



## PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN

Jeff Dunton, President

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The Abbotsford School District released its 2011/12 class size and composition statistics and the number of classes with 4 or more identified students with Special Needs has increased for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

This year there are 180 classes in Abbotsford with 4 or more identified students with Special Needs, in 2010/11 that number was 163, 2009/10 it was 148 and in 2008/09 129. It is clear that since the illegal stripping of our collective agreement in 2002 the most vulnerable students in the education system have been and continue to be neglected by our government.

Abbotsford has also seen an increase in class size. This year the District is reporting 168 classes that exceed the class size maximums found in the School Act, although this is down from 2010/11 when the number was 179, it is an increase from the 09/10 number of 115 and 08/09 which had 114 classes that exceeded the class size maximums. It would appear that the government does not realize that class size does matter and students learn better in a smaller class.

The District's report highlights what teachers have been saying for a number of years, conditions in the classroom continue to get worse with each passing year. Despite the overcrowded classrooms and the lack of resources for students with special needs, BC teachers continue to deliver a World Class education to our students. Teacher's work to ensure that the cuts made by government have a minimal effect on the students, but how much longer do teachers have to make up for the government's short comings.

To return classroom conditions to the 2002 levels would require a minimum of \$336 million this year. That means since the illegal stripping of our collective agreement in 2002 the government has saved millions at the expense of students and as the numbers demonstrate it is not getting better. A teacher's working conditions are a student's learning conditions.

The number of FTE educators has gone up in every province across the country, except for Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia. Newfoundland and Labrador had dramatic declines (16.5%) in student enrolment that account for its position. In every other province except Alberta, the numbers of educators went up while number of students went down. In contrast, the BC decline in the number of educators was a result of government policy to limit funding to boards of education.

The Government of BC needs to make children a priority, their poor educational record and the fact the province consistently has the highest child poverty rates in the country are shameful.

Jeff Dunton  
President, Abbotsford District Teachers' Association

Our kids just can't wait.