



ADTA Christmas News



**2570 Cyril Street
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 2G2**

**(604) 854-1946
December 10, 2007**



\$10 Now

The BC Federation of Labour continues to fight for an increase to the minimum wage. The current wage sits at \$8 an hour, not including the \$6 an hour training wage. Given the minimum should be just that, the minimum a full-time worker needs to remain above the poverty line, \$8 an hour does not meet that minimum. The BC Federation of Labour is arguing for an increase in the minimum to \$10 an hour, with the eventual goal of having the minimum wage indexed to ensure it remains a liveable wage. An increase in the minimum wage to \$10 for a full-time worker would put them just about \$300 over the poverty line for the year, not a tremendous increase.

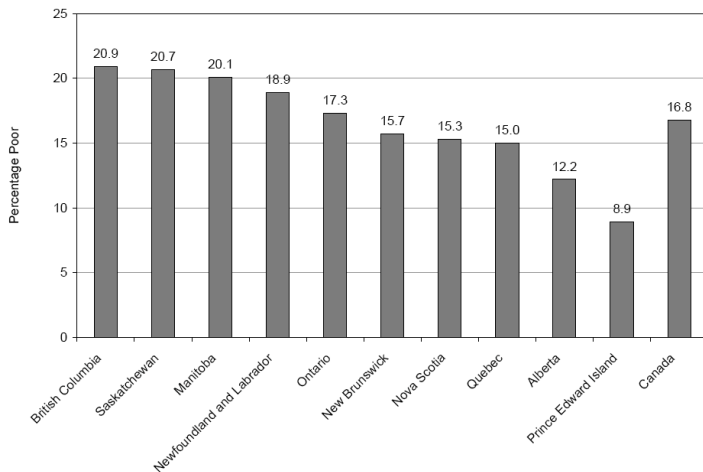
BC RANKS FIRST IN CHILD POVERTY

The Campbell government has once again failed the children of this province. For the fourth year in a row British Columbia's child poverty rates are the highest in the country. Considering we are in a time of unprecedented growth and a booming economy it is hard to believe that the Campbell Liberals have not put more effort into dealing with this situation. The fact that the Vancouver Convention Centre is now more than \$400 million over budget and many of our students are living in poverty is shameful. For more information check out the child poverty report card at www.firstcallbc.org

There were an estimated 174,000 poor children in BC in 2005. That was more than the combined populations of the cities of Victoria, Nanaimo, and Comox.

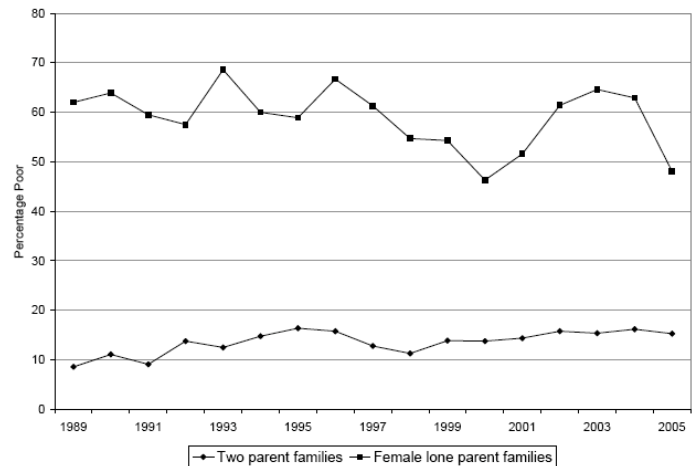
The risk of poverty varies greatly by family type. The poverty rate for BC children living in families headed by lone-parent mothers was 48.1% in 2005, while the poverty rate for BC children in two-parent families was 15.3%.

CHILD POVERTY RATES BY PROVINCE, 2005 (Before Tax)



Source: Statistics Canada *Income Trends in Canada 1980-2005*, Cat. 13F0022XC.B.

BC CHILD POVERTY BY FAMILY TYPE (Before Tax): 1989-2005



Source: Statistics Canada's *Income Trends in Canada, 1980-2005*, 13F0022XC.B



SEARS LOCK OUT

On October 1st, 2007 Sears locked out its service technicians, the people who repair your Sears' appliances. The technicians refused to work under an imposed agreement that contained a number of concessions, including split work weeks, lose of Boxing Day as a paid holiday and an increase to the work week of two and one-half hours. The IBEW is asking people to boycott Sears until this dispute is settled. For more information go to www.ibew213.org

DID YOU KNOW?

If minimum wage workers were to receive the same 54% wage increase that Premier Campbell gave himself they would be making \$12.32 an hour.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT!

1:16 SCHOOL STAFF COMMITTEES

- 1:16.1 The Board and the Association encourage each school to develop committees to foster communication and collegiality among teachers and Administrative Officers through discussion of issues relevant to the teaching staff.
- 1:16.2 Each school has the right to establish a recognized staff committee.
- 1:16.3 Staff committee size, quorum and membership shall be determined by the staff.
- 1:16.4 The school committee is entitled to review all school level budget and financial information and all relevant information to assist the teaching staff in making educationally sound decisions.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January	February
Monday, January 7 School re-open	Friday, February 15 Professional Development Day
Wednesday, January 23 General Meeting 4:00 pm, ADTA Hall	Wednesday, February 20 ADTA Staff Rep Meeting 4:00 pm, ADTA Hall

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please inform the ADTA office if you have a change of address so we may keep our records as up-to-date as possible.

Thank you.

On November 30, 2007 I had the opportunity to attend the second annual Teachers' congress.

Education Minister, Shirley Bond, invited comments, questions, and input around these four areas; a program called "Perspectives" that suits Planning 10 curriculum and helps make students aware of various options for funding their post secondary education, an inquiry approach to literacy, how a transition to healthier foods impacted vendor machine sales in a middle school, and a project to determine whether positive, personal interactions will benefit aboriginal student success. A common theme seemed to be a genuine desire to do the best for students yet the resources just are not enough. I can say I learned a fair bit about what else is happening around the province. The best question that wasn't answered was – OK, so we test lots of students and we discover there are deficiencies, then we should be helping in a huge way to correct this - yet the priority seems to be on the testing.....(not the helping to get these students back on track). I spoke on the

issue of healthy schools. I feel slighted that physical education has become physical activity and that next year, teachers are asked to keep a log of how much "activity their students are getting" (at least 30 minutes a day including recess, walking to school, lunch hour, etc.) To me this is a feeble attempt to address the obesity epidemic and the related health concerns. What we need is quality daily physical EDUCATION taught by PE specialists.....I reminded the Minister that we can address this problem now or ignore it and pay substantially more to fix it later.....

Would I attend next year? Yes. Do I expect this dialogue to change the way things are done? Not sure but at least teachers are speaking up on the issues and speaking up for their students. **David Tod PE @ King**



FOUNDATION SKILLS ASSESSMENTS

Teachers are concerned that Foundation Skills Assessments (FSA) are having deleterious effects on student learning and that the results of those assessments are being used to undermine public education by creating biased and artificial comparisons of students, schools, and school districts. Any testing regime should have, as the first priority, the improvement of learning. And that improvement can only be effected if the assessment instrument is valid and if the teacher has detailed and timely test results on which to base instructional plans. Neither the timing change nor the structure of the 2008 assessment will meet those standards and the results will continue to be misused.

According to proper research, common negative effects of large-scale testing include:

- misdirecting instructional time to drilling for the tests.
- narrowing the curriculum and instructional methods by teachers who are under pressure to have their students perform well on the tests.
- students losing motivation by concluding that they are unable to succeed.
- misrepresenting test results as measures of overall value or intelligence.

David Berliner and his colleagues at the University of Arizona conducted a large-scale study of national standardized test performances of high school graduates demonstrating that, in spite of the expansion of high-stakes testing in the U.S.A., the most heavily tested nation on earth, no improvements in average scores have occurred over time. This does not surprise those of us who know that simply weighing a calf will not make it grow.

The FSA's are not designed to assist teachers in the professional reflection that improves pedagogical practice. They are not examples of effective classroom assessments that are used by teachers to improve learning environments for the benefit of all students. The FSA's frustrate teachers by consuming valuable instructional time and by providing decontextualized data that is used by external agencies to denigrate teachers, to unfairly compare schools, and worst of all, to classify students and thereby characterize them as winners and losers. The FSA's promote an ideology that treats people as commodities by inflating the worth of test scores and by devaluing the essential social and aesthetic domains of public education. Prior to

large-scale testing in the UK there was no correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. After the introduction of large-scale testing, low-achieving students displayed lower self-esteem than high-achieving students. It is a sad commentary on the priorities of the B.C. government that more money is spent annually on FSA testing at the Grades 4 and 7 levels than on textbooks for the whole K–12 public school system.

The FSA's are not meaningful measures of our students, our teachers, or our schools. Children, the future citizens of our democracy, deserve to be supported and nurtured by our public education system. They deserve a learning environment that recognizes their differences and that provides equitable opportunities for all. As professionals we should express our reasoned opposition, to these measures of phony accountability, to administrators, trustees, parents, and the public at large. R.G.

For more information go to www.bctf.ca

Sample letter for parents

Dear Principal,

I am requesting that my child, _____, be withdrawn from all three Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) tests.

I am concerned that these tests:

- take time away from teaching and learning
- are misused to rank schools
- take much-needed resources away from classrooms and schools

I understand that the ministry provides instructions to principals on how to exempt students from the FSA tests if they receive a letter from parents requesting that their child be exempted. I prefer that my child be engaged in meaningful learning activities during the testing times.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Parent/guardian signature



SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITY ????

Insist that your school and your school district have provisions in place for the prompt disclosure of information about histories of violence. Insist that a proper risk assessment and safety plan is in place before a student with such a history is placed in your class. And, insist that the employer provides appropriate training for dealing with violent students.



Donate a non-perishable food item/
Jacket & Blanket Drive
organized by the
ADTA and win this
4GB - 1000 Song
IPOD



Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Sincerely,

The Abbotsford District Teachers' Association Staff

HAPPY HOLIDAYS