

Background: Green plan for providing the best K-12 education

1. Increase funding to allow more teachers and educational assistants to work directly with students.

After years of learning loss due to disruptions and illness, our province needs to ensure that students are not falling behind. A Green government would invest \$5 million in its first year to hire more teachers and educational assistants to work directly with students and improve educational outcomes.

2. Hire more school counsellors to address the mental health needs of students.

Referrals to student wellbeing teams have been on the rise since the pandemic began, with many students struggling with anxiety and stress.¹ A Green government would invest \$500,000 in its first year to hire more school counsellors to support the mental wellbeing of Island students.

3. Better plan school infrastructure for expected population growth, while keeping rural schools open, while building the schools previously announced, like the planned Stratford school.

PEI has experienced rapid population growth in recent years and projected continued population growth over the coming decades.² This will increase demands on public infrastructure, including Island schools. School infrastructure planning must take into account our actual and projected population growth to prevent overcrowding and ensure that high quality educational facilities are available and nearby.

4. Implement air quality monitoring in all schools and make the upgrades needed to ensure all schools have clean air.

A Green government would allocate \$500,000 in operational funding to undertake air quality monitoring and determine the priority locations for ventilation improvements. Any leftover funding would be dedicated to interim measures to improve air quality like the use of indoor air purifiers.

5. Improve opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning to increase awareness and interest in trades.

There are many good jobs available in the trades, and more will become available as workers age and the demand for services increases. A Green government would work with educators and industry to ensure interested students have opportunities to explore the trades and consider a possible career in the trades.

6. Make sure that our schools are safe and inclusive spaces that promote diversity and the acceptance of all people.

¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-student-mental-health-wellbeing-1.6504553>

² https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pt_pop_proj.pdf

There have been many reported incidents of concerning behavior at schools, including inappropriate conduct toward girls and those identifying as 2SLGBTQ+. This is not acceptable. A Green government would work with students, staff, school boards, and the community to ensure that schools have truly safe and caring learning environments. Acknowledging that hate is a learned behaviour, a Green government would promote education initiatives to promote tolerance.