

IPE/BC NEWS

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS A PUBLIC INTEREST.



Welcome to the first issue of IPE/BC News. We've created this newsletter to connect with you on our mutual interest- quality, accessible, inclusive public education in BC- and to keep you up to date on the Institute's work. Please feel free to share it and to invite others to subscribe [here](#).

ADVANCING PRIORITIES AND REFLECTING ON THE BUDGET

Last spring, IPE/BC made a [submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services](#), focusing on the following five major areas for consideration in the provincial budget:

1. Recognizing that public education is in the public interest and a critical element of our democratic society.
2. Focusing funding initiatives to support the most vulnerable students.
3. Avoiding a return to austerity to be able to recover from the damage of previous austerity measures.
4. Defunding private/independent schools.
5. Planning to incorporate remedies for the climate crisis in all areas of public education.

BC's provincial budget was tabled in April and support for quality, inclusive public education and the priorities listed above did not feature as highly as IPE/BC had hoped. We recognize the importance of the government's commitment to funding additional mental health supports over the next three years. However, the pandemic has highlighted many of the existing inequities and inadequacies in public education funding in BC which are in need of greater attention.

School boards are now grappling with their budgets for next year and, in some cases, facing potential cutbacks yet again. Additionally, a number of boards are dealing with the collapse of revenue from international students, a reliance that has deepened inequities between districts and should not take the place of adequate, predictable, stable government funding.

PRIVATIZING PRIVATE EDUCATION

It's a staggering sum- \$3,592,000,000- the amount of public funding that has been given in subsidies to private schools from 2013/14 to the 2021/22 budgets, less than a decade. Further, between 2001 and 2021, government subsidies to private schools have increased by 127% when adjusted for inflation.

In next year's provincial budget, the increase in private school funding will be 5.3% whereas the increase to public schools will be 4.2%. IPE/BC is firmly of the opinion that these subsidies should be phased out and the funding directed to public schools, where it can be used to help every child reach their full potential.

For further commentary on private schools and public funding, go to:

[Most British Columbians do not support public funding for private schools](#)

[Privatizing private schools should top the list of budget changes](#)

[Private schools don't need public funding](#)

[Private education funding is undemocratic](#)

ANALYZING THE OUT-OF-POCKET SPENDING

IPE/BC is working on a research project on another type of subsidy, the dollars spent by teachers and others working in the public school system to cover the many unmet needs. We'll keep you posted on this proposal.

SHARING PERSPECTIVES

Please take a moment to check out our blog posts at

<https://instituteforpubliceducation.org/category/perspectives/> We are currently featuring a three-part series related to the Charter for Public Education project. If you're not familiar with the Charter you can read about it here. IPE/BC is revisiting the Charter, considering whether to update it and how best to promote its use today. We'd be very happy to hear your ideas.

In the Perspectives Blog archives, you'll see a wide range of interesting posts from many different contributors. Please get in touch if you have a proposal for a blog post and would like to contribute.

BUILDING ON OUR COMMON INTEREST

We're in the process of creating a new feature on our website, the IPE/BC Commons, where we will be sharing links to research, articles, and other publications with a focus on quality, accessible, inclusive public education. We'll be launching this resource very soon, thank the contributors to date, and look forward to building a lively and informative site. Please don't hesitate to email to let us know about your own work or that of others that could be considered for this site.

REACHING OUT; MAKING CONNECTIONS

IPE/BC has been building on its commitment to quality public education and proud record to date. The Board of Directors meets monthly and works through a committee structure between meetings.

Recently IPE/BC welcomed incoming directors, Christine Ho Youngusband and John Malcolmson, and thanked outgoing directors, Wayne Ross, Anjum Kahn and Liz Blackwood for their valuable contributions.

-Thanks to the Columbia Institute's Centre for Civic Governance for the opportunity to collaborate on a workshop for the High Ground 2021 conference, March 24-26. IPE/BC Chair, Dr. Dan Laitch, moderated the session, A Vision for Public Education, with panelists Colleen Sturrock, a teacher from Langley School District, Owen Ebose, a student activist, and Jamie Smallwood, a parent activist, who also spoke at the IPE/BC Fellows' Forum this spring.

-We have been reaching out to education partner groups, advocacy groups and others, to highlight the role of IPE/BC and discuss issues in common, and certainly value the connections that are being made. Additionally, we've introduced IPE/BC to the new Minister of Education, Hon. Jennifer Whiteside, and requested a meeting with her.

-Thanks to the Surrey Teachers' Association for welcoming IPE/BC's workshop proposals for their district-wide convention on May 7th. We submitted two workshops: Re-engaging with the Charter for Public Education and Out of Our Own Pockets and were able to proceed with the first.

-Also on May 7th, IPE/BC, represented by Dan Laitch, participated in the Think Tank on Privatization sponsored by the BC Teachers' Federation. The session featured Dr. Sam Abrams Director of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

CREATING COMMUNITY ONLINE

- Please engage with IPE/BC on Twitter and Facebook. You'll find us at @publiceducation.bc.ca.
- Contact us at info@publicedbc.ca if you're interested in serving as an IPE/BC Fellow or on the research, fundraising or communications committee and have any questions about what it might entail.



