

Teacher

September 2011

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation

Volume 24, Number 1

Together we will be successful

By Jim Iker

In June, after four months of bargaining at the local and provincial tables, and going nowhere, with employers who have no ability to conclude an agreement, teachers voted 90% in favour of strike action. The purpose of strike action is to put pressure on trustees, who direct the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), and the government, who gives BCPSEA its bargaining mandate, to take collective bargaining seriously.

Even before bargaining began on March 1, the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) advised us that they would have nothing to bring to the bargaining table this round. They advised the BCTF that government had given them a net-zero mandate for bargaining that would prevent them from agreeing to any improvements in salaries or benefits, any improvements in working conditions including preparation time, or any improvements to teachers' rights such as professional autonomy.

Once at the table, however, BCPSEA revealed that in addition to their net-zero mandate, they would be demanding concessions from teachers, including the elimination of seniority for employment decisions, the gutting of posting-and-filling procedures for vacant positions, the weakening of layoff and transfer rights, the removal of

fair evaluation procedures, and more, much more.

In response to Justice Griffin's ruling that the legislation stripping our collective agreements in hours of work provisions was illegal, BCPSEA tabled a proposal in late August that would allow districts to unilaterally change school calendars, including hours and days of work. This would effectively allow districts to increase the work year or work day without any compensation for the extra work. In essence, BCPSEA is seeking our agreement on a legislative procedure that had been ruled invalid by the court. Proposals like this exemplify the lack of respect BCPSEA and

At current salary rates, over a 35-year teaching career, a teacher in Alberta will have earned over \$500,000 more than a teacher in BC. And in retirement, the Alberta teacher will earn nearly \$14,000 a year more in pension than the BC teacher for the rest of her or his life.

government have for teachers and for our work with students.

In contrast, our negotiating team has been given a mandate by members to bargain long overdue improvements in salaries, benefits, preparation time, class size and composition, and the very rights and working conditions for which BCPSEA has been demanding concessions.

While BCPSEA and government is adamant about a two-year wage freeze, the BCTF has tabled evidence that BC teachers are now, following four years of 0% increases in the last 13 years, amongst the



lowest paid teachers in Canada. Beginning teachers with masters degrees in St. John's earn almost \$10,000 more a year than their counterparts in Victoria. Last year, before Alberta teachers received a 4.4% increase for 2011-12, a beginning teacher in Prince George made over \$12,000 less than a beginning teacher in Edmonton, and experienced teachers made over \$16,000 less. If BC teachers do not receive a salary increase for 2011-12, an experienced Vancouver teacher will earn over \$20,000 less than a teacher in Lethbridge. A recent mediators' report from Saskatchewan confirmed that BC teachers are the lowest paid teachers in Western Canada.

What does this wage discrepancy with other provinces mean for BC teachers? At current salary rates,

over a 35-year teaching career, a teacher in Alberta will have earned over \$500,000 more than a teacher in BC. And in retirement, the Alberta teacher will earn nearly \$14,000 a year more in pension than the BC teacher for the rest of her or his life.

While the provincial government and BCPSEA are insisting that teachers accept a wage freeze, nurses, municipal workers, federal government employees, and many private sector employees have negotiated reasonable wage increases to offset the rise in inflation and the high cost of living in this province, and to keep them well positioned in terms of the wages of other employees in Canada.

At local bargaining tables, teachers have been proposing local

solutions to local issues, but school boards on the advice of BCPSEA have in many cases closed the door on discussing the issues. Even in light of the BC Supreme Court's ruling that the government acted unconstitutionally in 2002 by stripping teachers' collective agreements of class-size and composition limits and guarantees of library, counselling, learning assistance, special ed, and ESL services to children, local school boards and the provincial government still steadfastly refuse to negotiate these provisions.

Although there have been many meetings of the negotiating teams, there hasn't really been any bargaining in the true sense of

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Canada Post Corp. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40062724

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Save our schools march Washington, DC



By Kip Wood

On July 30, 2011, thousands of teachers, students, parents, and activists gathered on the Ellipse lawn near the White House to hear speeches by Linda Darling-Hammond, Deb Meier, Diane Ravitch, Jonathan Kozol, and others. The last speaker of the afternoon, Matt Damon, was introduced by his mother, Nancy Carlsson-Paige, a teacher. Part of Damon's speech is below:

I had incredible teachers. As I look at my life today, the things I value most about myself, my imagination, my love of acting, my passion for writing, my love of learning, my curiosity—all come from the way I was parented and taught.

And none of these qualities that I've just mentioned—none of these qualities that I prize so deeply, that

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On the inside

The state of our bargaining has hit center stage publicly. *Teacher* brings you up-to-date with the present state of play and the need to harness our collective strength in the months to come. BCTF President Susan Lambert, in her speech to summer conference, puts our present situation in a broad political and social context. Responding to similar intense pressures in the US a conference and rally in Washington, DC, drew together thousands of teachers and concerned citizens to Save our Schools.

Set against this demanding

backdrop are articles that celebrate provincial specialist associations, which continue to be places where teachers can enhance their professionalism. The PD Calendar is a page to browse as you make your plans for the province-wide PD day on October 21.

Curriculum innovation continues to abound, to which the work in Coquitlam in developing an Urban First Nations 12 course, attests. Challenging as this start to the school year may be, let the fine work being done by colleagues continue to be an inspiration.

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President's message



Susan Lambert

There is something decidedly different about teaching this fall. Yes we're on strike but that's not it. What's different is that this year, by virtue of our job action, we are unilaterally creating some of the space and time we need to pay more attention to the needs of the students we teach. That we have been forced to do this speaks volumes. It is a measure of the relationship between our government and the profession of teaching and a measure of the value this government places on public education itself.

If the BC government respected the profession of teaching, it would engage in the work necessary to improve teaching and learning

conditions. It would, as the Saskatchewan government has done, remunerate that work with wages that speak to the complexity of teaching, the responsibility of teachers, their professionalism and their level of training.

If the BC government recognized the value of a universally accessible, free and high quality public education system it would not place school boards in financial straight jackets. It would not encourage organizations like the Fraser Institute, to rank schools, pitting one against another. It would not coerce districts into contemplating measures requiring students to supply schools with photocopying paper.

If the BC government recognized that families include their children and that poverty is a barrier to learning, it would have set targets and adopted a plan to eradicate child poverty in BC. It would address itself to the needs of Aboriginal families who live in poverty in BC and who daily feel the oppression of a history of residential schools and racism.

This school year we are determined that in this round of bargaining we will attend to our needs, our students' needs, and the needs of the system itself. It is a tall order. Our job action is designed to focus pressure on school and district administration. It is not easy

to mount this pressure. As you work to insure the success of our job action, remember that we are all in this together. We will need to rely on each other to build our collective strength. Individual courage is built on that collective strength.

Throughout our bargaining campaign we will maintain our integrity and our commitment to our principles. It is that integrity that provides us with energy and that energy will create for us a year of joyful teaching. Take advantage of this year to create more time for your own teaching, and keep focussed on our goal—strong stable, high quality public education for all.

Readers write

Early education downsides

According to new research, full-day Kindergarten may be having a negative effect on the learning and personal development of some children. Early results of the study were presented at the June 2011 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Fredericton by Rachel Heydon and Wendy Crocker (University of Western Ontario). See: <http://newz4u.net/?p=14562>

According to world-renowned parenting author Steve Biddulph (www.stevebiddulph.com) full-day Kindergarten for five-year-olds is too long, and any younger is a big mistake developmentally.

Why is Finland's school system the envy of the western world? In the Aug. 23-30, 2010 edition of *Newsweek*, Finland was ranked number one out of 100 countries.

Although Finnish children have access to free, full-day daycare (up to age five), full-day Kindergarten (age six), they don't begin Grade 1 until age seven.

Carl Honoré, (www.carlhonore.com), writes in *Under Pressure: Putting the Child Back in Childhood* (2009): "Their (Finnish children) early childhood is spent at home or in nursery programs where play is king. When they finally do reach school, they enjoy short days, long vacations and plenty of music, art and sports." (p. 122)

"Apart from final exams at the end of high school, Finnish kids face no standardized tests. Teachers use quizzes, and individual schools use tests to track their pupils' progress, but the idea of cramming for SATs is as alien to Finland as a heat wave in winter. This presents a delicious irony—the nation that puts the least stress on competition and testing, that shows the least appetite for cram schools and private tutoring, routinely tops the world in PISA's (Programme for International Student Assessment) competitive exams." (p. 123).

Honoré was interviewed in the

2009 CTV documentary, "Lost Adventures of Childhood," available from Distribution Access (www.distributionaccess.com) and sold with PPR (public performance rights) or for home use.

At the very least, all provincial governments should be investigating the Finland model and creating full-day senior Kindergarten classes for those six-year-olds who would benefit.

Is Kelly McMahon's description of increased testing and data collection of Kindergarteners in Milwaukee public schools where BC is headed? (www.progressive.org/print/147874) See also: "Paths to full-day Kindergarten," April 2010, *Teacher*, <http://tinyurl.com/6k3ufbc> **David Buckna** Kelowna (retired)

Board shows leadership

On behalf of the Social Justice Committee of the Burnaby Teachers' Association, I would like to congratulate the Burnaby Board of Education on the development of and commitment to the very visionary, proactive, and necessary stand they have taken on the implementation of Policy 545 (Anti-Homophobia Policy), and their steadfast determination to see it put into practice in the Burnaby School System.

We take for granted that our public schools and other places of learning operate on inclusiveness, promote equality, and protect against all forms of discrimination—but sadly, news reports, statistics, and examples from all across our nation and globe tell us differently, substantiating the necessity for important policies such as this to be put in place. Verbal slander, bullying, stereotyping, and blatant discrimination have left many a student and staff in our public schools deeply scarred and worse in countless examples of both our recent and long ago past.

This policy will ensure that

students and staff in Burnaby schools are able to learn and teach in an education system and environment that guarantees dignity and respect for all, and puts in place serious measures for anyone who chooses to violate these "charter-sanctioned" rights. We, on the Social Justice Committee of the BTA, would like to commend Burnaby trustees for their support and strong stand on this proposed policy, particularly in light of the ongoing and outspoken lobby of some community members opposed to its implementation. This opposition and their very discriminatory and homophobic arguments against the policy remind us that we must remain ever vigilant to ensure the safety and equality of all in Burnaby schools and have a district-wide system in place for those who would choose to undermine our democracy and the human and democratic rights, which those who came before us fought so hard to establish.

We would like to convey to the BBE that this is an extremely important issue to take this courageous stand on, and that their support is great and their critics few! Stay strong!

Tina Anderson
Burnaby

Hostage taking as negotiation strategy

Recently our neighbors to the south conducted a huge political battle over the raising of the public debt ceiling during which both sides took political hostages in order to frame the discussion and pressure the other side. Slashing the military budget and cutting spending on medicare for seniors were both used to force opponents into politically impossible situations. Recently, here at home, our own government has adopted this strategy during settlement negotiations with the BCTF, ordered by the Supreme Court decision

invalidating Bills 27 and 28 in April of 2011.

As part of the Court decision, the two parties were ordered to meet and agree on a settlement prior to an April 2012 deadline, when the decision of the Court must be implemented. The decision of the Court was that the Bills had violated the Charter rights of 40,000 BCTF members and that many parts of the legislation that stripped the teacher contract were invalid and will no longer be in force as of April 2012.

Rather than reach an agreement with the BCTF, the government has adopted a strategy of ignoring the orders of the Supreme Court and instead are writing new legislation to further illegally strip the contracts in the same way for the same reasons. One interesting threat at the last meeting between the parties was the implication that if the government were forced to honour the contract, they would have to cut \$300 million elsewhere in the education budget by cutting any additional non-essential programs still existing in the system. Surviving music programs, choice schools, and language programs would all perish if the government were forced to obey the decision of the Supreme Court. Those are the hostages and the government has made the threat that they will disappear if they are forced to comply with the Court and fund the illegally stripped contract articles.

Generally, hostage takers who have ignored the Courts are viewed rather dimly by the public. If the hostages are killed off they will be the final victims of the illegal legislation tabled by then Education Minister Christy Clark in January of 2002.

Matt Pearce
Prince George

Pension articles impress

I have been most impressed with the recent series of pension plan articles. All active and retired members of the pension plan should be proud and thankful for the quality of the work and study that the various committees and boards devote to the continued oversight and development of the Teachers' Pension Plan. The pension plan has gone through countless changes since the first *Pension Act* of 1929 but the changes retained the original focus of providing a means for plan members to sustain themselves in retirement.

You have met one of the requirements of advocacy—awareness, knowing what's happening—through your articles. Now it is up to all the present and future members to continue their diligence to retain and further develop the pension system.

Bruce Watson
Retired BCTF staff,
Honorary Life Member, Duncan

21st century in action

Please tell us about a project or teaching strategy/method that you or your colleagues are involved with that demonstrates how your work reflects teaching and learning in the 21st century.

In 2008, Yale Secondary School received a Mitchell Odyssey Foundation grant. As a result of the funding, a number of opportunities were created to introduce students in SD34 to the world of robotics engineering.

A robotics engineering course is now an affordable, fun, highly engaging platform that reinforces core skills contained within our standard curriculum. While robotics integrates core science, technology, engineering, and math skills (STEM Education), it also reinforces key employability skills such as the importance of effective teamwork, project management, problem-solving, and decision-making skills needed for successful life-long learning in the 21st century.

At Yale Secondary School, our robotics engineering program is designed to teach students how to engineer complex autonomous mechanical devices, while simultaneously learning how to program a robotic device to complete a number of tasks and challenges. In addition, students are introduced to the engineering process and learn how innovative and creative thinking are critical concepts needed to solve problems in the world of work. Students work collaboratively in engineering teams to solve tasks and challenges as well as compete against other teams in class/group competitions, which helps them keep motivated and focused.

Dereck Dirom
Abbotsford, www.gearbots.org
www.yalesecondary.com

Amnesty's 50th anniversary

For 50 years, people around the world have worked together through Amnesty International to secure the release of tens of thousands of people who have been imprisoned for their beliefs or their way of life, and have worked to change human rights laws and practices in dozens of countries. To celebrate the milestone, Amnesty International has launched a fantastic new website—www.A150.ca—that will enable you to take action on critical campaign areas ranging from maternal health to the death penalty to corporate accountability.

The BCTF encourages members and retired members to participate in the activities of Amnesty International (see *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, procedure 34.06).

—Glen Hansman

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Volume 24
1 September 2011
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Tentative deadline
August 19, 2011
September 23, 2011
October 31, 2011
December 16, 2011
January 27, 2012
March 30, 2012
April 30, 2012

ISSN 0841-9574



PRINTED IN CANADA BY
MITCHELL PRESS LIMITED
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have brought me so much joy, that have brought me so much success professionally—none of these qualities that make me who I am can be tested.

I don't know where I would be today if my teachers' job security was based on how I performed on some standardized test. If their very survival as teachers, was based on whether I actually fell in love with the process of learning but rather if I could fill in the right bubble on a test. If they had to spend most of their time desperately drilling us, and less time encouraging creativity and original ideas; less time knowing who we were, seeing our strengths, and helping us realize our talents.

I honestly don't know where I'd be today if that was the type of education I had. I sure as hell wouldn't be here. I do know that.

As of this writing, Damon's speech had over 133,000 views on YouTube and his follow-up interview with a reporter had over 1.8 million views. Damon may be an A-list Hollywood actor but his message was not self-serving or superficial; rather, it was inspiring and poignant.

The Obama administration is advancing the mandate of NCLB. The legislation requires standardized tests in reading and mathematics to be administered every year in Grades 3 to 8 and it requires that "adequate yearly progress" or AYP is attained. Failing to meet the AYP standard means severe and punitive consequences for schools that includes a yearly series of sanctions...

Various sites on the National Mall in Washington are associated with historic speeches. Barrack Obama's inaugural speech in front of the Capitol Building on January 20, 2009 delivered a message of hope, confidence, and optimism. There were only two references to American schools, neither of which fit in with Obama's overall message. The first reference: "our schools fail too many" and the second reference: "we will transform our schools...to meet the demands of a

new age" set the agenda for Obama's Department of Education. It is the failure of schools, rather than a larger societal failure, that dictated the George W. Bush education policy direction and continues to inform Obama's Department of Education.



The Save our Schools March was a challenge to the Obama vision for the future of American schools. Close to 10,000 teachers and activists convened on the Ellipse lawn in 38°C heat and heard speeches for two-and-a-half hours prior to marching in front of the White House.

One of the speakers, Diane Ravitch, author of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*, connected the latest manufactured crisis in public education ("our schools fail too many") and the ensuing legislative over reaction. Charter schools, publically funded and privately run, have become the transformation that Obama referred to in his inaugural address. Along with merit pay schemes, test scores have become the only thing that matters in public education. With stakes that high, it is not a surprise that institutionalized cheating is a newspaper headline. While we were in Washington, the newspapers covered the latest cheating scandal in Atlanta. Regrettably, editorials in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* blamed the cheaters (teachers and principals), saying simply that there are "no excuses" and "it's the cheaters that must go, not the tests."

Ravitch did clarify that she is not opposed to testing. She spoke about

the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) that is conducted by the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The PISA was administered to 34 OECD countries (and 31 others) in 2009. At first glance, the PISA results show that six OECD countries scored higher than the USA on reading literacy. Ravitch spoke passionately about the importance of disaggregating the PISA data on the basis of the socio-economic status of students. The National Center for Education Statistics, in a document entitled *Highlights from PISA 2009*, showed that if US schools with fewer than 10% of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were considered as a separate category, they would have scored higher than every other OECD country. US schools with 75% or more of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch would have been 33rd out of 34 OECD countries. Ravitch received resounding applause when she revealed this significant societal failure. She simply said: "Schools are not the problem, poverty is the problem!"

Ravitch spent 18 months as the assistant secretary of education during the George H. W. Bush administration. Her book outlines how it was that charter schools received bipartisan support and how accountability and choice were hijacked and devolved into high-stakes testing. Ravitch supported the federal legislation *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) when George W. Bush signed it into law on January 8, 2002. Her support for the law remained strong until the fall of 2006 when she realized that the incentives and sanctions in NCLB were not working (and could not ever work.)

The Obama administration is advancing the mandate of NCLB. The legislation requires standardized tests in reading and mathematics to be administered every year in Grades 3 to 8 and it requires that "adequate yearly progress" or AYP is attained. Failing to meet the AYP standard means severe and punitive consequences for schools that includes a yearly series of sanctions that are outlined in the NCLB accountability plan:

- The school is labelled as "SINI" (school in need of improvement).
- The school is required to offer all of its students a transfer to a



"successful" school with transportation paid by the district.

- The school is required to offer free tutoring to low-income students with costs paid by the district.
- Corrective actions must be taken that may include curriculum changes, staff changes, a longer school day, or a longer school year.
- Finally, the school has five options to restructure: convert to a charter school; replace the principal and staff; relinquish control to private management; turn over control of the school to the state; or any other major restructuring of the school's governance.

For teachers, evaluations, bonuses, and the security of a contract have all become tied to student test scores under NCLB. During her speech, Ravitch called NCLB "...the worst piece of federal legislation that has ever been passed."

Jonathan Kozol, author of many books about inner-city schools including *Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, referred to Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech that

was delivered at the nearby Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. Kozol summed up the stunning reality of the American school system, when he said that schools are more segregated now than they were when King was assassinated in 1968. King would be 82-years-old if he were alive today and his dream would still be a dream.

As an observer and participant in the Save our Schools March, it is clear that the American school system is under attack. The experience was a reminder that great school systems exist only if there are great schools. If the moral purpose of government includes the stewardship of great schools, then the school system can be restored to greatness. Instead, ill-advised political reforms influenced by corporate power have restored "Apartheid schooling" as Kozol said with his provocative book title. Attempts to transform the system, as Obama envisioned, without meaningful input from the educators who made schools great, is a recipe for disaster. The inspiring work of teacher-activists provides hope for public education.

Kip Wood is a BCTF Executive member-at-large.

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Looking back

70 years ago

Canada is one of the great arsenals of Democracy. Here we are training men and producing materials to strike at the black heart of Despotism. Here are some things that need constant watching. Do your part to combat subversion and block Hitler's plans; fight these destructive influences wherever you meet them. The emphasis upon sex and easy living in books, magazines, advertising, and illustrations is full of danger. It tends to encourage self-indulgence and sex-expression—especially among our youth—and thereby lowers national standards of values and morality. The results are, inevitably, physical and mental flabbiness and weakened morale, which is just what Hitler wants.

— September 1941, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

The teaching machine itself is a self-instruction device rather than a means of communicating to pupils assembled together in mass audience. Sizes and shapes vary almost as widely as does the range of prices, from a simple pocket tool costing a few dollars to complex

machines for \$5,000. This could be the answer to the problem of the 50% whom we now write off as unable to succeed in an academic program under our present methods. Programmed learning puts the student into contact (however remote) with program writers who are presumably superior to the average teacher and who probably understand the learning process better than the scholars who write conventional textbooks. One math teacher was shown a program for Mathematics 10. He asked, "What will this do?" The answer was, "It will do what you are doing better and in half the time!"

— Sept./Oct. 1961, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

As I finish my first quarter century in the BC teaching profession, I must express quiet amazement at the degree to which the arts in this province's schools are officially relegated to the back of the shelf. This absurd notion of the arts as a little-used spice in the education of children has gone on long enough. Why the arts philosophies and aspirations of people like Aristotle,

Plato, and Tolstoy have not been translated into our education system is one of the great triumphs of utilitarianism over imagination, of pragmatism over idealism, of hindsight over foresight, of political expediency over sound educational principles.

— Sept./Oct. 1981, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

It was the day BCTF leaders and members had been dreading all summer. August 14, 2001: Labour Minister Graham Bruce rose in the legislature to introduce Bill 18, the *Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act*. BCTF President David Chudnovsky called a news conference where he spoke out against the legislation and warned that it will make achieving a collective agreement at the bargaining table much more difficult. He noted that the BC Liberals are alone in designating education essential—even Ontario Premier Mike Harris's Conservatives did not impose such a law.

— September 2001, *Teacher* newsmagazine

Compiled by Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

Privatizing of public education: Only in America or coming to a school near you?

By Tara Ehrcke

Even if you aren't a parent or a teacher, US "education reform" probably crossed your path sometime this year. You might have seen the film *Waiting for Superman*, which trumpets the concept of the charter school. Or you might have watched the 100,000 plus demonstrators in Madison, Wisconsin, take on a newly minted and aggressive Republican governor attacking teacher union rights. Or perhaps you came across a news story in some US media outlet, where it is almost impossible these days not to read about someone teacher bashing.

Most parents understand that schooling is more than standardized test scores, and many understand that the tests do nothing to improve their own child's education. They also tend to like and trust their children's teachers and schools—certainly more so than a bureaucrat or politician. So it takes a lot of ideological interference to turn people against their child's teacher and their neighbourhood school.

Although the American "reform" movement is over a decade old, it really heated up this year. The ideological onslaught began with the release and endless commentary on the film *Waiting for Superman*. If you watched Oprah's show on September 20, 2010, you saw the program, "The Shocking State of Our Schools." If you heard Bill Gates or Arne Duncan (Obama's top education czar) or Michelle Rhee (former Washington, DC schools chancellor) or practically any mainstream news report, the message was the same—our schools are failing.

And when the one-second sound bite got to be two or three mes-

sages, the same messages from the movie were listed off as the primary reasons for school failure: bad teachers, greedy teachers, teacher unions, teacher tenure.

These ideas are not new to the "education reform" movement in the US. They date back all the way to the mid-1980s with the introduction of standardized testing in OECD nations. They were, in many ways, enshrined into law through the *No Child Left Behind Act* brought in by George W. Bush. And they reached their epitome and perhaps most raw expression in the film *Waiting for Superman*. They are public education's very own "shock" (*à la* Naomi Klein), and they are designed to do something very different than improve schools.

The "shock" goes like this

- Test scores show that our schools are failing.
- The most important factor in a child's education is the quality of the teacher.
- Bad teachers must be leading to low test scores and failing schools.
- We must get rid of bad teachers.
- Tenure and teacher unions are in the way.

And then there is the actual, unspoken motive—commodify and privatize public education.

It is a difficult theory to put forward. Most parents understand that schooling is more than standardized test scores, and many understand that the tests do nothing to improve their own child's education. They also tend to like and trust their children's teachers and schools—certainly more so than a bureaucrat or politician. So it takes a lot of ideological interference to turn people against their child's teacher and their neighbourhood school.

At the root of this "shock doctrine" tactic are two goals—commodify and privatize the public education system. In the US, these goals are achieved in a variety of ways and take on various forms. Vouchers, testing, school rankings,

and charter schools all provide market-driven incentives within a publicly funded system. They do not privatize directly, but they create conditions that mimic a private system. Parents are "consumers" who "shop" for schools using rankings based on test scores. Despite voucher systems, the parents with more savvy and resources tend to get their children into the better schools. Charters escape democratic oversight as they don't run under elected school boards and they are outside of pre-existing union contracts. They can accept private funding (from philanthropists such as Bill Gates) and can employ more teachers who work longer at lower costs because there are no unions and no collective agreements when they start up. They even have rights to public funding and buildings whenever a public school "fails," and are replacing public schools at an alarming rate. They really are a publicly funded private system.

The "education reform" movement also comes with a variety of peripheral policy objectives: merit pay for teachers, more testing to use for more rankings—including teacher rankings as well as school rankings, elimination of teacher unions who are a barrier to school change, lowered teacher training standards to ensure an adequately large supply of new teachers just desperate for a job. So we see the publication in the *Los Angeles Times* of the "value added" teacher score for every public school teacher (this is meant to be a measure of how much more that teacher can improve student test scores). We see the wholesale introduction of charter schools in New Orleans after the floods, completely replacing the public system. We see the draconian legislation in Wisconsin and other states designed to drastically reduce the collective bargaining rights of public sector unions. And now, this spring, we are seeing across the US, significant funding cuts to education budgets, leading to mass layoffs.

The overall result? The public system is shrinking while the private system grows.

Could this be coming to a school near you?

In the dark Bush years, it was common for (some) Americans to lament and wish they were up north, in Canada, that place free of the worst of the market system run amok. But while the rhetoric may be more tempered, the same trends are apparent.

In Canada...we publicly fund private schools. BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories all provide public funding for private schools—in some cases up to 60% of the equivalent public funding. And BC is leading the way with respect to parent choice within the public system.

The most obvious is the testing, accountability and choice agenda. We do not have the same number of tests. But we have enough to produce the Fraser Institute rankings. And enough for Kevin Falcon to float the trial balloon of merit pay for teachers during the BC Liberal leadership race. Ontario has its EQAOs and BC its FSAs.

Parents do not have vouchers and charter schools are uncommon (they do exist in Alberta), but we do have an awful lot of "parent choice." In Canada, this is more direct—we publicly fund private schools. BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories all provide public funding for private schools—in some cases up to 60% of the equivalent public funding. And BC is leading the way with respect to parent choice within the public system. There are no more fixed catchments. In BC, a parent can choose any school, leading to inter-school competition and notoriously unreliable enrolment projections.

The attack on teachers and teacher unions is also alive and well. Ontario, in the Harris years, tried to impose a scheme of

practically constant recertification requirements. Alberta has just floated the idea of a graduated accreditation system, where teachers start their careers in a probationary mode and only after decades of practise and constant evaluation do they become "professional" teachers. The BC government is revamping the BC College of Teachers and threatens, again, to make teachers a minority on their own professional governing body. Just as in the US, these "policy objectives" are justified with erroneous exaggerations of the "bad teachers" who are ruining our education system. Rather than attract the best with competitive salaries (BC is now eighth in Canada) or set high entry standards, the BC government lowered standards (only a four-year degree is now required under the TILMA trade agreement with Alberta) and has let salaries, benefits, and working conditions plummet.

And finally the funding. Since the mid-1990s, and the reductions in transfer payment to the provinces, education budgets have been under constant pressure. Combined with the Supreme Court decision requiring fully integrated schools for students with special needs, the pressures on school boards are insurmountable. Fundraising has become a constant and practically a requirement for most schools. As public schools cut services, parents look elsewhere, if they can afford it. There is a flourishing growth in private specialty services for students with autism, learning disabilities and other specific educational needs, as well as after-school tutoring.

The overall result? Canada has experienced a massive increase in alternatives to the public school system—homeschooling, growth in private school enrolment, massive growth in private tutoring and schooling services (see for example: www.nall.ca/res/65ScottDavies.pdf). Just as in the US, the results are the same—the public system is shrinking while the private system grows.

Tara Ehrcke is president, Greater Victoria Teachers' Association—tara@gvta.net.

A 20-step program Cripple and then privatize

By Gary Hetherington

Western governments are very clever. They may be in British Columbia, North America, or anywhere else in the industrialized world. When they face a problem, they provide an answer. Their problem? How to eliminate public services and bring in private for-profit companies with the consent of the people and seemingly for the people? The solution? Cripple and then privatize.

This system works for any public-service sector such as education, health, and social services. Let us use the BC government as a prototype.

Government should:

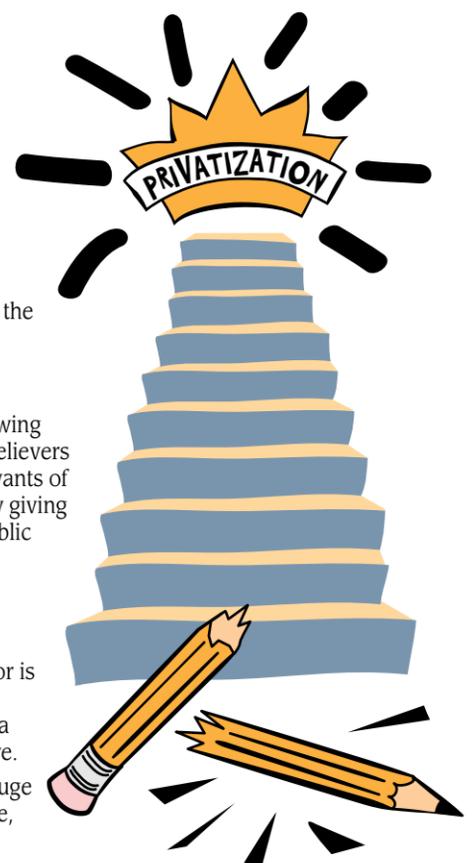
1. extol the virtues of the public systems, and pledge to safeguard them.
2. bring in a calculated cutback of money to support these systems under the guise of balancing the budget and greater efficiency.

3. at the same time, provide tax cuts to private companies and to the wealthier end of the economic scale.
4. wait.
5. suggest, once the public starts to complain about conditions, that the unions are too powerful and the jobs can be done by workers for less money or by contracting out.
6. legislate (not negotiate) agreements with workers, e.g., nurses, doctors, and teachers.
7. not provide any additional funds to cover the new legislated costs.
8. defend themselves with "...in a democracy, the local authorities have the right to determine how tax money is spent." Let the local authorities bear the brunt of the growing discontent from taxpayers.

9. wait.
10. where possible, break union contracts and hire cheaper non-union workers.
11. institute a low training wage so the employers can have cheaper labour for a given period of time; keep the minimum wage as low as possible.
12. call Step 11 an initiative to give people, particularly students, work experience.
13. wait.
14. now, as the public gets more and more restive, issue statements about the inefficiency of the workers in the public sector. Encourage through the media, any stories depreciating the workers.
15. with more, public outcry, respond with great reluctance, by saying the public system needs repairing and that the "public" seems interested in services provided by the private sector.

16. wait.
 17. open up the field to for-profit private companies, off-loading the costs to the individual workers or unemployed members of society.
 18. while continuing to extol the need for effective public services, allow more privatization.
 19. defend your move to growing privatization with, "As believers in democracy and as servants of the people, we are simply giving to the public what the public now wants?"
 20. celebrate! Your transformation of public services into the friendly hands of the private sector is well under way. It will be impossible to go back to a public system in the future.
- Reward yourself with a huge raise and remember, "Cripple, then privatize."

Gary Hetherington is a retired BC teacher.



TOGETHER from page 1

seeking fair solutions that meet the needs of the parties. And there won't be any real bargaining until the government gives BCPSEA a mandate to bargain.

That's why we've embarked on Phase 1 of our job action plan—teaching only—to put pressure on administration, to encourage trustees to ask government for a new mandate that will allow real bargaining to take place.

In just about every aspect of their employment, BC teachers have fallen behind other teachers in

But we simply cannot accept the government's net-zero mandate or in reality a "sub-zero" mandate and their demand for major concessions of long-held rights.

Canada. Our benefits have seen virtually no improvements in almost 20 years. Teachers in Ontario have more than double the amount of preparation time as teachers in BC (220 minutes or more in elementary and 25% in secondary). Many locals/districts in Saskatchewan and Manitoba also have at least 200 minutes of prep time for elementary teachers. Saskatchewan teachers, already better paid than BC teachers, have negotiated double-digit wage increases over the next three years to help catch them up with teachers in Manitoba and Alberta. If BC teachers were to accept a two-year wage freeze, it would mean six years of wage freezes in just 15 years.

BC teachers can't afford another wage freeze and can't wait any longer for improvements to our benefits. And after waiting nine years for the court to declare the legislation that stripped our collective agreements of class-size and composition limits and guarantees of services for students unconstitutional and invalid, it's long past time for the government to address the repercussions of that decision and negotiate improvements to the illegally stripped provisions. The time is now.

The BCTF provincial bargaining team returned to the table on August 23, a date that was mutually agreed to by both parties. Every effort is being made to reach a negotiated resolution.

But we simply cannot accept the government's net-zero mandate or in reality a "sub-zero" mandate and their demand for major concessions of long-held rights. It's time for BCPSEA to stop embracing the net-zero mandate and urge government to change the mandate. It is time that BCPSEA be given a mandate that enables them to engage in good faith negotiations. A mandate that enables the employer to table proposals that shows respect for, and values the work of teachers across this province.

Why is BCPSEA and the Clark government so intent on ensuring teachers in BC continue to be the lowest paid teachers and have the lowest amount of prep time west of Quebec?

It is likely this will be a protracted and difficult struggle. Bargaining is about compromise, about moving us forward and not backward. We cannot allow BCPSEA's and the government's disrespectful agenda to prevail.

It's about our future, our student's future, and about value and respect for the work we do with our students in our classrooms across BC.

Forty-one thousand committed members are a powerful force. Together, in unity, we will be successful.

Jim Iker is BCTF first vice-president and chief negotiator.

Why paying teachers based on student results is a bad idea

By Ben Levin

I'm an optimist and have even been called a "relentless optimist." Still, I get depressed when I see the frequency with which ideas for education policy are put forward despite a lack of evidence for their value.

Paying teachers based on their students' achievement is one of those ideas. It's a head-line issue in the United States. In Canada, there is often much fallout from issues prominent in the United States, so now there also are calls in Canada for some form of pay for performance for teachers, such as that made by one of the unsuccessful candidates for leadership of the governing Liberal Party in British Columbia.

My concerns about paying teachers based on student results come from my reading of the evidence in education and beyond. A paper I wrote recently for the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (available at <http://tinyurl.com/6jje8eh>) laid out eight reasons why these plans are likely to be bad education policy.

Proposals for pay for performance have migrated north to Canada—but Canadians have just as much skepticism for the concept as American educators.

1. Few people in any occupation are paid based on measured outcomes.

According to Scott Adams and John Heywood (2009), only 15% to 30% of all workers get any kind of performance pay, most of which is not based on outcomes, and only 6% are in ongoing performance pay systems. Most of this is in sales-related occupations. In the corporate world, there is no relationship between the pay of corporate CEOs and measured performance. If pay based on results makes so much sense, why is it so unusual, even in the private sector?

2. No other profession is paid based on a measured outcome.

Professionals are paid primarily based on salaries or on volume of work. Where there is pay for performance for professionals, the performance measures are rarely related to measures of client outcomes.

3. Most teachers oppose such schemes.

Surveys of teachers consistently show strong (70+%) opposition to pay schemes based on student achievement. Since improvement in education depends critically on teachers' commitment, anything that reduces commitment is likely to be unhelpful to better school outcomes.

4. Pay based on student achievement is very likely to lead to displacement of other important education purposes and goals.

When people have a financial incentive to achieve a score, that incentive may displace other, more desirable efforts. Since not all the important goals of education will be measured, those that are linked to



pay are likely to get more attention at the expense of other goals. Research in psychology shows that extrinsic rewards can act to displace intrinsic motivation. Pay schemes based on student achievement measures could reduce some teachers' desire to do the job well simply because that is their professional responsibility and wish.

If merit pay is individual and competitive, teachers will have fewer incentives to co-operate and share with colleagues.

5. There is no consensus on what the measures of student achievement should be.

Academic achievement is not the only important outcome of schooling; we also value students' ongoing ability to learn, interest in learning, abilities to work with others, and citizenship skills. Most of these, however, would not be used in a merit-pay scheme.

Even restricting the focus to academic achievement, there is the issue of how that should be measured. Does one measure all subjects or only some? Does one measure the absolute level of attainment, which is strongly influenced by prior attainment, or the incremental gain in learning? In that case, it can be very hard to show gains if students are already performing well.

Is performance judged one year at a time or over several years? Would teachers' performance be measured against some norm or benchmark? Or would it be measured against other teachers? If so, would teachers be compared to teachers in the same school or district? Or would they be compared to teachers in schools with similar demographics? With others teaching the same course or subject?

6. The measurement of outcomes involves a significant degree of error.

Any measure of student performance—whether it's a teacher's grade or a standardized test—has some error in it. Moreover, different students will be assessed using different measurements (for example, different tests are used at different grade levels), compounding the error. Where significant amounts of money rest on the measure, even a small error can be very significant.

7. The details of merit pay schemes vary greatly, but they also matter greatly.

Which teachers are included? What about teachers who don't teach a class of students (for example, special education teachers or counselors) or who teach in an

area that is not measured (such as music or physical education)? Should teachers who are in their first or second year of teaching or who are teaching a new grade or subject be judged on the same basis as others?

Is the measure applied individually to each teacher or to groups of teachers? If the latter, is the group an entire school staff or some subset? If groups are used, is the average of all members the right measure? If there is a group reward, is it shared equally among all?

Can all teachers potentially receive the merit amount, or is it restricted to some limited percent-

If pay based on results makes so much sense, why is it so unusual, even in the private sector?

tage of teachers? If the latter, how many would be eligible, and what effect would this have on the motivation of others?

Is the additional pay a small amount (say 1% to 2% of salary), in which case it might have very little incentive effect on teachers? Or would it be much more substantial—say 10% of pay—which means a very high overall price tag? Many previous schemes have failed due to the high continuing cost.

8. The evidence for merit pay for teachers is weak, and many schemes have been tried but did not last.

Merit pay is not a new idea. Such plans go back more than 100 years. There has not been very much careful empirical study, but most studies have found weak to no effects on students. Furthermore, few merit-pay schemes have lasted more than a few years, suggesting that, for one reason or another, they weren't sustainable. Where evidence is weak and experience is not positive, there are good reasons to be guarded about any policy. Why not focus on making changes in education that have more supporting evidence and are less controversial, such as helping teachers improve their skills?

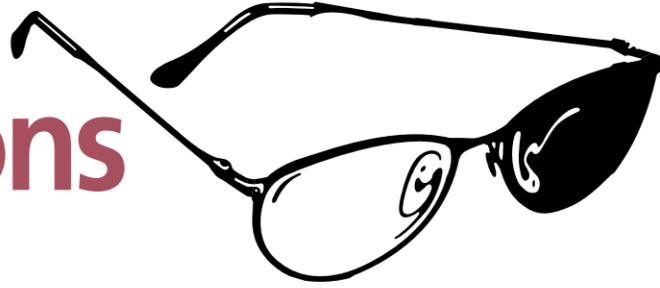
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"Why Paying Teachers Based on Student Results in a Bad Idea," by Ben Levin, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 92, No. 8, May 2011, pp. 89-90. Reprinted with permission of Phi Delta Kappa International, www.pdkintl.org. All rights reserved.

Contrasting visions



BCTF President Susan Lambert's speech to the 2011 BCTF Summer Conference in Kamloops (edited)

Elizabeth May says we must be relentless because the work to save the planet is urgent and compelling. In the face of the current global political climate the same is true for public education.

The contrasting visions of the purpose of public education could not be more stark. That is why the theme of this year's summer conference is "In support of public education: courage, strength, principles." There's a lot at stake, not just our collective agreement but the whole paradigm of building the collective commons which are public services.

We will need strength. That means unity. It's going to be a tough round. But, we have a very powerful tool and that's Phase 1 of our job action plan.

Throughout it all we must act with integrity and honour. Our vision of education is stronger, more universal and equitable, it is based on the principles of social justice.

We don't want to simply teach soon forgotten things—we have a different view of the purpose of education, and the nature of excellence in education.

Government's vision for public education is a different thing entirely. The rhetoric of 21st century learning is belied by the actions of a government that relies on standardized testing to rank schools and to undermine public confidence in public education.

And a government that continuously attacks the credibility of teachers and undermines our professionalism; a government that sells short the value of professional autonomy, which is critical to quality teaching; a government that acted illegally in 2002 to rob us of our collective agreement rights and children of \$275 million worth of educational services.

At our last meeting with Paul Straszak on the remedy to the Bills 27/28 Court decision, he insisted that no funds had been taken from public education in 2002—money had just been re-allocated by school boards.

In the very same meeting, he asked Peter Drescher (past assistant superintendent of Surrey) to explain to us what it would mean if our class-size composition language from 2001 was in force today in Surrey. Drescher showed us this slide:

Returning to 2001 Contract Provisions Teacher FTE Requirements	
Total classroom teachers	84.5
Total non-enrolling teachers	262.25
	346.75 FTE
Surrey would require at least an additional 347 teaching FTE at an average teacher salary/benefit cost of \$92,148 – the total cost would be approximately \$33 million.	

But Straszak insists no money was taken from education budgets.

Yes, we have very different visions about public education, its value and its purpose.

There's a poem by John Steinbeck that captures the essence of these contrasting visions called *Like Captured Fireflies*.

We don't want to simply teach soon forgotten things—we have a different view of the purpose of

How else do you understand a government that boasts of collecting the most data of any jurisdiction in Canada, while ignoring the starkly contrasting characteristic of being the province with the highest child poverty rates?

teaching requires yet again more. Quality teaching requires the learner's attention, and the support of resources, facilities, and proper conditions for learning. The authors are clear that to define a causal connection between teaching and learning, "...such that it could be perfected, [and] it could then be sustained under almost any conditions, including poverty, vast linguistic, racial, or cultural differences and massive differences

27 and 28 violation of our Charter rights and at the bargaining table are examples of these stark contrasts. Remember this is a government that stripped the system of class size, composition, and non-enrolling professional standards that teachers had negotiated.

They did this because they'd generated their own financial crisis in 2001. They reduced income taxes across the board by 25%. That decreased government revenues by \$2.1 billion annually. The decrease put enormous pressure on the provision of government services. The goal was to shrink the size of government.

It is a libertarian or neo-liberal ideology that views government provision of public service as a burden rather than a benefit.

This government is refusing to implement the Bills 27/28 Court decision. Instead, in the name of "government policy objectives" they want to shrink the size and obligations of government itself.

And that is their purpose at the bargaining table. Not just ours but at all the bargaining tables with all public employees. This is a government that fundamentally does not value public service or the collective and collaborative social action required to build and grow an equally accessible and high quality public commons. The sub-zero mandate, and remember this sub-zero applies to rights as well as financial interests, is a public policy not brought on by the austerity flowing from a financial crisis. It is a public policy choice of a government that believes the private provision of these services is better because:

- it provides a source of profit to be exploited by private businesses.
- it lowers the obligation of government to raise tax revenue, which they see as harmful, in two ways—the income tax responsibility of the rich is disproportionate to that of the poor and the obligation of corporations to pay taxes they say is a disincentive to create jobs.
- it rewards, in their view, those most deserving of reward, those who have demonstrated the ability to exploit opportunity for profit.

In these times, we teachers must understand that taxation policy is as critically relevant to public education as are issues of pedagogy, curriculum, and social justice. We must acquaint ourselves with what Henry Giroux calls the politics of "trickle-down cruelty." He says under neo-liberal policies, government is declared the enemy, there is a sustained assault on working and middle classes through the busting of unions and the export of millions of decent paying jobs and a transfer of enormous wealth to the already rich.

In these times, we teachers must understand that taxation policy is as critically relevant to public education as are issues of pedagogy, curriculum, and social justice.

in the opportunity factors of time facilities and resources...is not [just] naive, it is wrong." (Gary D. Fenstermacher, Virginia Richardson, University of Michigan, "On Making Determinations of Quality Teaching," *Teachers College Record*, 2005.)

It is wrong because it ignores the responsibility of the state to provide resources and facilities to support learning. It ignores the context that quantifiably differentiates the *human-ness* of each individual child. They argue that if we reduce the art of teaching to a formulaic reproducible prescription we endanger learning by reducing it to a quantifiable measure.

We are facing a government that cavalierly fosters the teaching of "soon to be forgotten things" and that denies any responsibility for providing teachers with the necessary resources and facilities for quality teaching. We are facing a government that fundamentally distrusts, and certainly does not respect teachers.

How else do you understand a government that boasts of collecting the most data of any

jurisdiction in Canada, while ignoring the starkly contrasting characteristic of being the province with the highest child poverty rates? How else do you understand a government that chooses the mechanistic, teacher-proofed, reductionist, superficial, and increasingly privatized models of education of the States rather than the model of excellence provided by Finland?

The only way to understand it is to realize that we have two starkly contrasting visions of the purpose of public education, two starkly contrasting visions of what constitutes quality teaching and two starkly contrasting visions of government's role in creating civil society, in building the social fabric or "commons" that is the moral purpose of democratic government.

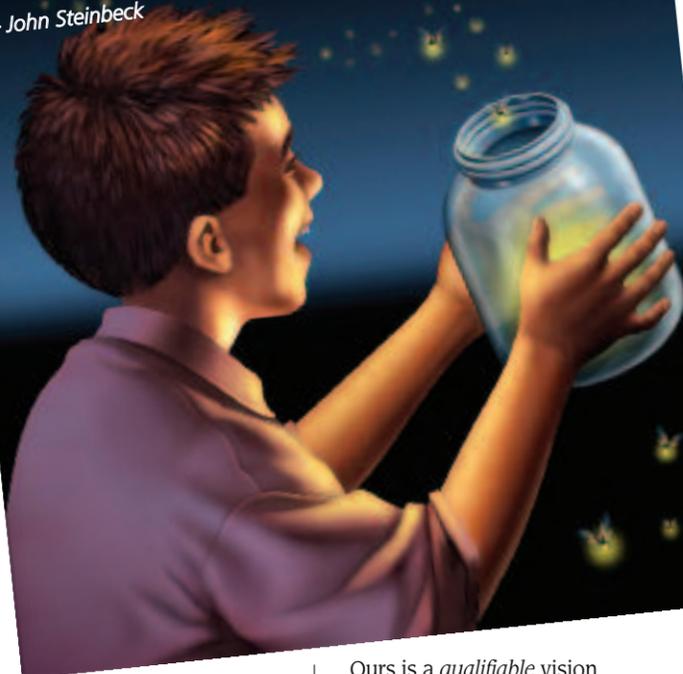
Their purpose for public education is the stoking of consumer capitalism. This government sees education as an arm of government's economic policy.

The struggle we continue to find ourselves in regarding both the Bills

Like Captured Fireflies

Like Captured Fireflies
In her classroom our speculations ranged the world
She aroused us to book waving discussions
Every morning we came to her carrying new truths, new facts, new ideas
Cupped and sheltered in our hands like captured fireflies.
When she went away a sadness came over us,
But the light did not go out.
She left her signature upon us
The literature of the teacher who writes on children's minds.
I've had many teachers who taught us soon forgotten things,
But only a few like her who created in me a new thing,
a new attitude, a new hunger.
I suppose that, to a large extent, I am the unsigned manuscript
of that teacher.
What deathless power lies in the hands of such a person.

— John Steinbeck



education, and the nature of excellence in education.

Theirs is a vision of *quantifiable* education. Here you find the language of outputs, measurable results, data, "best" practices, teacher-proofing, scripted lessons, the teacher as the only variable to be "improved" in the teacher-learner equation, vouchers, charters, merit pay and private alternatives.

Ours is a *qualifiable* vision. Researchers Gary Fenstermacher and Virginia Richardson distinguish "good teaching" from "successful" teaching. Successful teaching is the simple transmission of knowledge. It can easily be measured by testing students to determine if the desired transmission of information has been achieved. But, they argue, a highly successful teacher can teach students to kill.

The US army, for example, until this summer, included a course in the training of soldiers responsible for launching nuclear missiles called "Christian Just War Theory," which used passages from the Bible to "demonstrate the moral justification for atomic warfare." [*Vancouver Sun*, August 6, 2011]

Fenstermacher and Richardson say that successful teaching is only one component of quality teaching. Good teaching, another component, requires competency, is *morally defensible*, and is undertaken with the intention of enhancing the learner's abilities. Both good and successful teaching are components of quality teaching but quality

What is even more compelling, and what is even more critical for us to understand, is that the financial crisis was created consciously by the politics and politicians of greed. The current demand for people's austerity is an attempt to shift the blame. It is an attempt to hide the uneven distribution of wealth, the uneven burden of the consequences of Giroux's "casino capitalism" and the inequitable vulnerability of those most vulnerable.

We don't want to be merely successful teachers mechanistically transmitting government policy objectives as curriculum to uncritical consumers. We want the professional autonomy, professional respect and the authority to be able to design and deliver educational programs tailored to the needs of each and every child. We want to be critically aware of our role in building the expectation of citizenship in each and every one of our students.

Just keep a picture of the \$500 plus million retractable roof on BC Place in the forefront of your mind and remember that was a promise made by the investment arm of our government, PavCo, which wanted to turn Vancouver into a destination gambling resort to increase the profits of the Edgewater Casino group.

Stephen Hume on July 15, 2011, wrote a column citing Stats Can and the Conference Board of Canada, which recently reported that "income inequality has increased rapidly over the past 20 years...only five of 17 developed nations have income inequality worse than Canada's. ...In terms of wealth, while earnings for the top income groups were increasing by 16.4% between 1980 and 2005, earnings for the bottom group fell by 20.6%."

Hume talks about the ethos of greed and the remorselessly widening income gap between the richest and poorest Canadians. He wrote of BC Liberal policies attacking civil servants, imposing zero-% wage increases and freezing the minimum wage "while simultaneously inflating management salaries by more than 40%, a bigger rise in one year than the average Canadian wage rose over a decade."

The next step in this starkly contrasting vision is privatization. Rupert Murdoch, owner of the sleazy and now increasingly clearly criminal, *News of the World*, is just one billionaire who sees and wants to seize the opportunity for profit in the field of education. He has recently acquired a company devoted to exploiting the profits of the privatized provisions of education services saying: "When it comes to K through 12 education, we see a \$500 million sector in the US alone."

There are two visions of public education out there. They are in stark contrast. There is Finland, the top of the world and there is the States. Here in BC we can choose. Christy Clark has chosen. She appointed Gwyn Morgan as her advisor. Morgan donated \$1 million to the Fraser Institute in 2007 and is a trustee of their foundation.

I think the people of BC have

The art of teaching is a deathless, powerful, delicate, and fragile thing.

made a different choice. We've rejected the senseless economic bootstrap individualism represented by what Jim Quayle calls Thatcher's children—the hockey rioters, and we've embraced the notion that a civilized society is characterized by compassion, collaboration, and community.

I hope you didn't miss the story on the freeway near the Brunette

exit in Coquitlam on July 23. It's an amazing story that I want to end with. Harvey Sashi and Ibsan Islam were on the freeway when they noticed a car weaving erratically in the traffic. Looking at the driver they realized she was in obvious medical distress. What did they do? They pulled alongside and paced her to prevent her from veering into the heavy traffic. Then Courtenay Smith pulled in front and deliberately and carefully braked, causing her to bump into him, slow down, and eventually come to a stop. Meanwhile, realizing what was happening, Ron MacLeod pulled in behind to complete the box and warn approaching vehicles to stay clear. It's an incredible story. The selfless and courageous actions of these men averted a tragedy in dangerous conditions and saved a woman's life.

This is the story that must sustain us. It is the story that says British Columbians choose hope over cynicism. They choose courage and compassion and collective action over individualism and greed. And we as teachers choose Finland over the US as our model.

We don't want to be merely successful teachers mechanistically transmitting government policy objectives as curriculum to uncritical consumers. We want the professional autonomy, professional respect and the authority to be able to design and deliver educational programs tailored to the needs of each and every child. We want to be critically aware of our role in building the expectation of citizenship in each and every one of our students.

Here's another poem. This one dedicated to you math teachers; it's by Taylor Mali.

The art of teaching is a deathless, powerful, delicate, and fragile thing. Enjoy this year of teaching. And this year we will do no FSAs.

Susan Lambert, BCTF president.

Health and safety

Bargaining objectives and health and safety

By Karen Langenmaier

September 2011 will prove to be a challenging start to a new school year as members enter into Phase 1 of job action to support the bargaining objectives. The last time BCTF members took job action against the employer was 2005. There are many new members who have not experienced bargaining or job action and who may question why. From a health and safety perspective, there are many

...if there are members who wonder why we are launching into job action, they need only think about their working, and their students' learning conditions.

repercussions that have resulted from the cuts in funding. The following are some that impact BCTF members directly:

1. *Larger class sizes*—results in poor indoor air quality as many ventilation systems are designed for smaller class sizes, tripping hazards from backpacks or material on the floor, increase in noise levels, and increased symptoms of stress.

2. *Violence*—educators are meant to nurture students to help them become socially responsible global citizens. It is an affront when they are hit, kicked, and threatened by students. It is not within anyone's job description to expect to be hurt at work. Diminishing funds to education provide fewer supports for children with behavioural or mental health issues resulting in an increase in the number of violent incidents. When young children do not receive the help they need, they grow into antisocial adults. Our court and penal system is full of them.

3. *Ergonomics*—teachers are being expected to spend increasing amounts of time at computers writing reports, entering student data, and producing attendance reports. They often do this in their classrooms, which are not ergonomically designed as computer stations. With these "makeshift" work stations, teachers are reporting an increase in repetitive strain and musculo-skeletal injuries.

4. *Communicable diseases*—schools are unique environments in that they house sometimes hundreds of people in very close proximity with very few controls to minimize or eliminate exposure to diseases. People with communicable diseases touch not only the surfaces in the classroom but also the hallways, computer labs, libraries, gyms, doors, railings, all of which harbour viruses and bacteria to be passed on to all the other people who touch these surfaces. One only needs to stand in a hallway during class change at a secondary school to experience the number of people breathing each other's exhaled air. There are very few workplaces that

have the same numbers of people in such close proximity all day long. Reduction in funding has led to a decrease in custodial and maintenance staff resulting in dirtier and unhealthier schools.

5. *Reduction or elimination of release time to conduct workplace inspections and investigations*—the goal of health and safety programs is to prevent occupational injuries and disease. It is difficult to identify and remediate hazards when members cannot participate in inspections during work time or do inspections when no one is working.

6. *Changes to the formula in calculating compensation for lost time due to workplace injuries or occupational disease*—prior to 2002, compensation was calculated at 75% of a worker's gross pay. This essentially gave the worker what they would have taken home as net pay. The new calculation as of 2002 calculates the pay as 90% of net. The concern is that a worker should be entitled to 100% of what they would have taken home. There are also concerns as to how net is calculated.

7. *Proposed changes to late-night retail working alone provisions*—currently employers must either have more than one person working or construct barriers to protect people working alone from acts of violence. Late-night hours are defined as between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. The proposed changes suggest that employers do not have to have two people or construct barriers but must only do a risk assessment to determine need. The proposal also changes the late-night hours to between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. These changes impact many of our students who are entering the work force, their parents and some of our own members who are forced to take second jobs in late-night retail type employment.

The changes to education funding have seen a decrease in the general maintenance and cleanliness of schools. There are fewer custodians. The frequency of grounds and building maintenance has decreased. Responses to building repairs are delayed. Heating and ventilation systems are not cleaned as often. Lights are turned off earlier. Heating systems are turned on later. All these lead to an environment that is conducive to the growth of micro-organisms that affect people's health.

The decrease in funding has resulted in larger class sizes that contribute to poor indoor air quality.

The reduced funding provides fewer supports for students that impacts remedial programs for students with behavioural or mental health challenges.

So, if there are members who wonder why we are launching into job action, they need only think about their working, and their students' learning conditions.

Karen Langenmaier, Health and Safety, BCTF Income Security Division.

Undivided Attention

A grand piano wrapped in quilted pads by movers, tied up with canvas straps – like classical music's birthday gift to the insane – is gently nudged without its legs out an eighth-floor window on 62nd street. It dangles in April air from the neck of the movers' crane, Chopin-shiny black lacquer squares And dirty white crisscross patterns hanging like the second-to-last note of a concerto played on the edge of the seat, the edge of tears, the edge of eight stories up going over, and I'm trying to teach math in the building across the street.

Who can teach when there are such lessons to be learned? All the greatest common factors are delivered by Long-necked cranes and flatbed trucks or come through everything, even air. Like snow.

See, snow falls for the first time every year, and every year my students rush to the window as if snow were more interesting than math, which of course it is.

So please
Let me teach like a Steinway,
Spinning slowly in April air,
So almost-falling, so hinderingly
Dangling from the neck of the movers' crane.
So on the edge of losing everything.
Let me teach like the first snow, falling.

– Taylor Mali



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PSA Council – 40th anniversary

Origins of the PSA Council

By Heather Daly

BC teachers and supporters of public education in BC have the option of joining one or more of 33 exceptional professional specialist associations (PSAs). PSAs span the subject, grade, interest, and learning specialist areas relevant to public education in the province. They thrive thanks to the commitment of those individuals who choose to become PSA members and subscribers and the incredible work of each of the individual PSA executives.

Although each PSA has its own focus and is incorporated under its own constitution, all PSAs share the same powerful purpose: to foster and provide professional development, through such actions as organizing conferences, institutes, and workshops, developing curriculum projects and position statements, communicating and liaising with other groups, and championing appropriate standards and working and learning conditions. This shared purpose has long meant that PSAs can achieve more for BC teachers and students by working together.

It was this sentiment, given voice on May 1, 1971, that led to the formation of the Provincial Specialist Association Council, which is now celebrating its 40th anniversary. The hope behind the PSAs coming together as a council was that the dialogue and collaboration between PSAs would lead to, "...a growing interaction that will benefit all of us in our professional aspirations" and would, "promote professional development by enabling PSAs to communicate with one another, and as a body with other sections of the BCTF." It is reported that one delegate strongly supported the formation of the council by stating, "Who better than we can understand our needs and objectives? We are teachers helping teachers, and is this not the strength of our PSA movement?"

The first official meeting of PSA Council was held on October 23, 1971, and the agenda included program planning, financing, member recruitment, publications, and "additional items from PSAs," not dissimilar to PSA Council

meetings today. Delegates were present from most of the 21 PSAs that were in existence in 1971–72, which included Art, Business Educators, Classics, Counsellors, English, Home Economics, Intermediate, Librarians, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Music, Occupational Teachers, Physical Education, Primary, Science, Shop, Social Studies, and Special Education, along with Directors of Instruction, Principals and Vice-Principals, and Supervisors, who were at the time part of the BCTF.

One of the common concerns of the delegates who came together at the first PSA Council meeting was low PSA membership. Total PSA membership at the time was reported to be "disappointing," with less than 50% of all BC teachers at the time belonging to a PSA. The council newsletter from November

...all PSAs share the same powerful purpose: to foster and provide professional development, through such actions as organizing conferences, institutes, and workshops, developing curriculum projects and position statements, communicating and liaising with other groups, and championing appropriate standards and working and learning conditions.

1971 reports that the resolve of the delegates was that, "we shall have to try even harder next year." PSA finances, which can be dependent upon PSA membership numbers, were a related concern.

However, then as now, the major focus of the PSA Council was on how the PSAs could provide the best possible service to BC teachers and students. In 1971–72, the PSA Council delegates were keenly interested in promoting the ability for individuals to have representation and voice by being part of a provincial specialist association and the ability of BC teachers to have access to information and BC teacher-developed publications that would support them in their work.

One of the ways that the PSA Council delegates worked to assist individuals to have representation and voice was by encouraging additional groups of teachers to

form PSAs. In 1973, for example, the PSA Council delegates encouraged BC drama teachers to affiliate as a PSA. The delegates also worked together in those years to enable non-teachers and student teachers to become PSA members. These efforts resulted in the eventual creation of the PSA "subscriber" category, which today continues to be an option on the PSA membership form for BC public education supporters, administrators, institutions, and many teachers who work in independent schools to join PSAs in order to support and benefit from them.

Of particular benefit to PSA members and subscribers was access to BC teacher-developed curriculum materials and other publications that were produced by PSAs. At the first meeting in October 1971, the PSA Council delegates began the tradition of PSAs sharing with each other successful strategies for developing professional opportunities and materials and making them available. The delegates worked together to promote curriculum and other publications through displays at universities and the annual BCTF AGM and to make PSA publications available through the BCTF's Lesson Aids' Service. They were very concerned with the quality of PSA publications, recognizing that the printed PSA journals and newsletters were, "...of vital importance of maintaining a healthy relationship with members" and they supported orientation for PSA editors. Now, such orientation also includes assistance for PSA webmasters and the focus on print media has in many cases expanded to include the maintenance of a vibrant social media presence. The 1971–72 PSA Council delegates also worked together to encourage PSAs to submit articles to what was then called the *BCTF Newsletter*, another practice that continues to this day.

By 1973, the PSA Council was formalized to the degree that BCTF staff were identified as being liaisons to the council and minutes were recorded and preserved for the first time. The PSA Council was now not just a forum for PSAs to come together, but an important and official body within the BCTF.

Heather Daly, Winslow Curriculum and Staff Development Dept., Coquitlam.

This is the first article in a year-long series celebrating the 40th anniversary of the PSA Council.

BC Co-operative Learning Association

bctf.ca/psas/bccla

"If you want to be incrementally better: Be competitive. If you want to be exponentially better: Be cooperative." (Unknown)

We are pleased to tell you a little bit about our PSA, the BCCLA. Our goal is to foster and promote co-operative learning and co-operative schools in BC. Our objectives are: to provide leadership in professional development, and to provide the BCTF Executive Committee and other committees of the Federation with a source of consultation on matters affecting co-operative learning in BC.

As a cross-curricular PSA, the BCCLA is unique. We provide support to all educators in the province, regardless of level or subject area. With the support of the BCTF, we host conferences, provide workshops throughout the province, publish a quarterly journal, and provide a network to support our colleagues. Our executive is made up of dedicated classroom teachers who are passionate about co-operative learning and see the benefits for daily life in the classroom.

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We know that social emotional competencies can be taught, and when students learn to work together in socially responsible ways, for a common cause, wonderful things can happen. So

much exciting research is now taking place in the areas of social emotional learning and brain research that supports the basic tenets of co-operative learning. We have always known that when properly implemented, co-operative learning works, and now we are beginning to see the science behind it. With this in mind, we are actively exploring the links between co-operative learning, social responsibility and formative assessment. When students' own their own learning through active participation and meaningful dialogue, learning can shift dramatically.

The BCCLA offers several workshops that we can bring to you in your district or school at a minimal cost. We present for all levels of interest, from a small group of teachers to the larger school or district professional development plan.

If you are already a member of a PSA, we encourage you to stay involved. Together we have so much teaching expertise in this province, and active involvement in PSAs is a wonderful way to share. We are very proud of our quarterly journal (available to members) and it is always packed with practical information. We would love to welcome you aboard.

Together we're better!

Mike Galliford, BCCLA president
mgalliford@sd43.bc.ca

Teachers of Home Economics Association

bctf.ca/thesa

The Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) is proud to represent home economics teachers in British Columbia. Our members are passionate about teaching students practical skills they can use for the rest of their lives, and THESA works to provide professional development that assists teachers in bringing contemporary information and perspectives to our subject area. Our classes don't just focus on cooking and sewing, but seek to explore deeper global and environmental issues, nutrition, biology, chemistry,

Twenty things you didn't know about PSAs

1 The math PSA is the largest of the 33 PSAs and has more BCTF active members than do 60 locals.

2 The home ec PSA is one of the few home ec teacher associations left in Canada but it wields considerable influence. Their flood of letters and e-mail messages convinced UBC to retain the home ec teacher preparation program.

3 The music PSA has inspired music education industries to form an advocacy society to lobby for education funding. PSA members participate annually in a national advocacy and media campaign called *Music Monday* when 150,000 students across Canada perform the same piece of music.

4 The science and social studies PSAs have both surveyed their members about the Grade 10 and 11 provincial exams; see their websites for the results.

5 The PE PSA is currently writing a history of PE in BC over the last 100 years, and the Business Ed PSA is still teaching about taxes 5,000 years after the Egyptians introduced them.

6 The tech ed PSA is writing a Best Practices Guide that deals with the thorny issues of safety in industrial settings and class-size and composition issues.

7 The math PSA is set to release a book on assessment practices in mathematics.

8 The ESL PSA has produced brochures explaining ESL services to parents in 14 languages; locals can download these from the ESL PSA website.

9 The drama PSA, whose members are responsible for over 1,000 performances each year in BC schools, hosts a student playwriting contest each year, and publishes an anthology of student-written plays every second year.

10 Executive members of the English language arts PSA, half of whom are knitters, annually publish *Voices Visible*, a student-writing journal.

11 Collectively, the members of the modern languages PSA executive are fluent in seven languages.

12 The Aboriginal education PSA encourages us to question our assumptions about learning. They also work with districts to develop learning resources that encourage students to explore alternate world views.

13 In the late 1970s, the teacher-librarians' PSA coined the term "teacher-librarians" that is now used worldwide.

14 The art PSA organizes the displays of student art in the BCTF building.

15 The rural and small schools PSA takes inspiration from a teacher named Lottie Bowron who, 60 years

ago, traveled long distances in all seasons and conditions to meet and support young rural teachers, and annually offers two bursaries in her name to teacher candidates doing their final practicum in rural schools.

16 In addition to annual provincial conferences, many PSAs offer regional conferences, or regional meetings and workshops. The math PSA holds a New Math Teachers' Conference, and 15 PSAs offer workshops for schools and districts, often at cost.

17 Tired of keynotes and workshops? The culinary arts PSA, an advocate of local food initiatives, held a provincial conference in the Okanagan last fall that consisted entirely of field trips—to an agricultural research centre, vinegar works, an apiary, and the orchard with the "mother tree" of all Ambrosia apples.

18 The computer-using educators PSA was formed when computers were rare, but now all PSAs make use of electronic means of communication—all but one have websites, many have very active listservs, several publish their journals and newsletters online only, some conduct executive meetings by Skype, and the teacher-librarians' PSA operates seven blogs, two Google groups and is on Facebook and Twitter.

19 PSA Council holds paperless meetings with all 37 participants using an online interactive agenda. In over three meetings, this has saved 6,294 sheets of paper, assuming overleaf printing. That's 12.6 reams of paper. Or if you prefer, a paper trail 1.8 km long.

20 PSA Council will celebrate its 40th anniversary this fall. Send champagne!

Join a PSA – information and application form at: bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx?id=4308

psychology, economics, and many other topics.

To this end, we provide resources for our teachers that include a website (www.bctf.ca/thesa), an e-mail listserve, a quarterly newsletter, and a yearly conference that is attended by a large percentage of our membership. When asked how these communication and professional development tools affect

Our classes don't just focus on cooking and sewing, but seek to explore deeper global and environmental issues, nutrition, biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, and many other topics.

their teaching practice, many teachers felt a sense of connectivity that sometimes is hard to find within their local school environment: "We are often a department unto ourselves, especially in middle schools or smaller secondary schools. The Provincial Specialty groups allow us the opportunity to gain relevant (Pro D) information we can apply immediately" (Nancy Lawrence). The conference itself brings teachers together face to face: "Our THESA conferences are wonderful. The workshops are fun and creative, and always inspiring. But the best part is seeing the same faces every year and getting to know such a fantastic group of teachers" (Catherine Hay). And our conference always welcomes teachers from other subject areas who want a fun and rewarding professional development experience!

In addition, the THESA executive works to promote our subject area and to represent the challenges and concerns of our teachers. We encourage our members to participate in provincial committees such as FoodSafe and Guidelines for Healthy Eating in Schools. We have made recommendations, through the BCTF, for participants for curriculum writing committees and resource evaluations. An executive member commented, "We are a small elective that feels vulnerable to political whims and have formed a tight knit provincial body to advocate for all home economics teachers in our province" (Tanya Silvonon). Recently we successfully lobbied to help save the UBC home economics teacher preparation program (the only one in the province) and it now continues to graduate a number of new home economics teachers each year.

Last year, THESA completed an inquiry project looking at the work life and future of home economics teachers in BC. The information gained through this project will be used to continue to lobby for home economics teachers and home economics programs in BC. Teacher Sharon Kehoe sums up the feelings of many of us, "though we are surrounded by our students, teaching is nonetheless a solitary and even lonely profession. For me, THESA provides a sense of connectivity to a larger group of professionals who share my challenges and concerns...I'm grateful for the exceptional collegiality that the members of THESA offer so generously on a daily basis." The THESA executive is extremely grateful to our members for their dedication to home economics in BC and to making THESA a dynamic and exciting PSA. *Paula Aquino, THESA president*

Educators of the gifted, talented, and creative children aegtcbbc.ca

All BC teachers are teachers of the gifted! In 1996 there were 22,707 identified gifted students in BC. There are presently 7,333 gifted students identified in the province. Changes in the funding formula have reduced the identification of these students with special needs. The students are still there, in our classrooms, and they need special attention to enable their learning to progress. Educators of gifted children recognize the need to specialize our own learning and to specialize our teaching approaches to effectively meet the unique needs of gifted, talented, and creative learners. With this in mind, our PSA supports the regular classroom teacher as well as the gifted program specialist.

Educators of the gifted are passionately dedicated to supporting gifted learners. The past executive tallied over 100 years of knowledge and wisdom working with gifted students in our province. Our major event each year is our conference. It is always held on the fall provincial professional development day. Each year we feature a world-renowned presenter in gifted education and respected for work with gifted children. For example, recent presenters have included Carol Ann Tomlinson on Differentiated Learning, James Delisle on Survival Skills for Gifted Kids, Karen Rogers on Re-Forming Gifted Education, Susan Winebrenner on Classroom Strategies, Judy Willis on the Brain, and Joanne Foster on Being Smart about Gifted Education. Presenters design their presentations based on research and on experience-based, effective, teaching strategies. The conference also provides the opportunity to engage in collegial conversations regarding our own effective teaching practices.

This fall, on October 21, Tamara Fisher will present "Intelligent Life in the Classroom: Gifted Kids and their Teachers" including "Survival Strategies" and "Creating Doors in Brick Walls," at the Holiday Inn on Broadway in Vancouver. The conference registration includes membership to the AEGTCCBC. More information and registration is online at www.aegtcbbc.ca.

In addition to the annual conference, the AEGTCCBC provides grants to educators working with gifted students, gives support for the formation of local specialist associations, provides members with newsletters, and puts on educational workshops for teachers. Our website has copies of past newsletters, news, links, and brochures about special issues for gifted students.

All teachers are educators of the gifted, talented, and creative children in BC. In this role we often feel isolated, similar to our students. The AEGTCCBC provides teachers with a way to associate with others who share our passion for meeting the very special needs of these amazing learners. Visit our website at www.aegtcbbc.ca for resources and to contact us.

Join our PSA at www.bctf.ca and follow the links.

Shirlene Peters, AEGTCCBC president

BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association, bctf.ca/BCCASA

BCCASA is a branch of the BC Teachers' Federation. The membership of this provincial specialist association is dominantly comprised of chef instructors from various BC secondary schools, however, many members are kitchen assistants and industry supporters. All are committed to student learning and preparing students to enter the trade of commercial cooking post secondary. The association closely follows its standing mission statement: *To enlighten all interested persons in the connections between the Culinary Arts Programs in the secondary schools of British Columbia and the K-12 Educational Plan.*

BCCASA became its own provincial specialist association on October 20, 2000. Since then, the association has hosted various culinary events, student competitions, scholarship opportunities,

Our dedicated members are constantly faced with challenges that come with budget restrictions and healthy school guidelines, but one objective is always at the fore—strive to purchase and promote the use of local agriculture in our schools and provide students with the opportunity to purchase healthy foods at near-cost prices.

and has provided constant support to its members in secondary schools throughout British Columbia.

Aside from running more than 60 commercial culinary classes throughout the province, teaching kitchens directly instruct thousands of students on how to safely and efficiently prepare, cook, serve, and store food in a commercial setting. These culinary arts students will serve thousands of meals a day to the school's students and staff.

Our dedicated members are constantly faced with challenges that come with budget restrictions and healthy school guidelines, but one objective is always at the fore—strive to purchase and promote the use of local agriculture in our schools and provide students with the opportunity to purchase healthy foods at near-cost prices.



BCCASA's most recent partnership with Agriculture in The Classroom has propelled the goal of getting BC agriculture into our schools to a revolutionary level. The partnership created "Take a Bite of BC." Never before has the agriculture industry and the culinary arts classes that touch thousands of young students on a daily basis, worked so closely together. The products that are featured on the menus not only show the culinary benefits of purchasing local to the young cooks and of course the customers who purchase the food, but the partnership provides the

entire school body the opportunity to learn the local and global benefits of purchasing our province's agriculture. The program fits into chef instructors' goals to provide healthy, student-approved meals that meet budget and make menus diverse enough for the students in the teaching kitchen to meet all learning outcomes for the course.

For more information on BCCASA and other teaching kitchen news, visit: <http://web.me.com/Aesgau/BCCASA/Welcome.html>.

Eric MacNeill, BCCASA president

Visit PSA websites at: bctf.ca/PSAwebsites.aspx



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Creating locally developed curriculum

Urban First Nations 12: Expressing your truth



By Wendy Hawkin

One of the consistent findings in education is that Aboriginal kids frequent alternate programs; in fact, across BC, over half (52%) of the students in this type of program have First Nations ancestry (December 2010). Here in Coquitlam district that figure is currently 21%. There is much hypothesizing as to the reasons why, but I'll leave that to the experts. What I'd like to talk about is what we created at our alternate secondary school to connect First Nations culture to urban kids.

Most of the students at CABE need credits to complete their Dogwood, so early on we decided to make whatever we did, something they could receive credit for. Also, we wanted to provide a Grade 12 course, as it is more difficult to offer senior electives in an alternate environment where the student population is in flux. This led us to locally developed curriculum. Being situated within the tri-cities and close to Vancouver, our students are a diverse group. Though we reside on Coast Salish territory, many of our Aboriginal students do not know their ancestry or their stories are patchy. As adolescents they are bombarded with urban culture and lack traditional role

models. Given all of this, we decided to create a course for urban Aboriginal youth.

Myself, and Aboriginal resource teacher Kirk Gummow, created the course with the support of our district staff development coordinator. Weaving traditional teachings with urban experiences, we based our learning outcomes on the Medicine Wheel and called it *Urban First Nations 12: Expressing Your Truth*. Our main objective was for the student to explore/reflect and gain knowledge of self through intellectual engagement with text (mind), physical expression (body), spiritual understanding and expression (spirit), and emotional reflection and expression (emotion). We simplified the learning outcomes to these few:

Students will be able to...

- read, evaluate, and discuss a contemporary novel written by a First Nations author.
- discuss the concept of identity and difference as it relates to the text and to self.
- personally respond to the text; articulate ways in which they do or do not relate to characters, themes, or experiences in the story.
- share personal thoughts and experiences through discussion

and journaling that go beyond the text with respect to the conflict between identity and culture.

- engage in traditional Aboriginal and/or urban contemporary forms of physical pursuits.
- learn and practice relaxation and

We offered experiences such as mask-making, writing hip-hop, cedar paddle-making, carving, painting, and canoeing. We kept the assignments to a minimum, and provided lots of choice and adaptations. Using the current model of project-based learning, the student became the object of their project.

- stress management through physical activity.
- create or perform a work of art, inspired by an Aboriginal experience, that expresses the student's own ideas, thoughts, or feelings through a personal contemporary urban lens.
- explain how art reflects identity.
- create and deliver an oral presentation that reveals knowledge of contemporary First

Nations issues and modes of artistic expression such as music videos, film, text, or spoken word.

- comprehend how understanding and practice of Medicine Wheel teachings can lead to a healthy lifestyle.

We offered experiences such as mask-making, writing hip-hop, cedar paddle-making, carving, painting, and canoeing. We kept the assignments to a minimum, and provided lots of choice and adaptations. Using the current model of project-based learning, the student became the object of their project. These were the assignments:

- Learning Log: mode of choice (reveals personal engagement with learning outcomes)
- Visual Art (show and tell about the process)
- Representation of Personal Journey Through Movement (show and tell about the process)
- Oral Presentation (based on a film or music video of choice. Students must have engaged with this work during the course).

On reflection, we would, of course, change many things as teachers do. We had hoped to make the course self-paced, but realized that the students needed weekly meetings with us—connections are so important, as is the oral component. The one thing we would not change is to offer Sherman Alexie's *True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*—everyone loves that book and can find something in it to relate to. Our department gifted this book to the students.

We started with about 12 interested students and ended four months later by passing three of them. The great thing here was that two of those three students used our course to graduate. Here are their comments:

"This course makes the week more bearable. I love the hands on activities and the art of the course. I love that we get to read and write in journals and when we're all together I feel like (on a good day) we're connected like a family."

"This course taught me appreciation of my culture. It's about taking pride in who I am—what we stand for. We get into new things you might have a talent for...like Curtis Clearsky. I learned a new way of writing—to write as fast as my thoughts can think. And, carving gave me something to be proud of at the end of the day."

Pride, self-esteem, understanding, and honouring our self and where we come from...isn't that what it's really all about?

Wendy Hawkin is the Aboriginal education co-ordinator for Coquitlam School District. More information on Aboriginal resources is available at her blog: <http://hawkin-readsandrambles.blogspot.com>



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Coming out at work

by Glen Hansman and James Chamberlain

"I hope that I will be a symbol of support to the students who might start to realize their feelings are different from many of their peers. For those students who will grow up to be straight, I hope their knowledge that their fun music teacher was gay will shield them somewhat from the still prevalent messages that portray gay people as lesser. They'll have first-hand knowledge that that just isn't true," stated David Butler in describing his coming-out-at-work experience, recounted in "Coming out in elementary school," *Teacher*, May/June 2009.

Since writing his article, Butler has changed schools twice—like many newer teachers who are subject to layoff and surplus situations that effect BC schools in this era of underfunding. Consequently, he has had to start the whole process over again, building up credibility at a new school before opening up a bit more about himself as an individual. As he describes it, "...it's always a question of going back into the closet when changing schools, and having to come out again. I feel like I have to negotiate timing. Your students should know you as a person before you come out, I think; but on the other hand, the more that time goes by, the more they assume you're straight."

"Since coming out to my colleagues there have been several changes on my staff," states Mike Ross who works in a rural school district. "My current administrator understands my ongoing lobbying for a district LGBTQ policy, colleague resources, and Pro-D opportunities for staff that focus on antihomophobia education. As an 'out' teacher to my colleagues, the experience has generally been positive. I've been approached by parents, colleagues, and administrators at all levels within my district for advice and resources. I have also, however, had two hurtful incidents where parents felt it necessary to share laughter and questions about my sexuality, once when I was actually teaching!"

Myriam Dumont describes her experiences being out at school in a poignant manner. "I am lucky in that I have always taught at inner-city schools that have been very progressive when it comes to LGBTQ issues. When I taught Grade 1 two years ago, my students and their parents met my partner very early on in the year. It helped to have students who were from same-sex families, therefore the other families and students in my classroom were not surprised."

"Last year, I was in one of the most queer-positive schools in Vancouver. We have many queer families and we have students who are gender non-conforming and it was for the most part a non-issue. Working in such a safe place makes it so easy for me to relax, feel welcome, and able to focus on my job instead of worrying about whether a co-worker or parent will find out that my partner is a woman. I am completely out at my work and I like it that way. I don't want to have to hide who I am."

All public school teachers in the province are covered by the collective agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF at the provincial level, and between their school district and their local at the local level. Nearly every collective agreement contains a provision that lists sexual orientation in the list of protected characteristics in the agreement's non-discrimination

clause. Article E.20 in the Vernon collective agreement and Article E.19 in the Mission collective agreement are typical examples, both stating that: "There will be no discrimination against any applicant to a position covered by this Agreement or against any member of the bargaining unit on the basis of race, colour, creed, age, physical handicap, sex or *sexual orientation*, religious or political affiliation, national origin, marital status, whether he/she has children, ..." (emphasis mine). Article E.20 in the Vancouver collective agreement goes a step further by also mentioning gender identity, and stating that nothing "...requires the affected employee to actually

All public school teachers in the province are covered by the collective agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF at the provincial level, and between their school district and their local at the local level. Nearly every collective agreement contains a provision that lists sexual orientation in the list of protected characteristics in the agreement's non-discrimination clause.

possess a characteristic that is the basis for discrimination."

Even without such language, the *BC Human Rights Code* protects public school teachers from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation, and gender identity is "read" into the code (though having it specifically listed would be an important step at a future date).

LGBT teachers shouldn't need to file grievances using the non-discrimination clause or file complaints with the *BC Human Rights Tribunal* in order to protect their rights to be "out" at work and truthful about their lives with colleagues and students. In other jurisdictions, including most regions in the United States, LGBT teachers reasonably fear being fired or pushed out of employment as teachers.

Laws in Canada are different, and, as explained above, in BC protections exist in at least two legally binding areas. A growing number of school districts are also adopting standalone antihomophobia policies that, while perhaps not legally enforceable, also give a stamp of approval from school districts as employers for LGBT staff to be out at work. For example, the Vancouver school district's policy states that: "Employees who are out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transitioning to another gender will be given the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment." Likewise, the Southeast Kootenay school district's policy declares that: "The board will provide an environment for all members of the school community to work and learn, free from fear, discrimination, and harassment, while also promoting proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that sexual minority students, employees, and families are welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life, and are treated with respect and dignity."

If you have a question about your collective agreement's non-discrimination clause, contact your local office. Contact information can be found at bctf.ca/contacts. cfm?page=presidents. You can also

find a list of school districts with stand-alone antihomophobia policies at bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=17994.

Tips

1. Know your rights. Be familiar with what your collective agreement says, and know who to contact in your local if there is a problem. You can't be denied a teaching position because of your sexual orientation, and you can't be pushed out of your job because you're open about your sexual orientation. That doesn't mean there won't be bumps in the road, but knowing your rights is important, and knowing whom you can call for help is important too.
2. Be confident. It's 2011, and you're not asking anything more than what everyone else has. Straight teachers regularly talk about their families and loved ones at school. There's no reason why LGBT-identifying teachers shouldn't be able to as well. You are not responsible for other people's prejudice or discomfort, nor should you have to hide because of it. Your employer must maintain a discrimination-free workplace.
3. Find an ally in your workplace; or, make sure you have someone in your life you can compare notes with. Allies are good—particularly ones at work. But in situations where you might be new to a school, an ally might not necessarily be readily apparent, so it's important to have someone in your circle of friends outside of work with whom you can discuss these matters.
4. As an ally, support others. Speak out positively for change within the school system on all forms of discrimination.
5. For resources to be a change-maker, become a member of Pride Education Network. This is a group of LGBT and allied teachers, parents and post-secondary students who work to combat homophobia and transphobia in BC schools. They can be contacted at www.pridenet.ca. You can also find them on Facebook.

Glen Hansman is BCTF second vice-president and James Chamberlain is assistant director, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division.

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Shortfalls in seven Lower Mainland school districts

By Noel Herron

Vancouver is just one of seven Lower Mainland school districts that experienced sharp and ongoing budget crunches this year. The following seven districts ranked by enrolment, including Vancouver, all faced substantial shortfalls.

Surrey

Shortfall: \$12.3 million on estimated \$555 million budget
Impact: Drawing on snow removal funds to bridge funding gap this year; cutting board staff; extending spring break from one to two weeks; dropping of daytime elementary school custodians; 25% cut in elementary school counsellors; loss of estimated 43 FTE positions this year; over past decade many key programs (ESL and programs for kids with severe learning disabilities) sharply cut or completely eliminated.

Vancouver

Shortfall: \$17.23 million on \$500 million
Impact: Elimination of the three junior Kindergarten programs for four-year-old inner-city kids (the only ones of their kind in BC); dropping of universal hot-lunch program in five city schools; potential school closures of 12 elementary schools; layoff of almost all board consultants, secretarial positions (board and school-based); layoff of entire school board painting department; shrinking of original six city-wide board administrative areas to two areas; increase in fees to daycare and before- and after-school groups; loss of estimated 97.3 FTE positions; all aspects of K-12 instructional programs adversely affected.

Coquitlam

Shortfall: \$4.1 million on \$258 million budget
Impact: Drawing on benefit-plan contingency fund; extending spring break from one to two weeks; cutting back on school maintenance such as grass cutting and painting; loss of 15.9 FTE positions (mostly specialists positions).



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Burnaby

Shortfall: \$5.2 million on a \$200 million budget
Impact: Reducing supply and service spending; increasing average class size from 25.4 to 25.8 students; cutting staff (number not finalized).

Richmond

Shortfall: \$5.9 million on an \$18 million budget
Impact: Cutting early morning custodial staff, learning resource teachers and educational assistants; loss of estimated 60 FTE positions, which will impact on programs at all levels; five years ago this district produced a comprehensive report on the dramatic decline in ESL support and services.

New Westminster

Shortfall: \$630,000 on a \$56 million budget
Impact: Sharp cuts to programs and staff made in previous years.

North Vancouver

Shortfall: \$6.5 million; on a \$137 million budget
Impact: Loss of 30 to 50 FTE positions; all aspects of instructional programs affected; impact of school closures an ongoing issue.

Conclusion: Peer behind the numbers in the above list and you will see one of this country's finest public school systems in deep distress. The cumulative impact of volatile funding over nine years is biting and biting deeply, with parents being asked to make up shortfalls in many areas. Only one Lower Mainland school district—West Vancouver—does not have a sizeable shortfall. Since 2001, over 2,000 teachers across the province, particularly in speciality areas—learning assistance, ESL, special needs/special education—have been cut. With this and other cut-backs we see an increase in class size, the loss of valuable education programs, schools that are less clean, more neighbourhood school closures, less classroom supplies and resources and the further short-changing of students through an abbreviated school year with extended spring breaks (Surrey, Vancouver, Coquitlam). Professional development programs and services in almost all districts have been sharply reduced over the past decade. The above list is preliminary for this year but the goal of providing a quality public education system for every child is rapidly diminishing.

Noel Herron is a former Vancouver principal and school trustee.

Plotting the co-ordinates: Navigating educational change for the 21st century

A review of a report by the American Youth Policy Forum



By Louise Gonsalvez

Although the report, *Restoring the Balance Between Academics and Civic Engagement*, is a somewhat outdated (2005) American publication, it offers considerable insights into new waves of thought being introduced as 21st century education. According to author Bruce Boston (2005):

"As a new century unfolds, we find a disturbing imbalance in the mission of public education. America's recent preoccupation with reshaping "academics" and raising academic performance has all but overpowered a task of equally vital importance: Educating our young people to become engaged members of their communities, not just as wage earners and taxpayers, but as citizens—people who participate in the civic life of their communities." (p.7)

Boston also notes that, "The 'Telling Evidence' offered by the report points to an undercurrent of apathy eroding civic participation among the youth, beginning with voting patterns and extending to a tale of disturbing disengagement from civic and political institutions." (p.3). Given many North American mandates to prioritize reading, writing, and mathematical performance standards (the GPS co-ordinates for much current educational policy in North America) and implement personalized learning to combat instructionalism (the teacher hogging teaching time); civic education has been marginalized.

Yet, research studies indicate that civic education contributes substantially to student learning and school culture. "A 2003 report from the National Conference of State Legislatures, *Citizenship: A Challenge for All Generations*, suggests that civics education is an 'antidote to indifference'" (p. 19). A study conducted by the NCSL, Niemi, and Judd found that students engaged in civic education were more likely to "see themselves as responsible for improving society," saw voting as a necessary component of good citizenship, and were "two to three times more likely to vote" (Boston, 2005, p. 19). A study of service learning (analyzing and participating in community issues) found that such civic engagement increased "academic performance, student citizenship, and the reduction of 'at risk' behaviours" (p. 21). Results of a Michigan study found the following academic results:

- Grades 7–12 became more "cognitively engaged in language arts."
- Grades 2–5 became more cognitively engaged in their work

"e.g., paying attention to homework, concentration on learning, and classroom effort."

- Grade 6 students performed better on the "Terra Nova test of language arts and science."

The results of a study in Hawaii found the following student citizenship results:

- "...participants had statistically significant positive outcomes in their feelings of contribution to school and community, had feelings of being valued by the community, understood issues affecting the well-being of the community, and took actions to make changes."

- "...compared to their peers (not in the project), they were significantly more likely to think school was stimulating."

Most interestingly, critical (e.g., critical thinking) civic engagement through service learning contributed to the reduction of risk behaviours.

- "Students were less likely to be referred to the school office for disciplinary measures."
- Middle year students showed "reduced levels of alienation and behavioural problem."
- Middle year students were "less likely to engage in unprotected sex or violent behaviour."
- Middle and high school students were "less likely to engage in behaviours that lead to pregnancy or arrest." (p.21)

Engaging students in service learning (a form of community service that requires intellectual inquiry) positively affects student performance in school and the community. It gives students a sense of belonging, a belief that they can effect change, and contributes to students' participation in society rather than withdrawal from it.

A Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll revealed that "...over the prior 32 years, Americans believed 'preparing young people to become responsible citizens' to be the number one purpose of the nation's schools" (Boston, 2005, p. 15). Boston states, "We need to reinvigorate the notion of 'seedbed of democracy' as fundamental to what schools do, both in terms of curricula they impart and the results we expect...we need to reorient the educational experience so it equips and motivates young people to participate knowledgeably, productively, and energetically in their communities" (p.15). Reading, writing, math, sciences, and personalized instruction are significant but aligning educational purpose onto a freeway ramp (standardized methods, standardized testing, and achievement

supervisors) is not going to get students to the free market platform that this is aimed at, nor advance society in anyway—and it surely won't build a solid foundation to create a healthy, productive, democratic society.

Twenty-first century education policymakers should not abandon the "civic mission" of schools. We don't need directors and principles of achievement, nor do we need the type of personalized learning that is being promoted (an individualized road trip rather than a collective voyage of learning). If anything, we could benefit from civic facilitators, who work with schools and communities to build capacity. More importantly we need a 21st century education that reclaims a "broader purpose" and "civic mission" for education. We must move beyond competitive advantage and individualism as the driving force behind educational change. "If we hope to cultivate a healthy next generation of citizens, we must broaden our concept of public education to embrace civic learning and engagement, to think more comprehensively about our children's development as thinkers, problem-solvers, and responsible human beings, prepared to step into the role" of being a citizen.

Active citizenship provides a firm axis for a paradigm shift in education and implementation is plausible: science teachers would have more time with students to do project learning (e.g., wetlands, forestry, and conservation projects), language arts teachers to engage their students more in social issues (e.g., through journalism, qualitative research, and the arts), and math teachers could engage students in more hands on projects (e.g., financial management, quantitative research, construction projects). Civic literacy should be realized as an academic discipline and a pedagogical compass. Boston (2005) states:

"If the overall objective of schooling is to maintain a rigorous academic stance while simultaneously fostering civic literacy and civic engagement that focuses on real problems, then making these academic connections deliberate is among the most powerful ways to leverage well-rounded learning." (p. 23)

He writes a strong argument to support his claim and offers an implementation plan that consists of seven propositions which are clearly articulated. Many 21st century education policymakers need to reorient their GPS co-ordinates and reset their priorities.

Louise Gonsalvez teaches at Sparwood Secondary School, Sparwood.



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C'est le début d'un temps nouveau...

By Marie-Claude Tremblay

Titre d'une chanson de Renée Claude et la chanson thème de mon bal de finissants, il y a longtemps de cela.

Pour vous, c'est le début d'une autre année scolaire dans une nouvelle école, nouvelle classe, nouveau niveau, nouveau cours... C'est peut-être votre première rentrée comme enseignant, alors de la part de tous vos collègues de la province, bienvenue à notre grande famille.

Pour nous tous, cette rentrée s'annonce différente à cause de la Phase 1 de notre grève. Pas de réunions, pas d'activités administratives, pas de rapports... la liste est longue et ne pas avoir besoin de faire ces choses, nous permettra de nous concentrer sur la tâche qui nous motive le plus : enseigner.

Ici au Bureau des services et programmes en français, Moh Chelali a fini son mandat et se lance dans une nouvelle voie de sa carrière. Il a été remplacé par moi, Marie-Claude Tremblay, du Conseil scolaire de Surrey et enseignante depuis 1983. Notre secrétaire, Cecilia, est en congé et sera remplacée par Dawn, ce qui explique la nouvelle voix qui répond à vos appels.

Moh et moi aimerions remercier les enseignantes qui ont complété le Facilitators' Institute Training à Kamloops cet été. Elles sont animatrices des ateliers sur l'oral en salle de classe, sur l'intégration de la culture en salle de classe, le Diplôme d'études en langue française et le Cadre européen. La Fédération offre une grande variété d'ateliers et vous trouverez la liste avec une description ci-dessous.

Si vous êtes à la recherche d'occasions pour votre développement professionnelle, il y a les congrès suivants : l'Association provinciale des professeurs de l'immersion et du programme francophone (APPIPC) à Richmond en octobre, l'Association canadienne des professeurs d'immersion (ACPI) à Victoria au début novembre et, pour les enseignants de français langue seconde, le BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) aussi en octobre.

N'oubliez pas de vous inscrire au portail pour membre de la FECB (BCTF) en visitant le site de la Fédération. Ouvrez la page maison et cliquez sur la petite boîte grise en haut à gauche qui dit For BCTF members only. Vous aurez accès aux nouvelles les plus récentes et à plein d'informations qui ne seront pas dans les médias.

Alors, je termine en vous souhaitant une bonne année scolaire!

1. Le dépistage des problèmes d'apprentissage: Vous aurez la possibilité de discuter les caractéristiques observées chez les élèves en difficulté d'apprentissage tout en examinant les stratégies et les types d'intervention qui répondent à leurs besoins. Vous établirez les particularités entre l'adaptation et la modification de programmes. Des modèles de plans d'apprentissage personnalisé vous seront présentés.

2. Éducation planétaire tant dans la classe qu'en dehors: Venez explorer des façons d'intégrer et d'infuser une perspective mondiale à tout niveau d'études et dans tout domaine du programme. Vous découvrirez des rapports et des possibilités d'enrôler les élèves dans l'action visant au changement. La discussion portera aussi sur les possibilités de mettre en œuvre vos idées novatrices et de les soumettre

au site web bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6214.

3. Éducation planétaire pour un développement durable: Cet atelier se concentre sur le monde que nous souhaitons pour les futures générations. Diverses possibilités seront explorées ainsi que les actions à entreprendre pour faciliter le changement dans les connaissances, les valeurs, les comportements et les styles de vie pour un développement durable de la démocratie, de la sécurité humaine et de la paix dans les différents pays.

Les participants discuteront des thèmes économiques ou environnementaux pertinent au curriculum de notre province. On partagera des activités à entreprendre avec des élèves du primaire et/ou du secondaire pour que ceux-ci soient activement impliqués.

4. Classroom activities for Core French teachers: Cet atelier permettra aux enseignants de Core French de se familiariser avec des stratégies qui permettent de répondre aux résultats d'apprentissage des ERI. L'atelier se donne en anglais.

5. Enseigner l'oral en salle de classe: Cet atelier offre des stratégies et des activités pour animer les classes d'immersion et les amener à utiliser le français le plus souvent possible à l'école et entre eux.

6. La lecture, ça me parle: Cet atelier permettra de motiver les élèves à lire tout en offrant des stratégies sur le choix de petits bouts de bonne littérature et montrer à quel point cela peut être stimulant, et souvent amusant.

7. Évaluation au service de l'apprentissage: Cet atelier fait un état des lieux des recherches montrant que faire plus d'évaluations formative en classe peut avoir des effets notables sur l'apprentissage et la réussite des élèves et aider finalement le plus les élèves qui réussissent le moins. L'atelier passe en revue les recherches, clarifie les différences entre l'évaluation formative pour

l'apprentissage et l'évaluation sommative de l'apprentissage. Il fournit l'opportunité aux participants de discuter la mise en application dans leurs salles de classe en fonction des niveaux et des matières enseignés. Il est demandé aux participants d'apporter les travaux d'élèves pour pratiquer la méthode d'un rendu descriptif.

8. Intégrer la culture en salle de classe: Venez discuter de la culture dans votre contexte scolaire et découvrir quelques stratégies pour l'infuser dans le quotidien de vos élèves.

9. Le climat dans l'école: Cet atelier offre des stratégies pour améliorer le climat dans l'école ainsi que les relations entre collègues afin de promouvoir le travail d'équipe et la collaboration.

10. La gestion de classe: Cet atelier montrera comment créer un environnement propice à l'apprentissage tout en instaurant une gestion appropriée et efficace des troubles de comportement en salle de classe.

11. Rompre le silence: parler de la question gay et lesbienne dans les

écoles: Parlons-en! Entamer le dialogue dans vos écoles ou conseils scolaires sur les effets blessants et néfastes de l'homophobie. Examiner les mythes et stéréotypes, les liens d'oppressions et comprendre comment vous pouvez rendre votre école plus sûre et plus inclusive. Réaliser comment l'homophobie touche tous les élèves dans la salle de classe.

12. Du silence à l'action: Pour contribuer à un climat sûr et accueillant à l'école pour TOUS: Vous vous êtes parfois senti débordé par les insultes homophobes autour de vous ou vous avez appréhendé aborder le sujet de l'homosexualité dans votre classe? Que faire si un élève veut s'ouvrir à vous de son homosexualité? Cet atelier va répondre à ces questions et à d'autres que beaucoup d'enseignants du secondaire se posent quand ils essayent d'évoquer les questions LGBTQ (Acronyme faisant référence aux gays, lesbiennes, bisexuels, transgenres et à ceux qui sont dans le doute ou queers). Le contenu peut être adapté aux besoins des participants et inclure la manière d'intégrer ce

sujet au curriculum, au cours de justice sociale des 12ème année, aux clubs d'alliance gays et hétéros et à l'organisation d'événements au niveau de l'école. Cet atelier aide les enseignants à tenir un rôle de modèle positif et d'alliés afin de créer dans l'école un environnement sûr et accueillant pour tous. 13. L'histoire et culture des Premières Nations et la déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones: Cet atelier donne une vue d'ensemble des peuples des Premières Nations en CB. Les participants en retirent une compréhension accrue de comment l'histoire a affecté l'éducation des enfants des Premières Nations. L'accent est également mis sur la déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones. Les idées que vous aller en retirer vont affecter de manière positive l'apprenant des Premières Nations.

Marie-Claude Tremblay, Responsable des programmes et services en française, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division.

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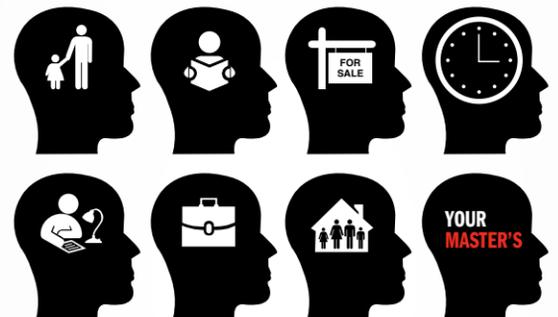
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PENSION QUESTIONS? Ask Arnie – now retired and available for expert, personal, one-to-one consultation including pension estimates, options, bridge, CPP/OAS, and pension splitting. Reasonable rates. Call Arnie Lambert at 604-354-5624 or e-mail arnielambert@shaw.ca

FRENCH FIELD TRIPS. Contact Sandy, Burns Bog Conservation Society, 604-572-0373.

FIELD TRIPS. K-12 curriculum based. Burns Bog Conservation Society, 604-572-0373.

EDUTALKS presents: Marianne Kaplan, creator of the award-winning film, *The Boy Inside* will discuss the challenges faced by her son, Adam, who has Asperger's Syndrome. Adam, now 19, will also be speaking. This workshop is relevant for anyone who works with students requiring support with socialization. Friday, October 21 (provincial Pro-D day), at Hycroft, 1489 McRae Avenue, Vancouver. Cost \$75. Register at www.edutalksseminars.com

TEACHING POSITIONS IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS through the 24th annual Teachers' Overseas Recruiting Fair at Queen's University, January 27-29, 2012. Hundreds of K-12 positions in dozens of countries. Most contracts for 2 years. Pre-registration required. <http://educ.queensu.ca/careers>

FOR PEAT'S SAKE. A classroom study on Burns Bog and other peatlands. K-7 curriculum based. 206 pages, \$59.95 plus HST. Special rate for multiple copies. Burns Bog Conservation Society, 604-572-0373.

TECH reTREAT. Two all-day workshops: Integration of iPods, iPads, & Cameras or Notebook 10 Level 1 Training. October 21, 2011, Parksville, BC. Information or registration at www.westviewlearning.ca

YMCA CAMP ELPHINSTONE OUT-DOOR CENTRE. Canoeing, kayaking, ropes, team building and much more! "The best camp experience I've had!" Bayview School. www.vanymca.org, 604-886-2025.

SCHOOL TATOOS 1,000 tattoos with your school's logo \$149. Visit www.schooltattoos.ca, E-mail info@schooltattoos.ca or call 613-567-2636.

Resources

Rallying together for resources

The ERAC Advantage? At the May 2011 PSA Council meeting in Vancouver, participants learned all about the ERAC Advantage after they were provided a presentation from ERAC's Maryjane Yusyp. Yusyp, a former teacher, is currently ERAC's professional learning and training project manager.

ERAC (Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium) works together with its members, BC public school districts and independent schools, to provide valued services in evaluation, licensing and acquisition of educational and operational learning resources for K-12.

Many PSA delegates had never heard of ERAC and were unaware of the wide range of products and services available to them. Without the knowledge of ERAC and the services they provide, many educators are losing out on great resource advantages.

Options like accessing ERAC's On-line Database Bundle are of great value, especially for those districts that have limited budgets for resources. That's where ERAC membership provides enormous benefits.

Another important service through ERAC is resource evaluations. Evaluations of novels, educational software, video, print, etc., provide benefits by delivering full product reviews with detailed information and evaluation summaries. Evaluations are done by BC teachers and the BCTF appoint the people needed for ERAC evaluations. This is done through a nomination of evaluators by the BCTF through an ERAC call-out once every three years.

New products are always being added to the collection as well as to the online database bundle. Recently, new additions to the bundle included *Global Issues* and *Canadian Points of View*. To update members of this information, ERAC sends e-mails to the school districts, puts updates on the ERAC home page, and provide a recap through their monthly newsletter called *ERAC Update*.

"PSA delegates tried out ERAC's new consolidated on-line resource collection through various searches and they also got to see the new resources added to our database bundle," said Yusyp.

By going to ERAC's website (www.bcerac.ca), teachers can access resources and these can also be accessed by both students and teachers through LearnNowBC. A common access point is created from both school and home by streamlining students' access to ERAC resources. This partnership with LearnNowBC offers access to numerous resources including ERAC's Online Database Bundle (EBSCO, GALE, World Book, Encyclopedia of BC, etc.), Media Awareness Network's "Passport to the Internet," "My World," CBC News in Review, and so much more. Having access to ERAC resources from school or home allows for a lot more flexibility and ease of access.

For more information about ERAC, what they do and what resources are available, go to their new website at www.bcerac.ca. To sign up for the ERAC Update newsletter, go to the ERAC website and click on the right hand "ERAC Newsletter" box and enter in your e-mail information.

Ryan's Well Foundation

The foundation has relevant, user-friendly teacher and student resources to support various curriculum areas. Online resources are available for students of all ages on topics related to water, community development, environmental sustainability, developing youth leadership, and fundraising. Our Youth in Action program has online resources that bring attention to local, national and international issues related to water, sanitation and activism. A new "School Challenge" is created each year with resources and guidance provided. The school challenge is a unique opportunity for individual students, classrooms and schools to fundraise for a specific water and sanitation project while seeing first-hand the construction and completion of a specific project.

The book, *Ryan and Jimmy and the Well in Africa that Brought Them Together* is available with accompanying lessons as well as a Ryan's Well DVD and Skype opportunities with staff members from Ryan's Well. The website also has printable downloads as well as links to video clips that support student activism initiatives.

Ryan Hreljac was a seven-year-old student when he started to learn about water issues and decided to

fund raise to build a well for a small community in Uganda. Since then, The Ryan's Well Foundation has helped build over 600 wells and 820 latrines bringing safe water and improved sanitation to over 723,300 people. Ryan is a very positive role model for students to learn about character traits such as empathy, responsibility, perseverance, attitude, duty and compassion. He has a clear message—that every person on the planet deserves clean water, and that everyone can help make a difference.

Check out ryanswell.ca or contact Elisabeth Rubli, Education Coordinator at 613-258-6832 or Elisabeth@ryanswell.ca for more information.

West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)'s rights-based resources

This past August, International Youth Day was celebrated in countries all over the world, commemorating the end of the International Year of Youth. The United Nations General Assembly's theme for this year was "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding;" a theme West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) endeavours to keep alive through online youth resources and training workshops.

These forums provide a starting point for conversations about human rights and freedoms: what they are, why they exist, and how they are talked about and used by people, organizations, and governments around the world.

West Coast LEAF launched its youth website (www.youth.westcoastleaf.org) as a way for young people to learn about case law that establishes equal rights in Canada. The website and West Coast LEAF's Youth Facebook group allow students to follow equality rights work and become part of the dialogue about human rights in Canada.

The Equality Rights Timeline featured in the youth website is an interactive learning device that graphically traces major legal precedents that enshrine equal civil, political, reproductive, and economic rights in Canada.

The youth website covers gender rights in detail, but it does not fail to address racial equality, gay rights, workers rights, immigrant rights, and disability rights. For example, the website includes detailed

information on workplace rights in BC. It references key laws such as the *BC Human Rights Code* and the *Employment Standards Act* and highlights the importance of power dynamics and sexual harassment awareness in the workplace. Expanding on a person's right to say "no means no" and to refuse to engage in sexual activities, the website discusses gender stereotypes and outlines issues of consent and bullying in high school friendly language.

The website challenges and expands ideas about law and civic responsibility. The cases highlight individuals who were not afraid to challenge their place in society and embrace their own ideas of true equality. The more detailed legal information in the body of the website—on federal and BC provincial government, court and tribunal systems, and major Canadian written law—highlights one's freedoms and duties under the law, such as the fundamental responsibility to respect the dignity and equal rights of peers.

As a teaching tool, the website dovetails with the Law 12 curriculum.

For further information about the youth website and to book a youth training workshop contact Deanna Ogle at education@westcoastleaf.org.

Radio Labour

After a short break RadioLabour is back on air with a special report on the strike by 45,000 workers at the giant telecommunications giant Verizon in the United States. This strike will be an historic defining moment for the American labour movement. Also reports on: A Kazakhstan union lawyer jailed for six years. The dismissal of leaders of the old federation of labour in Egypt. And a union demonstration being planned in Malawi despite 19 deaths in a previous protest.

RadioLabour is the international labour movement's international radio service. It broadcasts daily (Monday to Friday). Its programs are available on the RadioLabour website (www.radiolabour.net), Facebook, iTunes, LabourStart, union websites and community radio stations.

With our five-minute daily news program you can stay up-to-date on the most significant international labour news stories and support labour struggles all around the world. – Marc Belanger



- Monthly Workshops in Vancouver and Victoria
- Online Webinars
- Monthly Educational Newsletters
- One on One Coaching
- Access to Resources

Empowering youth aged 15-24 with physical disabilities during their transition to adulthood.
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A complimentary educational program focused on people with physical disabilities to increase awareness and inclusivity.



- School Resource Guide
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MuscleFactsWest@muscle.ca
1-800-366-8166 ext 107
Request a presentation or resource:
www.muscle.ca/western-canada/services/musclefacts.html

Exchange Teaching

Are you seeking a unique career opportunity? Are you a permanent teacher with 5 or more years teaching experience?

Consider exchanging your job with an overseas or Canadian teacher in order to:

- immerse yourself in a different education system.
- develop yourself professionally by exchanging ideas and knowledge.
- renew your professional enthusiasm.
- broaden personal experiences by travelling, working, and living in a different community and culture.

Orientation meeting Saturday, October 15, 2011, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cloverdale Learning Centre 5741-176 Street Surrey, BC

Carol Wilkins, from the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, will be presenting information about exchange opportunities.

Teachers currently here on exchange will be attending to answer questions specific to their country.

To register, contact: **Kulwant Toor, president, BCETA toor_k@sd36.bc.ca or 604-574-4141**

For further information, guidelines, and an application form, visit www.ceef.ca

Canadian Education Exchange Foundation

PD calendar

SEPTEMBER 2011

23 Abbotsford. 'Start UP your class' for early career teachers, TTOCs, and teacher candidates. This workshop will help you successfully start and manage your classroom by building good routines and beginning to plan the year. Each participant will receive a 33-page booklet, *The First Week of School*, with lesson descriptions, checklists, and suggestions of what to do in your new school. This workshop also is the introduction to PITA's Start UP and Build UP! Program for early career teachers. For details, go to www.pita.ca or contact Ray Myrtle, president@pita.ca.

28 Port Moody. "A Season of Non-Violence." Facilitator: Pummy Kaur, author of *A Season of Non-Violence, 64 Days and 64 Ways*. Moody Elementary School, 2717 St. Johns Street, Port Moody. Refreshments: 3:30 p.m.; presentation: 4:00-6:00 p.m. See www.pagebc.ca for conference program and more information.

OCTOBER 2011

4 Surrey. "Inside the Human Drama of Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century: A theatre for living, sill share workshop for teachers and community members." Facilitator: Adam Ward, Rhizome Theatre, Bellingham, WA. Location: Fraser Heights Secondary School, 16060-108th Avenue, Surrey. Refreshments: 3:30 p.m.; presentation: 4:00-7:00 p.m. See www.pagebc.ca for conference program and more information.

20-21 Vancouver. BCSCA (British Columbia School Counsellors' Association) "Youth In Mind: Child and Youth Mental Health." Keynote speaker is Dr. Bill MacEwan, founder of Early Psychosis Intervention initiative; "He is a psychiatrist with a difference—he doesn't wait for his patients to come to him"—he goes to them in the Downtown East Side of Vancouver. Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites in beautiful English Bay. www.bcscaconference.ca/index.php.

20-21 Victoria, BC. THESA (Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association) Annual fall conference "Making A Splash" by building sustainable practices, and advocating for our profession (October 20/wine and cheese, October 21/conference). Keynote speaker Don Genova. Location: John Stubbs Middle School (301 Zealous Crescent, Victoria, BC V9C 1H6). Contact information at www.thesaconference.ca/ or contact tsilvonen@sd62.bc.ca.

20-22 New Westminster (campus), BC. PE-BC PSA (Physical Education BC) 25th Annual Quality Daily Physical Education Conference. Join us for a very special celebration—this is the 25th conference hosted by Douglas College, the 50th birthday of PE BC, and the unveiling of the History of PE in BC project (in progress). Check out www.douglas.bc.ca/qdpe for more information. Contact Debbie Keel, PE BC president, dkeel@shaw.ca or David Munro, conference chair, munrod@douglas.bc.ca.

20-22 Richmond, BC. BCMEA (BC Music Educators' Association) Annual Professional Development Conference "Forte 2011" with Honour Ensembles Concerts on October 21 and 22, and all-members reception on October 20. River Rock Casino Resort. Info: www.bcmeaconference.com.

20-22 Richmond. APPIPC (Association provinciale des professeurs d'immersion et du programme francophone) Annual Conference "L'APPIPC célèbre en grand ses 25 ans!". Executive Airport Plaza. Contact information at: <http://congresappipc.ca>.

21 Burnaby. BCAMT (BC Association of Mathematics Teachers) Annual fall conference "21st Century Learning: Moving Forward in Mathematics," Cariboo Hill Secondary School. Conference chair: BrynM.Williams@sd41.bc.ca. Website: www.bcamt.ca.

21 Burnaby. BCATML (British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages) Annual Fall Conference, "Steps to the Future." Keynote: Etienne! Delta Burnaby Hotel and Conference Center. www.bcatml.org.

21 Fort Langley. AEA (Aboriginal Education Association) "Wellness and Our Environment." Keynote speaker: Dr. Jan Hare, Associate Dean of Indigenous Education, UBC. Fabulous workshops including, protocol and ceremony, mask making, rattles, blankets, anti-racism, cedar pouches, enhancement agreements, environmental learning and experience framework and more. Langley Elementary, 8877 Bartlett Street, Fort Langley. For more information, go to Aboriginaled.blogspot.com, or contact Gail Stromquist at 604-888-4819, ext. 232 or gjstrom@hotmail.com.

21 Kamloops. BCTEA (British Columbia Technology Education Association) Annual fall conference "TRU'ly Different; Approaches to Trades and Technology at Secondary and Post-secondary Levels," School of Trades and Technology at Thompson Rivers University. Chairperson: Mike Howard 250-837-3086, mhoward@telus.net.

21 Port Coquitlam. CUEBC (Computer Using Educators of British Columbia) and BCEDLPSA (BC Educators for Distributed Learning PSA) Annual co-sponsored fall conference "Embracing Emerging Technology." Keynote: David Warlick, and over 40 technology focused sessions. Location: Terry Fox Secondary School. Contact information at: CUEBC.CA or bcedl.ca.

21 Richmond. BCPTA (BC Primary Teachers' Association) Annual Primary Leadership Conference at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel. New one-day program "Play and Learning." Keynote speaker—Gary Anaka: "How Play Engages the Student Brain." Three breakout sessions with a choice of workshops across the curriculum: How to and what works in full-day K/K-1/Grades 1-3/French Immersion; Toolkit for teachers new to teaching Primary; and more. For a list of widely acclaimed speakers and BC classroom teachers as presenters see the BCPTA website: www.bcpta.ca. Fees: BCTF Members \$165; Students/TTOCs/Retirees \$135; Non-BCTF registrants \$195. Accommodation: BCPTA conference rates to stay at the Sheraton Hotel in Richmond is \$129/night. Online registration in June: www.bcpta.ca. BCPTA registrar: Joy Silver at odetojoy@telus.net.

21 Richmond, BC. BCBEA (British Columbia Business Education Association) Annual fall conference, "Achieving Financial Success" for ALL teachers at ALL teaching levels in ALL teaching areas on topics such as investing, mortgages, credit counselling, budgeting, pensions, wills and estate planning, and identity theft protection from bankers, investment counsellors, and Better Business Bureau. Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Richmond Campus. Contact information: Ken Kuhn at KensKuhn@gmail.com or Pat Douglas at pdouglas@vsb.bc.ca.

21 Surrey. LATA (Learning Assistance Teachers' Association) Annual fall conference "Dealing with Anxiety Disorders in School Settings" with Dr. Lynn Miller. Location: North Surrey Secondary School. For more information, please contact Alan Peterson, lataconference@hotmail.com.

21 Surrey. PAGE (BC Teachers for Peace and Global Education) "Education Not Indoctrination: A Practical Approach to Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century." Key presentation: Adam Ward, Rhizome Theatre, "An Intergenerational Theatre for Living Workshop: Exploring practical approaches to teaching and learning in the 21st century." A fun eye-opening, fast-paced journey, inside the human drama of educational reform. Fraser Heights Secondary, 16060-108th Avenue, Surrey, BC. 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. PAGE PSA AGM 2:45-4:00 p.m., Keynote Speaker, Brigitte DePape, parliamentary page who gained national attention with her "Stop Harper" sign. For further information about the PAGE AGM and Conference go to www.pagebc.ca.

21 Vancouver. ESL PSA (English As A Second Language Provincial Specialist Association) Annual fall conference: "Teaching the Multilingual Brain," Keynote speaker, Jim Cummins. All day workshops at Eric Hamber Secondary, 5025 Willow Street, Vancouver, BC V5Z 3S1. Contact information: jrobson@vsb.bc.ca or www.bctf.ca/eslpsa

21 Vancouver. AEGTCBC (Association of Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children of British Columbia), "Gifted Ed 2011" Annual conference presents Tamara Fisher, K-12 gifted education specialist for Polson school district in Montana speaking on "Intelligent Life in the Classroom: Smart Kids and Their Teachers," which will include the topics "creating doors in brick walls and survival strategies for teachers and kids." Fisher will also touch on advocacy and starting a gifted program. Location: Holiday Inn, 711 West Broadway, Vancouver. Information and registration at www.aegtcbc.ca.

21 Vancouver. BCDEA (BC Dance Educators' Association) "Rhythmic Diversity! Building Bridges Through Dance." Keynote speaker—Kim Meredith. Location: Gladstone Secondary School, 4105 Gladstone Street, Vancouver. Online registration at: www.bctf.ca/bcdea. For more information, contact Kim Wolski at kwolski@sd35.bc.ca or Whitney Deacon at wdeacon@sd38.bc.ca.

21-22 Burnaby. BCTLA (BC Teacher-Librarians' Association) Annual fall conference "Reaching Out." Featuring keynote Doug Johnson (Director of Media and Technology for the Mankato Area Public Schools, Minnesota), a

Thurs. night social event, vendor displays, and over 50 sessions on inquiry, technology, media, library, authors, and more. Burnaby Mountain Secondary. For more information, visit <http://sites.google.com/site/btla2011/>

21-22 Delta. PITA (Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association) Annual fall conference "Teaching Outside of the Box." Informative sessions cover all subject areas and intermediate grades. North Delta Secondary School, 11447 82nd Avenue, Delta. Full information at www.pita.ca.

21-22 Richmond. BCScTA (British Columbia Science Teachers' Association) "Catalyst 2011 Conference." Keynotes: Phil Nuytten (Nuytco Research) and Sandy Eix (Science World). Wide selection of K-12 science presentations and workshops. Exhibit Hall. Specific Elementary Science Strand. Cambie Secondary School, Richmond, BC. More Information at: www.bcscta.ca.

21-22 Vancouver. ABCDE (Association of British Columbia Drama Educators) Annual fall conference "A Stage in Your Life." The School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University, SFU at Woodward's 149 West Hastings. For more information, contact ccaasley@croftonhouse.ca or ghamilton@sd35.bc.ca.

NOVEMBER 2011

24-26 Vancouver. The 17th Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education. Westin Bayshore Hotel. Watch for call for workshops and registration details at www.fnesc.ca/conferences.

JANUARY 2012

19-20 Vancouver. BCAEA (BC Alternate Education Association) Annual "Challenge and Change" conference. Keynote: Gabor Mate on *The Hungry Ghost: A Biopsychosocial Perspective on Addiction, from Heroin to Workaholism*. Sheraton Wall Centre, 1088 Burrard Street, Vancouver. For more information, go to www.bctf.ca/bcaea/conference.html or contact DJ Pauls at djpauls@shaw.ca or 604-859-3015.

FEBRUARY 2012

1-4 Vancouver. The Early Years Conference 2012: Development of Children's Mental Health: How do we become who we are? This conference will stimulate dialogue, reflection, a deeper understanding of a child's total development as rooted in their earliest relationships, and may revolutionize our approaches and practices with young children, their families, and their communities. The conference aims to understand global development of children (birth to six years), and how it progresses through their early relationships and experiences, promote focused dialogue among individuals and groups who support early child development and learning, showcase exemplary approaches that support healthy early childhood social emotional development, learn how to apply the understanding of child development to practice and development strategies. For further information please visit our website www.interprofessional.ubc.ca, or contact us at ipcde2@interchange.ubc.ca or 604-827-3112.

MARCH 2012

1-2 Vancouver, BC. SEA (Special Education Association) is proud to present the 37th Annual Crosscurrents Conference, at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver. Keynote: To be announced, plus a variety of quality sessions and exhibitors for regular and special education. For information, contact or visit the website www.bctf.ca/sea/ or contact Conference Chair Leann Buteau at: seaconferencechair@gmail.com.

APRIL 2012

27 Whistler. PITA's Supporting Struggling Students in Literacy and Math, Sixth Annual. Learn practical strategies to support all students. Sessions focussed on intermediate classroom teachers and learning assistance. For information, contact Ray Myrtle, president@pita.ca or visit www.pita.ca.

MAY 2012

6-8 Vancouver, BC. Child and Youth Mental Health Matters. This conference brings together an interdisciplinary group of professionals working in the field of mental health to share knowledge and experiences related to child and youth mental health. Three themes woven through the conferences: Parental mental health, children of parents with mental illness and young carers. A forum for focusing on the needs of families as they struggle with issues related to mental health concerns across the generations. The overall goal is help us develop a common language and understanding of the needs of young people and families. By bringing together people from diverse backgrounds, we hope to enrich our collective knowledge of mental health strategies, best practices and the latest research in order to improve outcomes for young people and families. For further information please visit our website www.interprofessional.ubc.ca, or contact us at ipcde2@interchange.ubc.ca or 604-827-3112. We are currently accepting presentation submissions until September 26, 2011. The presentations can be submitted on line at www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/ChildandYouthMentalHealth.htm.

11 Alert Bay. BCRSSTA (British Columbia Rural and Small Schools Teachers' Association) Annual conference "Learning from Each Other" featuring innovative school organization from Zeballos Elementary, as well as presentations on teaching practices from other North Island rural communities. Host school: Alert Bay Elementary. Contact information: cmacdonald@sd85.bc.ca or vcivey@explornet.com.

Future October PSA days

BCTF procedure statements: 30.A. 14 That for the purposes of a province-wide PSA day, the BCTF supports the third Friday in October as the day on which all districts hold a professional day, except in years in which Thanksgiving Monday falls in the same week, in which case the fourth Friday would be the designated day. 36.30.10: That the BCTF's PD Calendar not publish PD events by outside agencies scheduled for the provincial PD day.

2012-13: October 19, 2012
2013-14: October 25, 2013
2014-15: October 24, 2014
2015-16: October 23, 2015

PSA PD Day October 21, 2011

PD Calendar website:
bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/ProDIPD-Calendar.cfm
Additions/changes—contact Betty Goto at bgoto@bctf.ca

October 24, 2011

National School Library Day

Journée nationale des bibliothèques scolaires

Drop Everything and **READ** Challenge



READING is a beautiful thing.
Today. Every day. Read for twenty minutes.

Laissez tout tomber pour lire Pour le plaisir de lire. Aujourd'hui, demain, toujours, lisez pendant vingt minutes.

The DEAR Challenge is sponsored by the

<http://bctf.ca/bctla>

British Columbia Teacher-Librarians' Association

Follow us at: @BCTLA_DEAR

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