

"Education is the transmission of civilization" - Will Durant

Dunster Fine Arts School
Dunster BC

To Whom It May Concern

We are writing to seek support in demanding the provincial government substantially increase funding of public education. We are frustrated parents who are tired of having our children receive a continually lower standard of education because of lack of funding. The provincial government has decimated public education and expects School Boards to make unrealistic and unprecedented decisions that directly affect students and their learning. It is within the Human Rights of Canadian citizens to have access to public education. But if adequate funds are not available, that right is meaningless.

Our children attend a small rural school - Dunster Fine Arts School - in the Robson Valley. This school is being considered for closure due to budget shortfalls within School District 57 (Prince George and area). As parents, we are mystified at the complete underfunding of public education. Your child's school may not be considered for closing, but maybe your child is in an overcrowded class, a structurally unsafe school, does not have access to a school bus route, or a child with special needs who receives minimal support.

In regards to funding and access of public education within British Columbia there are alarming statistics. British Columbia is reportedly, by the provincial government, to have one of the strongest economies in all of Canada. However, our student to teacher ratio has remained the **highest** in all of Canada for over 10 years! And British Columbia per capita spending is also far **below** the national average. British Columbia's contribution falls well behind other Western provinces in keeping up with inflation. Saskatchewan has increased their funding per capita by \$193 per student to offset inflation costs; conversely, British Columbia has only increased their per capita funding by \$2! And the most alarming statistic so far is the fact that British Columbia falls behind the national average of spending on education as a percentage of their Gross Domestic Product! In comparison, France spends 5.8%, Malaysia 6.2%, and Saudi Arabia 9.5% of spending on education as a percent of their Gross Domestic Product! What good is it to have one of the "strongest economies in Canada" if we don't invest in public education!

We believe in the importance of public education. Parents should not have to pay for private school or subsidize their child's school or bussing, to offset district costs of funding public schools. Public education is a human right in Canada. Although, yes, our children do have access to a public school, we believe that, for the majority, the public education is lacking due to substantial and persistent underfunding by the provincial government. James Garfield said, "Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be maintained." This is why we are asking for your courageous support and unity as parents in demanding that the provincial government increase funding to public education.

With courage,

Dunster Parent Advisory Committee.