

Pop Up Picnic for Public Ed

#picnicforpubliced





PICNIC FOR PUBLIC ED

In September of 2022, People for Public Ed, hosted our first **Picnic for Public Ed**. This picnic included speeches, post card writing to MLAs, and a wish wall.

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PUBLIC SCHOOL

People for Public Education is a non-partisan group of educators, academics, parents and members of the general public committed to promoting public education in Manitoba.

The objectives of our group:

1. To advocate for a public education system that is equitable, justice-oriented, and accessible to all. All students should have equal opportunity to reap the benefits.
2. To ensure that public education is universally accessible, free (paid for by the government), and serves the public interest (collective benefits).
3. To ensure the public is involved in public decision making, and that the process is open to the public.
4. To promote consistent, substantive public funding for public education in our province.



Pop Up Picnics For Public Ed 2023

On Sunday, September 17th, 2023, we would like people across Canada to host their own **Pop Up Picnic For Public Ed**. Recognizing that people are busy, that planning a big event can be very time consuming, and that meaningful dialogue with a small group of people can often have a far greater impact, we are inviting people to host Pop Up Picnics in their local parks. This can be a group as small as 2-3 people who are dedicating the afternoon of Sunday Sept. 17th to talk about public education. No group is too small--the goal is to get together and get talking about public education.



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BUT, ISN'T EDUCATION A PROVINCIAL ISSUE?



We recognize that education is a provincial issue; however, we think it is very important to **demonstrate a national commitment to the broader project of public education.** Across Canada, there are well coordinated efforts to undermine public education through increased privatization and marketization. The reformers are centrally organized, but the resistance is not. The purpose of this event is to demonstrate some of the parallel tactics and impacts between provinces, and to signal a united response.

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INTERESTED IN HOSTING A POP UP PICNIC FOR PUBLIC ED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Please sign up:

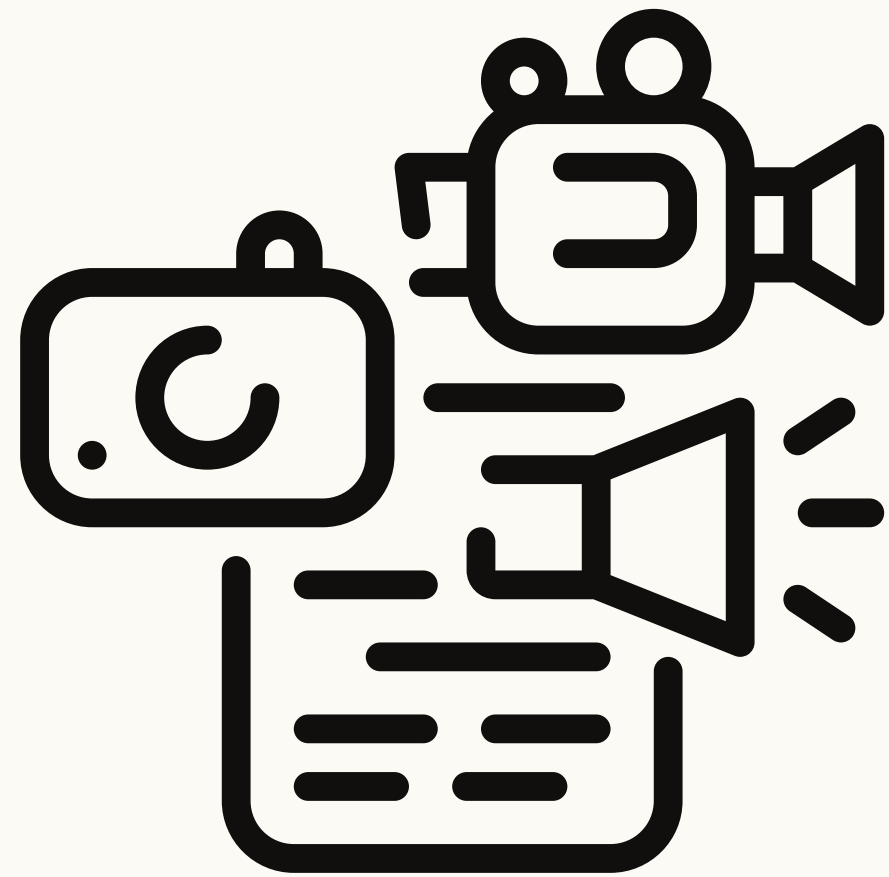
<https://peopleforpubliced.com/2023-picnic-for-public-ed>

Why sign up?

1. We plan to create a map to share that indicates where all of the picnics were held across Canada
2. We can send information about our picnic plans with everyone who signs up
3. We can share information with the media

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CONTACT LOCAL MEDIA




Template letter
to share with
local media
about

#PICNICFORPUBLICED



CREATING INCLUSIVE & EQUITABLE SPACES

In addition to the Tool Kit for this specific event, we have also sent a separate presentation that outlines ideas for making any event safe and inclusive. We encourage you to review it for this event, and any event you are hosting in the future.



[LINK TO PRESENTATION](#)

WHAT FOLLOWS

In the following slides, we have outlined some possible activities for the picnic. In addition, we have outlined several topics for discussion. Each topic is followed by a quote for discussion. These are intended to invite discussion--your group may find you gravitate to one topic OR that you don't need any prompts for discussion. These prompts are here if you would like to use them.



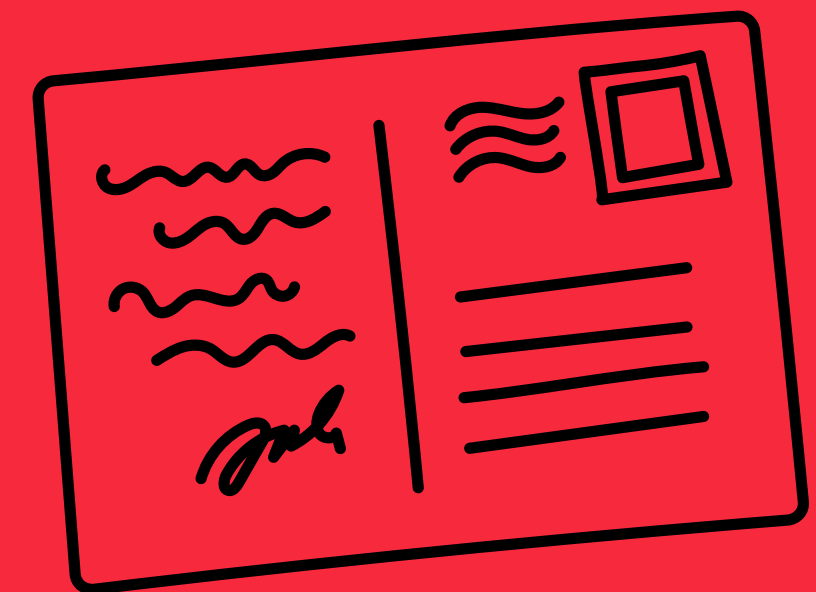
ACTIVITY IDEA 1

Bring blank 4 x 6 cards and art supplies to the picnic.

Ask people to create their own design on the front. This image/design should connect to the overall theme of public education.

Invite people to write a message on the back to the Minister of Education.

People can mail these themselves, or you can offer to deliver them on behalf of your pop up picnic crew.





ACTIVITY IDEA 2

Create a wish wall.

Invite people to place post-its on a piece of chart paper, cork board, or large chalkboard.

These post-its should represent picnic attendees' hopes and dreams for public education in their province.

The Institute for Public Education (BC) asked people the following:

- What are your hopes and dreams for public education?
- What do you think public schools need?
- What would an equitable, inclusive, and diverse public education system be like?

Images of this wall can be shared on social media or compiled and used for future advocacy.



IMAGE CREDIT: CHRIS CHUCKRY, MANITOBA

ACTIVITY IDEA 3

Create political cartoons

Bring some art supplies and a few pieces of paper and invite picnic attendees to create political cartoons to represent the issues surrounding public education in their province. These cartoons can be created at the beginning of the picnic to invite discussion, or they can be created at the end of the picnic to summarize discussions.

With consent of the artists, they can be shared on social media and/or submitted to local media.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

What positives are happening in public education right now? What supports exist to help support these positives?

What can public education do better? What supports are missing?



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Public schools are at the center of the **manufactured breakdown** of the fabric of everyday life. They are under attack not because they are failing, **but because they are public** – a reminder of the centrality of the role they play in making good on the claim that critically literate citizens are indispensable to a vibrant democracy.

--Giroux, 2018

<https://www.salon.com/2018/06/10/this-is-real-resistance-teachers-strike-back-against-neoliberal-assault-on-public-education/>

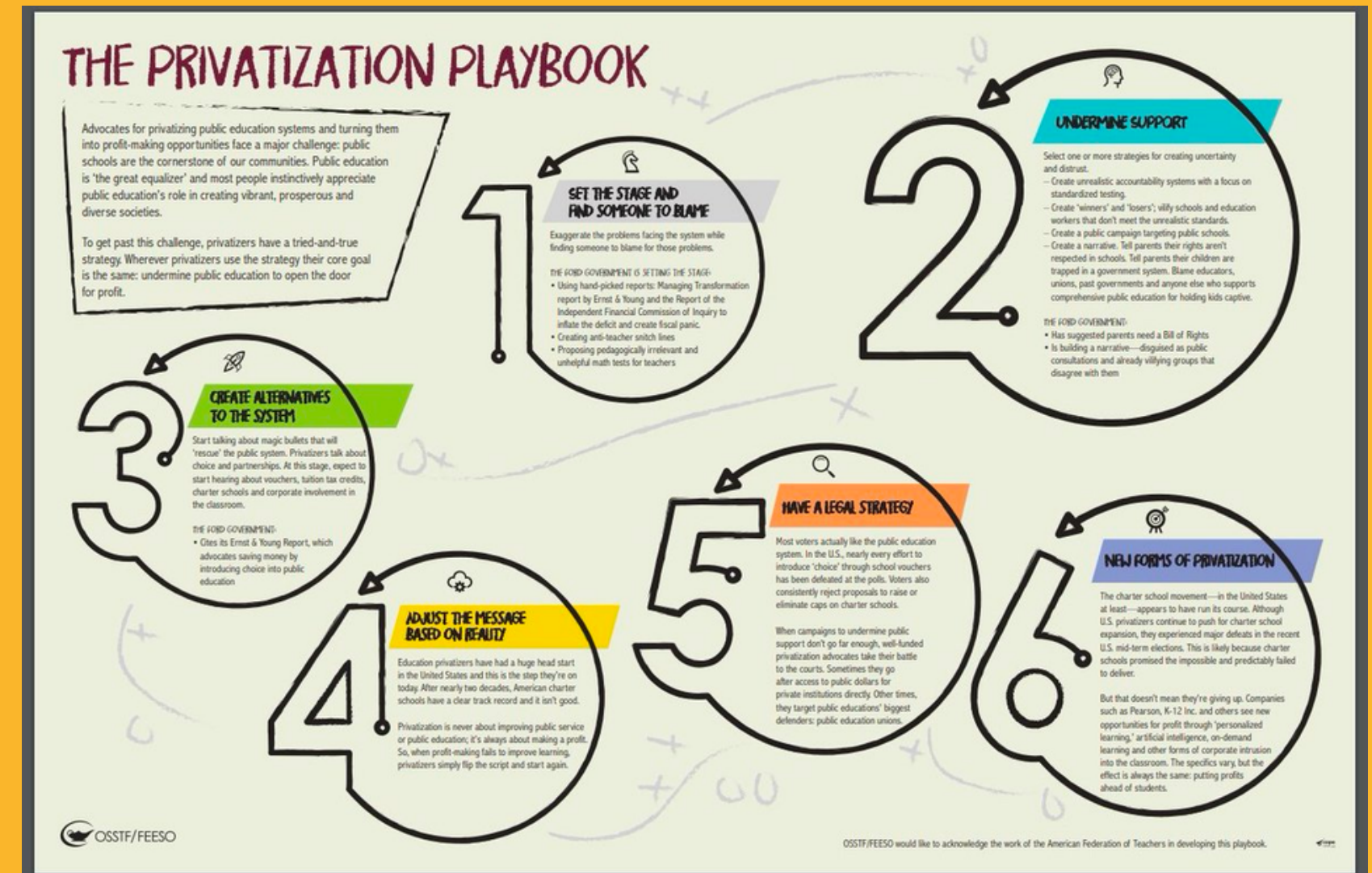


**quotes for
discussion**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Creeping Privatization

How is the privatization playbook being utilized in your province?



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We must not view
America's failed
privatization experiment
as an aberration that
couldn't happen here, but
as a cautionary tale.

--Ganshorn, 2022

<https://monitormag.ca/articles/populism-polarization-and-privatization-in-alberta-education/>



**quotes for
discussion**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

School Fees

In what ways do students pay to attend public schools? Consider: school supply fees, field trips, band equipment, sports, etc.

How have these fees changed over time? Why?

How could these fees be a barrier to some students?



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"As school fees creep up year after year, the public consent for privatization is manufactured. Parents feel obligated to pay fees, as they don't want their children denied opportunities, yet, this compliance normalizes the idea that public school costs money and allows the government to continually divest, downloading the shortfalls to parents." (Moore, Fraser, Janzen, 2022).

<https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/fast-facts-crowd-funding-public-education%C2%A0>

**quotes for
discussion**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Fundraising

What expectations to fundraise exist in your schools?

What does the fundraising support?

Why do students need to fundraise?

How can fundraising create inequities--between students and schools?



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-
- Ontario schools raised a total of over **\$583 million through school-generated funds last year.**

Source: <https://peopleforeducation.ca/>

**"SCHOOL FUNDRAISING PERPETUATES
INEQUITIES IN THE VERY SPACES
INTENDED TO ADDRESS THEM: PUBLIC
SCHOOLS"**

--WINTON, 2022

SOURCE: UNEQUAL BENEFITS



**quotes for
discussion**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Public Private Partnerships

How are public private partnerships (P3s) used within education in your province?

Why are they used?

What have you heard about the pros and cons of P3s?



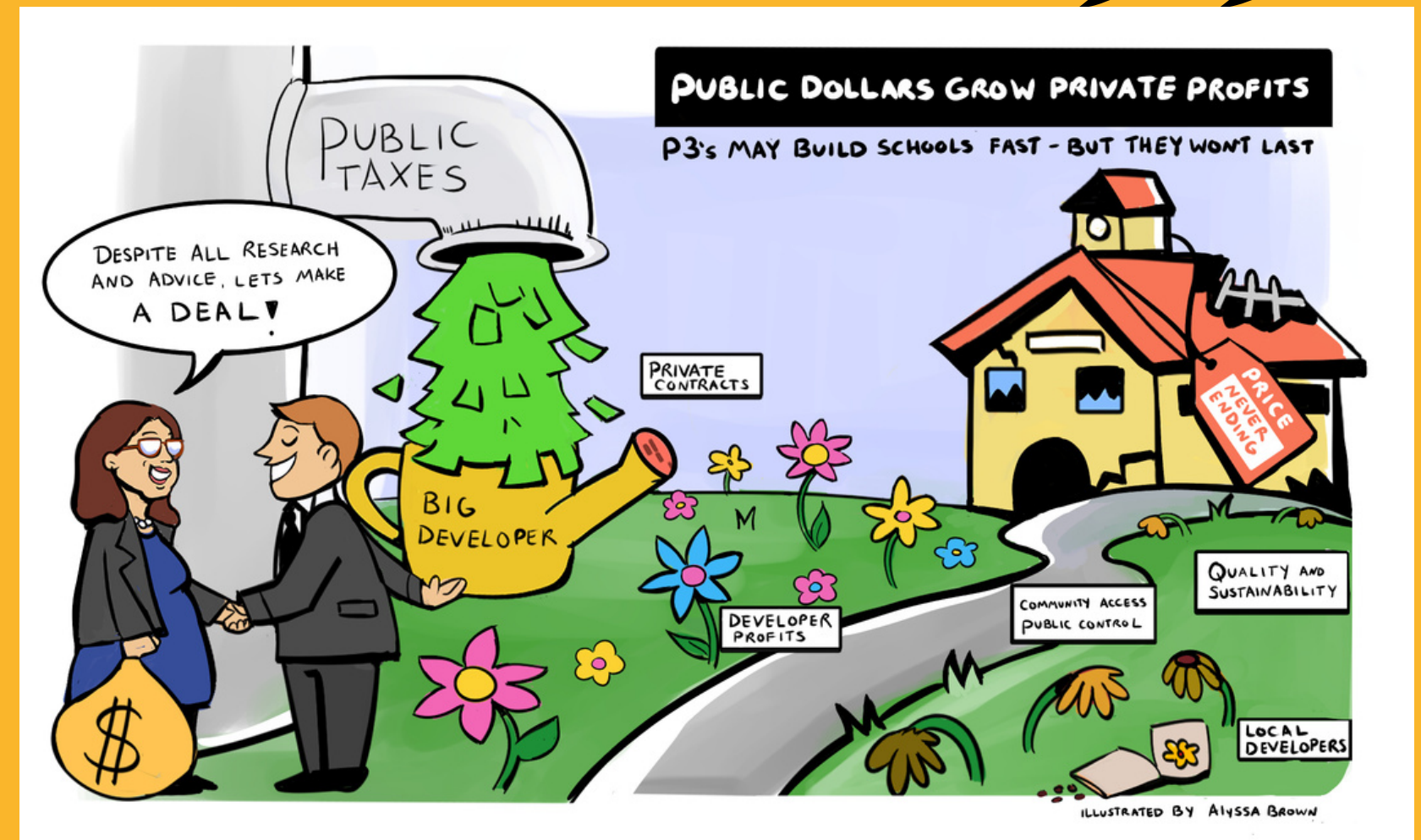
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--IN 2014, ONTARIO'S AUDITOR GENERAL FOUND THAT 74 P3 PROJECTS COST ONTARIO A COMBINED \$8 BILLION MORE THAN THEY WOULD HAVE IF THEY HAD BEEN BUILT PUBLICLY.

--IN 2017, NOVA SCOTIA DECIDED TO BUY BACK 10 P3 SCHOOLS BECAUSE IT WOULD BE CHEAPER TO OWN THEM THAN LEASE THEM. THE PROVINCE WOULD HAVE SAVED \$52 MILLION BUILDING SCHOOLS THE TRADITIONAL WAY RATHER THAN THROUGH FINANCE.

SOURCE: OSSTF, UNDERSTANDING PRIVATIZATION IN EDUCATION
[HTTPS://WWW.OSSTF.ON.CA/EN-CA/PUBLIC-EDUCATION/NO-CUTS-TO-EDUCATION/THE-THREATS-OF-PRIVATIZATION.ASPX](https://www.osstf.on.ca/en-ca/public-education/no-cuts-to-education/the-threats-of-privatization.aspx)

quotes for discussion



TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Choice = Privatization

- How are we seeing examples of choice being advanced in public education?
- Consider: mini schools, hockey & dance academies, language immersion.....
- What issues of equity might these "choices" within public education create?



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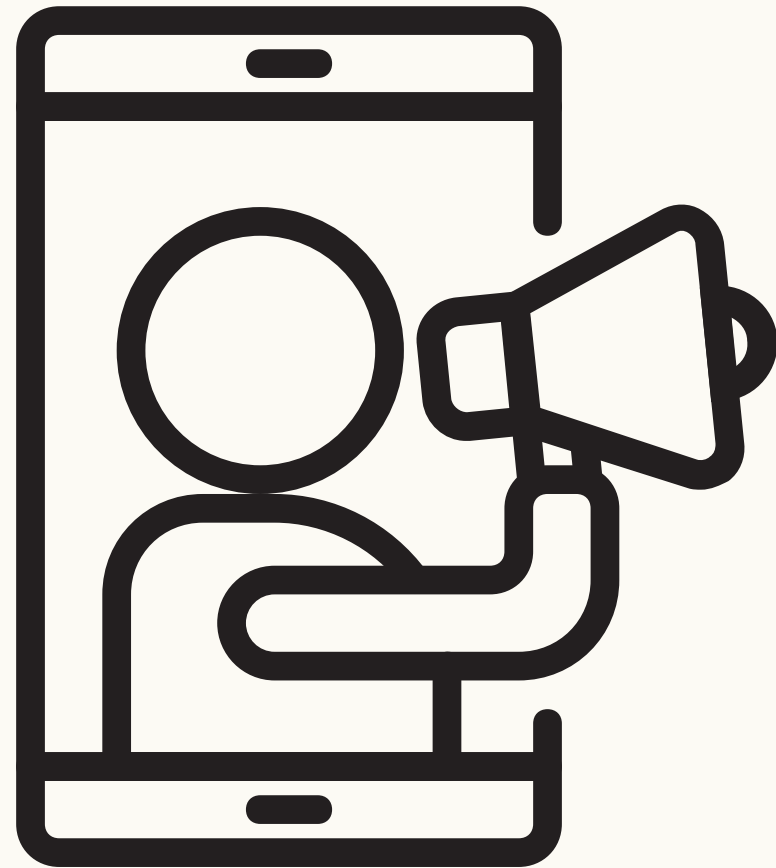
"The result of the proliferation of "school choice" is that some schools are now places where students are segregated along lines of ability, religion and socio-economic status. **This siloing of students runs contrary to the premise of public education, and prioritizes individual preferences over collective benefits**" (Silva, 2022)

<https://monitormag.ca/articles/education-whats-missing-from-the-choice-freedom-equation/>



**quotes for
discussion**

POST ABOUT YOUR PICNIC

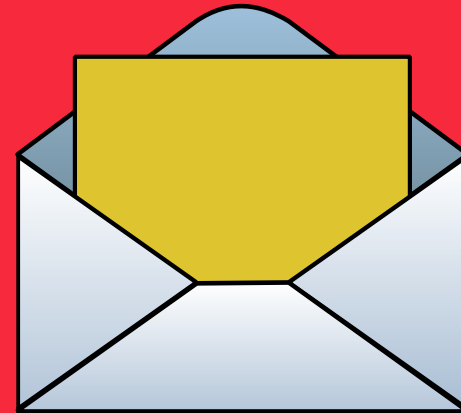


Using the **#picnicforpubliced** post about your picnic. This can include:

- a) images taken with consent of all parties involved
- b) discussion points
- c) your own examples of privatization in/of public schools
- d) your hopes for the future of public education

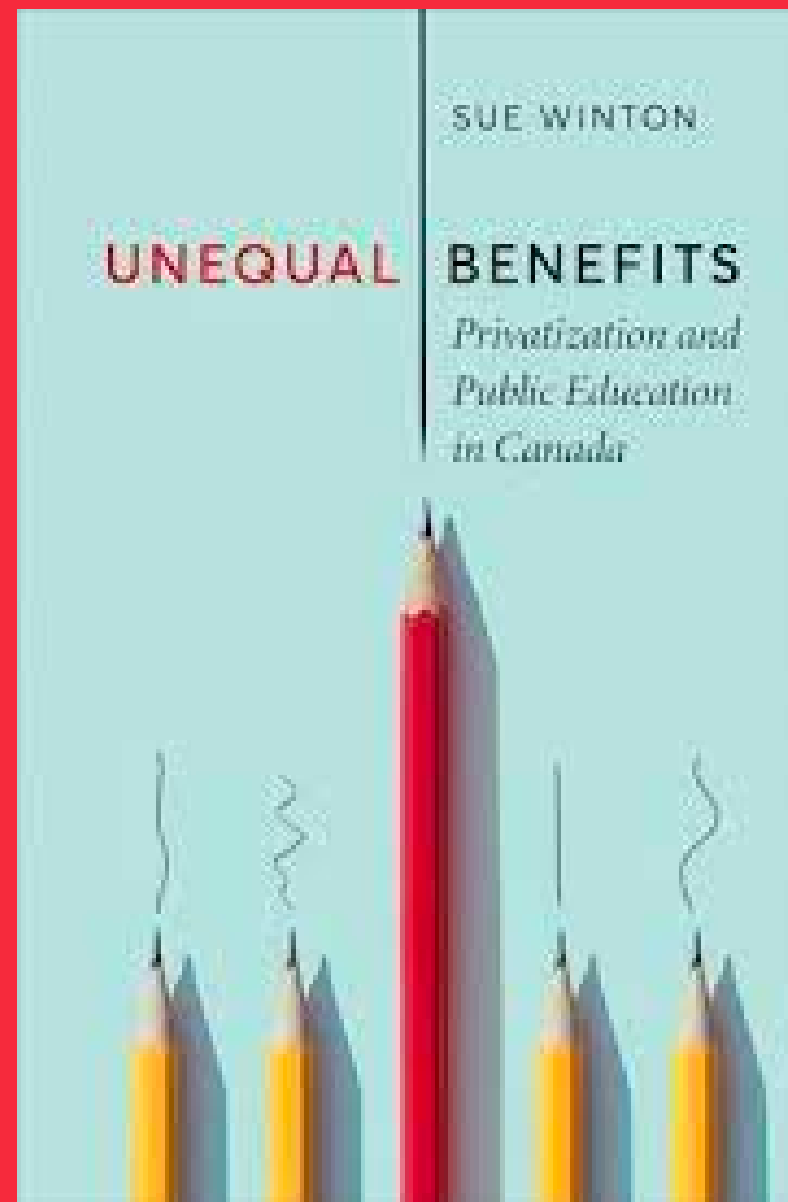


NEXT STEPS



Write a letter to your MLA/MPP about your hopes for public education in your province. **Link to letter template:**

NEXT STEPS



Host a Book Club

NEXT STEPS

Host a Movie Night



NEXT STEPS

Write an Op-Ed about one of the topics you discussed at your #picnicforpubliced



NEXT STEPS

Write to your teachers'
federation/association/union to
share discussions that arose
during your #picnicforpubliced



NEXT STEPS

Write to your school board to share discussions that arose during your #picnicforpubliced



NEXT STEPS

Check Out The Public Education Advocacy Groups in Your Province

