

Hungry to Learn PowerPoint Speaking notes

The Poverty Free BC Week of Action runs from February 25 through March 4, 2017. Each of the first seven days is dedicated to one of the seven pillars of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's Poverty Reduction Plan (see slide 16).

February 28 is focused on adequate funding of public education. We invite you to use this presentation, individual slides, or the sharable images to help raise awareness of the impact of poverty and low funding of public education on British Columbian children and families and to help make poverty reduction a provincial election issue.

Slide 2	<p>The 2016 Child Poverty Report Card, released by First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition last November, confirmed that for yet another year, one in five BC children are living in poverty. Poverty rates in BC are higher than the national rates for the overall population, as well as for children. The percentage of BC children living in poverty is even higher for children under five years of age.</p> <p>The Child Poverty Report Card used Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure (LIM) to calculate poverty rates. This measure doesn't take into account variations in the cost of living in different communities. In BC, where this is a relatively high cost of living, poverty rates are actually higher than indicated by these measures.</p>
Slide 3	This and the following six slides present some of the alarming statistics that were published in the Child Poverty Report Card.
Slide 4	The increase in the child poverty rate in Canada, despite the federal government's 1989 resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000, is evidence that simply resolving to eliminate poverty isn't enough. A clear poverty reduction plan, with legislated goals and timelines is necessary.
Slide 5	The majority of children living in poverty have working parents. The failure of salaries to keep up with increases in the cost of living have contributed to increased poverty rates in BC.
Slide 6	A single parent with one child working full-time and earning the minimum wage of \$10.85 lives well below the poverty line. A minimum wage of at least \$15 an hour is needed for such a family to meet its basic needs.
Slide 7	Families living on incomes that are below the poverty line are often forced to rely on food banks. Despite commonly held beliefs, 63% of food bank users are employed. Those unable to work are also frequently dependent on food banks. Individual social assistance payments have remained at \$610 per month for the past seven years. Food banks were first established as a temporary emergency measure in British Columbia, but their use has increased 33% since 2008. Higher minimum wage and social assistance payments are a more systemic and dignified response to food insecurity.
Slide 8	Poverty has a significant impact on BC students. The following eight slides highlight some of the concerns identified by BC teachers who participated in the 2011 BCTF Poverty and Education Survey. Teachers are noticing increasing numbers of students experiencing poverty.
Slide 9	Many teachers feel inadequately prepared and supported in addressing the needs of students experiencing poverty.
Slide 10	Increasing numbers of children are coming to school hungry and many teachers are supplementing their students' diet by providing food for them at school.
Slide 11	Poverty is a contributing factor to many children's inability to attend school regularly.

Slide 12	Inadequate funding of public education has resulted in an increased burden on parents to cover educational costs. This has a significant impact on families living in poverty.
Slide 13	Many parents living in poverty are unable to cover the costs of school supplies and cannot provide access to expensive technology. Low levels of funding for public schools have resulted in inadequate levels of specialist teachers to meet the needs of these students.
Slide 14	Adequate funding of public education for resources, training, and specialist staff and the implementation of a poverty reduction plan are essential components of a successful response to challenges associated with poverty in BC schools.
Slide 15	BC teachers see the effects of poverty in their classrooms on a daily basis. These are some of the components of a poverty reduction plan that would help address these challenges.
Slide 16	The BCTF has joined several antipoverty groups in BC in advocating for a poverty reduction plan that includes these seven pillars. Investing in a poverty reduction plan will save money. A 2011 study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimated the cost of implementing a poverty reduction plan in BC at \$3 to \$4 billion a year, while the annual costs associated with poverty were calculated at between \$8.1 and 9.2 billion dollars.
Slide 17	Responding to poverty through acts of charity, such as donating to food banks, is an example of downstream thinking, in which we respond to an immediate problem but make no systemic impact. Upstream action means addressing the problem of poverty at its source.
Slide 18	The first step in putting an end to poverty in BC is becoming informed about the current situation and proposed solutions.
Slide 19	What are the positions of the different provincial political parties with respect to poverty in BC? To find out, ask each of your local candidates the following question: Will your party commit to the immediate implementation of a poverty reduction plan with legislated goals and timelines?