



Young British Columbians for Better Governance Launches to Strengthen the Voice of Young People in B.C. Communities

New youth-led non-profit society will support youth-focused candidates, mobilize young volunteers and voters, and develop practical policy proposals through province-wide consultation

Saanich, B.C. — August 4, 2026 — Young British Columbians for Better Governance, a new youth-led non-profit society, today announced its official launch and a 24-month plan to ensure the priorities, experiences and ideas of young British Columbians are better reflected in government.

The organization will work to:

- Identify and support candidates who have demonstrated a strong commitment to young people;
- Recruit young volunteers and connect them with local election campaigns;
- Increase voter registration, awareness and turnout among young British Columbians;
- Research practical policy solutions to issues affecting young people; and
- Consult with young people, community organizations, elected officials and subject-matter experts throughout British Columbia.

Young British Columbians for Better Governance will begin its work during British Columbia's 2026 general local elections. Its initial goals are to identify candidates who will meaningfully represent young people, encourage greater youth participation in local campaigns and work toward doubling youth voter turnout across the province.

“Young people are too often asked for their views after priorities have already been decided,” said Jonah van Driesum, President of Young British Columbians for Better Governance. “We are building a permanent and practical way for young British Columbians to help choose their leaders, shape public policy and hold governments accountable for results.”

“This municipal election is our first major opportunity to demonstrate what meaningful youth participation can look like,” van Driesum added. “We want to support candidates who have earned the trust of young people, bring a new generation of volunteers into local campaigns and develop lasting partnerships that continue well beyond election day.”

Supporting Candidates Who Will Be Ongoing Partners

The organization will assess prospective endorsements according to candidates':

- Demonstrated history of working on behalf of young people;
- Understanding of the issues affecting younger residents in their communities;
- Commitment to listening to and consulting with young people;
- Willingness to work with the organization on practical policy solutions; and
- Ability to adapt broader policy proposals to the particular needs of their municipality, regional district or school community.

The organization intends to publish the reasons for each endorsement so that young voters can understand how candidates were evaluated.

Young British Columbians for Better Governance will also recruit volunteers for endorsed candidates. By introducing young people to campaigns and local civic institutions, the organization hopes to create opportunities for long-term participation in community leadership and public service.



The organization will operate independently from the candidates it endorses and has established clear internal standards governing endorsements, campaign engagement, financial reporting and potential conflicts of interest.

A 24-Month Plan for Youth Engagement and Policy Development

The organization's work will proceed through four phases:

Local election engagement — Summer and fall 2026

Before the October 17, 2026 general local elections, the organization will evaluate candidates, announce endorsements, recruit volunteers, promote voter participation and provide young voters with accessible information about local government.

Post-election fundraising, research and policy development — Late 2026 through spring 2027

Following the conclusion of the 2026 general local election cycle, the organization will begin fundraising to support its research and policy-development work.

Each Director-at-Large will lead work on a designated issue affecting young British Columbians. Funds raised during this phase will help the organization undertake research, engage additional research support and begin developing evidence-based policy proposals.

The directors' individual policy portfolios can be found on the organization's website.

Province-wide consultation — Beginning summer 2027

The organization will consult young people, community members, elected officials, Indigenous communities, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, businesses and policy experts.

These consultations will help determine how the province-wide plans and ideas that are developed can be tailored to the different economic, geographic and social needs of communities throughout British Columbia.

Implementation and accountability — 2027 through 2028

After completing its consultations, the organization will refine its proposals, work with elected officials and community partners to advance implementation, and publish progress updates describing what governments have done in response.

"Our objective is not simply to publish reports," said Edward Yuan, Vice-President of Young British Columbians for Better Governance. "We want to develop practical proposals with the people who will be affected by them and then work with elected officials to put those proposals into action."

"The issues young people raise—including housing, affordability, transportation, employment, climate resilience, recreation and access to services—are directly connected to decisions made by local and provincial governments," Yuan added. "Young British Columbians should be ongoing partners in making those decisions."

Leadership

Young British Columbians for Better Governance is led by President Jonah van Driesum.

van Driesum previously worked in the constituency offices of the Hon. Terry Beech and the Hon. Stephanie McLean during their service as Members of Parliament. He previously served as Editor-in-Chief of Link Magazine, the largest youth magazine in British Columbia, and is currently studying law at Thompson Rivers University.



The organization's Vice-President, Edward Yuan, previously served as Chief of Staff to former Member of Parliament Ken Hardie and Member of Parliament Jake Sawatzky. Yuan is currently pursuing his master's degree at the University of British Columbia.

The organization's Directors-at-Large are:

- Parker Dent
- Rachel Windrim
- Jaxon Neid
- Henry Sexsmith
- Hudson Gaudreault
- Finley Rolfe

Each Director-at-Large will oversee a specific policy or organizational portfolio while contributing to candidate engagement, consultation and province-wide outreach. Further information about each director's portfolio can be found on the organization's website.

Post-Election Fundraising and Research Capacity

Young British Columbians for Better Governance will begin fundraising following the conclusion of the 2026 general local election cycle.

The funds raised will be used to support the organization's research and policy-development activities, including engaging research support, consulting communities and subject-matter experts, organizing policy discussions and preparing evidence-based proposals addressing issues affecting young British Columbians.

The organization's research will be based on reliable evidence and will reflect the diversity of young people and communities throughout British Columbia.

Initial Endorsed Candidates

Young British Columbians for Better Governance is proud to endorse the following candidates in the upcoming 2026 B.C. general local elections.

Colwood Council: Eugene Tseng

Delta Mayor: Dylan Kruger

Maple Ridge Mayor: Dan Ruimy

Saanich Council: Susan Brice and Harjas Singh Popli

Sooke Council: Katherine Strongwind

Sooke School District 62 Trustee (Belmont Zone): Mattie McMillian

Surrey Council: William Li

Parksville Mayor: Sean Wood

Penticton Mayor: Julius Bloomfield

Additional endorsements will be announced throughout the election period.



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About Young British Columbians for Better Governance

Young British Columbians for Better Governance is a youth-led non-profit society working to strengthen the role of young people in public decision-making across British Columbia. The organization supports candidates who demonstrate a commitment to youth issues, encourages young people to vote and volunteer, conducts policy research, and brings together young people, communities and elected officials to develop practical solutions.