

# Five Hundred B.C. Schools Prepare to Vote in Parallel Provincial Election, Monday, May 11

VICTORIA, April 29 - The province's youngest citizens are leading by example and inspiring their families and school communities to get involved in the provincial election and referendum this May.

More than 75,000 students are expected to take part in Student Vote BC, a province-wide parallel election. Students will have an opportunity to cast two ballots: one for a local candidate and one for the referendum question. The results will be tabulated by district and compared to the official results.

In preparation for the vote, students are studying the electoral process, party platforms and the referendum choices in their classrooms, with many schools planning candidate visits and forums in lead up to their vote.

On Student Vote Day, May 11, students will take on the roles of election officials and coordinate a vote for their peers using official Student Vote ballots and Elections BC ballot boxes.

Even though British Columbians have already enjoyed two previous elections this school year, more schools have registered for Student Vote BC than ever before.

"BC classroom teachers are taking up the most important task - teaching democracy to their students – and are doing so in record numbers," Taylor Gunn, Chief Election Officer, states. "Social studies may incorporate lessons about democracy, but nothing compares to experiencing it first-hand. There is nothing like learning-by-doing. Our sincerest thanks to those teachers that are incorporating Student Vote into their lesson plans – and a special thanks to Elections BC (\$150,000), the Ministry of Education (\$75,000) and the BCTF (\$6,000) for making this learning opportunity possible."

In-kind support has also been provided by the BC School Trustees' Association, The BC School Superintendents Association, The BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, The BC Teachers' Federation, the BC Social Studies Teachers' Association and the Public Education and Outreach Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Organizers expect an increased turnout compared to the Student Vote BC program in 2005.

In the 2005 provincial election, approximately 66,000 students cast a Student Vote ballot from 350 schools. The NDP won that Student Vote with 34.6 per cent of the popular vote and 45 seats. The Liberals would have formed the opposition with 28.3 per cent of the popular vote and 24 seats. The Greens would have received their first seats in the

legislature with seven elected MLAs, while the Conservatives would have had one. B.C. students also endorsed the proposed BC-STV electoral system that year, as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

For more information on schools participating in your region, contact Stacey at [stacey@studentvote.ca](mailto:stacey@studentvote.ca).

For comments or further background on Student Vote, contact Taylor Gunn, Chief Election Officer, at [taylor@studentvote.ca](mailto:taylor@studentvote.ca) or 1.866.488.8775.

Background:

Student Vote is a national non-partisan organization engaging young Canadians in the democratic process. This is Student Vote's ninth parallel election program. More than two million Student Vote ballots have been cast since 2003. Student Vote has also coordinated other experiments in democratic engagement in-person, online and on TV.