

IPE/BC NEWS

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS A PUBLIC INTEREST.



As the new school year gets underway, the Institute for Public Education BC wishes students, parents, teachers, and communities a safe and rewarding year. We know that the pandemic has created many difficult challenges in public schools for more than a year now and, with case numbers still very high in many regions of the province, the new school year will bring added stressors once again. We gratefully acknowledge everyone involved in public education for the way in which they have risen to those new challenges and wish them all the best in the year ahead.

IPE/BC is committed to a quality, inclusive public school system and will continue to be a strong, independent voice for education in BC. You can learn more about the IPE/BC mission [here](#).

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGETS

IPE/BC has released [a new research paper](#) demonstrating the impact of COVID-19 on the collapse of funding from international students. The practice of recruiting fee-paying international students to cover gaps in funding provided by the province began under the previous Liberal government and carries on today. Inevitably it has deepened inequality between districts and led to a reliance on unstable funding, with the pandemic demonstrating just how unstable it can be. John Malcolmson, researcher, and IPE/BC Director, reveals the impact province-wide and on individual Board budgets for the coming school year. The budget numbers currently available are based on a best-case scenario, however the effect of the fourth wave and the variants is yet to be realized.

IPE/BC addressed the serious concerns with this practice in a previous research paper, [The Many Faces of Privatization](#). See, in particular, pages 8-10.

IPE/BC COMMONS

Be sure to check out the [IPE/BC Commons](#) for research, articles, and commentary on public education. We are hoping to grow this site so would really appreciate any suggestions that you have for links to your own work and that of others on education matters.

Our latest post in the Commons is a very timely and interesting article by IPE/BC Fellow Lindsay Gibson, [The Case for Commemorative Controversies in Canadian History Education](#).

Gibson, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at UBC, advances the need to teach about commemorative controversies in K-12 education and assets that doing so enhances civic education competencies and historical consciousness.

DECOLONIZING THE CHARTER FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

As you may know, the Charter for Public Education, developed in 2003 through an extensive community consultation in BC, now resides with IPE/BC. You can read about the Charter, its history, values and commitment to quality, accessible, inclusive public education on our website. The IPE/BC Board of Directors believes the Charter has great potential as a lens for examining the values and commitments in place in each BC public school and is dedicated to a project that will provide tools to support school communities in using it.

Yet, we realize we have some important work to do first. The extensive Charter for Public Education report and the Charter itself were written by a dedicated panel of five who travelled the province in 2003 to hear from students, teachers, parents, and community members about their perspectives on public education. There was tremendous engagement in the process and, at the end, the panelists drafted a thorough report on what they had heard in communities around BC and designed a charter reflecting the values, commitments and expectations expressed. In crafting the Charter, the panelists used a quotation that they believed captured the importance of public education. However, the quotation is by Edgerton Ryerson, who we now know was instrumental in the formation of the "Indian Residential School" system and in the creation of separate schools for Black children. Four of the panelists (sadly panelist George Watts is deceased), agree that the quotations should be removed, so the Board will be moving ahead with creating a revised version. At our September Board meeting, the Directors will also be discussing ways in which we can take a deeper look at decolonizing our work. We'll update you through the newsletter.

OUT OF OUR POCKETS PROJECT

In our first newsletter, we reported that IPE/BC was designing a project to analyze the dollars that teachers and others in the public schools spent out of their pockets to subsidize the system and cover unmet needs. Work on the OOP project has continued over the summer. We have developed a beta version of the data collection web site, begun the process of seeking ethics approval for full data collection, and started to establish a group of educators to pilot test and critique the system. We hope to start the pilot test by the end of September.

COVID-19 POLICIES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION, COAST TO COAST TO COAST.

During the last school year, People for Education, Ontario, has developed a handy reference to the pandemic policies and procedures in each of the provinces and territories. It has now been updated to reflect the requirements in place for the start of the 2021/22 school year. Thanks very much to People for Education for this valuable work. While our two organizations differ somewhat in approach and capacity, we share a deep mutual commitment to well-funded, quality public education.

ASSERTING OUR VOICE ON EDUCATION FUNDING

IPE/BC recently responded to an article on public education in the Canadian Journal of Education Administration and Policy claiming "an astounding" increase in education spending in BC. We first published a blog post by IPE/BC Director Larry Kuehn, Claims about education costs mislead by ignoring social and educational changes, providing the necessary context and addressing the factors which were overlooked. IPE Chairperson Dan Laitsch and Directors John Malcolmson and Larry Kuehn then submitted a thorough critical response to the journal with the request that it be considered for publication. We will keep you posted on any further developments.

MAKING CONNECTIONS, REACHING OUT

Since the last newsletter, IPE/BC has continued to reach out to other groups and organizations with an interest in the public education system. In July, IPE/BC Chairperson, Dan Laitch, along with Fundraising and Partnerships Chair, David Chudnovsky, presented to the leadership of the BC Teachers' Federation, providing an overview of the institute's current activities and project plans. Further connections are being made with the Retired Teachers' Association of BC, the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association and other local associations.

We are available to present to meetings and conferences should any group want to learn more about IPE/BC and its commitment to public education.

Please stay in touch with us through:

Email - info@publicedbc.ca

Facebook and Twitter - @PublicEdBC

Instagram- [ipe_bc](#)

Our website - instituteforpubliceducation.org

We'd be pleased to hear your comments and suggestions. We also invite you to share this newsletter with your contacts and encourage them to subscribe [here](#).
