

IPE/BC News

Public Education is a Public Interest.

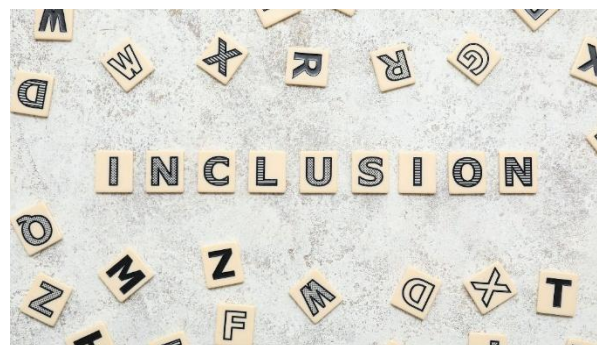


Inclusionary practices in BC schools: Are we making progress? IPE/BC March 6th Forum

We asked whether we're making progress on inclusionary practices and heard a very clear "No" from the panelists at our recent forum, Hilary Thompson president of [Inclusion BC](#), Tamara Taggart, president of [Down syndrome BC](#), and Tracy Humphreys, Executive Director of [BCCPAC](#) and past-ED of [BCEdAccess](#). They each spoke to the ways in which staffing shortages, underfunding, and lack of access to information, among many other issues, are leading to exclusion and, in some cases, segregation of students with disabilities and diverse needs. We're very grateful to them for sharing their experiences and perspectives with us and to our panel moderator, Patti Bacchus, a member of the IPE/BC Board of Directors.

If you missed the forum, you can [watch the video](#) and [read all about it](#) on our website. And, if you'd like to share your perspectives on the question we asked or have ideas for future forums, don't hesitate to [get in touch](#).

Calling on education officials



It can be very difficult for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities and diverse abilities to get access to education officials and the information they need. We urge the Ministry of Education and Child Care and school boards to arrange similar forums to learn from the perspectives of parents/caregivers, students, teachers, support staff, administrators and others about what is needed to ensure the best inclusionary conditions, supports, and practices are in place.

Report of the Inclusive Education Working Group of the Vancouver District Parents Advisory Council

The Inclusive Education Working Group of the Vancouver District Parents' Advisory Council has published a comprehensive report titled, "[Advocating for Equity: A caregiver-led examination of inclusive education in Vancouver Public Schools](#)." The IPE/BC Board was very fortunate to have Sherry Breshears and Amelia Needoba, from the working group, take us through the report and talk about their experiences in trying to effect change.

IPE Annual General Meeting

The IPE/AGM, held in conjunction with the forum, adopted the [2024 annual report](#) on the institute's work and appointed directors for the 2025-27 term. We're delighted to welcome Shannon Leddy as a brand new board member. Shannon, who has been an IPE/BC Associate for a number of years, is a member of the Metis Nation of BC and an associate professor in art education at UBC, specializing in using transformative pedagogies in decolonizing and Indigenizing teacher education.

We're also pleased to report that the following directors were reappointed to two year terms on the Board: Steve Cardwell, Anna Chudnovsky David Chudnovsky, Larry Kuehn, John Malcolmson and Bárbara Silva. Continuing on the board for the remainder of their terms are Patti Bacchus, Rory Brown, Kirsten Daub, Annabree Fairweather, Kevin Millsip, Moira Mackenzie, and Janice St. Helene. You can read more about the directors [here](#).

Reaching out: Making connections



We are very grateful CUPE/BC for inviting us to present two Hopes and Dreams workshop sessions to their members, with more to come. We had the privilege of meeting the provincial K-12 Education Committee and the Local 1091 (Delta School District) Executive Committee. Support staff have unique perspectives on the needs in our public schools and have very valuable insights to share. They're also under tremendous pressure as staffing shortages in their positions are having a significant impact on their roles and working conditions as well.

We're also pleased to have heard from the participants at the BCTF's annual Women's Institute and the Langley Retired Teachers' Association meeting. We're looking forward to talking with parents/caregivers, support staff, teachers and community members in Surrey, Campbell River and Prince George and at the upcoming Inclusion BC *Everybody Belongs* conference and the Public Education conference.

If you haven't yet participated in the Hopes and Dreams project, we hope you'll take a minute to [send us your perspectives](#).

Are cell phone bans the best way to go?



Check out our latest blog post, [“New Research Casts Doubt on School Cell Phone Bans.”](#) IPE/BC board member, Patti Bacchus, tackles this topic and cites a recent study on the impact (or lack thereof) of banning cell phones in schools. We’d love to hear your thoughts on this issue and your ideas for future blog posts.

New project underway

IPE/BC is involved in a new project with the goal of supporting elected trustees in speaking out on issues of importance in public education. We respect the role that BCSTA plays and understand that it has certain obligations to government under the co-governance model. However, like many of you, IPE/BC believes that trustees who are elected by their local communities need to be accessible to community members and to advocate assertively for the public schools in their districts. We feel we can play a valuable role in that regard. Our project is just getting started but you can see the initial plans and get in touch with us [here](#).

What’s happening in post-secondary education in BC?



It’s not just the K-12 public education system that is under stress. We’re worried about the increasing pressures that post-secondary institutions are experiencing as well. Where can you turn to get information on what’s happening? Here are a few sources to begin, but we’d welcome you sharing additional links and information with us.

[B.C.'s Kwantlen Polytechnic University lays off 70 faculty members | CBC News](#)

[CUFA BC Calls for Greater Commitment to Universities in Provincial Budget 2025](#)

[Students Give the BC Budget a Failing Grade: Adequate Funding Calls Remain Ignored Leaving Younger Generations to Struggle - British Columbia Federation of Students](#)

[FPSE Responds to 2025 Provincial Budget](#)

[CAUT Academic Freedom Campaign](#)

Firing of the Greater Victoria School Trustees

There are many pressing issues that the BC government needs to address in our public school system- chronic underfunding, severe staffing shortages, inadequate support for inclusion, overcrowding, to name just a few. Therefore, we were very surprised to see the Minister of Education and Child Care dismiss the elected Greater Victoria School Board as a first priority and equally concerned about the precedent it sets. Prior to the dismissal, we called for the Minister to play a constructive role in facilitating dialogue, especially with Indigenous Nations, and considering the needs and safety of young people in a broader context. Please read [our letter to the Minister](#) and [Statement of Concern](#).

Making public education a priority



Due to the election last fall, the BC Legislature's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services didn't hold the usual pre-budget consultation. But we felt it was very important to make our concerns and recommendations known, so we submitted a brief to government in advance of the current legislative sitting. You can read about the priorities we identified [here](#).

Public education a target south of the border

It's shocking to see the assault on public schools and post-secondary institutions in the US today. The very capacity to raise knowledgeable, engaged, forward thinking, compassionate citizens is now severely at risk. We firmly believe that quality public schools are key to a thriving society and strong democracy. We're thinking of everyone involved in education in the States, be it K-12 or post secondary, knowing that it must be such a heartbreaking and threatening time for them.

Stay in touch

Please feel free to share this newsletter and don't hesitate to [contact us](#) if you'd like to talk about public education matters, write a post for our blog, or share your perspectives. We'd be very happy to hear from you.



Institute for
Public Education/British Columbia