

BCTI Gazette

A Parliamentary Education Newsletter for BC Teachers



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read time: 15 mins



Re-release of Discover Your Legislature

Online Learning Resource | Matthew Creswick

The Parliamentary Education Office is pleased to announce the re-release of one of its premier learning resources – Discover Your Legislature!

Originally developed in 2001 as an interactive Flash file containing detailed information on the Legislative Assembly and the Parliament Buildings, Discover Your Legislature has been updated and transitioned to a new, mobile-friendly website. This new format hosts an array of educational material designed to provide users with a comprehensive overview of all things related to the Legislative Assembly.



Designed for educators, students, and the general public, Discover Your Legislature is divided into four sections that cover the main aspects of the Legislative Assembly and the Parliament Buildings.

The objective of Discover Your Legislature is to serve as both a starting point and reference for those curious about the Legislative Assembly and its role in British Columbia's system of governance. By transitioning Discover Your Legislature to a more accessible web-based format and updating its contents to accurately reflect the times we live in, this new website can serve both educators and their students in learning about parliamentary democracy in British Columbia, whether it be at home or in the classroom.

The Legislative Assembly and its parliamentary practices are always evolving to better meet the needs of British Columbians. Likewise, Discover Your Legislature will continue to evolve. This ensures that educational information on the Legislative Assembly remains accessible and up-to-date for all.



Purpose

The Legislative Assembly is central to democratic governance in B.C. Learn about what it does and how it works.

- [Constitutional Framework and Governance](#) >
- [About the Legislative Assembly](#) >
- [Parliamentary Proceedings](#) >
- [Parliamentary Committees](#) >
- [House Documents](#) >



People

The Legislative Assembly is made up of many people. Learn about the work they do and the roles they play.

- [Members of the Legislative Assembly](#) >
- [Speaker of the Legislative Assembly](#) >
- [Lieutenant Governor](#) >
- [Clerk of the Legislative Assembly](#) >
- [Sergeant-at-Arms](#) >
- [Statutory Officers](#) >



Place

The Parliament Buildings in Victoria are a world famous landmark. Take a virtual tour of the buildings, and learn about their design, history and use.

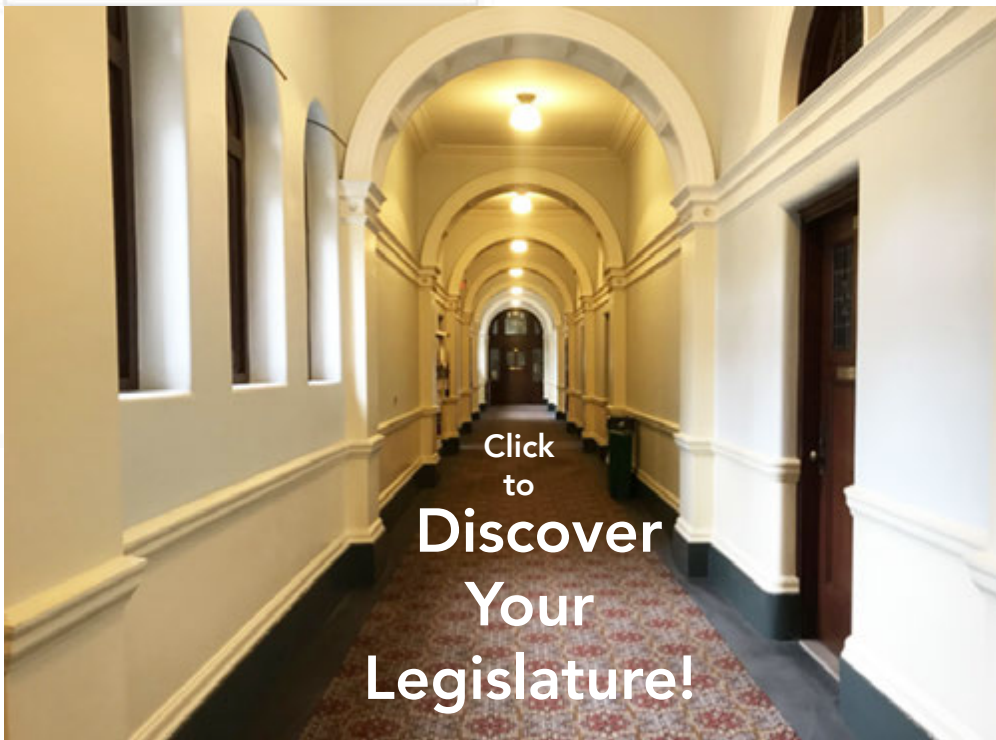
- [Visiting the Legislative Assembly](#) >
- [Building History](#) >
- [Building Tour](#) >
- [Provincial and Parliamentary Symbols](#) >



History

Learn about the significant historical, political and social events in B.C. and how they relate to the Legislative Assembly.

- [Begin](#) >



Click
to
**Discover
Your
Legislature!**

Virtual Classroom Program

Adriana Ayers
Parliamentary Tour Officer



It was with a heavy heart that the Parliamentary Education Office had to cancel nearly 350 booked school tours this spring. To offer an alternative to visiting in person, the Tour Team developed two fantastic digital presentations.

The Virtual Classroom focuses on the history of the Legislative Precinct and an introduction to the work of the Legislative Assembly. Students learn about the key people who work in the Buildings, how a bill becomes a law, and how they can make an impact in their democracy. The presentation includes many interesting photos of the Parliament Buildings from the time of its construction up to today.

The Primer on Heraldry program focusses on the British Columbia Coat of Arms to learn about the province, its place within Canada, and the key parts of its history and geography. Students also have a chance to design their own personal coat of arms, and to imagine a new one for BC.

Both sessions provide students with an opportunity to learn about the Legislative Assembly in a fun and engaging way from the comfort of their home computers or classroom. The programs offer interactive learning experiences, and while they do not replace an in-person visit to the Parliament Buildings, they do include the most impactful element of a visitor's tour experience: lively discussion and passionate interpretation by one of our lovely Parliamentary Tour Guides.

With field trips cancelled for the foreseeable future, we have taken the feedback offered to us from the students and teachers and are working to improve our digital offerings for the new school year. This fall, the basic presentation will be available in English, French and Mandarin.

Additionally, we will be creating separate grade specific offerings with stronger curricular connections for each age category. As always, if you have a specific request or idea for a virtual classroom visit, and just need an energetic tour guide to help facilitate, please contact us at Tours@leg.bc.ca! We are looking for more ways to reach out to all schools and students around the province.



Book your
Virtual Classroom
session online now!



Hybrid and Virtual Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

Susan Sourial
Clerk Assistant, Committees and Interparliamentary Relations

The Legislative Assembly was in the midst of a scheduled two-week adjournment when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. On March 17, 2020, the Government of British Columbia declared a provincial state of emergency. This was followed by an announcement on March 19 by the Government House Leader that the Legislative Assembly would resume sitting as scheduled on March 23 to consider urgent business that would be put forward by the government. House Leaders of all three recognized caucuses worked collaboratively to ensure that the special sitting on March 23 would adhere to physical distancing requirements by minimizing in-person attendance while ensuring all-party representation in the Chamber.

A total of 14 Members attended the one-day sitting to review and authorize urgent budgetary expenditures and legislative measures to support British Columbians during the pandemic. The Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole, MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, presided over the proceedings, as both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker were unable to travel to Victoria.

The adjournment motion adopted at the end of the sitting allowed for the location of sittings and the means of conducting sittings of the House to be altered due to an emergency situation or public health measures, by agreement of the Speaker and the House Leaders of each recognized caucus.

When the Legislative Assembly resumed its spring session on June 22, 2020, there was a brand new look and feel to its proceedings – four large TV monitors were hung in the Chamber, a maximum of 25 Members, along with a reduced number of Clerks and Chamber Attendants, were on the floor of the Chamber, physically distanced according to the 2 metre guidelines, and up to 62 other Members were participating remotely via the Zoom videoconferencing technology platform. The use of videoconferencing technology for proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committee of Supply was the most significant procedural and technical change in our history. In order to ensure physical distancing for Members participating in person in the Chamber, a temporary seating plan was developed, and unused seating and microphones were removed from the Chamber.

“...the most significant procedural and technical change in our history.”

One of the goals of the hybrid proceedings was to ensure that Members participating in person and those participating remotely were treated equally and that one group did not have an advantage over another. As such, Members could move motions, vote, count towards quorum, table documents, present petitions, and participate in debate whether they were attending in person or remotely.

Many Legislative Assembly staff participated in the months of planning and simulations required to operationalize hybrid and remote proceedings and to implement the various building blocks to support the proceedings. Preparing for this ambitious undertaking required innovation and an ability to ‘pivot’ and respond quickly to change – all at a time when Legislative Assembly employees were also dealing with unique work and home life pressures relating to COVID-19.

Some new roles were developed to support the hybrid proceedings, including a ‘Zoom Clerk’ stationed in the public gallery, near the Hansard console. Volunteers from the Parliamentary Committees Office and the Parliamentary Education Office monitored the Zoom chat and directed procedural questions to the Clerks at the Table and technical questions to Hansard Broadcasting. They also relayed points of order and questions of privilege to the Chair and Table by way of a specialized system developed by Hansard Broadcasting.

“We have shown that the institution is capable of adapting and innovating...”

Many departments contributed to supporting our hybrid and virtual sittings including:

- Digital Information Office
- Hansard Services
- Information Technology Department
- Legislative Facility Services
- Office of the Clerk
- Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms
- Office of the Speaker
- Parliamentary Committees Office
- Parliamentary Education Office

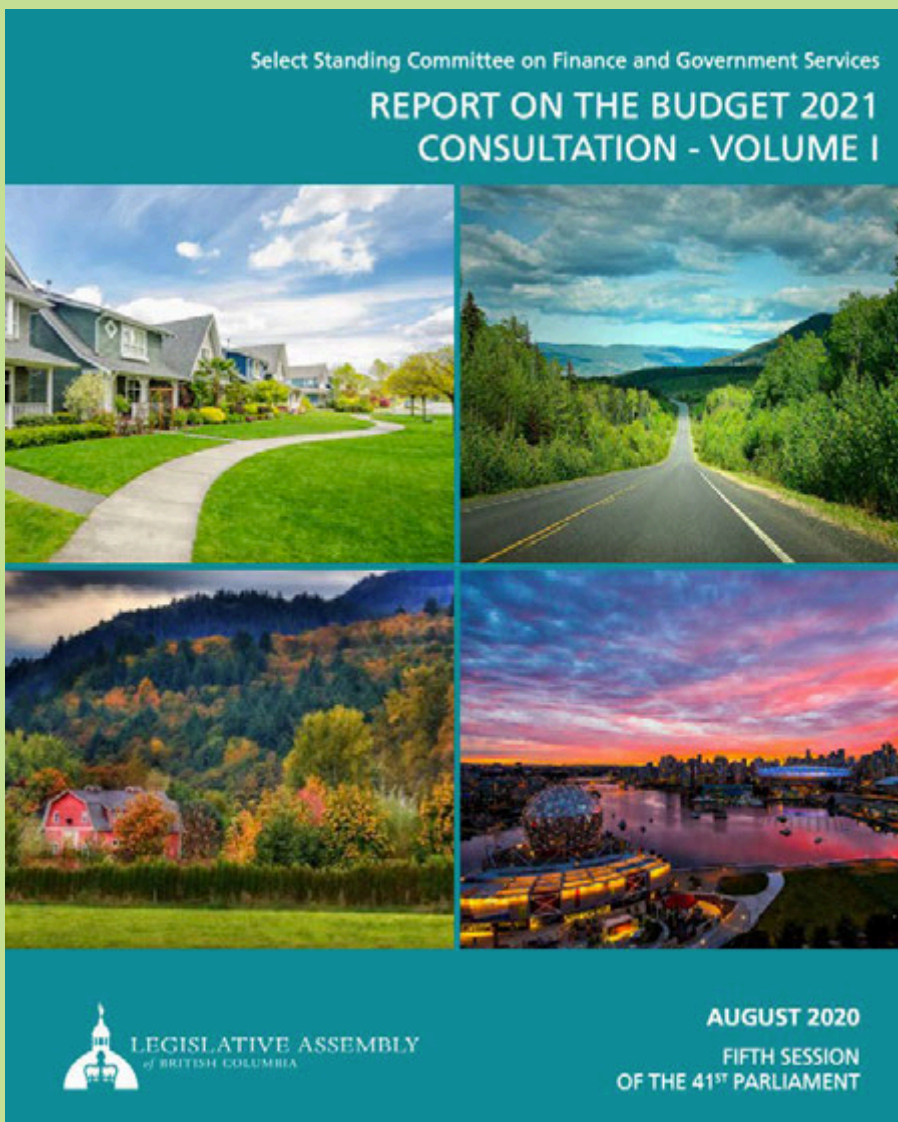
We have shown that the institution is capable of adapting and innovating to ensure that Members can continue with their responsibilities for legislating and deliberating, scrutinizing the executive, and representing their constituents.

Report on the **BUDGET 2021** Consultation

Katey Stickle
Committee Researcher

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services released its unanimous report on the Budget 2021 Consultation on August 21, 2020. The report provides a summary of the concerns and ideas shared by British Columbians and makes 124 recommendations for the next provincial budget in several areas including advanced education, economic development, health, social services, and the environment.

The committee heard about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on K-12 education, especially with regard to the mental health of students, families, and teachers, as well as the transition to remote learning. In their deliberations, Committee Members highlighted the need to ensure that schools are safe for students and staff and were supportive of capital funding that prioritizes safety. They also acknowledged inequities in access to technology and the internet with respect to remote learning. The report includes recommendations related to capital and operational funding, programming, remote learning, students with special needs, and vulnerable students.



The budget consultation ran from June 1, 2020 to June 26, 2020. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all public hearings were conducted by video and teleconference.

During the consultation, the committee heard 281 presentations, received 1,362 written and video submissions and 3,625 responses to an online survey which was based on questions in the Budget 2021 Consultation Paper released by the Minister of Finance on June 1, 2020.

View the [report](#).

Elections BC is the independent, non-partisan Office of the Legislature responsible for administering provincial elections and other electoral events. We create voting and democracy-themed resources for voters and future voters so they have the information and knowledge they need to vote. Here is information about our free resources for students:

List of Future Voters

16 and 17-year-olds who are Canadian citizens and residents of B.C. can now pre-register to vote by joining the List of Future Voters! Joining the List of Future Voters will make it easier for youth to vote when they turn 18. On their 18th birthday they will be added to the Provincial Voters List automatically, and when an election is called they will receive important information from Elections BC about where, when and how to vote. Find resources about the List of Future Voters [here](#).

Online Resources

Check out Elections BC's [website](#) for resources about democracy, the voting process and the history of voting rights.

The resources include:

- o short videos,
- o lesson plans and activities for English language learners, and
- o a Voter's Guide



"Elections and the Legislature: A Parliamentary Primer"

Virtual Session Co-hosted by Elections BC and the
Parliamentary Education Office

October 23, 2020 | 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Free Virtual Session | [Register by Email](#)

All K-12 teachers are invited to participate in this virtual session co-hosted by Elections BC and the Parliamentary Education Office. It will provide a high-level introduction to provincial elections, the Legislature and the start of a new Parliament. An array of educational programs and resources offered by both institutions will also be highlighted. This session is aimed at pre-service teachers, new teachers, and those with more limited experience of the subject area; however, teachers of social studies, civics, or related subjects (and any BCTI Alumni who would like a refresher!) are certainly welcome to participate. Please share this invitation with any colleagues who might be interested.

CIVIX is coordinating [Student Vote](#), a parallel election program for students under the voting age, coinciding with the provincial general election on October 24, 2020. Student Vote is a hands-on learning program that brings democracy and the real world into the classroom and helps foster the skills of active and informed citizenship. Participating students learn about government and democracy, and they research the issues, candidates and parties through classroom activities and media consumption. In the culminating activity, students vote for the official candidates running in their school's electoral district. Schools can register at www.studentvote.ca or by calling 1-866-488-8775.



Youth at the Booth

Elections BC has a secondary school student employment program called Youth at the Booth. This program aims to hire skilled election officials to administer voting and to engage young people in the electoral process. Participants in this program will earn at least \$350 for working the full day as an election official, obtain work experience and learn about elections and voting. [More information.](#)



Education Steering Committee

WELCOMES

Two New Members

The Education Steering Committee (ESC) advises the Parliamentary Education Office on the development of educational and interpretive programming. Among their responsibilities, ESC members provide pedagogical expertise in the development and evaluation of programs and resources for students; ensure curriculum connections; offer advice and consultation on educational matters including the B.C. Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy; and facilitate communication between the Parliamentary Education Office and the educational community. We are pleased to welcome two new ESC members, Michele Cumberland and Alecia Jones, who joined the committee in August.

Michele Cumberland

I have lived in small towns and big cities in Nova Scotia and Ontario but have spent most of my life here in B.C., where I went to high school in Prince Rupert. My work history ranges from the Canadian Coast Guard to Social Services to fishing lodges and finally education!

While I have taught a few different subjects and grade levels, teaching Social Studies to grades 7 and 8 is my passion and I have been doing it for the last 10 years. Teaching civics and discussing civic education with my colleagues are highlights of my day. I take every opportunity possible to allow my students to experience democracy whether it is through Student Vote or by learning to discern what news is fake news. I strive to instill in my students an excitement about being active and responsible citizens.

I am married and have one daughter who is beginning her third year as a high school teacher in Terrace. She and I attended Democracy Bootcamp together; a very unique mother daughter experience and just one example of the type of professional development that I am always looking for. I am excited about being a part of the Educational Steering Committee and the opportunities for collaboration that it presents.

Alecia Jones

I was born and raised in Victoria, B.C. and graduated from Mount Doug Secondary School. After graduation, I attended the University of Victoria and completed a Bachelor of Arts with a major in French language and literature. Upon completion of my bachelor's degree, I moved to France for a year where I worked as an English Language Assistant in two high schools in the town of Epernay.

When I returned to Canada, I attended the University of British Columbia and completed a Bachelor of Education with a major in French Immersion education. After graduation, I began teaching at McMath Secondary School where I taught Français langue and Sciences humaines. I enrolled at Simon Fraser University and completed a Master of Education with a major in Imaginative Education.

I met my husband in Vancouver, but since we were both from the Island, we decided to move back when we were ready to start our family. I have been teaching at Reynolds Secondary ever since. At Reynolds, I teach mainly Sciences humaines, but have also taught Social Studies, and Français langue. I share the role of the French Immersion department head with one of my colleagues.

A Note of Thanks | Karen Aitken, Director



I would like to publicly thank Beth Dye and Lisa Read for their expertise and advice on the Education Steering Committee now that they have completed their terms. Both have provided great insights into schools, classrooms, and the needs of teachers. They were both part of the initial Education Steering Committee, along with Neil Powell, who helped to develop the Terms of Reference and application form for future members.

Lisa Read hails from School District 79 (Cowichan Valley) and was our resident technical expert. She has over 25 years of experience teaching from grade 1-12. Lisa attended the B.C. Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy as an active participant and then returned as an excellent Facilitator. She then came back to present on innovative gadgets and ideas that inspired teachers to embrace technology in the classroom.

Beth Dye has been assisting the Parliamentary Education Office since its inception in 2001, working to develop the first B.C. Teachers' Institute in 2004. She has been involved as a Facilitator, Lead Facilitator, Presenter, Evaluator, and has also been instrumental in supporting the evolution of our Discover Your Legislature online learning resource, advising on how best to incorporate it with the provincial curriculum. Beth has recently retired from teaching in School District 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) and will no doubt be sorely missed by many.

Summertime Outdoor Tours of the Legislative Precinct | David Nicholls, Outreach Officer

With the interior of the Parliament Buildings closed to visitors, our ever-adaptable tour staff moved outdoors this summer to deliver tours of the Legislative precinct, distribute self-guided tour books, and offer scavenger hunts to children.

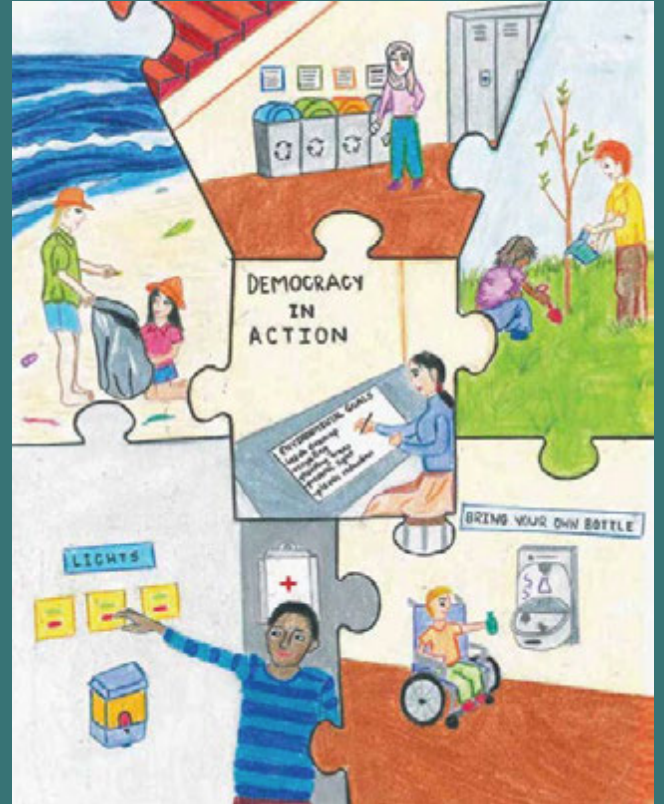


In a typical summer we deliver tours to about 35,000 people in the months of July and August. Things are a little different without international visitors in town and cruise ships delivering thousands of visitors to our doorstep, but we have still managed to offer tours to over 1,500 people since the end of June.

Outdoor tours have been offered occasionally in the past, but never on a regular basis. Based on the feedback we have received so far, it is definitely something we should continue offering in the future.

Democracy & Me Art Contest Winners

The winners of the Democracy & Me Art Contest, co-sponsored by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, were announced at the end of May. Visit the [online exhibit](#) to see all of the wonderful artwork that was submitted by students across British Columbia!



Kindergarten to Grade 4 Winner (top left)
William Wen, Grade 4, Coquitlam

Grades 5-8 Winner (top right)
Priya Bhatia, Grade 8, Surrey

Grades 9-12 Winner (bottom left)
Teagan Chow, Grade 9, Surrey



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Parliamentary TRIVIA!

In September 1916, a referendum on women's suffrage was held in conjunction with B.C.'s provincial general election. The results revealed that 65.8 percent of the men who voted were in favour of extending the provincial franchise to women. The following year, the new government enacted the *Provincial Elections Act Amendment Act, 1917* which granted some women the right to vote in provincial elections. For many women and men, the path to suffrage took much longer owing to persistent racial and religious discrimination.

Q. It took until what year for all British Columbians to have the right to vote in provincial elections?

Hint! The answer can be found in the re-released [Discover Your Legislature](#) online learning resource.

Email your answer to PEO@leg.bc.ca. The first correct respondent will receive a Parliamentary Face Mask.



Be sure to follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook



To update your contact info or to subscribe/unsubscribe to this newsletter, please [email](#) us.