

British Columbia Society for Public Education

Protecting the integrity of BC's public schools

www.bcspe.ca

February/March 2010

Education Funding Crisis

The VSB (along with many districts in BC) is predicting an enormous budget deficit. In Vancouver this deficit is estimated to be between 16 and 34 million dollars. This year's budget shortfall comes after years of funding cuts.

Unless the provincial government has a change of heart, there will be layoffs and cuts to programs and supports for students. At the core of this unprecedented funding crisis is the growing number of downloaded costs that the province has so far refused to cover in provincial education funding grants.

These include

- increases for teacher salaries and benefits under contracts the province negotiated;
- new provincial carbon tax and carbon offset charges;
- increases to provincial MSP and WCB premiums;
- implementation costs of new provincial requirements like Bill 33 and all-day kindergarten; and
- general inflation, which the provincial funding formula also does not cover.

BC Budget Day is March 2, so it's urgent that BC MLAs hear from as many people as possible before that date if we want to avert unprecedented cuts to our public schools!

About BCSPE

BCSPE is a registered society dedicated to upholding the values and tradition of public education in Canada. We support advocacy to strengthen public education, believing that the best advocacy is rooted in sound research and analysis. We are active in carrying out our own research and in highlighting the research of others as it relates to public education.

Our Board of Directors: Annie Ehman, Catherine Evans, Debbie Desroche-Fulton, Helesia Luke, Allison McDonald, Kelly Read and Cynthia Wong

Take Action

Write your MLA!

A sample letter is attached.

Visit www.stopeducationcuts.org

Here you will find:

- actions and events in communities throughout BC
- a letter template
- news about public education funding
- advocacy resources including studies, organizing and other communications tools

Rally for Public Education in Vancouver

Organized by the Vancouver Elementary and Secondary School Teachers join the HOPES and DREAMS Rally for Public Education

When: Monday, March 1st, 2010

Time: 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Where: Education Minister's Office
1200 Block of W. Broadway

Select Standing Committee Recommendations

In December 2009, after consulting with groups across BC, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services made these recommendations related to funding K-12 education.

- Work with boards of education to conduct a comprehensive review of the education funding formula.
- Work cooperatively with the boards of education on a review of the administrative and reporting requirements for each school district and within the Ministry of Education.
- Treat the annual facilities grant as a high priority for funding in the 2010/11 Budget.
- Ensure that the implementation of all-day kindergarten is fully funded.
- Enhance capacity within ministries and at the community level so that the planning and funding of adult literacy services are effective and well coordinated.

We urge the government to listen to its pan-partisan committee and fully fund public schools. To view these recommendations visit the Ministry of Finance website.