

# Charter for Public Education Network

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## CHARTER NETWORK -- WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

Thank you for joining the Charter for Public Education Network. Since our inaugural meeting on March 10, 2004 the Board of Directors and Steering Committee have been working hard to form the Network organization and to get solid plans in place for the long term work of the Network in encouraging the implementation of the Charter ideals. We have over 300 individual and group members.

Here is a partial list of our activities to date:

- In June we held a successful youth conference -- "Class Action" -- at the Vancouver Public Library which has spawned a youth wing of the Charter Network – you will be hearing more from them soon.
- In September we were able to present a framed copy of the Charter and the final report from the Charter panel to His Excellency John Raulston Saul at his Vancouver speech "In Defense of Public Education" sponsored by the Vancouver School Board and Vancouver City Council.
- We have developed working relationships with all of the Universities and University Colleges in B.C. As a result, every student studying to be a teacher in the province is now exposed to the Charter for Public Education as part of their studies.
- We have done the important leg work of writing a constitution and by-laws as well as establishing a charitable foundation which will make it easier to raise funds for research projects etc
- Our regular meeting minutes are posted on the website: [www.charter.publiced.ca](http://www.charter.publiced.ca) so you can follow up on any detail. We plan to keep you updated with a regular electronic newsletter.
- We are beginning a research project with Dr. Peter Grimmett at SFU which will prepare a "Gap Analysis" and a research plan for the Charter Network. This will include an assessment of public education in B.C. to determine ways in which the principles outlined in the Charter are being implemented and where there are "gaps".

We plan to be active in a non-partisan way during next May's provincial election and will be preparing materials for use at town hall meetings and in contacting candidates and political parties. The results of this work will be shared with members of the Charter Network and through you with members of our communities.

Check our website often to stay up-to-date with our activities. We realize that there has been a long silence for those of you who joined early and for those who have expressed an interest but not yet become members. You should begin to hear a lot more from us in the coming months leading up to our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual General meeting to be held March 10, 2005.

## OPERATING PLAN 2004 – 2005

**The Charter for Public Education** was published on March 10, 2003 after public consultations with 1600 British Columbians in 42 communities. On March 10, 2004 an independent organization, **The Charter for Public Education Network** was formed to:

**Advocate** for strong, stable public education in British Columbia.

**Lobby, communicate, and speak** out for learners.

**Promote** fully-funded, equitable, accessible public education.

**Work** with colleges and universities to carry out research that illustrates the value of public education.

**Sponsor** respectful debates and discussions on the issues facing public education in B.C.

**Develop and present** workshops on topical issues concerning advocacy and education.

**Organize** conferences where supporters of public education can learn from their diverse experiences and share their knowledge and wisdom.

**Publish** articles and studies and interviews in the media to defend the principles of public education.

**Model** participatory democracy, accessibility, and equity in all of its activities and projects.

An interim Board of Directors and Steering committee were established to form a non-profit society and a charitable research foundation to carry out the objectives of the Network. The formal structure will be in place for the first Annual General Meeting scheduled for March 10, 2005, at which time a Board of Directors will be elected from the membership at large and an executive committee selected from the Board.

The interim Board has endorsed the following action plans for 2004-2005:

**Mission:** Implementation of the Charter

**Goal:** Free, quality, learner-centred public education for all that offers learning opportunities and processes based upon Charter principles

**Objectives:** To persuade British Columbian's – learners, teachers, parents, and others, and thus their governments, to support and implement the Charter principles.

**Strategies:**

- a) **Research – Gap Analysis:** to analyze the gap between the Charter principles and the present practice of public education in British Columbia.
- b) **Influence election debate and engage the public:** by publication of gap analysis data and by organizing small scale, local debates and discussion groups
- c) **Bring partners to the table**
- d) **Maintain and grow membership by developing the network throughout B.C.**

**Tactics:**

- a) Engage one or more researchers to develop an initial gap analysis and to provide a long term, ongoing research plan to guide the implementation of the Charter principles.  
Encourage students, teacher, parents and others to research and write about educational strategies which will lead to implementing the Charter principles
- b) Publish the results of the gap analysis research and writings.  
Engage groups and, where possible the media, in debates about public education and the Charter principles
- c) Seek endorsements from provincial and local chapters of education partner groups
- d) Build both the Network organization and the general membership by reaching out to a minimum of 10 communities through out B.C. Continue to expand the web-site including a web-based newsletter and interactive discussions. Assist the development of a youth wing of the Network (Liberate the Learner) by following up on the successful Class Action Youth Forum held in June 2004

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