



Re-Imagine Education

Listen, Learn, Lead:

Motivations...

- Education is vital to the future of our province:
It does affect everything and everyone....
- A desire to engage with various groups of people...
 - In a different way through conversations/deliberations
 - To strengthen the enduring democratic values that underpin a strong and robust public education system.

Where to begin?

- The fundamental question about the purpose of education and of schooling...

What is the educated person?

- What have we learned from the past?
- What needs to be different in the future?

Something to Think About...

“In education we go right ahead to talking about standards, quality, good schools, excellent education, best practices, good teaching and so on and so on – as if we had reached an agreement on what is the essence of education”.

(Biesta, 2016, p. 40)

From 2006...

“We now face a world in which national and international political, military, and economic events have created a different, difficult and unstable reality.

We must equip our students with the values, knowledge and skills to address the imperative of finding peaceful and creative solutions to the challenges represented by conflict...and do so in a climate of continuous change”.

(Dolmage and Clark, 2006 p. 198).

To 2016...

“Public schools everywhere face a future of rapid change, intensifying complexity and growing uncertainty.

It is time for us to ***connect, learn and lead*** together”

(Berry, Zeichner and Evans, 2016, p 223)

How the document is organized...

- A different direction: Active democratic professionalism
- What we have learned from the past
- The question of “what is an educated person?”
- Cornerstones of democracy
- Public engagement: Through deliberation and dialogue
- A pathway forward: Open, deliberative dialogue

A call for engaging differently...

- Broad participation in open and honest dialogue about the complex array of issues that have emerged in education systems over the last few decades...
- Public engagement in wide and deep conversations about what the public education system could be...
- Processes of engagement that can build a sense of public trust...

Democratically respectful and safe forums...

- Participants can speak openly...
- Build support for the construct of education and an educated society, but “*disagree over the nature, form and process of education*” (Nelson et al, 2004)
- The first step...
 - To recognize and accept that the conversation is needed...

The Pathway

“Current educational policy chaos in some provinces can be attributed to the failure to determine and articulate the values and beliefs that should underscore every decision relating to education”

(Dolmage and Clark, 2006, p. 176)

Have we articulated the values and beliefs that underscore our decision making processes?

Concerns...

- Rarely do public consultations about education surface truly transformational ideas.
- Rarely have discussions about the future of education been inclusive of all perspectives, worldviews and ways of knowing.

Some considerations...

- Ideology, values, beliefs and worldview are important drivers within educational planning, reviews and decision making processes.
- These drivers will influence participants' individual and collective interpretations of perceived problems and the solutions developed to address those problems.

Past consultations...

- To what extent have reports/recommendations strengthened or weakened the system?
- How have they added value?
- To what extent have they been implemented?
- What is the impact?
- What have we learned?

... Process is important...

Who should decide and how?

“Deciding what counts as education is a political problem, in that such a decision depends on determining how people live with one another both now and in the future.
The challenges are myriad...”

(Coulter & Wiens, 2008, p.16)

Important educational decisions...

What are the forms of a good and worthwhile life that a society wishes to promote collectively?

What scope do people have to determine the direction of their own lives?

Which aspects are best left to individuals, families, groups, communities and governments?

And... who gets to decide?

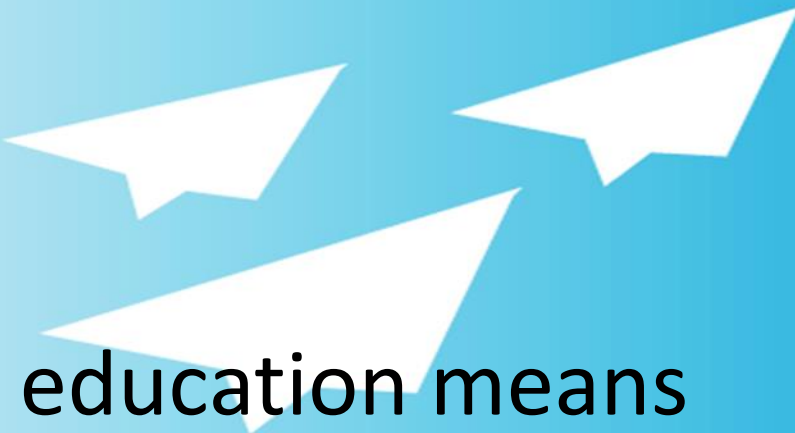
Cornerstones of democracy...

“Public engagement is a new way of thinking about how governments, stakeholders, communities, and ordinary citizens can work together to find solutions to complex problems”

(Lenihan, 2009, p. 7)

“A well designed and facilitated dialogue is a powerful countervailing force”.

(Lenihan, 2009, p. 27)



‘Fostering democratic dialogue about education means
starting over and over again:

Individual people with unique ideas in particular
contexts at various times will generate diverse
understanding (or not).

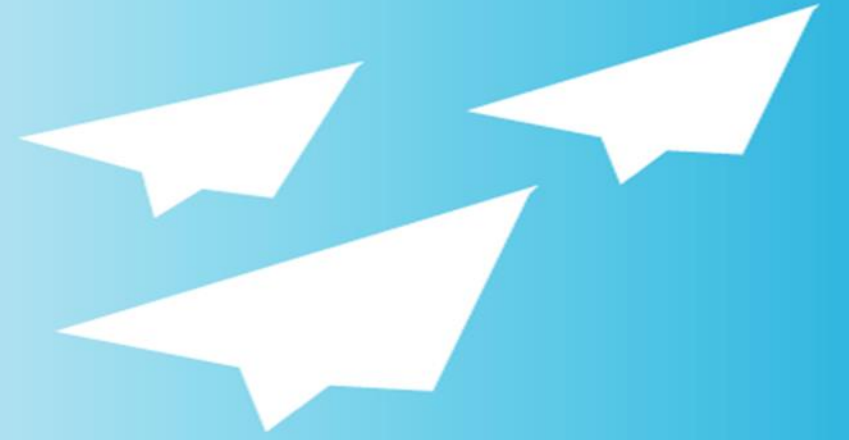
That’s the curse – and joy – of education in a
democratic society”.

Going forward...

- How might we ensure that this educational process is different from, yet supportive of, other forms of parent and community relationships with school?
- How many groups currently are engaged in education renewal and what kinds of change strategies do they typically use?

Going forward...

- What do we need to build on?
- What gaps exist?
- What role should the public play in a repertoire of educational change strategies in the future?



The Destination

“We need a public space –
A place where people could talk with one another
About matters of import...
A place where all are welcome”.

(Wiens and Coulter, 2008, p. 203)