

IPE/BC News

Public Education is a Public Interest



Healthy school food programs

At IPE/BC we know how important it is to ensure that all public school students have access to a universal, accessible, and non-stigmatizing healthy school food program. We also know there is much yet to be done to make it happen. So, on September 25th, we co-hosted a webinar with the Centre for Civic Governance titled, [“Healthy Food at School- Let’s do it together.”](#)



Thanks very much to the featured panelists:

- Brent Mansfield, co-founder of Lunch Lab, founder of the BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food and a Vancouver teacher, and
- Mark Robinson, Trustee for School District 68- Nanaimo Ladysmith.

Thank you also to our panel moderator Patti Bacchus, our admin support, Krista Sigurdson, and to everyone who attended.

We hope to have a video of the session posted to our website very soon. In the meantime, to learn more, see:
 -the [Coalition for Healthy School Food- BC Chapter](#)
 - [IPE/BCs submission to the Federal Budget Consultation in 2024](#) re: the importance of federal funding for a nation-wide universal school food program.

Welcoming two new associates

We’re very pleased to welcome two brand new [IPE/BC Associates](#)- Shannon D.M. Moore and Justin Fraser.

Shannon was a public-school educator and advocate in Vancouver for nearly two decades. She is one of the founding members of [People for Public Education, Manitoba](#), and the co-host of [Public Good](#), a podcast about public education in Canada. Her recent research and writing focuses on the impact of [neoliberal reforms and policies in/on public education](#).

Justin is a public school music teacher, musician, activist, and researcher. As a PhD student in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia, his research interests include (popular) music education, social justice, and the neo- liberalization of public education.

Justin and Shannon have already collaborated on an excellent paper for IPE/BC, [What’s left of public education when the left starts to leave](#), in which they shine a light on privatization of public education here in BC. We hope you’ll check it out and share it amongst your contacts.

Inclusion-The promise versus the reality

BC's [policy on inclusive education](#) begins with this overarching promise:

All students with disabilities or diverse abilities should have equitable access to learning opportunities for achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs.



Yet, for many students with disabilities and diverse abilities and their parents/caregivers, inclusion is a promise has yet to be delivered. Similarly, Education Assistants, teachers and administrators know that chronic underfunding puts the well-being and success of students with disabilities and diverse abilities at risk.

We're very grateful to Anna Geeroms for sharing her heartbreaking struggle to secure the support her children needed, and the toll it took. Anna includes her recommendations for delivering on the promise and

turning the all too common exclusion into meaningful inclusion. If you haven't already done so please take a minute to read, "[Not enough funding has cost me everything. Why BC's inclusion model is failing—and how to fix it.](#)"

Thank you very much also to Kirsten Daub for writing, "[Education Assistants play a critical role in inclusion.](#)" Kirsten explains the very valuable work EAs undertake in public schools and what is putting their role, and therefore the students they serve, at risk.

Please [get in touch with us](#) if you'd like to share your perspectives on what is needed to ensure the promise of inclusion becomes a reality in all of our public schools.

IPE/BC submission to Budget 2026 Consultation

In June, IPE/BC submitted [its recommendations to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services](#) during its Budget 2026 Consultation. We recommended that:

- there be sufficient funding for staffing,
- that inclusive education be fully funded,
- that a portion of public funding now going to independent schools be reallocated to strengthen the public system and that public school investment as a percentage of GDP be restored.

We were pleased to see our recommendations highlighted in the [committee's final report](#) (pages 54-68).

School district budget cuts- 2025/26



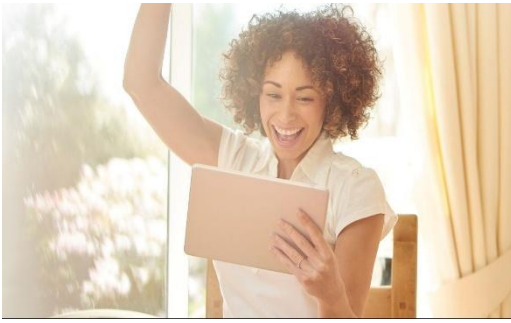
Unfortunately, once again the new school year opened with program losses, staffing cuts and overcrowding. In setting their budgets last spring, many districts grappled with shortfalls- the gap between what it costs to deliver the programs and services and the provincial funding they receive. In our blog post, [Denying the Reality of Education Underfunding](#), we've called on government to put aside the broken-record responses (highest funding ever, tough decisions, difficult times...) and open a genuine dialogue with those who experience the pressures and cutbacks in our public schools first hand.

Hybrid learning in the context of budget shortfalls

As expressed in a recent [Perspectives Blog post](#), we have worries about the hybrid learning model adopted by the Surrey School District as a pilot for this school year. It's not that innovation in education in and of itself is a concern, far from it. It's when cost-cutting is dressed up as innovation and inequity is baked in to a new model that

we have significant concerns. We do understand that the district was trying to cope with serious overcrowding and has long been lobbying for the approval and building of new schools to keep up with the population surge.

Hopes and Dreams project – Next steps



We asked, “[What are your hopes and dreams for public education in BC?](#)”. And hundreds and hundreds of people shared their perspectives in community meetings, workshops, emails, gatherings, and online. Now we can let you in on some exciting news. IPE/BC will be publishing a comprehensive report on our extensive community engagement project along with tools for advocating for a quality, inclusive, accessible, well-funded public education system.

PS: Don’t worry if you haven’t submitted your hopes and dreams to us yet. We’d still like to hear from you and also hope to continue the

engagement after the report is released.

David Berliner’s passing

We were very sorry to hear that [David Berliner passed away recently](#). He was a distinguished professor, researcher, author and champion for public schools and the fundamental role they play in a democracy. Author of over 200 articles, chapters and books, David Berliner tackled the myths behind the school reform movement, the damage caused by high stakes testing, the importance of a quality, free public education system designed to serve all children, and more. His publications not only stand the test of time, but they’re all the more relevant as public education is under attack in many jurisdictions today.

IPE/BC out and about



We’ve been privileged to have been included in the:

- BCTF Public Ed Conference on May 9-10,
- Inclusion BC, Everybody Belongs 2025 Conference in June 19-21, and
- Metro Vancouver Labour Day Celebration September 1.

We look forward to being present at the upcoming BC Teacher Librarians’ Association conference. Teacher-Librarians are so important in our public schools and in supporting student learning.

We really appreciate the rich conversations about public education that we have with others at events and will always do our best to meet any requests that come our way.

Staying connected

Please don’t hesitate to [get in touch](#). We’d love to hear from you.

We hope you’ll also engage with IPE/BC on social media:

Facebook- Institute for Public Education BC

X- @PublicEdBC

Blue Sky- @publicedbc.bsky.social

Instagram – ipe__bc (Note- there are 2 underscore lines)



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