

PROVINCIAL ELECTION 2024

Party Commitments to Public Education

The BC provincial election is in full swing and the BCSTA is active in our advocacy for public education. Members of the BCSTA identified three key advocacy areas that the organization is active in promoting throughout this election.

These three key areas are:

- **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF**
- **CAPITAL AND DEFERRED MAINTENANCE FUNDING**
- **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND STUDENT SUCCESS**

Your advocacy matters. All three parties provided responses to BCSTA advocacy questions specific to the three key areas of advocacy work.

These responses can be found here:

- [BC CONSERVATIVES RESPONSE TO BCSTA](#)
- [BC GREENS RESPONSE TO BCSTA](#)
- [BC NDP RESPONSE TO BCSTA](#)

The three main political parties have made several commitments to public education through their party platforms and through the media.

Here is what each party has to say:

BC Conservatives

According to the BC Conservatives [website](#), their platform ideas have been released but contain no specific mention of public education. However, BC Conservatives have been active in the media with comments on education and have made the following commitments via media interviews:

REMOVAL OF SOGI 123

The BC Conservatives have pledged to remove SOGI 123 (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) resources from schools. ([Source](#))

PARENTAL RIGHTS

The party emphasizes protecting parental rights in education. Rustad has stated they want to “make sure parents have their rights and engage with their kids in schools” ([Source](#))

CLASSROOM CHANGES

The Conservatives have promised to; increase the number of students in classrooms while maintaining or increasing the teacher-to-student ratio, end the extended-day model for six high schools in Surrey, Hire more teachers as needed ([Source](#))

CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS REVIEW

The party has stated they would; strike a committee to review all school textbooks and literature to ensure they are “appropriate” and remove what they see as political bias from classrooms. ([Source](#))

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BC Greens

The BC Greens have released their [full platform](#) and make specific commitments to public education starting on page 30. The BC Greens commit to the following:

- Create an Education Workforce Strategy - Strengthen the education workforce by providing financial support, fair compensation, and streamlined processes for educators.
- Modernize public school funding and infrastructure to support student success.
- Foster community connections by expanding the use of school facilities.
- Support students with diverse learning needs through equitable and inclusive education.
- Ensure all students have equitable access to mental health support in schools.
- Provide healthy, nutritious meals for all students.
- Equip educators with the tools and knowledge to deliver quality, inclusive education.
- Promote inclusivity and support for LGBTQ+ students in BC schools.

The BC Greens have also been active in the media with comments on education and have made the following commitments via media interviews and to media agencies:

INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

The party pledges to double the funds for mental health support staff in schools, estimating an additional cost of \$85 million. ([Source](#))

IMPLEMENTING A UNIVERSAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

The Greens propose instituting a universal school food program, which they estimate would cost \$400 million annually. ([Source](#))

ESTABLISHING A DIGITAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT

The party aims to create a digital literacy secretariat to help the school system navigate rapid technological changes, such as the emergence of artificial intelligence in classrooms. ([Source](#))

PROVIDING LAPTOPS TO STUDENTS

More than \$100 million will be set aside annually by the B.C. Greens to ensure all middle school and high school students have a laptop for coursework. ([Source](#))

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BC NDP

The BC NDP have released their [full platform](#) and make specific commitments to public education starting on page 54. The BC NDP commit to the following:

- Providing BC students the help they need by making sure every public school has a mental health counsellor.
- Increasing support for students in the critical kindergarten to grade 3 years.
- Getting more teachers into the classroom.
- Attracting more teachers to high-need areas.
- Building more than 20,000 new student spaces.
- Improving learning and reducing distractions by banning cellphone use in schools.
- Increasing support for kids with learning disabilities and their families.
- Helping prevent the cycle of addiction by taking a coordinated approach to drug prevention education in BC schools.

The BC NDP have also been active in the media with comments on education and have made the following commitments via media interviews and to media agencies:

INVESTING \$500 MILLION OVER TWO YEARS

The BC NDP has promised to spend \$500 million over the next two years on a major education plan. ([Source](#))

EXPANDING CHILD CARE SPACES

The party plans to increase child care spaces “in the thousands” by expanding an existing pilot program that puts child care into school spaces and utilizes education assistants. ([Source](#))

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS IN EVERY K-3 CLASSROOM

The NDP pledges to ensure there is an Educational Assistant in every Kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom in the province to help students with extra needs. ([Source](#))

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLORS IN ALL SCHOOLS

The party promises to equip all public schools with a mental health counsellor to provide professional support for students. ([Source](#))