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Restoring a Vision of Quality Public Education for All BC Children

Inadequate public education funding increases pressures on parents and school boards while widening the gap between 'have' and 'have not' schools.

VANCOUVER — The Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education (PAN), in conjunction with the Public Education Network Society (PENS), is speaking today to concerned parents at a PAC-sponsored panel discussion on public education at Bayview Elementary School in Vancouver.

To the great disappointment of PAN and to the detriment of our children's education, the BC government again did not sufficiently fund public education in Budget 2016. With a further \$25 million in "administrative" cuts taken from public education, school boards will be required to make additional operational cuts, to meet rising costs, as a result of grossly inadequate funding levels. The Vancouver School Board, just one of the 60 boards across the province faced with cuts, has announced that it is projecting a \$25 million shortfall in its 2016-17 budget.

"Funding pressures created by the provincial government are dismantling the democratic foundations of public education, undermining social equality and increasing pressure to compensate through fundraising and private sponsorship," said Maggie Milne Martens, parent and PAN co-founder.

"We believe that equal access to fully-funded quality public education is worth fighting for. The growing disparity between educational opportunities for different socio-economic groups, exacerbated by un-regulated parent fundraising, has implications for us all. As parents we need to look beyond our immediate contexts and work in solidarity with one another," added Martens.





The panel discussion, which features presentations from both PAN and PENS, is aimed at providing an understanding of the history of public education in B.C., how funding works, the issues currently facing Vancouver schools and the actions parents can take today for greater advocacy.

During the last decade, structural underfunding has crippled the public system forcing school boards, who are bound by law to balance budgets, to cut programming, support staff, resource workers, counselors, specialist teachers, librarians, maintenance, resources and supplies while increasing class sizes and closing schools.

“Parents are fundraising for necessities like classroom supplies, art and music programs, library and classroom books, and basic technology. Parents are tired of the continual and growing need for fundraising and are concerned about the increasing inequalities between schools,” said Andrea Sinclair, PAC Chair for Charles Dickens Elementary and a founding member of PAN.

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Supporting Resources

 <http://www.panvancouver.ca>
 [PAN Vancouver@PAN Vancouver](mailto:PAN_Vancouver@PAN_Vancouver)
 www.facebook.com/PANVancouver
 parentadvocacynetwork@gmail.com

About the Parent Advocacy Network

The Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education (PAN), formed in 2015, is a grassroots collective of parents from over 49 schools (and growing) across Vancouver who share a commitment to public education. Our mission is to connect parents across the district to support one another in advocacy. The network enables us to share information, experiences and stand together in protecting public education. In this way we see ourselves as supporting and complementing existing groups such as FACE, PENS, PPEN, DPAC, and BCCPAC in the work they are doing.

Media Contacts

Andrea Sinclair, 604-240-9834, andreasinclair@gmail.com

Maggie Milne Martens, 604-722-5700, m_milne@telus.net