

F&#K YOUR MARKET SOLUTION

by : Michael Brigade

It's May Day, and another piece of neo-liberal trash legislation has washed up on the hallowed grounds of education. The BC Liberals have drafted a warm pile of legislation that aims to restructure schools, from a PG Free Press article unveiling the plan: "within four years, a quarter of their operating grants will be targeted to programs with identified demand from the job market. Employment data will determine post-secondary funding, instead of the tradition of block grants to post-secondary schools." (Tom Fletcher, PG Free Press). It's a strategy that works basically opposite to one that encourages the kind of innovation and entrepreneurship that Prince George and northern BC desperately needs.

The whole reason that block grants are given to post-secondary schools is the same reason that money gets poured into R&D and startups: innovation brings business. Building a workforce with a limited skillset is ultimately self-defeating. Sure you may have a ready pool of workers to build your LNG boom, but that only lasts so long before it busts and you're back to square one. The workers will then require further training to move into other fields. Building a solid ground for innovation doesn't have that immediate short-term payoff, but it does ensure that there will be continued development in the future.

To use an imprecise analogy, at the moment, we are seeing the first few Model Ts roll off the assembly line, only to find that the government is paying for the training of buggy-whip and horse-cart manufacturers while equine transport is still in vogue. It may look good over the four-year political term, but this lack of forethought ultimately leads to a bunch of people with skills in rawhide work when they need to know nuts and bolts to stay relevant in the current job market.

