

The Many Faces of Privatization in Public Education

British Columbians and Canadians enjoy a quality of life that is dependent on quality public services. Public services are accessible, accountable, locally-controlled and a good investment of tax dollars. Public schools are one of those services. When privatization creeps into education, sometimes under the umbrella of educational reform, schooling becomes a political tool, accountability is weakened, and public funds and values are diverted to corporate profits.

Public funding for private schools may be the most obvious way public education in British Columbia is being privatized, but there are other less obvious privatizing strategies at work. This panel presentation will offer analysis of 1) the common narratives that legitimize and promote privatization thus drawing the public into a manufactured consent of privatization and 2) specific contexts in which this privatization is manifest, such as personalized learning (especially with technology), choice programs, school fees and fund raising, business principles of school administration, corporate sponsorships, fee paying international student enrollment, and publicly funded private schools. Following the panel presentation, participants will have an opportunity to analyze and discuss privatization strategies in their own schools, districts and communities with an emphasis on identifying short and long-term consequences.

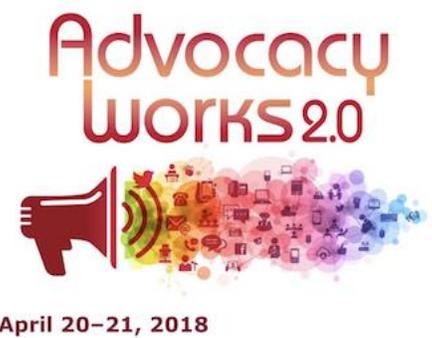
Sandra Mathison, Executive Director, Institute for Public Education/BC and professor of education, UBC will moderate the workshop.

Panelists:

E. Wayne Ross, IPE/BC Fellow and professor of curriculum & pedagogy, UBC

Wendy Poole, IPE/BC Fellow and professor of educational administration & leadership, UBC

Larry Kuehn, IPE/BC Director and Fellow and Director of Research & Technology, BCTF



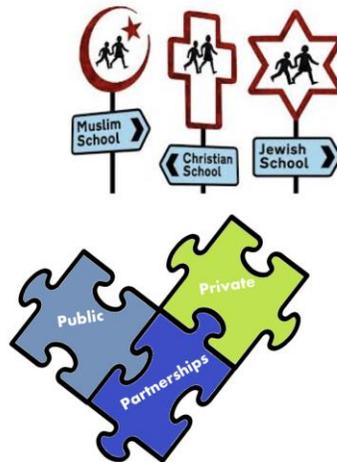
Privatization is a Global Issue



Privatization is an outgrowth of neo-liberalism, a form of minimal state intervention plus free market principles evident in many nations and in many sectors since the 1980s. Privatization fundamentally changes the nature of and relationships within education and is a policy strategy with inherent values.

“Forms of privatisation in and of public education changes the way in which education is organised, managed and delivered; how the curriculum is decided and taught; how students’ performance is assessed; and how students, teachers, schools and communities are judged.” Ball & Youdall

Privatization of public education



When the design, management and delivery of public education is opened to private, for-profit entities we have the privatization of public education. Examples include public-private partnerships, private schools (whether elite, religious or specialized such as distributed learning for special needs children) and charter schools.

Public education is a public interest

Privatization in public education

FEES > ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PROGRAMS FEES

2018/2019 FEES - Elementary and Secondary Programs
TOTAL FEE (Canadian dollars): \$13,700.00*

*Total Amount Payable prior to receiving Letter of Acceptance
(Includes compulsory Medical Insurance, does not include homestay)

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| NON-REFUNDABLE APPLICATION FEE | \$200.00 |
| PROGRAM FEE | \$13,500.00 |
| TOTAL FEE | \$13,700.00 |



When private sector and business ideas, strategies and techniques are imported to public education we have privatization in public education. In essence, schools are expected to act like competitive, profit-driven businesses. Examples include school choice within the public school system through the creation of boutique programs, school leadership as business management, merit pay for teachers, outcome measures like student test scores as best indicators of quality, and efficiency over effectiveness.

Public education is a public interest

Public and private education convey different values...

Public Values (Professional)

Privatization Values (Market)

| | |
|--|---|
| Needs (students, schools, communities) | Performance (students, teachers, schools) |
| Commonalities (mixed ability classes, inclusion) | Differentiation (streaming, selection, exclusion) |
| Community needs | Clients and customers |
| Collectivism (co-operation) | Competition |
| Resources to those with greatest needs | Resources to those most able |
| Broad assessment of worth based on a variety of academic & social indicators | Narrow assessment of worth based on standardized performance indicators |
| Education of all children is inherently worthwhile | Education of children based on costs & outcomes |
| Education is a public good | Education is a private commodity |

Privatizing our public schools makes as much sense as privatizing the fire department or or the police department.

Diane Ravitch

meetville.com



| TYPE OF PRIVATIZATION | What it looks like | Example | Considerations |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| CHOICE | Public \$s for private schools | Elite schools Faith based schools Distributed learning schools | Segregation of students by ethnicity, class, ability Tax benefits for the wealthy |
| | Boutique programs | French Immersion Mini-schools Sports Academies Cross boundary attendance | Class disparity Weaken neighbourhood schools “Choice” for only some |
| | Vouchers | | |
| | | | |
| PPP/P3 | New school construction & renovation; building ownership & management | | Tension between public accountability & profit-making Push funding into the future Long term lease/buy back Higher cost Lower quality infrastructure |

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| REVENUE GENERATION | Student fees | School supplies (books, workbooks, agendas, school IDs, photocopying) Field trips | Class disparity |
| | International student tuition | ~ 20,000 students in BC schools @ \$13,500/student | Generate significant revenue Divert scarce resources (teachers; classroom space) Exacerbate SD disparities—the rich get richer Values (what does it mean to be educated in a BC public school) |
| | School fundraisers | Product/service sales Specialized companies, like Plentii | Class disparity |
| | Targeted business patronage | (grocery store rebate programs, gas stations, restaurants) Chevron Fuel Your School | Pressure to “choose” specific businesses Values (sustainability, diversity) |
| | Within SD business development offices | Distribution of flyers Programs sponsored by external organizations Facilities rentals | SD assumes burden for funding and for budget shortfalls Education is commodified |
| | Philanthropy, donations | Breakfast Club of Canada MyClassNeeds Vancouver Sun Adopt a School Program | Off loads obligations to private sector |
| | Branding to students: “cola-ization” | Minute Maid—Breakfast Club Pizza Hut’s “Book It” | Subversive advertising Values (marketing, nutrition) |

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|--------------------|---|--|---|
| | breakfast programs, vending machines, logos, sponsorships, corporate sponsored curriculum material & websites | Channel One "News" | |
| | | | |
| BUSINESS PRACTICES | Contracted out... information services, testing and assessment, data management, commercial teaching software, teacher professional development | Pearson Publishers Third party software Fresh Grade | Privacy concerns Loss of control of educational theory & practice Teachers as technicians Education as product rather than a public good |
| | School administration as management | Performance monitoring Performance related pay Outcomes focused Return on investment Conflict of Interest not required for Superintendents | Test driven teaching & curriculum Ranking schools by outcomes Culture of assessment Supts vulnerable to patronage |
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Discussion Groups

Questions

1. In what ways is privatization manifest in your school community?
2. What is the most pressing concern with respect to privatization in your school community?
3. What are possible actions to raise awareness about or challenge privatization in your school community?

Resources

Stephen Ball and Deborah Youdall, *Hidden Privatization in Public Education*

http://pages.ei-ie.org/quadrennialreport/2007/upload/content_trsl_images/630/Hidden_privatisation-EN.pdf

Gerald Fallon & Wendy Poole, *Manufacturing Consent for the Privatization of Education in Canadian Contexts*

<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjeap/issue/view/2800>

Joel French, *Private Schools Don't Need Public Funding*

<http://instituteforpubliceducation.org/private-schools-dont-need-public-funding/>

Katie Hyslop, *Public Education School Fees: A Look at What Parents are Paying Across Canada*

<https://theyee.ca/News/2017/08/24/Public-Education-School-Fees-Across-Canada/>

Larry Kuehn, *Education Technology: The Trojan Horse of Privatization*

<http://instituteforpubliceducation.org/education-technology-the-trojan-horse-of-privatization/>

E. Wayne Ross, *How GERM is Infecting BC Public Education*

<http://instituteforpubliceducation.org/how-germ-is-infecting-bc-public-education/>

Alan Singer & Eustace Thompson, *Pearson and the Neo-Liberal Global Assault on Public Education*

<https://www.unite4education.org/resources/unclassified/pearson-and-the-neo-liberal-global-assault-on-public-education/>

Food and beverage promotions in Vancouver schools: A study of the prevalence and characteristics of in-school advertising, messaging, and signage

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335515001229?via%3Dihub>

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION ~ British Columbia

OUR MISSION: The Institute for Public Education BC, an independent non-profit organization, provides high quality information and leadership to build a strong public education system for British Columbia's children, families, and communities.

The *Institute for Public Education BC* is a registered society in British Columbia that offers analysis of current educational issues, supports public education, and shares current research findings to enrich dialogue on educational issues in our province.

OUR PRINCIPLES...

QUALITY

A quality Public Education system strives to insure every child develops their abilities to the fullest. No child is excluded.

A strong Public Education system recognizes children are at the centre of the enterprise. It is their individual and diverse needs that should guide policy.

Public Schools are concerned with a broad-based education that includes aesthetic, cultural, emotional, social, physical and vocational development, as well as intellectual and academic engagement.

The most fundamental and significant relationship in Public Education is between the student – and his or her parents - and the teacher. Relationships with peers are fundamental.

All professional educators—teachers, administrators, and support personnel—should be free to speak out for the best interests of the children they work with.

Assessing the progress and value of our Public Schools can't be reduced to a standardized test. School and system evaluation needs to be carried out with diverse tools and focus on supporting the lives of the children in those schools.

DEMOCRACY

Public Schools are open to all – rich and poor; urban and rural; Aboriginal, native born and immigrant. Students with special needs are welcomed.

Students in public schools come from families with every kind of religious background – and no religious background. The public school is a secular and tolerant place that celebrates the diverse reality of our communities while underscoring and emphasizing our common humanity.

Public Schools are democratic public institutions governed by publicly elected officials (School Trustees, Ministers of Education etc.) accountable to their communities.

Those closest to the education process—teachers, administrators, school staff, students and their parents and community members—must have a meaningful and respected voice in education policy and practice.

Public Schools must strengthen and deepen democracy and encourage active citizenship.

ACCESSIBILITY

Public schools...

- should be welcoming and inclusive. Students, parents, educators and community residents should feel that their cultures and contributions are respected and valued, and that their presence and participation in the life of the school is valued.
- must be safe and secure places for students and all who work in them.
- can only be optimally effective if they are adequately and equitably funded.
- are community institutions as well as centers of learning. An understanding of the Public School as a focus of community life is vital.

*Public education is a
public interest*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sandra Mathison is the Executive Director of the *Institute for Public Education – BC* and Professor of Education at the University of British Columbia. Her research focuses on educational evaluation and especially on the potential and limits of evaluation to support democratic ideals and promote justice in education. She is editor of the *Encyclopedia of Evaluation* and co-author of *Researching Children's Experiences*. She was Editor-in-Chief of *New Directions for Evaluation* and is currently co-editor of *Critical Education*.

Liz Blackwood is a public education advocate and the K-12 and early education and child care researcher for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). She is a Research Associate with the BC Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and her research has focused on public policy, privatization, trade and investment, education policy and public services.

David Chudnovsky worked in nursery, elementary and secondary schools and at the university level in England, Ontario and BC during his 35-year teaching career. He is a past-president of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation and was an elected Member of the Legislative Assembly in British Columbia Legislature from 2005-2009. David is co-author of the *Charter for Public Education*.

Dan Laitsch is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and President of the SFU Faculty Association. He is co-editor of the *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*. His research interests include the use and misuse of research in teaching, policymaking, and issue advocacy; the impact of neoliberal policies on educational systems; and school health approaches to systemic education reform.

Adrienne Montani is the Provincial Coordinator for First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. She has served as the Child and Youth Advocate for the City of Vancouver and as a Trustee and Chairperson of the Vancouver School Board. Among other awards, she received the MOSAIC Human Rights Award, awarded based on an individual's activities, altruism, personal risk, and significant contribution in the field of human rights and ethnic relations.

Vis Naidoo is an education technology expert focusing on strategy, policy, developing innovative programs and successful partnerships with academic institutions, communities, governments, corporations and non-profit organizations. He has extensive expertise using media and technology for formal school and post-secondary education and non-formal adult and youth learning, as a platform for economic and social development.

E. Wayne Ross is Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at The University of British Columbia. He teaches and writes about the politics of curriculum, critical pedagogy, social studies education, and academic labor. He was Distinguished University Scholar at the University of Louisville. He has been a day care worker and a secondary social studies teacher. His most recent books include *Working for Social Justice Inside and Outside the Classroom* and *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities*.

Larry Kuehn is Director of Research and Technology at the BC Teachers' Federation. He is a Research Associate for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and has written extensively on issues related to globalization and education. Among his most recent articles are: *International students as a market in Canadian public education* and *Digital capitalism: A social order is built into technology, including educational use of technology*.