



## PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN

Jeff Dunton, President

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[www.adta.bc.ca](http://www.adta.bc.ca)

Hello all;

On Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, Doug Smuland, ADTA VP, and I attended a provincial bargaining session at the BCTF building. I have difficulty putting into words what that experience was like, at least words that I am allowed print in this bulletin, other than to say that it left me with little hope that an agreement will be reached at the provincial table. The hostility and contempt exhibited from the BCPSEA/government side was obvious and palpable from the very beginning of the session. Within the first 10 minutes Jim Iker, Vice-President of the BCTF, called a caucus because of the insulting manner with which BCPSEA/government conducted itself.

I must confess that until sitting in the bargaining session I maintained the idea that we, the BCTF, were playing some role in stalling the bargaining process and that if we somehow altered our position or tactics at the table a deal could be reached. I no longer feel that way. From just that one session I don't think that BCPSEA/government is willing to bargain a deal unless the BCTF agrees to everything BCPSEA/government has proposed. I hope I am wrong and something can be bargained.

I also walked away feeling very sympathetic towards our BCTF bargaining team, Jim did a wonderful job, he stayed calm and cool the entire time, but to be sent into such a negative environment day after day without any end in sight has to be discouraging; this was session 59 and if this continues there will be 59 more at least.

While the BCTF was trying to talk about specific language that they have tabled, BCPSEA/government was still dealing with the philosophy of teaching and the protocol agreement, something that would be good to deal with in session 3 or 4, but not session 59. BCPSEA/government also made it very clear that the "net-zero" mandate was not negotiable and they had no interest in dealing with individual items, only packages that have been fully costed at no net increase. How does one bargain when there is no money for any improvements and BCPSEA/government are looking to gut our current agreement?

BCPSEA/government also claimed that they had reduced their package and were disappointed that the BCTF had not done the same. As we all know the BCTF wanted to limit bargaining to the items found in the Public Education Labour Relations Act: Salary, Benefits, Hours of Work and Paid Leaves. It was BCPSEA/government who forced the BCTF to send all of our local items to the provincial table; it seems hypocritical of BCPSEA/government to now ask us to narrow our package. If we dealt only with PELRA the BCTF package would be narrowed by 1150 items.

At the bargaining session BCPSEA/government presented their ideas for teacher evaluations, which are listed below. It was a difficult presentation to sit through without making comments about how insulted I felt as BCPSEA/government clearly has very little trust in the teachers of this province. BCPSEA/government also ignored the fact that evaluating every teacher every year will increase costs since many AOs have teaching loads and will require TOC coverage to conduct their evaluations and frequent observations. Seems only the BCTF must adhere to the "net zero" mandate.

1. Evaluation at least annually.
2. Clear standards of instructional excellence.
3. A multiple ratings structure to describe differences in teacher effectiveness (e.g. excellent, very good, etc.)
4. Multiple measures of performance with a focus on a teacher's impact on student academic growth.
5. Frequent observations and constructive critical feedback.
6. Outcomes as a major factor in key employment decisions about teachers.

Keep in mind the rest of BCTSEA/government's package; one poor evaluation can lead to termination and layoffs based on "best fit" for the school, rather than seniority. This type of evaluation may be needed in a school system that is performing poorly, but that's not the case with British Columbia. This seems to be a case of "if it ain't broke, let's break it". For detailed information on how students in Canada and British Columbia are performing go to <http://www.statcan.gc.ca> or <http://www.bctf.ca> and look under Issues in Education.

Sorry to sound discouraging, but I walked away with a sense of total disbelief. This is not what I thought session 59 would look like, I hoped they would be creating language. In an attempt to find a positive from all of this, unless the government interferes teachers will be in Phase 1 for a very long time, which isn't a bad thing.

Jeff Dunton  
President