

Parliamentary Education Gazette

A Newsletter for B.C. Teachers

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Read Time: 6 minutes

The Impact of Civic Education: How the B.C. Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy Leads to Student Success

On October 16, I had the pleasure of being interviewed by the CBC about our civic education program and Student Vote. The timing was perfect, as it coincided with our provincial election, and I was fortunate to be joined by Sophie Robinson, a former student who is now in her first year of university in Toronto.

The interviewer was particularly interested in Sophie's perspective, having participated in civic education programs like Student Vote at a young age. The CBC wanted to explore whether the lessons learned through these programs had a lasting impact. Sophie's story provided a resounding "yes." After leaving grade 8, she initiated numerous democracy-focused programs and activities in her high school, demonstrating a remarkable commitment to civic engagement.

Reflecting on this experience, I can confidently say that the B.C. Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy (BCTI) I was the spark that set both Sophie and I on a journey filled with passion for projects centred around civic education. The BCTI provides teachers with a transformative and enriching experience, empowering them to return to their classrooms inspired, energized and well-informed. Armed with meaningful strategies and content, they are equipped to nurture their students' growth and guide them on the path to becoming engaged and active citizens. Sophie is living proof that this works and that what we do, as teachers, is important and lasting. It's incredibly rewarding to see the transformative power of these programs and the way they inspire students to make a meaningful difference.

By: Michele Cumberland, Education Steering Committee Member

Elections B.C.: Looking Ahead

British Columbia's 43rd Provincial General Election was held on October 19, 2024. At the conclusion of final count, the seat count was 47 seats for the B.C. NDP, 44 seats for the Conservative Party of B.C., and 2 seats for the B.C. Green Party. Ultimately, 22 votes in one electoral district determined whether the winning party would form a majority government.

For Elections B.C., it was an election unlike any other, with successes to celebrate and challenges to reflect upon. Major changes to B.C.'s electoral process were administered for the first time. These changes resulted in significant benefits for voters, election officials and political campaigns. There were also challenges implementing this new model, which requires complex processes to ensure election integrity.

Following the election, and in the coming months, Elections B.C. will be busy completing election close-out activities like reviewing financial disclosure statements of candidates, political parties and advertising sponsors. Elections B.C. will also update the Provincial Voters List, with new registrations and updates completed in conjunction with voting, and produce its complete report on the administration of the election.

To all the election officials, candidates, campaign staff and voters of British Columbia: thank you. As we look ahead to the next provincial general election, our commitment to you is an electoral process that is free, fair, open and accessible. We will continue to innovate to make B.C.'s electoral process one of the best in Canada.

By: Melanie Hull, Senior Communications Advisor, Elections B.C.



PARLIAMENTARY TRIVIA

What year was the Pacific dogwood flower adopted as B.C.'s floral emblem?

Send your answers to PEO@leg.bc.ca for a prize!

Engaging with Democracy: Questions and Answers with B.C. Students

In December 2024, students studying humanities submitted questions about parliamentary procedure and politics in British Columbia. The Parliamentary Education Office selected two questions and provided answers below.

Question: If the Premier falls ill unexpectedly (i.e., due to an accident or surgery), who will step in until they are better?

Answer: In B.C., the Deputy Premier serves as a designated leader who can step in when needed. The current Deputy Premier is Hon. Niki Sharma, Attorney General and MLA for Vancouver-Hastings.

Question: Who makes the decision to call an election early, and why is that allowed?

Answer: An election may be called before the fixed election date if the government loses a vote of confidence in the Legislative Assembly. If a vote of confidence is lost by the government, it is normally expected to resign or request through the Premier that the Legislative Assembly be dissolved in order for a provincial election to be held.

Thank you to Suzanne Uher's students for submitting questions! If your students have questions related to parliamentary procedure or politics in B.C., please email us at PEO@leg.bc.ca and their question may be featured in our next issue of the *Parliamentary Education Gazette*.

Access Learning Resources

 The Parliamentary Education Office has launched new learning resources to use in the classroom:

SPOTLIGHT: VIDEO TELLS CHOCOLATE STRIKER STORY

In April of 1947, 200 school-age children charged into the B.C. Parliament Buildings to demand that the price of chocolate be lowered. Now, a new video from the Parliamentary Education Office brings students back in time to join this kid-sized movement. Follow Skipper as they explore the Parliament Buildings and tell tales of times young people made change in this province through protest. Teachers can also go to the Legislative Assembly website to find specially designed [lesson plans](#) connected to the video, complete with worksheets, additional information and suggested extension activities.

COMING SOON: BILL TEMPLATE: DRAFTING LEGISLATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Parliamentary Education Office has created a resource for teachers with support from the Office of Legislative Counsel in the Ministry of Attorney General to engage students in the process of drafting bills in B.C. This comprehensive resource package includes a lesson plan, a sample bill called the *Homework Elimination Act*, instructions with examples and a blank bill template for students to complete. There are a total of nine sections and an explanatory note for students to brainstorm what kinds of legislation they would like to see in British Columbia. Check out our [resources page](#)!



SIGNIFICANT DATES

FEBRUARY

18, 2025

Speech from the Throne [opening the 43rd Parliament](#)

The Pacific salmon was adopted as one of B.C.'s official symbols

MARCH

14, 2013

Upcoming Parliamentary Programming

Parliamentary Play and Tour



Join an interactive program that whisks students back in time on an award-winning historical play. Classes could meet architect Francis Rattenbury or participate in the Chocolate Bar Protests, then take a tour of the Parliament Buildings.

The program is free and runs for approximately 80 minutes. Program dates: May 20 to June 24, 2025.

Register [here](#).

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wrote this newsletter in the Parliament Buildings, that are located on the traditional territories of the Lekwugen-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.

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