

Taking a Stand!

Because Kids Matter and Teachers Care

Teachers have voted overwhelmingly to stand up to a government that threatens public education. Conditions in the schools have deteriorated ever since the Liberals came to power. Teachers are very reluctant to take strike action and seldom have been on strike. We all know that education does matter and time in school is important. It is however, not an essential service in the way that health care is. Teachers are withdrawing teaching services now because they believe that any harm in the short term will produce vital improvements for students for the longer term.

Teachers are asking for the following (in this order):

1. Improved learning conditions like limits on class size.
2. Bargaining rights restored.
3. A fair and reasonable salary increase. (4–5–6%)

Starting Wednesday September 28, teachers began modest job action aimed at inconveniencing administrators. We are now being asked to consider historic province-wide action. (*Keep up to date at www.bctf.ca/local83*).

The Facts!

1. Teacher's last contract ended on June 30, 2004. They are now into their second year without a contract.
2. Teachers have tried to bargain. They have met 35 times with the employer. Negotiations are about give and take. Yet all the Liberal government knows how to do is take. Teachers have been offered a zero percent pay increase plus reductions in maternity leave and sick days. This in a time of provincial surpluses.

...Bill 12 imposes a two-year freeze on wages. The legislation includes last year and this school year, making a 0%, 0% contract.
3. In 2002 the Liberal government stripped years of hard won clauses from teacher's contracts. Including:
 - Class size maximums were removed. (Obviously, resulting in larger class sizes as boards struggle with cuts to their budgets.)
 - Language that insured support services for students were removed (including guarantees for staffing of Teacher-Librarians, Learning Assistance Teachers, English as a Second Language support, and Special Education Teachers)
Note: while cutting special education funding for public schools the Liberals have increased funding for private schools by 9 million dollars.
 - Specific example from our contract that was stripped: "*The district recognizes the intrinsic value of Music Education.*" This shows the extent to which this government is willing to go.
4. The United Nations has found the Liberal government of BC in violation of international law for stripping teacher's contracts and legislating educators back to work. For more information see:
<http://www.bctf.ca/NoteFromTeachers/Archive/2005-06/2005-09-28.html>
5. Government surplus: 1.6 Billion. Pundits say this figure is vastly underestimated. See
<http://www.strategicthoughts.com/record2005/budget0905.html>
6.

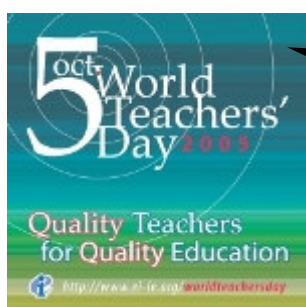
Pay levels	Years	SD #83	Edmonton	Difference
Level 5	0	\$39,580	\$48,300	\$8,720
2005	11	\$63,346	\$74,800	\$11,454

The difference will only increase now that teachers are forced to take a big fat zero over 2 years while teachers in Alberta and Ontario will receive between 6.5% and 10.2% over the same period.

Remember Premier Campbell's own words:
"In order to attract and retain the highest quality professionals in our public service, we need to ensure compensation levels are as competitive as possible, both with other government public service sectors in B.C. and across Canada, as well as with the private sector."

Note: Teachers have negotiated in the past for working conditions in exchange for increases in salary -- working conditions that have now been stripped from contracts.
7. Private sector wage increases this year in Vancouver: ~3.5%
8. BC teachers are worth it! BC's ranking: 2nd in Canada, 3rd in world.* (PISA stats on all indicators -literacy, numeracy, science)
9. BC teachers' salary: 6th in Canada.
10. The claim that all public sector employees have taken 0-0-0 is erroneous. Previous settlements are variable. Crown prosecutors are in the midst of a lawsuit against the government over an arbitrated settlement that started with a retroactive increase of 18% and was legislated over to become 0-0-15%. Across BC, many Post-secondary teachers, teaching assistants, and professors have all negotiated pay increases without calling them pay increases.

* Finland is first. They have small class sizes, lots of support workers, and strong government backing.



SO WHAT DID YOUR GOVERNMENT DO FOR WORLD TEACHERS' DAY?