

## **Inclusive education and student success**

### **1. How will you prioritize inclusion and diversity within the public school system to ensure all students feel safe, respected and valued?**

*Partnership, participation and personal expression:*

- The BC Greens will work with education partners to develop **province-wide inclusive education policies, orders, and legislation** that support diverse learning needs and promote equitable access to education for all students. We plan to create an **ongoing, sustainable funding model** for organizations that are responding to the diverse needs of students.
- This will include **outdoor education programming** as an effective way of getting children and youth into nature, while building leadership skills and confidence. The [Take a Hike](#) program, for example, has a record of proven successful outcomes, empowering youth with intentional, continuous clinical counselling, land-based learning, and a safe and supportive sense of community.
- We also believe that **arts and culture** are integral to a healthy society, supporting the wellbeing of both students and staff. As noted in our Mental Health platform [see question 4 below], the BC Greens will work to develop **comprehensive art-based therapy programs** across the province. We will work with education partners to develop these resources at every level of the education system. We intend to continue our support of innovative programs such as [Art Starts](#), providing educators and artists with tools and research to incorporate a vibrant and diverse arts education.

*Student rights are human rights*

- The BC Greens believe that **supportive representation of 2SLGBTQ+** in media and education is vital for the mental health and wellbeing of our youth. We also know that Educators across the province must also feel supported as they work to provide quality programming that is considerate of the diverse identities of all students in BC.
- The BC Greens will continue **supporting and refining SOGI 123**, a crucial tool to advance diversity, respect for differences, and belonging: <https://bcgreencaucus.ca/b-c-greens-statement-of-support-for-2slgtbqia-students/>

### **2. Accessibility for staff and students within our schools is a top priority. What do you plan to do to make schools more inclusive and accessible?**

*Supporting the role of EAs*

- By ensuring our education system has enough staff and adequate resources, we can create an educational environment that is conducive to learning and development for everyone. This includes **improving conditions for the EAs** who play such an important

role in supporting students with disabilities [for more on this, please see our response to your question, “How do you plan to address the shortage of qualified teachers and education assistants in public schools?”, further on in this survey.]

#### *Technology and equity*

- The world of education is changing rapidly – with new forms of learning on the rise, and technology evolving quickly, it is essential that students have access to technology like personal computers. The BC Greens will ensure that all students in the province have **equitable access** to the tools they will need in order to thrive in today’s world.

#### *A universal school food program*

- The BC Greens will create a universal school food program, including:
  - **Equal Access:** Every child in British Columbia, regardless of their family's financial situation, will have the same chance to enjoy healthy meals;
  - **Nutritional Standards:** Meals will meet comprehensive guidelines, supporting children's health and development;
  - **School and Community Collaboration:** Collaboration with schools, organizations, and local farmers will promote sustainable practices and educate children about healthy eating habits.

### **3. How do you plan to support school districts in implementing mental health and addiction awareness programs tailored to the needs of students?**

#### *Student mental health and wellbeing*

- The BC Greens believe that the The Ministry of Education should be expected to ensure that any child in BC can have equitable access to mental health supports and counselling. We will increase provincial funding targeted specifically to **hire more school psychologists and counsellors**, improving the counsellor-to-student ratio in school districts across the province.
- As noted in our response to question 1., above, the BC Greens work with education partners to develop **art-based therapy** programs across the province.

#### *A facts-based approach to substance use*

- Recognizing that Abstinence-based education programs – like DARE – have been shown to be insufficient at educating youth about drugs and substance use, the BC Greens will work to ensure that all schools provide age-appropriate **information on drugs and substance use that is rooted in evidence and compassion**. We recognize the importance of providing information on drug safety through accessible, relatable, and relevant [guidelines](#) that are continually updated.

### *Digital literacy and healthy learning*

- With the continuing impact of time spent online on our daily lives, digital safety is paramount. The BC Greens will **introduce guides for student digital literacy** for educators to incorporate into their curriculum. Recognizing links between social media, distraction and student anxiety, the BC Greens will work to support schools as places of learning and connection by **keeping personal devices, including phones, out of school classrooms.**

### **4. What initiatives will you commit to undertake to address completion rate results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students?**

#### *Indigenous education: a wholistic response*

*The legacy of residential schools as manifested both within Indigenous communities forms of **intergenerational trauma** and in Canadian society in **systemic racialized discrimination**, has left the governments of BC and Canada with a responsibility to develop **educational programming that lifts up indigenous students, families, and communities.***

*The BC Greens aim to support our indigenous students from multiple angles: funding **First nations educational institutes**, working to **reform child welfare** where it impacts on indigenous families; moving forward **Indigenous language education** and the use of Indigenous languages in **official communications**; providing training to **educate public service providers.***

*Our goal is to enact **real systemic change** addressing **root causes**. All of these approaches must be woven into a K-12 curriculum emphasizing the importance of family, language, historical awareness and global citizenship.*

#### *Learning starts at home: empowering Indigenous families*

- The BC Greens recognize that, as reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada, Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare “protects the well-being of Indigenous children, youth and families by promoting the delivery of **culturally appropriate child and family services** and, in so doing, advances the process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.” We will continue to work with First Nations towards **complete Indigenous jurisdiction** over child welfare – accompanied with **adequate and specific funding.**
- BC Greens acknowledge that intergenerational trauma and related poverty has played a major role in undermining the success of Indigenous students. A community-oriented, family centred approach can help to create conditions for children to thrive and lead our generation and the next; we plan to support this by implementing **a program of ‘Kinship care’** that ensures that all families and people raising their relatives will be provided with the same **financial and social support** that are provided to foster families.

### *A culture of support and reform*

- The BC Greens will work to address the problem of racialized discrimination by instituting policy requiring **anti-stigma and anti-racism education** for every person working in the Ministry of Children and Family Development. This education will be informed by the Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism along with people with lived and living experience with the child welfare system.
- We will **provide education for all public servants** at provincial and municipal levels on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous-Crown relations. This will include **skills-based training** in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

### *The role of language in framing and sustaining empowered learning*

- Taking up recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the BC Greens will enact an **Indigenous Languages Act**, which affirms that Indigenous rights include language rights, that Indigenous languages are a fundamental and valued element of British Columbia, and that provides Indigenous peoples and communities **the funding and support** for their preservation and revitalization. This will include enabling the use of all Indigenous languages on all forms of **Government-issued Identification**, with the assurance that people are able to reclaim their **Indigenous names** in this manner without cost.
- The BC Greens will ensure every school district has the resources to develop **credible and robust language learning options**, particularly for Indigenous and French languages, and American Sign Language.

### *A network of next steps: First Nations-mandated educational institutes*

- First Nations-mandated institutes help fill gaps of the mainstream education system, and provide First Nations students access to safe and culturally relevant education. The BC Greens will create an **additional funding stream** for First Nations-mandated institutes. Any institute providing Indigenous language programming will be eligible for ongoing capacity funding.

### **Capital and deferred maintenance funding**

**1. What changes would you make to provincial procedures, and what resources would you provide to school districts, to enable them to sustainably provide more child care spaces?**

*A varied multitude of pilot projects and ad hoc funding programs have created a scattered childcare system in BC. The lack of cohesive programming has been tough on childcare providers and families. The BC Greens will use the data collected throughout these pilot projects to create a comprehensive early childhood education and childcare system in BC.*

#### *Funding childcare and early childhood education*

- The BC Greens will develop a **universal funding model**, which will include: the wage grid, space creation and licensing, staffing, and fee reduction initiatives. This will allow childcare providers to reduce the amount of paperwork they're required to complete, allowing them more time to focus on themselves and the children under their care.
- Recruitment and retention remain an issue with Early Childhood Education. To support fair, competitive wages, pensions and other benefits, and improved working conditions, the BC Greens will establish an **ECE wage grid** of at least \$30/hour, and ensure educators have access to pension plans and extended health benefits.

#### *School-aged care*

- The BC Greens will ensure all families in BC have access to school-aged care, by **creating more dedicated school-age care spaces** in schools across the province and **expanding before and after school programs**.

#### *Under 5 care*

- As we have heard from families and child care providers, it can be difficult to access child care for children under 5. The BC Greens will commit to developing a **universal access** early learning and child care system, by:
  - Providing for continued space creation for children and infants under 5.
  - Ensure we remain on track to achieve \$10/day child care for all.
  - Providing ECE and child care centres with the supports they need to continue operating, and create more spaces.

#### *Expanding ECE spaces in schools*

- The BC Greens will provide funding to create a **new capital program** in the Ministry of Education to fund **renovation and additions** to existing schools to support ECE spaces.

#### *Recognizing the value of community Schools in fostering accessibility and inclusion*

- Through multi-ministry funding and non-profit partnerships, [Community schools](#) make use of public buildings that would otherwise be empty outside of school hours. We recognize that extensive research shows overwhelming economic and social returns that result from investing in prevention and integrating community services. The BC Greens would **increase provincial funding support of community schools** to address the needs of all age groups, with programs for preschoolers, after school care, and adult education and recreation.

## 2. How will your party address the additional funding required for capital projects, deferred maintenance, seismic upgrading and inflation-driven operational costs?

### *Supporting the creation and operation of public schools*

- The BC Greens have a plan to **modernize operational funding**. We will raise operating grants for school districts to ensure every school in the province has funding to continue equipping their students for the future.
- We will undertake **comprehensive reforms in facilities management** to ensure all schools meet high standards of safety and functionality.
- The BC Greens will be proactive in setting guidelines to **streamline future school construction**. We recognize that school project costs are inflated because of the additional steps and requests for proposals from architects, contractors, and other construction, and plan to collaborate across Ministries and the construction industry to develop **pre-approved universal school building designs**.

## 3. What climate change initiatives will you implement to ensure that public schools are equipped with energy-efficient infrastructure and resources?

- A key part of the BC Greens' plan for universal school building design is to create **climate-resilient, smart building designs** that will be reevaluated every 10 years to meet changing needs and conditions.
- This will include banning gas hookups in new buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve public health.
- New school builds will incorporate key aspects of the BC Greens' larger agenda to promote electric alternatives (which includes, for example, providing rebates for electric heat pumps to support the transition to clean, energy-efficient heating and cooling solutions.)

### **Recruitment and retention of staff**

## 1. How do you plan to address the shortage of qualified teachers and education assistants in public schools?

### *A respectful education workforce strategy*

- The BC Greens believe that we cannot have a healthy society without a thriving education system. We see and support the myriad ways that early childhood educators, educational assistants, and teachers work together to make invaluable contributions. To address the issues with recruitment and retention within the education system, the BC Greens will implement the following incentives:
  - **Paid final practicums** for teachers and early childhood educators;

- **A streamlined certification process** for teachers from other provinces or countries;
- **Fair compensation for EAs** with increased hours to ensure a living wage;
- **Loan forgiveness** for teachers, ECEs, and EAs.

## 2. What is your party's plan to address the differing needs of rural and urban school districts?

- Our plan to **modernize operational funding\*** aims to ensure that every school and school district has the funding they need to deliver excellent education, regardless of their location across the province. We recognize the importance of collaborating with school districts and working to meet their needs and are committed to *equitable* access to education and support for all students across the province.  
[\* please see our response to the previous question, "How will your party address the additional funding required for capital projects, deferred maintenance, seismic upgrading and inflation-driven operational costs?", above.]
- To underscore our support for remote schools, we will **develop bursaries** for teachers serving in remote districts, and **increase funding** for rural and remote teacher education programs.