

## BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

400 – 3381 Cambie Street  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R3

+1 (604) 265-9298  
bchumanist.ca  
info@bchumanist.ca



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### END PUBLIC FUNDING OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Humanism “insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility” and is “committed to education free from indoctrination.” Further, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the right of children to an education “on the basis of equal opportunity” and that promotes a respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The bedrock for developing this respect in a free and multicultural society is universal public education. However, since 1977, successive governments in British Columbia have sought to create a two-tiered education system through a public subsidy to independent schools. A majority of these schools are faith based, while others charge prohibitive tuitions. These barriers segregate society along sectarian and socio-economic lines. Further, the Government has a duty to protect the rights of children, recognized under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in religious independent schools. Humanists have also welcomed innovative and experimental forms of education.<sup>1</sup>

RESOLVED that the British Columbia Humanist Association:

- Supports the principle of public funds for public education;
- Opposes public funding going to faith-based education;
- Joins calls for the phase out of public funding to all independent schools;
- Supports greater innovation within the public education system; and
- Calls on the Government of BC to ensure:
  - the religious neutrality of the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools,
  - all independent schools meet comparable curriculum standards as public schools and
  - students in independent schools are free from discrimination and their freedoms of religion and expression are protected.

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<sup>1</sup> Eleventh point of Humanist Manifesto II (1973)