

LETTER OF THE DAY

Penny-wise, pound-foolish

Imposing tuition on adult learners denies chance for betterment

Re: Cuts to adult education spending bad for B.C., Editorial, Sept. 24

We all deserve a second chance in life, in love and in opportunities missed. And if that second chance is in education and costs very little but offers tremendous benefits to the individual, to society and to the economy, why would the B.C. government make it so difficult for working adults to upgrade their skills?

Basic adult education courses have been tuition-free since the Liberal government's initiative in 2008. And it was working fine. Thousands of adults came to college and upgraded their basic math, English, and computer skills. They took Grade 11 and 12 courses in biology, chemistry and writing that gained them entry into the job market and then onward into successful careers.

Adult learners come back to school later in life against all odds. They try to balance work, child care, helping aging parents and the high cost of just living in the Lower Mainland. Adding tuition of \$550 per course with a cumbersome grant system for some who qualify is just one more barrier to making their dreams come true.

We need welders, nurses, home care attendants and carpenters. The Liberal government had it right in 2008 when adult basic education was mandated to be tuition-free. It's time for the Liberals to return to this policy before too many more second chances are missed.

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