

Rights

Everyone has the right to a free quality public education.

The Charter panel was surprised and delighted at the number of presentations that called for education to be recognized as a right. Most of us assume that every British Columbian will have available to them the Kindergarten to grade 12 system at least during their childhood and adolescent years. Yet there is both a desire to assert the right to this education as a principle and anxiety that increasingly this "right" is being undermined.

102.8, 102.9, 103.1, 103.7, 103.8, 104.5, 106.1, 108.4, 108.13, 108.14, 108.17, 108.18, 108.19, 108.20, 108.24, 110.16, 111.14, 113.2, 113.6, 113.9, 113.13, 113.14, 114.4, 114.9, 114.15, 117.10, 117.11, 117.12, 118.2, 118.5, 118.6, 119.12, 119.13, 119.14, 120.9, 120.11, 120.13, 120.14, 120.16, 121.1, 121.2, 121.4, 121.9, 121.12, 122.3, 122.4, 122.5, 122.6, 122.7, 122.8, 122.10, 123.3, 123.4, 123.5, 123.6, 123.7, 123.9, 123.10, 123.12, 123.13, 123.14, 123.15, 123.16, 123.17, 124.1, 124.2, 124.4, 124.6, 124.8, 124.10, 124.11, 124.12, 124.13, 124.15, 124.16, 125.1, 125.2, 125.3, 125.4, 126.10, 127.1, 128.4, 128.7, 128.8, 129.1, 129.2, 129.3, 129.4, 129.5, 129.6, 129.8, 129.9, 129.10, 129.11, 129.13, 129.14, 130.1, 130.3, 130.4, 130.5, 130.6, 130.7, 130.8, 130.9, 130.11, 130.13, 130.14, 130.15, 130.16, 130.18, 130.19, 130.20, 131.1, 131.2, 131.3, 131.4, 131.5, 131.6, 131.8, 131.10, 131.11, 132.3, 132.4, 132.5, 132.6, 132.7, 132.8, 132.9, 132.10, 132.11, 132.12, 132.13, 132.14, 132.15, 132.16, 132.18, 132.19, 132.20, 132.21, 133.1, 133.2, 133.3, 133.4, 133.5, 133.6, 133.8, 133.9, 133.10, 133.11, 133.12, 134.12, 134.13, 134.14, 134.17, 134.18, 134.19, 134.20, 134.21, 134.22, 134.26, 134.27, 134.28, 134.29, 135.1, 135.2, 135.3, 135.4, 135.5, 135.6, 135.8, 135.9, 136.1, 136.2, 136.3, 136.5, 136.6, 136.7, 137.1, 137.2, 137.9, 137.10, 137.12, 137.14, 138.1, 138.2, 138.4, 138.5, 138.6, 138.7, 138.9, 138.10, 138.11, 138.12, 140.1, 140.6, 140.7, 140.8, 140.9, 140.10, 140.11, 140.12, 140.14, 140.15, 141.1, 141.2, 141.6, 141.7, 141.8, 141.13, 141.15, 141.17, 141.18, 141.26, 141.29, 141.30, 141.33, 141.34, 141.35, 141.36, 141.37, 141.41, 141.42, 141.44, 141.45, 141.46, 150.2, 150.24, 101.5, 102.8, 102.9, 102.10, 104.5, 104.11, 106.1, 107.9, 108.3, 109.2, 109.7, 109.13, 109.19, 109.20, 109.21, 110.6, 110.12, 111.10, 111.12, 113.14, 114.8, 114.10, 114.11, 114.15, 114.17, 117.2, 117.11, 117.13, 118.2, 119.13, 120.9, 120.11, 120.12, 120.13, 120.14, 120.16, 121.2, 122.3, 122.7, 122.8, 122.10, 122.11, 123.5, 123.6, 123.9, 123.13, 123.14, 123.15, 124.11, 124.12, 124.13, 124.15, 125.1, 125.4, 127.1, 128.4, 128.8, 129.2, 129.8, 129.11, 130.1, 130.2, 130.3, 130.4, 130.5



A good quality public education is part of being Canadian. It's like a right. It's what the world expects of us.

Darlene Westerman, Terrace

Significantly, many presenters connected the notion of education as a right, to the ability and responsibility of a relatively wealthy country like Canada to provide that right.

If we can't maintain a strong education system in Canada, how are they going to do it in Brazil, or Argentina or Afghanistan.

Candace Roggeveen, student,
Salmon Arm

A large number of participants in the Charter process stressed the distinction between a commercialized and commodified model of education on the one hand and a public and community service model on the other in asserting the principle that education is a right.

Education is not for sale. It's a right.

Christine Ellis, Ben West, Christian
Botelho, Vancouver

The question of the cost of education to learners, their families and their communities was dealt with by many of the presenters to the **Charter**, both in formal submissions and in informal discussion. Two motivations were apparent in the commonly asserted principle that education be free. The first was a philosophical predisposition that educational services be provided free to British Columbians.

130.7, 130.8, 130.11, 130.14, 130.16, 131.4, 131.5, 131.6, 132.3, 132.4, 132.5, 132.6, 132.8, 132.10, 132.11, 132.14, 132.18, 132.21, 133.1, 133.2, 133.4, 133.5, 133.8, 133.9, 133.10, 134.12, 134.13, 134.18, 134.19, 134.26, 134.27, 134.28, 134.29, 135.1, 135.2, 135.4, 135.5, 135.8, 136.1, 136.2, 136.3, 136.5, 136.6, 137.1, 137.8, 137.9, 137.10, 138.2, 138.7, 138.9, 138.12, 138.14, 140.8, 140.10, 140.11, 140.14, 141.1, 141.2, 141.8, 141.15, 141.26, 141.37, 150.2, 150.19

Every child is entitled to a free education.

Pat Heal, North Vancouver

Second, presenters saw a system which requires school fees, widespread fund-raising, school boards operating as profit-making enterprises or a combination of these as inimical to another fundamental principle widely supported - that of equity. That is, there was a view that to the extent that funding is dependent on these processes the principle of equity is threatened.

My ability to learn shouldn't depend on whether the market is up or down.

Brad West, student, Coquitlam

Indeed, there was real fear that the public system is threatened by the need for these alternate funding mechanisms.

We are being left to bleed a slow death through fund-raising

Barb Berger, Campbell River

Presenters to the Charter were clear about their views regarding the source of resources for the public education system. British Columbians believe that a progressive income tax system is the proper way to fund education.

Funding should come from provincial and federal income taxes, and it should be escalating with the wealthy paying more.

Reid Fowler, Salmon Arm

Many participants in the Charter process connected the principle of full funding supported by taxation to anxiety about potential privatization of the public education system or parts of it.

Free public access funded by the community through taxation, not a place for privatization.

Linda Purcell, Gibsons

106.3, 108.15, 109.17, 109.21, 110.4, 110.13, 113.13, 114.10, 116.2, 117.12, 118.1, 118.5, 119.11, 120.16, 121.2, 122.6, 122.7, 122.8, 122.10, 124.6, 124.11, 124.13, 125.2, 127.1, 128.5, 128.8, 132.5, 132.14, 132.18, 132.20, 133.3, 133.4, 133.8, 135.4, 135.5, 136.1, 136.3, 138.7, 141.26, 150.2

In addition, many presenters expressed dissatisfaction with continued public funding of private schools.

Together with concern about privatization came warnings about the potential negative consequences of including education in international trade agreements like the General Agreement on Trade in Services under the WTO.

A Charter for Public Education in British Columbia must become a catalyst to demand firm action from the federal and provincial governments "to provide effective GATS safeguards", so that the current round of re-negotiations will not worsen the threats that the current international agreement already poses for public education systems.

Sieglinde Stieda, Maple Ridge

Participants were convinced that resources are available to adequately fund the public education system, but that political decision-makers needed to make education a priority.

Perhaps the most telling point in this regard was made to the Charter panel by a student who said,

Education shouldn't be so much about saving dollars. It should be about making sense.

Braeden Caley, student, Richmond

With respect to the principle of quality, presenters made several points. First, they called for excellence, which they most often described as “the best we’re able to give.” Second, was a belief that high expectations on the part of families, teachers, the school system and learners themselves are an important contributing factor to quality public education. Finally, quality was associated with self-confidence, pride and self-esteem, and a belief that the system has a responsibility to encourage and build these attitudes.

101.3, 102.12, 102.13, 102.19, 103.6, 105.1, 108.4, 108.14, 108.20, 109.1, 110.8, 112.3, 112.7, 113.9, 113.13, 113.14, 114.1, 114.4, 114.9, 114.10, 114.16, 114.18, 115.8, 115.9, 115.10, 116.2, 116.4, 116.5, 117.6, 117.1, 117.10, 117.11, 117.12, 117.13, 118.2, 118.4, 118.5, 119.9, 120.9, 120.11, 120.12, 120.13, 120.16, 121.1, 121.2, 122.6, 122.7, 122.8, 123.6, 123.7, 123.12, 123.13, 123.14, 124.2, 124.8, 124.10, 124.11, 124.12, 124.13, 124.14, 124.15, 124.16, 126.12, 128.8, 129.2, 129.4, 130.1, 130.2, 130.13, 130.5, 130.13, 130.16, 130.17, 131.5, 131.10, 132.4, 132.8, 132.15, 132.18, 132.19, 132.21, 133.1, 133.2, 133.4, 133.8, 133.10, 133.12, 134.12, 134.17, 134.18, 134.29, 135.2, 136.3, 136.6, 136.7, 137.2, 138.5, 138.13, 138.14, 140.3, 140.9, 140.12, 141.1, 141.25, 141.30



101.9, 101.11, 102.17, 105.1, 107.9, 108.21, 109.4, 109.5, 109.6, 109.11, 109.14, 109.17, 109.18, 109.20, 113.13, 115.2, 115.7, 115.9, 116.2, 116.3, 117.5, 117.11, 118.4, 120.6, 121.13, 123.10, 123.13, 123.16, 125.2, 126.8, 127.1, 130.1, 130.4, 130.6, 131.1, 131.3, 132.14, 132.20, 133.1, 133.4, 133.12, 136.1, 138.6, 140.6, 140.7, 140.12, 141.15, 150.23

Each First Nation has the right to be recognized and respected by those within the educational institutions located in their traditional territory.

Two of the most important concepts for Aboriginal people are “respect” and “recognition of territory.” The **Charter** panel witnessed, in Alberni, for instance, how these concepts are being carried out in the public school system. At A. W. Neil School, which is in the traditional territory of the Hupacasath people, Chief Judith Sayer was asked to give opening remarks and an elder from the community did the opening prayer at a district wide professional development day which the panel attended. No matter where Aboriginal people travel they always thank the local Aboriginal people for the privilege of speaking in their territory. If Aboriginal people are going to feel comfortable in the public education system then these two concepts when practiced go a long way to meeting that goal.

Since contact, education has been used as a primary vehicle for the devaluation and disruption of First Nations people. The history of First Nations people in Canada has been one of oppression and colonization with aggressive legislation and policy aimed at eradicating the language and culture of First Nations people. The legacy of residential schools is still evident today. Despite the oppressive history, First Nations people have persevered to remain a distinct people with distinct rights recognized in the constitution.

Robert Hill, Prince Rupert

