

TEACHER

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation

The FSA albatross

By David Denyer

As school finished for the holidays in December, an agreement was reached between the BCTF and the employer (BCPSEA) on the distribution of FSA materials by teachers to parents. The agreement, which is binding on all 60 school districts and teacher locals, states that teachers and locals can send home three pamphlets informing parents of BCTF concerns and positions on the FSA and provincial testing.

Awareness of teacher concerns with the FSA and the proliferation of district assessments is growing.

The employer has agreed to the distribution of three BCTF/Local Union produced FSA pamphlets to parents via students or directly to parents at teacher/parent meetings: *What Parents Need to Know*, *Testing? You bet.*, and *What Parents Need to Know: Dear Parents withdrawal letter*. Awareness of teacher concerns with the FSA and the proliferation of district assessments is growing. The BCTF has been seeking a constructive discussion with government on the use, necessity, and value of testing, and has asked

government to agree to a moratorium and the establishment of a provincial task force to explore the issues and information about assessment.

Each of the pamphlets addresses a number of aspects of the debate about testing, and dispel and clarify the misunderstandings and simplistic notions that have often been promoted by major news sources in regard to the views and position of the Federation.

Distribution of these pamphlets is going to be particularly important in furthering the goal of having a rational, informed consideration of the purposes and need for testing and assessment. All elementary, middle-school, and secondary-school teachers are being encouraged to send home the *Testing? You bet.* pamphlet at any time, with report cards, or in middle and secondary schools sent just before midterm or final exams. Grade 4 and 7 teachers are being urged to send home the *What Parents Need to Know: Dear Parents withdrawal letter* before the FSAs are written.

Materials sent home with students should be in a sealed envelope addressed to parents that shows it is from the union.

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



Coalition-building, learning, and solidarity

By Glen Hansman

In November, locals had three very different ways of getting connected with other members and allies from around the province.

This year's BCTF Public Education Conference, the Federation Leadership Institute, and BC Federation of Labour Convention all took place within the space of two weeks.

Public Education: Protecting our Children's Future was the theme for the BCTF-sponsored conference held November 13-14 in Richmond. The BCTF funded a teacher and parent from each local. Provincial partner groups, education support staff unions, trustees, MLAs, and advocacy groups were also invited, including several representatives from the BC Confederation of Parent

Advisory Councils.

The conference focused on issues around authentic assessment, standardized testing's effect on teaching and learning, student engagement, international trends, and alternatives to the testing regime. Workshop presenters, facilitators, and speakers were from the ranks of parents, teachers, principals, education professors, BCTF staff, superintendents, and secondary school students. The workshops themselves were an excellent opportunity for participants to challenge their assumptions on a number of the related issues.

The keynote panel included Dr. Sue Montabello (principal of Maywood Elementary School in Burnaby), Dr. Ted Riecken (dean of education at the University of

Victoria), and Sue Spalding (teacher and parent from Terrace). All three spoke of the importance of authentic assessment, as well as the importance of respectful conversations between parents and the school about the FSA and other

assessment tools. Dr. Montabello emphasized the important relationship between the home and the school, and the need to respect parents' choices around the provincially imposed assessment tools such as the FSA.

See CONFERENCE page 3

On the inside

The upcoming Olympic games will no doubt saturate the news media for the next month and a half. In schools little will change, although a number of articles in this edition show how the event can be used as an opportunity to direct attention to other important issues.

Provincial funding for education and the precarious future for school district budgets is a major cause of concern and a number of contributions in this edition focus on the impact of continuing underfunding and downloading. Others write of how the provincial government acts toward essential service workers and how important it is for us to

recognise what distinguishes Canadian from American society (toward which we seem to be slipping) and the importance of defending our values and traditions.

With the FSA campaign in full swing, this is a particularly busy period for the union but teachers writing for this edition nevertheless doggedly persevere in exploring and innovating in curriculum and practice.

The AGM comes early this year and in preparation the financial statements are included for information as required by the *Labour Relations Code*.



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Canada Post Corp. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40062724
Please return undeliverable Canadian addresses to...
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President's message



Irene Lanzinger

Across the province another set of Foundation Skills Assessment Tests is being administered to Grade 4 and 7 students. For many years teachers have advocated against the proliferation of school-wide, district-wide, and province-wide assessments. We believe that the overuse and misuse of standardized, high-stakes tests has many negative impacts on the quality of public education.

These tests narrow the curriculum and take valuable time away from teaching and learning. They overemphasize easily testable skills and neglect more complex learning and the multitude of creative and

innovative projects going on in our schools. They allow right-wing, antipublic education think tanks like the Fraser Institute, to undermine public education and promote private alternatives.

Once again teachers will be talking to parents about our concerns and sending information home to parents. Over and over again, legal cases have established our right to freedom of expression. Over and over again, we have confirmed our right to inform parents about our concerns and ask for their support.

In spite of the clarity of legal rulings regarding teachers' right to free speech, some school boards

and principals have attempted to interfere with the sending home of information by teachers.

In December, we reached agreement with the BC Public School Employers' Association that school districts would not interfere with teachers sending home our pamphlets regarding the FSA. The agreement covers three specific pamphlets including the information and "withdrawal letter" that many teachers have sent to parents in the past.

While teachers retain the right to send any material home to inform parents, this agreement on specific pamphlets will make things easier

for teachers this year. Hopefully, it will result in more information getting to parents regarding the FSA.

On the provincial scene, we continue to press for a moratorium on standardized testing and a provincial task force on assessment. We have discussed these issues with all the partner groups in education and there is considerable interest in the idea of a provincial task force on assessment. A number of BCTF locals and school districts have agreed to set up local task forces. We are also working with the partner groups on a joint letter opposing the Fraser Institute rankings.

Readers write

Teacher newsmagazine is negative

I have recently read your article on the debt/deficit curse and felt compelled to let you know that there is no media publication more negative than the BCTF *Teacher* magazine, with the exception of *Global TV News*. If there is a negative perspective on something, your colleagues can find it and this seems to pervade most of the articles.

In the article on deficit, it seems to have escaped you that part of the cause of the meltdown in North America was caused by a predominant attitude that debt is a way of life. In that regard, you are also in good company with *Global TV*. I would respectfully suggest that your article is "shallow twaddle" with little understanding of the larger economic picture.

Perhaps, using your rationale, the BCTF should freeze membership dues when the economy is not doing so well and run a deficit.

I can only say that I am pleased that you are not able to run the pension plan with your present mindset.

D. Leatherdale
Salmon Arm

TTOC rotation

I read Glen Hansman's article about TTOC's with interest (*Teacher*, October 2009). I have been a TTOC in North Vancouver for almost 20 years. It has been my choice to stay on as a TTOC—it has suited my circumstances quite well over the years and I have never really wanted to have my own class. Having said this, I have to disagree with Hansman's position that TTOCs should be called out by seniority. I can understand his disagreement with the calling out being done on a preferential basis. I, too, oppose this method of calling out as it can be totally unfair to the newer teachers who have not yet

established themselves in a school district.

I think that the best method of calling out is the one we have in North Vancouver. TTOCs are called out on a rotation basis. If TTOCs have a specialty, then the rotation goes through the specialized teachers first, then through the regular pool of available TTOCs. (We do have an automated dialing system in North Van, and it usually works well, though it has had its fair share of glitches.)

With this method of calling in rotation, the new TTOCs have better opportunities to receive assignments in a variety of situations where they gather valuable experience. They have better chances of receiving more income, which they most likely desperately need to live on and with which to pay off their student debts. If they do not have the opportunity to work on a more regular basis, then I could see that they would get discouraged and probably look for employment elsewhere. We need to keep the new TTOCs working in our schools as much as the established TTOCs, and not have them wonder why they bothered to get their teaching certification in the first place.

Yolande Lissett
North Vancouver

Debt/deficit confusion

This front page story ("Exorcising the debt-deficit curse," *Teacher*, October 2009) promulgates a fairly common misunderstanding—the difference between debt and deficit, though it seems as though the writer is using the misunderstanding in a deliberately misleading way. He uses the figure of a nearly \$3 billion deficit on a \$40 billion budget as an approximately 7.5% figure. He then compares this to a family with a \$100,000 income having a \$7,500 debt. The correct comparison would have been to say that the family incurred an additional \$7,500 of debt, which is what

a deficit means in this context. That's considerably different from having a total debt of \$7,500. Just as the figures presented give no indication of the province's total debt, they also give no idea of the size of the family's debt.

It's reasonable to compare apples to apples (deficit to deficit), but not to compare apples to bananas (deficit to debt).

Otherwise, keep up the good work. I look forward to each edition.

Bill Saffin
Nanaimo

Our apologies

In reading the Nov./Dec. 2009 issue of *Teacher*, I noticed the list of retired teachers before September 2009. I was curious to see if my name was amongst them. As a retired teacher who was a teacher teaching on call, my name did not appear on the list.

Typical, I mused, as a TOC rarely did I receive recognition for the work I provided in the classroom, and as a retired teacher who was a TOC, I still don't get recognized.

Mary Masiel
Princeton

No Gonzo

I particularly enjoyed David Denyer's article, "Reviving the arts in education," in the Nov./Dec. 2009 issue of *Teacher*, and I entirely agree with his view of school administrators as the modern Philistines of the education community. But my concern is not with his views, but his budget.

Was it really necessary for him to travel to Toronto and Los Angeles in order to pen a 700-word piece for the back page of the newsmagazine?

I have never balked at paying union dues, but I have always expected my union to use those dues in a responsible manner. It would seem to me that, in this case, that would seem not to be the case.

I hope there is someone overseeing the newsmagazine budget, and that this kind of excessive gonzo journalism will be curtailed for future editions.

Joshua Swanson
New Westminster

[Editor's note: I'm glad you enjoyed the article; the arts, particularly music, is a topic I care about deeply. I didn't travel to Toronto or Los Angeles (we certainly don't have money for that). I follow closely the world of classical music and through news items was keeping abreast of the visit by the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra, Jose Abreu, and Gustavo Dudamel. I listened to the opening concert at the Hollywood Bowl on internet radio on the KUSC station out of Los Angeles.]

Notice of AGM 2010

As required by *The Society Act*, the following formal notice of the 2010 Annual General Meeting is made to all BCTF members pursuant to By-law 8.1 by publication in this edition of *Teacher*.

The 94th Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver, beginning on Saturday, March 6, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. and continuing to Tuesday, March 9, 2010.



Feel like your calendar is chasing you to June?

Is there a difficult conversation that you keep putting off? Has a professional relationship disintegrated without a repair in sight? Are you involved in a dispute from which there appears no way out?

Don't leave a difficult issue until late in the school year. Ask for help to improve your teaching experience early in the year. Mediation can fit into your busy life and make your calendar more manageable.

The BCTF Internal Mediation Service assists members and others in resolving disputes in a timely manner. This confidential service is conducted by trained, neutral, teacher-mediators who understand the stresses of today's classrooms and schools.

For more information, contact Patti Turner, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division, 604-871-1803, toll free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1803, e-mail: pturner@bcf.ca.

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ISSN 0841-9574

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Volume 22
1 September 2009
2 October 2009
3 Nov./Dec. 2009
4 Jan./Feb. 2010
5 March 2010
6 April 2010
7 May/June 2010

Copy Deadline
August 21, 2009
September 25, 2009
November 4, 2009
December 18, 2009
January 21, 2010
March 19, 2010
April 23, 2010

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CEPA Canadian Educational Press Association

CALM Canadian Association of Labour Media

PRINTED IN CANADA BY MITCHELL PRESS LIMITED

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Full-day Kindergarten and the Primary Program

Last year, at an Early Learning Issue session of the BCTF, a decision was made to start the process to revitalize the BC Primary Program, updating it with newer research and images to once again bring it to the forefront in our primary classrooms. With the move to push-down curriculum and more demands on the students and teachers, many feel that the essence of the Primary Program is being watered down in classrooms and school districts around BC.

This year, with the announcement of full-day Kindergarten in 50% of our schools for September 2010 and in 100% by September 2011, more opportunities have arisen for us to have a serious look at practice and pressures in our primary classrooms.

The BC Primary Teachers' Association, with the BCTF, has created workshops and brochures to help teachers and schools with these changes. The titles of the workshops are:

- The Primary Program—Doing it Right in the Primary Years (for global audiences)
- The Primary Program—Doing it Right in the Primary Years (for teachers/administrators)
- Full-day Kindergarten—Doing it Right—Right from the Start (for K teachers).

In addition, the BCPTA has the following plans.

- A provincial workshop in

Kelowna, focusing on the Primary Program, Play and Full-day Kindergarten in April 2010.

- A provincial Kindergarten conference in Richmond, focusing on the implementation of Full-day Kindergarten, in August 2010.
- Our annual Provincial Primary Leadership Conference in Richmond, focusing on the Primary Program, Full-day

Kindergarten, and many other current topics.

For more information about how to book these workshops and facilitators, call Jane Turner, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division, 604-871-2283, ext. 1871, toll free 1-800-663-9163 or e-mail jturner@bctf.ca.

For more information about the BC Primary Teachers' Association, visit www.bcpta.ca.

— Jane Turner



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A few days later, the 2009 BC Teachers' Federation Leadership Institute took place November 20–21 in Vancouver. All local and sub-local presidents and local officers released 50% or more (or designates) were eligible to attend, and a number of locals sent additional delegates to take part. Local leaders were able to take part in several workshops such as "Conflict Management," "Grievance Handling: Level 3," "Assertive Communication," and "Investigations." Participants were also able to discuss professional autonomy issues in the context of some recent arbitrations. The purpose of the Federation Leadership Institute (referred to most often as "FLI") is for local officers to receive the most up-to-date information and skills needed to facilitate their work in local offices in the service of members.

Back-to-back with FLI was the 2009 BC Federation of Labour Convention, also held in Vancouver. Bringing together hundreds of delegates from dozens of public- and private-sector unions, the annual convention focuses on the working lives of unionized and non-unionized workers in BC, across

Canada, and around the world. Of particular focus this year was the legislated imposition of a collective agreement upon the ambulance paramedics and the situation facing the HandyDart drivers in Vancouver. The BC Liberal's recent actions in the provincial legislature have set a negative tone, just months before over 200,000 public sector workers

The BC Liberal's recent actions in the provincial legislature have set a negative tone, just months before over 200,000 public sector workers enter into collective bargaining with their employers in early 2010.

enter into collective bargaining with their employers in early 2010.

Delegates from BCTF locals also worked to bring the issues of provincial grant cuts to school districts to the attention of the convention, and worked to connect with delegates from other unions to get support for our 2009–10 FSA campaign, which focuses on encouraging parents of Grades 4 and 7 students to withdraw their

children from participating in the FSA tests. It was hard to miss the BCTF delegation's blue "Choose the Right Answer: Test or Teach" t-shirts when they all appeared at the convention at the same time! Teachers present were pleased that the BC Federation of Labour convention unanimously endorsed the BCTF resolution calling for restoration of public education funding, legislation allowing full-scope bargaining, including class size and composition, and support for parents to withdraw their children from FSA tests. Here's what other unions had to say on the subject:

"I have always trusted the integrity of teachers in BC; I still do and will always. FSA tests are

wrong!" — Jeff Parker, co-chair, BC Fed Young Worker Committee, CUPE 378

"We value the work of our teachers and trust them to assess students' learning. Our children are not pawns in a game to rank schools." — Miriam Martin, Health Sciences Association

"To succeed in school, our children (especially our children with special needs) require smaller classes, more teachers, and teaching assistants—NOT FSA testing." — Judy Darcy, Hospital Employees' Union

"In my experience with the FSA they are a complete waste of our limited education resources." — Ken Robinson, president, Hospital Employees' Union

"Education is what makes people better citizens, not simply knowing how to add, subtract, and divide and take a test." — Barry O'Neill, president, CUPE BC

With bargaining on the horizon for all of these unions, and with teachers' bargaining opening only slightly more than 12 months away, teachers are encouraged to nurture their relationships with other unions and with parents in their communities so that we are all working together to defend public education and other public services over the next few years.

Glen Hansman is a member of the BCTF Executive Committee, and past president of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association.

Looking back

70 years ago

After four months of war, and the rush of many events, it is appropriate at the beginning of the New Year to consider the great struggle as it affects the schools and especially the teachers of this province. Unfortunately, some teachers plunge themselves and their friends into needless difficulties through making indiscreet utterances regarding the war and Canada's participation in the European scene of hostilities. Complaints about certain teachers' alleged disloyalty and unfitness to teach the youth of British Columbia reach the Minister's desk altogether too frequently.

— January 1940, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

A misconception which leads us fairly far along the road to Socialism is the belief that the purpose of taxation is to redistribute wealth. That its function is to take from those who have and give to those who need. This, of course, is rank

Marxism and the sad part about it is that it seems to have been accepted by those who listened to it because from nowhere did I hear any outcry. This kind of thinking goes even beyond the practical application of communism in Soviet Russia. Every organization and every individual who believes in freedom, who believes that there exists a threat to that freedom, should perform a Public Relations job on behalf of our economic system.

— February 1960, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

What will take place in the 1980s? Formal divisions of schooling will finally be eliminated and motivation and readiness will determine placement. Separate subject disciplines will disappear and be replaced by an integrated approach. Schools will provide a 24-hour service to the community. The September to June school year has no validity today. Teachers will no longer be preoccupied with information-giving. They will be

concerned with helping students to apply learning, and will become diagnosticians of learning problems.

— Jan./Feb. 1980, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

Why do BCTF members respect the picket lines when CUPE support staff are on strike in our school districts? We support our colleagues because their hard work in difficult circumstances ensures that students are safe on the playground, that shattered windows and broken furnaces get fixed, that students with special needs get their medication, that our schools run smoothly and efficiently. When they make the difficult choice to strike, we support them because the right to strike is a fundamental part of a real democracy, providing workers with a measure of bargaining power in an employment environment which, by law and economic clout, is biased in favour of employers.

— Jan./Feb. 2000, *Teacher*

*Compiled by Chris Bocking
Keating Elementary School, Saanich.*



School boards clobbered by Victoria

Many boards in financial crisis says BCSTA president

By Noel Herron

As school boards start preliminary budgetary planning for the 2010-11 school year, an aura of uncertainty and deep foreboding grips secretary-treasurers' offices across this province.

Updated surveys and interviews show that more than three-quarters of BC's boards of education have large and growing shortfalls in their current budgets with fears that the worst is yet to come.

"I don't know of a single district that isn't grappling with serious funding issues. Yes, many are in a financial crisis," said Connie Denesiuk, president of the BC School Trustees Association, when interviewed by this writer at a break in the October BCSTA Provincial Council meeting.

Based on policy fluctuations, uncertainty, and punitive directives from Victoria since the opening of schools, from September through December, school boards are now very apprehensive about the world of education in a post-Olympics era.

These fears are well-grounded as they wrestle with increasing cutbacks, lack of clear direction, surprise announcements often coupled with non-responses from the Ministry of Education. Policy changes or directives appear to be made on an *ad hoc* basis.

School boards are now literally limping from year to year and in some instances, since September, from month to month, as they keep a running tally of the immediate impact of cuts on their school communities.

This situation is bluntly reflected in an October BCSTA council motion authored by two school districts—Kamloops Thompson and Peace River North—in which they plead for "funding provisions that are adhered to in a predictable, responsible, and accountable manner recognizing the responsibilities locally elected boards have to their communities."

Multiple policy gyrations from Victoria have raised the ire of school trustees: the Ministry of Education's apparent refusal to grant, what boards term, "hold-back" funds from the previous school year (some boards received these funds; others apparently didn't, or received them much later than others); the late August cancellation of the \$110 million facilities grant; the 50% reduction in PAC grants; the ongoing uncertainty regarding CommunityLink core funding, moved from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Social Services; the mixed messages (or no message at all) to some boards regarding access to what has been termed "restricted" funds (limited to a small number of boards).

What is now clear, halfway through the current school year, is that the financial destabilization or, in the words of one trustee, the "definancing" of this province's boards of education is well under way in British Columbia and is a matter of public record.

Many factors come into play in the financial squeeze boards face—size of boards, geographic location (transportation funding is a growing

irritant for several boards); age of school buildings (leaking schools, schools to be seismically upgraded, or the need for new schools); impact of declining or increasing enrolment, spending all, or part, of the facilities funds promised last year but not delivered by Victoria; plus the diversity of student populations.

These factors, and more, underline the glaring inadequacy of the current one-size-fits-all funding formula introduced by the Liberals in the 2002-03 school year. This formula mocks the ad nauseum claims of successive education ministers that they are adequately funding and "protecting" education. The BC Liberals boast that they have added \$84 million to this year's education budget but given their ongoing treatment of school boards and current basic funding requirements this smacks of hypocrisy.

Recent tallies indicate that most boards are descending deeper and deeper into a financial morass. Other boards are barely holding their own and are justifiably fearful about their future. A small number have opted to remain silent in the apparent naive hope that the storm will blow over.

The BC Liberals determination to impose HST levies on July 1 will add \$24 million in operating costs and \$15 million in capital costs for the province's school districts.

Faced with all of the following components that will impact on their next year's budgets—an inexperienced and unsympathetic minister of education; the prospect that the annual facilities grant could be withheld again next year (although this may not happen in light of the recent recommendation from a government committee); impending additional cutbacks in the March 2010 provincial budget; the continued underfunding, by stealth, of board expenses in areas such as employees salaries, medical services, hydro, gas; and the upcoming July 1 HST tax—hope is a scarce, if not a false, commodity.

The BC Liberals determination to

impose HST levies on July 1 will add \$24 million in operating costs and \$15 million in capital costs for the province's school districts.

It was, however, the cancellation of the annual facilities grant that generated the unprecedented October letter of protest by the coalition of four key provincial organizations (parents, teachers, school support workers, and school trustees) against the provincial government. This cancellation with its far-reaching effect (see attached initial impact of cuts provided by BCSTA on 7 out of 28 school boards) crossed a line in underfunding and drew a very strong reaction. School buildings and facilities will increasingly fall into disrepair if this continues, with serious implications for the health, safety, and security of students.

For the first time ever, the October BCSTA Provincial Council passed a seven-part resolution urging the association to "develop a province-wide advocacy plan" to respond to the blizzard of cuts and to "convene a provincial public conference on sustaining public education."

This motion is unprecedented from an association that, for the most part, hitherto sidestepped strong criticism of the provincial government. The public BCSTA conference is to be held in April in Victoria in conjunction with the association's annual general meeting.

To underline the increasing vexation of trustees at their meeting, of the 24 motions passed, 19 were critical of the provincial government, while the remaining 5 were simply procedural.

Add to this the collapsing of the completion timeline for the seismic upgrading of 87 high-priority schools across the province, as this is now being pushed back 10 years (due to its low priority status and provincial foot-dragging) to the year 2040. The 6.3 earthquake on November 17, in the Queen Charlottes, may serve as a wake-up call for Victoria.

All of these considerations, with their multiple ramifications, mark the death of whatever little has remained of local autonomy of school boards as the education ministry tightens its centralized grip.

It was interesting, in this context, to read Premier Gordon Campbell's cynical musing at last fall's annual meeting of the Union of BC Municipalities about the possibility of returning the power to levy school taxes to local boards. Having no intention whatsoever of making such a move, these comments from the premier can at best be characterized as throw-away lines or, more bluntly, political blather.

What is now clear, halfway through the current school year, is that the financial destabilization or, in the words of one trustee, the "definancing" of this province's boards of education is well under way in British Columbia and is a matter of public record.

The ongoing public relations facade for the past four years around Campbell's phony "Great Goal" in education, is now in tatters.

Indeed, the BC Liberals' disregard, if not disrespect, for school boards is accurately reflected in their current ideological and political search for board "efficiencies" by the new education minister, and also in her musings about board amalgamations as well as her not-so-subtle earlier threat of a provincial "review" of board operations.

How much more can this government squeeze out of this province's school boards?

Individual and collective voices of protest are being heard across the province.

Not surprisingly, many local Liberal MLAs have apparently taken to the hills, not returning phone calls or e-mails. (It has not gone unnoticed that the refusal this year to hear the BCTF's annual brief to the provincial Standing Committee on Education resulted from more than scheduling difficulties.)

A local letter to the *Penticton Herald* from school Superintendent Juleen McElgunn, speaking out against cuts, provides an example of the growing disenchantment of a senior board staff with provincial policies. This letter apparently

represents a first for this district and it echoes, in part, the unprecedented 1984, "Statement of Concern," prepared by six superintendents of schools, for the BC Association of School Superintendents, at a time when the discredited Van der Zalm government was slashing support for public schools.

The Social Credit cutbacks of the mid-1980s pale by comparison with the current BC Liberals' assault on school boards.

Joan Axford, secretary-treasurer of the Saanich district, a district that has been hard hit with 20 teacher layoffs, points to the "uncertainty" and "lack of clear direction" from the Ministry of Education, noting that "the requirements of the system far outstrip the monies that are currently available."

Kootenay Lake Superintendent Pat Dooley, speaking on behalf of her board, outlined to the provincial standing committee the "crisis situation" in her district and pointed to the "lack of predictability and stability" that cuts were causing. Her detailed brief could be summed up in her statement, "the pressures coming on our operating budget are immense."

The Ministry of Education's October carbon reporting order to boards, on the eve of the BCSTA Provincial Council, with its demand to cut costs further, while at the same time forcing boards to use the province's outrageously expensive software (shades of BCeSIS; an irate Burnaby board estimates the new carbon reporting software will cost 83¢ per student while the Vancouver board estimates it will cost it \$40,000 in the first year), was the final straw for individual trustees at this meeting. "Appalling" and "stunning" were some of the terms used to characterize this move.

The thanks-but-no-thanks, unanimous resolution at the BCSTA meeting with regard to next September's introduction of full-day Kindergarten was evidence of a strong backlash against Victoria. Fearing partial funding of this provincial initiative at the expense of the existing K-to-12 system, trustees flatly rejected a rob-Peter-pay-Paul strategy about to be foisted on them.

Fed up with stealthy provincial downloading over the years, they asked that this initiative be delayed until full funding was provided, while at the same time, emphasizing that they endorsed the full-day Kindergarten concept.

A deep and growing distrust of both the provincial government's intentions and its *modus operandi* was very much in evidence at this meeting. Marketing ploys (the rebranding of school boards as "boards of education" and spin doctoring (promoting the premier's phony seismic upgrading plan as a "Neighbourhoods of Learning" project) are a poor substitute for substantive program changes and genuine education reform.

Key questions remain in this ongoing financial crisis: Will the layoffs of teachers and support workers accelerate? Will core programs and services be downgraded once more? Will more school boards be forced into truncating the school year—thereby depriving students of their full entitlement—as happened in districts like Boundary and the Gulf Islands with their 4-day weeks, or in the case of Surrey, which lopped six days off at the end of this school year? Will the March 2010 provincial budget bring any relief or, once again pile on more direct and indirect cuts? Will yo-yo (withdrawal followed by occasional reinstatement) funding become the norm for school boards over the next three years?

And equally important, will provincial organizations not heard

David Parkins 2009



from yet, representing groups such as principals and superintendents join others and speak out, or will they become passive participants in the inevitable decline of one of this country's finest K- to-12 public school systems?

If the latter happens, then educational leadership in some key sectors in this province, given the current stakes, will need to be made of sterner stuff.

The road map ahead for school boards is precarious and littered with obstacles and uncertainty.

Noel Herron is a former Vancouver principal and school trustee.

This is the second of two articles on schools boards.

The impact of the loss of the annual provincial facilities grants on seven school districts

SD 8 (Kootenay Lake)

- Our June 30, 2009, financial statements reflect that the AFG fund was overspent by \$760,565. This is because of an actual over expenditure of \$364,000 and AFG grants not received, yet budgeted for, of \$395,662.
- Our anticipated final 2009-10 transportation budget is in excess of the announced \$2,333,958 M of E transportation funding.
- As the bulk of operations expenditures are found in salaries, this significant budget cut will result in job losses.
- Significant reductions have been made in administration, travel, training, technology replacement, supplies.

SD 23 (Central Okanagan)

- Increases to MSP: \$90,000.
- Reduction in CommunityLINK Funding of \$10,393.
- Impact of BC School Sports Cut—at least \$3,000 in direct support to assist our district athletic association.
- AFG 19 permanent staff have been given 30-day layoff notices.
- 13 temporary staff have been given seven days layoff notice; will finish their temporary assignments 4-6 weeks earlier than planned.
- 41 positions will be impacted through layoffs or bumping.
- To date, we have spent \$1.5 million of the upcoming year's (09-10) anticipated funds (roofing, HVAC upgrades that have to be done in the summer), this is in addition to the money we carried over from the previous year's budget that has now been spent.
- All other planned AFG projects for this year have been halted.

SD 28 (Quesnel)

- Cuts to CommunityLINK funding to this district have been reduced by \$30,000 (one youth-care worker position)
- The AFG, this year, an anticipated \$885,000, used for critical maintenance repairs to school buildings, the majority of which are 30 to 50 years old; significant portion had already been spent. This loss is compounded by the ministry holding back the final AFG payment of approximately \$179,000 from the 2008-09; combined loss to district exceeds \$1,000,000.
- Among the actions being taken or considered by the School District to ensure compliance with section 156 of the *School Act* which requires boards of education to not incur a deficit—staffing reductions through layoffs and/or not filling vacancies, maximizing district class size, reducing district budgets.

SD 38 (Richmond)

- Historically, Richmond has received \$4 million in AFG funding. Many projects were on hold and that only the most urgent were being done. With the new cuts, we are looking at another \$5.7 million in cuts to balance 09-10.
- Currently leasing a school that was closed in 2003 to the CSF for \$225,000. The 5-year lease just came up for renewal in June and we renewed again on a year-by-year basis as we have been thinking if full-day Kindergarten comes we

would need to re-open the school ourselves.

- Total of extra MSP premiums to be paid per year: \$115,588
- We cannot improve building envelopes in order to save energy. We cannot move forward with BC Hydro energy efficiency incentive agreements. Yet we are still asked to provide proof of how we are striving to become carbon neutral and we will still be required to begin paying carbon offsets for our greenhouse gases produced in order to become carbon neutral.

SD 39 (Vancouver)

- Next year's projections show that without surplus or reserve funds, we'll be almost \$7 million over the current year.
- Enrolment is expected to decline by 578 students, which will result in a loss of approx \$1.3 million.
- General inflationary costs increase of \$940,000.
- Purchase of carbon offsets: \$280,000.
- BCeSIS commitments: \$150,000.
- If school districts aren't granted the same HST rebates being proposed for municipalities, it will cost us another \$1 million.
- That all takes us to about \$15 million in funding ABOVE what we received for this 2009-10 school year. If we add in the AFG (\$10.6 million) and the cost of the teachers' salary increase (\$4.8 million), we're starting to see the potential for a shortfall of over \$30 million if government doesn't increase our funding. That situation would bring our district to its knees.
- We have an accumulated shortfall of \$40 million since 2001-02 (i.e., to return to 2001-02 service and staffing levels, adjusted for enrolment decline and inflation, we need an additional \$40 million in operating funding per year).

SD 44 North Vancouver

- \$1.1 million deficit due to the AFG clawback.
- Now faced with the task of addressing a \$1.1 million shortfall currently and another deficit for 2010-11 that is projected to be much larger than the \$3.2 million we addressed for the current year.
- The increase in MSP payments will cost us \$50,000 in 2009-10, and \$150,000 in 2010-11 (because it's a full year of the January 2010 increase and another 6% effective in January 2011).
- With the loss of AFG funding we will not be able to become carbon neutral anywhere in the near future. However, even with the AFG funding it would not be possible to be carbon neutral by 2010.
- It will take much more funding than AFG offered in order to initiate upgrades necessary to mechanical systems, building envelopes (heat loss), bus and service vehicles, and the like. The more realistic scenario is that we will be paying the offset costs for several years until older facilities and equipment are replaced at the end of their life cycles.

SD 46 (Sunshine Coast)

- AFG shortfall of \$208,000, after spending all our carry-over funds and drastically cutting back on what was planned to be spent this school year.
- Maintenance staff for this school year were cut; we are unable to make any further cuts (including those funded out of AFG) without giving up completely on the need for day-to-day maintenance.
- No capital reserves.
- Currently have about \$667,000 in unrestricted reserves, which is less than the 2% contingency recommended by our auditors.
- The concept of a "contingency" fund has now changed, too, because we have no more AFG. It could disappear quickly due to any kind of structural/mechanical emergency in our buildings.
- The shortfall we had to cover with unrestricted reserves in our 2009-10 budget is now about the equivalent of what we have left as contingency; meaning over the next year, it is looking increasingly inevitable that we will have to close schools and cut significantly from the classroom.

Source: Excerpt from background report by the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) on 28 school districts in early October 2009.

Death by a thousand downloads

The financial strangulation of BC public schooling

By John Malcolmson

A spectre of financial crisis currently stalks BC public schools. The signs of it are everywhere. Parents are increasingly roiled with the ongoing assault on what public schools are able to offer their children. School trustees are starting to move to a more assertive political stance after years of hand-wringing despair over the program cuts they find themselves forced to make. Even senior district administrators are starting to question the role foisted on them as they stare at worsening cutback scenarios increasingly unable to stave off rising revenue shortfalls.

How can we make sense of a system under perpetual duress to ratchet down what it is able to offer its students? And how is a steady stream of cutback news to be squared with the increased expectations that our provincial government places on the doorstep of our public schools?

The Ministry of Education's role in all of this has been one of fast-freezing annual budgetary allocation, while disclaiming responsibility for program impacts. Fingers are routinely pointed at boards and administrators, supposed culprits whose standards of financial management must somehow be deficient.

This policy response is succinctly reflected in the perpetual MOE mantra of "the most funding ever... hundreds of millions in new spending," a site-licensed mantra chanted with monotonous regularity by virtually every government MLA when asked questions linked to the sorry state of public school finance.

It is useful to take a step back and look more systematically at the yawning gap separating dead-tracked funding levels on the one side, and the relentless march of school cost obligations on the other. Doing this yields an interesting picture. Consider the following:

- Our schools are highly dependent on the province for grant money—95% of all revenue comes in the form of provincial grants, a figure up sharply since school districts lost the right to control property taxes two

The shortfall crisis has left virtually every district scrambling to lever down spending by eliminating programs, staff, and services.

decades ago. If Victoria fails to provide the necessary cash, it makes for big problems at the school district level.

- Those districts best able to loosen the fiscal noose are the ones most adept at navigating the unsure path to increased entrepreneurialism with the push to market BC school services internationally. Last year foreign students brought in almost \$130 million in fee revenue. A few boards successfully cornered the market on offshore earnings; the bottom half of districts got less than 2% of this revenue. This shows that international education is not the financial panacea some make it out to be.
- Cross-district migration of



school-aged children will be the chief victims of this crisis.

Unfortunately, students, parents, staff, and community members anxious to oppose this looming disaster are sometimes held back in their ability to understand the mounting crisis. Use of the term "cutback" is a case in point. For the MOE, cutbacks are a myth because

We have a task ahead in fully and irrevocably puncturing the myth of "highest funding ever."

- Falling enrolment is supposed to ease matters—fewer students to educate should ease the financial pressure. But, when a district currently loses a student, more than \$5,800 in revenue dries up while cost "savings" total an estimated \$2,800. That leaves a \$3,000 per capita crater in district budgets that has to be made up in "greater efficiencies." The latter is a code phrase for school closures, program and staff cuts, and more fees for parents in areas like student busing.

How then are we to make sense of schools' current financial difficulties? Mounting evidence from different boards around the province points to an emerging "structural funding shortfall" in provincial funding support. This shortfall is the product of at least three inter-dependent processes:

1. The downloading of new unfunded or underfunded cost obligations by the province (such as the HST, full-day Kindergarten, carbon compliance, etc.)
2. The failure of the current Funding Allocation System model used in K-12 to keep pace with cost increases in areas that are notionally funded (such as rising transportation and benefit costs, teacher pension cost increases, a teacher 2% salary increase due in 2010, and the financial impact of falling enrolment).
3. The imposition of ad hoc cuts to discretionary programs in efforts to contain the size of the provincial deficit (such as the \$110 million cut in this year's Annual Facilities Grant, or the last minute clawback in district "hold-back" funds).

The shortfall crisis has left virtually every district scrambling to lever down spending by eliminating programs, staff and services. Information compiled by school administrators puts the size of the current structural shortfall at several hundred million dollars province-wide as we approach 2010-11. While the jobs of teachers and support staff are already coming under pressure as a result, BC's

in gross terms funding is up not down. In addition, it is boards—victims of the structural shortfall—that make actual decisions to cut staff and program. "Needs budgets" are also problematic, simply because the concept is easily misrepresented as an effort to map new cost obligations without regard for underlying economic realities.

Ending the "highest funding ever" charade requires a more concerted effort to document, research, quantify, and popularize the actual extent of the current imposed shortfall in terms an average parent or community member can readily understand. Doing this shows "highest funding ever" to be an out-and-out myth.

We also need to point the finger clearly and unambiguously at those bearing responsibility for the current financial strangulation. Specifically:

- The Ministry of Education and its finance counterpart have frozen levels of funding while downloading—often by stealth—new cost centres and obligations to boards.
- Treasury Board refuses to properly index revenue resources to reflect underlying changes in real prices faced by school district decision-makers.
- The Premier's Office bears ultimate responsibility for visiting ad hoc and irrational jump shifts in funding rules, like this fall's cut to the Annual Facilities Grant that tightens the financial noose while undercutting board efforts to meet newly imposed carbon compliance obligations.

We have a task ahead in fully and irrevocably puncturing the myth of "highest funding ever." The BCTF and CUPE are committed to taking up this challenge and to bringing a new message debunking government funding claims to a board of education near you. Stay tuned.

John Malcolmson is CUPE research representative with occasional luck in ferreting out useful information.

Censorship in Canadian school libraries

By Richard Beaudry

Censorship in school libraries is a common practice that school librarians need to recognize, acknowledge, and resist.

Teacher-librarians must understand the legal ramifications of censorship by reviewing school selection policies in light of the recent challenges to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Courts continue to rule that schools are not exempt from upholding students' human rights under the charter. These rights include the freedom to information and the freedom to read.

Courts continue to rule that schools are not exempt from upholding students' human rights under the charter. These rights include the freedom to information and the freedom to read.

Here are important points that teacher-librarians need to take into account, if they perceive that censorship issues have arisen in their libraries:

- Local policies can assist teachers, parents, and administrators as a first step in looking at challenging materials in a school library. Here is a local example from my school district.

"SD 35 Policy No. 5062—Date Approved: December 2, 1973—Date Amended: May 15, 2001

1. That the final decision for controversial reading, listening or viewing matter shall rest with the Board after careful examination and discussion of the reading, listening or viewing matter with school officials or anyone else the Board may wish to involve.

2. That no parent or group of parents has the right to determine the reading, listening or viewing matter for students other than their own children."

- The BC *School Act* also offers instructions for challenges:

"Section 76 (1) All schools and Provincial schools must be conducted on strictly secular and non-sectarian principles.

(2) The highest morality must be inculcated, but no religious dogma or creed is to be taught in a school or Provincial school."

- The BC Civil Liberties Union (BCCLU) has information pertaining to challenges to books in BC libraries:

"Standing to invoke a review process: Adequate evidence of widespread concern

"In our Association's view, there must be sufficient evidence of significant opposition to the material before the review process is commenced. For example, evidence of widespread concern sufficient to invoke the process could be presented in a petition. It should not be enough for the subjective views of one person to invoke an expensive and time-consuming process (as was the situation in this case—(another case in BC)). Evidence of communal concern is, of course, not enough in itself to prohibit any particular material since the views of the majority should not automatically determine access to ideas and information, even for youth."

Review committee composition: Independent and representative members

"Most policies require a committee to review challenged material. It is important that this group of individuals be independent. That is,

committee members should not be biased by any connections to other people who have a particular opinion regarding whether the challenged material should or should not be retained. For example, we were critical that the challenge policy in this case allowed the parent who challenged a book to appoint his or her own representative to the committee. Furthermore, this committee should represent a cross-section of interests including parents, teachers, librarians, administrators, and trustees and, importantly in our view, students."

- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, ratified by Canada in 1990, is another document that can serve as a guideline.

"It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable... It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them... Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups."

- The Canadian Library Association (CLA) Statement on Intellectual Freedom

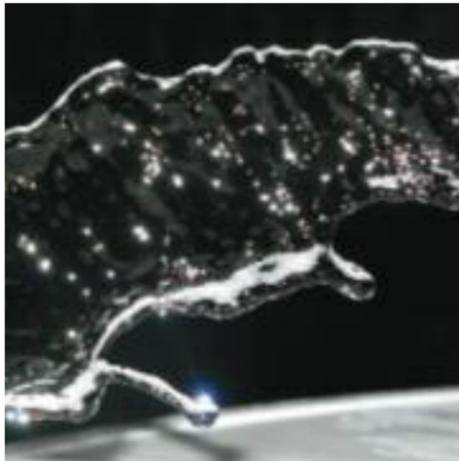
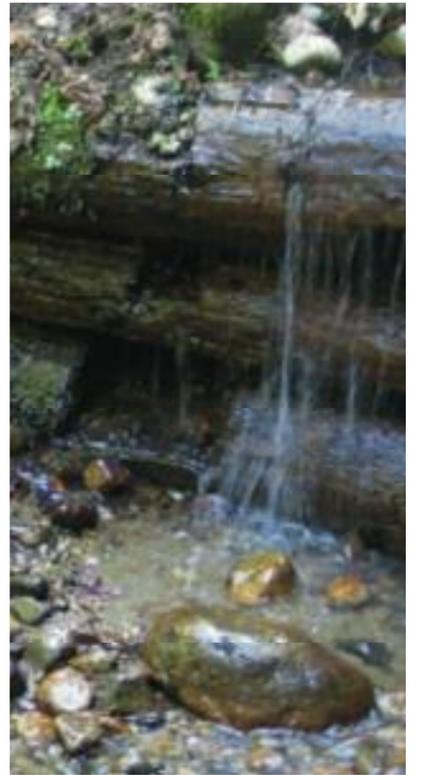
"All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society."

How can school districts in BC remain vigilant against censorship issues?

1. Teacher autonomy. Before parents can enter a school library and remove a book, they must go through a process based on district policies. School administrators need to let parents know that their district has a policy in place and that it needs to be followed. As well, administrators and district managements need to understand when parents are putting pressure on teacher-librarians to simply remove books, and assist the teacher-librarian in explaining the policies in place.

2. Each school district must have a "Request for Reconsideration" document in place (updated regularly) that permits parents to question if a book should be in the library and lets the district decide whether it should be removed. If no document or updated version is in place then one should be adopted as soon as possible.

3. A selection policy for school libraries should be in place. A group consisting of members of the local teacher-librarians, administrators, and, possibly, board management should get together and decide on such a policy to suit all schools in the district.



Environmental learning: Multiplied wonders

By Anne-Marie Lascelles and H el ene Moise

Teachers play a crucial role in empowering students to become environmentally responsible. The project we created during the 2008–09 school year aimed to stimulate students and teachers to think about the importance of environmental education.

Our project, *Les Merveilles de l'eau/The Wonders of Water*, demonstrated how an interdisciplinary, multimodal environmental

We learned, as we went along, the importance of creating positive feelings regarding the environment and, in our case, more specifically about the wonder of water.

project can be successfully integrated in all aspects of the school curriculum. Our goals were to deepen our Grade 3 French immersion students' relation with nature, to help them develop an understanding of water issues such as fresh water supply and water access, and to guide them to take actions in their community. As teaching partners, we brought together each other's strength and passion for visual art. While H el ene Moise concentrated on digital literacies, including photography and blogging, Anne-Marie Lascelles focused on fine art, drama, and creative writing.

We learned, as we went along, the importance of creating positive feelings regarding the environment and in our case, more specifically about the wonder of water.

Exposing our students to water photographs and beautiful books such as *Les enfants de l'eau*, played a big role in starting to create

positive feelings toward water. We asked the students to explain and illustrate how and why water was important to them.

A blog was created: www.thewonderofwater.blogspot.com—where we and the children posted video-clips, comments, and photos that explored the magic of water, as well as water issues and solutions. The students were encouraged to think about the importance and the state of water in their community and around the world.

As we believe that "going outside the class" is crucial to deepening students' relation to and understanding of nature, the many field trips we took during the year allowed our students to rediscover, with a new eye, the wonders of water around them. Exploring Capilano's watershed was an amazing place where the children took spectacular photographs and discovered the source of their drinking water. Going to the beach had a new meaning when the students were asked to paint the ocean that was in front of them. The fantastic paintings and pictures they made and took further inspired them to write some very creative stories.

The students also explored water usage at home and took photographs that portrayed the role of water in their daily life and shared the meaning of each of these pictures with the rest of the class.

Some drawings and other paintings expressed their positive emotions toward water and a quilt displayed a collaborative collage of water and the qualities they found in it.

This collaborative project also provided a great opportunity for the students to take action. As they learned about the unequal distribution of water around the world, they became particularly concerned with the number of children who

died each year due to a lack of access to clean water. Our Grade 3 students decided to organize a fundraising event for the One Drop Foundation, whose mandate is to provide clean water access to those in need. Students organized a silent auction of their water photographs and paintings. They also took this opportunity to encourage their families to sign the petition for Article 31 (which would add the right to clean and accessible water to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*) and the Metro Vancouver Tap Water Pledge. To add to this soir ee, they presented a play titled: *Alice in Waterland*, which was written by us and played by our students. We also choreographed a dance about water and wrote a song called: *De l'eau pour tous/Water for all*, which were all performed in front of a big audience at our soir ee. This highly motivated group of 18 students succeeded in raising more than \$1,100 during that memorable evening.

As they learned about the unequal distribution of water around the world, they became particularly concerned about the number of children who died each year due to a lack of access to clean water.

Step-by-step, during this incredible journey, we discovered how different wonders can inspire us to go beyond an initial educative plan.

Environmental inspiration really can do wonders!

Anne-Marie Lascelles, *Trafalgar Elementary School, Vancouver* (alascelles@vsb.bc.ca) and H el ene Moise, *JBT School, Fort Smith, NWT*, (hmmoise@gmail.com).

More than just games

More than just games: Canada and the 1936 Olympics, an exhibit on view at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre aims to engage students in a discussion of the 1936 Olympics and human rights.

In 1936, Nazi Germany hosted the Olympics, a watershed moment between the Nazi regime's accession to power and the Second World War. While tempering its racism and militarism, the Nazis impressed international visitors with the first Olympic torch relay, the first purpose-built Olympic stadium, and spectacular opening ceremonies. The games also represent Canada's first point of interaction with the Nazi regime and offer insight into the early policies of persecution that contributed to the Holocaust.

While Canada sent teams to the 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics, some Canadian athletes elected to boycott the games.

More Than Just Games: Canada & the 1936 Olympics, an exhibit on view at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC) until June 2010, aims to engage students in a discussion of the 1936 Olympics and human rights. In order to take advantage of the "teaching moment" presented by the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, the VHEC created the exhibit in collaboration with Canadian scholars Richard Menkis and Harold Troper to tell the little-known story of the Canadian boycott debate and Canada's participation in the 1936 Games.

While Canada sent teams to the 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics, some Canadian athletes elected to boycott the games. The school program focuses on the decisions of various Canadian athletes, as well as German-Jewish athletes, who navigated complex concerns to decide whether or not to participate. These compelling stories are presented to students in the form of collectible sports cards that are available online at www.vhec.org as part of the downloadable *More Than Just Games Teacher's Guide*. Along with student readings on the Olympic movement and the Nazi regime, the sports cards prepare students for a 90-minute interactive school tour of the exhibit.

The athletes' stories act as entry points into the history of the boycott debate to help students better understand what was at stake. During the tour, students learn about athletes from diverse backgrounds. Rudi Ball, one of the

best hockey players in Germany, was one of only two "half-Jewish" athletes on the 1936 German Olympic team. He participated in the games in exchange for the safety of his family. Sammy Luftspring, a Jewish Canadian boxer, faced a different dilemma. He had dreamed of attending the Olympics, the pinnacle of amateur sport, since his childhood, but his parents and the Jewish community convinced him that participating would be an endorsement of the Nazis' racist policies. He announced his decision, along with fellow Jewish boxer Norman "Baby" Yack, in a letter to *The Globe* on July 7, 1936: "We would have been very low to hurt the feelings of our fellow-Jews by going to a land that would exterminate them if it could." During the interactive tour, students discuss the stories of these and other athletes to get at the heart of the 1936 Olympic boycott debate.

In a complementary exhibit, *Framing Bodies: Sport & Spectacle in Nazi Germany*, students participating in the school program decode Nazi propaganda images related to sport and the human body. These images present idealized "Aryan" figures, as well as groups the Nazis excluded from their vision of the perfect body, such as Jews and disabled people. After the guided visit is over, teachers can continue a discussion of the relationship between propaganda and prejudice through a classroom activity in the teacher's guide that includes contemporary extensions.

For their part, students have reacted to the story of racism and prejudice in the 1936 Olympics thoughtfully and critically.

Uma Kumar, a VHEC docent, was inspired to guide student visitors because of the centre's mission to promote human rights, social justice and genocide awareness. She stresses the value of learning from the past, "I especially enjoy telling students about the 1936 Olympics and the Canadian connection," Kumar said, noting that Canada should have taken the Nazis' human rights violations more seriously.

For their part, students have reacted to the story of racism and prejudice in the 1936 Olympics



USHMM, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park

Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels sign autographs for members of the Canadian figure skating team at the 1936 Winter Olympics.

thoughtfully and critically. One student wrote, "I already knew that racism was bad, although, to me, it meant the rights between African-Americans and the Caucasians. Your explanation furthered my [understanding of] racism [and

how] racism can lead to misery and chaos."

The More Than Just Games school program, which is recommended for Grades 6 to 12, consists of a 90-minute interactive tour. Tours will be offered until June 18,

2010. For more information, visit www.vhec.org or call the VHEC at 604-264-0499.

Alia Dharssi, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Olympics with a twist: The Teaching 2010 Resistance Project

By Nat Marshik

This school year opened with a stroke of irony, as the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic Games (VANOC) unveiled its half-a-million dollar "Spirit School" program right on the heels of staggering funding cuts to BC's public school system.

According to the Ministry of Education's website, the Spirit School program offers teachers the opportunity to "bring the excitement of the Games to [their] classroom." Yet many of our youth may find their "excitement" dampened by the realization that, after siphoning

billions of dollars from government coffers, the Olympic beast has left practically nothing behind for them. Not even enough, say, to fund another year of BC school sports.

Such contradictions between Olympic ideals and Olympic realities are becoming harder for most of us to ignore. Yet, many educators face a lack of resources for meaningfully addressing these contradictions in the classroom, and for examining what kinds of legacies will truly be left for our youth.

In response to the growing frustration of students, parents, and teachers, a group called Teaching 2010 Resistance has launched a

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new educational project out of Vancouver. Through a series of interactive workshops presented in

primary and secondary school classrooms, the project aims to introduce students to critical perspectives on the social, environmental, and economic issues associated with the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. In addition to fostering a conceptual understanding of the Olympic industry, the workshops also aim to empower youth through concrete visions of change—What would you do with six billion dollars? How can you make this happen?

As of this writing in October 2009, Teaching 2010 Resistance is still in its fledgling stages. However, the positive response from

educators and youth workers has been overwhelming. In less than a month, the workshop has already been presented to over 100 students in Greater Vancouver. The project team will continue to present workshops in British Columbia through January 2010, and perhaps beyond.

To schedule a workshop with Teaching 2010 Resistance, please e-mail orn.youth@gmail.com.

For further information and teaching resources, see <http://teach2010.org>.

Nat Marshik is a member of Teaching 2010 Resistance.

Preserving Canadian exceptionalism

An educator's context

By Paul Shaker

As an educator in the later stages of my career, I have, for more than five years, had the opportunity to practice my profession in British Columbia. This change of venue follows three decades as a teacher, professor, and administrator in the United States. Although, I have lived and worked a number of times in overseas assignments, this was my first experience as an alien in an English-speaking country. The opportunity to closely observe the relative functioning of two societies with respect to education and without a language barrier has been extremely informative.

During my career, I have seen the United States move from a grassroots and often progressive posture in education to centralized control for illiberal purposes. Along the way, educators have increasingly been marginalized in their own profession.

My reflections have been given urgency by the drama of the Bush years in America, particularly because of that administration's policy on education, *No Child Left Behind*. This legislation caused what I perceived as the loss of rightful autonomy for professionals in the field and motivated me to become an "educator refugee" in Canada. Recruiting young Americans into teaching in an NCLB world was not a job that I was willing to do. So, in coming to Simon Fraser University, I was in a state of hyper-attentiveness to the confluence of politics and culture that threatened to redefine my profession. Terms such as *deregulation*, *decredentialed*, and *neoliberalism* are associated with those movements and they extend to fields beyond education, as we now are painfully aware each time we read the financial news.

Friends and colleagues tell me at times that my responses to the landscape of education here in BC are too influenced by my experiences in the United States. In so many words they say, "It can't happen here." They suggest that infringements on the profession—such as school rankings published by Canwest newspapers in cooperation with the Fraser Institute—are minor. They tell me that public, resolute responses to such abuses are disproportionate to the significance of these acts. I am not assuaged by this confident talk. During my career, I have seen the United States move from a grass roots and often progressive posture in education to centralized control for illiberal purposes. Along the way, educators have increasingly

been marginalized in their own profession. The best of school districts in enlightened states have been forced into triage practices developed in backward states. The strong have emulated the weak in practices such as teacher testing and high-stakes examinations. The advanced have modeled the marginal, and many sound practices—often with local roots—have been suppressed. STARS, Nebraska's local assessment program, is an outstanding example of progress and reform denied. The attempted federal suppression of Reading Recovery funding is another.

Yet my hope is that Canada does have a different, unyielding character, often described as "liberal," "multicultural," "social democratic," or "European." Future education policy may be one litmus test for this difference. I say this because for every voice that says Canada differs, there is one that says "American trends will eventually come here." Ontario pollster and author Michael Adam's research leads him to claim, "...the two countries that share so much are in fact headed in two significantly different trajectories in terms of the basic socio-cultural values that motivate their 'populations.'" (Adams, 2003) It should be noted, though, that this Canada/US variance is on a continuum; it is not black and white. Politically, it takes only a few percentage points of voters in either country to tilt an election in the opposite directions.

And so we are left with the question: "Will Canada sustain the societal differences that allow innovative, comprehensive, and locally informed public education to prosper?" The question invites us to move beyond education to look at the underpinnings of the larger societies.

Human development as a frame

In this task, the academic tools available to me are classic and contemporary writers such as Rousseau, Dewey, Jung, Piaget, Erikson, and their interpreters. Drawing on these sources to interpret our two countries, I see narratives of human development played out on two societal stages. In other words, one can extrapolate from the field of lifespan develop-

mental psychology to identify the norms of a society, or to contrast two societies.

One key aspect of these pathways of maturation is the adaptation of the individual to the challenges of living among others. To use Piagetian language, an individual experiencing the give and take of the world, and responding to dilemmas that such new experience brings, makes this adaptation. The process is motivated by an innate drive toward psychological equilibrium—a process that seems simple in the abstract. Rousseau described it in *Émile* as "learning from the discipline of natural consequences." (Rousseau, 2007) Dewey designed his "problem method" around it. The concept inspires some of our best pedagogy.

In practice, however, this method of instruction is fraught with challenges since natural consequences do not automatically lead to productive student reactions. Erikson described the problem in *Childhood and Society*: "The strength acquired at any stage is tested by the necessity to transcend it in such a way that the individual can take chances in the next stage with what was most vulnerably precious in the previous one." (Erikson, 1963) In other words, even if the worldly context in which we find ourselves introduces an appropriate challenge, our prior disposition may tempt us to hunker down in denial and stasis, rather than to adapt. When events invite us to understand changes in society, we feel Erikson's tug of egoistic anxiety and resistance. In the United States, resistance has become the norm. Politically, this is the impulse Obama decried in his celebrated observation, "They cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them." It is also the impulse that Harper played to when he abandoned the principle of diminished culpability for youth and said, "When all is said and done, 'soft on crime' doesn't work. We are determined to crack down on crime,

whether it is by youth or anybody else." (Mayeda, 2008) The strategy clearly damaged his party, especially in Quebec.

Leaving society interpretations and returning to the individual, clearly the guidance of trusted others, such as teachers, makes a difference in how we respond to challenges—whether by denial or adaptation. Piaget describes how we stray from the course of development. When asked whether "school situations could lead a child to accommodate wrongly—that is to change his ideas on the wrong basis," he replied: "...This is a big danger of school—false accommodation which satisfies a child because it agrees with a verbal formula he has been given. This is a false equilibrium which satisfies a child by accommodating to words, to authority, and not to objects as they present themselves to him." (Duck, 1964)

Here we have what may be the heart of the divergence of our North American societies: the role of words and authority, as opposed to reason and experience, in guiding accommodation of individuals to their natural environment and their changing social order. An example might be a sectarian science lesson in which creationism/intelligent design is authoritatively provided as an explanation for life. The words may be based on authority (Genesis), or they may be based on reason (Darwin). They may be

During the past 50 years in the United States, politics has become the object of the same powerful psychological machinery of promotion that has driven commerce for the last century.

received uncritically, or evaluated by experiment or analysis. That difference may help explain why Canada and the United States differ as they do. How deeply set in society's soil are the foundations of reason? Does authority or reason ultimately hold sway in the classroom?

Educating voters

What pushes one society toward authority and another toward reason? What societal influences

lead individuals to develop—or fail to develop—critical thinking skills?

One answer may be the role of marketing, advertising, and public relations. During the past 50 years in the United States, politics has become the object of the same powerful psychological machinery of promotion that has driven commerce for the last century. Most notably, identity politics has shaped, to a remarkable degree, the results of recent elections. Voting in America has, for many, become an exercise in self-validation and identity formation rather than one of applying the power of citizens to direct the course of their government. One of the victims of this shift has been the concept of "the common good" and education policy aimed at promoting it.

Canada, too, has been subject to the influence of marketing and public relations, although there is reason to believe their effects have been weaker. Evidence for this claim includes less individual and federal debt, as well as resistance to the "politics of personal destruction" via television advertising and robocalls. The popular negative reaction to the 1993 Chrétien attack ad by the Progressive Conservatives would be a case in point.

Who benefits from this misdirection of the voting public toward egocentric, antisocial purposes? Most likely, those who fund the mass media advertising that has so dominated modern political campaigns. In his book and documentary, *The Corporation*, Joel Bakan responds this way: "Increasingly, corporations dictate the decisions of their supposed overseers in government and control domains of society once firmly embedded within the public sphere." (Bakan, 2004) We might amplify his analysis to say that groups and individuals who stand to gain materially from their control of politics are wielding a massive tool in seeking power and wealth for themselves. The erosion of concepts, such as "the public sphere," community, and the common good, is an inevitable outcome in societies where these marketing forces are allowed to hijack the political process.

Returning to our developmental analysis, my claim is that, through use of artful advertising and partisan mass media programming, moneyed interests manipulate voting so that it is a "feel good" exercise rather than an act of prudent and selfless citizenship. These interests accomplish their purpose by introducing a steady stream of words and images that play to people's identifications rather than to their reason. That is, voters are invited to affirm their sense of self by supporting a political party or candidate. The relevant grounds for voting are not a rational analysis of individual or national interest, but the short-term gratification Piaget spoke of as a primitive response. In



his words, "Considered in its social aspect, this distorting assimilation consists, as we have seen, in a sort of egocentrism of thought so that thought, still unsubmitive to the norms of intellectual reciprocity and logic, seeks satisfaction rather than truth and transforms reality into a function of personal affectivity." (Piaget, 2008)

How, specifically, does this transformation occur? Language and images create a locus for voter identification in a political party. Voters are driven by race, as in the

Politics in the United States has instead been converted for many into a vehicle for deceiving voters into acting against patriotism or enlightened self-interest. This is accomplished by flattering their baser instincts, such as greed, and providing short-term ego-gratification.

Willie Horton ad and in the South Carolina telephone company of 2000 alleging John McCain's "black baby." They are driven by gender and affectional preference, as will ballot initiatives aimed at banning gay marriage. "Liberal," a term upon which North American democracy was founded, is converted into an epithet. Secular government, another foundation of North American government, is boldly elbowed aside by appeals to a narrow band of Christianity. Sadly, while Canada hears voices like Bakan and Naomi Klein, the American left raises few effective protests, recalling lines that are becoming cliché through their frequent, but apt citation:

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity. (Yeats)

Additionally, religious feeling, a powerful subjective and tribal experience, has become confounded with the law, which aspires to universality and objectivity. Faith is displacing reason in the conduct of civil affairs in the United States, and religion is distorted by being pushed away from universal moral principles toward a role as shill for war and materialism. Karen Armstrong explains that compassion is the paramount value of great religions, but "Compassion is not a popular virtue, because it demands the laying aside of the ego that we identify with our deepest self; so people often prefer being right to being compassionate." (Armstrong, 1994)

Our mythology—both in Canada and the United States—asserts that voting should be employed to create national and individual advancement. Politics in the United States has instead been converted for many into a vehicle for deceiving voters into acting against patriotism or enlightened self-interest. This is accomplished by flattering their baser instincts, such as greed, and providing short-term ego-gratification. The mantra of tax reduction is the codeword for greed, while the disparagement of the other—whether gay, dark, foreign, or liberal—is a vehicle for inflating the voter's ego. This ego-gratification is the "personal affectivity" of which Piaget spoke. In contrast, Canada's multilingual and multicultural commitments create significant resistance to this divisive approach, tilting it instead toward the mature alternative of compassion for, and understanding of, the other on the path to one's own self-realization.

Paul Shaker, Ph.D., is professor and former Dean of Education at Simon Fraser University.

References available on request.

Democracy lost for the five-ring circus



By Don Blakey

As I write this, I have just finished attending the Fall Representative Assembly. During the two days of meetings, there was a story in the news concerning the BC Ambulance paramedics and the government legislating them back to work under Bill 21. This brought all sorts of thoughts and feelings forward for me, since I am both a teacher and a paramedic.

Now, I should explain that I am a teacher first and a paramedic second. I have worked in many small towns during my teaching career, and have gotten involved in helping the communities I have lived in by also working as a paramedic during the evenings and weekends. This is the way I choose to give back, so to speak. Now for me, the one issue around wages in this paramedic dispute is not that important. Do I think the wages paramedics get are fair? Well, to that I would have to say "No." Working on call on a "kilo" shift, where you have a pager, have to be able to respond in nine minutes or less for a call during the course of your shift for only \$2 an hour, is not reasonable. Yes, you can be at home with your family, but you cannot go out to a movie, or even have friends over for dinner and enjoy a sociable evening because at any moment, your pager can go off and you are out the door respond-

Yes, you can be at home with your family, but you cannot go out to a movie, or even have friends over for dinner and enjoy a sociable evening because at any moment, your pager can go off and you are out the door responding to an emergency call.

ing to an emergency call. Yes, once called out on a "kilo" shift, you are paid your call-out rate for a minimum of four hours. For most, this call-out rate is approximately \$24 an hour, but what about those days when you do not get a call. This is quite normal in a remote station, where it can be days or weeks between call outs. Things are

not that different though for those working a "fox" shift, where they are at the station waiting to be called out, making \$10 an hour until that call comes in. Then you get your call-out rate for a minimum of three hours. While at the station though, you are doing regular station duties, which includes mopping floors, cleaning and restocking the ambulance, and other duties. For me, because I have my teaching job, I do not do the job for the pay. I do it to give back to my community.

However, I work side-by-side with many dedicated people for whom this is their main source of income. Some of these people are single parents, others brand new parents, trying to earn a living, and some are single, looking to make BC Ambulance a career. The downside to all of this, is you need to work this way, mostly part-time in smaller communities, with no medical or other benefits, for a minimum of six years before you can possibly move to a larger centre like Vancouver or Kamloops, where, if you are lucky enough, you can possibly become a full-time employee. All of these people have paid for their training, like teachers, and yet there is no way to gain better employment other than to work in rural and remote communities part-time, for miniscule wages, to try to survive until they can maybe earn their way into that better posting. These people deserve better, and they deserve a lot more respect than has been given to them by the current provincial government.

The Campbell government was, once again, throwing out rights guaranteed under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* with the simple stroke of a pen. As I heard the stories, I could not help but think back to the feelings I had when this same government treated teachers in a similar manner with Bills 27 and 28. Again, I was not being treated and respected for the professional that I am, but I was being attacked because I was standing up for things I believed in, that the government did not want to listen to. This dispute with the paramedics had been going on for seven months, and like any attempts at collective bargaining that we tried as teachers, the exact

same things were happening. The employer, who really is the government, whether you are talking BCPSEA or BC Ambulance Service, kept saying that there was no money for the things we were asking for. Bill 21, in fact, was passed while paramedics were still voting on the last offer the employer had put forth. Since that offer was stripping clauses out of the collective agreement that guaranteed a provincial ambulance service, paramedics were going to vote "no,"

I have absolutely no respect for a man, or a group of people, who strip us of our rights and of things that have been guaranteed to us for years, just because they feel they know what is best for us, and in this case, they want to make sure there is no strike during the Olympics.

just like teachers did when it came down to the stripping of class-size language from our agreements with Bills 27 and 28. Paramedics were already deemed an essential service by the Labour Relations Board and were unable to really do anything that would be considered "strike action," the same way teachers were deemed an essential service with Bills 27 and 28.

How can a government get away with this again? The Campbell government has already been ordered by the United Nations Labour Council to change Bills 27 and 28, because it violated the rights of workers; they lost in the Supreme Court of Canada with regards to the stripping of the HEU workers' contract; and yet they have done this again, to paramedics this time, saying that it is in the best interest of the public because of threats of the H1N1 pandemic.

These actions by Gordon Campbell and his government have frustrated and angered me because I have been assaulted twice by this disrespectful group of people who keep giving themselves raises while stripping away everything that has been fought for and earned in collective agreements. I have been taught to be respectful and treat others the way you want to be

treated. However, when the premier of this province tosses a loonie at a paramedic and tells him not to spend it all in one place, I have to ask myself, Why should I respect this man? Well, the short answer is, I don't. I have absolutely no respect for a man, or a group of people, who strip us of our rights and of things that have been guaranteed to us for years, just because they feel they know what is best for us, and in this case, they want to make sure there is no strike during the Olympics.

This strike by the paramedics was not just about wages. This strike was about trying to bring attention to a broken system that relies on part-time employees who put in hours of overtime trying to keep a system functioning so it can be there when a person needs help the most. There is a lack of resources and people in the system. That is what this dispute was about. Paramedics do the job because they want to help those in need. Just like teachers who need resources to work and help develop children into the adults and leaders of tomorrow, paramedics are there doing their job making sure that there is a tomorrow when those same people need help.

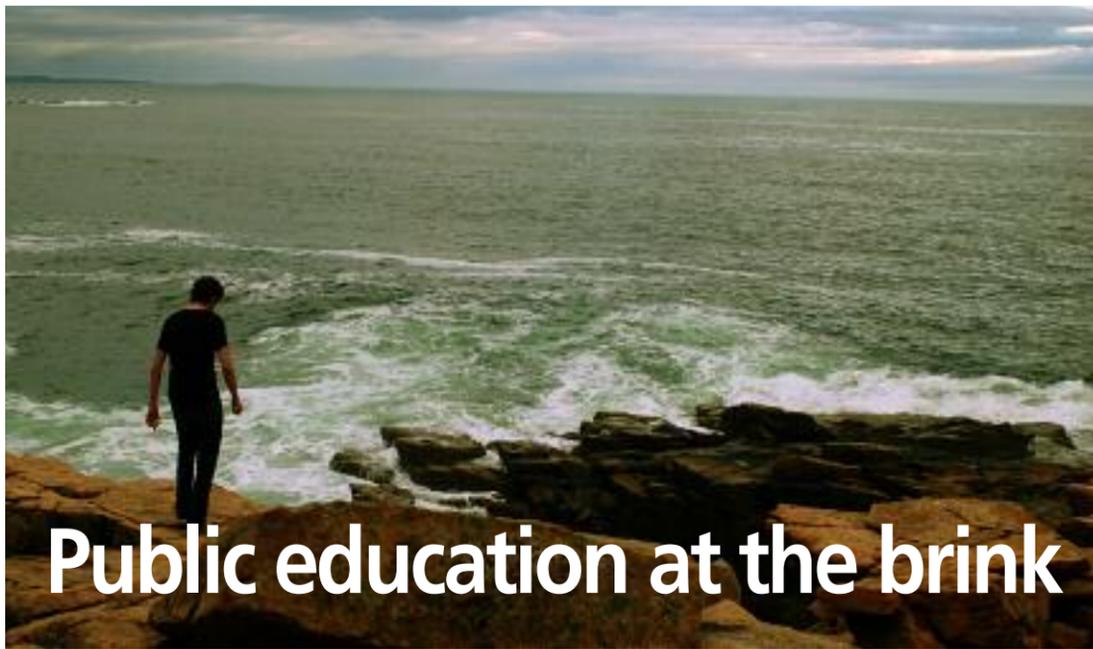
As a teacher and a paramedic, my reasons for being upset with our

Just like teachers who need resources to work and help develop children into the adults and leaders of tomorrow, paramedics are there doing their job making sure that there is a tomorrow when those same people need help.

current government have doubled. When will they stop violating our rights? And to be honest, I am having trouble finding enough words to express my frustration.

Thank you to those who brought forward motions in support of the paramedics. It is only by sticking together and supporting each other, that unions in this province will be able to affect a change.

Don Blakey is a teacher and paramedic in Lillooet.



Public education at the brink

A presentation by Professor Robin Barrow given at the Public Education Conference, November 13–14, 2009.

Some fear a deliberate attempt by the government to privatize the school system. I do not see a threat to the system, so much as a threat to education within the system, and I see that more as a consequence of confusion rather than deliberate planning.

First, let us distinguish economic, social, and educational crises. They are interrelated, but they are nonetheless distinct. There is an economic crisis of sorts.

There is a major social crisis. With the breakdown of traditional influences such as the family, community, and church, we are losing social cohesion. Traditional values of civilized behaviour are being abandoned; we have a culture that is essentially materialistic, and we live in a “culture of complaint,” wherein litigation and fear of litigation largely replace moral rules. We are in danger of losing shared values.

While this obviously impacts on the school, it is not in itself an educational crisis, and it is not immediately clear what the school can do about it or should do about it. Are there too many teenage pregnancies? Has there been a spate of violence? Too often comes the response, “the school can and should fix it, and is probably responsible for it in the first place.” But it is not primarily because of what schools do that people get

pregnant or violent, and it's not clear that they could do more than most of them already do by way of example, modeling, and providing information. So, if you judge the success of the school system by the state of society, then things may sometimes look a little bleak, though even this is to ignore the fact that the vast majority are not pregnant, toting knives, etc. But this is not the way to judge public education. It cannot solve all of society's ills and it is not primarily there to do that.

What the public school system is primarily there for is to educate people. Education is good in itself, because it is better to be educated than un- or, worse, mis-educated. Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. The mind being the chief characteristic that distinguishes the human from other animals, to be well educated, to have well-developed understanding, is to be more fully human—to achieve a degree of specifically human excellence. It is to be empowered. It can also very plausibly be argued that educated people, by and large, make more of themselves and contribute more to society than the less well-educated. It should also be pointed out that social justice demands a public system for educating people, because, while of course one can educate oneself, by and large people don't—in particular people already disadvantaged in various ways, don't.

So what is this education that we are primarily there to provide? I suggest three things that we seek to promote through education.

Autonomy

This is a more useful concept than fashionable phrases such as critical thinking, imagination, or creativity. The objection to the tendency to think in terms of the latter is that it can lead to a misconceived attempt to develop these presumed skills in the context of any material. The assumption being that it doesn't much matter what one is critical about so long as one is being critical. But, in fact, it does matter rather a lot what people are able to be critical about. Overall what we want is for people to think intelligently for themselves about important issues and to organize their lives in the light of their own informed understanding. The word for that is “autonomy” and the way to promote it, in outline, is to engage critically and imaginatively with powerful bodies of thought and achievement. To study history critically and in depth, for example, rather than to engage in critical thinking exercises; to immerse oneself in literature rather than to engage in free expression exercises under the name of creativity; to understand the nature of science, rather than play at being a scientist, misleadingly referring to the gathering of information or the replication of experiments as research.

Shared values

Shared values, including respect for reason and an openness or tolerance that stops short of tolerating the intolerable. We need to put some brakes on the current fashion for saying that any opinion is as good as another and that any cultural practice that exists is *ipso facto* sacred. Certain ways of treating women, for example, are simply not acceptable, and should not be tolerated in our society. And certain societies, such as Stalin's Soviet Union or Pol Pot's Cambodia, are clearly abhorrent. We agree on that. Why do we inconsistently teach that it is wrong to judge other cultures?

Idealism

I am referring here to the need to oppose the materialism of our society, without linking it to any specific religious or spiritual viewpoint. I am thinking of cultivating a sense of awe, a sense of commitment to, and wonder, at the natural order and the achievements of humankind—with encouraging pride and aspiration in human potential.

But what about the financial shortfall that is taken to be the most obvious sign of society abandoning public education? I appreciate that if you are a school district, which overnight has its budget effectively rewritten with a shortfall of thousands of dollars, this is serious. The fact remains that money is not as essential to successful education as we sometimes claim. Half the world, as we speak, is engaging in true education without a tiny part of the wealth we can still draw on. Furthermore, we waste money. The increase in bureaucracy at most levels of schooling has been both costly and of questionable benefit. The increasing demands made upon us all in the name of health and safety, and fears of litigation, have been extremely costly. Environmental concerns are sometimes overplayed, and they come at a cost. Only recently for example, school trustees were instructed to invest in an expensive new software to report carbon emissions, which seems strange at such a time. Technology is clearly potentially helpful to the teacher and student, but it has its dangers too, and it is very expensive. Are we pinning too much and spending too much on

keeping up-to-date in the school? Finally, a great deal of empirical research, particularly into teaching methods, is as trivial and meaningless as it is expensive.

While I am as displeased as anyone with recent news relating to the economy, I do not think we should claim that a shortfall in our funding means that we cannot succeed.

What, then, does threaten the provision of a proper education?

1. The confusion of education with training, or a preoccupation with preparing people directly for jobs rather than developing their minds.

2. A lazy acceptance of the fashionable view that everything is a matter of opinion such that we cannot think in terms of right and wrong, correct and incorrect, sense and nonsense.

3. A climate of political correctness that inhibits serious debate about such matters as inclusion or multiculturalism.

4. An incoherent rhetoric of rights that has led to a degree of vulnerability for any teacher who wants to speak her or his mind, exercise discipline or, more broadly, make demands on, and “correct,” students.

5. A misguided belief in a science of teaching and a consequent attempt to train teachers in various generic skills and practices: thus, for example, all teachers are supposed to follow the same “best practice,” to generate lesson plans in the same way, and to write report cards according to formula.

6. A tendency to feel that it is inherently desirable to utilize the most up-to-date technology all the time, whereas in point of fact technology may very often get in the way of true education.

But surely the most obvious problem for today's teachers is simply that more and more tasks are imposed upon them, most of which have nothing to do with education. It is the fact that teachers have more and more bureaucratic tasks to fulfill, that they are expected to take on all the social problems society faces, and that their freedom is constantly curtailed inhibits their ability to focus on education.

Robin Barrow is a professor, SFU Faculty of Education.

Neo-liberalism

By Kerry Richardson

A few months ago I decided to take in a symposium at Simon Fraser University on the topic, *The Future of Neo-Liberalism*.

It was a cool, sunny autumn day and everything, even the concrete, seemed to sparkle. There I was, brushing shoulders with young, lively students, and learned professors, hearing what I hoped was the latest word on a political phenomenon that has drifted into my field of vision and smouldered there, inviting further investigation.

I was teaching in Surrey, in 2002 when Gordon Campbell's version of *Liberal* came onto the scene. Within weeks, British Columbia as I knew it began to change dramatically, without warning, and as far as I knew at the time, with neither plan nor purpose being revealed to voters.

First of all, there came a billion dollar payout from the government's coffers described as a tax refund. Apparently, this province had no need of a billion dollars, since services were going to be privatized or cut to the bone. No matter that the NDP had already cut things to the bone—BC had the most efficient civil service in North America, but that was never

acknowledged. Likewise, our global standing as a first-rate public education system was kept from the public. The unspoken message was that something had to be fixed, and decisive, harsh measures were required. Teachers saw their ability to bargain working conditions *Riced*. More legislation forbade protest because teachers were deemed an essential service.

Next, legislation was unleashed that changed the balance of power so rapidly there was barely time to grasp the implications of one set of “bills” when another onslaught began.

Slogans and message boxes were the order of the day. Citizens who wrote letters to Victoria were being dismissed with impersonal form letters; it was clear that questions were unwelcome, and that a cabinet minister had no obligation to explain or even defend her or his actions to anyone—the election was over. The concept of government working for the people, for the public good was being expunged and replaced with... Well, that is what many of us have been trying to figure out for the last eight years. Because there is nothing ‘liberal’ in the traditional Canadian sense (i.e., Trudeau, Pearson) or even right-wing in the usual BC sense (Gordon Gibson, Social Credit). I was at a

loss to fathom who these people were, where they came from, and what informed their very extreme agenda. Which brought me to explore—what exactly was neo-liberalism?

The SFU symposium was hosted by several departments, including The Centre for Global Political Economy and the Centre for Labour Studies. The two speakers covered the history from 1947 to today's version of liberalism and where it seems to be leading. For me, whose experience in economics extends to balancing my chequebook, there were moments of recognition and clarity. It's alarming to realize that there are forces bent on manipulating and disrupting social stability and claiming every cubic metre of natural resources, including air and water, to serve the chosen few. Who chose the few? Well, certainly not you and me, my friend; democracy has no place in this pursuit.

A new capitalism has evolved since the 1970s and it has gone by a few names—neo-conservatism, the corporate agenda, and more recently, neo-liberalism. In economic terms, liberalism means an absence of government interference. But unlike what most of us understand to be traditional capitalism, with small government a goal, this recent incarnation sees government and the capital of the state used to wield enormous power to advance the cause of privatization.

Anathema to corporate interests is the stability brought to bear by government regulatory bodies, labour unions, and employment standards, and all social security safety nets. Insecure workers are glad to have a job, any job, and will not make waves. Under neo-liberal influences, government centralizes its power. Government capital is welcome if it is used to bail out bankers, as we have seen recently, but not if used to keep public schools open for the children of ordinary taxpayers. The concept of government for the public good is made to seem unattainable in these tough economic times. Yet, in the years before the economic crisis, money did not flow—schools in BC were closed, homeless people became a common sight on city streets, and BC had the worst child-poverty rate in the country.

Professors Jamie Peck and Alfredo Saad-Filho, speaking at SFU's symposium, offered some intriguing analogies, more than definitions, of neo-liberalism. Alluding to its ability to adapt and mutate, they likened it to a virus that has no life of its own, and cannot ever exist by itself. As an ideology, it can only be a Utopian project with an unattainable endpoint. They likened it to a parasite, grafting itself into various state systems from the extreme right to the extreme left—forever seeking and finding a host. Since there are

only hybrid versions of neo-liberalism, they described it as a mongrel—creating new inequalities and profound differences around the world, reconstituting state powers, and strengthening the right arm of the state, the military, and police.

There are many things to learn and there are many books and films that shed light on what is happening to our world, and our province. Teachers have lived through a turbulent eight years under a neo-liberal government. Stripping our rights as workers, on the one hand, and stripping our rights as professionals on the other—it's all part of the plan. It's been done everywhere else and now it's our turn. Authoritarianism is replacing the more collegial staff committees and teachers are urged to compete against each other in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Now more than ever, we need to encourage each other to stand for something better than the Ministry of Education and the Fraser Institute are trying to foist on us.

If we teachers endeavour to educate ourselves about neo-liberalism in all its ever-changing forms, we can continue to fight the noble fight for a humane and caring approach to government in general, and public education in particular.

Kerry Richardson is an assistant director, BCTF Field Services Division.

Class-size reduction or increased incidents?

By Paul Boscariol

The BC Technology Education Association recently held their district reps meeting prior to the October conference in Maple Ridge. At this meeting was a presentation from a representative of the Employers' Advisors Office on Due Diligence. It coincided well with the

While most educators agree that large class sizes have negative implications on the quality of education being provided as a result of less teacher-to-student time, the situation is more dire in a technology education shop.

next topic, which examined the issue of over-sized classes in technology education shops. While this presentation reinforced many of our beliefs relating to class size and shop safety, it also opened our eyes with regard to due diligence and levels of responsibility of instructors in technology education shops.

While most educators agree that large class sizes have negative implications on the quality of education being provided as a result of less teacher-to-student time, the situation is more dire in a technology education shop. Our shops are typically a bee hive of activity with students engaged in a variety of processes that may involve the use of stationary power equipment, power hand tools, use of hazardous chemicals, and exposure to gases from welding, and other hot metal processes. Throughout this activity, students also constantly move about from one station to another, transporting materials and projects, and depending on the size and

configuration of the shop, this in itself may prove to be a challenge.

Prior to Bill 33, governing class size/composition, shop classes were typically capped at 24 students. Today we are seeing many instances of shops crammed with 30 students and more than 3 identified students and accompanying educational assistants, resulting in a total population of up to 34 people. That is 10 more than the 24 work stations shops have been designed for. These images illustrate the issue of class size as it relates to shop space and students ability to work effectively. Imagine running a computer class that has 24 computers, but with 30+ individuals trying to get their work completed. This does not even begin to address another reality in many technology education classes; having multigrade courses running simultaneously (e.g., Woodwork 9, 10, 11 & 12).

Technology education teachers are facing increased stress levels and a growing number of near misses and serious incidents. The following is an example of a near miss one teacher recently experienced in his shop.

"As he arced the blade out of the side of the wood, something about his expression and hand speed caught my attention. His trailing hand was accelerating toward the saw blade. Instinctively, I reached out and pinned his hand to the machine table. The gap between his palm and the moving saw blade had closed to only a couple of millimeters. He was totally unaware. After moving his hand away, I turned off the machine and asked him if he realized what almost happened. He looked at me and the colour drained from his face.

"While I believe that I had the situation totally under control (it

took hours for my adrenalin to ease), there is no doubt in my mind that if I had not been able to do so, that he would have at least partially, if not fully amputated his thumb at its base.

"After an experience like this, you always replay the scenario looking for ways to mitigate future events. The more I thought, the more I realized that everything worked the way it should have. The only variable that I could not control was a teenage mind, he simply lost his concentration.

"This happened in a motivated senior class (middle school) with 16 students present. I am convinced that if the same circumstances occurred during a larger class that it is highly unlikely that I would have been close enough to prevent the injury. In fact, I would probably not have even been aware of it until I heard his scream.

"All of my professional experience tells me that when student numbers exceed 24 in an industrial ed class, that the likelihood of injury will go from possible to probable."

Technology education teachers are facing increased stress levels and a growing number of 'near misses' and serious incidents. The following is an example of a 'near miss' one teacher recently experienced in his shop.

Near misses like this one, though not always documented, are growing in number. The occurrence of serious incidents where fingers are lost, hands lacerated, or other injuries can be attributed to having too many students to adequately

supervise. These injuries, while a risk, do not have to become a reality.

A simplistic solution offered by some administrators is to shut down these programs because of the risk factor and the cost of running the programs. The reality is that technology education programs make a significant contribution to the strong graduation rates in BC. If not for these programs, many students would not have reason to attend regularly or to stay in school at all. Many of our students will become those you call to repair your furnace, do the wiring in your addition, or keep your car running.

The outcome of the district reps' meeting was to establish a task force to examine this serious issue and develop what is being termed as a *Best Practices Code for Technology Education*. The code would set a maximum class size of up to 24 students, (that facilities provide adequate space and are equipped to meet the instructional needs and safety of all students enrolled in the program). It would also have technology education specialists teaching these programs; and finally, ensuring that educational assistants who are assigned to work with students in shop programs have relevant training to work in a shop environment.

The goal is to have the best practices code established by the end of January 2010 and submit it to the Executive Committee for review and adaptation. The BCTEA feels this is necessary for the protection of our instructors and students and if the integrity of our programs is to be preserved.

Paul Boscariol is president of the BC Technology Education Association.

Health and safety

How does Bill 33 affect health and safety in tech ed classes?

A radial-arm saw is a cutting machine consisting of a saw blade driven by an electric motor that can rip and cut lumber.

A lathe is a machine that spins, cuts, sands, knurls, drills, and deforms a block of material.

A power drill is an electrical motor that rotates a drill bit to make a hole in wood, plastic, or metal.

Automotive hoists are used to lift thousands of pounds of steel, plastic, rubber, and glass.

None of these pieces of equipment are dangerous when used properly.

Picture a room of 34 Grade 9 students, one teacher, and two education assistants all crammed into a space designed for 24, using these pieces of equipment as well as hammers, handsaws, cutting tools, screwdrivers, wrenches, sanders, planers, hot glue guns, and scissors. Add to this the noise created by the equipment, wood dust, inadequate lighting, and hazardous chemicals.

This is the teaching environment of a tech-ed teacher.

Students who take these tech-ed classes thrive on hands-on learning in which they learn valuable practical skills, to use into their adult years. Some develop skills sufficient to carry into a profession or trade.

Tech-ed teachers say that they could safely teach these skills when their class sizes were manageable. They are afraid they can't anymore. They are worried for the safety of the students, the untrained educational assistants, and also for themselves.

The Ministry of Education advertises how it has increased the focus and funding of trades' programs in secondary and post-secondary education. Research indicates that schools with tech-ed programs show an increase in graduation rates. When we know that only 18% of our students complete university programs, the real-life literacy and numeracy skills students learn in tech-ed programs make it imperative to keep them alive.

Tech-ed teachers say that they could safely teach these skills when their class sizes were manageable. They are afraid they can't anymore. They are worried for the safety of the students, the untrained educational assistants, and also for themselves.

When site-based joint committees do regular inspections, make sure the tech-ed programs are inspected during class time. Make recommendations to improve the health and safety of the teachers, educational assistants, and students.

If we can't make the Ministry of Education pay attention to the damaging effects of large class sizes from an educational perspective, maybe we can through health and safety.

— Karen Langenmaier
BCTF health and safety officer



Canadians “peacing” Israeli and Palestinian youth together

By **Tarik Chelali**

Until recently, Omar Chu was a regular Grade 10 student. This teenager from Dr. Charles Best Secondary School in Coquitlam played goalie on his hockey team, centre for the secondary school basketball team, and spent a lot of time hanging out with friends. In the summer of 2008 when Chu participated in the *Peace it Together* program and created films with Israeli and Palestinian peers, he was transformed into a global citizen. Now, a creative teaching resource will revolutionize the way your students think about conflict, prejudice, and the possibility of peace.

Peace it Together is a Vancouver-based charity that empowers youth to promote peace through dialogue, filmmaking, and multimedia. In 2006 and 2008, 10 Palestinian, 10 Israeli, and 10 Canadian youth gathered on Canada’s westcoast to engage in dialogue, and then to collaboratively produce short films on their perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Peace it Together is a Vancouver-based charity that empowers youth to promote peace through dialogue, filmmaking, and multimedia. In 2006 and 2008, 10 Palestinian, 10 Israeli, and 10 Canadian youth gathered on Canada’s westcoast to engage in dialogue, and then to collaboratively produce short films on their perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

With Canadian youths like Chu mediating and facilitating, Israeli and Palestinian teenagers learned to listen, collaborate, and befriend one another. Consequently, their inspiring films have touched people from all walks of life and are now being shared in film festivals worldwide.

Those films are now the spotlight of an educational resource for secondary school and post-secondary classes with a focus in

history, current affairs, social justice, or film and media studies. “Peacing it Together” is an educational package that includes a documentary by award-winning filmmakers, seven youth-made short films with corresponding discussion questions, a teacher’s guide, and invaluable behind-the-scenes footage of how these kids came to trust one another.

In an effort to publicize the youths’ message of peace and educate Canadian teenagers on this lasting conflict, the educational resource is engaging, creative, and has a clear message to teachers and students—peace is possible. The films, the adolescents concur, remind viewers of the humanity that exists in this conflict.

The package allows teachers to steer and structure their classes creatively. The teacher’s guide enables group work and discussions on the award-winning documentary and the youth-made short films. Furthermore, the package allows students and teachers to interact with a sensitive and complicated conflict within the safety of the classroom.

In support of the program, Canadian Peace it Together delegates have made countless appearances at school assemblies, community meetings, film festival receptions, all in hopes of reaching out to their peers. Some of the youths live in the Lower Mainland, on Vancouver Island, in Northern BC, and throughout Canada. They are willing to present their short films and talk about their experience at secondary schools in their area.

Adri Hamael, a Palestinian, and Reena Lazar, a Jewish Canadian, founded Peace it Together in 2004 in hopes of breaking historical barriers to peace and dialogue. Lazar, now the executive director of the Peace it Together Society, explains, “The films provide a fresh and real perspective on the conflict that is of great interest to young people here in British Columbia. While the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the most notorious and intractable in the world today, most young people outside the conflict region don’t understand what it is about or how it impacts everyday

people. Mass media and classroom curricula generally fail at conveying to students what they really want to know—the concerns and interests of their peers.”

While the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the most notorious and intractable in the world today, most young people outside the conflict region don’t understand what it is about or how it impacts everyday people.

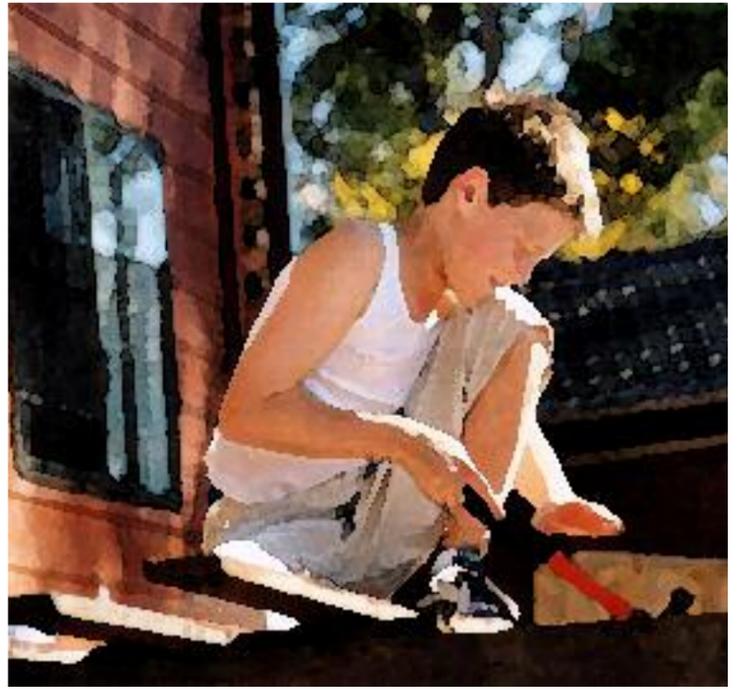
As an educational tool, “Peacing it Together,” will push your class to see beyond the permeating images of war. It will enable teachers to challenge students to think about peace and how Canadians can help end conflicts worldwide.

Omar Chu’s transformation is an example of the impact that Peace it Together can have on your students. Since 2008, Chu has written articles for the *Pearl World Youth News*, attended dozens of community meetings, film-festival screenings, and school assemblies to present the films. Chu and his fellow participants are working on a new documentary that they hope will give behind-the-scenes access to the relationships and the Canadian perspective on the significance of the program. Chu graduates from secondary school in June of 2010 and plans on continuing with an education in Peace and Conflict Studies.

The “Peacing it Together” educational package is quoted at \$195 for schools, libraries, and organizations. All proceeds go to creating more programs to inspire people to take peaceful action to resolve conflict.

Tarik Chelali is marketing and distribution co-ordinator, Peace It Together Society, tarik@peaceittogether.ca

If you are interested in screening any of our films, hosting a discussion with a member of the Canadian delegation, or to purchase, please e-mail us at info@peaceittogether.ca. For more information on the package or to watch a trailer, visit www.peacingittogether.ca



The pain of work

Child labour and injuries in BC

By **Helesia Luke**

If you aren’t familiar with what happened in 2003, you might be scratching your head right now wondering why we need to be concerned about child labour in British Columbia. You’d be forgiven for thinking that child labour isn’t an issue—this is Canada after all. Unfortunately, children working and getting injured on the job is a pressing issue in BC in 2010.

Seven years ago, the BC government lowered the work-start age (that’s the age you can work without government permission) to 12 years. Yes—you read that correctly. Since 2003, children aged 12 and up can work at virtually any worksite, at any time of day, and at any task with the permission of one parent or guardian. At the same time, government eliminated the requirement for employers to obtain a permit to employ children between the ages of 12 and 14. A permit is still required to employ a child under the age of 12.

To be clear, by child labour, we’re not talking about babysitting or raking leaves. Child labour is the employment of children at regular workplaces.

In 2003, these changes positioned BC as the jurisdiction with the youngest work-start age in North America. In addition, by requiring only a parent’s permission, parents were effectively placed in charge of assessing work-site safety. Under the previous permit system, Employment Standards officers had the lead role in determining the suitability of a worksite and the ability to impose conditions on employment. The permit system itself protected children, as many employers simply did not attempt to hire children and submit their workplaces to special conditions. Educators also played a role in deciding if a work commitment would have a negative effect on a child’s education.

Interestingly, government made one exception. After hearing that California-based lobby groups would use this change to keep film productions on the US side of the border (lower child-labour standards would give BC productions an unfair advantage and put us off-side the spirit of NAFTA!), the permit system was continued for children in the film industry.

Child and youth advocates, as well as teachers, warned that lowering employment standards would put children at risk of injury and exploitation. New research

shows that indeed more children are working and getting hurt in the workplace.

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition recently released “What’s Happening to Our Children? A Look at Child Work-Related Injury Claims in BC Over the Past 10 Years,” a report that examines the effect of changes to BC’s laws governing child labour.

The first challenge in the research was simply trying to find out how many children are working. Statistics Canada does not track the

Child and youth advocates, as well as teachers, warned that lowering employment standards would put children at risk of injury and exploitation. New research shows that indeed more children are working and getting hurt in the workplace.

workforce participation of those under 16 and since the permit system no longer exists, there is virtually no way to reliably count how many children are working and where.

The proxy we landed on was WorkSafe BC’s accepted injury claims. This data gives us only a glimpse at what’s happening to our children in the work force. And that glimpse is not reassuring.

The report’s key findings

- Beginning in 2004, a year after the law was changed, accepted injury claims began to increase in all age groups examined in the report (14 and under, 15- and 16-year-olds). In 2008 accepted claims for 15- and 16-year-olds dropped slightly but injury claims for children under 15 continued to increase through 2008.
- We found a startling increase in the number of child workplace injury claims accepted by WorkSafe BC since the work-start age was lowered to 12. In 2008, WorkSafeBC accepted 42 claims for job-related injuries to children age 14 and under. This represents a 10-fold increase in claims over a four-year period.
- For all age groups, injury claims were significantly higher after 2005 than they were in any previous year.
- 12- to 14-year-olds working in five sectors experienced the highest rates of injury—accommodation and food services, retail, agriculture, general construction, and food and beverage manufacturing.

The report also examined the potential causes of this alarming



Palestinian, Israeli, and Canadian filmmakers conclude the shooting of No Place for Dreamers (2006).

injury trend. In all other age groups, we observed that an increase in the number of people working, results in an increase in the number getting hurt on the job. We concluded the same was true for children. The significant increase in injury claims that we saw means that more children are working!

It is foolhardy to place the burden on parents to ensure workplace safety for children. The lack of protection and regulation about what work is safe for children, and the effort to shift responsibility for assessing workplace safety onto parents is fueling a crisis.

It is foolhardy to place the burden on parents to ensure workplace safety for children.

The rising injury statistics are evidence that parents are not able to protect their children. The responsibility for regulating, monitoring and enforcing workplace safety standards rightly belongs to government.

Since 2003, WorkSafe BC has produced numerous materials for parents advising them to become more knowledgeable about on-the-job health and safety for their children. While more education is always helpful, within the virtually unregulated environment of where children work in this province, greater awareness does not change the fact that once a child is on a worksite, parents are powerless to ensure that the child is safe and that tasks are age appropriate.

In fact, heightened efforts to raise awareness about workplace safety for children also served to advertise the fact that 12-year-olds in BC could now work in virtually all occupations and at all tasks.

Adding insult to injury, while education about workplace safety is mandated in Grade 10, this is actually two or three years after a child can begin working in BC.

A country with the economic strength of Canada has a moral obligation to adopt known best practices governing child labour. In addition to protecting our own children, we have a responsibility to our global neighbours to enact, maintain, and enforce responsible child labour legislation and regulation—a framework that will help to eliminate the child labour worldwide.

Recommendations arising from the report

- The provincial government must develop and enact legislation to protect children from work-related injuries. This includes bringing BC's legislative and regulatory framework into compliance with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
- The government should immediately establish a child-labour advisory group that includes a broad representation of child and youth advocates, including young people with recent work experience in the higher injury occupations.
- There is an inexcusable lack of information about how many children are working and under what conditions. The government must gather and monitor data about children in the workforce.
- It's time to place children's safety and healthy development at the top of the priority list and raise BC's child labour standards.

The increase in accepted injury claims over the past four years is cause for serious concern. At a minimum it should prompt an immediate inquiry into how to reduce the number of children injured at work. WorkSafe BC data tells us only about the experience of children with reported injuries; it does not capture the broader experience of children in the workforce.

What you can do

Please join First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition in calling for legislation and regulations that will protect children and bring BC in compliance with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Here is what you can do:

- go to www.nochildlabour.org and sign the petition
- write to your MLA
- write to your MP
- get the word out—tell parents and students in your school community (look for resources to help you with this on the website)
- join our Twitter and Facebook groups and get the word out to your friends and colleagues.

Helesia Luke is a public education advocate and author of "What's Happening to Our Children? A Look at Child Work-Related Injury Claims in BC Over the Past 10 Years."



What's new in the marketplace?

We hope that you noticed the launch of the Advantage Program "Marketplace" in last month's *Teacher*. In that edition, we provided teachers with limited knowledge of the program to some fundamentals: the program's website is accessed from the Advantage Program logo on the BCTF's homepage, and once in, the Marketplace can be viewed through one of the navigational tools under the masthead.

Last month we introduced the first nine partners in the Marketplace offering. This month we have six new partners who have joined our program:

FROGBOX

Providers of an eco-friendly alternative to cardboard moving boxes

LUSH

Fresh, natural, hand-made soaps and cosmetics

Quench Designs

Beautifully hand-crafted, organic jewellery designs

Raspberry Kids

Children's toys, clothes, and things for mum, too

SoftMoc

Quality men's and women's shoes

10,000 Villages

Ethically traded gifts and games from around the world.

If you know of any non-teacher

owned/operated businesses in your community whom you think might be interested in joining the program, e-mail pmclaughlin@bctf.ca.

Critical illness expanded coverage

You may remember, in May 2009, Industrial Alliance Pacific, who offer the optional life insurance for all BCTF members and their families, offered \$25,000 of Critical Illness Insurance with a guaranteed acceptance. That offer ran for May and June. After June 30, the product reverted to its original, medically underwritten form.

Critical illness insurance is a tax-free, one-time lump sum benefit that can be used any way you wish. And, unlike short- or long-term disability benefits, the payment is not dependent on your ability to work, or whether a full recovery is made.

The BCTF Critical Illness Insurance Plan offers members and their spouses (under the age of 65) up to \$300,000 of coverage (in units of \$25,000).

As of January 2010, the Critical Incident Insurance offering has expanded to include several new features:

25 covered conditions

- Alzheimer's disease
- Deafness
- Major organ transplant
- Aortic surgery*
- Heart attack
- Motor neuron disease
- Aplastic anemia*
- Heart valve replacement*
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Bacterial Meningitis*

- Kidney failure
- Occupational HIV infection*
- Benign brain tumour
- Loss of independent existence*
- Paralysis
- Blindness
- Loss of limbs
- Parkinson's disease
- Cancer (life-threatening)
- Loss of speech
- Severe burns
- Coma
- Major organ failure on waiting list
- Stroke
- Coronary artery bypass surgery

*New conditions covered

Included in this coverage is an AdvanceCare benefit. Four other non-life-threatening conditions are covered by the AdvanceCare benefit. AdvanceCare will pay 10% of the insured benefit amount on the following conditions:

- Coronary Angioplasty
- These early-stage cancers:
 - Malignant Melanoma
 - State A Prostate Cancer (T1a or T1b)
 - Ductal Carcinoma in situ of the breast.

This benefit is payable for one AdvanceCare Benefit condition. And, payment of an AdvanceCare Benefit will not affect the benefit payment for a subsequent diagnosis in the event that the illness develops into a covered condition.

For more information on the plan, please visit www.iapacific.com/bctf or contact an IAP customer service specialist by e-mail at group@iapacific.com or by phone at 1-800-266-5667.

– Patti McLaughlin

Yours for the asking

Out in Schools launches LGBT teacher's resource guide

The *Out in Schools* program is an innovative project garnering critical acclaim amongst educators across the province. Out in Schools has reached more than 13,000 students since its inception and the launch of a new *Teacher's Learning Resource Guide* will extend the programs reach even further.

This handy guide is based on the Out in Schools program that uses independent film, and especially youth-produced film to engage and educate young people on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) issues including discrimination, homophobia, isolation, bullying, and violence. This guide is a terrific resource for educators and youth workers who require support when tackling LGBT issues in their classrooms.

The guide includes a detailed list of program learning outcomes that meet BC Ministry of Education standards, as well as a teacher's instruction guide, a glossary, and list of youth resources. It also comes with student work units and includes a double DVD of selected youth films which focus on a variety of LGBT issues. The guide also includes student workshop

activities, a timeline of the gay rights movement in Canada and suggested discussion topics for instructors.

The guide is available January 1, 2010, for only \$35. To order your copy or to learn more, contact Ross Johnstone, director of Youth Education, Out in Schools, 604-844-1615, e-mail: ross@outonscreen.com, website: outinschools.com.

BCTF video resources

BCTF members may borrow video resources from the BCTF Information Services Department. In future issues of *Teacher* we will highlight new resources that members may use for professional or classroom use. We purchase public performance rights for all items. Feature titles this month include:

- *Growing Up Online*
- *Straightlaced: How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up*
- *The Suzuki Diaries: Sustainability in Action*

Search our online video catalogue, info.bctf.ca/videos/search.aspx, for complete descriptions of these titles or to find video resources on other topics.

Please call toll-free 1-800-663-9163 (local 2241), or 604-871-2241 (direct) or e-mail your request to video@bctf.ca and include your

name, e-mail address, video title, date required, school address, and your school phone and fax numbers.

To minimize loss, videos are couriered rather than mailed, and we request that members assume return courier costs. Members may also choose to pick up videos from the BCTF.

Seizure info for schools

The BC Epilepsy Society has produced a new DVD specifically for teachers. *Epilepsy and Seizure Information for Schools*, discusses seizures, epilepsy, learning impacts, and classroom management. It includes interviews with medical professionals, school personnel, parents, and children.

It is estimated that one in twelve people will have a seizure in their lifetime. Seizures are more common in children, especially among children with special needs or chronic health conditions. Epilepsy, sometimes called a seizure disorder, means that someone has recurring seizures. In fact, considering the prevalence, it is likely that a child in your school has had seizures.

The DVD is available from school resource media libraries or you can order a copy by contacting the BC Epilepsy Society at outreach@bc.epilepsy.com or at 604-875-6704.



Teachers' Pension Plan

Your pension is a defined-benefit plan. Each day that you work is recorded by your employer and that information is sent to the pension plan. For each full year of pensionable service, you accrue 2% of your final pension. Thirty-five years of pensionable service is the maximum pension you can accrue, so a maximum pension is 70% of your highest average salary. The highest average salary is calculated on your best five years of earnings. Working part time does not negatively affect the highest average salary calculation, but it does affect how much pensionable service you accrue. If

you have a half-time assignment, you will accrue half the pensionable service of a full-time employee.

One of the most common questions asked regarding pensions has to do with the Factor 90 formula. If you add your age in years and months to your contributory service, in years and months, and the two numbers add up to 90, you qualify for an unreduced pension. It's important to remember that an unreduced pension is not necessarily a full pension. An unreduced pension for a teacher with 32 years in the classroom, who had attained the 90 factor, or reached the age of

60 would be equivalent to 64% of her or his five-year highest average salary. A reduction of 3% per year or .25% per month is applied below the 90 factor. So as an example, a teacher with 30 years pensionable service who retires at factor 88 (age 57 and 31 years of contributory service) would have a pension equal to 60% of her or his highest average salary and that would be reduced by 6%, so that teacher's final lifetime pension would be 54% of her or his highest average salary.

– Rob Taylor, BCTF Income Security Division

BCTF Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2009

President's comments

The accompanying financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2009 have been prepared in accordance with the by-laws of the Federation and the provisions of the *Society Act*. They reflect the stewardship of the Executive Committee over the resources of the Federation and the committee's accountability to the membership for the effective management of those resources.

On a combined (all funds) basis, expenditures exceeded revenues (a deficit) by \$3.8 million for the 2008-09 year compared to a deficit of \$0.6 million for the 2007-08 year. The General Operating Fund incurred a deficit of \$607,000 for 2008-09 due mainly to increased expenditures for AGM and RA meetings, EC travel, Teacher mailing, and grants to locals. However, the main reason for the increase in the combined deficit was due to higher expenditures for the commitment to public education campaign in the Public Education Defence Fund (PEDF) in 2008-09 which resulted in a PEDF deficit of \$2.6 million for the 2008-09 year (Schedule 5) compared to a deficit of \$627,000 for 2007-08.

The Collective Bargaining Defence Fund (CBDF) deficit was \$425,000 for the 2008-09 year (Schedule 2) which, combined with the \$3 million transfer to the PEDF approved by the 2008 AGM, decreased the fund balance from \$11.2 million at June 30, 2008 to \$7.8 million at June 30, 2009.

The Provincial Bargaining Fund surplus was \$212,000 for the 2008-09 year (Schedule 4) which improved the negative fund balance of \$374,000 at June 30, 2008 resulting in a negative fund balance of \$162,000 at June 30, 2009. The improvement in operating results was due mainly to lower expenditures in 2008-09 compared to the prior year.

The Public Education Defence Fund (PEDF) deficit of \$2.6 million for the 2008-09 year (Schedule 5) was offset by the \$3 million transfer from the CBDF which improved the PEDF negative fund balance from \$774,000 at June 30, 2008 to a negative fund balance of \$374,000 at June 30, 2009.

At their December 10-12, 2009 meeting, the Executive Committee will be considering the Finance Committee 2010-11 total fee recommendation of 1.50%, which represents an increase of 0.05% to the 2009-10 total fee of 1.45%.

The operations of the Salary Indemnity Fund (SIF) reflect a deficit of \$27.1 million for the 2008-09 year (Statement 3) compared to a deficit of \$5.9 million for 2007-08. The fund balance has now decreased from \$71.5 million at June 30, 2008 to \$44.4 million at June 30, 2009. A 2008-09 surplus budget of \$6.6 million recognized that fee revenue at 1.50% would not cover claim and administrative expenses which would need to be supplemented by budgeted investment income of \$22.5 million. However, a \$27.1 million actual deficit occurred due to a significant downturn in the economy and deterioration of investment values subsequent to the June 30, 2008 year end resulting in a \$9.0 million realized loss on investment income in 2008-09 along with a \$12.7 million unrealized loss on investments held on June 30, 2009. The Income Security Committee is recommending a status quo fee of 1.89% for 2010-11.

Auditors' Report

Irene Lanzinger

To the Members of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation

We have audited the statement of financial position of the General and Other Funds (not including the Salary Indemnity Fund) of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as at June 30, 2009, and the statements of changes in net assets, operations and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Federation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the General and Other Funds (not including the Salary Indemnity Fund) of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as at June 30, 2009 and the results of its operations, changes in its financial position and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. As required by the *Society Act of British Columbia*, we report that, in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Smythe Ratcliffe, Chartered Accountants, October 28, 2009

Management Responsibility for Financial Statements

The accompanying financial statements and all other information contained in this annual report are the responsibility of the management of the Federation. The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and have been approved by the Executive Committee.

Preparation of financial information is an integral part of the ongoing operation of the Federation. A system of internal accounting controls is maintained to ensure that transactions are accurately recorded on a timely basis, are properly approved and result in reliable financial statements.

The Finance and Audit Committee reviews the financial statements and recommends them to the Executive Committee for its approval. In addition, the Finance and Audit Committee meets with the officers of the Federation and the external auditors, and reports to the Executive Committee.

The financial statements have been examined by the Federation's auditors who are engaged by the Executive Committee on recommendation of the Finance and Audit Committee and whose appointment was ratified at the Annual General Meeting. The auditors have free access to the Finance and Audit Committee, without management present, to discuss the results of their audit work and their opinion on the adequacy of internal accounting controls and the quality of financial reporting.

Moira Mackenzie, Executive Director

Rob McLaren, C.A., Treasurer

STATEMENT 1 Statement of Financial Position as at June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Assets		
Current		
Cash (Note 10)	\$ 4,676	\$ 10,514
Marketable securities (Note 3)	5,720	6,137
	<u>10,396</u>	<u>16,651</u>
Membership fees and other receivables	3,777	3,975
Inventories and prepaid expenses	435	525
	<u>14,608</u>	<u>21,151</u>
Due from Salary Indemnity Fund	650	1,097
Capital Assets (Notes 5 & 6)	<u>14,439</u>	<u>14,702</u>
	<u>\$ 29,697</u>	<u>\$ 36,950</u>
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 2,458	\$ 2,846
Employee future benefit obligation (Notes 2 f. & 7)	4,802	5,502
SIP rebate (Note 10)	—	2,164
Due to Provincial Specialist Associations	<u>1,111</u>	<u>1,292</u>
	<u>8,371</u>	<u>11,804</u>
Members' Funds		
General Operating Fund (including investment in capital assets) (Schedule 1)	13,786	14,393
Internally Restricted Funds:		
Collective Bargaining Defence Fund (Schedule 2)	7,793	11,218
Contingency Fund (Schedule 3)	147	525
Provincial Bargaining Fund (Schedule 4)	(162)	(374)
Public Education Defence Fund (Schedule 5)	(374)	(774)
William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund (Schedule 6)	126	148
Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund (Schedule 6)	10	10
	<u>21,326</u>	<u>25,146</u>
	<u>\$ 29,697</u>	<u>\$ 36,950</u>

Approved by the Executive Committee




See Notes to Financial Statements

STATEMENT 2 Statement of Changes in Net Assets for the year ended June 30

	General Operating Fund		Internally Restricted Funds				2009	2008
	Operating	Invested in Capital Assets	Collective Bargaining Defence Fund	Contingency Fund	Provincial Bargaining Fund	Public Education Defence Fund	Other Funds	Total
Balance, beginning of year	\$ (309)	\$ 14,702	\$ 11,218	\$ 525	\$ (374)	\$ (774)	\$ 158	\$ 25,146
Adjustment to beginning balance	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(47)
	(309)	14,702	11,218	525	(374)	(774)	158	25,146
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses	(607)	—	(425)	(378)	212	(2,600)	(22)	(3,820)
Transfer	—	—	(3,000)	—	—	3,000	—	—
Net change in capital assets	263	(263)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ (653)</u>	<u>\$ 14,439</u>	<u>\$ 7,793</u>	<u>\$ 147</u>	<u>\$ (162)</u>	<u>\$ (374)</u>	<u>\$ 136</u>	<u>\$ 21,326</u>

See Notes to Financial Statements

STATEMENT 3
Statement of Operations for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 32,294	\$ 30,934
Net investment income	349	513
	<u>32,643</u>	<u>31,447</u>
Operating expenses		
General Operating Fund (Schedule 1)	29,239	28,422
Collective Bargaining Defence Fund (Schedule 2)	2,125	1,087
Contingency Fund (Schedule 3)	611	384
Provincial Bargaining Fund (Schedule 4)	228	733
Public Education Defence Fund (Schedule 5)	3,729	1,041
Other funds (Schedule 6)	630	506
	<u>36,562</u>	<u>32,173</u>
Subtotal	(3,919)	(726)
Unrealized gain on investments	99	121
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ (3,820)</u>	<u>\$ (605)</u>

See Notes to Financial Statements

STATEMENT 4
Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Cash flows from operating activities		
Deficiency excess of revenue over expenses	\$ (3,820)	\$ (605)
Items not affecting cash:		
Depreciation	1,218	1,040
Employee future benefits	(700)	974
Unrealized gain on investments	(99)	(121)
	<u>(3,401)</u>	<u>1,288</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital items		
Membership fees and other receivables	198	(134)
Inventories and prepaid expenses	90	141
Due from Salary Indemnity Fund	447	9
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(388)	(74)
SIP rebate	(2,164)	—
Due to Provincial Specialist Associations	(181)	71
	<u>(1,998)</u>	<u>13</u>
Cash flow from investing activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(955)	(1,167)
Sale of marketable securities	516	—
	<u>(439)</u>	<u>(1,167)</u>
Change in cash	(5,838)	134
Cash, beginning of year	10,514	10,380
Cash, end of year	<u>\$ 4,676</u>	<u>\$ 10,514</u>

See Notes to Financial Statements

Schedule 1
General Operating Fund
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance
for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Allocation of membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 28,601	\$ 27,399
Net interest (expense) income	(35)	87
	<u>28,566</u>	<u>27,486</u>
Divisional operating expenses		
Management	5,114	4,471
Professional and Social Issues	4,867	4,782
Communications/Campaigns	4,402	4,546
Finance and Administrative Services	2,783	2,717
Field Service	2,545	2,542
Research and Technology	2,497	2,265
CA Protective Services	1,483	2,570
Income Security	381	241
	<u>24,072</u>	<u>24,134</u>
Grants to Locals	5,167	4,288
	<u>29,239</u>	<u>28,422</u>
Subtotal	(673)	(936)
Unrealized gain on investments	66	21
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(607)	(915)
Fund balance, beginning of year	14,393	15,309
Adjustment to beginning fund balance	—	(1)
	<u>14,393</u>	<u>15,308</u>
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$ 13,786</u>	<u>\$ 14,393</u>

Schedule 2
Collective Bargaining Defence Fund
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance
for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Allocation of membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 1,336	\$ 1,919
Net investment income	331	412
	<u>1,667</u>	<u>2,331</u>
Expenses		
Legal costs over GOF budget	1,671	915
Bills 27 and 28	298	37
GVTA prep time	116	—
Bargaining mobilization	40	29
CUPE strike support	—	88
Third party support	—	17
Bargaining strategy support	—	1
	<u>2,125</u>	<u>1,087</u>
Subtotal	(458)	1,244
Unrealized gain on investments	33	100
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses	(425)	1,344
Transfer to Public Education Defence Fund	(3,000)	—
	<u>(3,425)</u>	<u>1,344</u>
Fund balance, beginning of year	11,218	9,920
Adjustment to beginning fund balance	—	(46)
	<u>11,218</u>	<u>9,874</u>
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$ 7,793</u>	<u>\$ 11,218</u>

Schedule 3
Contingency Fund
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance
for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Allocation of membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 223	\$ 213
Net investment income	10	30
	<u>233</u>	<u>243</u>
Expenses		
Legal costs over GOF budget	363	116
Bill 42	210	15
Codevelopment Canada re Cuba	20	—
Citizens for Public Power Society	10	—
Langley Commission	8	44
Langley Farmworkers	2	—
School closures	(2)	4
GVTA prep time	—	145
Sooke support action	—	37
Bills 20, 21 and 22	—	24
Bills 50 and 51	—	(1)
	<u>611</u>	<u>384</u>
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(378)	(141)
Fund balance, beginning of year	525	666
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$ 147</u>	<u>\$ 525</u>

Schedule 4
Provincial Bargaining Fund
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance
for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Allocation of membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 446	\$ 426
Net investment expense	(6)	(4)
	<u>440</u>	<u>422</u>
Expenses		
Provincial negotiations	228	733
	<u>228</u>	<u>733</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	212	(311)
Fund balance, beginning of year	(374)	(63)
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$ (162)</u>	<u>\$ (374)</u>

Schedule 5
Public Education Defence Fund
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance
for the year ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Allocation of membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 1,114	\$ 426
Net investment expense	15	(12)
	<u>1,129</u>	<u>414</u>
Expenses		
Commitment to public education	2,938	—
Public education advocacy	791	1,041
	<u>3,729</u>	<u>1,041</u>
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(2,600)	(627)
Transfer from Collective Bargaining Defence Fund	3,000	—
	<u>400</u>	<u>(627)</u>
Fund balance, beginning of year	(774)	(147)
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$ (374)</u>	<u>\$ (774)</u>

Schedule 6
Other Internally Restricted Funds
Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Fund Balance
for the year ended June 30

	WR Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund	Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund	Total 2009	Total 2008
	(in thousands)			
Revenue				
Allocation of membership fees (Note 4)	\$ 542	\$ 32	\$ 574	\$ 551
Other income	34	—	34	—
	<u>576</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>608</u>	<u>551</u>
Expenses				
Grants	598	32	630	506
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses	(22)	—	(22)	45
Fund balances, beginning of year	148	10	158	113
Fund balances, end of year	<u>\$ 126</u>	<u>\$ 10</u>	<u>\$ 136</u>	<u>\$ 158</u>

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended June 30, 2009

1. BACKGROUND AND BASIS OF COMBINATION

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (the BCTF or the Federation) is incorporated as a society pursuant to the *Society Act of British Columbia*, and is a trade union pursuant to the Labour Relations Code of BC and the *Public Education Labour Relations Act*. The Federation is exempt from income tax.

The financial statements of the Federation include the results of the seven funds described below.

General Operating Fund: The purpose of the fund is to meet the goals of the Federation through program expenditures planned in advance and approved by the Representative Assembly. This fund also holds the investment in capital assets.

Collective Bargaining Defence Fund: The purpose of the fund is to pay costs directly related to strikes, lockouts, the honouring of picket lines in third-party disputes, and contract enforcement in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Representative Assembly.

Contingency Fund: The purpose of the fund is to meet, without delay, special or emergent expenses that could not reasonably have been anticipated and to promote the cause of public education by providing the financial means to respond effectively to any crisis in education. Expenditures from the Contingency Fund are made in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the Representative Assembly.

Public Education Defence Fund: The purpose of the fund is to ensure adequate resources are available to effectively respond to the attack on public education launched by the government and to support the implementation of the Federation's Public Education Advocacy Plan. Expenditures from the fund are planned in advance and approved by the Representative Assembly.

Provincial Bargaining Fund: The purpose of the fund is to pay costs related to provincial contract negotiations. Expenditures from the fund are planned in advance and approved by the Representative Assembly.

William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund: The purpose of the fund is to improve public education in developing countries.

Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund: The purpose of the fund is to promote socially responsible teaching practices.

The **Salary Indemnity Fund** is reported to the membership in a separate set of financial statements and is not included in these financial statements. The purpose of the Salary Indemnity Fund is to meet the obligations of the Salary Indemnity Plan which provides income benefits to members disabled from employment as a result of illness or accident. The total fee allocated to the Salary Indemnity Fund was 1.5% of gross salary for the 2008–09 membership year (2007–08 was 1.7%). Any fund deficiency is the responsibility of the Federation. The financial statements of the Salary Indemnity Fund should be read concurrently with these financial statements.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below. These policies are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the recommendations of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

a. Fund Accounting

The Federation follows the restricted fund method of accounting for membership fees whereby fees are allocated to each fund on the basis approved annually at the Annual General Meeting.

b. Financial Instruments

All financial instruments are classified as one of the following: held-to-maturity, loans and receivables, held-for-trading, available-for-sale, or other financial liabilities. Financial assets and liabilities classified as held-for-trading are measured at fair value with gains and losses recognized in net income. Loans and receivables and other financial liabilities are measured at amortized cost using the effective interest method.

Receivables are classified as loans and receivables and liabilities are classified as other liabilities. Marketable securities are classified as held-for-trading and presented at their fair value with the unrealized gains or losses recognized in excess/deficiency of revenues over expenses for the year.

c. Revenue Recognition

Membership fees are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund as received or receivable. Investment income from the Federation's investments is recognized as revenue as it is earned and is allocated to the appropriate restricted fund based on the investments held for the fund.

d. Marketable Securities

Marketable securities are presented at their market values as of the closing of business June 30, 2009.

e. Capital Assets

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line method based on anticipated useful lives:

Building	30 years	Furniture & equipment	3–10 years
Renovations	9–10 years	Computer hardware & software	3–10 years
Tenant improvements	10 years		

f. Employee Future Benefits

The Federation maintains a defined benefit registered pension plan for all support staff of the Federation including casual and temporary employees and any administrative and excluded staff who are not eligible to join the Teachers' Pension Plan.

The pension expense and plan funding requirements are determined tri-annually by independent consulting actuaries. The date of the most recent pension valuation was January 1, 2008. The cost of pension benefits earned is determined using the projected benefit method pro-rated on service and is charged to expense as services are rendered. Adjustments arising from plan amendments, changes in assumptions, experience gains and losses, and the net pension assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over the estimated average remaining service lives of the employees.

In addition, the Federation provides non-pension benefits to qualifying retirees consisting of supplementary health insurance benefits. The cost of post-retirement benefits other than pensions is recognized on an accrual basis over the working lives of employees. The expense reported in the current year, based on tri-annual independent actuarial assessment, is an allocation of estimated future benefits under these plans related to the service of employees in the current year. Future obligations for these benefits are funded when they occur. The date of the most recent non-pension benefit valuation was June 30, 2009.

g. Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires the Federation to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Estimates in these financial statements include the collectability of receivables, the useful lives of capital assets, and the liability and expense related to employee future benefits. Actual results could differ from those estimates and would impact results of operations and cash flows.

3. MARKETABLE SECURITIES

The market value of marketable securities at June 30, 2009 was \$5,720,466 compared to a cost of \$5,621,508 (June 30, 2008 market value—\$6,137,388; cost—\$6,063,128).

4. MEMBERSHIP FEE

The membership fee for the year ended June 30, 2009 was 1.45% of the gross salary of each member.

The following summarizes the fee allocations:	2008–09	2007–08
General Operating Fund	1.31%	1.31%
Collective Bargaining Defence Fund	0.06	0.09
Contingency Fund	0.01	0.01
Provincial Bargaining Fund	0.02	0.02
Public Education Defence Fund	0.05	0.02
	<u>1.45%</u>	<u>1.45%</u>

The General Operating Fund allocates 1.86% of its fee revenue to the William R. Long Memorial International Solidarity Fund. In addition, the General Operating Fund allocates \$1 per member per year to the Ed May Memorial Social Responsibility Fund.

5. CAPITAL ASSETS

	Original Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	2009 Net Book Value	2008 Net Book Value
			(in thousands)	
Land	\$ 4,430	\$ —	\$ 4,430	\$ 4,430
Building	12,736	(5,676)	7,060	7,535
	<u>17,166</u>	<u>(5,676)</u>	<u>11,490</u>	<u>11,965</u>
Renovations	936	(546)	390	393
Tenant improvements	1,131	(645)	486	418
Furniture and equipment	1,022	(535)	487	553
Computer hardware & software	3,006	(1,420)	1,586	1,373
	<u>\$23,261</u>	<u>\$(8,822)</u>	<u>\$14,439</u>	<u>\$14,702</u>

6. NET ASSETS INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS

Net assets invested in capital assets are funded as follows:

	2008–09	2007–08
	(in thousands)	
General Operating Fund	\$ 9,197	\$ 9,054
Collective Bargaining Defence Fund	5,242	5,648
	<u>\$14,439</u>	<u>\$14,702</u>

In 2000, the Representative Assembly authorized a loan of \$8,400,000 from the Collective Bargaining Defence Fund to the General Operating Fund to finance the purchase of the remaining interest in the Federation's building. For presentation purposes, the inter-fund loan payable and receivable are eliminated in the combined statement of financial position.

The loan bears interest at an effective annual rate of 3.56% and is repayable in monthly principal and interest payments of \$49,773. The current term is renewable on December 31, 2010. Loan interest for the year 2008–09 was \$191,204.

7. EMPLOYEE FUTURE BENEFITS

The following tables pertain to the Federation's employee future benefit plans, and provide fair value of plan assets, benefit obligations, and funded status for the year ended June 30, 2009:

	Pension	Non-pension
	(in thousands)	
Fair value of plan assets	\$ 23,518	\$ —
Accrued benefit obligation	(22,470)	(11,567)
Funded status—plan surplus (deficit)	<u>\$ 1,048</u>	<u>\$(11,567)</u>

The plan assets are invested in a professionally managed balanced pooled fund.

The net expense for the Federation's future employee benefit plans is as follows:

	Pension	Non-pension
	(in thousands)	
Benefit expense	<u>\$ 378</u>	<u>\$ 1,175</u>

The actuarial determinations were based on the following assumptions during the year:

Discount rate	8.0%
Expected long-term rate of return on plan assets	6.5%
Rate of compensation increase	2.5%

The assumed healthcare cost trend rate at June 30, 2009 was 7.5%, decreasing to 5% after five years.

8. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

a. Fair Value

The Federation's financial instruments include cash, marketable securities, membership fees and other receivables, due from Salary Indemnity Fund, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and due to Provincial Specialist Associations. The fair value of these financial instruments, excluding marketable securities, approximates their carrying value due to their short term to maturity. The fair value of marketable securities is disclosed in Note 3.

b. Interest Rate Risk

Financial risk is the risk arising from changes in interest rates. The Federation is exposed to interest rate risk due to the long-term maturity of certain of the investments. These investments are interest rate sensitive although this risk is actively managed.

c. Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from the possibility that a counter party to a financial instrument would fail to fulfill its financial obligations; therefore, the Federation is exposed to credit risk with respect to its cash, accounts receivable, and marketable securities.

The credit risk associated with cash is minimal as cash has been placed with a major financial institution. The Federation is not exposed to significant credit risk with respect to its accounts receivable and marketable securities as the majority of these amounts are due from school districts and governments.

9. SALARY INDEMNITY FUND

A summary of the financial position of the Salary Indemnity Fund is as follows:

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Total assets	\$211,717	\$242,681
Total liabilities	167,352	171,157
Fund balance, end of year	<u>44,365</u>	<u>71,524</u>
	<u>\$211,717</u>	<u>\$242,681</u>

A summary of the revenue and expenditures is as follows:

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Total revenue	\$ 28,026	\$ 55,331
Total expenditures	(42,454)	(46,936)
	<u>(14,428)</u>	<u>8,395</u>
Unrealized loss on investments	(12,731)	(14,254)
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ (27,159)</u>	<u>\$ (5,859)</u>

10. SALARY INDEMNITY PLAN (SIP) REBATE

The SIP rebate amount reported at June 30, 2008, represents the balance of funds received from the BC provincial government, net of refunds issued to members. Further to an Executive Committee motion of October 23, 2008, these funds were transferred into the Salary Indemnity Fund.

11. CAPITAL DISCLOSURE

The Federation preserves and manages its capital with the intention of promoting public education in British Columbia, obtaining improvement in conditions for its members and ensuring the continued existence of the Federation.

The Federation's capital includes cash, marketable securities, accounts receivable and accounts payable, and accrued liabilities.

12. FUTURE ACCOUNTING CHANGES

The CICA issued a new accounting standard, "Disclosure of Allocated Expenses," for not-for-profit organizations, which requires the disclosure of any accounting policies adopted for the allocation of expenses. This will affect the Federation's 2010 year end. The Federation is in the process of assessing the impact of this new standard on its financial statements.

Salary Indemnity Fund

Auditors' Report

To the Members of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation

We have audited the statement of financial position of the Salary Indemnity Fund of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as at June 30, 2009 and the statements of revenue, expenditures and fund balance, changes in net assets, and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Federation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

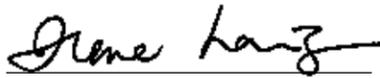
In our opinion these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Salary Indemnity Fund of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as at June 30, 2009, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. As required by the Society Act of British Columbia, we report that, in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

SmytheRatcliffe
Chartered Accountants
October 28, 2009

STATEMENT 1 Salary Indemnity Fund Statement of Financial Position as at June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Assets		
Accounts receivable	3,865	4,523
Investments (Note 3)	207,322	237,726
Capital assets (Note 4)	530	432
	<u>\$211,717</u>	<u>\$242,681</u>
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
Cheques issued in excess of funds on deposit	\$ —	\$ 318
Bank indebtedness	3,075	—
Accounts payable	573	876
Due to General Operating Fund	650	1,096
Provision for claims (Note 5)	163,054	168,867
	<u>167,352</u>	<u>171,157</u>
Invested in capital assets	530	432
Fund balance	<u>43,835</u>	<u>71,092</u>
	<u>44,365</u>	<u>71,524</u>
	<u>\$211,717</u>	<u>\$242,681</u>

Approved by the Executive Committee




STATEMENT 2 Salary Indemnity Fund Statement of Changes in Net Assets for Year Ended June 30

	Fund Balance	Investment in Capital Assets	2009	2008
	(in thousands)			
Balance, beginning of the year	\$71,092	\$432	\$71,524	\$35,052
Adjustment to beginning balance	—	—	—	42,331
(Deficiency) Excess before unrealized loss on investments	(14,428)	—	(14,428)	8,395
Depreciation (net of deposits)	136	(136)	—	—
Purchase of capital assets	(234)	234	—	—
Unrealized loss on investments	(12,731)	—	(12,731)	(14,254)
Balance, end of year	<u>\$43,835</u>	<u>\$530</u>	<u>\$44,365</u>	<u>\$71,524</u>

STATEMENT 3 Salary Indemnity Fund Statement of Revenue, Expenditures and Fund Balance for Year Ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Revenue		
Membership fees (Note 1)	\$31,759	\$34,636
Teachers' share of employment insurance premium reductions	2,645	2,190
Salary Indemnity Fund rebate (Note 8)	2,646	—
Investment (loss) income	(9,024)	18,505
	<u>28,026</u>	<u>55,331</u>
Expenditures		
Short term claims paid	11,067	10,287
Long term claims paid	27,721	28,827
	<u>38,788</u>	<u>39,114</u>
Decrease actuarial valuation of provision for claims (Note 5)	(5,813)	(1,721)
Total claim expenditures (Deficiency) Excess of revenue over claim expenditures	(4,949)	17,938
Administrative expenses	8,605	8,456
Investment management and trust company expenses (Note 6)	874	1,087
	<u>9,479</u>	<u>9,543</u>
(Deficiency) excess revenue before unrealized loss on investments	(14,428)	8,395
Unrealized loss on investments	(12,731)	(14,254)
Deficiency of revenue over expenditures	<u>(27,159)</u>	<u>(5,859)</u>
Fund balance, beginning of year	71,524	35,052
Adjustment to beginning fund balance	—	42,331
	<u>71,524</u>	<u>77,383</u>
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$44,365</u>	<u>\$71,524</u>

STATEMENT 4 Salary Indemnity Fund Statement of Cash Flows for Year Ended June 30

	2009	2008
	(in thousands)	
Cash flows from operating activities		
Deficiency of revenue over expenditures	\$ (27,159)	\$ (5,859)
Items not affecting cash		
Unrealized loss on investments	12,731	14,254
Decrease in actuarial valuation of provision for claims	(5,813)	(1,721)
Depreciation	136	141
	<u>(20,105)</u>	<u>6,815</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital items		
Accounts receivable	658	471
Accounts payable	(303)	(861)
Due to General Operating Fund	(446)	(9)
	<u>(91)</u>	<u>(399)</u>
Cash flow from investing activities	<u>\$ (20,196)</u>	<u>\$ 6,416</u>
Purchase of capital assets	(234)	(38)
(Increase) decrease in investment portfolio	17,673	(7,134)
	<u>17,439</u>	<u>(7,172)</u>
Change in cash	(2,757)	(756)
Cash, beginning of year	(318)	438
Bank indebtedness/Cheques issued in excess of funds on deposit	<u>\$ (3,075)</u>	<u>\$ (318)</u>

Notes to Financial Statements for Year Ended June 30, 2009

1. BACKGROUND AND FEES

The purpose of the Salary Indemnity Fund is to meet the obligations of the Salary Indemnity Fund (the Plan), which provides income benefits to members disabled from employment as a result of illness or accident.

The membership fee for the year ending June 30, 2009 was 1.5% (2008—1.7%) of the gross salary of each participating member as set at the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

The financial position of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (the Federation) is reported to the membership in a separate set of financial statements and is not included in these financial statements. The Federation is a trade union pursuant to the *Labour Relations Code of B.C.* and the *Public Education Labour Relations Act*. The Salary Indemnity Fund is part of the Federation and is therefore exempt from income tax. The financial statements of the Federation should be read concurrently with these financial statements.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Significant accounting policies used in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below. These policies are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the recommendations of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA).

- Fund Accounting:** The Salary Indemnity Fund follows the restricted fund method of accounting for membership fees.
- Financial Instruments:** All financial instruments are classified as one of the following: held-to-maturity, loans and receivables, held-for-trading, available-for-sale, or other financial liabilities. Financial assets and liabilities classified as held-for-trading are measured at fair value with gains and losses recognized in net income. Loans and receivables and other financial liabilities are measured at amortized cost using the effective interest method.

Receivables are classified as loans and receivables and liabilities are classified as other liabilities. Marketable securities are classified as held-for-trading and presented at their fair value with the unrealized gains or losses recognized in excess/deficiency of revenues over expenses for the year.

- Revenue Recognition:** Restricted membership fees related to the Fund are recognized as revenue of the Fund in the year earned. Investment income on the Fund's investments is recognized as revenue in the year it is earned.
- Investments:** Investments are presented at market values as of the close of business June 30, 2009 and June 30, 2008.
- Capital Assets:** Capital assets are recorded at cost. Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line method based on anticipated useful lives: Furniture and equipment: 3 to 10 years Computer hardware and software: 3 to 10 years Renovations: 10 years

A capital project relating to the upgrading of computer and portal infrastructure for the Plan, which was approved for the 2008–09 budget year, was not completed prior to year end.

- Use of Estimates:** The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Estimates in these financial statements include the collectibility of receivables, the useful lives of capital assets, claim expenditures, and the provision for claims. Actual results could differ from those estimates and would impact future results of operations and cash flows of the Plan.

3. INVESTMENTS

The market value of long-term investments as at June 30, 2009 was \$207,321,534 compared to a carrying value of \$191,975,662. (June 30, 2008 market value—\$237,725,536; carrying value—\$209,648,969.)

4. CAPITAL ASSETS

	Original Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	2009 Net Book Value	2008 Net Book Value
	(in thousands)			
Furniture & equipment	\$ 160	\$ (103)	\$ 57	\$ 76
Computer hardware & software	690	(488)	202	212
Renovations	402	(275)	127	144
Work in progress	144	—	144	—
	<u>\$1,396</u>	<u>\$ (866)</u>	<u>\$ 530</u>	<u>\$ 432</u>

5. CLAIM EXPENDITURES AND PROVISION FOR CLAIMS

The estimate of accrued liabilities and provision for claims is based upon an actuarial valuation as of June 30, 2009 performed in accordance with standards established by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries using data supplied by management of the Plan. This valuation uses standard claims tables modified to reflect Plan experience and is performed manually. In subsequent periods the accrued liabilities and provision for claims are adjusted based upon actual Plan experience. These adjustments can be significant. The estimate of accrued liabilities and provision for claims for the individual segments of the plan are set out below:

	June 30, 2009	June 30, 2008
	(in thousands)	
Short term claims	\$ 5,420	\$ 4,911
Long term claims	157,634	163,956
Total provision for claims	<u>\$163,054</u>	<u>\$168,867</u>

As a result of the current period's actuarial review, adjustments were required for claim benefits and pension contributions attributable to prior periods. These adjustments are included in the operations of the current period.

	June 30, 2009	June 30, 2008
	(in thousands)	
Increase related to current period	\$ 509	\$ 476
Decrease related to prior periods	(6,322)	(2,197)
Total change in provision for claims	(5,813)	(1,721)
Opening provision for claims	168,867	170,588
Closing provision for claims	<u>\$163,054</u>	<u>\$168,867</u>

6. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AND TRUST COMPANY EXPENSES

The investments of the Salary Indemnity Fund are managed by independent investment management firms in accordance with investment policies and restrictions as established by the Federation and the *Trustees' Act (B.C.)* and are lodged for safekeeping with a trust company.

7. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

- Fair Value:** The Fund's financial instruments include bank indebtedness, accounts receivable, investments, accounts payable, and due to General Operating Fund. These financial instrument, excluding investments, approximate their fair values due to their short-term nature. The fair value of investments is determined by using market price.
- Interest Rate Risk:** Financial risk is the risk arising from changes in interest rates. The Fund is exposed to interest rate risk due to the long-term maturity of certain of the investments. These investments are interest rate sensitive. To mitigate this risk, the investments are actively managed by both management and professional investment managers.
- Currency Risk:** The Fund owns certain securities that are denominated in foreign currencies and as such is subject to risk due to fluctuations in exchange rates. Currently the Fund is exposed to currency risk with respect to approximately US\$29,400,000 in marketable securities. The Fund mitigates this risk by using professional fund managers.
- Credit Risk:** Credit risk arises from the possibility that a counter party to a financial instrument would fail to fulfill its financial obligations; therefore, the Plan is exposed to credit risk with respect to its accounts receivable and investments.

The Plan is not exposed to significant credit risk with respect to its accounts receivable as the majority of these amounts are due from school districts. The credit risk inherent in investments is mitigated by the fact that the investments are professionally managed and must conform to strict investment guidelines.

8. SALARY INDEMNITY PLAN (SIP) REBATE

The SIP rebate amount represents the balance of funds received from the BC provincial government, net of refunds issued to members. Further to an Executive Committee motion of October 23, 2008, these funds were transferred into the Fund from the Federation.

9. CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

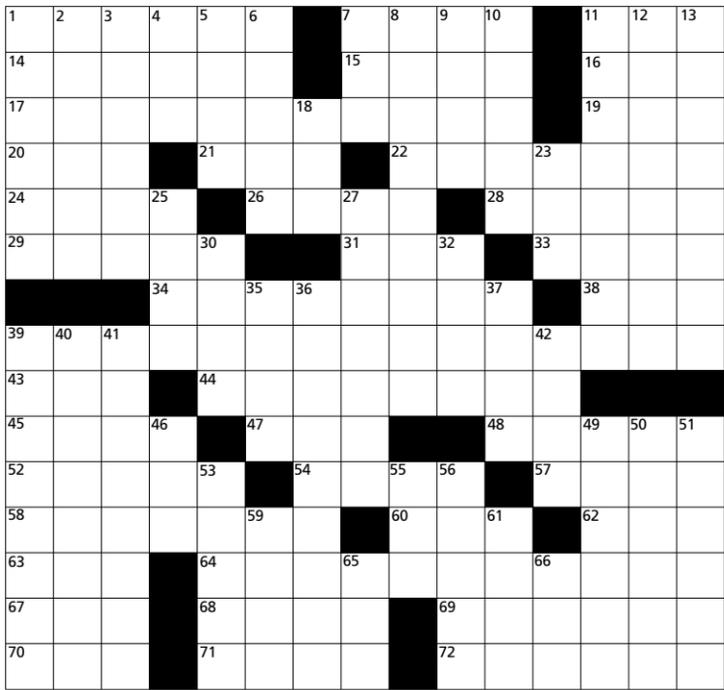
The Fund preserves and manages its capital with the intention of providing short-term and long-term benefits to members who are disabled from employment as a result of illness or accident together with ensuring the continued existence of the Fund. The Fund's capital includes cash, investments, accounts receivable, and accounts payable.

10. FUTURE ACCOUNTING CHANGES

The CICA issued a new accounting standard, "Disclosure of Allocated Expenses" for not-for-profit organizations that requires the disclosure of any accounting policies adopted for the allocation of expenses. This will affect the Fund's 2009–10 year end. The Fund is in the process of assessing the impact of this new standard on its financial statements.

Crossword

"Beat the Meetles" by Brian Porter (solution in March 2010)



ACROSS

- 1 Hip nudist emulating the Beatles? (part one) - *Rubber Soul*
- 7 Shelter for Fido
- 11 One across (part two)
- 14 _____ Springs near Ottawa
- 15 Seafood capital of Scotland
- 16 It might be bought
- 17 Periodontist, driven by self-interest, emulating the Beatles? (part one) - *The Beatles (White Album)*
- 19 Progressive organization founded by Simon Rosenberg, in short "Simple Simon met _____ man" (3.1428571)
- 21 Reformed first-time offender emulating the Beatles? (part one) *With the Beatles*
- 22 Twenty-one across (part two)
- 24 College admissions tests in short
- 26 National Anti Klan Network, initially
- 28 _____ Hunt, founder of the American Football League
- 29 Twenty-one across (part three)
- 31 Intelligent Dance Music, commonly
- 33 Cape Verde's "Paradise Isle"
- 34 As far as (two words)
- 38 No response necessary/needed, briefly
- 39 Solitary masseuse emulating the Beatles? (with "If") *Rubber Soul*
- 43 Boo or yoo trailer
- 44 Seventeen across (part two)
- 45 Choir voice
- 47 Ahead of nuptial or med
- 48 Former lead singer for the Moody Blues emulating the Beatles? (part one) *Magical Mystery Tour*
- 52 Forty-eight across (part two)
- 54 Revise text
- 57 Naples-based denim company
- 58 How super heroes often appear (two words)
- 60 Former bodyguard to Mohammed Ali and Michael Jackson
- 62 Launched by Moffat Communications January 1, 1995
- 63 _____ ck Le Sabre
- 64 Protesting voyeur emulating the Beatles? (with "I'm") *Revolver*
- 67 Upton Airport call letters, S. Africa
- 68 Up and down aircraft, briefly
- 69 The _____ Sandwich
- 70 Damning evidence and its name-sake website, in short
- 71 Quantities of rum
- 72 Disability Rights Office Eastern Washington University, initially

DOWN:

- 1 New Orleans Hamburger and Seafood Company, initially
- 2 _____ with (level)
- 3 Elk
- 4 Psychic's need
- 5 A _____apple
- 6 Past tense of an overly complex sentence?
- 7 A short cry for help from encrusted pots and pans?
- 8 Two cable networks
- 9 Canadian Association of Independent Schools, initially
- 10 _____ Adams, American photographer
- 11 _____ a _____ (form of combat)
- 12 Banff, Moray _____ (Scottish kennel club)
- 13 Queen or worker bee descriptor
- 18 Flight deck prediction
- 23 Kind of shaft
- 25 Hook's right hand, so to speak
- 27 Certain spirits
- 30 Formerly a member of a 12-step program, familiarly
- 32 Synthesizer brand name
- 35 2006 Meryl Streep comedy-drama, initially
- 36 House of sticks in the "Hundred Acre Wood" found here
- 37 A web-based "client" in virtual world gaming
- 39 Fishy sequel to 2004 Will Smith movie?
- 40 Caffeine-laden seeds of West Africa
- 41 "Thanks for _____ me," Eeore catchphrase
- 42 Health info on line
- 46 " _____ Clear Day..."
- 49 "I worked _____ to meet you" (Thomas Hardy)
- 50 Parent's response often
- 51 Early Chinese military tactician (Hint: first name if Yin's opposite)
- 53 Web mail
- 55 Little demon
- 56 Forested
- 59 Inner, prefix
- 61 Kind of drop
- 65 A 'little' cunning in reverse
- 66 _____ Am

Help us find a new name

The BCTF Rehabilitation Program: We are changing our name and we need your help!

Since 1995, BCTF members have had access to support and services to help return or maintain teachers in their assignments. This voluntary program provides services to over 600 teachers annually and operates in 56 of the 60 school districts across the province. While the program has garnered tremendous support from teachers and locals over the years the term "rehabilitation" in the title has not. In a recent survey of local presidents, 79% responded that the name of the program should be changed.

While historically rehabilitation has been synonymous with an intervention to restore function and health, it has taken on other connotations in today's society. Most notable of these is the association between rehabilitation and substance abuse. On the radio we have heard Amy Winehouse (whose song *Rehab* was both a popular and critical success) croon about her refusal to attend residential treatment to deal with her addiction problems. On television, the recent reality show *Celebrity Rehab* followed celebrities attending a treatment centre and how they progress through recovery.

These and many other examples have created a negative stigma attached to the term rehabilitation. When members are approached about joining the program, some refuse to accept our support. In other cases teachers have been falsely labeled as having substance abuse issues because of their enrolment in the program, which can cause unneeded stress and

strain to the return to work process.

In addition, the current name does not reflect the variety of services that are offered by the program. While the program does provide rehabilitation services to teachers, the program also has an early intervention component. We also assist teachers who are using sick leave to manage their illness and are accessing treatments that allow them to maintain their current teaching assignment. And this year, the program is piloting its first wellness/prevention program entitled "Living with Balance," which focuses on helping teachers maintain their mental and physical health and to achieve work/life balance.

As a result, we need a new name reflective of the evolution of service provided by the program since its inception. Over the years several ideas have been suggested. Most recent suggestions include the "BCTF Vocational Wellness Program" or the "BCTF Occupational Health Program." While both proposed names have merit, neither have garnered overwhelming support. So now the program and the Income Security Committee are looking for teacher input in choosing a new name that reflects the range of services that are currently offered by the program, and removes any of the negative stigmas associated with rehabilitation. If you have any suggestions please e-mail them to benefits@bctf.ca with "Rehab Name Change" in the subject line. In order for a suggestion to garner consideration it must be received not later than February 10, 2010.

- Michael Kimmis
Income Security Division



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(ECRI) Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction

The ECRI is a national leader in staff development for 25 years. US Dept. of Education is offering "Prevent Reading Failure" seminars in Utah, June and July 2010. Research-based and teacher friendly strategies will be offered to educators from Kindergarten through 12th grade in teaching phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills.

June 14-19 and 21-26: Initial and Intermediate Seminars, Reid Ranch, Red Creek, Utah (fly in and out of Salt Lake City) \$475 registration fee/week or \$750 for 2 weeks with \$95/night board and room, local transportation, and all amenities. (View Reid Ranch at www.reid ranch.com.)
July 19-23 and 26-30: Initial and Intermediate Seminars, Salt Lake City Utah, (same registration fees). University of Utah single and double rooms approximately \$60 and \$50/night with 3 meals daily.

Register at www.ecri.cc

Call 1-801-486-5083, Dr. Ethna R. Reid, Director, for specifics. University graduate credit available at Reid Ranch and SLC.

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WHISTLER GETAWAY Pinecrest Estates, 4 bdrm cabin, sauna, deck, BBQ, tennis, private lake, suits 2-8. 604-936-3346, glush@shaw.ca

WHISTLER Condo. Sleeps 4, views, close to village, 604-943-9423, preddyplace@telus.net.

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PUERTO VALLARTA. Modest 1 bdrm., 2 blks from beach, downtown, \$495/wk. Monthly rates. 604-608-4268, dbemc@hotmail.com

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MISCELLANEOUS

TEACHER EXCHANGE. French Immersion Kindergarten teacher seeking a teaching exchange in Canada (preferably Quebec, but flexible) for the 2010-11 school year. Currently teaching in Burnaby, a suburb just east of Vancouver. Contact Fiona at 604-980-8436 or fewalsh@yahoo.com

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PD Calendar

FEBRUARY 2010

5 & 19 Hemlock Mountain. Snow Safety, An Adventure Based Learning Workshop. Begins the week prior with an on-line multi-media 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. E-mail Grassrootsadventure@gmail.com, or visit www.Grassrootsadventure.ca

19 Victoria. Tapestry 2010 Conference. Presented by Greater Victoria and Sooke Teachers' Associations at Spectrum Community School. Keynote speaker Dr. Egan on "Developing Students' Minds and Imagination." Introduces new theories, principles, and practical techniques for making teaching more effective. Engaging students' imaginations in learning and teachers' imaginations in teaching is crucial to making knowledge in the curriculum vivid and meaningful, to teachers no less than to students. Dr. Egan will extend these ideas in the workshop connected with this presentation and show how this can be done routinely in everyday classrooms. For registration and more detailed information contact www.gvta.net or www.sooketeachers.com

MISCELLANEOUS continued

VARIETY-THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY Working with children is your passion. Leaving a legacy to Variety in your Will for BC's special kids is your gift of a lifetime. There are estate planning benefits too. Contact Peter Chipman or Paul Spelliscy for information. Toll free 1-800-381-2040 or 604-320-0505 or e-mail peter.chipman@variety.bc.ca

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RETIRING SOON? Join the BC Retired Teachers' Association to: Keep informed, Stay connected, Remain involved. For more information, go to www.bcrta.ca or call 604-871-2260, 1-877-683-2243.

TEACH IN AUSTRALIA OR EUPOPE for a year! Experience another culture while making your regular salary and guaranteeing your job. Every year many BC teachers do it. Why not you? For information contact Terry Teacher, president, BC Exchange Teachers' Association at teacher_t@sd36.bc.ca

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NEED A BREAK? See China for Free and Teach English, 10 wks teaching conversational English. Return flight, accommodation and meal allowance provided free. Start times: Sept (2010); Nov; Feb; or April, contact grahammul@canadatj.com

19 Vancouver. Underwater Robots in the Classroom. Vancouver Maritime Museum, 7:30 p.m. The Underwater Archaeology Society of British Columbia (UASBC) will feature maritime author Vickie Jensen and student-built underwater robotics at its February Speakers Series. This lively, illustrated presentation dovetails with the Vancouver Maritime Museum's new *Submersibles: Into the Deep* exhibit. Jensen will take you into classrooms across North America where the challenge of building shallow-diving robots is enticing students to dive into scientific studies and explore maritime careers. The evening will also feature BC's award-winning student teams, their robots, and a preview of the 800-page Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) textbook *Underwater Robotics: Science, Design & Fabrication* which Jensen has co-authored and edited. Vancouver Maritime Museum, 1905 Ogden Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1A3, 604-257-8300.

MARCH 2010

26-27 Kelowna. BC Science Teachers' Association presents Catalyst 2010—A Science Odyssey. A conference for all Science Educators K-12+ at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre. Join us for: exciting keynotes, featured speakers, teacher-led professional development, hands-on workshops, technology workshops, science literacy and reading strategies, IRP implementation ideas, current issues in science education, Presentations by leading scientists, science teacher collaboration, K-7 science work - shops, exhibitor hall. Visit the BCScTA website www.bsccta.ca for more details.

26-27 Richmond. BCTF New Teachers and Student Teachers Conference 2010. The 2010 conference will take place at the Radisson Hotel in Richmond. For further information, contact Cécilia Huard de la Marre at chuarddelamarre@bctf.ca or 604-871-1869.

31 Burnaby. BCTF Day on Campus will take place in SFU at the Burnaby Campus. For further information, contact Cécilia Huard de la Marre at chuarddelamarre@bctf.ca or 604-871-1869.

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

APRIL 2010

20-24 Victoria. BC Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy Spring 2010. The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia offers an exciting professional development program for BC teachers in elementary, middle and high school. Come to your Parliament Buildings in Victoria and learn about parliamentary democracy and the political process. Eighteen teachers will be selected to participate and experience BC's parliamentary system first-hand, returning to their schools and communities with an enhanced understanding of democracy. Deadline for applications is January 31, 2010. Further information and to apply on-line visit www.leg.bc.ca/bcti

30 Whistler. PITA's 5th Annual mini conference "Supporting Struggling Students in Literacy and Math." Learn practical ways to survive the diversity in your classroom. Encourage reluctant readers using Elaine Jaltema's literature circle approach; Guys Write!—nine sure-fire ways to excite your boys (and girls) about writing with Diana Chuchley,

Strengthening students struggling in math with Liz Barrett; Understand and learn how to support those frustrating disorganized children in your class with Mary Moody; Learn to engage learners through differentiating instruction and start on adapting your units together with Amber! with Amber Flanagan. Details contact Ray Myrtle president@pita.ca

MAY 2010

10 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices 2010 13th annual conference. Teachers from different educational contexts convene at UBC to share their investigations, understandings and questions. Deadline for proposals March 19, 2010. Registration fee \$25 (\$15 for students). Lunch and refreshments included. Scarfe Education Building 2125 Main Mall UBC. For more information, contact Judy Paley 604-822-2733 judy.paley@ubc.ca or visit epl.educ.ubc.ca/programs/institutes/iop.php

15-16 Vancouver. UBC offers at the Point Grey campus a French and Spanish immersion weekend. Single accommodation is available at the Pacific Spirit Hostel for \$33 (+ taxes) per night. Teachers can use their Tuition Fee Certificate toward the \$250 tuition fee. Call toll-free 1-866-528-7485 or see www.frenchcentre.ubc.ca/weekend.html

19-23 Vancouver. Environmental Educators' Provincial Specialist Association (EEPSA) 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 visit our website 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

PITA – BC Provincial Intermediate Teacher's Association Build UP Series

Provides support for early career teachers but the strategies presented are helpful for all teachers!

* February 13 Burnaby *
Portraits Unit (Nora Mountain)
French (Liliana Lanfranchi)

* February 13 Surrey *
Social Studies (Holly Lloyd)
Language Arts (Diana Cruchley)

* February 19 Kelowna *
PE (Tammy Wirick)
Writing (Bryan Gidinski)

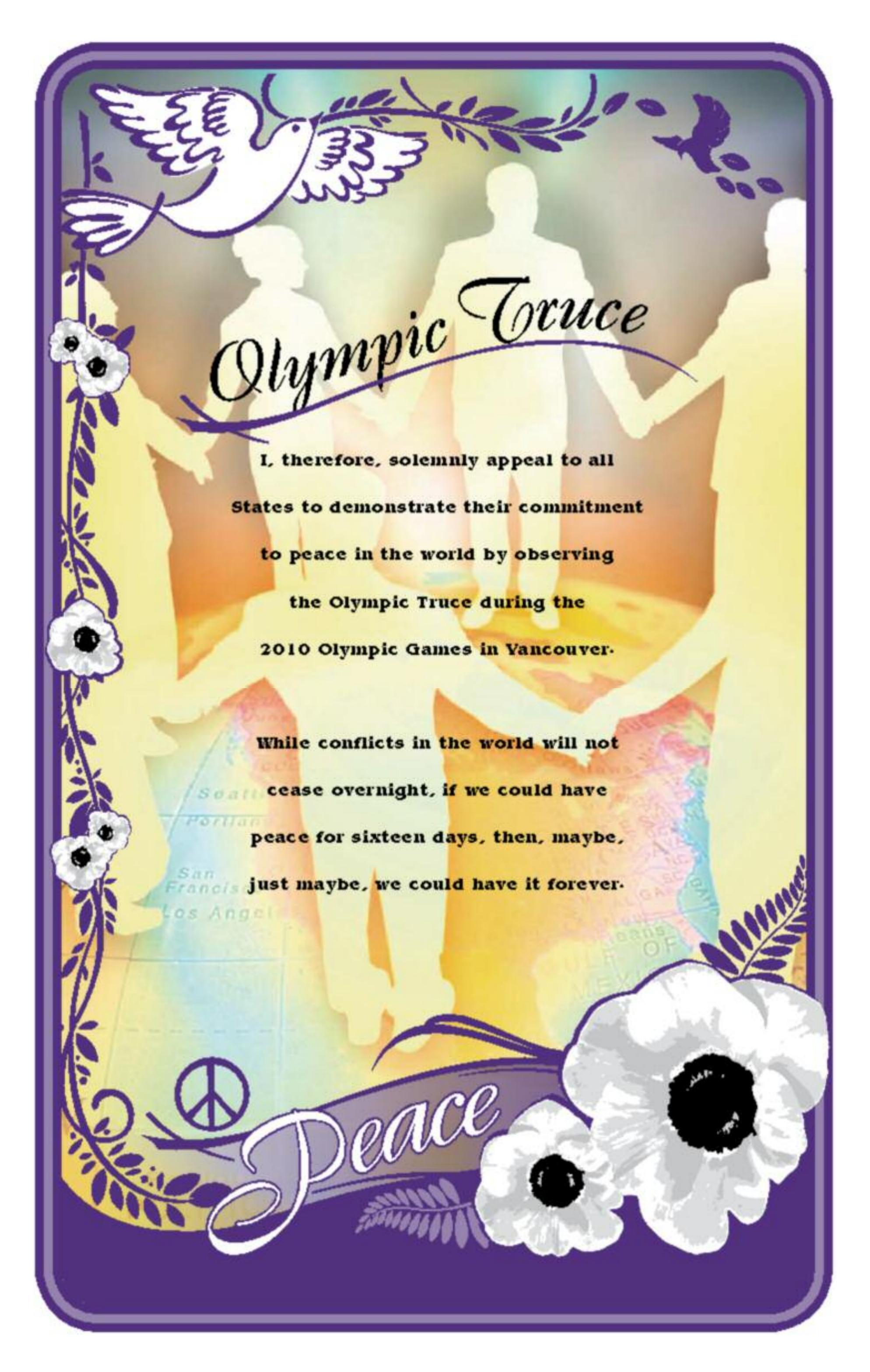
* April 10 Burnaby *
Social Studies (Holly Lloyd)
Language Arts (Diana Cruchley)

* April 10 Kelowna *
Science (Ray Myrtle)
Math (Ray Appel)

* April 10 Surrey *
PE (Glenn Young)
Writing (Bryan Gidinski)

For more information about the PITA workshops, visit pita-earlycareer.wikispaces.com or contact PITA President Ray Myrtle, president@pita.ca

PSA PD Day—October 22, 2010
PD Calendar website: bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx
Additions/changes: sdrummond@bctf.ca



Olympic Truce

**I, therefore, solemnly appeal to all
States to demonstrate their commitment
to peace in the world by observing
the Olympic Truce during the
2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.**

**While conflicts in the world will not
cease overnight, if we could have
peace for sixteen days, then, maybe,
just maybe, we could have it forever.**



Peace