

"Christy's Classroom" to open on Legislature lawn on Tuesday if dispute with teachers not settled

Posted by Joan Russow

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VICTORIA—The Legislature Lawn is slated to be transformed into an outdoor "peoples' classroom" by students, parents, teachers and community members on Tuesday Sept 2nd if the BC government does not reach a settlement with the teachers first.

"Christy's Classroom" will open with the ringing of a school bell at 9AM on Tuesday, the day classes are scheduled to start in BC's public school system.

The classroom will include a morning assembly; classes in civics, history, environmental education, music and art; physical exercise and recess; the convening of students' council and parents' council meetings; and activity areas for younger children. All parents, students and community members are encouraged to participate.

"I believe it is important for the whole community to come out to Christy's Classroom," says Victoria parent Renay Maurice, who is helping organize the event. "Moms, dads, caregivers, aunts and uncles, grandparents, little kids and babies too are encouraged to attend. We owe it to our teachers, to the students, and to each other."

"By showing up on September 2nd ready to learn on the first day of school, we are demonstrating our concern for education in BC and holding the government accountable," says Maurice.

A wide array of community organizations and individuals have joined together for Christy's Classroom, including School District 61 trustees Diane McNally and Deborah Nohr, parent organizations Protect Public Education Now and Support BC Teachers, and the advocacy groups Raging Grannies and Social Environmental Alliance. Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour, is scheduled to address the morning assembly at Christy's Classroom, along with children and youth enrolled in public schools in the Greater Victoria area.

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Deborah Nohr, trustee on the School District 61 Board of Education, points to the record of the Premier and her government as contributing to the current impasse with the teachers, and other deficiencies in BC's public education system.

"This government has removed over \$300M from public education every year since 2002," Nohr says. "That funding had been lawfully negotiated through many years of teacher bargaining to target and support students' needs. This has resulted in many students experiencing the frustration of inadequate instruction and other essential learning supports."

All are welcome at Christy's Classroom,
Tuesday September 2nd at 9AM
at the BC Legislature.

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