

Date: November 18th, 2011

Re: Poverty, Inequities and BCs NEW EDUCATION PLAN

Hi colleagues.

In the BC Education Plan document it was very clear that there would be no additional funding and students would be encouraged to bring their own technology to the classroom.

Here is the rub. Recall those commercials highlighting the choices that families in poverty had to make - will I eat tonight or have a roof over my head. Now consider recent news stories about cuts to the province's Homeless Emergency Action Team shelters (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2011/11/17/bc-homeless-shelters-cold.html>) and the higher incidence of shoplifting of food for basic sustenance (<http://www.theprovince.com/news/Grocery+store+theft+first+time+shoplifters+rise+expert+says/5722090/story.html>). Then consider that the BC Education Plan calls for students to bring their own technology and devices for instruction (http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2011EDUC0089-001372.htm).

The lack of additional funding will create further inequities by forcing the transition of education beyond its funding levels. Those transitions may already be occurring but at a pace that is more reasonable so forcing a faster transition will add to the expenses that students already have with various school fees as schools will not be able to provide students with the resources required for learning.

Families in poverty will be pressured to consider technology for their children to take to school over the necessities of life (because they want to fit in and because it will be a required or recommended resource for school. What is considered the great equalizer (public education) will be exactly the opposite. It will drive inequity greater than school fees do. No human should be placed in that position.

The disturbing part is the benefit to corporations by implementing this plan through the requirement of students to carry technological devices in their pocket.

There are more pressing issues than to mess with a high quality and great public education system and the public needs to be reminded of those issues.