

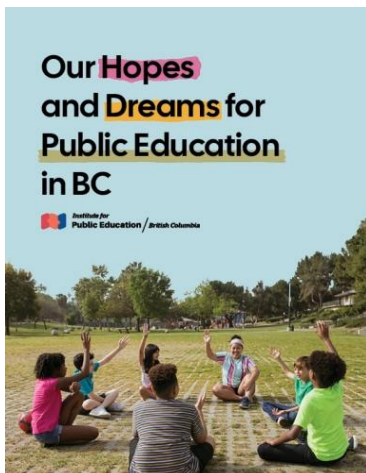
IPE/BC News



Public Education is a Public Interest

Hopes and Dreams for Public Education in BC

By now you will have read about our recently released community engagement research report, [Hopes and Dreams for Public Education in BC](#). We're grateful to the hundreds and hundred of British Columbians who shared their hopes and dreams with us. We hope you've had a chance to read the report and share it with your contacts and networks. We know that years of chronic underfunding have resulted in many unmet needs in our valued public schools and we're pleased to present this report as an inspiring vision for all that public education can and should be.



We are delighted that responses to date have been very encouraging and the idea of a positive vision for public education has been well received. But we'd certainly like to hear from you as well. [Please send us your feedback and questions and consider joining the growing list of people endorsing this report.](#)

Our next steps in the project will be to rally support for making these hopes and dreams come true. To start, we hope you'll join us by sharing the report with school board trustees and candidates for trustee in your district, the Minister of Education, your district and school parent advisory councils, school staffs, and other organizations and networks in your community. Let's work together to turn this positive vision for public education into a reality.

Election of school trustees

We're just nine days away from the local government elections in BC and we'd like to highlight the importance of electing strong school trustees. Too often the focus is on the mayor and council candidates, whereas a well-supported, accessible and inclusive public education system is absolutely key to healthy democracy and thriving society. Therefore, the choice of the school trustees who will be in place for four years is very important.

While many of the public education decisions, including funding levels and curriculum, rest with the provincial government, school trustees can have a significant impact when they use their voices to advocate for the funding and conditions public schools need,



welcome parent and community engagement, and do their utmost to put the needs of students, parents, staff and school communities first. If you haven't voted yet, we'd urge you to select trustee candidates who will be determined champions for accessible, inclusive, well-funded public education.

Reading, writing and arithmetic

With two elections underway at the same time in BC, we're increasingly seeing public education being used as an ideological target. We're hearing slogans like "back to the basics" and "reading, writing and arithmetic, not ideology". These catch phrases are not new and are not endemic to BC. All too often, they have been linked to privatization, defunding of public education and the elimination of critical thinking skills, classes for music and the arts, and skills for citizen engagement. Here are some resources to learn more about the impact of back-to-basics movements in other jurisdictions, including who gains and who loses:

["Back to Basics" Again! What Does it Mean for Students and Teachers?](#)

[What is wrong with "Back to the Basics" Education?- A Lot!](#)

[Why we cannot go back to the basics](#)

Please don't hesitate to share other resources on this issue. We'd love to hear from you.

Private school funding



We're pleased to report that we have a major project on private school funding underway. In particular, we're very concerned that the elite private schools in BC receive considerable funding from our tax dollars while our public schools are in dire need. We will be doing a very thorough job of studying this issue and reporting to you. Stay tuned and, in the meantime, check out our Issues and Advocacy page with resources on the issue of private school funding [here](#).

We'd also like to highlight [Andrew Longhurst's analysis of private school funding in BC](#) and the [Public Funding for Public Schools](#) pledge created by RECESS and the Coalition for Public Education.

Misconceptions about FSA and PISA testing

Since its inception, IPE/BC has been opposed to narrow criteria to measure the success of our public schools. We have all seen the Fraser Institute's school rankings based on the FSA tests and we worry this annual exercise is conducted in the interest of promoting private schools over public. Furthermore, questionable conclusions are drawn in the absence of understanding all the factors that make a public school successful, welcoming, supportive, and inclusive.

The recent release of the PISA results by country and jurisdiction is also being used for similar ends as the FSA. However, we'd like to share an excellent article in The Conversation Canada which puts the issue in perspective, [Standardized tests needed to boost student achievement? Saskatchewan begs to differ](#).

IPE's Select Standing Committee Presentation

IPE/BC presents to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services during the budget consultation process each spring and this year was no exception. We know there are many unmet needs in public schools that need to be addressed, but the submission process only allows for

three recommendations from each presenter. This year our Chairperson Steve Cardwell presented IPE's priorities for the 2027 provincial budget as follows:



-increase funding for staffing in public schools.

-fully funding inclusive education, and

-reallocate a portion of public funding from private independent schools to strengthen the public system.

You can read the complete IPE/BC presentation [here](#) and the report of the Select Standing Committee [here](#). IPE/BC's recommendations are noted on page 70 in the section on K-12 Education.

Police in public schools

First and foremost, we believe that children, youth and their families/caregivers need ready access to school counsellors, community services and supports, and age- appropriate, positive activities readily available to them. We worry that the push for police in schools might be seen as an alternative to these supports. We also recognize that there are strongly held views, both in favour and opposition to police in schools and legitimate concerns from many different perspectives. Therefore we were pleased to see the framework that the New Westminster School District has established for their [Police Partnership Program](#). It's a very thoughtful and considered approach that takes into account the need for a carefully defined and limited role, an overall respect for equity and inclusion, and a commitment to transparency, accountability and on-going evaluation. We encourage you to check out the NWSD policy and consider whether those same thoughtful provisions are in place in your school district.

Stay connected

Please don't hesitate to [get in touch](#) with us. We also hope you'll check out the resources on [our website](#).

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