

# Parliamentary Education Gazette

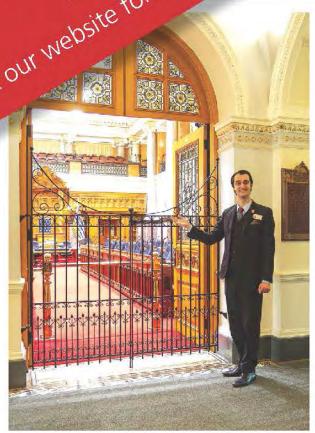
A Newsletter for B.C. Teachers

Volume 19, No. 2 | September 2025

Read Time: 5 minutes

leg.bc.ca

Check our website for the latest updates



VICTORIA



The School Travel Program reduces financial barriers for B.C. school groups to visit the **B.C. Parliament Buildings**. Eligible school groups apply for the travel grant when booking their tour. Visit our website to learn more.



[f LegislativeAssemblyBC](#)

[X BCLegislature](#)

[@ bclegislature](#)

## Introducing: Legislative Assembly of British Columbia School Travel Program

The Legislative Assembly is pleased to offer a new travel grant program for B.C. school groups in Grades 4 to 12 from outside of the Greater Victoria area. This program is open to B.C. public schools, independent schools (with a group 1 or 2 classification), schools from the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, and schools operated by a First Nation.

To receive grant funding, eligible school groups must travel to Victoria and take a guided tour of the Parliament Buildings offered by staff of the Parliamentary Education Office and complete an online Virtual Classroom session.

Please scan the QR code to determine whether your school group is eligible to apply and for application information.

The grant application is included as part of the online booking form. We are looking forward to seeing you in Victoria!

# Comings and Goings: Education Steering Committee (ESC)

## FAREWELL: MICHELE CUMBERLAND

The Parliamentary Education Office would like to bid farewell to Michele Cumberland, who has served on the Education Steering Committee for six years. Michele's dedication to the committee, teaching and democracy in Canada are commendable. Recently, Michele was shortlisted for the Governor General's History Awards for Excellence in Teaching. Although her time with the committee has ended, she continues in her role as Lead Facilitator for the B.C. Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy and will be returning to the Parliament Buildings this fall.

Thank you, Michele, for your contributions.

By: Emma Curtis, Parliamentary Education Officer

## WELCOME: ALEXANDER MADER AND JOY WILSON

### Biography: Alexander Mader

I have been teaching since 2013 and am currently a secondary social studies/humanities teacher in School District 72 (Campbell River); I have also taught abroad in China (Yichang) and Spain (Barcelona). I am the head of my school's social studies department and have taught a variety of humanities courses - English, psychology, history, geography, political studies, and law.

I have a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree and a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. My B.A. major was history (specializing in historiography), and my minor was English literature (specializing in medieval English literature). For my B.Ed., I specialized in secondary social studies education. I intend to pursue a Master of Education within the next few years.

I am a former participant in the British Columbia Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy and look forward to supporting the Parliamentary Education Office, and teachers throughout B.C., through my work with the ESC. I'm really glad to be here!

### Biography: Joy Wilson

I am currently teaching at Chemainus Secondary School in School District 79, where I work with both Grade 7 Humanities and Grade 9 English students. Over my 15 years as an educator, I have taught a range of subjects and grade levels, including eight years teaching Grades 6 and 7 at Maple Bay Elementary and six years at the secondary level. During my time in elementary education, I developed a deep passion for the social studies curriculum, and I have taken a lead role in teaching government units and fostering leadership and civic engagement among students. I am committed to inspiring curiosity in my students, whether through exploring history, geography or scientific inquiry.

I hold a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) with a double minor in biology and kinesiology, a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Vancouver Island University. My teaching is grounded in trauma-informed practice and creating inclusive classrooms where students feel safe, valued and connected.

For the past nine years, I have served as a SOGI lead and have led the Rainbow Club at both my previous and current schools, fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students. Beyond this, I have initiated programs such as the Kindness Club and the Postcards for Veterans project and supported student participation in national initiatives such as Student Vote. I am also actively engaged in professional development, including presenting on trauma-informed education and participating as a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow, an experience that has profoundly influenced both my teaching and personal growth.

### PARLIAMENTARY TRIVIA

What year was the Elasmosaurus designated as B.C.'s fossil?

Send your answers to [PEO@leg.bc.ca](mailto:PEO@leg.bc.ca) for a prize!

# Empowered Perspectives: A Journey Through Civic Engagement

My trip to Victoria transformed my perspective on government, an institution that once felt distant to me. The highlights were meeting the Premier and witnessing Question Period. Meeting the Premier was surreal and seeing the back-and-forth on pressing issues made me realize how vital accountability and dialogue are in our democracy.

Mrs. Cumberland played an instrumental role in this experience, passionately encouraging us to engage in the process. Her dedication to empowering young people sparked reflection on how our voices can shape society. It's vital for us, as future leaders, to view our government as a dynamic system that affects our lives.

We visited the Legislature on May 13. The warm welcome we received made me realize that civic participation is within everyone's reach, no matter where you are in life. As I sat on the steps of the Legislature with friends and my guitar, I felt a wave of confidence. In that moment, I realized I could be a force for change. Civic participation isn't just for politicians; it's for everyone, regardless of background.

Wandering through the historic halls, I was struck by the images of the first women who broke barriers within those walls. Their faces filled me with admiration and a sense of duty - that I, too, could contribute to that legacy. The artifacts I encountered told stories of progress and resilience, reminding me that our future is shaped not just by elected representatives but by engaged citizens. Some of these engaged citizens work in this building! Cai Dong and Emma Curtis, two people we met that day, are young people with important and active roles in our democratic system. These active roles are being filled by great role models.

We spent an entire day here and met with Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms. It was an opportunity that I wish every student could experience. After eating lunch on the lawn, in clear view of the Knowledge Totem Pole, we played our guitars and displayed some of our artwork on the steps of the ceremonial entrance. Our songs were by Canadian artists, and our art was inspired by the songs; we thought this was important for a performance at this place.

The Legislature represents more than just politicians in a great big building; it embodies our collective potential to influence the world. Each piece of history tells a story of progress and accomplishment. This trip wasn't just educational; it was a profound personal journey that inspired me to stay informed and actively involved in civic life. I left Victoria with a deeper understanding of my role in democracy and the belief that together we can create meaningful change.

By: Maya Castillo, Grade 8, Holy Cross School, Penticton, B.C.



Holy Cross School class with the Honourable David Eby, K.C.



Holy Cross School class on the lawn of the Parliament Buildings in Victoria, B.C.



## SIGNIFICANT DATES

OCTOBER 1  
2007

B.C.'s first Indigenous Lieutenant Governor, Honourable Steven L. Point, was sworn in.

Chief Kim Baird, Tsawwassen First Nation, addressed the Legislative Assembly from the Bar of the House.



OCTOBER 15  
2007

# Access Learning Resources

---

## ELECTIONS B.C. LEARNING RESOURCES

### LIST OF FUTURE VOTERS (AUDIENCE: 16-17 YEAR OLDS)

Anyone who is 16 or 17 years old, a resident of B.C. and a Canadian citizen can join the List of Future Voters so they are automatically registered to vote in provincial elections when they turn 18. We encourage you to share our List of Future Voter [resources](#) with your students.

### ONLINE COURSE: PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS (AUDIENCE: GRADE 10-12 STUDENTS)

Elections BC partnered with ChatterHigh to launch a gamified online course called [Explore Provincial Elections](#). During the course, students learn about the election process, voter rights and voter registration with Elections BC.

### DEMOCRACY IN A BOX ACTIVITY KIT (AUDIENCE: ALL AGES)

The democracy kit explores voting and democracy, past and present, in B.C. It is available in English and French. The kit includes:

- supplies for a mock election
- trivia cards
- a map to explore B.C.'s electoral districts
- a timeline to learn about the history of voting rights in B.C.

---

## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wrote this newsletter in the Parliament Buildings, that are located on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples. Now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, these Coast Salish peoples have a rich culture and history dating back thousands of years.

We are thankful to live and work here.



[Educational Programs & Workshops](#)



PEO@leg.bc.ca



250-387-8669

## CONNECT WITH US

