

Shuswap Teachers Association

It's
about
time...

Employer Proposes Contract Stripping

The B.C. Public Employers Association (BCPSEA) has made severe “contract stripping” demands at the bargaining table. Of the 14 proposals put forward by the BCPSEA, 12 call for stripping provisions from our collective agreement. The employer wants to turn back the clock to a time when administrative officers could unilaterally determine teachers’ working conditions and students’ learning conditions.

The following is only a partial list of what our employer has in store for the teachers and students of British Columbia:

- **No duty free lunch.** The proposal gives AOs the power to determine the amount of supervision teachers do before and after school, and during lunch breaks. Teachers will have one half hour lunch free of duties -- otherwise they could be forced to perform any supervisory duties as required by the AO. Under the language proposed, teachers could be compelled to supervise evenings and weekends as well.
- **No class-size limits.** All language referring to maximum class sizes would be removed from the collective agreement. The employer’s proposal allocates a certain number of teachers to a school, and then allows the AO to decide how many students in each teachers class.
- **No non-enrolling teacher provisions.** This would threaten the job of every teacher-librarian, resource room teacher, ESL teacher, counselor, and learning-assistance teacher currently protected in the collective agreement.
- **No support for special needs.** BCPSEA wants to strip provisions protecting the placement of students with special needs and the level of support provided for them. This means there will be no cap on the number of students with special needs. Again, the AO will make all decisions.
- **Sick leave.** Here, BSPSEA wants a complicated set of concessions. They propose that: 1) teachers must work a minimum of ten days in order to earn their 1½ sick days; 2) teachers will be restricted to a number of sick days per illness, regardless of how many sick days the teacher has accumulated; 3) prior approval will be required to attend medical appointments during the school day; 4) access to partial medical leave will be reduced; 5) teachers will be required to provide medical certificates under more circumstances.

Both the BCTF and STA reject any calls for concessions. Our mandate is to improve conditions for teachers and students – not to worsen them. In the coming days, we will need a clear demonstration of your steadfast support for improvements, and your fervent opposition to the employer's proposals.