

## **Free K-12 Education in BC: Constitutionally Guaranteed**

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Tuesday, May 10, 2005

<http://politicsrespun.org/2005/05/free-k-12-education-in-bc-constitutionally-guaranteed/>

Too often, minute key factoids evade my memory: likely an aging and expiring neuron issue. One recent brain fart showed up last week when I got on a tangent in some [or maybe all] of my classes [I currently teach high school...for another 2 months anyway before less toxic pastures greet me] when I got talking about school and course fees for public K-12 school students.

I'm opposed to them. They're illegal and anti-constitutional.

But I couldn't remember if they had been upheld in court.

The [March 2005 Columbia Journal](#) provided me with a serendipitous resolution to my brain fart as it reminded me that a court case upheld [section 82 of BC's School Act](#) and set a clear precedent that meant that people didn't have to be [or pretend to be] poor to be exempt from paying annual school activity fees and course material fees.

The [BCTF](#) is pretty assertive in their opposition to fees in an egalitarian, universal, democratic school system:

*Full equity is possible only with no fees.*

In general, school boards and schools charge fees only because provincial funding is not adequate to cover all the programs and activities that they think should be offered. Despite the best intentions, even the most generous practices in waiving fees means that some students are excluded and that some take part at a cost to their dignity. The only way of ensuring full equity is to have adequate public funding so that fees do not have to be charged.

Thus I remain steadfast in my recommendations to students and parents alike: DO NOT PAY YOUR SCHOOL FEES.

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