

TEACHER

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation

The great class-size/composition sham

By Richard Hoover and George Popp

In the September issue of *Teacher*, David Denyer outlined the basics of arbitrator Dorsey's 354-page ruling on the class-size and composition grievances for the 2006-08 school years. Dorsey found that 21 of the 81 representative classes for which evidence was presented were in violation of Section 76.1 of the *School Act*. Of the 21 cases in violation, 19 were found to have had flaws in consultation and, in the other 2 cases (a Chemistry 12 class of 36 students and a Social Studies 9 class of 29 with 8 IEP students), Dorsey determined the principal could not have held a reasonable opinion that they were appropriate for student learning.

But the 2006-08 grievance process is still ongoing. As BCPSEA denies that any remedy should be awarded, we now need further hearing dates for arbitrator Dorsey to determine what the remedy will be. Following that, there will need to be more meetings and likely more hearings to determine which of the remaining 1,587 classes cited by the BCTF will receive remedies, and what those remedies will be. It has turned into a time-consuming, expensive, and disappointingly slow process.

The students in the classes that were found to be in violation can never be compensated. Bill 33 has



clearly been a failure in limiting class sizes and class compositions to educationally sound levels. What it did do was paper over the governments' failure to properly fund public education, and legitimize thousands and thousands of oversized classes.

For 2008-09, the government changed the legislation regarding consultation to put the onus on classroom teachers, rather than principals, to request consultations. For that year, there were 3,336 classes over 30 and 10,985 classes with more than 3 students with IEPs. Teachers reported to the BCTF over 4,000 instances where they disagreed with the size or composition of their classes. We are currently in the process of setting arbitration dates for Dorsey to hear the evidence from 2008-09.

For 2009-10, as *Teacher* goes to

press, we are still collecting consultation forms from teachers who disagree with the organization of their classes. We anticipate that for this year, once again, there will be well over 10,000 classes with more than 3 students with IEPs and well over 3,000 classes with more than 30 students.

There are still thousands of oversized classes and classes whose composition too often make it an impossible challenge to meet students' needs.

Although the ministry hasn't yet published the statistics for 2009-10, the 2008-09 information is available for each school and district, and for the province as a whole at

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/enrol/class-size.php.

So, three years after first citing violations of the legislation, we still do not have a remedy or a solution. There are still thousands of oversized classes and classes whose compositions too often make it an impossible challenge to meet students' needs. The process of identifying, reporting, and grieving violations of the legislation has been frustrating for everyone involved. Dorsey noted his own frustration with the legislation when he wrote that "the word 'appropriate'...is not amenable to pre-determined definition... (and that) perhaps 'appropriate' was chosen because it does not provide clarity or certainty or carry preordained constraints."

Dorsey concluded that the legislation, except in the rarest cases, grants principals "presump-

tive deference" in determining whether a class is "appropriate for student learning." That is, the principal's opinion will almost always prevail over the opinion of the teacher as to the appropriateness of the organization of the class for student learning.

In his ruling, Dorsey found that a Surrey Humanities 8 class of 27 students, 6 with IEPs, was not in violation of the legislation—that is, it was appropriate for student learning. A Saanich Woodwork 10/11/12 class of 24 students, 9 with IEPs, was not in violation of the legislation. Another Saanich Science 9 class with 29 students, 6 with IEPs, was also not in violation of the legislation. A Qualicum Mathematics 7 class with 30 students, including 5 with IEPs, was not in violation of the legislation. A Merritt Grade 5 class of 28 with 5 IEP students (rising to 11 IEPs later in the year) was not in violation of the legislation.

The lack of effect of Bill 33 on class size and composition around the province is astounding.

Last year, in Campbell River, over 33% of classes had more than 3 students with IEPs and almost 9% of classes had more than 30 students.

In Delta, 8.2% of classes were over 30 last year, and 21.8% had more than 3 students with IEPs. In Victoria, 17.9% of classes had more than 3 students with IEPs. In Nanaimo, 15.7% of classes had more than 3 students with IEPs. In Surrey and North Vancouver 13.6% of classes had more than 3 students with IEPs.

In Qualicum, where there has been a 22% increase in administration over the last five years, almost 32% of classes in the district had more than 3 students with IEPs last year, and over 10% of all classes were over 30. To compound matters, the local had to file a

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The HST gift to business

By Geoff Peters

The BC Liberal government plans to "harmonize" the 7% provincial sales tax with the 5% federal general sales tax to create a single harmonized sales tax of 12% effective July 1, 2010. The net effect of this tax will be a \$2 billion saving for business and a shift of that tax burden to consumers. HST will increase the gap between the rich and the poor in the province making the needy poorer and the wealthy richer. Gordon Campbell's Liberals have embraced this tax because the federal government would administer collection, saving BC \$30 million in administration costs. A \$1.6 billion transitional funding grant will come from the federal to the provincial government.

There has been much opposition to the proposal, and not just because it was never mentioned

during the election campaign in May. Opposition is based on the expansion of products and services taxed, no clear reason for exemptions from HST, the shift of tax away from corporations and onto citizens, and the likelihood of a future decrease in provincial revenues to support crucial public services. Additionally, school boards have not been exempted from the HST and will receive no funding to cover another downloaded, increased cost.

Some goods and services currently exempt from PST which would be taxed by HST include:

- restaurant and catered meals
- school supplies
- services such as club and gym memberships, taxi fares, haircuts, veterinary care, live theatre, and professional fees like accountants and architects
- services such as repairs to home

See HST page 3

On the inside

Our ongoing struggle with class size and composition takes the lead in this edition and the ever-present spectre of funding cuts forms a backdrop to much that is of concern for teachers. Commentators from outside the world of education are beginning to recognize the limited nature of the school curriculum under the present pressures of achievement and testing, and also that teachers are undervalued.

Other items introduce the pursuit of philosophy in elementary school, resources to combat bullying, help

for beginning teachers, and working with the community. Teacher-librarians took over the legislature and teachers continue to raise their voices over many aspects of their work that often receive little or no attention.

Although later than originally hoped, a list of members who retired earlier this year is a timely reminder of the extraordinary contribution teachers make to our society. We wish them well.

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President's message



Irene Lanzinger

Memories of warm summer days are long gone and we are all settled into the school year. The new budget introduced by the Liberal

government at the end of the summer also seems like it happened a long time ago. Unfortunately, the impact of that budget lives on in our classrooms. That budget cut \$110 million dollars in funding to school boards in the form of the Annual Facilities Grant (AFG). In a move of astounding hypocrisy in the lead up to hosting the Olympics, the government also cut \$130,000 in funding to BC school sports.

Of course, the bad news is that the cuts will inevitably be felt in the classrooms of the province. In many districts, maintenance and custodial services are being reduced. In some cases, the AFG money was already committed and so the result of the reduced funding will be larger classes and less support for

students with special needs.

The good news is that we are no longer alone in speaking out about education underfunding. In early October, the BCTF, BC School Trustees Association, and the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils wrote a joint letter to the minister of education. That letter outlines the impact of the cuts to funding. It points out that the funding decisions will "result in long-term instability, larger classes, and reduced services for students including those with special needs." The letter ends by urging the minister to "reverse these cuts to prevent significant erosion of BC's outstanding public education system."

Across the province, locals and

boards have also written joint letters signed by trustees, parent groups, and support staff unions. In North Vancouver and in Kootenay Lake (our locals of Nelson and Creston), they achieved the near impossible task of getting administrators' organizations and superintendents to sign their letters.

Over and over again, these letters outline the concern teachers, parents, and trustees have that continued underfunding is eroding a public education system that we have been proud to work in and have relied on to give our children a high quality education. Other groups are joining with us to say that it will be impossible to maintain that quality in the face of continued underfunding and lack of

resources.

In an article in *The Vancouver Sun*, Paul Shaker, former dean of education at SFU comments: "The struggle for resources threatens the quality of BC public education: a world-class social enterprise that is in danger of being reduced to mere adequacy through changes in funding priorities."

BC teachers have been speaking out about underfunding for a long time. We live the reality of lack of resources every day in our classrooms and understand the impact it is having on the children of our province. Thank goodness we are no longer alone in speaking out about the need to preserve the high quality of public education in BC. Let's hope it makes a difference.

Readers write

Two issues with the October Teacher

A couple of things—the "debt-deficit" article and "paternalism," and the TTOC survey [October 2009 *Teacher*].

As the mother of a son, and an individual who has seen and experienced serious oppression personally and politically from both (straight and other) men and women (and amazing support from both), as a survivor of abuse, and as a formerly poor person on welfare who has dealt with the usual array of related disasters poverty and abuse present as life challenges, I strongly object to the characterization of the current BC government's actions as lashing out in "typical paternal fashion."

Could we please get over genderizing bad policy and bad decisions?

On a related note, I have unsuccessfully brought motions to amend the BCTF *Members' Guide* to add "The BCTF deplors violence toward men." We deplore it toward women, but I guess it's still open season on men.

And don't even begin to tell me "I don't get it." I am one of the hundreds of thousands of women who took action one by one and in growing groups in the 1960s to free women and men from oppressive gender roles by refusing to accept the expectations for the gender roles of the day. It was uphill all the way. But here we are.

So, let's just drop "paternalistic" as a pejorative term.

If you just can't get over it, if you feel you must keep using it—thus dating yourself as an ideological holdover from the great gender wars—in the interests of equal opportunity, use "maternalistic" 50% of the time.

We women can do just as much oppressing. And lashing out.

Now about the TTOC Task Force survey. The TTOC Task Force wants to know why I plan to work as a TTOC when I retire at 65.

I have thought about my reply quite a lot. Here is the publishable version: "None of your business."

What makes one group of teachers think they can interrogate another group about their reasons for working? Am I asking new teachers why they are working?

Does everyone think teachers over 55 are all going on cruises and paying golf-club fees? I have an outstanding student loan from a late-breaking masters' degree.

We might be paying for family members' tuition or other expenses for struggling family members. We might still have a mortgage.

We have very old parents who need help. Targeting elders is not my idea of social justice. How this one got by us all I don't know.

I was next to speak at the mic at the AGM when the list was cut off, or you would have heard from me then.

Diane McNally
Greater Victoria

Rotational callout perpetuates centuries of discrimination

I would like to thank Sandra Dueck for her article "Seniority Based Callout." (October 2009, *Teacher*) and Glen Hansman for his article on the importance of eliminating preferential callout, "Support TTOCs by Ending Preferential Callout," in the same issue.

In recent months, I have heard discussion regarding rotational callout as a reasonable interim step toward seniority callout. I have to

disagree.

You often hear people say that rotational callout is the fairest callout system. This is not accurate: under rotation, those among the TTOC population who will be most negatively affected are those who have been on the list the longest. Those senior TTOCs are often middle-aged or older women, who have had a lifetime of unpaid or underpaid work. They have raised the future generation, but lost the ability to contribute fully to our pension plans. Rotational callout perpetuates the centuries of discrimination against women, by not recognizing their past service to the district. In fact, rotational callout actually dismisses their work as not being meaningful. This is unlike other teachers, who gain seniority and security with increased length of service to the district.

Rotational callout does not fit in with a union that supports social justice. For those men who will be caught in this rotational callout cycle, welcome to a woman's shoes, where your contributions are often not valued. It's not fair, is it?

While seniority callout might result in less work for new teachers at first, it offers the prospect of steadily increasing work as a reward for diligent service to the school district. On the other hand, rotational callout offers no hope for improvement. You just keep rotating in an endless circle, like a gerbil on its exercise wheel.

Remember that the average time on a TTOC list in BC is seven years. In some districts, particularly where the lists are long, the wait may be even longer. So if TTOCs think that rotational callout is preferable to seniority callout, they need to think about how they will feel once they have been on the list for four or five years and are still at the same level,

with the same amount of work as when they started. Won't they be wishing then that they had some sort of credit for the years they have put in on the TTOC list? Surely they deserve credit for their years of being available for work, often on very short notice.

Rotational callout is not a 'baby step' toward seniority callout. Instead, it is a serious miss-step for our union. It merely spreads out the poverty and it will spell the death knell for seniority callout. Administrators, who want to save money, would like straight rotational callout because the chances of any teacher getting four days in a row are lost. If we are lucky, TTOCs might be able to get the occasional four days in a row, but only if we are able to negotiate that a TTOC can stay in the same assignment when the teacher she or he is replacing is away for more than one day in a row. So the district would not need to pay to scale very often in a truly rotational system. This would be a loss of income for all TTOCs.

Rotational is the best system for management in terms of finances. Once it is entrenched as the system of callout, it would be extremely difficult to get boards to agree to seniority callout, especially when funding levels are uncertain. However, it wouldn't take long for our own members to despise rotational callout.

Moving to rotational callout would be the worst way for our union to represent TTOCs. Seniority callout based on length of service to the district is the only fair and socially just method of callout for TTOCs.

Kathy Couch
Nelson

We Day: A new perspective for students and educators

I had the privilege of attending We Day at GM Place with my students in September. We Day was a free event where we had the opportunity to hear from a host of incredible and inspiring speakers including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Jane Goodall, Her Excellency the Governor General, Mia Farrow, Craig and Marc Kielburger, and countless others. There is no other event of this magnitude engineered to promote social change that I am aware of. The charge of positive energy and enthusiasm that ran through GM Place was absolutely contagious and cannot truly be understood unless you were there.

In the words of one of my Grade 9 students, "The speakers, the crowd, and the performers. It was all just phenomenal. The power, hope, and confidence behind each word the speakers spoke had my heart bouncing and kept a lump in my throat. I wish I could go back and relive that few hours because it means so much to me."

We Day was a rare chance for my students to be among 16,000 other youth and countless others that tuned-in from their classrooms and homes to understand that changing the world is not only possible, but actually cool! My students left more inspired, more knowledgeable, and more motivated to change the world around them. The impact was incredible and, as I am finding out, lasting! As a teacher, this is truly rewarding and energizing, I could not ask for anything more...and did I mention that it was absolutely free?

I was devastated to read "Corporate hucksters hijack Me to We Day" (*Teacher*, October 2009) in your last edition, which raised concerns about the day. This certainly was not my impression nor was it the experience of other teachers I've spoken with. I believe Free The Children should be commended for putting together this inspiring and highly educational event for youth. I was also fortunate enough to attend the follow-up in-services workshops. This was a valuable time for learning from, and speaking with, other educators to help turn the inspiration into action.

Unfortunately, my students were unable to attend the also free student training that would have been extremely valuable for them. For me, We Day and its yearlong educational program have brought renewed hope and joy to teaching. The knowledge and enthusiasm my students and I brought back to school has both other students, other educators, and my district personnel counting the days until next year's We Day and working hard to make a difference that we can be proud of before that time. For educating and motivating my students and for helping me integrate the ideals of social action into my classroom, We Day was an absolute success and Free the Children should be commended for providing such a positive opportunity.

Moreover, I'd also like to raise awareness on a number of inaccuracies contained in the article. The event was called We Day, not Me to We Day, and it is put on by Free The Children, an extremely reputable children's charity. Me to We, on the other hand, is a separate organization. As the article mentions, 50% of Me to We's profits do indeed go to support Free The Children and their development projects in rural communities overseas. The remaining 50% is reinvested back into Me to We to help support and sustain the organization.

As an educator, I feel a responsibility to speak out when injustice takes place. We Day was an amazing educational experience for students and teachers, and I call upon all educators to voice their support to ensure such days only continue.

Michele Dekok
Boston Bar

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- appliances including fridges, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners
 - cleaning services such as laundry and dry cleaning, carpet, upholstery, and car washes
 - new housing valued under \$400,000
 - vitamins, dietary supplements, and non-prescription medicinal products
 - smoke and fire alarms
 - residential use of electricity, natural gas, and fuel oil
 - magazines, newspapers, student yearbooks
 - energy conservation items such as building insulation, hot water tank insulators
 - bicycles and services performed on bicycles
 - automobile towing and roadside services.
- A few items would be exempt at purchase:
- motor fuels
 - books
 - child-sized clothing
 - car seats and booster seats
 - diapers
 - feminine hygiene products
 - items that are currently GST-free such as basic groceries, prescription drugs and most health and dental services, and educational services.

Some rebates, such as up to \$20,000 on new housing, for charities, municipalities, and eligible non-profit organizations, and for low-income earners are proposed. School districts are not exempt, which has been raised repeatedly by trustees with no response. Unless changed, this would have a further crippling impact on school board budgets.

CCPA analysis

Marc Lee, of Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: "For the public, the HST is a transfer of almost \$2 billion from businesses paying PST on their inputs to consumers who will pay new taxes on goods and services previously exempt from the PST. Arguably, some of the savings on inputs will get passed along to consumers, but only if markets are highly competitive and in the form of slightly lower inflation rather than immediately lower prices. Expect many companies operating in BC to simply pocket the difference and not pass along the savings to consumers."

- The CCPA analysis indicates that:
- HST will not help a slumping economy.
 - HST transfers income from consumers to business.
 - Liberal government is using HST to reduce BC's deficit.

- HST will hurt modest to middle income households.
- A BC Federation of Labour paper calls the HST the largest tax shift in BC history, with individuals paying on average an extra \$800 per year. Even as families pay more and corporations pay less, Finance Minister Colin Hansen estimates "the implementation will result in a drop in revenues to the province initially." David Schreck, a BC economist, suggests that the drop in revenues will be substantial and long lasting.

Progressive and regressive taxation

The purpose of taxes is to raise the money needed to support and fund the goals of the society. Tax policy can also be used to implement other social goals such as to

Expect many companies operating in BC to simply pocket the difference and not pass along the savings to consumers.

— Mark Lee, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

reduce income inequality, ensure more equitable access to social services, or stimulate the economy. Or in the case of the provincial government, reward certain sectors of the economy with lower taxes and thereby increase their spending power.

Our system has a combination of regressive and progressive taxes. Sales taxes are regressive when those who earn less pay more of their income on taxes. Progressive taxes, like income tax, are based on taxing those who earn more money at higher rates on the part of their income that is in higher "brackets." Regressive sales taxes hit people with low purchasing power hardest. Sales taxes do not affect high earners in the same way. High earners pay only a small percentage of their disposable income on sales tax.

Citizens generally support fair taxation when they can see the social benefits that result. Most members do not give much thought to taxation except at tax-filing time. Since tax policy, especially when based on the mantra of "tax cuts," can drastically decrease provincial revenues, members need to be more aware of issues and concerns around taxation. This is especially true given the current economy and the threats to education budgets.

Geoff Peters is director of the BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division.

recognized the need for flexibility and the demands of multigrade classes. And they recognized the need to reduce class sizes when special needs students were integrated.

Bill 33 has clearly been a failure in limiting class sizes and class compositions to educationally sound levels. What it did do was paper over the governments' failure to properly fund public education, and legitimize thousands and thousands of oversize classes.

Provisions in our pre-2002 collective agreements also recognized students' needs for counselling, ESL, library, learning assistance, and special education services. Such services were guaranteed by providing ratios of specialist teachers to students.

It's clear that we cannot rely on legislation to maintain the quality of public education in British Columbia. Negotiating provisions into our collective agreements for class size and composition and student support is the only way we can assure students, parents, and teachers that we will truly have classes that are, in the words of the failed legislation, "appropriate for student learning."

Richard Hoover is director and George Popp is assistant director, BCTF Field Service Division.

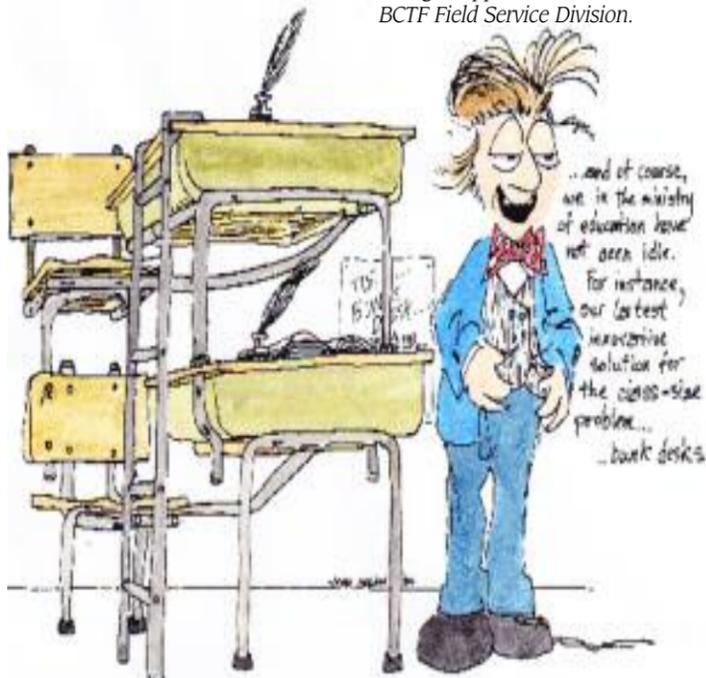
CLASS SIZE from page 1

grievance last year because the superintendent didn't provide the board with a report on the organization of classes as required by the School Act.

Boards and superintendents just aren't taking the legislation seriously. In a number of districts, superintendents have ignored the requirements of the School Act for reporting to parents, trustees, and the public. Our locals have had to launch grievances and Freedom of Information requests to obtain basic information about the organization of classes in the district. With the exception of Vancouver, all superintendents have ignored Dorsey's direction that boards and parent groups need to be informed of teachers' specific disagreements with their class organizations.

In other districts, superintendents have given oral reports to the public board meeting required under the School Act, rather than the signed and written report required by law. Many superintendents have neglected to provide the board with the rationale for each class over 30, as specifically required in legislation.

Prior to the stripping of our collective agreements in 2002, there were very clear class-size and composition provisions. These were reasonable, enforceable, and agreed to by the parties. Those provisions took into consideration safety, equipment, and space concerns in lab and shop courses. They



Twenty years along, and this cartoon printed in a 1989 issue of Teacher to illustrate crowded classrooms, still rings true today.

A letter for parents on FSAs

The Ministry of Education admits student participation in Grade 4 and 7 Foundation Skills Assessments is dropping. More parents are questioning the benefits of the FSA when it is obvious no new provincial funding is available for boards to support the struggling learner.

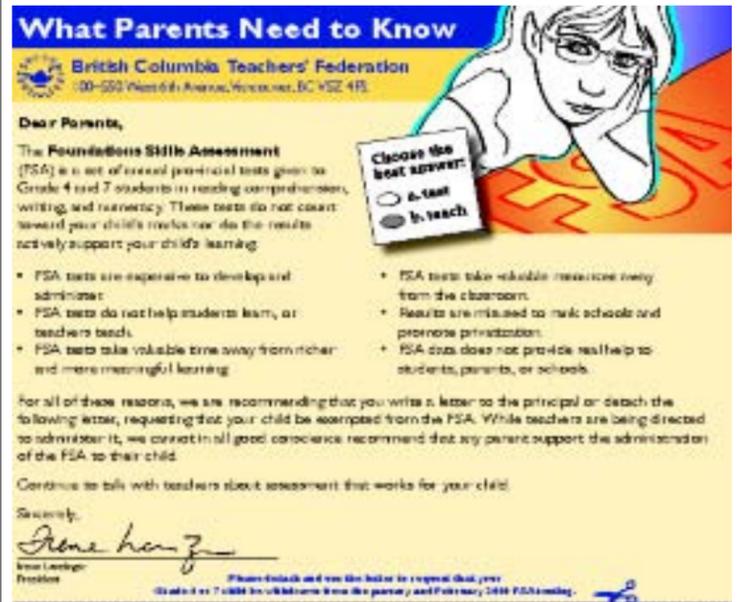
The BCTF has actively opposed the misuse of standardized tests as a means of evaluating the individual student, a teacher, or a school. The Federation has asked school boards and locals to undertake an analysis of current school and district-wide exams to determine which have an educational value related to student success. Those that have little educational value or primarily serve to collect data for outside agencies

should be eliminated. Teachers, parents, and the education community are now calling on the BC Ministry of Education for a moratorium on assessment. This would allow for a healthy discussion among the education community about testing and assessment.

The Federation encourages all Grade 4 and 7 teachers to approach parents with the following letter that encourages withdrawing their child from participation in the 2010 FSA.

The letter below is a sample copy. Actual letters will be distributed to schools and teachers in January 2010.

— David Halme



Dear Principal,

I understand that parents may request the principal to excuse a student in the event of a family emergency, lengthy illness, or other extenuating circumstances.

Please excuse my child, _____ from all three Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) tests for the following reason:

family emergency lengthy illness

other extenuating circumstances

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Parent/guardian signature

Find the BCTF on Facebook

The BC Teachers' Federation is on Facebook and engaging members through social media. If you have a Facebook profile, go to [www.facebook.com/BCTeachers Federation](http://www.facebook.com/BCTeachersFederation) to see our brand new page and become a fan. You will get updates about BCTF news, events, and opportunities to discuss current issues in education.

Check out the BCTF's YouTube channel

Go to www.youtube.com/BCTFvids to see the BCTF's YouTube channel. It's loaded with content about education funding, Teachers Teaching on Call, Social Justice 12, and a brand new video on testing assessment that was filmed at Summer Conference. Don't forget to pass those links on to friends and post them on your Facebook page.

Looking back

70 years ago

The taxpayers need to be reminded that the person in the community upon whom the most disproportionate share of the added financial burden for school expansion and new programmes falls is the teacher. Folk would like to pay teachers a reasonable salary, but the necessity of adding further classrooms makes it impossible. Folk know that much of the best in recently adopted educational ideas involves teachers in continual expense for books but any spare funds are needed not to help him buy them but for the school library, which they know the teacher will himself supplement after the ratepayers have contributed their pittance.

— November 1939, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

To the teachers I say: Don't let the experts belittle your ability to serve, or take away your greatest asset, your contact with the children

under your care. Don't accept an inferior position within the bounds of your profession but maintain that profession's prestige by insisting that all its members live up to its naturally high standard. Important as it may be on occasion, don't let that overemphasized word "research" replace the value of your daily experience.

— November 1959, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

The popularity of such pseudo-sciences as astrology and bio-rhythms, and belief in such paranormal wonders as the Bermuda Triangle and pyramid power, afford teachers a unique opportunity to initiate a curriculum unit on rational thinking and critical evaluation of evidence. That the propagators of the pseudo-sciences and the realm of the paranormal have been remarkably successful in spreading their ideas, with the aid of the sensationalistic sectors of the media, is hardly open to dispute. The popularity of such ideas is in

itself disturbing, and we argue that schools have a vital role in counteracting this trend.

— Nov./Dec. 1979, *The BC Teacher*

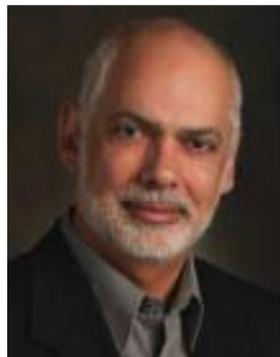
10 years ago

There is a real push by companies to gain access to students in schools. Corporations are attempting to gain customers by having their products promoted to a captive audience in a setting where there is a lot of credibility for what is presented to students. Corporations are in business to make profits for their shareholders. Selling corporations access to students is clearly contrary to our Code of Ethics. We are educating citizens, not providing customers. If we speak up and act, we can ensure that the learning environment is protected.

— Nov./Dec. 1999, *Teacher newsmagazine*

Compiled by Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich.

Education reforms need democratic values, not pseudo-science



By Paul Shaker and Lee Shaker

"So another poorly thought out 'reform' has been implemented, this time associated with fatal consequences for one poor student and his family." Deborah Lynch, teacher and former union president, writes in the *Chicago Sun-Times* on the September 24 beating death of Derrion Albert, 18.

Lynch draws the connection between this murder and school reform because Fenger High School, from which the violence spilled forth, is a "turnaround" school. Schools with insufficient standardized test performance eventually face remarking in the wake of US No Child Left Behind policy. In the case of Fenger, this meant removing over 90% of its teachers and replacing them and other staff *en masse*. At the same time, students are shuffled among schools, further reducing community ties and potentially inciting new conflicts that follow pre-existing neighbourhood loyalties.

Albert's tragic death was the result of such a conflict. Further, it dramatizes the consequences of re-engineering human service institutions without either meaningful consultation with relevant professionals or sufficient attention to interpersonal factors such as social capital. Such drawbacks plague test-driven accountability. Punitive high-stakes testing has become notorious for its authoritarian character and offensiveness to professional educators. Impatient policymakers attempt to resolve complex social problems through the imposition of pseudo-scientific remedies. Our students' growth is more complex and episodic than such theories allow.

In economics, a parallel wake-up call came regarding free market ideology, another failed policy deconstructed as follows by former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan before the US Congress in October 2008, "Those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholder's equity (myself especially) are in a state of shocked

disbelief." Let us hope there is no "shocked disbelief" sometime in the future about the policies we are implementing to govern BC's public schools.

For the better part of a decade we have experienced a number of policies that cause harm to our public schools. These policies

For the better part of a decade we have experienced a number of policies that cause harm to our public schools. These policies include tightening education funding, suppressing communication among education partners, and valuing education primarily as an arm of the economy.

include tightening education funding, suppressing communication among education partners, and valuing education primarily as an arm of the economy. Historically and with citizen support, our schools and teachers have done their part to make BC one of the most desirable places on the planet—and not only in material terms. We can act now to continue that legacy.

Clearly, it is difficult to fund an outstanding public program during constrained budgetary times. Resources are limited, and other agencies of government are clamoring for them in order to simply maintain services. This struggle threatens the quality of BC public education: a world-class social enterprise that is in danger of being reduced to mere adequacy through changes in funding priorities. Such a shift has already resulted in the rise of BC university tuition from student-friendly rates to those no better than the Canadian average. Ironically, these policies began when times were good.

Additionally, for all of the democratic impulses that exist in the Pacific Northwest, BC education remains a very top-down organization. With the exception of the BCTF, the stakeholder groups are generally muzzled through close Ministry of Education financial control. Even district superintendents, potentially a vital source of insight on schools, are not able to express themselves frankly. The failed and apparently defunct Learning Round Table forum—a ministry response to the 2005 teachers' job action—is further evidence of our inability to communicate freely among education partners. And, from the start,

university faculties of education were excluded from the table although they are uniquely qualified as research-oriented participants in such a discussion.

We are diminished and ill-served by casting schools primarily in economic and market terms. When teachers resist high-stakes testing because it narrows the curriculum to what is being tested and encourages the unjust blaming and shaming of schools, they are pushing back on careless intrusion into their profession. A more holistic analysis of effectiveness is an alternative, including such rigorous qualitative methods as teaching portfolios, expert observation, and performance assessment.

If there were true consultation in the shaping of policy, political leaders would adopt the forms of reward and recognition that educators find motivating and authentic as is happening in Ontario. We need to have the courage to speak of human and spiritual values and to lead our schools accordingly. Students educated to become enlightened individuals will inevitably provide for the economic needs of society and more. Economic success is a by-product, not the primary purpose of education.

British Columbia's policymakers have ground to make up in education. We have been living off our past investments and priorities, while wasting resources on feuding and false science. Through consensual allocation of resources, an

Students educated to become enlightened individuals will inevitably provide for the economic needs of society and more. Economic success is a by-product, not the primary purpose of education.

honest commitment to democratic decision-making, and a new appreciation of our historical values, we can restore our position of educational leadership for the benefit of all our children and youth.

Paul Shaker is professor emeritus of education at SFU and host of Your Education Matters. Lee Shaker is senior research specialist in the department of politics at Princeton University.

Your Education Matters

Your Education Matters is the only TV program in BC dedicated to addressing education issues beyond the headlines.

- *In Metro Vancouver*
On Shaw TV Channel 4:
Mondays at 6:30 p.m.
Sundays 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- *On Vancouver Island*
On TV Channels 11 and 4:
Last Saturday of each month at 10:00 p.m. and the following Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

encourage all children to read and that require no after-school marking. Ann-Marie Hunter described the way she starts up her math program and provided each participant with a Math Basics CD from Trevor Cawkins' *Power of Ten* program. Other fantastic workshops suggested ways to build routines in the first week of school and how to efficiently plan for the year. Workshop topics included French, socials, science, and various other intermediate subjects much to the appreciation of the participants.

The Start UP! series comprises the first part of the year for the Year of Professional Support (YPS) Program designed to provide practical help to early career teachers with unit

planning and lesson preparation. PITA has been responsible for the launch of this much-needed program with the support of the ministry and BCTF locals in Surrey, Delta, Kelowna, and Abbotsford.

Feedback from the first part of the program indicated that participants have found the workshops highly useful and that they would recommend the workshops and the YPS program to others. "Thanks again for a wonderful day of workshops. I am amazed at the dedication and generous sharing of time and talents," said one Start UP participant, Marie Frick.

The next phase of the YPS is the Build UP series, which includes eight specific building blocks for creating

Nothing official—reality cheque

Maybe we're not quite as valuable as we think we are



by Tony Wilson

Reprinted from *Bartalk Magazine*

My daughter is entering Grade 12 this year, which means she has only a few hoops left to jump through before she graduates, and then discovers that life will force her to jump through hundreds more on her way to what she will inevitably "do for a living." I'm told it won't be law, which she describes as "Job Z." Oh well.

The amazing thing is that the three-year-old girl who I used to take to "parent participation preschool" in the 1990s (instead of sitting at my desk recording billable hours on some forgettable file), is now a self-assured and confident young woman who drives a car, scuba dives with me in Mexico, speaks fluent French, skis like a pro, and is looking at university calendars as I write this. She pens stories in her spare time and has no difficulty sitting in her room for hours immersed in a new book. A friend from Victoria e-mailed me last month and said, "Emma's in Grade 12? How did that happen?"

Since we've had our two kids, my wife and I have always left the house and returned from our respective law offices at sensible hours, in large part, to have dinner together as a family, and to not let the practice of law consume us like it can (and does) consume others. It's a trade-off in terms of compensation, but we think it's a good one. They're only kids once, and then they're not. Blink, and you may miss it.

But between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. we have more or less surrendered our kids to their teachers since they were in Grade 1, (and if you count Kindergarten, even longer). So the daytime upbringing of our most important "treasure" has been entrusted to other people between the months of September to June, Monday to Friday, for almost 12 years now (summers, holidays, and Pro-D days excepted). That may well amount to 15,000 billable hours per child, if teachers billed by the hour (being professionals of course, they don't). At my hourly rate, that's \$6 million

each. And that doesn't include the after hours marking time, sports coaching time, lesson prep time, one-on-one time, and the countless hours that their teachers put in over and above simply showing up for class. So to an enormous extent, the people who are responsible for shaping what direction our kids' learning will take, (and arguably, who they will inevitably become as adults) are their teachers.

Although I am olive green with envy over their impressive pension plan, why is it that society pays me (and you) buckets more money to draft contracts, close business transactions, or defend insurance companies than those who are

...why is it that society pays me (and you) buckets more money to draft contracts, close business transactions, or defend insurance companies than those who are responsible for educating the most important people in our lives?

responsible for educating the most important people in our lives? Sure, it's great for me to charge \$400 per hour for what I do, but why is drafting a franchise agreement for yet another new chain of pizza restaurants worth more than teaching my kids French or Biology or how to successfully jump through the hoops that life will put in front of them? Regrettably, it's the same society that thinks CEOs, hedge-fund managers, and professional hockey players are worth gazillions of dollars a year, but teachers shouldn't be paid more than \$70,000 because they get summers off and can go home at 4:00 p.m.

It's all too easy to be seduced by our own sense of self-importance, just because we're paid a lot of money, or we know how the levers of power work, or because others put a value on the legal profession that, dare I say, is sometimes out of proportion with other vocations and callings. In many ways, teachers are more valuable than lawyers, because unlike us, they don't talk about changing the world. They do it day by day—child by child.

Some of my closest friends in the world chose to become teachers rather than lawyers. And it makes me very happy that my daughter wants to become one too.

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PITA's year of professional support a success story

By Ray Myrtle and Rita Tedesco

PITA's new Year of Professional Support, which begins with the Start UP! Series was recently provided to more than 120 early career teachers. Participants received practical suggestions about how to start up their classes in four days of workshops in Kelowna, Surrey, and Burnaby. This Start UP series consisted of eight workshops held over four days during August and September.

Workshop presenters from around BC shared their valuable expertise and resources. For example, Elaine Jaltema introduced teachers to her version of literature circles that

gathering materials and ideas.

The most valuable part of YPS is the support that teachers receive through the relationship building that is achieved by attending workshops, learning from teachers with expertise, and the sharing of resources and ideas through the YPS Wiki. The most positive of our learning experiences are often those that are shared. YPS is doing just that. Early career teachers learn and grow together through a supportive program that ensures that its teachers go back to the classroom with useful tools and great ideas that will help them be the best teachers they can be for their students.

Ray Myrtle and Rita Tedesco, Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association, PITA.

a strong intermediate program. Held during four more Saturdays, the program begins on November 21 through to April 10. These include topics such as starting a writing program in the language arts using picture books and teaching data analysis on other subjects such as math, PE, French, art, and so on.

Altogether, the Start UP! and Build UP! portions of the YPS program provide year-long support through 16 specific workshops over eight days. The program is helping early career teachers to successfully build up their program by providing best-practice strategies, great ideas, and specific resources that help early career teachers save precious time with planning, marking, and

Teacher-librarians on the loose at the legislature

74 A group of teacher-librarians representing the BC Teacher-Librarians' Association (BCTLA) visited the legislature on National School Library Day, October 26, 2009.

On October 26, several MLAs, some joined by members of the BCTLA team, supported Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) by going to Greater Victoria elementary schools and reading with students.

Other members of the group met with Adrian Dix and Shane Simpson in the Opposition Caucus room and discussed with them substantive issues surrounding teacher-librarianship and public education. Vancouver examples proved worthwhile as these engaged the interest of Dix and Simpson. The Vancouver teacher-librarians who were on the team are very familiar with the working and learning conditions of Vancouver school libraries and were able to provide accurate and devastating statistics to demonstrate the inequities between schools (e.g., two school libraries, in schools with similar student FTEs, with vastly different teacher-librarian staffing levels) which are a result of the lack of funding, the removal of ratios from the contract, and the lack of leadership from the ministry (refusal to refresh Developing Independent Learners: The Role of the School Library Resource Centre), all combined with site-based decision making.

Later in the morning, Pat Parungao met with Liberal MLA Richard Lee and showed him the

school library inquiry video, created by the Vancouver teacher-librarians' inquiry group. (<http://schoollibraryprogram.pbworks.com/Video-Project>).

Meanwhile, the other members of the group visited the Legislative Library and found common ground there talking with the library staff.

The library is spectacular, and still houses a card catalogue and microfiche for items that have not yet been added to an electronic database.

The group worked with the librarians to have a copy of the book, *The Fourth Way: The Inspiring Future of Educational Change* by Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley ordered, and directed toward the MLAs we met with.

Following this, at the appointed time in the day, the group participated in the DEAR Challenge in the beautiful surroundings of the Library Reading Room.

Members of the team met for lunch with Robin Austin, the opposition education critic, and Diane Thorne, deputy education critic. We discussed a wide range of issues around school libraries and education in general, including class size and composition (and the recent ruling), learning resources selection, support for Aboriginal learners, recent cuts affecting K-12, the overall lack of funding for K-12 including the trustees' call to delay all-day Kindergarten, and the growing federation of all education stakeholders in support of renewed funding for the K-12 system. Before the meeting, the NDP did not know

of the recently exposed Liberal cut to BC ERAC (Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium) (\$1.2 million ministry grant reduced to \$500,000).

Thorne and Austin were engaged by the description of initiatives under way in school libraries to support learning, such as the automation of SD43's Aboriginal Education Library. They also seemed very interested in the large number of post-secondary degrees possessed by the team members. It just came up as a comment, but the fact that in particular one team member has five post-secondary degrees demonstrated the expertise of teachers working in school libraries and in the K-12 system as a whole.

We believe that the best part of this meeting was forming relationships that will hopefully continue in some form or another.

At 1:00 p.m., the entire group reconvened and picked up our reservation/seating passes, left our belongings at the security check and passed through the metal detector into the gallery. Very few MLAs were in session on each side of the house. It almost seemed as if the MLAs asking questions were positioned in relation to the MLAs behind and beside them in a way such that when the *Hansard* TV camera was on each of the speakers it appeared as if more MLAs were in the house.

Private members speeches about National School Library Day were given by MLA Ron Cantelon and MLA Diane Thorne (Coquitlam/Maillardville). We were happy to hear that Ron Cantelon's daughter-in-law is a teacher-librarian and that Ron supported DEAR. Diane's speech presented a thorough understanding of the role of school library programs, mentioning inquiry and critical thinking.

As an aside, we were joined in the gallery by individuals introduced as leading members of the technology industry as well as the leader and deputy leader of the BC Green Party. Kevin Krueger, in his non-answering of questions about the effects of the HST on the tourism industry, mentioned that he had just met with the technology group and that they had told him that they "love the HST"! At this, members of the technology group in the public gallery burst out laughing.

The BCTLA team felt quite at home at the legislature and used every resource in our lobby efforts. We think the BCTF was very well-served by letting a group of teacher-librarians loose on the legislature building. The team proved very resourceful, one of many speciality-area-related capacities, including also a propensity for information seeking and provision, which was employed during the day.

We felt that the visit was very valuable and we look forward to the BCTF pursuing more opportunities to work directly with MLAs, including providing the Opposition with information about cuts to the K-12 system and statistics that may assist the Opposition in their efforts in Question Period and in estimates

debates. We were pleased to see this as focus in the BCTF Executive key decisions from October 21-22, 2009.

We were very happy to be able to bring our knowledge to the table in support of BCTF, BCTLA, and K-12 public education in general, and thank the BCTF for supporting our lobbying visit. We look forward to more of our members meeting with MLAs in ridings when the current session breaks. We hope next year to have National School Library Day finally proclaimed, and will begin work early on more MLAs' participation in DEAR. We do hope that next year they will read in the legislature (not just loudly thump their desks and voice agreement when the suggestion was made that the MLAs read after question period).

Representing BCTLA through the BCTF: Heather Daly (BCTLA president), Karen Lindsay (BCTLA vice-president Advocacy), Moira Ekdahl (BCTLA liaison chair), Val Hamilton (BCTLA web steward), Michele Farquharson (BCTLA continuing education co-chair), Sandra Hedley, Kathy Inglis, Geoff Orme, Pat Parungao (former BCTLA president), Mark Roberts (former BCTLA president), and Cherie Weichel.



"Feminine characteristics: needs counselling"

By James Harcott

In 1967, my male Grade 6 teacher wrote the above descriptor on my "Pupil's Cumulative Record" as I left elementary school for junior high. And for the next six years of my education, subsequent teachers encountered me first through his judgment, meeting me in person second. This comment box was labelled "Character Summary" and Mr. H.'s impression was the only asked-for and recorded comment by my elementary teachers. Three years later, my male grade nine teacher responded to his judgement with "Still slightly feminine but is growing out of this." None of my high school teachers responded to the two earlier judgements. Academic marks were solely recorded by them.

Forty years later, does this still have meaning? As a long-time elementary teacher, I endeavour not to commit judgments to paper concerning my students: they're irrevocable. Permanent records follow students throughout their education as do the inaccuracies they contain. They characterize a student based on limiting criteria. Ask an impartial colleague to confirm or dispute classroom-based impressions before committing to students' official records. Choose your words carefully and precisely.

They will be read and interpreted for many years. And definitely act on legitimate problems, accessing school-based resources, seeking assistance for students.

I find it interesting—but somewhat puzzling—counselling was not offered throughout my Grade 6 year or the years afterwards, despite many teachers' examination of my file. [Academic marks were duly recorded each year by subject area teachers—they surely read the 1967 comment.] Why record permanently a supposed necessity without follow through? And was my perceived femininity truly an element of my character? Certainly the femininity was seen as a problem to be corrected by at least two teachers.

Gender identity in 1967 was very prescribed and limited for students, teachers, and parents. Social redefinitions were yet to come to

Permanent records follow students throughout their education as do the inaccuracies they contain.

prairie Canada. Nowadays, gender identity encompasses the feeling of being female or male alongside biological, psychological, social, and legal components. And nowadays, character is defined around the qualities of co-operation, extension to others, social responsibility and citizenship. The touched-on sexuality of 1967 no longer has a place in a teacher's comments.

I received my cumulative record from Edmonton Public Schools while researching a 1962 educational program I was enrolled in. [Interestingly, I was the only male student in this program along with four females.] My initial reaction to this teacher's comment was painful as I remembered an approachable, humorous, and engaging Grade 6 teacher. His judgment of my masculinity—because certainly his remark about my femininity is actually a remark about my masculinity—stung. Roger Angell in his memoir, *Let Me Finish*, states "...memory is fiction—an anecdotal version of some past event..." Had I fictionalized my actual Grade 6 behaviour to conform to the then-accepted standards of male and female student behaviour? Was Mr. H.'s impression accurate? Gender identity is now seen as a continuum. The stringent labels of 1967 are no longer applied as society understands and embraces broad and freeing definitions and standards of masculine and feminine behaviour. Such terms—masculine behaviour, feminine behaviour—are not understood now as polar opposites. And each gender displays mutual characteristics in their expression of self. The "isms" of the 1960s, 1970s, and so on have deconstructed long-ago limited definitions.

Schools now strive to foster and provide safe, supportive, and caring environments for all. Acknowledgement of both individual expression and respect for all are promoted currently in classrooms and school hallways. My behaviour may not have generated a Grade 6 teacher's notice and comment in 2009. And if it did, a validation of my individuality may have been expressed to my betterment and the teacher's credit. Such is the passage of time and the realization of personal expression.

James Harcott is on leave, Faculty of Education, UBC.

It's for the kids

By Joanna Krop

"Teaching is becoming expensive for teachers when there's no budget" read my *Facebook* friend's wall post. He was buying an adaptor cable to show *YouTube* clips from his I-pod on a TV. I thought that's great—it's cheaper than DVDs and you have it for your own use too. But then someone posted that they were contemplating buying a video projector because the school couldn't afford one.

Since I like to have money to do things, such as pay my bills, I flung myself into this debate. I posted: "I'd never spend so much for school unless I was being directly compensated. It's time districts/ministries started valuing the work we do rather than assume we are going to make up for the inadequacies of a system that undervalues its teachers not to mention students."

People online didn't like that. To paraphrase the next five posts: We shouldn't need to pay out-of-pocket but we do it because it's good for the kids. If you don't get what you think is needed, students suffer because you can't do the best possible job. Unfortunately, it's part of the job, but teachers who spend on their classroom take pride in having quality materials for students.

I doubt you'd find a doctor bringing in her own personal supply of gauze, disinfectant, and syringes for a shift in the emergency ward, in addition to the defibrillator she bought yesterday because the hospital didn't have enough. How is it any less ridiculous when teachers do it?

It's for the kids. I've said it before. I'm sure you have too. We're not heartless—we're teachers! But before we wax sentimental about why we went into teaching, let's ask

a critical question. When we say—it's for the kids—which kids are we talking about?

Is it the kids of the teacher who has the economic and social positioning to be able to essentially donate money for the students? What about the kids of the teacher who can't? Are we saying that such a teacher doesn't take pride in having quality materials for their students? That the students should settle for an inadequately funded classroom? Even if teachers can afford it—should they?

While we are fortunate to have autonomy in our classrooms they are not "our" classrooms. The classroom and teacher are embedded within a larger system tied to social, political, and economic realities. That system has a mandate—to educate the future of the province. It is not like donating your time or money to a non-profit that does good works with kids. The ministry is not a charity. When we take it upon ourselves to make up for the inadequacies of the system, we enable it to get away with not fulfilling its mandate.

Back in the *Facebook* debate I posted again: "I'm all for what's good for the kids so long as it's not to the detriment of the teacher. Principled political action through your union, your vote, or letters to your MLA is, to me, preferable to taking this on with your wallet."

The refrain, "It's for the kids," needs to expand beyond the limited scope of the 30 kids in our class to the thousands of kids in our districts and the collection of districts across the province. The responsibility of funding education rests with the province, not with the teacher. If anything should be "for the kids," it's a strong, well-funded education. They deserve it.

Joanna Krop, Queensborough Middle School, New Westminster.

Overcrowded in Ladysmith

By Karen Fediuk

This personal opinion article was created to highlight the current poor school facility, with no intervention in sight, at Ecole Davis Road School in Ladysmith. Reproduction of the original article and editorial cartoon that cast light on the situation was not granted by Black Press. The original article, available online, is titled "Davis Road School is bursting," and was published on October 12, 2009.

Serving as a successful example of the desire of parents to bridge the two solitudes of Canada, Ecole Davis Road in Ladysmith has an ever-growing student population but parents are bewildered by the politics that has left our facilities ignored.

Operating at 227% capacity, the facilities are crowded, inadequate, and seismically unsafe. We are truly bursting apart at the seams.

In 2003, Davis Road School was struggling with enrolment. As the older and smaller school at the south end of town, many parents seemed keen to send their young children elsewhere. Two parents spearheaded a petition to get School District 68 to bring French immersion to Ladysmith, which was later introduced in fall 2004. Until 2010, the school will continue to add at least one new division until French immersion is offered through to Grade 7. Over the last six years, enrolment at Ecole Davis Road has tripled. Parents send their students from outside the catchment area because of the school programs and great administration and teachers. Within the last year, enrolment has increased by 25 students bringing the current population to 212 students: 89 English and 123 French immersion.

According to grandparents and parents, the facilities at Ecole Davis Road have remained frozen in time, unlike other area schools. Operating at 227% capacity, the facilities are crowded, inadequate, and seismically unsafe. We are truly bursting apart at the seams.

Parents are becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of response to our need for a new school. So far the only concrete response has been more portables. In spite of long-term use and request for wet portables, we have six dry portables (no washrooms, no sinks). A sagging roof in one portable has been 'fixed' with the addition of the 'infamous dancing pole' in the centre. We know there will be another portable arriving next year, although we all wonder what part of the playground will be lost next.

Already, 88 children have no ready access to running water in the portables where they learn and eat. Until, coincidentally, three weeks ago, when an article appeared in the *Ladysmith Chronicle* newspaper about the lack of access to hand-washing facilities at Ecole Davis Road, School District 68 would not purchase hand sanitizers. Since then we've learned that School

District 68 is very concerned about children in dry portables and is purchasing hand sanitizers at least until all children are inoculated against the swine flu. This short-term only purchase comes in spite of a recommendation by Health Canada and medical health officers that all children should have non-compromised continuous access to handwashing facilities to reduce transmission of other bacteria and viruses.

As the school grows, it is increasingly difficult to support activities. By next year, our undersized gym (capacity 249) will not allow a whole school assembly. The gym is already too small to support full intermediate classes from participating in gym activities and league games. No change-room prevents children from changing into gym strip or washing after exercise. For our 2008 Christmas function, we relied on the kindness of our secondary school to allow Ecole Davis Road to use their drama room. While hot lunches remain popular with students and parents (and are an important fundraiser), PAC has to order in food for hot lunches or cook hot dogs in plug-in slow cookers as there are no kitchen facilities available for use. The school fruit and vegetable program fridge and products have to be stored in the Kindergarten classrooms.

So why is nothing concrete on the horizon? After the last school board election, the new board voted down the Facilities Plan that would have seen \$68 million injected into SD 68 and a new school building for Ecole Davis Road. The school board has only ranked Ecole Davis Road as number three on their preferred priority list for seismic upgrades

Already, 88 children have no ready access to running water in the portables where they learn and eat.

behind South Wellington (student population 69) and Cilaire (student population 204). These two schools in Nanaimo have a lower audit score (48% South Wellington and 40% Cilaire) than Ecole Davis Road (60%). In Nanaimo-area schools, however, there remains under-utilized space, whereas in Ladysmith, schools are operating at over 110% of their capacity.

According to a letter from the Ministry of Education (August 2008), Ecole Davis Road is a high priority due to space needs but because of ranking and limited capital funding, it has not been chosen for renovation or renewal. In my opinion, until the underutilized space in Nanaimo is dealt with or Ecole Davis Road moves up the preferred priority list, or until a separate facilities renewal plan for Ladysmith schools is finally submitted (because it's geographically quite far from Nanaimo-area schools), a new school building will remain just an idea. It's past time that Ecole Davis Road was replaced. Are any decision-makers listening?

Karen Fediuk is Parent Advisory Council chair, Ecole Davis Road School, Ladysmith.



Portables at Ecole Davis Road Elementary, Ladysmith.

School-community partnerships

Strengthening the web of support for children and youth now and in the future

By Denise Buote

Over the years the role of the school has changed dramatically as we are now called upon to address not only the academic needs of children and youth, but also the mental and physical well-being of youth. In BC, much work has been done in this regard. For example, along with the state of Illinois, BC has been a leader in addressing the social-emotional side of learning through the implementation of the social responsibility framework. In the area of physical well-being, efforts to move toward healthy food choices and increased physical activity in our schools have demonstrated the importance that we place on encouraging healthy living.

But schools are not in a position to meet the needs of children and youth without the support of other organizations. Educators are already stretched to the limit in terms of their time as they work within their diverse classrooms of students. Furthermore, it is not possible for teachers to have the skills and expertise to educate students about a wide range of issues in our increasingly complex world. In working toward providing students with additional education and services from outside the school comes a tremendous opportunity to strengthen the web of support that young people can draw upon to facilitate their positive development.

Growing awareness of the benefits of school-community partnerships is rapidly emerging throughout North America as we realize that everyone has a stake in positive youth development. With the increased recognition that schools are feeling tremendous pressure, stakeholders have encouraged schools and community organizations to work in partnership in order to more effectively meet the needs of students and their families (Anderson-Butcher,

2004). I would like to very briefly highlight three such school-community partnerships that work to offer prevention/intervention programs throughout BC. These three programs are ones in which I have been involved as an external evaluator and through this role have evaluated the great benefit these programs have on participants.

The *Violence Is Preventable* (VIP) program, developed by the British Columbia/Yukon Society of Transition Houses (BCYSTH), is a school-based program in which trained Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) counsellors work with schools to offer universal domestic violence prevention education to both students and educators. These CWWA counsellors also run psycho-educational intervention groups in schools for children and youth who have been exposed to domestic violence. Eighty-five percent of educators who participated in the evaluation of the program, indicated that as a result of the VIP training, they feel more able to recognize and support children exposed to domestic violence. Youth who participated in the universal education awareness presentations reported high levels of learning about what domestic violence looks like, the negative impact, and where to go for help should they or someone they know need supports or services.

The *Respectful Relationships* (R+R) program, developed by SWOVA Community Development and Research Society (Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse), is a comprehensive anti-violence program for students in Grades 7-11. Each of the four modules, which build upon one another, consist of 12 sessions that are delivered to students by a trained community-based facilitation team. Through a dynamic interactive style, youth explore a number of issues such as bullying, media influence, harassment, homophobia, and racism. This past school year, seven school districts had schools involved in the program. Provincial findings demonstrated statistically significant

positive growth from pre- to post-program in several areas related to social responsibility, for example, civic mindedness, social consciousness, empathy, and non-violent conflict resolution.

The *British Columbia Cancer Agency (BCCA) Prevention Programs* uses a grassroots community-based approach to promote and educate about cancer prevention. With 20 Cancer Prevention Co-ordinators (CPCs) working in communities throughout the province, they educate children, youth, and adults on the five main cancer risk factors and the fact that more than 50% of cancers are preventable. This approach, unique to North America, centres on CPCs being responsive to the needs of communities and adapting the way they provide this education. Preliminary findings from surveys with secondary school students indicate that there exists a tremendous need for education around cancer prevention among young people. Feedback from adult participants at health fairs demonstrates the value that people find in having clear knowledge and directions that they can follow in their proactive efforts to keep healthy in a society where there is a significant prevalence of cancer.

With these school-community partnerships, comes not only a learning opportunity for our students but also for educators who in turn add their knowledge base. When community organizations work together, the foundation is strengthened for everyone. In the end, if we can augment the work being done by schools through partnering with community agencies, we can better equip our children and youth with effective tools and skills that can be used throughout their life. In the end, we will give them a chance to experience overall higher levels of mental and physical well-being—two critical factors for a life well-lived.

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Lady Grey Centennial Mosaic 1909–2009



On Sept. 18, 2009, just over 100 years after the opening of the original school on the Lady Grey School site, a ceremony was held to unveil the Lady Grey Centennial Mosaic. Representatives from all the sponsors pulled off the tarp covering the mosaics to the boisterous approval of the crowd. Two 4'x8' mosaics, along with a 2'x4' mosaic with a bronze donor plaque in the centre, adorn the east gym wall of the school.

The mosaic, a creation of artists Pierrette Robinson and Donna Williams (Between Friends Mosaic), features school life in 1909 and

2009. The mosaic is mostly composed of tile, rock, and clay. The mosaic designs included input from the Lady Grey School community, Golden Zone school trustees, and the community along with help from Colleen Palumbo and the Golden Museum. Two designs were drawn up for each era and all the Lady Grey community stakeholders voted on their preferred design. The border of the mosaics incorporates tiles created by the students and staff at Lady Grey under the direction of the two artists. Each tile is very individual and represents some of the things

that Lady Grey School means to them. A unique feature of the mosaics is that the faces and hands of the people are sculptured from clay giving the art a 3-D appearance.

The original school was opened by Governor General Earl Grey and his wife Lady Grey who were touring through BC at the time. These mosaics will be a great visual reminder of the school site, which has served the community of Golden for over 100 years.

Ian Robinson, principal, Lady Grey Elementary School, Golden.

How to foster young philosophers

Welcome to my classroom, where kids are never too small to think big



By Tiffany Poirier

(Excerpt from article published in *The Tyee*, on September 8, 2009)

When you picture a philosopher, who do you see? A white-bearded, toga-wearing Athenian? The classic professor type, hunched over stacks of essays in a university office? Do you imagine someone pretentious sitting at a café, smoking a pipe while expounding his views of existence?

How about eight-year-old Kelsey with grass-stained knees and a drink carton, which she plops into the recycling bin?

"I think the meaning of life,"

Kelsey told me, "is to play, have fun, but be good to Mother Nature."

As an elementary school teacher, I have witnessed children doing philosophy, and the process always amazes and inspires me. I remember facilitating a particularly spirited session with Grade 3 students. We explored the question "What would be your perfect playground?"

During this dialogue, talk moved naturally from listing the basic features of a fantasy playground (like lots of swings, cotton-candy machines, bumper cars, etc.) to eventually the ethical and meta-physical realms. For example, the students wondered aloud, "How should we solve conflicts on the perfect playground?" and "Is it possible to be perfect?"

Following up this discussion, my students worked in teams to design and build 3D models of their versions of the perfect playground. They wrote and presented short speeches explaining the philosophical significances of their choices. For example, Immanuel wrote, "I put in lots of ramps to help kids who use wheelchairs because I think a playground is perfect only if all kids can play on it."

So often the problems and solutions of children can be microcosms for those of the larger world. Much of our discussion on the perfect playground was philosophically rich and would apply to a discussion on an ideal society. For example, students reasoned that, "We should create a place where no one would get hurt... where everyone got a fair turn... where there was enough of everything to go around."

I have found that by way of analogy to their immediate experiences, children begin to meaning-

fully address abstract issues. And through their eyes, we adults learn to see our world afresh.

Of course my pint-sized philosophers aren't as rigorous in their practice as their university-trained counterparts. Still, their philosophical efforts are valuable since they are the first pieces of a larger puzzle. People learn to walk before they run. Through increased exposure young people become more versed in the procedures of a community of inquiry. They become more fluent in the language of logic, more adept at uncovering their own views, and more creative and confident in their self-expression.

That is why I wrote *Q Is for Question: An ABC of Philosophy*, an illustrated children's book to inspire philosophical discussions on a variety of topics, published this spring (www.qisforquestion.com).

And, it is why I foster philosophical exploration in my classroom.

Although it can be helpful to look at what eminent philosophers have said on certain issues, I rarely pull out a classical text. I have found that, at the elementary level, it is often better to help the students dive right in and actually do philosophy themselves through discussion.

As a teacher, I take on the role of discussion facilitator, letting students engage in philosophical dialogue about issues that are important to them. Through this process, I aim to scaffold students' learning in acquiring the skills of effective inquiry.

We may think of the practices of a good elementary philosophy teacher as similar to those of a good physical education teacher in some ways.

For example, when teaching basketball, the good PE teacher doesn't only lecture from a podium about bygone sports heroes, doesn't assign overly complex readings from sport annuals, doesn't hotdog and slam-dunk the ball, yell discouragements from the bleachers, or force kids to strain unsafely beyond their capabilities. A good PE teacher wouldn't do things that inhibit learning and hurt the students—and neither would a good philosophy teacher.

Rather, in both cases, the good teacher takes a hands-on, student-focused approach. She or he lays down the ground rules and safety

procedures, offers a few examples, sets up the court, and ultimately turns the game over to the students. Finally, a good teacher provides support from the sidelines and helps students to meaningfully debrief the event when it's over.

In the case of basketball, these teaching strategies help students develop a life-long appreciation for sport, strategies for self-improvement, and teamwork. And in the case of philosophy, these strategies help children develop skills to live an examined life, which as Socrates said, is the only one worth living.

Still, I have encountered skeptics who say children needn't bother with philosophy at school. Given that it is the job of a philosopher to anticipate and answer her or his skeptics, in an upcoming article, I will answer a collection of possible concerns about doing philosophy with children, as well as offer some practical tips on teaching philosophy in the regular classroom.

Tiffany Poirier is a Surrey elementary school teacher.

Some tips on doing philosophy with children

- Do create a safe atmosphere for children to share their ideas.
- Do weave philosophy into the regular curriculum.
- Do look for and respond to natural "teachable moments."
- Do let children have a choice in the questions they debate.
- Do draw out the philosophical significance of a child's own ideas.
- Do model skills for good inquiry.
- Do encourage students to continue class dialogues with their friends and families.
- Do read up on philosophy so you can be a better resource for your students.
- Do present a wide variety of perspectives on any given topic.
- Don't shy away from "heavy" topics, but use discretion.
- Don't affirm every opinion—some arguments are stronger than others.
- Don't allow any one voice to monopolize conversations.
- Don't emphasize your personal views; let students make up their own minds.
- Don't be afraid to let the conversation wander.

Records made, records lost: The school history puzzle

By Bob King

The Cowichan Valley Schools Heritage Society, under the encouragement of the BC Retired Teachers' Association's Education Heritage Committee is actively attempting to reassemble the lost record of early Cowichan schools. Data on former schools, their students, and staffs is being actively sought but, unfortunately, much of the record from the first school in 1863 to the Cameron Report of 1945 has not been kept. Over the past 146 years in Cowichan, 76 schools have been taken out of service. This amounts to more than one school lost every two years. For some, archival material is available, for others, very little. A few schools have even disappeared entirely with their records. Over the years, schools have survived at the whim of local economies, population shifts, and transportation changes.

The 1863 Cowichan School was raised with hand-hewn timbers crafted by the earliest settlers. This building, which also served as church and meeting place, was obsolete by the time the two colonies of Vancouver Island (1849) and British Columbia (1858) were joined in Confederation (1871). As a result of population growth, the Municipality of North Cowichan was formed in 1873. It was the first rural municipality in BC. As a result of the 1872 *Schools Act* requiring organized municipalities to administrate schools within their boundaries, North Cowichan also became one of the first five BC school districts. Remote rural schools were administered from Victoria but most had local school boards. Some information on former schools such as the builders, school plans, and some inspectors' reports can be found in the BC Archives.

Required under the *Schools Act* of the day, daily, monthly, and annual reports were to be kept by the teacher. Today, the majority of these records can not be found. While the diligent teachers of the past did the recording, those in authority failed to preserve them as historical record. A few schools burned with their records, but in most, the records were left to moulder in damp basements or were discarded to make shelf space. This tragedy affects those attempting to do

research today. If it were not for church records, family histories, newspapers, and scarce archival sources, the earliest schools would be impossible to trace. The message in all this is that current staffs should be aware of this past failure and, as a group, take positive steps to ensure that history does not repeat itself. Those of us who have retired are well aware that teaching staffs are totally involved with the here and now of education but there is a fair chance that, without scrutiny, the record made today may, in time, be lost. Safekeeping would benefit those yet to come and also current students.

If it were possible to reach further toward a collective historical goal, the creation of a local curriculum covering regional, school district, and individual schools' history could be of great long-term value. Consider that the forming of a student's bond with a school could be enhanced by an understanding of its past. Most villages, towns, cities, and rural areas have local historical societies and museums. Those people involved in local history would be delighted to provide resources to get programs started and even act as presenters. Most school districts have teams of retired teachers toiling away at school historical research or putting together collections that could be used.

One of the most important means of ensuring the historical records of schools is properly maintained is to involve the board of school trustees along with office and maintenance staff.

In Cowichan, for example, the encouragement of retired office and maintenance staff to join our society has been of great benefit. These staff are able to open doors that teaching staff can not. School boards can be especially supportive in the maintenance of the records by providing filing and storage space, even perhaps copying capability. If classrooms are being closed, why not fill them with past history?

History is being made in the now but it has to be the responsibility of those making it to ensure it is not just recorded but preserved for the future.

Bob King is president of the Cowichan Valley Schools Heritage Society (siambrwen@shaw.ca).



(top) Duncan Elementary School built in 1913. Note the wood pile; the janitor was on duty all day as the school was heated by hot water so he had to continually feed the boiler. (below) Cowichan Station Elementary School, in the 1950s before the gym was built on the front.

BC school boards at crossroads

System decay—not decline—inevitable unless boards and all their provincial partners step up to the plate

By Noel Herron

School boards now find themselves in an untenable situation as the pressure mounts to balance their books with virtually frozen budgets, increased inflationary costs, declining enrolments, new HST taxes, and the scrapping of an across-the-board multimillion dollar facilities grant by the provincial government.

Prior to this, with previous rounds of cuts (2001–03) many boards somehow managed to weather the financial storms and scrape by, but not this time round, as current cuts, or looming cuts, are too broad, too deep, and threaten the very integrity of our public school system.

Up to now many boards, especially Liberal-friendly boards, appeared to look the other way by making a variety of cuts here and there while sadly allowing the provincial government to uphold the fiction that it was “protecting public education” with adequate funding.

...with previous rounds of cuts (2001–03) many boards somehow managed to weather the financial storms and scrape by, but not this time round, as current cuts, or looming cuts, are too broad, too deep, and threaten the very integrity of our public school system.

But now it's a different ball game, as many boards will face a doubling, if not tripling, of their shortfalls over the next two or three years, as a cash-strapped Victoria continues to put the squeeze on them.

The process of destabilizing boards of education in this province is well under way.

The mask falls off the misleading BC Liberal claim that it is adequately funding education when one examines the attached shortfall listing of 27 boards by the Centre for Civic Governance. And especially, when one realizes that the government has refused on three occasions since coming to power in 2001 to provide inflationary allowances. This latter strategy amounted to an annual, built-in, cut to programs and services.

But the real wake-up call to recalcitrant school boards now comes with this year's massive, last minute, across-the-board cut of \$110 million to school maintenance and repairs.

Take the case of the Liberal-friendly Surrey Board of Education (a previous Surrey board chair is the current Liberal Minister of Children and Family Development) with this year's \$9.53 million budgetary shortfall. The Surrey board lopped six days off the school calendar this year and initiated the new position of *elementary principal/custodian* for the daytime emergency cleaning of



schools, in order to meet Victoria's budgetary cutbacks. It now finds itself with a rain-soaked Johnston Heights Secondary School after the province abruptly cancelled a previously approved \$3.5 million grant.

The board's concerns were dismissed by our new education minister, Margaret MacDiarmid, with an arrogant, “This government clearly has its priorities right.”

The Surrey situation is replicated in a variety of ways across this province as boards scramble to make last minute adjustments to their budgets.

Vancouver, for example, was forced to cancel a \$400,000 fire extinguisher check that is required by municipal regulation as well as its ongoing asbestos removal program, while the Okanagan Skaha School District has issued layoff notices to 50 staff members as a result of a \$1.3 million cut to its budget.

At the heart of this particular aspect of the debate are the issues of health, safety, and security of students in the midst of an H1N1 era.

Practical, day-to-day, problems and questions related to a combination of cleanliness, hygiene, upkeep, and maintenance are now being raised in many school communities.

Some of these are:

- Who, for example, will do the clean-up of vomit in a Grade 2 classroom, or the urine-splashed floor of a school's washroom, if the daytime “principal/custodian” is not available in a Surrey elementary school? And how about the forcing of elementary principals to do snow removal as well?
- Who is going to provide the in-class support for high-needs, special education students in North Vancouver now that this board will not provide substitutes for teacher assistants?
- Who will explain to Johnston Heights Secondary School students in Surrey why they will have to spend another winter with water dripping into their school?
- Who is going to explain to Vancouver parents that the safety check on their school's fire

extinguisher will not be done this year and, sorry, we also had to cancel the asbestos removal program in your school as well?

Certainly not the BC Liberals who have taken this province's school boards in hand, as you would a lemon, and seem determined to squeeze the last ounce of vitality and creativity out of them as the following cross-section of cuts demonstrate:

- The BC competitive sports cut of \$130,00 for secondary school athletes, widely criticized by the general public.
- Parent advisory council cuts that impact negatively on hundreds of programs in almost every school district in areas such as funding for school playgrounds, school equipment and supplies, computers, field trips, school clubs, and in some instances, school textbooks. A marked increase in parental fund-raising is anticipated as Victoria now relies more and more on parents to fund the system. This also accentuates inequality between schools.
- Cuts to intensive autism programs for children under six on the pretext that more money (a very small amount) would go to more children as a result—this cut was later rescinded.

The key question now remains: Will we be able to maintain the quality, world-class system we currently offer, or will we let the system decay continue, thus endangering the economic and social future of this province?

- A cut of \$150,000 to the Premier's Awards program, which offered scholarships to high-achieving secondary students.
- Cuts to small capital grants for childcare centres from \$5,000 to \$2,000 affecting the safety of physical space for young children.

need for strong advocacy in tough times by the provinces five key stakeholder groups. These groups are: BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, BC Teachers' Federation, BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, BC School Superintendents' Association, and the BC School Trustees Association.

The impact of the recent unprecedented letter from provincial parents, teachers, school support workers, and trustees' association outlining the negative impact of cuts on public schools will be examined in the next issue of

Our current, one-size-fits-all, provincial funding system urgently needs to be adjusted to meet changing needs and unshackled from its rigid centralized control.

Teacher: Our current, one-size-fits all, provincial funding system urgently needs to be adjusted to meet changing needs and unshackled from its rigid centralized control.

All of these groups have not just a professional but moral obligation to step up to the plate and speak out on behalf of the half million students, currently in our K–12 systems. They also have to pointedly remind this provincial government that its spring campaign slogan to “Keep BC Strong” should have both meaning and substance if it is to retain its rapidly vanishing credibility within the education community.

Make no mistake about it; we are facing not just decline, but decay, of one of this province's key institutions, namely, our public school system.

Noel Herron is a former Vancouver school principal and school trustee.

A second article on school boards will appear in the next issue of *Teacher*.

2009–10 Preliminary budget shortfalls in 27 boards of education

8 (Kootenay Lake)	\$600,000
20 (Kootenay-Columbia)	\$476,500
22 (Vernon)	\$2.7 million
23 (Central Okanagan)	\$3 million
33 (Chilliwack)	\$4 million
36 (Surrey)	\$9.3 million
37 (Delta)	\$3 million
38 (Richmond)	\$4.2 million
39 (Vancouver)	\$7.12 million
40 (New Westminster)	\$3.147 million
41 (Burnaby)	\$1.75 million
42 (Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows)	\$3 million
43 (Coquitlam)	\$4.141 million
44 (North Vancouver)	\$3.2 million
45 (West Vancouver)	\$1.3 million
51 (Boundary)	\$910,000
57 (Prince George)	\$2.2 million
61 (Greater Victoria)	\$500,000
62 (Sooke)	\$800,000
63 (Sanich)	\$3.644 million
67 (Okanagan Shaha)	\$1.74 million
68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)	\$2 million
70 (Port Alberni)	\$753,000
71 (Comox Valley)	\$726,397
73 (Kamloops Thompson)	\$4.3 million
79 (Cowichan Valley)	\$1.6 million
83 (North Okanagan Shuswap)	\$950,000

The above list of shortfalls in 27 boards of education was compiled by the Centre for Civic Governance. It was compiled from school board documents and reports in local newspapers and filed as of May 5, 2009.

• Delaying, for four years, the introduction of all-day Kindergarten programs with the consequent loss of progress for thousands of students plus the long-range negative impact on the provincial economy.

• Cuts to community-based supports and services to schools, i.e., childcare workers, performing arts groups, and preschool literacy programs.

• The cut to boards' facilities grants will, however, have the most far-reaching and multiplier effect. This will involve staff layoffs, program downsizing or cancellation (depending on how tightly squeezed the board in question is) in areas as diverse as learning assistance, special needs, regular classroom support (no teacher on call or substitute for classroom assistants when they are ill), English-as-a-second-language, counselling programs, and, especially, professional development workshops and in-service.

The list goes on and on, as do the cuts—some large, some small—with a full listing of PAC cuts not available publicly until July 2010. Stealth, reversals, and obfuscation have characterized the two-month release of information by various ministries.

The key question now remains: Will we be able to maintain the quality, world-class system we currently offer, or will we let the system decay continue, thus endangering the economic and social future of this province?

Where do we go from here?

With one, two, and possibly three more years of cuts, increased taxes, continued downloading, and post-Olympic debt, not forgetting the cumulative effect of previous cuts, the situation appears grim indeed.

What if Victoria continues with the false economy of withholding next year's facilities grant from school boards? This would amount to deeper cuts to core programs and services for students with irreparable damage to their future.

Faced with today's mounting problems and the darkening horizon ahead, there is an urgent

Secondary school shop class

By Lance Read

While visiting my English nephew's high school in small town Tring, north of London, I saw shop classes full of hand-tools, modern power-tools, low and hi-tech milling machines, plastics molders, and computerized mini-lathes. Meanwhile, here in BC although there are little gems of shop classes scattered around the province, their funds are being eroded and siphoned away as if it is the last thing our kids need to learn.

Since the mid-1980s, education journals touted preparing kids for the computerized, high-tech world as we headed further away from the industrial society. We shifted funding toward computer literacy and away from shop classes. We created a generation of kids with heads full of facts for SAT regurgitation, who can't hammer a nail or do anything useful with their hands away from the computer keyboard.

We've come to rely heavily on the hand-skills of the Asians. The problem with this is that the Asians are in Asia and of no use to us when our transit buses need fixing, our porch deck needs replacing, our bathroom plumbing is due for an overhaul, or the washing machine starts making that funny squeaking noise.

We've lost touch with our stuff. What ordinary people—your grandfolds—once made, we now buy; what they once fixed we have repaired, or more commonly just replaced. When it comes to hand skills, we've become insanely stupider. Until recently, we expected appliances and power tools to come with a blown-up parts diagram and

...who can't hammer a nail or do anything useful with their hands away from the computer keyboard.

schematics but now they arrive with esoteric fasteners for a tool we don't even own as if we dare not even think of exploring a possible simple repair. "And did you want the extended warranty with that?" is a huge money maker for Future-type shops. Thankfully for the few remaining handy-folk, repair manuals are usually available online somewhere.

We've forgotten that productive labour is the foundation of all prosperity and encourage our kids to go for the moneyed, Wall Street meta-work, trafficking in surplus dollars skimmed from other people's actual hard work. With the collapse of Wall Street, Bay Street, and London's Square Mile, knowledge workers will become permanently redundant and it becomes mandatory to teach more students to learn to make a useful living with their hands.

Technical school enrolment today

includes a fast growing population of four-year knowledge degree students who are returning to learn marketable trade skills. Here in BC, for the most part, BCIT and certified community college grads find jobs while more and more university grads are unemployed. My own son spent time in engineering at UVic before switching to BCIT and VVI to become Red-Seal certified as a fire-protection (sprinkler) system technician, which entailed basic blueprint reading, pipe fitting, electricals, and many other hand skills as well as a good whack of brain work. My daughter's partner, a top academic student, chose BCIT to become a top-notch mechanic.

There is nothing wrong with an adequate number of young people studying to be a neurosurgeon, engineer, teacher, concert pianist, or computer programmer if that is their true interest, bent, and talent *but* there is great harm in not encouraging our kids to learn hand skills and enter the skilled labour trade professions.

A case in point

I am very proud that one of my own students, Bree Weir, chose to teach shop over any of the many other career choices she would have excelled at. Weir was brilliantly creative in every area of computers from desktop publishing and website development to animation. She was our yearbook editor and school website steward. She played most sports and mentored classmates in every area of study. She was also a star tech-ed student at Citadel Middle School run by the great Ian Wakeling. Bree Weir would have reached the top of any profession she chose from law to surgery, from mechanics to engineering, but she chose BCIT and UBC education and followed in her father's footsteps (Burnaby South shop teacher Glyn Weir), to assure us there will be someone in future to repair our stuff.

I strongly encourage more parents to see the light. We'll always need electricians, plumbers and house framers, welders, mechanics, and pipefitters. How many office workers will we need now that the phony Wall Street world is gone?

It is interesting to note that no BC private school offers, nor has facilities for, hand-skill shop courses; they are all about academic university prep. It is therefore incumbent upon public schools to accept their responsibility in this ever-more important area of study. Let the private schools focus on areas of study which are becoming ever more useless.

Lance Read is a retired BC teacher.

Note: Some concepts gleaned from *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, Matthew B. Crawford, 2009. I highly recommend this book as mandatory reading for the BC Minister of Education and all school trustees.

BCTF Advantage program marketplace

Many of you had the opportunity to meet the principal partners in the Advantage Program at this year's AGM, and more recently, at Summer Conference. BCAA, Industrial Alliance Pacific, Ellis Mortgages, and Daniel Lavery Realty, were present at those venues to meet members and explain their offerings.

However, the Advantage Program is now in the process of developing a rather different side to its offerings. On the homepage, under the masthead, are several navigational links (Google BCTF Advantage Program). Have a look at what's new in the "Marketplace."

Under this link, the Advantage Program is sponsoring discounts and incentives offered by businesses throughout the province—available to all Advantage Program members. The Advantage Program Subcommittee: Jeff Dunton, (Abbotsford), Laurence Greeff (Langley), and Drusilla Wilson (Maple Ridge) have been working hard to launch the marketplace offerings, and to begin the process of attracting businesses that have a sincere interest in offering discounts and incentives to our Advantage Program participants.

Some of the offers available by Marketplace partners will be

available province-wide, purchases being made online. Others, because of the nature of the service, will be available only to those in close proximity, who can access the business directly. On the Marketplace page, members can access a direct link to the businesses.

We are very pleased to introduce this first round of new marketplace partners. All of them are businesses that have a track record of being teacher-friendly, and supportive of the work teachers do. The offerings are quite eclectic, and we hope this first group will have widespread appeal.

The subcommittee will continue its work of finding businesses to join the marketplace. However, if you are aware of local businesses, (only those not teacher-owned or operated), that would be interested in participating, please inform the program co-ordinator, Patti McLaughlin (pmclaughlin@bctf.ca).

In the meantime, please visit the website and have a look at what is available.

New partners

- *Baad Anna's Wool Shop*—eco-friendly yarns, supplies, classes
- *Black Bond Books*—Independent Booksellers in person & online
- *Bobo Baby & Bobo Kids*—manufacturers of organic/kosher baby & children's food
- *Erik Stevens, RMT*—therapeutic massage therapy
- *Etico Coffee*—purveyors of fair trade, organic coffee
- *GardenWorks*—retail garden centres providing plants, advice, home accessories
- *MD Cosmetic & Laser Clinic*—Cosmetic and Laser skin care treatments
- *SPUD*—Local, organic food delivered to your home
- *Suzanne Bell Fashions*—innovative plus-size women's fashions

Hot summer deal winner!

Congratulations to Diane Green of Powell River (School District 47), the winner of the "Hot Summer Deal" promotion through the BCTF Advantage program.

Between July 1 and September 30, every BCTF Advantage member who took advantage of Ellis Mortgages Canada's services received a \$150 gift certificate from Home Depot as well as an entry in a final draw for the Grand Prize. Diane Green won the Grand Prize of a gift certificate worth \$1,500!

The Advantage program invites you to visit the website at www.bctfadvantage.ca to check out the great deals and opportunities from all of our partners.

The screenshot shows the BCTF Advantage Program website. At the top, it says "BC Teachers' Federation Member Advantage Program". Below that, there are navigation links: "What's New", "Resorters", "Insurance", "Financial Services", "Real Estate", "Membership", and "Register Now". A red circle highlights the "Real Estate" link. Below the navigation, there's a section titled "BCTF Advantage. Everyday Benefits to Fit Your Lifestyle." with a sub-heading "Registered members of the BCTF Advantage program enjoy access to special benefits, customized products and services, and exclusive discounts on everyday purchases." There are also links for "Not an Advantage Member? Click here to find out how free registration in the BCTF Advantage program can save you time and money." Below this, there are several promotional banners: "BCTF Summer Memories Contest" with a photo of a family, "LAVRES Real Estate Solutions" with the LAVRES logo, "NEW! BCTF Mortgage Discount Program" with logos for Ellis Mortgages Canada and VERICO, and "Wish You Were Here? Contest Winner" with a photo of a sunset.

Reaching the problem child

By Robert Stelmach

What is the problem? That's often the first question. What can I do to fix it? That's often the second. There are many others I can ask: questions about grades, life at home, even choice of friends. Each of these most likely will lead to other problems, more things to fix, and certainly more questions and still more problems. Which makes me think, can I fix things for someone else? Can I truly understand what a problem child is going through, so as to make the right choices for that child? Or am I fighting a losing battle?

Perhaps, there is another way. What if I start, not by thinking of the child as a problem, but as a person, let's say a brand new friend? His name might be Jordan. So, what do I know about Jordan? This new beginning suggests a whole new series of questions. Where does he live? What does he really like to do? If he could have one wish, what would that wish be? And what can I do to encourage him to follow his dream?

Now, if my friend Jordan is particularly difficult to deal with, perhaps I could think about what colour,

plant, or animal he reminds me of, something that helps to smooth out his rough edges. When growing exotic plants or dealing with wild animals, one needs to be patient—take one step at a time. I could picture him as a young colt, a bit frisky, moody, and sometimes even cantankerous. But he is young, strong, and shows promise. It's worth the effort.

Then again, what if Jordan turns obnoxious, gets under my skin, or really pushes my buttons. Friction is inevitable, even with the best of students. However, when friction does occur, I could concentrate on a mantra, a word picture that puts difficult moments into perspective. I could think of Jordan as K2, a mountain in the Himalayas that has killed more climbers than any other.

I could think as follows: K2 is nothing more than a mountain, while Jordan is nothing more than a child. "K2 K2." The mountain has no intent to kill. "K2 K2." One minute, the sun is shining. A moment later, a sudden storm literally chokes the mountain with snow, making survival almost impossible. "K2 K2." Is this not true of Jordan as well—how he changes in an instant from amiable to outrageous, leaving me feeling the dagger of his words or

eyes? "K2 K2."

What I need to realize and think about is that the dagger is not meant for me, but is pointed at the reflection of what really bothers him, something that has absolutely nothing to do with me. Like the storm, his anger is only an act of nature. And it is up to me to protect myself from that storm. And so I say, "K2 K2." It is through my own strength of will that I will survive and walk away from this battle of wills unscathed.

Helping a child like Jordan is not easy. There will always be setbacks. There will even be failures. It is also true that helping troubled kids is not for everyone. But, the rewards are as great as those for climbing K2 and surviving, or turning a wild horse into a winner. Though in cases like Jordan, the rewards are usually silent and within, the gift is greatly worth giving. I know from experience. I was once like Jordan.

And who am I in this process, the teacher or the Kid Whisperer? I prefer to think of myself as the latter. Teaching can wait until I have won Jordan's trust.

Robert Stelmach, (aka MaxTell), troubadour, author, and musician. www.maxtell.ca.



BC schools echo UK experience

A conversation with the National Union of Teachers (NUT)

By Ritchie Kendrick

I was in England recently for my daughter's convocation and had the opportunity to meet with the National Union of Teachers (NUT) regional secretary of the Southwest Region, Andy Woolley, and his regional officer, colleague Peter Sargent at their office in Exeter, Devon. The NUT represents 22,000 teachers over six counties and the Channel Islands, which is about 45% of the current teaching workforce in the region. What follows is an excerpt from the conversation between Woolley and me. The similarities in issues experienced by both teachers in the UK and BC school systems is striking as you will see in this and subsequent excerpts from their meeting.

I have often wondered if someone in our BC Ministry of Education is keeping a watchful eye on the educational developments in England in regards to the delivery and implementation of programming because we have adopted many similarities with the current English system. The use of standardized tests and the ranking of schools is a huge issue for both of us. Your campaign to oppose and eventually boycott Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) is parallel to our campaign on the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSAs) and there's also the issue of downloading more onto teachers and introducing new programs or curriculum.

That's a common thing, sometimes you get things introduced that go back, or around in a cycle, every 10, 20, or 30 years. You know long-serving teachers are thinking—been there, done that. Recently, however, it seems that for everything that comes in, nothing goes out the other end...and that has been creating more and more stress and pressure on our teachers.

Unfortunately it seems that stress is also an issue shared on both sides of the pond.

That's a key issue for us. A lot of teachers have come to recognize it and a few things have improved. There has been a big case taken to the House of Lords by the solicitors who work in-house for us in this office and it established levels of liability for managers; that managers have a duty to recognize stressful working conditions. The employee could win a case for workplace stress without having to say, "I am stressed, please do something about it," if it should have been evident to the manager.

So this has put more onus on school headteachers (principals) to actually recognize that what they are asking their teachers to do is unreasonable.

Yes, to actually understand that for certain people it should be obvious for a good manager to turn around and see that this person is not functioning as they used to. It is still difficult to prove because you do have to prove significant causality. We have been fortunate to win a case in our area, recently but unfortunately it hasn't set precedent and we will have to deal with each case as it comes. But it is significant because we are able to publicize the fact (the court decision) within the local authorities making school leaders more aware of their responsibilities.

What are the biggest catalysts for stress for teachers in your region?

A growing issue is stress, related to reports by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education). Ofsted is often used as an excuse to push people out of the school or to bully teachers into doing things the headteacher wants them to do to reflect what they want in the next Ofsted report. That's one pressure where some say I've had enough of this. This is also a major contributor to a very concerning phenomenon at the beginning of many teachers' professional lives—it is an issue that after three or four years almost 50%

of new teachers leave the profession. There's this young person who comes in with the vigour to change things, to bring things on and get things going, who has enthusiasm and drive to start, but that is sometimes driven out of them from the pressures in the system. And then there are people who have been long-term, say 50+, who are impacted by the pace of change or pressure to change their practice... they're often not getting the support or appropriate professional development.

We have a very similar problem that we call the five-year window. If you survive the first five years, the chances of you becoming a long-term teacher are greater. But many youngsters feel the pressure in the system and part of this may be precipitated through the lack of

mentorship and other initial supports. You jump out of university, get thrown into the deep end, and away you go.

The youngsters didn't come into the profession to get rich but what they now see is their colleagues they went to university with, their cohort, out-earning them and the gap growing. But their former student friends also have the time to spend it. Their friends do their job and go home whereas teachers find themselves working all hours. Time is the real factor.

In future issues of *Teacher* our conversation explores pupil behaviour, the NUT campaign to boycott Standard Assessment Tests, and more.

Ritchie Kendrick is an assistant director, BCTF Field Service Division.



(L-R) BCTF's Ritchie Kendrick, Regional Officer Peter Sargent and Regional Secretary Andy Woolley, National Union of Teachers (NUT), Southwest Region, Exeter, Devon.

Are you interested in becoming a BCTF-endorsed candidate for the College of Teachers' Council?

The next round of elections for the BC College of Teachers' Council, under the new provisions of the *Teaching Profession Act*, will take place in the Spring of 2010.

The BC College of Teachers is the regulatory body of the teaching profession in BC. The college has a focused mandate: teacher education, teacher certification, and member discipline.

Responsibility for governing the college rests with the 20-person council. Twelve of 20 council members are elected by the membership. Eight council members are appointed by the minister of education.

The role of a council member is to make policy decisions, to make quasi-judicial decisions concerning individuals and institutions, to represent the college on various external committees, and to communicate with members. Further information about the college can be found at the following link: www.bcct.ca.

Elections are held in four of the 12 geographic zones each year. The term of office runs for three years, beginning August 1 through July 31. This year, elections will be held in the following college election zones:

- **Zone 4 Kootenay:** Arrow Lakes, Boundary, Cranbrook, Creston Valley, Fernie, Kimberley, Kootenay Columbia, Kootenay Lake, Nelson, Revelstoke, Windermere
- **Zone 5 Okanagan:** Vernon, Central Okanagan, Okanagan Similkameen, Okanagan Skaha
- **Zone 6 Upper Fraser Valley:** Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Fraser Cascade, Mission

- **Zone 11 South Coast:** North Vancouver, Sea to Sky, Sunshine Coast, Powell River, West Vancouver.

The BCTF has established a policy that provides for the zonal selection of a BCTF-endorsed candidate in each zone where an election is being held. Only active BCTF members are eligible for BCTF endorsement as candidates in the BC College of Teachers' elections.

Each local has the right to select one nominee. This nominee must undertake to abide by the endorsement process. Once a local has nominated a candidate, the name of the candidate will be forwarded to the BCTF staff co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that each local in the zone conducts a vote to determine the zone's BCTF-endorsed candidate by secret ballot in accordance with BCTF procedures.

The BCTF will publicize, among members, the names of all BCTF-endorsed candidates. The BCTF provides funding to assist local nominees in seeking to become the BCTF-endorsed candidate in a college zone. The BCTF also provides funding to assist endorsed candidates in the college elections.

If you are interested in being considered as your local nominee for the BCTF-endorsed candidate in one of the college zones where an election is being held, please contact your local president as soon as possible.

Jinny Sims, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division.

Health and safety

Violence prevention

By Karen Langenmaier

It's not okay to be hit, kicked, or threatened at work

Teachers need to understand that they are workers in a work environment just as those who work in construction, sawmills, offices, and hospitals are workers. This means that they have the right to a safe worksite and even though they work with children who are often smaller, they cannot accept being hit, kicked, scratched, spit upon, or threatened at work.

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Reporting

The information from zone meetings, e-mails, and phone calls, identifies that the biggest issue of why members continue to be hurt at work is because of not reporting or incorrectly reporting an incident.

Reporting is the first step in ensuring that the worker nor anyone else is injured or exposed to an occupational disease. Not reporting or not following the correct steps could potentially result in re-injury or injuring another person. We do nobody any favours by not reporting.

What to do if you are hurt on the job

1. Report to the first-aid attendant.
2. Report to the administrator and complete the WorkSafeBC 6A form.
3. Inform your health and safety or staff rep.
4. Report to WorkSafeBC via Teleclaim at 1-888-WORKERS.
5. If your claim is denied, contact the BCTF WCB advocate at 604-871-1890.

Remember that violence is a reportable incident.

What happens after you report?

1. Members of the site-based joint health-and-safety committee should investigate the incident.
2. A risk assessment must be done for all the workers who work with the offending person. The risk assessment should identify who all the people are, what the risks are, where these people are at risk, and when an incident may occur.
3. A safety plan must be written using the information from the risk assessment for each worker to ensure the safety of the worker and their family, if appropriate. *A behaviour, intervention, or safety plan for the student is not the same as a safety plan for the worker.*
4. A training and review plan must be in place to ensure that all the workers receive training in the safety plans with an established review schedule to determine if the plan is working.

Remember, you are a worker with the right to a safe and healthy workplace. The mantra of prevention, prevention, prevention should constantly run through our heads.

Karen Langenmaier is a BCTF health and safety officer.

klangenmaier@bcctf.ca

Send us your funny classroom stories

No matter what grade or subject you teach, there will inevitably be those unpredictable funny moments that will be remembered and related for many years after. We would like you to submit your funny, unforgettable teaching story.

From the entries we receive, we will choose three to publish in an upcoming issue of *Teacher* and send a copy of the much-sought-after

"Dancing in the Park" cartoon printed on art-quality paper to each of the chosen entrants.

Please send in your entries by January 21, 2010, to David Denyer, ddenyer@bcctf.ca and Kathleen Smith at ksmith@bcctf.ca or fax to 604-871-2289 or mail to: David Denyer, Editor, *Teacher* newsmagazine, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2.





Let boys be boys

By Alex Sanchez

Sex. The word elicits immediate attention. I know: I'm a novelist, a spinner of words. My books have been challenged by parents, yanked by schools from summer reading lists, and banned by libraries because—although my novels aren't graphic—the teen characters I write about explore sexuality, sexual orientation, and, yes, sex.

I don't write about this stuff to sell more books. Contrary to popular belief, sex doesn't always sell. In the teen fiction world, controversial issues and adverse publicity can, and do, limit book sales.

I don't write about this stuff to sell more books. Contrary to popular belief, sex doesn't always sell. In the teen fiction world, controversial issues and adverse publicity can, and do, limit book sales. So why continue to write stories revolving around teen sexuality?

I write the books I wish I'd had available when I was growing up, books that would've told me, "It's okay to be who you are." And one part of who I was then was a very normal teenage kid trying to sort out his sexuality. Sexuality. It's how we experience and express ourselves as beings characterized and distinguished by sex. In the 1970s when I was a teen, sex education programs were limited to the biology of reproduction and the ravages of VD.

Judy Blume's groundbreaking novels that speak openly and honestly about teen sexuality were just starting to come out. There were no books that portrayed teenage boys like me: struggling with same-sex attraction, questioning my sexuality, wanting to love and be loved. I thought I was the only one in the world. After school, alone in my room, I would tell myself, "Stop feeling this way! I refuse to let this happen."

Such were the dark ages before *Will & Grace*.

In some ways, the world has changed a lot since then. Young people today grow up watching gay and lesbian characters on TV, hear news reports of US Supreme Court sodomy rulings, and engage in debates about same-sex marriage. And yet, even in today's world, I receive daily e-mails from young readers struggling to accept themselves, harassed and bullied at

school, hearing ministers condemn gay people, and fearing that their parents would kick them out if they found out their secret.

Decades after I was a teen, most school sex-ed programs continue to focus on biology and reproduction. Abstinence-only programs in some schools approach sexuality in the spirit of a "just say no" antidrug campaign, treating sex as if it were equivalent to some illicit substance that society must control. Little, if any, discussion is given to gender identity or sexual orientation.

Only an exceptional few comprehensive school programs address sexuality as a fundamental part of being alive—a human experience that entails risks but can also yield tremendous benefits, that may have painful consequences but can also be enormously rewarding. Instead, we far too often abandon young people to figure it all out on their own.

In my novels, I especially focus on high-school boys because (a) I'm a guy, (b) high school was a wicked, tough time for me, and (c) I feel a particular empathy for the struggles of teen boys.

We know that society often imparts a message of "boys don't cry." But from what I've observed, the message is actually far broader than that: boys shouldn't feel, period. Whereas girls are allowed a wide range of emotional expression, boys are given the message that they shouldn't show or feel any weakness, whether it be hurt, loneliness, sadness, grief, or even too much joy.

What's left? Anger—directed either toward others or turned inward toward the self. Such is the "box" that we confine guys to. Is it any wonder that males: commit suicide about four times more often than females; constitute over 90% of juvenile and adult prison populations; comprise a majority of alcoholics, drug addicts, and homeless of all ages; have lower levels of university attendance and life expectancy? The list goes on, including the striking fact that nearly every school shooter has been a male.

One of the tasks of growing up male is figuring out, "What does it mean to be a man?" In our era of single moms, absent dads, latchkey kids, and an average of six hours per day spent by teen boys in front of a screen, we're largely abandoning a generation to figure out how to be a man from violent, misogynistic computer games and gangsta' rap videos, Internet porn sites, and endlessly gun-filled TV shows—media that fuel the anger boys feel.

Accompanying the violence and misogyny is an equally strong dose of homophobia. In a majority of schools, religious and ethnic slurs are no longer tolerated, but homophobic remarks remain commonplace.

And antigay comments aren't limited to hurting gay and lesbian students. At some point almost every boy gets called queer, fag, or worse. To imply somebody is gay serves as one of the most effective and pervasive forms of bullying and harassment among boys. It's a way of keeping males inside their box.

When adults allow homophobia to persist, we're hurting the straight students alongside the gay ones—and there are 10 times as many straight students. Homophobia hurts everybody—gay and straight.

Some individuals believe that to address homophobia would imply condoning or promoting homosexuality. Nonsense.

When adults allow homophobia to persist, we're hurting the straight students alongside the gay ones—and there are 10 times as many straight students. Homophobia hurts everybody—gay and straight.

The reality is that young people today already know gay people. They have gay or lesbian friends, relatives, parents; they regularly see gay people in the media; they hear US President-elect Barack Obama include gay people in his victory speech. What addressing homophobia and issues of gender and sexual identity actually promotes is a climate of inclusiveness in which all young people can feel safe to be themselves regardless of their differences.

Every one of us is different in some way, but we are all essentially the same. I've learned this from my readers, most of whom, it turns out, are straight. Each, in his or her own way, can identify with characters feeling different, wanting to love and be accepted, coming to terms with sexuality, and trying to sort it all out.

Alex Sanchez was the keynote speaker at the BCTF's Regional Social Justice Conference held in Abbotsford in February 2009. He spoke about the intersectionality of faith and sexuality. He is the author of *Rainbow Boys*, *The God Box*, and other award-winning teen novels. AlexSanchez.com

For resources to combat homophobia in schools go to: bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106

Child brides portrayed in teen novel

By Janet Nicol

"Glancing around, I notice how many curious people there are, watching me. Already I've been asked by a nosy clerk if I'm one of Daddy's wives or his daughter."

These are the self-conscious thoughts of Celeste, who is not your typical 15-year-old heroine. Celeste is a member of the Movement, growing up in a polygamous community called Unity. She is the central character in *Sister Wife*, a teen novel written by Vancouver author and former teacher, Shelley Hrdlitschka. The story is based on a controversial break-away Mormon sect in Bountiful, British Columbia.

"I read about the community and it didn't feel right," the author says in an interview over coffee at Lonsdale Quay, near her home on Vancouver's North Shore. "These girls aren't old enough to make a choice about marriage."

In Hrdlitschka's story, as in the existing community in BC's interior, a patriarchal world based on religious dogma prevails, and girls as young as 14 are assigned a husband, forced to leave school early, and endure many pregnancies while sharing their husband with multiple wives.

Hrdlitschka says her inspiration for the novel came from runaway sect member Debbie Palmer's tell-all book, *Keep Sweet*, and Daphne Bramham's news columns in *The Vancouver Sun*.

Orca, a local publisher, hastened the printing of *Sister Wife*, Hrdlitschka says, after legal prosecutions began unfolding last year in an American polygamous community with links to Bountiful. Since then, the BC government has charged two local sect leaders. Don't expect an uncomplicated black and white story in *Sister Wife* because Hrdlitschka wants her readers to think for themselves. "I like the grey areas," she says.

While Celeste questions her own faith, in this story, her sister Nanette is a foil because she is a true believer. A third character, Tavana is portrayed as a tough young woman who has lived on the streets since she was 12. As the novel opens, Tavana is helping with the childcare and making close friends with other teens at Unity.

"I had to show an outsider's viewpoint," Hrdlitschka explains. She also had to give Celeste a way to learn about the outside world. And so Tavana represents 'normal' society—even though this society has not served her well.

The author gently but wisely guides readers through the harsh realities facing these three girls,

each character giving a first-person perspective in alternating chapters.

Hrdlitschka has a zeal for teen literature and is part of a trio of successful teen writers she met in her writing group long ago. She also attends a teen book club. "This is my genre," she admits.

Sister Wife is Hrdlitschka's eighth novel, and she has more coming. She is very much at ease when she visits schools to talk about her stories, having spent 10 years teaching elementary school in Delta.

"I used to read aloud to my Grade 3/4 class and I would just keep reading and forget about the time," she remembers.

That's when Hrdlitschka got interested in writing. She began with picture books but discovered getting this type of book published wasn't easy. Hrdlitschka eventually realized she had an empathy with teens' feelings, enhanced by raising three daughters, now ages 16, 20, and 23. "There's lots of drama," she says smiling.

"My readers tell me I get it right," she adds.

Hrdlitschka wrote about teen pregnancy and adoption in *Dancing Naked* before the popular Canadian movie *Juno* arrived on the scene. "I wanted to show teens there was a third option. They know about abortion or keeping the baby—but what about adoption?"

Hrdlitschka has filled a binder with e-mails from readers who appreciate her sensitive portrayal of a pregnant teen.

The feedback from readers of *Sister Wife*, also keeps coming. A teen blogger in Halifax was surprised to learn there was a polygamous community in BC. Another local teen, a 13-year old male, expressed concern for the author's safety.

"I told him I'm not worried because sect members don't read books from the outside world."

This leads her to add: "The 'lost boys' of Bountiful are worth writing about too."

Despite the troubling nature of the polygamous community, the author finds a way to deliver Celeste from a tangled world by the novel's end.

"I want to leave teens with a sense of hope," Hrdlitschka says.

Janet Nicol teaches at Killarney Secondary School, Vancouver.

Sister Wife, by Shelley Hrdlitschka. Victoria, BC: Orca, 2008. 269 pp, pbk, \$12.95. ISBN 978-1-55-143-927-3

For more about the author, visit Shelley Hrdlitschka's website at www.shelleyhrdlitschka.com/.



Need a neutral third party?

- Feeling stressed with a break down in a work relationship?
- Is a work-related dispute getting worse and you don't know what to do?
- Are you less effective as a teacher because of a conflict with a colleague?

BCTF members are entitled to access the confidential services of

trained neutral teacher-mediators who provide effective processes through the BCTF Internal Mediation Service to aid in resolving disputes among members and others. All you have to do is ask!

For more information, contact the BCTF PSID Division at 604-871-1800 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1800, e-mail pbalango@bctf.ca.

Teachers retired

Teachers who retired prior to September 30, 2009

5 Southeast Kootenay

Diane Bjorgaard
Nancy Burke
Victor Epp
William Fite
Barbara Heathfield
Sue Leonard
Pamela Pepin
Shellie Proctor
Debbie Reed
Judy Ridgway
Valdene Salant
Kathleen Smith

6 Rocky Mountain

Robyn Believeau

8 Kootenay Lake

Dane Allison
Gayle Buchner
Trudy Graham
Mary Haberstock
Christopher Hallam
Linda Hoffmann
Elizabeth Hutton
Alan Inkster
Ron Konkin
Barbara Martin
Candy Root
Gala Sly
Robert Thompson
Clements Verhoeven
Vicki-Marie Walker
Glen Whitehead
Pamela Woods
Donald Wuori

10 Arrow Lakes

Liz Chernoff
Judy Eichhorst
William Sopow

19 Revelstoke

Valerie Bellamy
Maureen Conn

20 Kootenay Columbia

Pamela Arcuri
Ingrid Baker
Garry Bock
Irene Brown
Richard Dewdney
Raymond Furlotte
Bonnie Griffith
Diane Holt
Jack Kinakin
Marlane King
Brenda Konkin
Richard Lauer
Douglas McKenzie
Astrid Pinkerton
Renice Townsend
Colene Vilene

22 Vernon

Laurie Atkinson
Patricia Couch
Janice Dale
Jean Dobson
John Fyke
Rita Gilbert
Deanne Graham
Lila Grist
Barbara Harris
Patricia Helm
John Hockey
Linda Hoover
Anne-Marie Kanester
Barbara Klopfenstein
Lyle MacWilliam
Robert Marshall
Elaine Pybus
Denis Raimbault
Heather Scott
Sonja Siddle
Shelley Thompson
Cheryl Wiles
Carol Willis
Eric Young

23 Central Okanagan

Deborah Berry
Lorne Brooks
Carol Campbell
Valorie Campbell
Harry Collier
Karen Davidson
Mairi Forsyth
Karen Gibbons
Douglas Gillett
Robert Guenette
Jeff Hastings
Robert Hewitson
Mary Inaba
Glenys Iskiw
Ralph Kneller
Marie-Paule Lacasse
Heather Lamont
Leslie Merrell
Susan Pendray
Glenn Pybus
Jody Schellenberg
Janice Schwartz
Margaret Shindelka
Beatrice Stinner

Eric Tyler
Lynn Vigar
Lynnel Weston

27 Cariboo-Chilcotin

Randolfe Brown
Salvatore Desandoli
Robert Gibb
Ella Gilbert
Norma Latin
Ellice Pearce
David Richardson
Claire Schreiner
Barbara Simser
Marilyn Turkel
Elaine Watt
Terry Wilson

28 Quesnel

Enid Bond
Judy Edberg
Paul Gotro
Antoinette Ros
Ruth Thideman

33 Chilliwack

Dawn Adams
Gary Emms
Nancy Gauthier
Donna Hawkes
Randi Hermans
Christine Huber
Thomas Lucas
George Major
June McKellar
Christine Newsome
Kenneth Pugh
Robert Rowe
Elsie Schmidt
Bernice Solheim
Merlin Solheim
Edward Soltysik
John Vander Flier
Laura Watson
Robert Wilson

34 Abbotsford

Jane Beatty
Nancy Bertrand
Clare Brooks-Higgins
Donald De Regt
James Dorgan
Margaret Farr
Fiona Hoey
Beverly Holroyd
Linda Kawaguchi
Diane Kisson
Monty Martin
Sharon Matthews
Cynthia Nikolai
Francisca Ooievaar
Geraldine Povey
David Purdy
Sharon Raine
Timothy Raine
Gary Segnoe
David Swansborough
Marilyn Tamblyn
Mary Vaughan
Carol Wiebe
Wayne Yaskow

35 Langley

Keith Allingham
Susan Anderlini
Margie Austin
Lynda Brewer
Marilyn Buyar
Mimi Chung-Hong-Hing
Mary Ann Coren
Glenn Disney
Marie Etchell
Gayle Fowler
Diane Fox
Sharlene Galbraith
Mary Gawryluk
Alan Gregson
Susan Guyot
Marilyn Habiak
Anne Heys
Paul Howell
Grant Inkster
Bradley Jones
Mark Kowalenko
Jill Lafontaine
Gregory Leino
Donna Lonneberg
Marianne MacLeod
Eileen Mahood
Carel McDonald
Irene McKaig
Karen O'Brien
Stephen Sheriff
Betty Siegel
Cynthia Silen
Charles Spurgeon
Carol Tindall
Rose-Marie Tremblay
Muriel Veen
Linda Vickberg
Anne Warneke
Jean Wiebe
Jill Wight
Gladys Willmer
Pearl Wong
Monica Zurowski

36 Surrey

Marian Allingham

Rita Appleton
Ann Belanger
Catherine Bernard
Kenneth Borrie
Jane Boyd
Gillian Brady
Judith Briscoe
Heather Bruce
Loretta Buchi
Melvin Caldwell
Marianne Calvert
Margaret Chapman
Louise Chase
William Clark
Judith Craig
Mary Davies
June Ditson
Gaitan Dupont
Linda Finch
Judith Finstad-Isaac
Barbara Fisher-Fleming
David Frankson
Elizabeth Fraser
Nancy Fryer
Doreen Greenfield
Susanna Hampson-Thorpe
Delora Harper
Gail Hayes
Nancy Hill
Ruth Homan
Helene Horban
Frederick Horton
Katherine Ide
Patricia Ingram
Helen Johnston-Poole
June Joubert
Patricia Kelley
Katherine King
Alison Kirkley
Judith Klatt
Maureen Kling
Akemi Kobayashi
Marilyn Kramer
Henry Kuan
Melanie Kuzminski
Donna Loewen
Don Look
Karen MacDonald
Maureen Mace
Joanne Matheson
Anne McClelland
Therese McElean
Susan McKenzie
Joyce McNamara
Diane McRae
Louise Michie
Marilyn Middleton
Gregory Moro
Marilyn Morris
Daryl Mytron
Darlene Nunn
Anna Ochnio
Margaret Ostroff
George Paget
Gordon Parker
Susan Poulton
Marylin Roberts
Aviva Roseman
Brian Schuppert
M. Diane Shelling
Terry Small
Ann Soon
Ellen Sorley Cook
Kay Speevak
Sherry Surcess
Maurice Tétrault
Samuel Van Ieperen
Donna Vernon
Connie Wadge
Philip Watson
Valerie Watson
Janice Watts
Carol Whitlock
Lee-Ann Winters
Ellen Wong

38 Richmond

Melanie Anastasiou
Sara Asbeek-Brusse
Aldyne Bauder
Susan Blockberger
Nadene Carline
Heather Davis
Wendy De Bucy
Anna Fung
Denise Gobbo
Kenneth Gofsky
Sandra Gooding
Judith Hagan
Dede Hamilton
Janet Healy
Dennis Henderson
Mary Hewitt
Wayne Hirayama
Karen Holden
Dennis Hoy
Robert Jackson
Judith Kootte
Kenneth Lorenz
Sheila Louie
Yee Louis
Douglas May
Genevieve Meillon
Stanley Miyazaki
Takashi Nakanishi
Nadine O'Donnell
Linda Reid
Julia Reilingh
Corinne Richter
Andrew Rosengarten
Devra Samsom
Susan Schuck
Maeva Shrieves
Roland Gerard
Ann Golinsky
Shelley Goss
Carole MacDougall
Sandra Marsden
Patricia Numata
Wendy Wilson

40 New Westminister

Helen Alford
Kalwant Biln
Isabel Bunning
Roland Gerard
Ann Golinsky
Shelley Goss
Carole MacDougall
Sandra Marsden
Patricia Numata
Wendy Wilson

41 Burnaby

Anna Ash
Victor Austin
Sharon Bacon
Helen Ballard
Charles Bell
Elizabeth Benson
Noreen Brush
Janice Smith
Pauline Stephen
Sean Sullivan
James Sully
Jill Sully
William Tong
Ian Tooley
Mary Uzelac
Susan Vlismas
Sylvaine Von Mende
Sheila Watt

44 North Vancouver

Loren Barnett
Jacqueline Corrie Best
Frances Blake
Nicola Carroll
Wing Chow
Laurie Clark
Marilyn Clevin
Deborah Crawford
Paule Desgroseilliers
Barbara Ellwood
Stephen Friday
Lynne Frith
Marilyn Gallagher
Melville Gallpen
Elizabeth Hamfeldt
Cheryl Harland
Christopher Hough
Douglas Irwin
Janice Jones
Lewis Jones
Richard Kidd
Colin MacKay
Penelope Margetson
Chelan McDonald
Asimina Morton
Beth Myers
Diana Olcen
Vernon Porter
Kenneth Philip
Shewchuk
Carol Anne Shollert
Charlotte Stevenson
Julia Thomas
Elizabeth Ward
Linda Watson

45 West Vancouver

Patricia Dixon
Gordon Ferguson
Linda Heel
Lorna Klassen
Joanne Manson
Mary Anne Massiah
Leisha Pearce
Esther Reoch
Thomas Rippon
Colleen Sunderland
Marilyn Taylor
Janeen Wallwork

46 Sunshine Coast

Janet Amberg
Leslie Berends
Janice Brunson

Mary Veltri
Gwen Wells
David Williams
Valerie Windsor
Carol Wong
Barbara Woodford
Douglas Woodroff
Florence Yee
Lynn Zuehlke

38 Richmond

Melanie Anastasiou
Sara Asbeek-Brusse
Aldyne Bauder
Susan Blockberger
Nadene Carline
Heather Davis
Wendy De Bucy
Anna Fung
Denise Gobbo
Kenneth Gofsky
Sandra Gooding
Judith Hagan
Dede Hamilton
Janet Healy
Dennis Henderson
Mary Hewitt
Wayne Hirayama
Karen Holden
Dennis Hoy
Robert Jackson
Judith Kootte
Kenneth Lorenz
Sheila Louie
Yee Louis
Douglas May
Genevieve Meillon
Stanley Miyazaki
Takashi Nakanishi
Nadine O'Donnell
Linda Reid
Julia Reilingh
Corinne Richter
Andrew Rosengarten
Devra Samsom
Susan Schuck
Maeva Shrieves
Roland Gerard
Ann Golinsky
Shelley Goss
Carole MacDougall
Sandra Marsden
Patricia Numata
Wendy Wilson

40 New Westminister

Helen Alford
Kalwant Biln
Isabel Bunning
Roland Gerard
Ann Golinsky
Shelley Goss
Carole MacDougall
Sandra Marsden
Patricia Numata
Wendy Wilson

41 Burnaby

Anna Ash
Victor Austin
Sharon Bacon
Helen Ballard
Charles Bell
Elizabeth Benson
Noreen Brush
Janice Smith
Pauline Stephen
Sean Sullivan
James Sully
Jill Sully
William Tong
Ian Tooley
Mary Uzelac
Susan Vlismas
Sylvaine Von Mende
Sheila Watt

44 North Vancouver

Loren Barnett
Jacqueline Corrie Best
Frances Blake
Nicola Carroll
Wing Chow
Laurie Clark
Marilyn Clevin
Deborah Crawford
Paule Desgroseilliers
Barbara Ellwood
Stephen Friday
Lynne Frith
Marilyn Gallagher
Melville Gallpen
Elizabeth Hamfeldt
Cheryl Harland
Christopher Hough
Douglas Irwin
Janice Jones
Lewis Jones
Richard Kidd
Colin MacKay
Penelope Margetson
Chelan McDonald
Asimina Morton
Beth Myers
Diana Olcen
Vernon Porter
Kenneth Philip
Shewchuk
Carol Anne Shollert
Charlotte Stevenson
Julia Thomas
Elizabeth Ward
Linda Watson

45 West Vancouver

Patricia Dixon
Gordon Ferguson
Linda Heel
Lorna Klassen
Joanne Manson
Mary Anne Massiah
Leisha Pearce
Esther Reoch
Thomas Rippon
Colleen Sunderland
Marilyn Taylor
Janeen Wallwork

46 Sunshine Coast

Janet Amberg
Leslie Berends
Janice Brunson

Wendy Thomson
Cynthia Waechtler
Adele Weir
Katherine Wejr
Virginia Wilkie

39 Vancouver Secondary

Muriel-Anne Averill
Gloria Baker
Barry Botsford
Peter Cawsey
Giuseppe Ferrara
Sanse Fitzpatrick
Frederick Galloway
Patricia Goldberg
Lavana Heel
Peter Johnson
Victoria Jury
Shane Kenneally
Sandra Koven
Claire Lloyd
Mary Loder
Anne Mandrella
Jean Mickelson
David Myles
Harold Neufeld
Leane Neufeld
John O'Neill
Barbara Raphael
Dennis Repel
Brent Rykiss
Joanne Sawatzky
Eric Schilperoot
Susan Stewart
Jarmila Tegart
Marcia Toms
Ronald Turner

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Lewis Jones
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Janeen Wallwork

46 Sunshine Coast

Janet Amberg
Leslie Berends
Janice Brunson

Fay Mah
Bertie Mathis
Charles McCafferty
Moira McRae
Faye Meek
Ronni Morris
Susan O'Reilly
Valerie Paley
Geraldine Phillips
Linda Raskewicz
Jerald Reed
Patricia Smith
Christopher Taylor
John Toews
Marie Wright

43 Coquitlam

Mary Alsop
Cheryl Angell
James Block
Douanne Brown
Sharon Cairney
Lee Coffman
Daniel Collett
George DeVita
Patricia DeVita
Richard Dixon
Lois Elke
Elsa Fogale
Stephen Fraser
Arlis French
Sherry Fulton
Joan Gagnon
Dianna Gilbreath
Lucy Goodbrand
Blake Handford
May Henry
Kerry Heywood
Patricia Jackson
Dennis Joel
Odile King
Karalee Larsen
Marie Rose Lortie
Maureen Luckhart
Marilyn McKay
Karin McSorley
Catherine Mendoza
Ethel Merola
Nancy Meyer
Fred Minty
Frances Mittendorf
Carol Moffat
Jennifer Myles
Rita Orchard
John Perry
Robert Rankin
Kenneth Sakaki
Susan Seaman
Lorraine Shaw
Janice Smith
Pauline Stephen
Sean Sullivan
James Sully
Jill Sully
William Tong
Ian Tooley
Mary Uzelac
Susan Vlismas
Sylvaine Von Mende
Sheila Watt

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Cheryl Harland
Christopher Hough
Douglas Irwin
Janice Jones
Lewis Jones
Richard Kidd
Colin MacKay
Penelope Margetson
Chelan McDonald
Asimina Morton
Beth Myers
Diana Olcen
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Kenneth Philip
Shewchuk
Carol Anne Shollert
Charlotte Stevenson
Julia Thomas
Elizabeth Ward
Linda Watson

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Linda Heel
Lorna Klassen
Joanne Manson
Mary Anne Massiah
Leisha Pearce
Esther Reoch
Thomas Rippon
Colleen Sunderland
Marilyn Taylor
Janeen Wallwork

46 Sunshine Coast

Janet Amberg
Leslie Berends
Janice Brunson

Janet Crosby
Thomas Roberts
Gaetane Royer

47 Powell River

Georgina DeVries
Patrick Hill
Iris Kramer-Clarke
Debbie Malthouse
Linda Milliken
Sharon Scott

48 Sea to Sky

Hugh Bourhis
Joanne Krickan
Alma Lewis
Jane McCabe
Jean Wilkinson

51 Boundary

William Duff
George Longden
Leonard Longden
Brenda Schmalz

52 Prince Rupert

Patricia Banighen
Wendy Budde
Patricia Jean Eby
David Konsmo
Sonja Kozmaniuk
Verna Marade
Joanne Pritchard
Melita Stuart

53 Okanagan Similkameen

Catherine Baskett
Gordon Bonnett
Heather Frank
Kathleen Friesen
Ian Gibson
David House
Brita Park
Robert Park
Lawrence Yamaguchi

54 Bulkley Valley

Kathy Brise
Joan Campbell
Judith Côté
Anne Griffith
Alice Holm

57 Prince George

Huberlina Abercrombie
Jan Anderson
Brock Anderson
Donna Bain
Joan Baker
Peter Bihun
Jeanette Boner
Donna Butcher
Keith Carlson
Christine DeBruin
Elizabeth Eakin
Joanne Forsyth
Greig Goldstone
Terrence Green
Carol Jones
Linda King
Sharon Lindstrom
Karen Matheson
Patricia Mayne
Judi Muir
Bonnie Munday
Barbara Padley
Linda Pepperdine
Jo-Ann Perry
Douglas Power
Elizabeth Schafer
Shirley Stadler
Christine Stigant
Mary Toots

68 Nanaimo

June Batey
Iona Belous
Lynn Bourgoin
Janis Bruce
Mary Carr
Marlene Cathers
Arlene Clark
David Cutts
Curtis Dams
Edward Dawe
Shirley Dorsey
Leslie Ellis
Beverly Feather
Robert Friend
Michael Haley
Heather Harbo
Marti Marie Jeacock
John Johnson
Rose Jossul
Ariane Kelleris
Donna Klockars
Arlene Kulai
Sidney Lloyd
David Mack
Kathryn Maurer
Kathy McKierahan
Patricia McKinlay
Rose-Anne McQueen
Janet Mills
Richard Morrison
Martina Nash
Bonnie Palfy
Thomas Renton
Larry Roy
Paul Sedola
Harjap Shahi
Sharon Spencer
Sharon Stephenson
Carey Struch
Jacque Thompson
Ian Thorpe
Dhavinder Tiwari
Brenda Westmacott
Norman Willey

58 Nicola Similkameen

Margaret Christopherson
Kathy Froese
Lorna Leaman
Zanie Morrissey
Susan Walker
Ian Webster

59 Peace River South

Gertrude Grant
Rodney House
Janis Johnstone
Karl Moser
Anita Prescott
David Shannon
Shirley Tollefson

60 Peace River North

Harry Block
Erica Froese
Lloyd Gibson
Robert Lloyd
Janet McKale

61 Greater Victoria

Debbie Fremmerliid
Sharon Lassey
Ghislain MacPherson
Ian Marsh
Paule Moor
Martha Pollatsek

Evelyne Py
Carrellyn Sheldon
Eileen Butts
Dale Wilson

62 Sooke

Douglas Archibald
Margaret Banner
Josie Bernhard
Robert Edwards
Meridee Gattinger
Gerrit Geysen
Mary Gosnell
David Grubb
Darlene Hagel
Duane Kinshella
Terry Kniert
Alice McGregor
Deborah McLaren
Patricia Metcalf
Rilla Murchison
Dorothy Parker
Andrew Robertson
Anne Scherr
Paul Stringer
Pamela Teasdale
Judith Ward
Harvey Whittmire
Gail Williamson

63 Saanich

Tibbie Adams
Douglas Alderson
Karen Alexander
Elizabeth Baxter
Daniel Bedard
Mark Calfey
Lynn Calder
Gillian Chater
Jeanne Crerar
Catherine Cross
Susan Field
Shirley Lim
Lorna Lundeen
Susan McCann
Anne McFarland
R McKay
Carolyn Parkes
Linda Peterson
Brigitte Rathje-Papadakis
Darlene Sera

64 Gulf Islands

John Bergsma
Stacia Kennedy
Holly Ziwicki

67 Okanagan Skaha

Deborah Bailey
Douglas Bailey
Linda Campbell
Mary Lou Dunn
Joanne Forsyth
Greig Goldstone
Terrence Green
Carol Jones
Linda King
Sharon Lindstrom
Karen Matheson
Patricia Mayne
Judi Muir
Bonnie Munday
Barbara Padley
Linda Pepperdine
Jo-Ann Perry
Douglas Power
Elizabeth Schafer
Shirley Stadler
Christine Stigant
Mary Toots

72 Campbell River

Mary-Ellen Collura
Doranne DeMontigny
Wayne DeMontigny
Patricia Denne
Paula Douglas
Ron Dworski
Linda Dwyer
Diana Eckford
John Elson
Manfred Hensel
Jerry Horton
Bill Johnston
Janet Johnston
Janice Langley
Manfred Laube
Ruth Niedziejko
Eileen O'Reilly
Douglas Puritch
Coleen Ray
John Ringstead
Brian Slater
Barbara Staton

73 Kamloops-Thompson

Alan Baker
Barbara Boonstra
Robert Boonstra
Erika Byrne
Shirley Clayton
Lynn Cleveland
Susan Dixon
Beverly Doyle
Joanne Embury
Judith Fehr
Debbie Findlay
Helena Franklin
Judith Gray
Ron Harcus
Patricia Hooper
Craig Hopkins
Catherine Hopland
Valerie Johnson
Michael Lamoureux
Linda Langevin
Marlane Leclair
Jane Olson
Paul Porter
Noralee Quast
Renee Renkema
Sylvia Rogers
Mary Schmid
Donald Smith
Michael Townsend
John Watson
Clifford Weathermon
John Webb

74 Gold Trail

Lynn Albertson
Valerie Gillis
Danita Howard
Myrna Isackson
Andrew Kormendy

69 Qualicum
Deidre Bjornson
Eileen Butts
Barbara Clark
Ellen Coates
Hughena Cousins
Colleen Lucas
Susan Poules
Mark Swiecki
Josette Walsh

70 Alberni

Neil Abrahamson
William Bingham
Vaughan Chase
Georgina Cormack
Alton Crane
Jane Davis
Richard Gagnon
Richard Gibson
Arthur Halsall
Rosalie Harper
Judith Hutchison
Gerald Jones
Florence Kainz
Rose Lane
Ron Maccauley
Jory Mitchell
Zana Nesbitt
Rosemary Ronalds
Bonnie Ruttan
Barbara Scobie
Gary Semchuk
Lesley Shams
Angela Slomnicki
Leigh Smith
Jerry Swaney
Leslie Wright

71 Comox Valley

Kathryn Askew
Lorraine Anne Auld
Lisa Marie Bobocel
David Brooker
Anne Campo
Deborah Cullinane
Anne Cunningham
Dean Dogherty
Douglas Embree
Marta Fiddy
Jennifer Forbes
Deborah Graham
Sheila Kenny
Maureen MacKenzie
Graeme McFadyen
Joanne Meyer
Sharon Rouleau
Gayle Schultz
Thomas Shaw
Jean Shepherd
Sylbil Sinclair

72 Campbell River

Mary-Ellen Collura
Doranne DeMontigny
Wayne DeMontigny
Patricia Denne
Paula Douglas
Ron Dworski
Linda Dwyer
Diana Eckford
John Elson
Manfred Hensel
Jerry Horton
Bill Johnston
Janet Johnston
Janice Langley
Manfred Laube
Ruth Niedziejko
Eileen O'Reilly
Douglas Puritch
Coleen Ray
John Ringstead
Brian Slater
Barbara Staton

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Susan Dixon
Beverly Doyle
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Judith Fehr
Debbie Findlay
Helena Franklin
Judith Gray
Ron Harcus
Patricia Hooper
Craig Hopkins
Catherine Hopland
Valerie Johnson
Michael Lamoureux
Linda Langevin
Marlane Leclair
Jane Olson
Paul Porter
Noralee Quast
Renee Renkema
Sylvia Rogers
Mary Schmid
Donald Smith
Michael Townsend
John Watson
Clifford Weathermon
John Webb

74 Gold Trail

Lynn Albertson
Valerie Gillis
Danita Howard
Myrna Isackson
Andrew Kormendy

Linda Madden
Kenneth Martin
75 Mission
David Darbey
Scott Goodman
Cathy Gregson
Judith Heppner
Lorraine Johnson
Cheryl Laninga
Nicole Laurendeau
Margaret Melnichuk
Karen Pedersen
Jug Sangara
Maggie Wallace
78 Fraser-Cascade
Patricia Appleby
Sheila Asdal
Truls Asdal
Allan Bell
Steve Brogan
Francesca Froehlich
John Koopman
Louis Kraszany
Randy Lee
Cornell Stefaniuk
79 Cowichan Valley
Noreen Bowden
Roger Carr
Sharon Chipman

Preston Davies
Melodie Dupuis
Diane Farris
Charles Granger
Margaret Hammond
Thomas Henderson
Lawrence Hickman
Irene King
Joy Larson
Hugh Leithead
Adèle MacLeod
Judith MacLeod
Linda Moore
Carolyn Prellwitz
Kenneth Sartini
Leslie Stubbe
Christina Wales
Michael Ward
Edward Webb
82 Coast
Mountain
Daryl Anaka
Gillian Cavalheiro
John Eades
Gail Flynn
Betty Geier
Dennis Horwood
Sandra Knowles
Cynthia Northridge

Mary Papais
Susan Thorne
Lynn Turner
Raymond Webster
83 N. Okanagan
Shuswap
Margaret Abramzik
Suzanne Ackerman
Terry Adair
Diane Ambil
Anthony Beefink
Jeanne Binnie
Elisabeth Borthwick
Sheila Forster
Barbara Gray
Indira Greenhough
Diane Hatt
Phyllis Heinson
Robert Henderson
Patricia Holman
Michael Holoiday
Charles McTavish
Carol Minor
Anne Morgan
Stephen Naylor
Cheryl Oglloff
Frances Prevost
Raymond Russell
Ross Shannon

Jack Stefanyk
Kristina Susoeff
Neil Wuolle
84 Vancouver Is.
West
Brenda Gilman
85 Vancouver Is.
North
Beverley Byce
Deborah Huddleston
Marilyn Kuss
Michael Kuss
Bernice McAleer
Ian McLaughlin
Terrence Whitney
91 Nechako Lakes
Alice Armstrong
Patricia Christensen
Doreen Friesen
Robert Friesen
Pamela Hachey
Roderick McDonald
Denise Milne
Constance Scott
Allan Whidden
Arendje Whidden
92 Nisga'a
David Cunningham
Kathleen Cunningham

Teachers' Pension Plan

As indicated in the last issue of *Teacher*, the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees is responsible for all aspects of the Teachers' Pension Plan. They operate under the rules of a Joint Trust Agreement and are governed by several different pieces of legislation including the *Income Tax Act*, the *Pension Benefits Standards Act* and the *Public Sector Pension Plans Act*. There are 10 appointed trustees on the board. Five are appointed by the provincial government (known as the plan-employer partner) and five by the BCTF (the plan-member partner). The trustees are bound by law to act in the best interest of the plan members, both in the investment and administration of the pension. Imagine having to shoulder the

burden of responsibility for ensuring a lifetime pension for the 86,000 members of the plan! Those 86,000 members include teachers, principals, vice-principals, superintendents, and retirees, all of whom are counting on the board to make wise decisions on their behalf.

Factor 88? Don't wait

A member who has attained age 64, has reached factor 88 (age plus contributory service), or is in receipt of a retirement pension under a registered pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the long-term portion of the Salary Indemnity Plan. Withdrawal may be made during any school year in which one of the foregoing conditions has been met and upon the completion of the appropriate withdrawal form. Withdrawal will be effective, upon

approval, in September for applications received in that month. Applications submitted later will be effective the month following approval of the application.

In making application for withdrawal, you should ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave which, when combined with 120 days of benefit from SIP: short-term, will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach factor 90 or the end of the month you attain age 65, whichever comes first.

Applications are available online at: bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SalaryBenefits/SIP/LT-WithdrawalForm.pdf or by calling the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.

Yours for the asking



Multimedia resources explain First Nations history, treaty making

What is the Nisga'a treaty all about and what does it mean for the Nisga'a and other people living in the Nass Valley? Why are treaty negotiations happening in BC? Who are BC's First Nations people?

These are just some of the questions teachers can address with a series of free lesson plans, videos, and background information offered by the BC Treaty Commission. As the independent voice of treaty making in BC, the Treaty Commission is committed to helping all British Columbians understand the BC treaty process, including offering classroom-tested resources for BC's teachers.

Nisga'a Dancing in Both Worlds video and lesson plans

Lesson plans, video clips, background information and resources are just a click away at nisgaatreaty.wikispaces.com. The classroom-tested, online resource, designed in partnership with the Surrey School District Aboriginal Education Department, works hand-in-hand with the documentary film, *Nisga'a Dancing in Both Worlds*.

The 44-minute video, which tells the historic journey of the Nisga'a people to achieve a modern-day treaty, was approved last year by the BC Ministry of Education for use in secondary schools. The Treaty Commission then provided two copies of *Nisga'a Dancing in Both Worlds* to every secondary school in BC.

The lesson plans were designed specifically for the Social Studies 11 curriculum by a team of educators but are available to all secondary school teachers, including Social Studies 10, First Nations 12, and Social Justice 12.

Film-makers John Bassett and Rosalind Farber, made numerous trips to Nisga'a territory beginning in 2003 to document Nisga'a

history, their struggle and life since the Nisga'a treaty became reality in May 2000. Bassett, perhaps best known for his contribution to *A Planet for the Taking*, a *Nature of Things* series, which won a United Nations Environmental Award, initially financed the documentary himself believing the remarkable Nisga'a story had to be told.

If you would like more copies of the video, contact Kinetic Video by e-mail through their website www.kineticvideo.com or telephone 416-538-6613 or mail to 511 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1Y4.

What's the deal with treaties?

Social Studies 10 and First Nations 12 teachers can help their students understand *What's the Deal with Treaties?* by inquiring about their school copy of the popular educational kit. In fall 2000 the Treaty Commission provided the *What's the Deal with Treaties?* kit to secondary schools across BC. The kit, designed to introduce the important concepts of treaty making in British Columbia, includes a handbook, a 20-minute video, and a viewer's guide. These resources are also available at bctreaty.net under "Education."

Secondary schools across BC also have copies of *Exploring Aboriginal Culture: Then and Now*, a learning resource kit recommended by the BC Teacher's Federation and the BC Ministry of Education produced by ForeBC. Contact ForeBC at their website www.landscapesmag.com.

From Time Immemorial Teacher's Guide – Grade 4

Grade 4 teachers can inquire about their school copy of the ministry-recommended teacher's guide, *From Time Immemorial: The First People of the Pacific Northwest Coast*.

The teacher's guide complements the popular ministry-approved textbook, *From Time Immemorial*, which now includes expanded information on treaty making and self government. Diane Silvey, an accomplished Aboriginal teacher and author, developed both resources in partnership with BC-based Pacific Edge Publishing.

The Treaty Commission provided the teacher's guide to every elementary school in BC in October 2003. Additional copies of the teacher's guide and textbook may be purchased from Pacific Edge Publishing: toll free 800-668-8806, e-mail to orders@PacificEdgePublishing.com, or visit www.pacificedgepublishing.com.

About the BC Treaty Commission

The Treaty Commission is the independent body responsible for facilitating treaty negotiations

among the governments of Canada, BC, and First Nations in BC.

To request your free copy of our educational resources or to find out about booking a guest speaker for your classroom, please contact the Treaty Commission: Tel: 604-482-9200, toll free: 1-800-665-8330, www.bctreaty.net

Participate in SFU's study on bullying

James Climenhage and Dr. Michael Schmitt, Department of Psychology, SFU, invite you to participate in an online psychology study looking at your thoughts and feelings regarding bullying behaviour at school. Participants will be asked to read about a school bullying incident, and answer questions regarding that incident and about bullying behaviour in general. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study and participation in this study is completely anonymous.

Your participation in this study may help to advance understanding of factors that lead to and perpetuate bullying behaviours amongst children. As well, this study may help predict antisocial behaviours within social groups, and provide potential solutions for how to overcome these types of behaviours.

As an added incentive, participants are encouraged to enter their e-mail address for a chance to win \$200.

If you would like to participate, copy the following link into your Internet browser—https://cgi.sfu.ca/~sisclab/cgi-bin/rws4.cgi?FORM=school_bullying. As our data collection software is somewhat incompatible with Mozilla Firefox, we recommend using a different Internet browser to view this study.

Art scholarships for Aboriginal youth

The YVR Art Foundation (YVRAF) was established in 1993 by the Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR) with a mandate to foster the development of Northwest Coast Aboriginal art. And in 2004, YVRAF, in collaboration with corporate sponsors, created an Art Scholarship Program, awarding scholarships of up to \$5,000 each, to First Nations youth who wish to develop their artistic potential and pursue training and skill development in traditional Northwest Coast visual arts.

This program addresses a need expressed by the late Bill Reid, acclaimed Haida master, one of Canada's greatest artists, and founding patron of the YVRAF who commented that "artists need to

learn the basic knowledge and skills of Northwest Coast art if quality is to be maintained and evolution of the art is to flourish."

The scholarship provides the opportunity for young people, under age 25 who reside in British Columbia, to work in areas such as wood carving, weaving, jewelry design, and printmaking with an elder, a mentor, or in a formal learning environment. The scholarship is intended to financially assist the student through a program of study that must be completed within 12 months of receiving the scholarship. At the end of the student's studies, their completed work from a specific project is displayed at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) for one year.

Since its inception five years ago, the YVR Art Foundation has awarded \$110,000 in scholarships to 25 young men and women. They have studied in such places as the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Art in Hazelton, UBC, Northwest Community College, SFU, Emily Carr University, and with artist mentors in their own communities.



Artist and mentor Stan Bevan (L) with Todd Stephens and his project, a Hummingbird mask, "My Jiji's Spirit." Todd attends the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art, in Terrace, BC.

This scholarship is so much more than just a cheque; it's a yearlong adventure. Scholarship winners are brought into Vancouver, tour the YVR Art Collection and meet their sponsor, and are then celebrated at a reception at YVR, with their family in attendance. The following day, after a complimentary stay at the YVR Fairmont Hotel, scholarship winners tour a variety of galleries, museums, and artist studios, before travelling home. They are brought back to YVR again, one year later, at the next year's reception for the new scholarship winners, where

they will show the work that they completed during their program of study.

These scholarships provide not only fundamental training but also hope and encouragement to talented youth. It could make the difference in turning artistic potential into promising careers. It hopes to provide them with inspiration, contacts, exposure to the art community and ongoing support, during the award year and beyond.

The application deadline is January 31, 2010, and more information can be found on our website www.yvraf.com, or by contacting program co-ordinator Rita Beiks at yvraf@shaw.ca or at 604-873-4891.

UNICEF brings child trafficking into the open

Child trafficking is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative international crimes. It remains, however, an issue that many of us find difficult to discuss, and because it's so often hidden, an incredibly challenging problem to tackle.

"There is almost no country in the world now that isn't impacted by human trafficking in some way," says UNICEF Chief of Child Protection Susan Bissell. "The statistics are staggering. More than 1.2 million children are being trafficked each year and nearly 80% of all trafficking is for sexual exploitation."

The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly girls and young women. Girls as young as 13, mainly from Asia and Eastern Europe, are trafficked as "mail-order brides." In most cases, these girls are isolated and at serious risk of violence.

To help bring this international child-rights issue out into the open, alternative rock band The Killers and MTV have partnered with UNICEF and USAID to produce a music video for *Goodnight, Travel Well*. The video—released in 160 countries worldwide—dramatically highlights the dangers and impact of child trafficking for sexual exploitation, particularly for young women (youtube.com/watch?v=IoTBcll22Dk).

Putting children's right to protection front and centre is one small part of UNICEF's global work to raise awareness and help governments, communities, and families prevent child exploitation. With your support, we are hard at work building a safer environment for all of the world's children.

For more information on UNICEF's efforts, visit www.unicef.org/protection/index_exploitation.html.

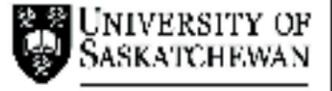


Leave a legacy in your will to Variety - The Children's Charity and help children who have special needs in the province. Your generosity will help us continue to provide hope, enrich lives, and build a better future for children like Xander.

For more information on how to leave a legacy: Call 604 320 0505 or Toll-free 1 800 381 2040 or visit our website at www.variety.bc.ca



The Department of Educational Psychology & Special Education



College of Education

Master of Education Programs

M.Ed. in School and Counseling Psychology

Entrance requirements: Pre-requisite courses and one-year work experience in the human services field plus either a B.A. (Honours) in Psychology, a B.Ed., or a B.A. (Honours) in an area other than Psychology or Education.

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PD Calendar

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29-31 Banff, AB. The 5th Annual Learning Through the Arts Banff Teacher Institute "Critical Thinking, Collaboration & Communication." Join teachers, principals and administrators from Western Canada and across the country in these three inspiring days of professional development, surrounded by the breath-taking beauty of Banff. Come and explore how to engage learners in core curricula through arts-infused differentiated instruction strategies. Senior LTTA artist-educators will guide you in discovering the benefits and techniques of teaching math, science, Aboriginal and ecological curricula through technology, drama, music, visual arts and more. Online brochure: <http://bit.ly/1umm58> or at www.ltta.ca or contact ltta@rcmusic.ca or 1-888-408-LTTA (5882).

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19 Hemlock Mountain, BC. Snow Safety, An Adventure Based Learning Workshop -Begins the week prior with an on-line multimedia learning module. The day of Feb 5 will include a moderate 2 hr snow shoe trek in the winter alpine backcountry with your choice of a specific focus: Fitness, Natural History, Survival in the Snow, Snow Play, Avalanche Awareness. During lunch we will share curriculum ties

by subject area, and outdoor adventure experiences and ideas. After lunch, we will explore the mountain on snowboards or skis on a full-access lift pass, with rentals provided for all those who need them. Lessons also available. Registration includes all costs for day. 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. For more information e-mail Grassrootsadventure@gmail.com, or visit www.Grassrootsadventure.ca

MARCH 2010

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31-April 1 Vancouver. The Special Education Association (SEA) is proud to present the 35th Annual Crosscurrents Conference (right before the Easter long weekend) at the Westin Bayshore Hotel. The dates have been changed this year to accommodate the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Keynote: plus a variety of quality sessions and exhibitors for regular and special education. For information contact or visit the website: bctf.ca/SEA, Exhibitors contact Karen Bell at karbell@shaw.ca

MAY 2010

19-23 Vancouver. The Environmental Educators' PSA (EPPSA) hosts the EECOM 2010 national conference in partnership with Simon Fraser University and Metro Vancouver. Diversity, Sustainability, Environment: Cultural and Practical Diversity in Environmental Education. Contact Patrick Robertson, 604-818-6521, pabrobo@shaw.ca or see our website for more information at www.bctf.ca/eeepsa.

Future October PSA days
2010-11: October 22, 2010
2011-12: October 21, 2011
2012-13: October 19, 2012
2013-14: October 25, 2013
2014-15: October 24, 2014
2015-16: October 23, 2015

PSA PD Day—October 22, 2010

PD Calendar website: bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx
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The arts help us all to engage in life

Society's fixation with measuring success has pushed music and art to the sidelines in education

By Peter McKnight

Learning may be a much more rich experience than we currently understand. If art and music are cut from a curriculum, you may be losing more than the piece you're leaving out. — Martin Gardiner

The only time my education was interrupted was when I was in school. — George Bernard Shaw

Ken Robinson is no fan of education. Perhaps I should rephrase that: Robinson, who is renowned for his writings and speeches on the importance of imagination and creativity, and who will be speaking at the Vancouver Peace Summit this weekend, is no fan of our current approach to education.

That approach, says Robinson, educates children "out of creativity." And it does so by privileging math and languages—the three Rs—over the humanities, and even more so, over the arts, the very subjects that have creativity at their core.

The truth of Robinson's contention is everywhere in evidence. Elementary and high schools tend to emphasize math and languages at the expense of the arts, thanks in part to our fixation on measuring student performance.

That approach, says Robinson, educates children "out of creativity." And it does so by privileging math and languages—the three Rs—over the humanities, and even more so, over the arts, the very subjects that have creativity at their core.

The arts, after all, don't lend themselves well to traditional metrics. And if we can't measure artistic performance, then there is little point in spending precious time and money on teaching the subjects.

That's not the only reason for under appreciation of the arts, and this under appreciation extends far beyond elementary and secondary education. Universities, for example, are typically judged by their scientific and technological prowess, not by their achievements in

the literary, musical, visual, or theatrical arts.

And governments, always under pressure to use public money wisely, inevitably see the arts as a veritable treasure trove of funds, ripe for redistribution to more worthy endeavours.

Underlying these attitudes is a certain conception of the arts, one that sees art as purely ornamental—pretty, to be sure, but no match for the serious business of serious pursuits that help to keep the world turning, that power economies both large and small.

For those who wish to defend the arts, there is an rejoinder to this attitude: there is an abundance of research that suggests studying the arts improves student performance in those more "worthy" subjects.

Education in music, for instance, has long been known to aid performance in mathematics, and theatre arts help students develop oral and literary skills. Anyone interested in the three Rs ought therefore to advocate for the inclusion of arts in education.

This is true, but it is not a wholly satisfactory answer, since it reduces the arts, not to an ornamental role, but to an instrumental one: the arts are seen as worthy of our allegiance

in so far as they aid students in grasping the subjects that make the world go 'round.

This impoverished view of the arts recognizes some of the benefits of an artistic education, but only by obscuring its deeper benefits, by concealing the fact that art helps us to engage, not only with math and language, but with life.

In *Education and the Arts*, Christine Sinclair, Neryl Jeanneret, and John O'Toole emphasize this life-affirming nature of the arts. They note, for example, that "the arts are all about how we perceive the world through the senses, and sort into order and harmony the welter of stimuli from outside us and within us, to create a meaningful reality."

Art therefore helps us to make sense of our world, and of ourselves. Indeed, art may be better situated to make sense of a complex world than virtually any other pursuit.

On this point, Elliott Eisner, a professor of education at Stanford University, and the author of *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, notes that the arts teach us that many problems have more than one solution.

Art consequently encourages us

to embrace flexibility and creativity, toward solutions and toward ways of arriving at those solutions.

Similarly, understanding that there is often no single correct solution to our problems encourages risk-taking. The arts—and the sciences, incidentally—are all about taking risks, about taking a chance, getting things wrong, and trying again.

Creativity and risk-taking are as indispensable in a knowledge economy as they are intolerable on an assembly line.

Now consider these virtues of the arts—flexibility, creativity, and risk-taking—in the context of modern education. As Robinson and others have noted, the school system discourages all of these virtues by encouraging fealty to rules, and to the authority figure (the teacher), and by insisting that there is one correct solution to a problem -- and punishing those who get the wrong answer.

The modern education, therefore, educates children out of creativity. Or to put it another way: our current

system trains students to become functionaries, to follow rules without question.

Robinson notes that there is good reason for this, since the system was developed at a time of increasing industrialization, when society needed people to work on assembly lines, where rule-following and a lack of questioning are essential.

But that is not the world we live in today. Creativity and risk-taking are as indispensable in a knowledge economy as they are intolerable on an assembly line. And in our multicultural global village, the ability to understand other people and other cultures is arguably as important as technological prowess.

If we are to ensure our future success, then, we need to bring our education system out of the 19th Century and into the 21st. And we can begin to do so by returning the arts to their rightful place in schools, to emphasize that there are not three Rs, but four—reading, writing, arithmetic and art.

Peter McKnight is a columnist with The Vancouver Sun.
pmcknight@vancouversun.com

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Reviving the arts in education

By David Denyer

Toronto has just played host to a unique orchestra of young people from Venezuela. The Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra drawn from the poorest and most disadvantaged quarters of Caracas stunned audiences with their virtuosity and musicality. Put an instrument, tuition, and an opportunity to play in the hands of children and you can turn lives and society around, claims José Antonio Abreu, the founder of a program called *El Sistema* for which he was honoured and awarded the Glenn Gould Prize.

One of Abreu's protégés, Gustavo Dudamel who has also worked to change lives through music in the notorious favelas (slums) of Rio de Janeiro, has had a meteoric rise in the musical world and at 28 years of age has just been appointed musical director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. A few weeks ago

while listening to the season opening concert at the Hollywood Bowl, I was taken back to my early days as an itinerant music teacher in the Cowichan School District in 1975. The principals in the district at that time had presented a report to the board entitled "Through the Looking Glass," which pleaded for an expansion of the music program in the district. An admirable example of leadership that is sadly lacking in today's world. The board responded and four of us were appointed to provide music for the elementary grades across the district. Money, supplies, and instruments were provided and that was in addition to the band and choral programs that already existed.

Looking back, it is clear that was the last gasp of a broad concept of liberal education. Along came a provincial social credit government, restraint was all the rage, cutbacks

became the order of the day, and music withered on the vine. Individual teachers, and some districts struggled valiantly to

There is a growing sense that something is lacking, that the emphasis on education as a business and mindless skill acquisition is stifling the development and growth of our young people.

preserve music (Victoria even managed to keep a strings program going for some years) but in general it began to drop out of the curriculum and faded rapidly in significance. In more recent times, the aggressive, intimidating use of accountability, the emphasis on data collection, testing, basics, and achievement contracts has all but

wiped out consideration of the arts in education.

Lately, a few green shoots of concern have arisen in the largely barren landscape of educational debate (Peter McKnight identifies some of these in the article above). There is a growing sense that something is lacking, that the emphasis on education as a business and mindless skill acquisition is stifling the development and growth of our young people. Only the high fee-paying private schools (which are also in part publicly subsidized) are providing these opportunities thereby enriching the privileged few. Thus, says Abreu, music education (and by extension all the arts) is a matter of social justice.

"People refer to this talking only of material wealth, leaving aside the spiritual patrimony of humanity, within which art takes a very important place. The distribution in the world of arts education is tremendously unjust. When arts education takes the place in our society that it deserves, we will have much less delinquency and

violence, and much more motivation toward noble achievement."

This is the challenge. Whilst data and tests may satisfy the automatons who walk the halls of the Fraser Institute and some board offices it does not befit an advanced, prosperous, and civilized society.

In a recent interview, José Abreu spoke of his dream:

"My struggle is for a society in which art is something more than just an aesthetic dimension of life. It is the primary instrument for the development of the individual and of the people."

At his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel presented, quite appropriately, Beethoven's 9th symphony culminating in Schiller's great *Ode to Joy*, celebrating the ideal of unity and brotherhood of all mankind which is a fitting tribute to his mentor's dream and the power of the arts to transform.

David Denyer is editor of Teacher newsmagazine and assistant director, BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division.