

Teacher

Nov./Dec. 2011

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation

Vol. 24, No. 3

BC's Education Plan

Experiments with kids' learning

Sweeping changes on tight timeline

By Larry Kuehn

A lot of official chat about a dramatic change in BC's education system has been around the province for a couple of years. Only recently has a more detailed, but still somewhat vague, outline of the Ministry of Education plan appeared. It calls for significant change, but no more money.

Education Minister George Abbott made the official public announcement in Richmond at a meeting of BC Student Voice, a program that brings together select secondary school student leaders, organized by the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association and financed by the Ministry of Education. Clearly, using this venue for the announcement was intended as symbolic of placing students at the centre of the planned revolution in education in BC.

This announcement of the "BC Education Plan" lists five elements:

1. Personalized learning for every student
2. Quality teaching and learning
3. Flexibility and choice
4. High standards
5. Learning powered by technology.

Canada Post Corp. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40062724
Please return undeliverable Canadian addresses to...

BC Teachers' Federation
100-550 West 6th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5Z 4P2
E-mail: newsmag@bctf.ca

Most of the immediate media reaction to the announcement focused on technology. The specifics put forward by the minister included encouraging students to bring their smartphones and iPads to class for the teacher to incorporate into their teaching.

Bloggers immediately focused on two negatives: one was the inequality that is inevitable if some students can use these technologies while those from families with fewer resources have to make do without. The "occupy" movement has clearly made issues of inequality top of mind.

Some other comments questioned whether the focus on technology is really appropriate. For example, the referenced recent *New York Times* article reporting that even many of the people working in high-tech jobs in Silicon Valley choose to send their children to schools without computers and with a focus on the development of humane qualities.

"BC's Education Plan" at www.bcedplan.ca/welcome.php provides a description of the proposal, and includes a section for public conversation called "engage."

Within days, the blogs attracted comments that ranged from support for radical change incorporating technology to concerns about the lack of funding to make changes work. One commentator cautioned "Let's be very suspicious of glitzy PowerPoints and videos that are long on Rousseauian slogans and short on detail."

While the minister has implied that the BCTF had been consulted,



Composite image: LUIS ISDORO. Source images: Thomas Northcut/Photodisc/Thinkstock; Chad Banker/Digital Vision/Thinkstock; Comstock/Thinkstock.

teachers were not formally consulted on the plan before it was announced.

Competency-based education

One central theme comes through the description of this transformation agenda—that education will be centred on "competencies."

Our current structure of curriculum is based on subject matter and skills. Many, many intended learning outcomes frame both what we teach and to a lesser degree, how we teach. In contrast,

the competency-based approach has very broad objectives, but is somewhat agnostic about the content or approach to teaching it.

This is where the "personalization" comes in. The content is not primarily determined by the curriculum, but rather the student has a great deal of choice of content and the teacher's role is to steer the student learning toward the competencies.

What are these competencies? Competencies have been articulated in a variety of ways. Education Minister Abbott identified in an opinion editorial released on

October 13: "...key competencies like critical thinking, insight and teamwork." Defining competencies is a main topic of discussion on the ministry website, as noted above.

The plan calls for a six-month process where the ministry will work with "education partners" to "define competencies; design over-all curricular organization; identify K-12 performance standards requirements; and develop curriculum and assessment frameworks." This is six months to do a redesign of the framework for all of K-12 education.

See EDUCATION PLAN page 8

Teachers' Act (Bill 12) changes College governance

By Ellen Ellis and Gretchen Brown

The *Teachers' Act* establishes new structures within the Ministry of Education to certify, regulate, and discipline teachers. George Abbott, recommended these changes in order to rectify "problems identified in the Avison Report."

New regulatory structures

The current council is made up of 12 elected and 8 appointed members. The Act dissolves the council and divides its responsibilities between the following four new authorities:

British Columbia Teachers' Council

This body will consist of three teachers nominated by the BCTF, five practicing teachers elected from regions (practicing is defined as having taught or supervised educational programs in the last two years), and seven persons appointed by the minister. It is

expected that the government appointees will represent each of the educational partner groups. One appointee will have knowledge and experience in independent schools. The final member will be a non-voting member of the council who will report on council activities directly to the minister.

The Teachers' Council will be responsible for establishing standards for teacher education programs, co-operating with the design and evaluation of teacher education programs, establishing qualifications required for certification, establishing standards for conduct and competency, and creating categories of certificates.

Disciplinary and Professional Conduct Board

This board will be appointed by the minister from members of the council. The board will consist of four members from the councillors

See TEACHERS ACT page 3

On the inside

Changes for teachers and education have been coming thick and fast over the past few weeks. Our lead piece links together the strands evident in the government's recently announced "Education Plan." In addition, the changes that have been enacted to the BC College of Teachers are examined in detail. These developments are taking place against a backdrop of continuing discussions over Bills 27 and 28 and protracted negotiations in bargaining. Two writers offer their thoughts as to what this means for the very nature of education; changes that they consider well under way.

In a period that is witnessing a concerted attack on unions, and the important gains for working people

that they have achieved, a project to bring labour history back into the curriculum couldn't be more timely. Decent pensions have been one of the key objectives for unions and two articles in this edition look at their future in the context of today's financially turbulent times.

A number of our members speak about their involvement in the BCTF and what the union has meant to them.

Research on the contributions made by retired teachers shows how valuable their volunteer work is to so many endeavours and facets of our society.

As is customary in this issue, we also acknowledge teachers who have retired and wish them well.

| | |
|--|----|
| My life, my union | 4 |
| Teaching labour history | 6 |
| Social Justice 12 gains momentum | 7 |
| BC retired teachers support their communities | 13 |
| Public pensions are not a pariah on the taxpayer | 14 |

President's message



Susan Lambert

It has been an intense fall. We've worked very hard both to teach and to advocate for our profession and our public education system. We know that our work is of critical importance, that our students rely on us, and that parents have confidence in our profession and our skills. We draw our energy and spirit from this certainty.

We know this in the face of growing evidence that our government neither respects nor values our profession or the work we do. Their Education Plan that is gradually being unveiled relies on technology as the panacea for educational change. Aside from a single reference to Aboriginal students, it

neither acknowledges nor works to mitigate the poverty faced by 20% of the children we teach. Instead, it will exacerbate the growing disparity between the rich and the poor in BC. The "bring your own device" idea and the credit for external programs are inconsistent with the founding principle of public education, universality of access, and are the next steps in the privatization of public education. It comes without any funding and blames teachers for being entrenched in old-fashioned curriculum and teaching methods.

This brave new education plan is shallow, superficial, and rushed. Despite the claims to the contrary,

teachers were not consulted in its development. It disrespects the profession and disregards the representative professional voice of teachers, the BCTF, while couched in the language of appreciation for teachers. Once again government's rhetoric and the actions do not match.

We want educational change. We want change that allows every student access to high-quality educational programs tailored to individual need at neighbourhood schools. We want to offer every child (not just those who can afford their own) access to technology and programs that grow their love of learning. That is what we try to do

every day. Teachers have tried their best to pull this system into the 21st century and most times that has been an uphill struggle.

All the more reason why this break must truly be a break. We must restore our energy.

As the winter break approaches I wish everyone a great holiday. Whatever you celebrate, may it be wonderful—a time to reconnect with family and friends and acknowledge the richness of our lives as teachers.

Luckily we work with kids—their energy and optimism are sustaining and our work is our passion. You simply cannot be a teacher and not be an optimist.

Readers write

Support for teachers

The Board of Directors of the Charter for Public Education Network (CPEN) Society wish to convey to the BCTF Executive and the teachers of British Columbia our support for your struggle to improve the economic well-being of teachers, the working conditions of teachers and the learning conditions of students.

Our organization exists to advance the cause of public education and to advocate for and support the promises and principles of the Charter for Public Education. However, we are greatly concerned with policy directions that undermine the progressive and democratic vision articulated in the charter. It is essential that all students in the province have the material conditions for a good life, a safe and healthy home, and the rights articulated in the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child*. The failure to fully fund the public education system so that it can meet the needs of all learners is a threat to the future of our province. To sustain a free, just, and democratic society, we must ensure provincial funding is sufficient to meet the educational needs of all students, without fees charged to parents or the children.

A society that values education and takes responsibility for providing a superb education to all children and young people will not deny teachers the salaries and working conditions that go with an excellent school system. We also support your struggles to make your rights to collective bargaining meaningful. Rights to collective bargaining are another integral aspect of a democratic society, and teachers, like all other workers, deserve that right.

Please convey to your membership and those engaged in the struggle our appreciation and

support for your efforts to improve public education in British Columbia.

Mike Zlotnik

Board of Directors, Charter for Public Education Network (CPEN) Society

Response to BCPSEA's LRB application to garnishee teacher wages

Teachers are dedicated professionals and we do whatever we can to meet the needs of our students, often using our own money to pay for needed resources. (And then we can't claim that on our tax returns even though business people can claim alcohol.) We spend our time off planning lessons and marking work and providing extra help and support for our students. We do it with an open heart because when all the politics are removed, there is but one truth. Each student, each day, each year deserves the best we can give and we give the best that is in us. I know that teachers are communicating with parents about their children and the progress they are making all over the province. I know the grief you are feeling.

I am a trustee because of the funding cuts I have seen in my classroom over the last 10 years. I will not sit in silence while support and resources for children with special needs are cut deep into the bone by this government.

BCPSEA's action is inflammatory at a time when we should be rationally discussing the state our education system is in. BCPSEA states, as part of its application to the LRB, that "BCPSEA remains committed to achieving a negotiated collective agreement." It doesn't look like it. BCPSEA should stop trying to strip the teachers' contract and go back to government to ask for a new and more reason-

able mandate to negotiate. Our job action was agreed upon by both sides at the Labour Relations Board and teachers have followed that agreement.

I am speaking for myself as a duly elected trustee with 10,800 votes, and not for the board.

Catherine Alpha

Greater Victoria

If there, why not here?

In September, Alberta's new premier, Alison Redford, delivered in person a letter to the provincial executive of the Alberta Teachers' Association, which promised to restore education funding cuts made in 2011-12. Reprinted below are excerpts from that letter...for the record:

"I am committed to funding public education properly and it is important that the government move quickly on that front.

"I will commit to restoring the education cuts made in the 2011-12 budget within 10 days of being sworn in as Premier.

"The restoration of this funding will allow School Boards to hire back teachers and support staff laid off this summer. This, in turn, will reduce class size to a more manageable level. In consideration of the funding restoration, I will request that School Boards also roll back fee increases passed on to parents this fall.

"Further, I commit to stable and predictable funding on three-year cycles in the future. School boards need to be able to plan, not annually react to unpredictable budgets. In order to keep talented teachers, we must be able to offer them longer term stability, not a continual cycle of layoffs and rehiring. Students and parents must know what to expect from year to year.

"It is increasingly obvious that we need to change how we consult,

and how we plan and implement government initiatives. I am very hopeful that you will work with me going forward to build a much better process, for the benefit of

public education, public healthcare reform and other areas of government."

— *Alberta Teachers' Association newsletter, ATA News, October 2011.*

BCTF Judicial Council decision

An allegation of a breach of Clause 5 of the BCTF *Code of Ethics* was submitted to the Judicial Council. A hearing panel subsequently determined that the respondent violated the requisites of Clause 5 when they met with the school administrator to express concerns regarding a colleague's choice of teaching resources.

Following that meeting, the complainant was contacted by the district superintendent to discuss the complainant's choice of "sensitive teaching materials." The respondent also contacted the colleague's department head and

school accountant to confirm who ordered the teaching resources.

The respondent did not, at any time, address their concerns to the complainant or contact anyone at the local association or the BC Teachers' Federation who could have offered advice and assistance on how to proceed with their concern.

The hearing panel reprimanded the respondent for their conduct contrary to the BCTF *Code of Ethics* and determined that these events would be reported in *Teacher* newsmagazine.

MyBCTF

Our members-only secure portal is online at mybctf.ca

What's in it for me?

- timely bargaining updates
- interactive tools, including secure member-only discussion groups
- update your personal information
- easy registration for conferences
- information, articles, videos

Sign up is easy!

1. At bctf.ca, click on "BCTF Member Portal".
2. At BCTF member portal, click "first time here?".
3. Enter your name and either your BCTF six-digit member ID (if known) or your district name and employee number.
4. Choose a password (and remember it).
5. If you have a problem, call 604-871-2119 or 1-800-663-9163, local 2119 or e-mail portal@bctf.ca.

Teacher

Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation
100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2
604-871-2283, toll free 1-800-663-9163,
F: 604-871-2289 E-mail: news@bctf.ca
Web: bctf.ca/news



Editor
David Denyer

Assistant editor
Kathleen Smith

Copy editor
Joan DeBruyn
Vanessa Terrell

Graphics
BCTF Graphics Dept.

Staff writers
Gretchen Brown
David Denyer
Ellen Ellis
Nancy Knickerbocker
Larry Kuehn
Karen Langenmaier

Teacher Newsmagazine Advisory Board
Richard Beaudry
Jack MacDermot
Stacey Robinsmith
Jennifer Wadge
Hayley Waring

BCTF Executive Committee
Rick Guenther
Glen Hansman
Jim Iker
David Komljenovic
Susan Lambert
Joanna Larson
Denise Moffatt
Teri Mooring
Paul Steer
Christine Stewart
Kip Wood

Volume 24
1 September 2011
2 October 2011
3 Nov./Dec. 2011
4 Jan./Feb. 2012
5 March 2012
6 April 2012
7 May/June 2012

ISSN 0841-9574

CEPA Canadian Educational Press Association
CALM Canadian Association of Labour Media



Articles contained herein reflect the view of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BC Teachers' Federation. The BC Teachers' Federation does not endorse or promote any products or services presented in the advertising sections of the newsmagazine. All advertisements will be reviewed and approved by the BCTF. They must reflect BCTF policy and be politically, environmentally, and professionally appropriate.



MASTER OF ARTS FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (MATE)



MATE is an innovative graduate program designed for working professionals who teach English in the elementary, secondary or college system.

Courses cover a broad spectrum of literary genres, historical periods, and critical approaches to literature. The program, which leads to an MA in English, provides unique opportunities to engage in specialized academic scholarship, and to deepen one's knowledge of great literature and its role in shaping culture.

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY THINKING OF THE WORLD

www.sfu.ca/mate
778.782.8478

TEACHERS ACT from page 1

appointed by the BCTF or elected by teachers and five from the ministry appointees. Individual discipline hearings of public school teachers will be before a panel of three with only one member of a hearing panel being a member of the BCTF.

Commissioner

A commissioner will be appointed to oversee professional conduct and discipline matters. The staff of the commissioner will become employees of the ministry. The commissioner will take over the functions currently performed by the Registrar, the Director of Professional Conduct, and the Preliminary Investigation Subcommittee with respect to discipline matters. All reports regarding discipline, conduct or competency will go to the commissioner to review and determine which require action, the terms of any consent resolution agreements, which matters go to hearing, selection of hearing panels (including appointing individuals who are not members of the council) and issuing pre-hearing suspensions where a teacher poses a risk to the safety of students.

The Act gives the commissioner sole authority over all discipline matters that are resolved without a hearing. This is the vast majority of all discipline cases as very few matters require a hearing. It is expected that the commissioner will have judicial or quasi-judicial experience.

Director of Certification

The director will determine whether applicants meet the requirements for certification with respect to both qualifications and good character. The director must provide written reasons for any decision to deny an applicant a certificate of qualification, consider applicant appeals, and enforce the requirements of the *Criminal Records Review Act*. This work was previously done by a committee whose majority were members elected by teachers. The director of certification will assume sole authority over certification decisions.

Other changes**Teacher registry**

The registry of certificate holders will be maintained in a manner very similar to the current public registry and available on a public website.

The employer's registry is retained without any changes. This registry includes a complete list of past employers and does not include any discipline records. It may be accessed only by employers. The intention of the registry is to ensure full disclosure of past employment during the application process.

Public/parent complaints

The bill retains the process for person complaints. Any person can make a complaint directly to the commissioner.

The Act creates new rights for complaints for access to information. Complainants are entitled to be copied on any agreements or discipline decisions regarding the complaint.

Procedural rights

The bill contains few procedural protections for teachers. Section 81(k) provides power to the minister to make regulations regarding the commissioner's rules of practice and procedure. Presumably these regulations will contain some requirements for due process and fairness.

The bill expands the authority of those investigating teachers. The commissioner is given broad powers of investigation including the authority to:

- enter any school or board offices.
- inspect any records held by boards.
- interview any employees, including the person who is the subject of the investigation.

The creation of a commissioner with very broad powers, without any corresponding rights for the teacher being investigated, leaves open the possibility of a process that is inquisitorial to the point of compromising the basic rights of teachers. It will be essential to have a commissioner who has an understanding and commitment to fair process in order to prevent this from happening.

Right of appeal

Section 40 of the old *Teaching Profession Act* provided a right to appeal any decision of the college to the courts. Bill 12 removes that right. Section 42 of Bill 12 provides that the decisions of the commissioner and of a panel are final and binding. It would still be possible to seek a judicial review by the courts of decisions, however, the grounds for review would be narrower than a full appeal.

Costs

Under Section 65, the hearing panel's authority to award costs is restricted to cases where the teacher has engaged in improper behaviour during the hearing. Costs may be collected by filing an order in court. Current college rules provide for costs in a broader range of circumstances, but do not contain any means of enforcement.

Professional development

There are no new provisions about currency or professional development.

College staff

The current registrar will cease to hold office immediately upon Royal Assent of the bill. The minister may appoint a transitional registrar until the other provisions of the Act come into force.

Other college staff will likely continue with their current duties, but will do so as employees of the ministry rather than the college.

Elimination of the concept of membership

The old Act merged membership in the college with certification. Bill 12 eliminates the concept of membership. Certified teachers are referred to as "authorized persons" or "certificate holder." The bill does not, however, return to the regime of non-expiring certificates. Certificates will still be cancelled for non-payment of the annual fee.

Change in the name of the Act

It appears that the new title of the Act will simply be the *Teachers Act* and will not include the word profession.

BCTF concerns**Public reporting of discipline**

The Act contains numerous provisions that make discipline proceedings more public.

Under Section 61, oral discipline hearings will be open to the public unless the panel orders otherwise. The Federation is concerned about the potential for these to be "show trials."

Under Section 54 of the bill, consent resolution agreements will not be confidential. Notice of the agreements must be published on a public website. It is concerning that this does not seem to be limited to agreements that have a disciplinary outcome. Publication of such agreements would seriously

compromise the privacy of teachers who are struggling with health problems and other challenges.

Limited right of appeal

Section 40 of the old *Teaching Profession Act* provided a right to appeal any decision of the college to the courts. Bill 12 removes that right. Section 42 of Bill 12 provides that the decisions of the commissioner and of a panel are final and binding. It would still be possible to seek a judicial review by the courts of decisions. However, the grounds for review would be narrower than a full appeal. The Federation is very concerned about this aspect of the Act.

Annual fee

The annual fee is set by regulation and the Act provides that it will be an automatic deduction from all employees' wages. The ministry has announced this will be \$80.

This Act has removed teachers' rights of self-regulation. The responsibility for certification has

returned to the ministry. The Federation maintains that it is the ministry who should provide funding for their responsibility.

Surplus

The minister has not provided any information on how the current surplus will be used within the new structure or within the ministry.

Duty to report discipline

There is no change to the matters required to be reported to the Disciplinary and Professional Conduct Board by the employer. The government did not clarify how employment related discipline, such as letters of reprimand, will be dealt with by the employer at the school district level. The BCTF recommended that only serious matters be referred to and dealt with by the disciplinary board. There is no direction in the legislation to define the difference between employment matters and misconduct. The minister did indicate in the House debate that employment matters

should be dealt with by the employer—the school district and superintendent.

Gaps in consultation process

While the minister did meet with the full-time table officers of the BCTF several times, there were still items included in the legislation that were never discussed—in particular, he omitted to mention the lack of right to appeal and the public nature of hearings.

Regulations

There are still ministry regulations coming to define several important aspects of the structure and mandate of the Teachers' Council and Disciplinary and Professional Conduct Board. We have no information at this time about the specifics of such regulations.

Ellen Ellis, director, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division;
Gretchen Brown, BCTF staff lawyer

What does this change mean for you as a classroom teacher?

Annual practice fee

The annual practice fee may be reduced. The government has indicated the fee will be \$80 next year.

Fee payment schedule

Teachers will continue to be required to pay an annual fee to maintain certification. Employed teachers will have the fee deducted by their employer and sent directly to the ministry. Any teacher who is not employed must pay their fee by May 31 each year. Late fees will be applied to fees paid in June. The certificate will be suspended on July 1 if the fee and late fee is not paid. The certificate will be cancelled on November 1 if the fees remain unpaid.

Current certification rules

Current certification rules will continue. The new Teachers' Council will have the ability to change the certification requirements in the future, as the College of Teachers did previously.

Teachers on letter of permission

Teachers on letter of permission or with temporary certification will continue to follow current rules. These rules are subject to review by the council, as they were in the past.

Complaints

Teachers who have had a complaint made, or a report by a superintendent, will continue to follow the rules set under the College of Teachers. It will take some time for the new Council to be elected/appointed. We expect that cases will continue with the hearing panel once they are started.

Public website

A public website will report the following information for each certificate holder:

- Teacher's name
- Current status of certificate
- Any record of suspension or cancellation of certificate, terms of a consent resolution agreement (admission of misconduct, conduct unbecoming a teacher or incompetency and the consequence ordered)
- Any findings and orders from a disciplinary panel.

Employers' registry

The employers' registry will continue. Each employer must provide the college with a list of employees. The website will allow employers to view a list of all previous educational employers of certificate holders. The purpose of this list is to prevent exclusion of employers from a prospective employee's employment history.

Looking back

70 years ago

The subject of Automatic Membership in the British Columbia Teachers' Federation is once more being studied by a committee which has been instructed to report at the next Easter Convention. Our purpose in this article is designed less to determine the issue than to orient it; less to solve the problems involved than to bring them forth and to clarify them. Automatic Membership is, in essence, the principle that in order to teach in the schools of the province, every teacher must become and remain a member of the BCTF. Added services to members would be made possible through increased revenues received from present non-members. The Federation would be able to act more effectively and forcefully because it would speak for all teachers.

– December 1941, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

One of the key criteria in measuring any group's degree of professionalism is the amount of effective control it exerts over its own practice. By this standard, we, the teachers of BC, are a long way from

true professional status. Indeed, under the present government we are losing ground. Under the revised education act we have in effect lost our rights in pressing for what we believe to be more than just salary scales. Faced with automatic arbitration, and denied the legal right to strike, we are almost completely emasculated in this regard. When the Government decided to add to the length of the school day, thereby increasing the teacher's work load, we were not even consulted.

– November 1961, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

This magazine has dealt in the past with the "union vs profession" dilemma, which many teachers see as the heart of the matter. *The BC Teacher* is breaking no new ground; instead we are sowing the seeds of information and viewpoint so that all teachers are prepared to take part in the referendum. Whether teachers see themselves in the "profession" or the "union" model, the top priority of the 1981 AGM to widen our scope of bargaining must be considered.

– Nov./Dec. 1981, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

The future of public education is at stake in this round of negotiations. The Liberal government appears to want to emulate models of education in countries, such as the US and UK that do not perform as well as Canada. After providing a massive tax cut, which goes mostly to the wealthy and corporations, the government has announced a freeze on health and education spending. BCPSEA wants to remove guarantees of equity, quality and funding. The BCPSEA is proposing to remove class-size limits, to abolish minimum ratios for librarians, counselors, learning assistance and to end guaranteed standards for students with special needs.

– Nov./Dec. 2001, *Teacher newsmagazine*

Compiled by Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

My life, my union

The BCTF, along with other public sector unions, is publishing a series of member profiles in *The Asian Post*, *The South Asian Post*, and *The Philippines Post* in an outreach effort to raise the profile of the Federation and raise awareness in immigrant communities about workers' rights and the role of unions in Canadian society. The articles are published in English, Chinese, Punjabi and Tagalog.

Teachers stand together and stick to their ideals



Bernice Jay knew from an early age that she wanted to be a teacher, but she never imagined it would lead to becoming a union activist too.

A first-generation Chinese-Canadian, Jay grew up in a happy extended family that celebrated the best of both Chinese and Western cultures. Her fluency in Cantonese later proved to be a tremendous asset in her professional life.

Jay completed teacher training at the University of BC and taught for five years before doing her masters in education at the University of Toronto. When she returned to Vancouver in 2004, she began teaching Grade 1 and 2 at Sir William Osler Elementary.

What's her favourite thing about the job? "Connecting with the children and establishing a community in the classroom," she says. "Every child in my class is special, and everyone is welcome." Jay enjoys many aspects of the work: helping children learn from one another, watching them flourish as they explore their strengths, and boosting their self-esteem to confront challenges.

As a Vancouver teacher, Jay is a member of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association (VESTA), a local of the 41,000-member BC Teachers' Federation.

"Even as a new teacher, I was aware of the importance and power of the union. When I first received my collective agreement, I felt very aware that I needed to read it from cover to cover to know my rights," Jay recalled.

At that time, difficult relations between staff and administration made school stressful: "It was a toxic atmosphere." As a VESTA representative, Jay worked to ease frustration and foster a high level of professionalism.

Working on the grievance committee, she found satisfaction in reaching out to members whose rights had been violated. In 2009, she was elected as a member-at-large on the VESTA executive committee. Jay has also appeared in BCTF videos, helping get the message out about the importance of voting.

She is concerned about the intense pressure on public education and the long struggle with the BC Liberal government. A decade of underfunding has resulted in 3,000 fewer teachers, 200 closed schools, thousands of overcrowded classes, and less support for students with special needs.

"It's the children who are losing out, especially the most vulnerable ones," she lamented.

BC teachers are in negotiations for a new collective agreement, and everyone knows it is a difficult round of bargaining. "I'm sure our members will stand together, remain positive, and stick to our ideals," Jay said.

Cultural diversity strengthens our schools



As a Pakistani-born Vancouverite, young **Raza Mirani** learned to navigate his way around numerous ethnic and linguistic cliques at his East Vancouver high school. In the 1980s, Gladstone Secondary was home to large and well-established Italian- and Portuguese-Canadian communities, a significant Chinese-speaking population and a small number of South Asians. Intercultural relations weren't always cordial.

Today, it's a fundamentally different school. "There's no one culture that is dominant and there's no more ghettoization," Mirani says. "We've come a long way."

In a family story that has happily come full circle, Mirani is now a teacher and head of the science department at his old school, and his eldest son Amir is a Grade 8 student there. Married for 15 years, Raza and his wife Hina have three boys aged 14, 11, and 3.

What's Mirani's message for immigrant kids, based on his own experience?

"They can't see themselves as outside the community. Yes, it's important to maintain the culture and identity [of the home country] but it's also important to be part of this society," he says. "We pigeon-hole ourselves too much. That can be dangerous. Within the global climate, we have to understand we are Canadian and we have to take care of this place now."

As the former president and now general secretary of the Pakistan-Canada Association, Mirani helps immigrant families integrate the best of both old and new countries, and speaks out on behalf of the community when needed.

His career path illustrates what teachers mean by lifelong learning. Mirani completed a bachelor of science in biology at the University of BC. Following a 5th year for teacher training, he started his career in the classroom in 1997. He completed a graduate diploma in technology education at Simon Fraser University in 2003, and now is working towards his MA in digital curriculum.

Asked his favourite thing about his job, Mirani responds enthusiastically: "It's the kids! For secondary teachers a lot of it is our passion for the subject area we're teaching, but it's also the day-to-day interaction with the students and seeing them share your love of the subject."

Mirani's first union involvement was with the technology committee. He later expanded his commitment and now serves as a member-at-large on the executive of the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association.

"Teachers can become isolated in the classroom," Mirani said. He enjoys his union involvement because it enables him to see the bigger picture and to understand the way decisions are made that impact the classroom.

"I like serving my colleagues and making a difference."

TTOC found a home base in the union



Erlinda Palines's mom was pregnant with her when the family immigrated to Canada from the Philippines in 1975. Born and raised in Vancouver, young Erlinda often felt like a misfit at school.

"I didn't like the peer pressure or the dynamics of friends, but what I did like was my teachers," she said. "My parents split up when I was in Grade 7, and things were pretty tough at home. But I developed a close relationship with the school nurse, and basically the teachers were my saving grace."

Palines enrolled in UBC's Faculty of Education, determined to offer the same kind of support and caring for her future students that she had experienced as a youngster. "I wanted children to know that even if it's very difficult at home or with your peers, teachers care and we can help you feel safe," she said.

But when Palines graduated, it was the worst time in 30 years to start a career in teaching. It was 2001, the BC Liberals were newly elected, and they immediately began a series of cuts that resulted in the loss of more than 3,000 teaching positions.

For the next five years, Palines had to work as a teacher teaching on call (TTOC), filling in for classroom teachers who were absent. Because the work was so sparse, she had to take on private tutoring to make ends meet. She had no job security and at one point she felt so hopeless about her prospects that she considered abandoning her dream of being a teacher.

Fortunately, Palines got involved in the Coquitlam Teachers' Association (CTA), her local of the BC Teachers' Federation. "On a personal and professional level, it gave me the community I needed. I didn't have my own school, but I had the union. It was my home base."

CTA leaders mentored Palines, and encouraged her to volunteer on the TTOC Committee. "Our goal was to get TTOCs to know their contract, know their rights, and to understand that the union is there to help. We also wanted to dispel the myth that if you're heavily involved in the union you'll never get a full-time job."

In 2006, Palines did get a full-time job working with high-needs students in Coquitlam. She found that her union experience helped her become a much better teacher. "I've learned so much about problem-solving, about patience, about how to connect with people who have different viewpoints."

She volunteered as a school union representative, and served three years on the local executive. Her dream job came about when she was seconded from school to work part-time at the CTA office. "I loved being in the union two days a week, and being in school three days a week kept me connected to the kids. I had the best of both worlds!"

Racism in childhood fuels teacher's work in social justice union



Daniel Shiu's family came to Vancouver from Hong Kong when he was only four years old. It was an era when racial stereotyping and discrimination were still overtly present in schools and society, and it had serious consequences for young Shiu's pride in his cultural heritage.

"Miss Hong Kong Alley"—that's what one teacher called a group of Asian girls who all happened to sit in one row in class. Although the label stung, the children couldn't speak up. That sense of powerlessness remains a vivid childhood memory.

Sometime in elementary school Shiu stopped speaking his native Cantonese, even with his parents. Why suppress your mother tongue? "Because I didn't want to be called *Chink*," he recalled. "I thought as long as I could shed that identity I could fit in."

Shiu's parents were both teachers back home. Mom taught math and Dad taught biology. Neither pushed him into a career in education in Canada. Rather, Shiu found his own way into the classroom. Today he teaches social studies, history, and law at North Surrey Secondary School, where the student population represents a broad multicultural mix.

"I look at my students who are totally bilingual and I think it's great. I'm jealous that their cultural bonds are so strong," he said. At North Surrey Secondary, the students generally get along well and respect one another's cultures, "but under the surface, you can tell there are still some racial issues."

Shiu's commitment to union work involves tackling these very issues. The BC Teachers' Federation is a proud social justice union, which supports a great deal of work related to equity issues: women's rights; Aboriginal education; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender - ed, and queer struggles; antiracism work, and more. As a member of the Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ), Shiu devotes his energy and passion to antiracism education.

Working with other CASJ members, he has helped produce a moving PowerPoint presentation on racism in Canada, and a companion poster for teachers to hang in their classrooms. The presentation focuses on the history of racism and its persistence right up to this day, but also highlights positive developments in redressing injustices. The CASJ teachers have also developed two workshops—"Antiracism: Socializing justice" and "Anti-discrimination training for teachers."

My BCTF

Win an iPad

When you sign up to MyBCTF

you will be automatically eligible to win an iPad

Details: Nine iPads will be randomly drawn at sign-up milestones (2,000 members, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 7,000, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000, and 25,000). If you are signed up, you are eligible to win in all subsequent draws. The sooner you sign up, the more chances to win.

Apple is not a participant in or sponsor of this promotion.

Teaching English: A new perspective

By Don Standing

So, here I am, 30 years into the game, retirement on the horizon and I have figured it out. Last year, I finally realized why I teach English. No, wait. That's not it. I realized why everyone is teaching English. And then, last week, I realized that maybe, just maybe, I've figured out why everyone teaches any subject. I've found the Holy Grail.

A bit of hubris? Perhaps. Overly optimistic? Maybe: although, truth to tell, that is something I've rarely (probably never) been accused of. But bear with me. Let me explain.

These things probably don't have a discreet beginning, a point at which we can point our metaphorical fingers and say, "That's where it all began." But for my purpose, I'll assign an arbitrary beginning. Several years ago, in our department at Ballenas Secondary School, a few of us realized that we were probably moderately successful at teaching kids about the culture of Shakespeare, or Chaucer, or Tennyson, but we were not even trying to teach them about their own culture. A notion arose: We needed to teach kids how to be informed consumers of culture. But how do we do that?

A few years later, many of us went to a great workshop given by Linda McDonald at Dover Bay Secondary on how to teach (as opposed to merely use) movies in

the classroom. This seemed to be just what we'd been looking for. So we spent some time cobbling some lessons together, trying to get up to speed. And time went by.

A few years after that, I was having a discussion with a colleague about *To Kill a Mockingbird*. You know the one: "I'm bored with *Mockingbird*." Blahblahblah. So I made the suggestion to use the movie as the primary text and use the novel to supplement it. Use only parts of the text, I suggested. Later that year, I was teaching *Lord of the Flies* to a particularly leaden group of Grade 11s. I realized what I was doing was stupid and pointless. After all, who cares who killed Piggy? Were I on the island, I may well have done it.

So I tried something new. I taught the novel without teaching the book. The students were instructed specifically not to read the book and, wonderous to say, they didn't. I've never had such a success. But we did something else. Students were told to skim the book and pull out all the text relating to a character (Ralph, Jack, Piggy, the conch: we had done Simon in class). Then their task was to analyze that text they'd pulled and look for patterns of word choice, dialogue, description. Whatever they could find. And then they were to discuss what effect these patterns had on the reader: to address how Golding was trying to manipulate

his audience.

The unit was a great success. Although the student results varied (as they always do), the stronger students said how they had noticed things they never had before. I was on to something. But what?

As luck would have it (if luck you call it), in June last year, a graduation student gave me a book—*On the Origin of Stories*. This book provided me with the theoretical foundation for the road I was now

What I've set out to do is to teach students to realize that everything they see or read or hear in media is a consciously produced artifact...I'm teaching students to read media, because if they can't understand how they're being manipulated, they'll forever be puppets.

travelling. Primates, all primates—you and I and every student we've ever had are obsessed with finding patterns. That's how we survived in the wild: we observe events, find (or impose) a pattern and predict results. We do it all the time. We can't not do it.

You know that old proverb about things we know we know and things we don't know we know. This has become my mantra for English 9. Kids subconsciously see patterns in TV and movies; they just don't understand them. They hear patterns in poetry, but don't appreciate them. They recognize plot patterns in prose, but aren't conscious of them. What I've set out to do is to teach students to realize that everything they see or read or hear in media is a consciously produced artifact. Nothing is there unless it's intended to be there. They are realizing that all artists working in all media from all time draw from the same bag of tricks. I'm teaching students to read media, because if they can't understand how they're being manipulated, they'll forever be puppets.

It's really quite cool what's going on. It's all still a work in progress, but it's exciting.

And then last week I wondered, isn't pattern recognition what every academic discipline is about? Aren't we trying to give students a tool that they can apply to all aspects of their lives? We always bemoan how useless it is to stuff their heads with interesting (but, perhaps, useless) knowledge. Is it possible that really what we should be doing is teaching students to recognize that which they already see? It is the ability to recognize patterns and to predict what those patterns mean in their daily lives that is important.

It may well be that science and math are already doing this, but I

wonder. Maybe it's just a matter of approach, of emphasis, or of a teacher's mindset. I know that teachers of social studies are always lamenting the content that must be mastered. What if we taught more thematically (as some schools already do)? What if we taught "Revolution"? We could start with the generic pattern of events that lead to and result from revolution. Then we could look at historic revolutions as proof and then look at events today to analyze and make predictions. Wouldn't it be cool if students could see the Rebellion of 1837 as something that was actually applicable to their own lives as an example of an existing pattern?

I (and you) are examples of public schooling's success. But I haven't used any calculus or much algebra since I finished secondary school. Most of you have had little or no exposure to poetry since then. All we really need to function is literacy and numeracy. The rest is gravy. Unless there's something to this pattern recognition stuff. This is a tool that all students have by virtue of being primates. It's not even an intellectual thing: it's an evolutionary one. All we're really doing is raising their awareness of it, of making what was subconscious, conscious.

Maybe there's nothing new here, nothing worthy of discussion. But my teacher gut says no. It tells me there's something important here.

Don Standing, Ballenas Secondary School, Qualicum.

From the bargaining table

by Tara Ehrcke

The BCTF bargaining team entered negotiations knowing it would be a challenge. In addition to a fair and reasonable salary increase and improvements to preparation time, we are seeking benefit improvements and an increase in local bargaining.

Moreover, we knew at the beginning there would be the significant issue of the "net-zero" mandate—that BCPSEA (govern - ment and school boards) was coming to the table with nothing.

Things went from hard to worse quickly. Within weeks of the start of bargaining each side began exchanging proposals, and we were shocked with much of what BCPSEA tabled—major concessions. Because class size and composition was a discussion directly with government, we pursued our other objectives first, leaving a "place holder" for class size when discussions with government were completed.

The first proposal the BCTF team tabled was to change the "split of issues" and allow more bargaining at the local table. This is so important because we have been unable to address issues in local agreements for upwards of 18 years.

BCPSEA's reaction was puzzling. First, they didn't like our formatting—could we please use strike-throughs and bold in our documents. So we did. Then, they began asking questions. What would the processes be? How would similar items at local tables be packaged together? How would the provincial parties vet the agree - ments? We were perplexed at these questions. None of them actually referred to our proposal. We already have local bargaining tables and the processes and procedures are developed by each local teachers' association and board and are in place. A change in the split of issues (a mere moving of proposals from one table to another) doesn't impact process and procedures.

BCPSEA countered with a document almost entirely procedural. It contained pages of rules and requirements that in effect would make local bargaining impossible. It would constrain local parties to be under the authority of the provincial parties even though this is actually legally prohibited when items are delegated to local tables. It was a step backward from the *status quo* rather than a step forward toward an agreement.

We moved on to our other

...BCPSEA has yet to produce a single counter proposal on a single item with cost. Not one penny has been put on the table. Not one of our proposals, except for the split of issues, has been countered by BCPSEA.

proposals. As we tabled improvements to salary, benefits, paid leaves, and hours of work, BCPSEA tabled concessions to seniority, transfer, prep time, and evaluation. There were no strike-throughs and bolds in their documents, but we let that go.

Many of the BCPSEA documents on the table are not really proposals. They are "discussion" documents. Items for discussion, like how we could change the post-and-fill system to allow principals to better choose a teacher whom they feel is a good "fit" for a job. I guess BCPSEA thinks teachers all over the province are applying for jobs that they can't do? But since we have qualification requirements, perhaps BCPSEA thinks "fit" or suitability is something more than being qualified? Of course underlying these supposed "discussion items" is one of the real dynamics of bargaining—the relationship between employee and employer

and who has the right to make certain decisions. Suitability is a euphemism for "we will decide."

Some of the BCPSEA proposals are extremely vague. They are promises to have conversations. I guess kind of like the conversation on benefits we agreed to in 2006. Has anyone noticed an improvement in their benefit package since then? I see this as an excuse for not doing anything real to address the issues.

Fairly early on, BCPSEA began producing "costing" documents. Normally in bargaining, each side counters the other. For example, the employee group might ask for a 6% wage increase, the employer offers 2%, and so on, back and forth. The parties meet somewhere in the middle. Costing documents are used to assist in this process.

But BCPSEA has yet to produce a single counter proposal on a single item with cost. Not one penny has been put on the table. Not one of our proposals, except for the split of issues, has been countered by BCPSEA. They have not offered a penny, a nickel, or a dime.

And so it seems to beg the question: Why do a "costing" when you don't intend to offer anything anyway? Well, we found that out when the "costings" appeared on the public BCPSEA website and were promptly published in the major provincial media. Never mind that they are inaccurate (and I'll get to an example of that soon). And never mind that they are our starting position. And never mind that BCPSEA seems to have no intention of offering anything.

There are many problems with the "costing" documents, but let me just give two examples. BCPSEA calculates bereavement leave on the basis that every teacher will take the full leave once per year. Now, I don't know about you, but I have taken bereavement leave once in nine years of employment, and I did not take the full amount available. I didn't need to. So if I am

representative, they are over-estimating by a factor of about 10. So that would be \$8 million, not \$80 million—big difference.

Here's another one: BCPSEA calculates the cost of our early retirement bonus based on the cost of teachers paid out through the bonus. But they did not include the amount saved by having a new employee on the bottom of the payscale. If a teacher retires five years early, they pay a teacher at Step 0-4 for those five years instead of a teacher at Step 10 for those five years. Since the cost savings of the less expensive employee (five years of salary differential) are greater than the cost of the bonus (up to one year's pay), this is actually a cost saving for the employer. Yet BCPSEA erroneously ignores this part of the calculation and lo and behold, this adds several hundred million dollars to the "costing." This item alone was included in the costing at \$445 million (or half a billion)—a full one-quarter of the total costing of our proposals. And yet probably a real costing would show it as a cost savings.

What is evident in the negotiations about the split of issues is that BCPSEA is extremely reluctant to allow boards to make decisions.

But more annoying than the media play is the fact that this did absolutely nothing to move bargaining ahead. They are not offering a penny, so why "cost"?

Six weeks after our strike vote, BCPSEA challenged the vote at the Labour Relations Board. This despite the fact there is a five-day limit for such challenges. This began an arbitration process that has considerably slowed the pace of bargaining.

What is evident in the negotiations about the split of issues is that BCPSEA is extremely reluctant to allow boards to make decisions. Rather, they seem to want to further constrain boards' ability to negotiate locally and make local decisions. This will lead to more legal conflict and more years of unresolved issues in local school districts.

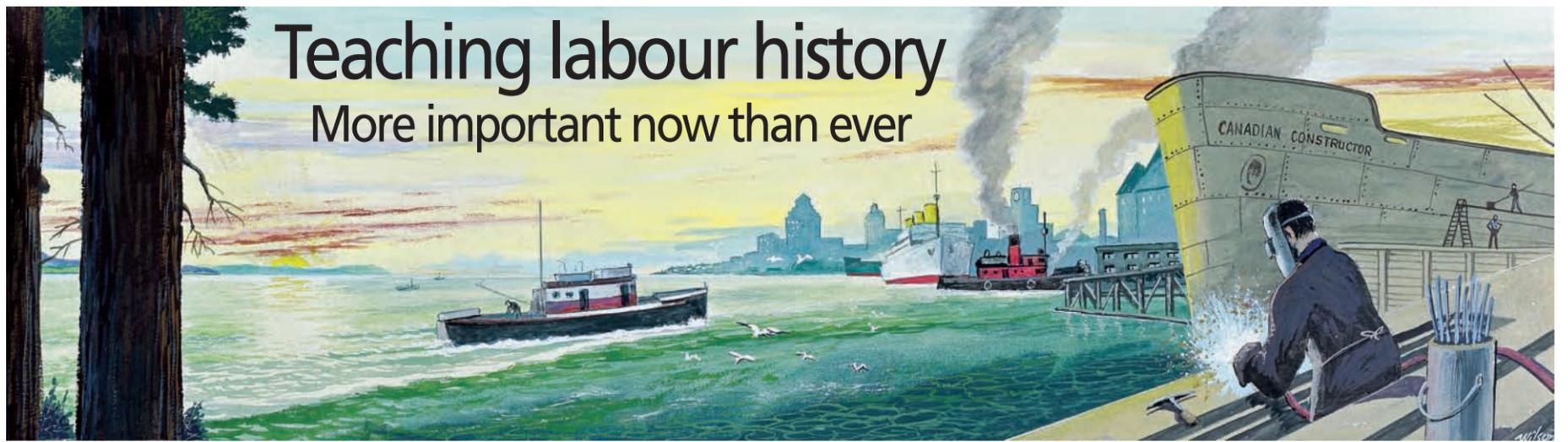
Perhaps most frustrating at the provincial table is simply the attitude of the employer toward teachers. There is a considerable lack of respect and a complete disconnect on what improves educational outcomes and improves teaching and learning.

One particularly memorable day, BCPSEA asked us what we could talk about that was "in the employer's interest." We were flabbergasted. Are improved class sizes not in the employer's interest? Is adequate preparation time, so teachers are able to prepare amazing lessons and provide timely and thorough feedback, not in the employer's interest? Is an adequate number of learning assistance teachers to support students with special needs not in their interest? Is a fair salary increase to remain competitive with other provinces not in their interest? The response from their side of the table was a telling silence.

Despite the frustrations, I feel good about where we are. The bargaining team sat excitedly waiting as the strike-vote count was completed and the result of 90% came in. Reports from the Phase 1 job action are overwhelmingly positive. Teachers' resolve in our classrooms and communities will be the pressure that will shift the dialogue at the table. It will be a struggle, but we are ready.

Tara Ehrcke, provincial bargaining team member, and Greater Victoria Teachers' Association president.

Read Tara's blog at: staffroomconfidential.blogspot.com or follow on Twitter—@taraehrcke



Marine Workers & Boilermakers Industrial Union Mural

Teaching labour history

More important now than ever

By Ken Novakowski

Since the Second World War, citizens belonging to the union movement and participating in the collective bargaining process have been able to maintain decent wages/salaries, establish reasonable benefits including pension plans to see them through retirement, and enjoy reasonably safe and healthy working conditions. All that is under attack now as we saw in the recent past with anti-labour legislation in Wisconsin and other American states virtually eliminating collective bargaining and in our own country, with continued disregard for the rights of working people by the Harper government. More recently, the emerging movement for a more equal society has moved the focus for many of our economic problems from unions and pensions to the wealthy who continue to increase their proportion of the overall income in this country by leaps and bounds while the majority of us are lucky if we can simply manage to maintain our standard of living.

In the midst of the economic crisis, which now appears to be ongoing, it has become clear that the much diminished organized labour movement in the western world has become the single most significant force in the struggle to maintain a viable middle class and a civil society. It is with this in mind that I raise the issue of the critical importance of labour history being taught in our schools as part of the curriculum and indeed as part of the

history of this country and this province. The next generation of citizens must have the opportunity to learn about and understand the historical and pivotal role of the union movement in shaping the social safety net that has come to characterize the make-up of western democracies. Unions have fought not only for their own members but collectively for the betterment of all working people: for the introduction of such significant social programs as the minimum wage, hours of work, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, public housing, public education and yes, public health care or medicare.

So much of what we have achieved together over the past few generations is now under attack by governments that denigrate the very role of the state in its responsibility for the well-being of all citizens by cutting back resources for important public services such as welfare, education, and healthcare. Right-wing governments consistently say they do not have the money to pay for these important programs. These same governments have instituted major tax cuts mostly again to the benefit of corporations and the more well to do in our society. The state has been complicit in the creation of a more unequal society.

Promoting the classroom teaching of labour history and the role of the union movement is a major objective of the Labour Heritage Centre. It has been working with the BCTF, the BC Social Studies Teachers' Association, the

BC Federation of Labour, and others on a curriculum implementation project that works with teachers to support them in increasing their capacity to teach labour history and trade union issues in the classroom. We are together, working on the establishment of a web site that will be a major resource for teachers to turn to when they wish to teach labour history.

If you are interested in becoming part of the BC Teaching Labour History Network...please send your name and e-mail to Ken Novakowski at knova@telus.net.

The Labour Heritage Centre (LHC) is a voluntary organization of trade unionists and retired trade unionists who are working to promote a broader understanding of the role of working people in the creation of this province. The LHC played a central role in the development of the interpretive panels at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre West. These panels, both inside and outside the Convention Centre highlight the important contribution made by individuals and by groups of working people in shaping this province. If you haven't seen these panels, they are worth the effort; they tell informative and fascinating stories about our past

and honour the role of working people in building this province.

The LHC is currently involved with the Knowledge Network in developing about 30 vignettes of events in BC labour's past that will run extensively on the Knowledge Network once they are produced. When completed, these stories will be available for use by teachers.

The aforementioned LHC curriculum implementation project, with assistance from the BCTF, is working on a number of initiatives to support teachers teaching labour history: They are:

1. updating the Grade 10 and Grade 11 Social Studies units in *Youth, Unions and You*, a compendium of lesson plans developed jointly by the Ministry of Education, the BCTF, and the BC Federation of Labour in 2000.
2. planning to develop lesson plans to accompany the stories on the interpretive panels at the Trade and Convention Centre West.
3. planning to develop lesson plans to accompany the three-minute stories being developed by the Knowledge Network project.
4. compiling a database of all labour history resources available in local and community museums and libraries throughout BC. The website resource would include access to all of this teaching material as well as other labour history resources identified by the LHC and others. The website would also allow teachers who develop their own lesson plans of labour history issues to share them with other teachers.

If you are interested in becoming part of the BC Teaching Labour History Network and either being informed of or participating in future labour history teaching initiatives, please send your name and e-mail address to Ken Novakowski at knova@telus.net.

There are other significant developments occurring in the area of labour studies. Simon Fraser University recently established the Morgan Centre for Labour Studies with a clear objective of establishing a labour studies program at SFU that will enable students to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Labour Studies. The focus over the next few years will be to develop an increasing number of senior courses on labour until degree requirements can be met. This was all made possible by a generous grant from Margaret Morgan last year. Morgan, who was a retired Coquitlam teacher (a past president of the Coquitlam Teachers' Association) and administrator, passed away this summer. She and her late husband Lefty Morgan both contributed their time and energy to the growth and development of the union movement in this province and the promotion of human rights in Canada and internationally. Jim Sinclair, BC Federation of Labour president, played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Morgan Centre and now co-chairs the centre's advisory committee.

Ken Novakowski, retired teacher, former BCTF executive director, past BCTF president, currently on the board of the Labour Heritage Centre.

*Happy Holidays
from your
Advantage Partner
Canadian Direct Insurance*



Home • Auto • Travel

1.888.225.5234 | canadiandirect.com/bctf

Swiss teacher exchange



by Amélie Marceau

Geneva International airport, CFF train to Fribourg, bus to Rossens... Welcome to Switzerland to teach for one year. In August 2010, I arrived in Switzerland. The previous autumn I had started the teacher exchange application process through the CEEF (Canadian Education Exchange Foundation). The dream to teach overseas was finally to come true.

In order to participate in an exchange, a teacher needs five years' experience and a full-time

permanent position. Working for the Conseil Scolaire Francophone for five years in Nelson, BC, I was ready to jump and live this experience. The CEEF found a teacher from Rossens, in the French area of Switzerland, matching our common expectations. I was to teach Grade 1 for approximately 11 months. The Swiss teacher would come to Nelson, live in my apartment and teach my K-1 class.

Teaching overseas for one year is comparable to teaching for the first time. In the beginning, there is a lot to learn and many hours are spent at school. However with time,

experience, confidence, and pedagogical talks with my new colleagues, the school year went by beautifully. An adaptation time was needed to understand the Swiss society as well as the educational expectations that go hand-in-hand with the culture and its traditions. Differences were sometimes surprising, sometimes comforting.

Every day I was biking 6 km, through fields and small villages to reach the school in Posieux. I was teaching 17 kids, which was the normal class size in this school. Parents and colleagues welcomed me very nicely. I am still in touch with them from time to time. While in Switzerland, I had the opportunity to travel and discover the country, its ski fields as well as the ones in France, close to Switzerland. Italy was my favourite destination and easy to access. During the long holidays of October, April, and July, I went to Sicily (Italy), Canary Islands (Spain), and Northern Ireland.

Teaching and living in Europe was a wonderful experience. I encourage all my colleagues in BC to take the challenge as well as my Swiss colleagues. The benefits are enormous. It took courage, motivation, and a good sense of humour, but the results have been positive in many aspects.

*"Merci, c'était trop bien!"
Amélie Marceau, Ecole des Sentiers-Alpins, Nelson*

Social Justice 12 gaining momentum in schools

By Janet Nicol

Project-oriented, relevant, and reaching beyond classroom walls, Social Justice 12 (SJ12) has gained momentum since first offered as an elective in 2008. My own experience at Killarney Secondary, a school on Vancouver's eastside, and interviews with three other SJ12 teachers in British Columbia schools, reveal this course is a valuable addition to our curriculum.

"Homelessness is a really important issue," writes Rosa Serdar, a student in my SJ12 class. "I had a chance to get to know a man who is victimized by homelessness (in a class project) and truthfully, throughout the interview, I felt really sad for him and wished there was something I could do to help."

As Serdar's comments illustrate, many students who gravitate to this course want to explore ways to help others. Raising awareness through group and class discussions, guest speakers, films, and readings, educate students about specific issues. For example, Gary Snyder, a resident and activist on Vancouver's downtown eastside, gave students a better understanding of living within Canada's "poorest postal code." Some students became motivated to volunteer their time in the neighbourhood, and as an action project, volunteered at the Carnegie Centre and Gallery Gachet (an artists' co-operative gallery supporting mental illness issues).

Topics generating the most interest among students have been homelessness, homophobia, and bullying. All are issues relating directly to teenagers' experiences of power, sensitivity, and vulnerability. We grappled with a much wider range of topics over the course of the year, however, expanding students' knowledge, tolerance, and empathy.

"A moment that stood out for me was when we had Trent come in," wrote Jonathan Nguyen, in reference to a visit by Killarney's First Nations' counsellor. "He was someone I learned a lot from. There are many First Nations issues being overlooked by our government and it is quite concerning."

School copies of fiction and non-fiction books on social justice topics were distributed and for Alyson

Lohada, was an effective lesson. "While I read *The Book of Negroes*," she writes, "I did a lot of thinking. The insane amounts of racism that occurred then, has lessened and is seemingly hidden. I feel that there is still a lot of racism today. I hope one day soon, all of this racial profiling will come to an end."

Topics generating the most interest among students have been homelessness, homophobia, and bullying.

Several students read *Under the Bridge*, by BC born author Rebecca Godfrey. The non-fiction account is based on the bullying and murder of Victoria teenager Reena Virk. Many messages come across in this story, made even more relevant by the young people involved, familiar setting and contemporary themes.

Ming Lin writes: "*Under the Bridge* led me to contemplate the power of the mob, peer pressure, and the capacity for evil within us all. This cemented my belief that one should stay true to herself/himself."

"The power of the pen" was apparent when Rebecca Godfrey visited our classroom. As she came through the doorway, students spontaneously clapped. Following Godfrey's talk, some students approached her to sign their own store-bought copy of the book.

Sami Sekhon, was among those inspired and writes, "I was blown away by Rebecca Godfrey's analytical approach to the case and I became very interested in youth crime and the restorative justice process."

Chris Stolz has been teaching SJ12 at Tamanawis Secondary School in Surrey for three years. He has also sponsored the Gay Straight Alliance club for 11 years. Stolz says the club, and the SJ12 course, have effectively reduced homophobic language and attitudes among students.

"The single best moment," he says, "was in my first year teaching to a group that included some very homophobic boys. Amar Sangha of 'Sher Vancouver' (the South Asian

LBGTQ group) came to talk. I was worried these boys, many of whose parents had explicitly condemned LBGTQ people as "sick," would make fun of openly gay Amar. But at the end of his presentation, they stood and applauded, and, without me asking, walked up to him to shake his hand, admiring his incredible tenacity."

Stolz teaches SJ12 with a laptop. "There are hundreds of excellent videos on all SJ12 topics on Youtube," he says. "We use these all the time."

"Our class has a Facebook group," he adds. He says students use the site for discussions, sharing links, and homework questions. But Twitter is not on the lesson radar.

"Twitter is for celebrities and marketers," he observes.

Stolz believes the course helps guide youth through the complexities of life. "BC students are part of a complex people mosaic," he says, "that includes all sexual orientations, many ethnicities and languages, a huge diversity of religious views, and many people who have experienced serious adversity. A thoughtful modern citizen knows who people are and what their challenges are, so that he or she can compassionately and intelligently deal with the world."

Erin Wilkins, a teacher-counsellor at Hope Secondary School, is also in her third year teaching SJ12 in the town of Hope. She started with only 12 students in her class and this year has 29. "I believe SJ12 promotes acceptance, empathy, understanding, and a desire to make a change, both globally and locally," she says. "This class addresses real life issues that apply to the majority of our student population and it gives students the knowledge, tools, and confidence to stand up and fight for what is right."

There have been several classroom highlights for Wilkins and her students.

"As a teacher, the highlight for me was when one of my students told me that he had the confidence to tell his parents that he was gay because of my class."

"Our local food bank was robbed this summer," Wilkins also says, "and my students contacted me to ask if they could do something about it."

Besides fundraising for the food bank, Wilkins' students have learned about human trafficking and ways they can fight for the rights of children.

"The school and the community have noticed a huge change in the attitudes of students," she says. "They seem motivated and determined to make the world a better place. They stand up for what is right and are not afraid to comment when something is wrong."

Technology is part of the classroom for Wilkins too. Among the many tools used, is a teacher blog for students and a smartboard.

"A great experience!" Rachel Deschenes, writes about the course. "I learned about real issues—most of which I didn't know existed."

"What can I say? It was the most applicable class I have ever taken," writes Nathan Bobroske.

In the lively exchange among colleagues, the consensus seemed to be clear: youth studying important issues and taking action will create a more positive school, community, and global culture.

Lois Sanford has been teaching SJ12 at Total Education, an alternative school in Vancouver, for two years. She says the course permits the telling of untold histories. "The course covers factual content that is often entirely unknown to students," she observes.

"Telling these stories of others is the occasion for developing more complex cognitive tools," Sanford believes. "First, students begin wondering about which social groups are represented more, and why; next, they begin discussing patterns of injustice. Through this process, they begin to envision more complex solutions to pluralistic social problems. Finally, students begin to appropriate the modelled analytical tools and see their classmates' opinions as sources of teaching and learning."

Sanford says students "walk the walk." She says, "this is because the course covers a range of subjects that elicit a broad range of sympathies, students who feel vulnerable to one issue of social injustice might be resistant, or occasionally downright hostile, about another. Since the common theme is justice for all, not just 'your' group, an environment is created where students might feel deeply accepted for their own particular vulnerabilities, and then may feel challenged to face their own biases in order to accept others. Both the discomfort and resulting respect allows them a more personal and complex understanding of these issues."

There are many highlights to teaching the course Sanford says. "It was very heartening to hear passionate social justice discussions between students continue throughout their break time." She also says "A couple of students who became involved in their action projects were changed by their own work, and expressed their enthusiasm to pursue these fields in their post secondary studies or their careers."

Leah Moynahan, a student from Sanford's class, called the class wonderful. "It really opened up my mind and helped me become aware of issues that were totally related to me—and I didn't even know it," she writes.

Currently only a quarter of Vancouver's 18 secondary schools offer SJ12. Interest continues to grow, as was apparent at a BC Teachers' Federation Conference on Social Justice in the spring of 2011. Teachers from around the province gathered to network, attend workshops, and browse a wealth of resources. In the lively exchange among colleagues, the consensus seemed to be clear: youth studying important issues and taking action will create a more positive school, community, and global culture.

For more information, visit the BCTF website and click on Social Justice. Also, the BC Ministry curriculum guide for Social Justice 12 is available on line.

Janet Nicol, Killarney Secondary School, Vancouver

Poverty in contrast to opulence

By Mark Proctor

"Hello darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk with you again..."

The déjà vu associated with Carrie Gelson's cry from Seymour Elementary School is overwhelming. At nearly 25 years' distance, I am beginning to realize that *truth* and *justice* are the first casualties in both good and bad economic times.

The recent rediscovery of child poverty in British Columbia begs belief—not the existence of poverty among our most vulnerable citizens. There is really almost no debate about that. It's the rediscovery that shocks me. My recent sojourn to the CBC studios on Hamilton was like an out of body experience. There is no one there who could possibly recall that I was interviewed 23 years ago on the same topic with the same questions. The answers I can give now are supported by detailed and exhaustive research that didn't exist when I and my colleagues, like Carrie Gelson, held forth and said "these children are not being sustained by the society in which they live."

The public response then, like the recent event was immediate, people opened their fridges, closets, and wallets and walked into the school to try to make a difference. A major difference this time though was the response from the Vancouver School Board. The board had discretionary funding to meet local needs. The next school year saw a school lunch program and additional services in five schools—counselling time, a project teacher, additional discretionary funds injected into the schools, more nursing time, and more support staff. There was a recognition that public schools had responsibilities beyond the mere provision of equal access to education. That is that public schools had a moral duty to ensure the physical and mental state of their students were such that the education would be efficient and effective. Hungry and ill-clothed children did not seem to prosper in the school system. Eventually, the province funded inner-city schools and made them a part of the funding formula.

Whole areas of research into the demographics of poverty were undertaken, right here in BC. We continue to be in a leadership

position in our understanding of the results of poverty impacting learning through the work of Dr. C. Hertzman, Dr. Mustard in Ontario, and Dr. Schonhart Reichle. The research phase ended nearly 10 years ago. We know what's wrong and how to fix much of it.

In these years, British Columbians have literally moved heaven and earth. A grass-roofed world-class convention centre sits on piles in what was once an oozing mud flat. The sea-to-sky highway sheered tops off mountains and used the rock to fill in valleys. Our ferry fleet has been renewed. Our stadium opens to take in the sun and closes when it rains. We have hosted the world and staged an Olympics to remember. We are spanning the Fraser River yet again and expanding our port to accept the world's goods. The Canada Line whisks us into town from the airport.

And Carrie's students don't have shoes for the winter.

"For a vision softly stealing left it's seeds while I was sleeping and echoed in the sounds of silence."

Mark Proctor, retired Vancouver teacher and principal.



Victoria teacher Chris McQuaid, attends the Occupy Victoria rally, October 15, to speak out against inequality.

LIKE TO OWN A TUTORING AGENCY?

Flexible Lifestyle
Good income
Ability to grow

Academic Advantage Tutoring is seeking ambitious entrepreneurs. We have a proven system and we are excited to share it with you.

www.schooliseasy.com 1-877-ITS EASY

EDUCATION PLAN from page 1

This process of reframing is central to the rest of the plan—it is the place where teachers will learn what the government expects them to do.

The other central theme is “personalized learning.” It is defined on the plan website as follows:

“Under the Plan, teachers, students and parents will work together to make sure every student’s needs are met, passions are explored and goals are reached. This means student-centered learning that’s focused on the needs, strengths, and aspirations of each individual young person. Students will play an active role in designing their own education and will be increasingly accountable for

While the minister has implied that the BCTF had been consulted, teachers were not formally consulted on the plan before it was announced.

their own learning success. It’s all about putting students at the centre of education. That means giving teachers and schools the flexibility to make sure each student is well served by their educational program. Each student is unique and our education system will support each student’s interests and ways of learning.”

The implication of this is that a personal learning plan will be developed for every student, with participation of the student, parents, and teacher. Can you hear the secondary teacher now asking how am I going to create 200 individual, student learning plans, engaging the student and parents in the process?

The focus on individual student learning plans makes clearer why the education minister keeps saying class size isn’t important—he seems to expect that your students will all be on individual plans, grouped around projects and not classes as we have known them.

This transformation of the education system—focused on competencies and personalized student learning plans—is on a fast track. The timeline in the plan is the end of the 2013–14 school year.

The work to be done in that time frame is extensive: define the competencies (hopefully more specifically than “insight”), redesign teaching practice to focus on competencies, create performance standards for K through 12, “design, and pilot and implement student plan and standards based report card that is aligned with competencies/performance-standards.”

How can we change at this speed? A key element in the plan, according to the minister, is “learning empowered by technology.” We can do it all because technology allows for rapid social/pedagogical transformation, seems to be the minister’s message. Online, compulsory “professional learning” is implied.

District superintendents are supposed to be the leaders in this transformation, indentifying “champions” to define it. Of course, superintendents have been rather busy at the start of this school year with doing supervision of students. (On the other hand, one could say that their jobs have already been transformed, albeit temporarily.)

Nothing substantial for students with special needs

As part of the plan, a ministry staffperson has been given four months for the task of developing a recommendation for revised policies and procedures for students with special needs “through provincial dialogue.”

The review is to look at “special education in the context of personalized learning to ensure every student’s needs are met in light of the five key elements of BC’s Education Plan.”

The implication of this is that a personal learning plan will be developed for every student, with participation of the student, parents, and teacher.

What will it take to graduate?

Redefining a graduate is also high on the transformation agenda. In a four-month period, the minister is supposed to have a report that will “define attributes of a graduate and determine graduation requirements.” The minister’s op-ed piece

suggested what this will mean: “We will expand our current learning credential program to better recognize learning that takes place outside of the classroom—like arts, sports, science and leadership programs.”

How can we change at this speed? A key element in the plan, according to the minister, is “learning empowered by technology.”

The team that is supposed to define the standards for graduation is to be made up of “leading community members.”

The ministry has in the past expressed concern that the BC’s school completion rate has been on a plateau of about 80% in recent years, while some other provinces have improved their graduation results. They fail to acknowledge that provinces improving graduation rates have also improved funding for the system as a whole, as well as funding for professional development led by the teacher unions.

One way to increase to the desired result of more graduates, of course, is to change the definition. Reducing the requirements for graduation, giving credit for community activities in place of school courses, may be a strategy for increasing the graduation rate.

Technologies of control and alignment: BCeSIS-v2.0

BCeSIS crashed and is currently burning itself out. So what will replace it?

The decision to axe BCeSIS was probably made easier by the fact that it would be totally inadequate for the new BC Education Plan—the technology would have to be changed anyway. What technology, then, would the plan require?

To see that, one needs to refer back to the structure of the proposed system. Each student is to have a personal learning plan, developed by the student, parent,

and teacher—and similar to the current Individual Education Plan for a student with special needs. It is to be largely based on competencies and skills and the plan for any one student may be significantly different from that for another student. Students will also work in question or project groups.

Then, for each of the competencies and skills, performance standards, presumably with a rubric, are to be built into the system and reported on a standardized provincial report card, according to the plan. Somehow the personalized student learning plan is going to be customized for the individual, yet the performance is to be reported on a standardized report card.

As a secondary teacher with a student load of 200, you might have 200 different learning plans and the performance standards, assessment, and record-keeping that goes with each separate student’s learning plan.

That is a lot of data for the personalized reporting on 600,000 students in BC.

The central source of data is key to central control, ensuring everyone at all levels is aligned with the centrally set goals.

Should the replacement of BCeSIS be another centralized database? Think about all that data—the storage needed in a central database and the amount of bandwidth to get it all there. With the problems we have already experienced for the last five years with BCeSIS, it seems sensible not to centralize all that data in one place.

However, a new single, centralized system is proposed—implicit in BC’s Education Plan is the development of BCeSIS-version 2.0. And the timeframe for doing it is very tight. BCeSIS is on a destroy and replace timeline of 2013. And a new system that would meet the needs of personalized learning

would have to be in place for the transformation to personalized learning, scheduled for completion at the end of the 2013–14 school year.

Given the experience with BCeSIS-version 1.0, how could that be the option chosen by the ministry?

The need for a huge and complex centralized data system comes down to the paradox of personalization in a neo-liberal system. Objectives are set centrally—competencies, skills, whatever—and the student and teachers are told they can design their approach to the way to those objectives.

But that is not left as a matter of trust, nor trust of those directly involved, nor trust of those responsible at the school district level. The control is actually held at the centre, with the centralized database providing the data for the “dashboard” telling how the system is doing on the centrally set performance standards. (If this seems far-fetched, go to the IBM presentation on the superintendents’ association website and work through their slides.)

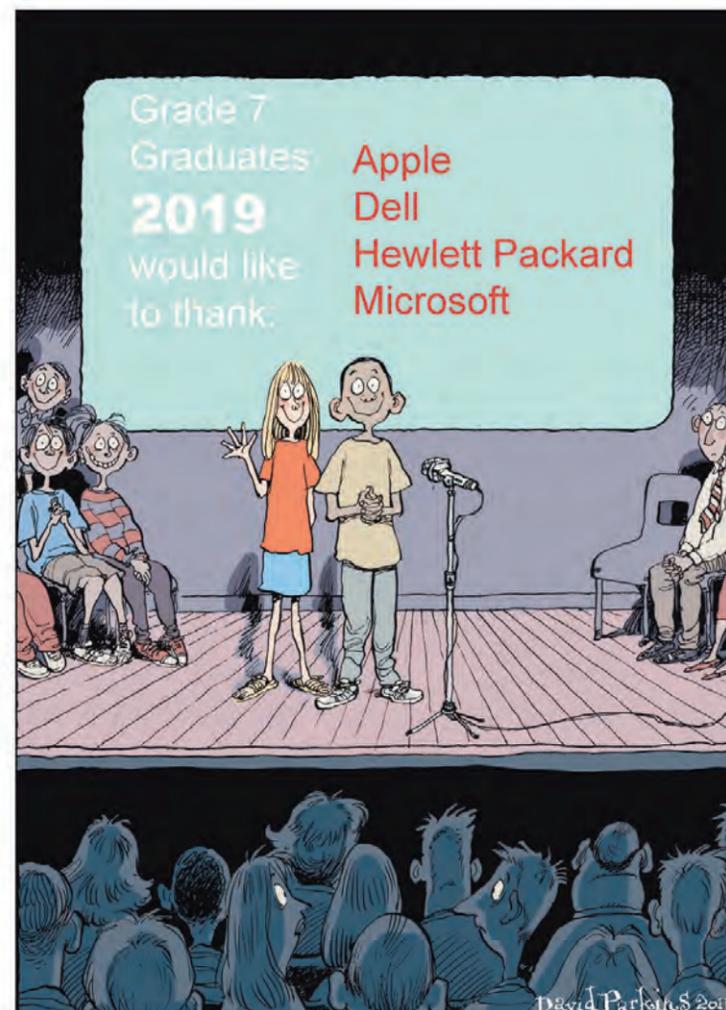
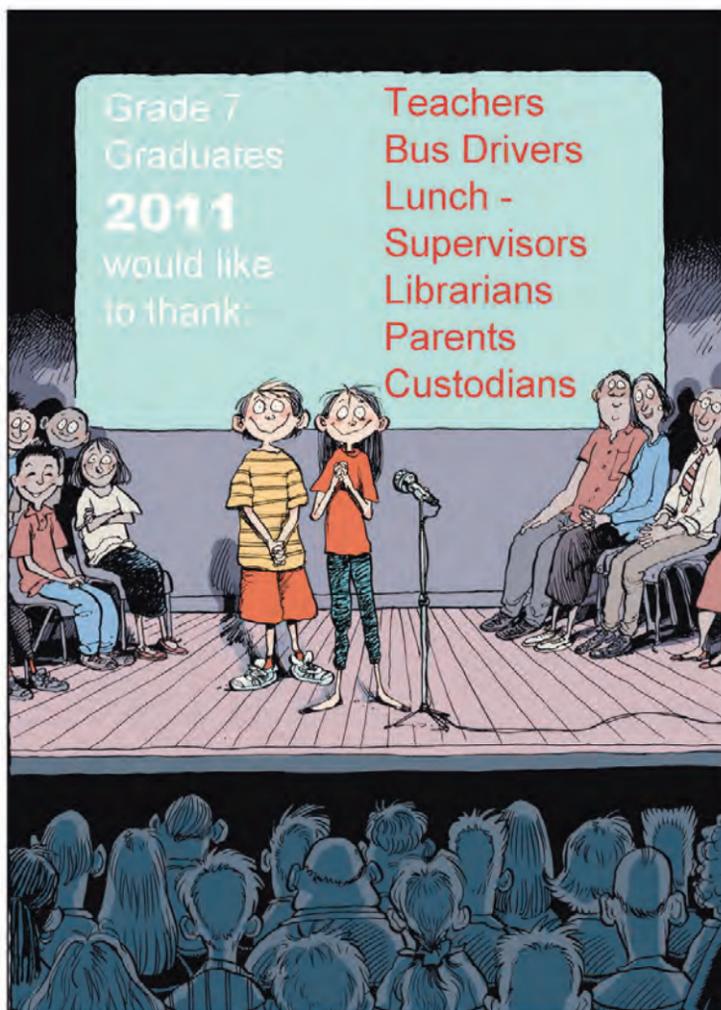
The central source of data is key to central control, ensuring everyone at all levels is aligned with the centrally set goals. The desire for accountability to the centre is a key driver for BCeSIS-version 2.0.

No funding, and kids bring their own gadgets

Reporters who covered the minister’s public announcement of BC’s Education Plan saw the story as being about technology—and noted a lack of funding to make it a reality.

They were right—the plan is technology from beginning to end: technology in the content, technology in “professional learning,” and technology in the system of documenting and reporting on learning. And the students will use technology by bringing their personal communication gadgets to use in class.

Larry Kuehn, director, BCTF Research and Technology Division



"Alignment" aims to fix the teacher

One theme of BC's Education Plan is "alignment." This is a soft way of saying that those who work in the system will be forced to follow the centrally set direction.

On the other hand, "flexibility and choice" is also a theme, seemingly the opposite of alignment enforced on the teacher.

The contradiction can be easily explained. The flexibility and choice is for the students and the employer. The alignment is for the teacher to ensure they are on the ministry program.

In fact, "fixing the teacher" is a central theme implied in the "BC Education Plan." To ensure the teacher is "fixed," BCPSEA has been told to strip the collective agreement of fair protection for teachers and their conditions of work.

- "We will...make sure that Professional Development days are used to enhance educators' knowledge-base and professional expertise." Deputy Minister James Gorman told the superintendents that the ministry would "align in-service professional development with school district and government policy objectives." BCPSEA has put employer control of professional development on the bargaining table.

- "Working British Columbians in most professions participate in performance evaluation sessions with their employer. Principals will be doing the same with teachers." BCPSEA has put annual evaluation by principals on the bargaining table, with teachers being fired after one negative performance review.

"Working British Columbians in most professions participate in performance evaluation sessions with their employer. Principals will be doing the same with teachers."

- Demands for flexibility and choice in organizing classes: management of human resources to "control costs and direct limited resources to student learning." Flexibility is translated at the bargaining table by BCPSEA as stripping seniority and post and fill provisions that currently set rules for assigning teaching work. Existing contract items protect teachers from arbitrary decisions of administrators—"flexible" in practice often means arbitrary.

- "Flexible learning paths for students—when, where and how learning takes place" sounds a lot like distributed, online learning, which has no provisions for putting boundaries around hours of work or number of students being taught.

- "Maximum flexibility for school districts to vary school day, school year and instructional time" and "enable individualized learning time for each student and early or late starts" appear at the bargaining table as proposals to give arbitrary power to boards to set the calendar and define an extended school day.

—Larry Kuehn

Education through the looking glass

Like lambs to the slaughter: The erosion of the cultured citizen

By Sean M. Douglas

"I have never let school interfere with my education" wrote Mark Twain as he considered his own understanding of the world; but how long before someone holds a mirror up to public education and realizes that the reflection of the students staring back is not the one they thought they would see? It is a shame to see Mr. Clemens' (Twain's dual persona) fears become a reality as education becomes lost within the school.

When the emphasis of education is based around statistics and external perception, it is no wonder that students are not developing a sense of personal identity, citizenship, and culture.

Perhaps what first needs to be asked is, what should an education look like, versus what kind of learning is currently shaping the next generation?

One can hardly deny that education has changed since, say, the days of Socrates, and it is clear that the age of texting and self-corrective technology has led to a decline in communication skills, and while the decline of such proficiency is unfortunate, it will not be "the way to a dusty death." What is unfortunate, however, is education's digression from culture in the classroom, for it is through the process of being cultured that all skills follow; "ay, there's the rub!"

There is, however, a great irony in such a digression of culture, for what often brings culture to a standstill is what occurs in the school itself, the same institution that one would assume seeks to shape the hearts and minds of the future. Then again, it is the ministry whose three objectives "focus on establishing high levels of student achievement; reducing the gaps in student achievement; and ensuring high levels of public confidence in public education." When the emphasis of education is based around statistics and external perception, it is no wonder that students are not developing a sense of personal identity, citizenship, and culture.



Perhaps schools no longer know how to effectively implement the values of culture, for now that we have become so immersed in politics, we are so overwrought with tensions that our sensitivity and our fear of being unpolitically correct has eroded culture itself. One's ability to teach classic literature, art, music, history, philosophy, and theory, is successfully being eroded, and it is these disciplines that are necessary for students to become cultured citizens.

We are at a point in time when what most would benefit society is a renaissance of culture. Instead, we have entered an age where the priority for the arts and humanities has been overshadowed by what is commonly considered "employable skills," the same skills that are quickly eradicating what it means to truly be human.

Education should challenge one to question, push one to seek, allow one to reflect; education should inspire curiosity, share insights, admit that failure is a necessary adversary to success; education

should drive one to study the thinkers, artists, writers and musicians of the past, to promote fading values, and to instill an appreciation for wanting to learn the ideas that establish all that we are and can be.

We are at a point in time when what most would benefit society is a renaissance of culture.

So what is it that has shifted within schools? What is the new model for the curriculum? Perhaps it may be argued that society has shifted its values away from bettering the person to bettering the profit, and that education now seeks to create a culture consisting of employable skills rather than creating a community of culture.

While on the surface, schools suggest initiatives that promote an individual's freedom to critically think, reflect, challenge, and be

challenged, though the reality is that there is very little room for true criticism or reflection in the classroom; the focus of education is not on challenging students, but rather on explicating absolute skills that can be translated in something that can be effectively numerated and explicitly bought. This is not suggesting that students do not need to develop skills necessary for the workplace, but it is implying that if a greater emphasis was placed on culturing students, these skills would naturally follow.

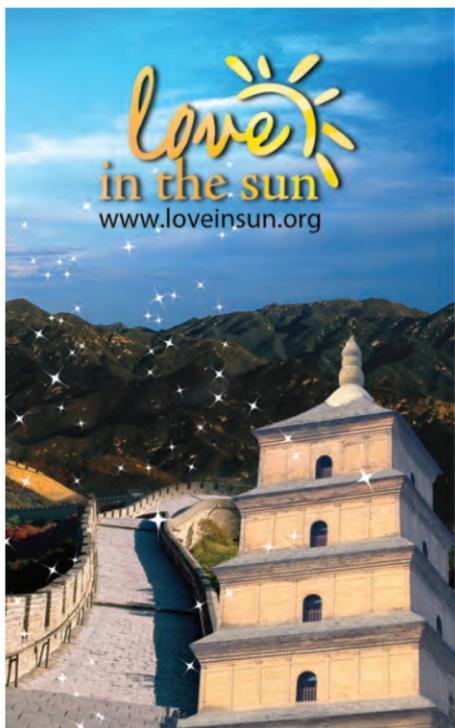
To be cultured is to encompass a greater understanding of people; culture allows one to appreciate the undertones that drive society and connect what it is that inspires and feeds the passions of the individual. Instead, we are becoming a culture dictated by the values of material worth without having been taught the values of culture. Where once there was a desire to improve oneself through reading, music, and art, now there is a desire to prove one's worth through the superficiality of those things that come and go without leaving so much as a lingering impression. We have been driven "like lambs to the slaughter" toward a corporate model of citizenship where profit precedes the person. And it is public education that has promoted this ideal.

Gone are the days when expectations were created to challenge, and one equated success with self-advocacy and the strength that came through trial and error, determination, hard work, and consequence; here are the days where expectations are written with an emphasis that there is no such thing as failure, when one's personal realities are substituted with accommodations, and culture has been replaced with conformity.

Now is the moment that public education must begin to look through the looking glass and realize that unless we want a country with no cultured consciousness, we need to focus on creating a community of culture. The time is now, the place is here; this is the moment that change must be made, for it is now that we must ensure that school never interferes with education.

Sean M. Douglas, author of *From Storm Clouds Come Angels; a former teacher in Ontario continues to lecture and studies theory and policy at the University of Toronto.*

Part I of a series entitled "Education through the Looking Glass," which is a commentary on the role of politics and its effect on critical thinking and reflection in education.



Beijing 8 Days \$999*
Beijing Xi'an 10 Days \$1399*
Beijing Xi'an Guilin 13 Days \$1899*

Departure Date: March 03, 10, 17, 24, 31
 April 06, 07, 14, 21, 28

Departure City: Vancouver, Seattle
 *Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto

Highlights:

- Beijing Sun Village
- Chuandixia Village
- Mutianyu Great Wall
- Tiananmen Square
- The Forbidden City
- 2008 Olympics Games Sites
- Giant Wild Goose Pagoda
- Terra Cotta Warriors
- Reed Flute Cave
- Li River

LOVE IN THE SUN 2012

Dear Guests:

When we enjoy our happy life in the sun, there are still many children whose parents are behind the bars wishing to receive our love and concern. We would like to help these children, and you'll have the same opportunity to do so by joining us on this trip and visit the Beijing Sun Village. On behalf of our company and our tour members, we'll donate \$10 for every tour member registered for this program.

*Add on fare \$200 for round trip
 *Plus airport taxes & fees, fuel surcharge are subject to airlines approve by government



#240 - 8877 Odlin Crescent,
 Richmond, BC V6X 3Z7 Canada
 Tel: 778-297-5593
 Fax: 778-297-5578
 info@snotours.com

Toll Free: 1-888-412-5593



Are you a fan of the BCTF?

Please join us on Facebook.



www.facebook.com/BCTeachersFederation

Opinion

Back to the future in educational policy

By Jim McMurtry

The British Columbia government is continuing the cycle of change in schools under the banner of personalized learning.

The Premier's Technology Council, which began in 2001 and issued its landmark 10th report in 2007, made recommendations that are consistent with personalized learning. It advocates "blended learning"—both online and in the classroom—that supports student choice and flexibility. Blended learning began long ago under the name "distance education" and is indispensable for students living far from schools. It has grown to include "distributed learning" where students follow a personalized

School authorities have an obvious financial interest in getting students fully online, and ultimately right out of the building and onto the home computer.

curriculum on the computer at school or home. Online learning is one of many new technologies in schools, but it has raised concerns. For one, teachers are given the designation "facilitator," which can be perceived as demeaning for its dictionary definition is of someone who helps others to achieve goals "without taking a particular position in the discussion." There are also concerns about damaged eyes, weight gain, back pain, carpal-tunnel syndrome, and radiation effects from prolonged screen exposure. Then there is the opportunity cost of students spending less time with teachers and peers. A final concern is that school authorities are embracing the blended learning model only to save themselves money by rendering many teaching roles and school facilities obsolete.

The BC government states on its website that online personalized learning "will help improve student completion and achievement." Yet completion rates are reported to be as low as 2% in some online programs, which is why school districts are keeping their completion rates from the public. Maggie McVay Lynch at the University of North Carolina found in a sample group of 5,000 students the following:

1. Student dropout rates were as high as 35% to 50% compared to 14% for traditional classes.
2. Faculty spent excessive time troubleshooting the problems students had with technology.
3. Students reported feelings of social isolation in response to electronically delivered homework.

Lynch's research shows that online learning can weaken "student completion and achievement."

The BC government has also tied itself to another American organization called the Personalized Learning Foundation, which apparently "puts kids first...through a blended approach to learning that combines the delivery of education both within and beyond the traditional classroom environment." It argues that "education research confirms that not all students are able to learn successfully at the same pace, with the same teaching approach, in the same learning environment, and in the same learning style and manner." John Dewey and others in the progressive education movement in the early 20th century long ago made this argument. All that is new is that personalized learning will now be online.

School authorities have an obvious financial interest in getting students fully online, and ultimately right out of the building and onto the home computer. They also have a political interest because the public enthusiasm for online learning is high: students want choice and flexibility, teachers want better resources, parents want their children prepared for the complex workplace of the future, businesses want technology-adept workers, and governments and boards want "improve[d] student completion and achievement." The fly in the ointment is that full online learning may hinder student completion and achievement, as Lynch posits, for many children do not use their computer time profitably and end up missing the diverse activity and stimulation of the traditional "egg carton" school, with students in rooms under the control of a motivating, if not inspiring, teacher.

The provincial government is playing a shell game—a shell game being a game involving sleight of hand in which three inverted cups are moved about and contestants must spot the hidden object—because it knows that education and society will not improve by having pupils isolated on a home computer. While deception may be part of all human activity, and certainly an integral part of the smoke and mirrors of politics, it has no place in the education of children. The government should be honest about its prime objectives, one of which is to stem the rising cost of educational services and the other to increase graduation rates—despite the attendant cost in academic challenge and accountability.

When the BC government trumpets improved "completion and achievement," it is telling that completion comes first. In adopting the paradigms of personalized learning, the government dropped the features that would improve achievement, like smaller class sizes and parent development programs, because they would add

expense—the evident truth being that greater student achievement requires greater resources. The same truth does not apply to higher completion rates, which are attainable at current or even lower spending levels if the government makes it easier for students to get through.

By lowering the bar to get more children through to graduation, public schools do a great service to private schools whose ranks will continue to grow because they market an alternative based on traditional, disciplined, accountable schooling where children are challenged to work hard and aim high. My personal story comes into play here, for I moved from a private school to a public school because of my attraction to public education and its diverse and democratic splendour. Yet public schools have become a hamster wheel of change turned by wandering educational mystics who peddle ideas like full online learning or, in the past, throwing out all the spellers or knocking down classroom walls. Now I have my students handing their school work in whenever they please because

Yet public schools have become a hamster wheel of change turned by wandering educational mystics who peddle ideas like full online learning...

someone came up with the idea that late marks are bad.

The policy directive against late marks sums up the political game. It is about completion. Kids need to get through. Some will take longer, but they too have to get through. While this is a laudable policy goal, it should not come at the expense of academic standards. I have asked many teachers about their feelings on the no late policy. The most common response is that many students now hand in their work at the last minute, which means that it never gets marked. It also means there is no feedback, lazy behaviour is reinforced, and many students are left unprepared for the strict deadlines in university and beyond. In 2010, the Ontario government brought an end to its flirtation with no late marks in its report "Growing Success," concluding that "...students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments for evaluation or for submitting those assignments late."

The best way to teach our children is not going to come from American organizations that distrust public education. It is not going to come from endless reforms or dressing up old educational ideas in a different way. It is not going to come from a facilitator or a virtual teacher. It is not going to come from reducing the number of classroom teachers. And it is not going to come from making learning less structured, less social, less adult-guided, less dialogical, and less toil for the student.

Jim McMurtry, Panorama Ridge Secondary School, Surrey.

Les trois actions sociales : responsabilité, service, justice

par Marie-Claude Tremblay

Cet article a été traduit de The Three S's: social responsibility, social service, and social justice par Joan Merrifield de la FECCB et publié dans le Social Justice Newsletter de la FECCB, automne 2008.
<http://tinyurl.com/3ka3ynj>

La justice sociale, le service social et la responsabilité sociale sont souvent confondus. Les trois sont liés mais ont des buts très différents. Notre approche à ces enjeux sociaux est-elle pareille ou différente ? La responsabilité sociale n'est pas le nombre de fois qu'un étudiant est en retard pour la classe ou que ses devoirs sont incomplets. Cela consiste à aider nos étudiants à devenir des citoyens responsables et bienveillants. Pour eux, les cours de planification personnelle et de sciences humaines peuvent augmenter leur connaissance et leur compréhension de la démocratie et de la société dans laquelle ils vivent.

Quand les étudiants se concentrent, ils apprennent à devenir des penseurs critiques, comment réfléchir et comment répondre aux questions d'intérêt public de leur communauté. Avec un apprentissage en compétences d'écoute efficaces et réfléchies ainsi que des habiletés en communication assurée, les étudiants développent une confiance en soi et une résilience lorsqu'ils traitent de questions controversées. Grâce à la responsabilité sociale, nous avons l'occasion d'enseigner aux étudiants la valeur de la diversité et de combattre les stéréotypes et les préjugés. Donc nos étudiants seront plus susceptibles d'agir d'une façon positive et active dans nos écoles et nos communautés lorsqu'ils ont le pouvoir de le faire et quand ils savent ce que veut dire vivre dans une société démocratique et socialement juste.

Le service social n'est pas à propos de la pitié ou de juger de la capacité des autres à prendre soin d'eux-mêmes. Il ne s'agit pas de restreindre l'accès aux services ou de décider qui mérite un soutien. Il s'agit d'offrir des dons en nature ou de faire des levées de fonds pour une cause ou un événement.

Lorsque nous participons dans une activité de service social, nous faisons cela dans un esprit d'altruisme sans attendre de retour personnel. C'est une tentative de subvenir aux besoins immédiats de survie et de tenter de fournir abris, nourriture, vêtements, soins médicaux, etc. pour ceux qui en ont besoin. De même, on donne souvent de son temps et de son argent pour s'assurer que les animaux sont soignés, que la faune est protégée et que les espaces sauvages sont préservés. Bien que les services sociaux tels que banques alimentaires fournissent de la nourriture pour ceux qui ont faim, ce service en soi n'attaque pas les causes profondes de la faim et n'élimine pas la nécessité des banques alimentaires. Lors des événements de bienfaisance dans les écoles pour recueillir des fonds pour nos communautés ou pour d'autres pays, nous essayons d'aider d'autres à survivre. Nous ne traitons pas les questions sous-jacentes de l'inégalité et leurs conséquences. Les étudiants qui

participent à ces événements apprennent l'empathie et feront donc des œuvres de charité dans leur communauté en tant qu'adultes.

La justice sociale implique le redressement d'injustices : prendre des mesures qui assurent un changement systémique ; prendre des décisions responsables et les vivre consciencieusement tous les jours ; faire partie des activités qui soutiennent autant un individu qu'une communauté. Quand on renforce les compétences et qu'on change la vie des autres, on crée une société civile et humanitaire, fondée sur le respect. Par exemple, les jardins communautaires nous donnent non seulement la possibilité de cultiver, mais aussi la possibilité de planifier et d'être participant égal au niveau des décisions à prendre. Quand on reçoit un salaire décent, contre un salaire minimum ou pas de salaire du tout, on acquiert la capacité de faire des choix et de participer dans la communauté aux niveaux sociaux et politiques. La justice sociale ne donne pas la permission aux élites d'avoir du pouvoir sur d'autres groupes, communautés ou pays. On ne doit pas imposer un ensemble de valeurs sur les autres, mais on doit travailler côte à côte, souvent dans le rôle d'apprenant, afin de créer le changement.

Si l'on compare les trois actions sociales, on peut voir trois approches pour traiter des questions sociales. La responsabilité sociale dépend de l'éducation, tandis que le service social est une façon de maîtriser les situations de crise immédiates. La justice sociale crée des changements à long terme en analysant l'oppression systémique qui a provoqué l'inégalité en premier lieu. Nos étudiants peuvent être impliqués dans les projets locaux et globaux aux trois niveaux et peuvent y augmenter leur connaissance et leur sensibilisation. Ils peuvent faire des levées de fonds et de dons. Ils peuvent développer des relations avec ceux qui partagent leurs avis tout en découvrant les questions importantes sur lesquelles ils veulent se concentrer. Ils peuvent choisir des projets qui leur permettront d'effectuer des changements.

En tant qu'enseignant, nous devons expliquer ces trois actions aux questions sociales à nos étudiants et les aider à choisir les projets qui auront le plus grand impact.

Une bonne ressource pour nos membres est Social Justice Lens, un outil pour planifier et évaluer des projets de justice sociale au niveau de la classe ou du conseil scolaire <http://tinyurl.com/44gdgdd>. N'hésitez pas à partager cet article. Si vous avez des questions, communiquez avec Marie-Claude Tremblay ([mctremblay@bctf.ca](mailto:mcTremblay@bctf.ca)), responsable des programmes et services en français.

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

**ALAN ANDREWS
PRUDENTIAL UNITED REALTY**

***I'm transitioning from
teaching to real estate...***

Are you Buying? Selling? Do you need a free, no obligation home evaluation?

**Call Alan – 604-240-4050
Email: alanandrews@shaw.ca**



Health and safety

Joint occupational health and safety committees

Eight-hour education entitlement

By Karen Langenmaier

The following information provides language from the *Workers Compensation Act* with policies relating to the entitlement for eight-hour education leave for joint committee members.

It is clear that the employer is obligated to provide the release time as well as the costs of the training course and any reasonable associated costs. There is no language that says that the employer must provide the actual training.

The process for joint committee members to request health and safety training is also clearly laid out (see Prevention Policy below) and is based on the specific needs of the committee member relative to their workplace.

This office has received numerous e-mails and phone calls regarding members' rights as to whether they need to take the training and education provided by the employer. The guiding principles of health and safety training and education are:

- Based on inspections, risk assessments, and incident reports, what are the health and safety needs of the specific workplace?
- What prior training/education has the joint committee member received?
- What further training/education does the committee member require to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a health and safety committee member?

Once these questions have been answered, the committee member then seeks training/education opportunities to provide the knowledge needed and follows the process outlined in the policy.

The BCTF health and safety program is an internal WCB education partner and provides health and safety training and education to administrators, support staff, and teachers. As an internal partner, the BCTF is not listed as an external educational

partner, as training/education is provided only to committees associated with public education K-12.

1. Workers Compensation Act—Part 3, Division 4, Section 135—Educational leave

135 (1) Each member of a joint committee is entitled to an annual educational leave totalling eight hours, or a longer period if prescribed by regulation, for the purposes of attending occupational health and safety training courses conducted by or with the approval of the Board.

(2) A member of the joint committee may designate another member as being entitled to take all or part of the member's educational leave.

(3) The employer must provide the educational leave under this section without loss of pay or other benefits and must pay for, or reimburse the worker for, the costs of the training course and the reasonable costs of attending the course.

The above is an excerpt from the following website:
<http://tinyurl.com/3dlshcy>

2. Prevention Policy

Members of joint health and safety committees are entitled to take time off from work to attend occupational health and safety training courses conducted by or with the approval of the Board.

Decisions as to when members will attend courses, what courses they will attend and at what time and place will normally be made as follows:

- An individual member will bring his or her request to the committee.
- If the committee agrees, the committee will forward the request to the employer.
- If the committee does not agree, or is unable to come to a decision within a reasonable time, the individual member may forward the request to the employer.
- Upon receiving a request from either the committee or the individual member, the employer will make its decision within a

reasonable time. The employer will give reasons in writing where required by section 133. In making its decision, the employer must act in a manner consistent with the purpose and intent of section 135. Permission must not be unreasonably denied.

If a member of the committee considers that the employer is not allowing the member the leave to which she or he is entitled under section 135, the member may, after following the above process, complain to the board. The board will investigate the matter. If the employer does not pay a worker's wages for leave taken under section 135, a complaint can be made to the board under section 152.

The above is an excerpt from WorkSafeBC's website located at:
<http://tinyurl.com/44h5szj>

Karen Langenmaier, BCTF Income Security Division, Health and Safety

SUSTAINABLE REGION INITIATIVE ...
TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION

Explore Sustainability

in your classroom and beyond!

Use Metro Vancouver's **free online videos** about water, waste, climate change, regional planning – and much more.

While online, also find:

- field trips
- classroom teaching tools
- teacher workshops

Inspire students to get to know, value and care about topics that are real, current and local.

Visit www.metrovancouver.org and search "education" or "teacher resources".

metro
vancouver

www.metrovancouver.org

The Department of Educational Psychology & Special Education



College of Education

Master of Education Programs

M.Ed. in School and Counselling Psychology

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

M.Ed. in Educational Psychology and Special Education

(thesis or course-based with some online course offerings for Sept. 2011)

Measurement and Evaluation

Entrance requirements: a 4-year degree in Psychology or Education including introductory and intermediate courses in statistics.

Special Education

Entrance requirements: a four year degree in Psychology or Education plus 6 credit units of undergraduate study in Special Education and an introductory statistics course. Students who have completed a Post Degree Certificate in Education: Special Education can receive advanced standing in the Special Education course-based masters option.

Enquiries should be directed to: Dr. Jennifer Nicol, Graduate Chair (epse.gradchair@usask.ca or 306-966-5261) or Susan Mason, Graduate Secretary (epse.gradsec@usask.ca or 306-966-5255). Information is available at www.usask.ca/education/epse/graduate-program

Post Degree Certificate in Education: Special Education Program

Applicants must have a Bachelor of Education and a valid Teaching Certificate. In addition, applicants will be expected to have one year of teaching experience and 6 credit units of undergraduate courses in special education (EPSE 390.3 and EPSE 414.3, or equivalent).

Enquiries should be directed to Dr. Laureen McIntyre, Director (laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca or 306-966-5266) or the Program Secretary (spec.edpse@usask.ca or 966-5253). Information is available at <http://edpsecertificate.usask.ca>.

The application deadline for the programs above is February 28, 2012. A fee of \$75 CDN is required at the time of application.

Ellis
Mortgages
Canada
Money made simple.



Need More Money?

EMC can set up a Line of Credit.
Special \$800 Rebate... Call for details.

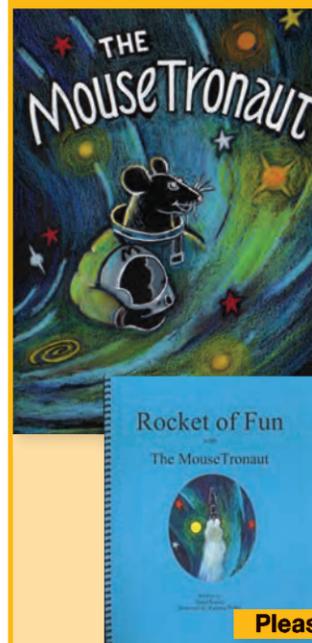
Please contact Ellis Mortgages Canada today:

604-739-0320

www.emcmortgages.ca



MOUSE-MERIZE students to READ and WRITE and watch their literary skills SOOOARRR with



The MouseTronaut and his Rocket of Fun

No longer will you burn the midnight-oil preparing vocabulary expansion, comprehension and research skills. The workbook, *Rocket of Fun*, does it all: sample instructions, an answer key and more.

Chock full of humour, play-on-words, and motivating surprises to ignite a child's interest in reading and writing.

Order your package from the White Rock author and retired teacher, Marya (Shellard) Sopova. Call 604-536-6749.

Please see: www.mouseTronaut.ca

Teachers retired

Teachers who retired prior to October 31, 2011

5 Southeast Kootenay

Brian Hamagami
Garth Harkess
Annella Hoffman
Judith Johnson
Pierrette Pelletier
Annalee Siemens
BrendaTosczak

6 Rocky Mountain

Bruce Cottrell
Catherine Larwill
Maureen Loucks
Norene Olson
Joanne Robson
Fay Stade

8 Kootenay Lake

Karen Armstrong
James Barber
Leonard DeVuono
Betty Falck
Michael Gabriel
Maureen Hyham
Pierre Kaufmann
Marcella McDougall
Peter Myles
Melissa Nesbitt
Joanna Temple
Linda Ullo
Lois Warthe

10 Arrow Lakes

Anne Beliveau
Anita Vibe
Alice Watson

19 Revelstoke

Shirley Frank
Lynn Hollingsworth
Stan Stefura

20 Kootenay Columbia

Brenda Balahura
Ann Bayfield
Darlene Bell
Paul Broyd
Jennifer Carter
Deborah Chmara
Grant De Wolf
Alan Defoe
Roberta DeLuca
Philip Donaldson
Chris Foster
Neil Fricke
Brenda Gibb
Mary Larmour
Vera Maloff
Terry Marshall
Linda Masleck
Heather McQuiggan
Janice Partridge
Agnes Walden

22 Vernon

Guida Atkinson
Rosa Behuniak
Francine Bergeron
Lois Campbell
Kristina Charlton
Bonnie Davidson
Marlaine Grazier
Diane Katz
Lynn Kermode
Georgina Kerr
Lynne Madison
Kirk Mallette
Marlene Nickel
Jeanne O'Brien
Lorraine OKeefe
Sharon Page
Barrie Reid
Maureen Reid
Sharon Robinson
Kelly Smith
Dale Tousignant
Cheryl Turner

23 Central Okanagan

Sharon Affeld
Glenn Bergen
Vicki Cairns
Linda Chamberlayne
Valerie Charison
Dennis Colpitts
William Colston
Eileen Cousineau
Laurie Desautels
Robert Fellner
Janet Fisher
Adrienne Friesen
Judy Halldorson
Holly Harkness-Murray
Sonya Hartell
Robert Hayes
Sharon Helberg
Nelda Hokazono
Darcie Hudson
Arlene Huxtable
Marianne Ingraham
Anne Jennings
Carl Knowles
Cathy Maralia

John Mardall
Robert Maxey
Judi May
Murray McDonald
Wolfgang Neufeld
Evelyn Newman
Sharon O'Brien
Loy Pierce
Mary Power
Susan Quirk
Maryanne Reavie
Susan Robert
Linda Roberts
Terrance Roy
Susan Sanger
Pamela Sherlock
Patricia Smith
Linda St Martin
Brenda Stewart
Brian Street
Anna Thibault
Wendy Williamson
Jim Wood

27 Cariboo-Chilcotin

Raeleen Campsall
Gary Carlson
Karen Chapman
Mary Cornwall
Mary Cowan
Marguerite Davie
Shelley Force
Ken Grieve
Gary Kowaliuk
Christina Mayall
Douglas Steven
Jean Wellburn
Julian Willsey

28 Quesnel

Ron Ball
James Benson
Daniel Broderick
Laurie Butler
Jolayne Dancey
Lorraine Daniell
Joseph Devito
Christina Fugler
Brian Gruber
David Law
Ronald MacDonald
Margaret Mok
Carol Price
Valerie Sanderson
Wilma Watkin
Marilyn Wiles

33 Chilliwack

L. Audet
Doris Eichstadt
Kenneth Heise
Paul Huesken
Dianne Hultgren
Wendy Lawson
Douglas Lowe
Kathleen Lucas
Ian MacVicar
Betty Meiszner
Sandra Rees
Carol Roberts
Cheryl Ross
Ruth Schulz
Janeen Szigety
Wendy Toth

35 Langley

Judy Alden
Rob Anderson
Arlene Barichello
Sharon Beard
Carolyn Burgess
Francine Charlton
Nancy Charron
Jack Colman
Allan Flemons
Kathleen Gaitt
Michael Gallagher
Judith Gerein
Kathryn Harrison
Jacqueline Hollybow
Diane Huet
Cheryl Janz-Graham
Susan Jarvis
Stewart Jensen
Wendy Johannes
Karen Johnson
Garry Kent
Robert Lang
Paul MacDonald
John Mah
Carolyn Marcotte
Mary Matheson
Edward Mulock
Pamela Nidderly
Pauline Piccott
Lynne Proske
Kerry Querns
Vickie Rasmussen
Linda Roberts
Debbie Taylor
Donald Thomson
Lynn Williams
Lucille Yoshioka

36 Surrey

Eric Andres
Andrea Andrews
Kanwal Arora
Sandra Asfar
Caryn Barlow
Cynthia Barrett
Natalie Boychuk
Gregory Burr
Lynne Burr
Elaine Busby
James Calhoun
Lee Campagnolo
Sharan Carroll
Ruth Chelsom
Robert Clauson
Vicki Cox
Sandra Davies
Patrick Demwell
Mark Desjardins
Dianne Dunsmore
Lynda Ecclestone
Carol Evans
Evelyn Feller
Doreen Fenton
Bruce Fryer
Stan Gidora
Linda Gidora
Roberta Gifford
Margaret Graham
Wendy Gregg
Maurlice Hadland
Michael Hannan
Ann Harris
Sandra Henderson
Heather Hendry
Kathleen Higgs
Carolyn Hilder
Kok-Choi Ho
Wayne Hogg
Roger Hussen
Dennis Hutton
Margaret Inouye
Patricia Jackson
Joan Jantz-Lee
Christena Kelm
Joyce Kipp
Betty Klassen
Carol Lane
Brenda Lightfoot
Yit-Shang Lim
Louise MacMaster
Linda McArthur
Pat Milliken
Sylvia Moffatt
Arlene Morris
Nancy Nowak
Valerie Olafson
Ann Paisley
Mary-Beth Piggott
Lori Plain
Mary Ann Pylpchuk
Lynda Roberts
Deborah Ronneseth
Janet Scoffield
Pamela Sinclair
Janice Smithaniuk
Lynn Swanson
Margaret Thiessen
Adele Thome
Elizabeth Thornton
William White
Gail Wilson
Sandra Wyndham
Deborah Zack

37 Delta

John Baines
Edward Baran
Sharie Beadle
Sheryl Blaser
Geraldine Boretta
Darlene Brown
James Camps
Lynda Caron
Winnifred Edwards
Cathie Gordon
Dawne Guernsey
Marette Hains
Wolfgang Hennig
Geneviève Huchulak
Lindsay Hughes
James Lawrence
Sherril Lee
Richard Marks
Beverly Mason
Barbara Massie
Helena McDowell
Marion McNeill
Phyllis Mitchell
Hilda Norton
Richard Pelletier
Lynne Peterson
Dinah Phillips
Helen Robertson
Arleen Sarvari
Sandra Stanton
John Turecki
Marilyn Watts
John Westlake

38 Richmond

Randa Bloom
Munjeet Booton
Faye Brownlie
Brenda Buchanan
Norlan Cabot
Kenneth Caig
Madeline Caruso
Nancy Dixon
Marilyn Donaldson
Yvette Gellatly
Brenda Gordey
Mary Hardy
Kevin Harkness
William Hemer
Donelda Henderson
Alannah Ireland
Susan Iversen
Janet Jones
Monique Kliman
Ellen Konnert
Joanne Long
Rita Luetzen
Heather MacKay
Gordon Maze
Judith McBride
Patricia McKeown
Margaret Menzies
Catherine Moore
Maureen Nakanishi
George Nakanishi
J. O'Gorman
Gerard O'Toole
Ida Ollenberger
Gary Payne
Christine Pearce
Lynda Prystie
Margaret Reid
Lineke Rich
Daphne Roberts
Rose Schwenning
Adrienne Sharp
Catherine Silverberg
Gary Silverberg
Grant Strandberg
Kenneth Whitehead
Valerie Wong
Catherine Wozny

39 Vancouver Elementary

Linda Attin
Claudia Azoulai
Patricia Baldwin
Elizabeth Barlow
Cheryl Berns
Laura Black
Janet Blue
Judith Brear
Laara Brown
Maria Carrillo
Francisca Carter
Pauline Carter
Joseph Cash
Mae Chin
Joan Cook
Kevin Crowe
Shirley Duggan
Mary-Ann Dyson
Ralph Fraatz
Jonnet Garner
Marcelle Gilbert
Betty Gilgoff
Tania Godoroja
Charlene Goldstein
Sharon Graham
Susan Harrison
Peter Hawkshaw
M. Helmcken
Donna Heselton
Nora Irvine
Sheila Johns
Howard Judge
Sharon Kent
Mikos Lambropoulos
Margaret Lang
Peggy Lasser
Maimy Lau
Jenafor LeBarge
Irene Loncar
Judith McCormick
Elaine McGauley
Kathryn McIntosh
Marlene McLaren
Dawn McMillan
Christine Miller
William Mizera
Susan Morgan
Josephine Nadiger
Valorie O'Connor
Harold Olsen
Jacquelin Osten
Mary Paine
Mark Roberts
Constance Robson
Yvonne Rosenberg
Judy Rother
Faye Rutledge
Gail Sergeant
Claire Smythe
Kimberly Soo-Goodtrack

D Stancombe
Jenna Stuart
Louise Thomson
Eleanor Turnau
Wayne Ulian
James Wyatt
Frances Young

39 Vancouver Secondary

Bruce Adams
Alan Andrews
Sheila Barrie
Jane Belanger
Robert Best
Janet Black
Patti Buchanan
Gregory Chambers
Gary Davis
Josie De Brouwer
Trudy Douglas
Christopher Fan
Daniel Frewing
Philip Grimmett
David Hawes
Gary Hawkins
Patricia Hutchinson
Bruce Kelly
Jane Kelty
Lawrence Killick
Betty Kosel
Thomas Koven
David Louden
Denise Marquette
Sherran McKinlay
Nader Mirhady
James Nakamoto
Margaret O'Brien
Gregg Parsons
Ludovit Paskovic
Antoinette Perrotta
Jadzia Prenosil
Judy Robertson
Robert Roy
Alan Sarna
Michael Springer
Sally Stubbs
Barbara Ward
Brian Wells
Arle Wiseman

40 New Westminster

Patricia Kelly
Wendy Koch
George Kostiw
Frederick Langston
Ronald Mars
E. Wynn Nightingale
Sally Simmons
Bruce Wong

41 Burnaby

Phillip Aird
Catherine Ashbury
Lynne Block
Louise Bradley
Leslie Campbell
Bruce Campbell
Cathrine Conings
Patricia Coutts
Gloria Creighton
David Cutcher
Joanna Doonan
Madeleine Dumais
David Farris
Pennie Fieldhouse
Jennifer Fisher
Peter Fruhling
Nina Gehl
Barbara Hall
Margaret Handel
Reta Hayes
Jeanie Hicks
John Kapka
Odie Kaplan
Joan Koch-Kalanj
Brenda Kyle
Patti Leveille
Branka Milosevic
Bunnie Munch
Raymond Myrtle
Patricia Parker
Bohdan Pisak
Allison Pisak
Erin Riffel
Virginia Shaw
Joyce Shimokura
Gail Takeshita
Mark Tanner
Ann Tamowski
Margaret Wanless
Lynne Wilkinson
Karen Williams
Diane Williams
Sheridan Angerilli
Helen Bush
Sharilee Carrat
Jean Chalifoux
Andrea D'Andrea
Hans Dewit
Isabel Gibson
Edith Hume
Margaret Inkster
Edith Ives
Bruce Kabush
Joanne Kent
Janet Lang
Rita Laseur

Patriciamay McBlane
Gina McCulloch
Darlene Penny
Linda Perugini-Seko
Antonine Pouyol
Alice Sanderson
Monica Severinson
Barbara Stevens
Anna Willis
Anita Winch

43 Coquitlam

Rosa Apperley
Dawn Bertamini
Heather Best
Douglas Binns
Barbara Boddy
Colleen Boddcher
Elaine Boisson
Pearl Camara
Gayle Chin
Elizabeth Coffin
James Cropley
Carol De Balinhard
Thomas Dickson
Lynne Edgett
Michael Fenn
Joyce Galea
David Ginnever
Valerie Grover
Catherine Haffard
Eileen Holland
Lynn Jones
Ken Kuhn
Catherine Lambert
Roberta Leslie
Marie Levesque
Kenneth MacKenzie
Caroline Malm
Brenda Martel
Carol Martin
Geoffrey McElgunn
Wendy McNally
Lois McNeill
Frederick Mioska
Caryl Nelson
Barbara Popoff
Charles Provost
Laura Roberts
Brent Rumble
David Secunda
Joyce Shebib
Judi Stockley
Patricia Symonds
Sandra Thompson
Dawn Twerdoff
Wendy Vitter
Christine Wakeling
Barry Walker
Lorne Whorley
Krystyna Wlodyka
Laverna Wong
Mark Wong
Bronwen Young
Susan Zuckerman

44 North Vancouver

Johanne Anderson
Douglas Barker
James Best
Joan Boxall
Quentin Brown
Barbra Carlsen
Dawna Coady
Corry Ewens
Catherine Fairbank
Brian Fairholm
Cheryl Galdert
Gordon Gaudet
Ghislaine Gautelier
Charlene Gavel
Jacqueline Hayter
Helen Hilder
Gillian Irwin
Gail Jeffrey
Arlette Marchal
James McDuffie
Darlene Osborne
Anthea Poskitt
Maureen Purdy
George Quan
Deborah Quinville
Anne Russell
Sharon Sanford
Agnes Swankey
Janis Valli
Pierrette Vezina
Marilynn Winterbottom

45 West Vancouver

Susan Atwood
Blair Christopher
Sue Elliott
Linda Hathaway
Ardath Hoole
Ronald Hurley
Judy Marshall
Nancy Masterman-Boyd
Sheila McKinlay
Shelley McLean
Fay Peraya
Tara Sinclair

46 Sunshine Coast

Douglas Andrew
Marilyn Farrell
Margaret Gormely
Frank Harrison
Jean Klan
Dianne Lim
Wendy McGowan

Bobbie McLeod
Ivy Miller
Lorrie Swan

47 Powell River

Maria Anderson
Kathryn Andrews
Robert Burnside
Thomasina Iles
Anar Lalani-Arnold
Diane Lawn
Marilyn McLaren
Leslie Paul
Charles Soroke
Peter Taylor
Brin Wilson

48 Sea to Sky

Anne Chatel
Graeme Galloway
Roger Lake
Peter Lang
Scott McIver
Pat White
Janice Zimmerman

50 Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte

Anne Mol
Karl Puls
Audrey Putterill

51 Boundary

Bonny Cooke
Shayne Konar
Kathryn Moslin
Joan Thompson
Carol Tirk
John Westaway

52 Prince Rupert

Janet Anderson
Colette Cantin
Donald Cembella
Lachlan Clement
Michael Crawford
Howard Linn
Carol Manning
Joan Mullin
Beatrice Robinson
Shelley Stafford

53 Okanagan Similkameen

Linda Beaudette
Robin Bonnett
Donald Bridgman
Gregory Smith

54 Bulkley Valley

Richard Brise
Thomas Butz
Cheryl Hofweber
Irene Howard
Kathryn Kantakis
Mark Littler
Ian Malcomson
David McMillan
David McNeilly
Beverly Munro
Michael Richy
Catherine Short

55 Burns Lake

Cathy Shane

57 Prince George

Ina Anderson
Robert Bagnall
Beverly Bagnall
Lalonia Ballantyne
Constance Bennett
Leslie Bishop
Kenneth Bohn
Laura Chandler
Carol Chanter
Philip Clark
Janet Cocker
Felicia Constantinescu
Diane Coole
Randall France
Erich Franz
Violet Froese
Rhonda George
Erika Gregson
Charles Grove
Jennifer Harvey
Kathleen Hughes
Dale Hynes
Douglas Kibble
Douglas Knox
Shelley Kobewka
Kim Koehn
Janice Lazzarin
Foo Lee
Robert Lee
Irene Lind
Ellen Macinnis
Janice Manning
Joan Marchant
Jacqueline McLaughlin
Eleanor Mulroy
Wendy Mundie
Linda Naess
Sharon Nusse
Carla O'Brien
Patricia Offin
Kathleen Paulson
JM Payette
Terry Phillips
Timothy Power
Anne Rose
Penny Roze
Diane Rustad

Cheryl Sales
Suzanne Sharp
Toni Skaalid
Eileen Skiffington
Norma Stacey
Larry Stewart
John Thomson
Debbie Thorsteinson
Janet Thwaites
Grace Vallee

58 Kootenay Similkameen

Rose Balan
Stephen Carroll
Kevin Dixon
Karen McKenna
Allan Rasmussen
Thomas Soroka

60 Peace River S

Linda Armstrong
John Davidson
Brian Goy
Jean Matthews
Veronica Shannon

60 Peace River N

Eunice Chapman
Rita Churchill
Margaret Constable
Andy Hunter
Gerald Paille
Gary Smith
Brenda Smith
Patrice Wicharuk-Hunter
Nora Zeman

61 Greater Victoria

Patricia Barron
Kathryn Bergstrom
Andrea Chorney
Janice Coady
Carol Cooper
Louise Crumrine
John Cuthbert
Sandra Davis
Arthur Dow
Karen Edwards
Donald Goldsmith
Michael Grew
Marilyn Hancock
Susan Harrison
Catherine Harrower
Mary Head
Dragica Horne
Karen Hughes
Joanne Ibbetson
Mary Jackson
Lorraine Kemp
Sandra King
Susie Konrath
Vaughan Lewis
Marion Longpre
Ian MacPherson
Diane McBeath
Marilyn McCrinmon
Gillian McCutcheon
Barbara McLean
Diane McNally
Barbara Mitchell Pollock
Carole Morin
Margaret Penny
Joanne Randall-Williams
Roderick Sauve
Rhonda Schactman
Robert Schwartz
John Shaw
Stuart Soward
Marion Statham
Corinne Susut
Laura Chandler
Carol Chanter
Philip Clark
Janet Cocker
Felicia Constantinescu
Diane Coole
Randall France
Erich Franz
Violet Froese
Rhonda George
Erika Gregson
Charles Grove
Jennifer Harvey
Kathleen Hughes
Dale Hynes
Douglas Kibble
Douglas Knox
Shelley Kobewka
Kim Koehn
Janice Lazzarin
Foo Lee
Robert Lee
Irene Lind
Ellen Macinnis
Janice Manning
Joan Marchant
Jacqueline McLaughlin
Eleanor Mulroy
Wendy Mundie
Linda Naess
Sharon Nusse
Carla O'Brien
Patricia Offin
Kathleen Paulson
JM Payette
Terry Phillips
Timothy Power
Anne Rose
Penny Roze
Diane Rustad

Lynne Majid
John Martin
Wendy Moulding
Janice Roper
Patricia Saxon
Linda Schaefer
Inez St Dennis
Patricia Stevens
Karen Stills
Wendy Szczepanowski
Ann Tamboline
Wendy Wignall

64 Gulf Islands

Wilf Davies
Ann Donahue
Ronald Edmonds
Marjorie Jones
Sandra Locke
John Nicolson
Leslie Sheehan
Joyce Weir

67 Okanagan Skaha

Suzanne Aubin
Fraser Barton
Dean Bates
Stephen Clarke
Janice Clary
Giovanni Cristini
Thomas Doratti
Patricia Gartrell
Gillian Guerard
John Hannah
Maureen King
Beverly Krieger
Sherilyn Lewis
Ross Lindquist
Sheila Martin
Charles Mayer
Shirley Rafter
Ronald Smuin
Vanda Wilson

68 Nanaimo

Gerald Adams
Christina Brand
Naomi Hurwitz-Adams
Anne Schulz
Jo-Ann Terpstra

69 Mt Arrowsmith

Adriaan Bergink
Christina Brown
David Brown
Daniel Cousins
Darcy Dalgaard
Catherine Dempster
Cheryl Dunfield
Virginia Hama
Carolyn Hickman
Michael Lawrence
Jill McCaffery
Laurie Rankin
Gerald Smith
David Sufrin
Jill Trelawny
Catherine VanHerwaarden

70 Alberni

Lesley Anderson
Carol Astrom
Louise Berlinski
Kenneth Callaghan
Susan Comeau
Gregory Falls
Catherine Huisman
John Leslie
Gary Marks
Robert McCarter
Gail Morton
James Sereidick
Marcus Slotiuk
Patricia Venn

71 Comox Valley

Dale Acheson
Lynn Adamschek
Gay Bailey
Barbara Berger
Nicole Blackwell
John Carswell
Henrietta Hall
Patricia Hodge
Helen Jackson
Susanna Kaljur
Keith Kroeker
Owen Leung
Sandy Malcolm
Sharon Milburn
Cora Pullin
Susan Rowe
Valerie Sherriff
Ileana Woolman
Anita Wotschel

72 Campbell River

Lesley Bird
Katharine Fitzsimmons
Mary Kiddle
Jack Mar
Diana McKerracher
Gregg Mitchell
Loretta Netter
Dorion North
Derek O'Brien
Deborah Rizun
Sharon Sanford
Vicente Sequeira
Stephen Sparling
Gerry Vanderjagt
Victor Wizbicki

Colleen Wizbicki
Darlene Zamluk

73 Kamloops-Thompson

Barbara Aarestad
Victoria Antoniak
John Bade
Dawn Beck
Jacob Bornstein
Pamela Brockington
Elizabeth Cameron
Patricia Coates
Shirley Collins
Colin Covington
Elizabeth Critchley
Marlene Crowther
Robert Cuming
Brian Dick
Sharon Dodd
Edward Fridriksson
Lorna Fuoco
Jodene Gowans
Marilyn Hannis
Ann-Marie Hunter
Joan Inkster-Smith
Denis Jacques
Virginia Kaser
Therese Laforge
Dorothy Lear
Jo-Anne Loader
Joanne McClelland
Alan McLean
Lily-Anne Millar
Janet Milliken
Colin Mole
Bella Morris
Debora Newman
Ross Nybo
Helen Nybo
Robyn Rexin
Michele Sabatino
Linda Schatkoske
Robert Seagle
Brenda Simpson
Linda Smith
Elizabeth Toman
John Walker
Janet Ward
Jeffrey Willett
Sharon Young

74 Gold Trail

Volker Jastrzebski
Janice McGillis
Ken Pite

75 Mission

Helen Baron
Pamela Carter
Pirjo Hartman
Geraldine Howe
Robert Livingstone
Linda Miller
Susan Naughton
Ingrid Olthof
Heather Rapin
Kathleen Smith
Harry Smith
Selma Strowbridge
Colleen Trenholme

78 Fraser-Cascade

Janet Baldwin
Gordon Burgoyne
Theresa Crossgrey
Patricia Kjemhus
John Lang
Joyce Mitchell
Donald Piechotta
Peter VanStolk

79 Cowichan Valley

David Aris
Helen Butcher
Darlene Collinson
Joan Eichenlaub
Sue Emblem
Susan Gavaghan
Kerr Gloster
Barry Hoag
Ane-Marie Hogan
Cathy Hoodikoff
Barbara Jones-Sussman
Barrie Luff
Eric Marlin
Ruth Morden
Wendy Neilsen
Diane Paton-Molnar
Lorelei Phillips
Jillian Purves
Donna Smyth
Laurel Taylor
Steven Taylor
Catharine Wade

81 Fort Nelson

Sharie Loeppky

82 Coast Mountain

Urs Gasser
Michael Jones
Nancy Kurbel
Estelle Mitchell
M Morgan
Mary Paterson
Theresa Rosengren
Lederer Wernetta

83 N. Okanagan Shuswap

Shelley Baumbrough
Nicholas Buyer
George Elamatha
Judith Harris
Wendy Henderson
Gordon Henderson
Denise Klinge
Janette McDonnell
Colleen Moore
Irene Novak
Wilf Pauls
Betty Ross
Ryley Shaw
Alan Shipmaker
Bryon Wiley
Robin Wilmot

84 Vancouver Is. West

Terry Kellington

85 Vancouver Is. North

Susan Anweiler
Frances Jenkins
Kristin Quigley
Christopher Tinney

91 Nechako Lakes

Ann Davis
Ann Douglas
Doreen Loseth
Donald McIntyre
Judith Mitchell
Rena-Mae Neufeld
Sandra Panagopoulou

92 Nisga'a

Desmond Belton
Ron Peal

93 SEFP

Michel Goudreault
Marielle Last

Research

BC retired teachers support their communities

By JoAnn Lauber

In March and April 2011, the BC Retired Teachers' Association (BCRTA) conducted a survey to investigate both the volunteer role of educators who had retired and the impact of their work on communities in the province.

The survey found that thousands of retired teachers are actively contributing to society by volunteering in communities all across the province...

Based on the number of responses to the survey (1,036), the professional staff of the Research and Technology Division of the BC Teachers' Federation, who assisted the BCRTA, declared the results statistically valid. Respondents, in addition, made 1,282 written comments.

The survey found that thousands of retired teachers are actively contributing to society by volunteering in communities all across the province where they taught and built connections, and where they still reside. Their volunteer work is rich in scope and diversity, and significant in terms of contribution.

In volunteering, retired teachers, even into their 80s and beyond, touch the lives of people in all age groups from children to the elderly. In their volunteer work, they engage in a variety of activities, in fact, an average of four different activities by each volunteer.

The largest number of BCRTA volunteers work in community, provincial, and international organizations and events—more than half (681) of the survey respondents, thus indicating active participation in social and civic affairs.

One survey respondent remarked, "Retired teachers are significant in the leadership and organization skills in our town in almost every area" and another, in support of this finding, wrote, "In my experience, retired teachers are highly valued as volunteers by organizations because of the skills developed over a teaching career—planning, organizing, implementing plans, and working well with others—and are often actively recruited."

The results show that the largest number of hours of volunteering per person per month, far greater than for any other category, was found to be in caregiving. Many respondents commented that they were also administering necessary caregiving in their homes; thus, many hours in addition to those cited on the survey, are devoted to caregiving. This contribution—in the form of caregiving assistance—constitutes a huge social and financial benefit to our health and childcare systems.

The study revealed that each BC retired educator devotes an average of 31 hours of volunteer time each month to multiple endeavours in a broad range of community and people-centred activities. This amount of time is more than double that donated by "top volunteers," as described in a 2009 survey on volunteering by all Canadians.

If the volunteer work of BCRTA survey respondents is extrapolated to the entire population of retired educators in the province (29,831 retirees at the time of the survey), and calculated at only a minimum wage of \$10 per hour, the economic benefit is valued at about \$111 million annually. A phenomenal contribution to the welfare of society in British Columbia!

The study revealed that each BC retired educator devotes an average of 31 hours of volunteer time each month...

Retired educators contribute in diverse and significant ways to the well-being and sustainability of the communities of our province. During their lives as educators, BC teachers were devoted to their charges—the school children in their communities; perhaps it is not surprising that their altruistic and compassionate spirit of involvement and caring carries on to become their passionate preoccupation in retirement.

This spirit of caring and giving pervaded the comments of the survey respondents. One retired educator wrote, "Volunteering is wonderful, keeps us young, keeps brain cells dancing, and makes us realize just how many skills have been attained throughout a teaching career. Volunteering not only fills the hours but provides an opportunity to serve others in a meaningful way, to make community stronger, to give back to society the benefit we get from living in a democratic country."

The authors of this report wish to thank all those retired teacher volunteers from every region of this province who shared their experiences and reflections. Their work as volunteers makes our world a better place. We hope that the results of this study will enable informed discussion about retiree volunteering in British Columbia and encourage the provincial and federal governments to consider what they might do to support the selfless work of volunteers.

The full report is posted on the website: bcrt.ca.

Ad hoc Volunteerism Committee: Cliff Boldt, Judy deVries, Dale Lauber, JoAnn Lauber (chair), Sheila Pither, Howard Spence

The Teachers' Pension plan invites you to free pension seminars designed especially for you!



- New to teaching or at the mid-point in your career? **Your Pension, Your Future** helps you better understand the value of your Teachers' Pension Plan.



- Within 5 years of retirement? **Thinking about Retiring** focuses on the information you need to know before you retire.

Learn more and pre-register for a seminar by visiting tpp.pensionsbc.ca (click on Resources, then Pension Seminars)

UBC a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA | FACULTY OF EDUCATION

MASTER of EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (MET)

Complete your Master's degree. From anywhere.

100% online

UBC's cutting-edge Master of Educational Technology program is delivered in an online format that is ideal for in-career teachers.

Check out the MET program – just one of the many continuing education options offered by UBC's Faculty of Education.

Learn More @ met.ubc.ca/bc

GERRY DEE 2012 LIFE AFTER TEACHING COMEDY TOUR

January 18 - Victoria, BC
McPherson Playhouse

January 19 - Nanaimo, BC
Port Theatre

January 20 - Abbotsford, BC
Abbey Arts Centre

January 21 - North Vancouver, BC
Centennial Theatre

January 22 - Kelowna, BC
Kelowna Theatre

Callaway GOLF Twitter

mr.d on CBC

Everyone's favourite teacher...just ask him.

Watch for Gerry on his New CBC sitcom
Monday nights starting January 9th at 8:30 pm.

WWW.GERRYDEE.COM

Our futures are not determined simply by what we do but how and why we do it.



Jobs are being added every day.

Visit www.makeafuture.ca to find career opportunities in BC's public schools and districts. Apply online for positions in teaching, special education, leadership, information technology, speech therapy, counselling, psychology, and more.

Make a Future – Careers in BC Education is a joint venture among BC's 60 Boards of Education, the BC Ministry of Education and the BC Public School Employers' Association.

www.makeafuture.ca

Make a Future
CAREERS IN BC EDUCATION



Public pensions are not a burden on the taxpayer

By Rob Taylor

The rhetoric around the exorbitant cost of so-called “gold-plated” public pensions has become increasingly heated in the mainstream media over the last year. This ramping up has been highlighted by events taking place in the United States and Europe with regard to their heavily underfunded and supposedly rich pension plans.

It's time to take a step back and look at the issue from a Canadian perspective. We all jump when we read of the pensions earned by corporate CEOs such as the recent reporting of a pension in excess of \$300,000 a year earned by David Hahn, CEO of the BC Ferries Corporation. The reality for classroom teachers is far from that. It is true we belong to a good pension plan. It is a defined-benefit plan, which means we know what our pension will be when we retire because it is based on a formula consisting of time worked, our highest average salary, and a percentage which we earn for each full year of work.

Defined-benefit plans do contribute an element of risk to an employer because the contribution rate to the plan is variable based on what an actuary believes is necessary to fund a pension in the future. The long-term cost is completely unknown to the employer and employee because there are so many factors that influence the plan. Three recent issues that affected contributions have been the drop in portfolio values as a result of the 2008 recession and the subsequent turmoil in the stock markets since June of 2011, the improved lifespan of teachers and the expected tsunami of baby boomers who are moving into their retirement years.

Canada has some of the strictest legislation governing pensions in the world. The *Income Tax Act* ensures that we can't squirrel away too much of our income in tax-deferred vehicles and the *Pension Benefit Standards Act* sets minimums for what pension plans must provide. Defined-benefit pension plans in Canada may not amass surpluses greater than 110% of what the plan needs to pay the pension promise. At the same time, they may not be underfunded by that same 10% margin. Simply put, pension plans have to save enough money to cover the earned pension of every member. In the 1990's when the stock market was booming and pension-plan investments were making double-digit returns, many plans were forced to take contribution holidays in order to keep their surplus in check. In the long term, this had a negative effect because the subsequent double-digit losses took their toll on a plan that had been curtailed. Add to that the failure on the part of government to regulate plans in the private sector and pensions became headline news.

General Motors is a case in point. The introduction of robotics to the assembly line meant a loss of workers on the factory floor. Generous early retirement incentives were offered in order to avoid layoffs and as a result their pension plan became a liability. It is often said that GM is a pension plan that makes vehicles as a sideline. At present their unfunded liability exceeds \$27 billion.

What should be a concern is the encroachment of the defined-contribution plan. As an employer, this represents less risk. The company knows what its contributions will be for each employee based on salary. What is unknown,

and therefore a huge risk to the employee, is the outcome. In a defined-contribution plan, contribution rates are fixed, the money is invested in personal accounts, and at retirement the employee receives their accrued retirement nest egg. Imagine though, comparing two employees, one of whom retired on June 30, 2011, and one who retired on September 30, 2011. It's entirely possible the June retiree had a pension that was 20% larger than his colleague even though the contributions were identical.

Recent labour disputes highlight this. In a recent year-long strike at Vale Inco, the main issue was conversion of their company plan to a defined-contribution plan for all new members. Crown corporation job actions were over the same issue at Air Canada and Canada Post.

Are defined-benefit plans risky?

No pension plan is risk free. As contributors, we share the risk with the employer, but we also share the reward when markets are good. A defined-benefit pension plan can best be described as a long-term savings plan that starts on your first day of work. You and your school district contribute an amount set by the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees, based on the advice of the actuary to ensure that when you retire you will have set aside enough to fund your own pension promise. Financial advisors currently predict that with current market conditions the average investor would need to set aside at least 25% of their salary to reach the goal of 70% of preretirement income, which is the industry standard for ensuring a risk-free retirement. That 25% does not account for inflation protection.

Currently, contributions to the TPP sit at 24.5%, so in relative terms they are right on track.

What's happening in the rest of the world

The simple reality is that pension plans elsewhere don't enjoy the protections that Canadian ones do. Pensions are often underfunded because governments choose to spend their revenues elsewhere, expecting that the public purse will fund the pensions later. That's simply not viable. As well, actuarial assumptions on what a pension plan could earn in the investment market were unreasonably high, calling for returns as high as 7.75% when 6.5% was more likely. Keep in mind that these are multi-billion dollar plans, 1.25% can represent hundreds of millions of dollars in shortfall.

There is a difference in the rhetoric between Canada and the United States. In the US, the focus is on the deficits rung up by underfunding pensions. In Canada the dialogue from groups like the Canadian Federation for Independent Business tends to focus on the entitlements public service workers have. They contend that pension entitlement has virtually disappeared in the private sector and should do so in the public sector.

How do we react?

There are three possible scenarios. First, is to defend the plan with facts and figures. Teachers' pensions are not gold-plated. The average teacher pension granted in 2010 was under \$2,400 per month. This is a pension for someone with at least five years of post secondary education and 25 years of work who has reached the age of 60.

The second defence is actual cost. The government, as employer, contributes about 15% of the final value of the pension, the teacher contributes a further 15%, and the rest of the value comes from investment earnings accrued over the working life of the teacher. In realistic terms it is a small investment in exchange for a financially secure retirement. The employer can also use the pension plan as a recruitment tool because it can promise future financial stability.

Wages of public service workers tend to be lower than those in the private sector. Even when calculated as part of their total compensation package, a public service employee still earns 3% less than a counterpart in the private sector.

A final defence is the social good generated by a secure pension plan. According to a report by the Progressive States Network, public pension-plan investments generate \$358 billion in economic impact and account for 2.5 million jobs. In relative terms, that's \$35 billion and 250,000 jobs created by the investments alone.

That impact doesn't include the spending power of retirees who are, after all, taxpayers and consumers. In fact, according to a recent CBC report, seniors represent the newest consumer market. As a group they have the highest disposable incomes in history and are enjoying that.

A final thought is the savings generated in the health and social service ministries that come about when seniors enjoy the moderate standard of living that a defined-benefit pension plan provides.

Rob Taylor, BCTF Income Security Division

CPP protects workers from market meltdown

by Ken Georgetti

Just when you thought the 2008 global financial crisis was an ugly memory, the stock market roller-coaster is back with a vengeance, and we're along for the wild ride. Across the world, investor fears over sovereign debt and sluggish growth have ignited a loss of confidence and a flight from risk.

Workers trying to save for retirement are watching in frustration and disbelief. In the space of one week in August, Canadians with equity mutual funds watched 10% of their retirement savings evaporate.

Defined-benefit pension plans also lost money during the summer's carnage in equity markets, but only about 4% of total assets.

The gyrations come less than three short years after the last gut-wrenching plunge in equity markets. In between, indexes like the Toronto Stock Exchange did not even manage to return to their previous highs—which is why many RRSP portfolios have failed to recover from devastating market losses three years ago.

Mutual fund investors in Canada have, in the meantime, been charged management fees that are amongst the highest in the world. Whether you win or lose at the blackjack table, it seems, the dealer takes a cut.

To be sure, all of this turbulence is good for hedge funds and speculators, who rely on market volatility for outsized returns. But is this any kind of sane way to ensure that retired workers have decent incomes in old age?

The current market swings are a reminder of just how costly and irrational the shift from defined benefit to individual savings plans really is. Think about two individuals retiring this week from a lifetime of work—Steve and Ted.

Steve is a member of a large defined-benefit pension plan, and knows exactly what his retirement benefit will be. That's because pension plans, which pool risk across generations and spread it over many years, can roll with the market punches and recover from temporary losses far better than individual portfolios.

The Canada Pension Plan is a perfect example. Canadians retiring this week with a CPP pension will get the full amount to which they are entitled, as will those retiring next year and beyond. Large funds like the CPP have professional investment managers who typically secure higher returns than small-fry investors, who lack the knowledge and access that institutional investors enjoy.

As a member of a defined-benefit pension plan, Steve can proceed with his retirement plans despite the market turbulence, confident in the knowledge that his retirement benefit is secure, protected against inflation, and provided for life.

Imagine Ted, on the other hand, with a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). Unlike many of his friends, Ted has been lucky to have an employer who chose to offer a group RRSP at work, even if Ted's boss opted not to pay into his RRSP.

Ted has dutifully contributed a portion of every pay cheque for

years, in anticipation of his retirement date. But for Ted, as with other individuals with retirement savings in private individual accounts, everything depends on market conditions.

The drop in the value of Ted's retirement portfolio on the eve of his retirement means that he will either have to put up with a permanent loss of retirement income, or postpone retirement

until he can recoup his losses—with no guarantee that markets will rebound even three years from now.

Make no mistake, defined-benefit pension plans lost money in equity markets during the summer, but only about 4% of total assets—far less than the haircut small investors received. But most importantly, time is on the side of pension plan members. This is not so for retail investors with individual retirement savings accounts.

Three years ago, the prime minister reassured us that a tumbl-

ing stock market signaled new buying opportunities. Great advice for high rollers, but not so good for Canadians trying to plan for retirement. Amidst persistent market turmoil, it's clear that we need the stability and protection of Canada's secure and enduring national pension plan more than ever. It's time to expand the Canada Pension Plan.

Ken Georgetti is president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

Reprinted from CALM Labour News & Graphics, September 2011



Classified

TRAVEL/VACATION

WHISTLER CABIN-PINECREST 5 bdrm/loft, totally renovated with 4 baths, sauna, woodstove, large decks, fully equipped kitchen. By tennis courts and private lake. Seasonal rates from \$275/nt. 604-936-3346, e-mail: glush49@gmail.com

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

FRANCE. Ultimate vacations, privately owned, beautiful furn. 1 bdrm. central Paris. Wkly/mthly. 604-738-1876, 604-879-4936, irene.roland@gmail.com, www.ultimateparis.com

MAUI HAWAII, Great S. Kihei location, 1 bdrm. with ocean view, across the street from great beaches. For more information 209-599-5248 or www.maui342.com

KIHEI, MAUI, Privately owned, beautiful fully furn. 2 bdrm, 2 bath condo, across from Kamaole Beaches. Great complex, Great location. 250-598-6955.

PUERTO VALLARTA Bright, clean, quiet, 1 bdrm, 2 blks from beach, downtown, \$350/wk., mnthly rates. 604-608-4268, dbemc@hotmail.com

GULF ISLANDS Deluxe waterfront cottage, 1 bd./sleeps 4, winter and summer rates, call Alma 250-629-3008, www.ainsliepointcottage.com

SOUTH OF FRANCE villa in lively, lovely market town of Limoux. 4 bdrms. Sleeps 8. 2 bathrooms. All mod cons. Near lake and river swimming and historic Carcassonne. Great rates. Deep discounts for long-term, off-season. www.southofffrancerental.com

QUADRA ISLAND private cabin for 2. Panoramic ocean, mountain view, soaker tub, www.lunavista.ca

WATERFRONT CONDO Birch Bay, WA. 2 bdrm, 2 bath, for week or weekend rentals. Complex has indoor pool, hot tub, games room. \$150/night or \$900/wk (plus \$50 cln. fee), birchbayrentals.com or call Teresa@604-831-4080.

WHISTLER. Townhouse, sleeps 6, fully equip. 604-925-7669 or Gary 604-669-7212.

WINTER STORM WATCH. Sunshine Coast oceanfront home, spectacular SW Georgia Straight Views from every room. Enjoy a winter weekend getaway curled by the wood-burning fire watching the weather. 3 bdrm, 2 bath, private & peaceful, walk to beaches, Gibson's funky shops, restaurants. \$200/night, longer stays rates negotiable. Xmas avail. janeski@telus.net, 604-921-7122.

LA MANZANILLA, MEXICO. Beautiful, new, luxurious home in quiet cul-de-sac. 4 bdrm, 3½ bath, pool, fully furnished. 12-min. walk to village and playa. 250-537-6984, casalamanz@shaw.ca, www.lamanzanillarental.com

PUERTO VALLARTA. 1 bdrm. with kitchenette: \$300/wk. or \$600/mo. in a new ocean-view private home in gated community. 7 min. to beach, 15 min. to airport. <http://mexicohome.weebly.com> for details. Your best bet.

GRAND TOUR. Join us on The Grand Tour in July 2012. See Europe like you've never seen it before. www.onelifeitours.ca for details.

PALM SPRINGS. 2 bdrm., 2 bath townhome. Newly renovated private spa. 604-574-1904, ldevitt@roadrunner.com

PALM SPRINGS. Gorgeous 2 bdrm., 2 bath townhouse, \$800/wk, 2 wk. minimum, or \$2700/mo. Great location, many amenities, large pool and tennis courts. Available March 8th. billchelsom@shaw.ca

GULF ISLANDS. Lovely cabin, low-bank waterfront, 2bd.+sleeps 4+, available fall, winter, spring including Xmas/Spring break. No smoking, no pets. 250-592-7263, wombats@shaw.ca

TRANQUIL SEASIDE retreat. Quadra Island. Full facilities and Internet. Serene mountain and oceanview. www.otterhouse.ca

RENT/EXCHANGE

VANCOUVER Clean, bright, quiet, centrally located condos at Robson & Bute. 1 bdrm. \$95. Daily/wkly/mthly rates. 604-608-4268, dbemc@hotmail.com

GABRIOLA ISLAND. Experience beautiful Gabriola Island, gorgeous waterfront home available, Dec. 20 to March 8, reasonable rent. billchelsom@shaw.ca

KAMLOOPS. 2 bd. suite in 55+ River-Bend Seniors Community, \$2,100/mo., Spacious. Welcoming. Wheelchair friendly. Avail. immediately. catherine_steele@hotmail.com, 604-408-1023 (Vancouver).

VANCOUVER. Newly refurbished & furnished studio apt in West End, 2 blocks from Stanley Park & English Bay. \$450/wk. jkathleen@shaw.ca

SUBLET KITSILANO. 1 bdrm. furnished view apartment, January-April, \$1,200 all inclusive. 604-731-4798.

CHILLIWACK EXCHANGE. Want to try life in the Fraser Valley? Let's exchange your Greater Vancouver house/townhouse for our beautiful, private, 4 bdrm. Fairfield Island home for 6-12 months. Grow your own veggies!! Hiking, paddling minutes from your door. Vicgladish@shaw.ca

OCEAN VIEW HOUSE on 1 acre garden property, Vancouver Island. \$1000/mo. plus utilities. Includes fridge, stove, washer, dryer. South of Ladysmith in Saltair. 2 bdrm. References, credit check & lease required. Beaches nearby. mcleangrocery@telus.net

OCEAN PARK, S.Surrey. 1 bdrm. suite for rent in residential area. Utilities incl. Contact 604-535-9315. Avail. January or February 2012.

MISCELLANEOUS

RETIRING SOON? Join the B.C. Retired Teachers' Association with 50 branches around the province. Services to members: Preservation of school heritage, guarding members interests, promoting members welfare. For more information, go to www.bcrrta.ca or call 604-871-2260, 1-877-683-2243.

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>

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.

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.

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.

TILING & PAINTING. Want to get the job done right? Call Vito. Glass and slate specialist. Indoor, outdoor painting. Serving the Vancouver area since 1996. www.tile-rific.ca or call 604-831-4013.

HOCKEY/FITNESS INSTRUCTORS needed for Hockey Schools next summer. Interested, contact llemire@telus.net

FOR SALE. Recreation paradise. Park-like acreage. New home: 4 bdrms, 2 full baths. Main floor 1100 sq.ft. Second floor 800 sq.ft. Walk-out basement: serviced mortgage helper suite. Three bay storage shed. Two car garage. Near schools. Minutes to lakes, hiking, golf; snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. See www.shuswaptourism.ca. 75 minutes to Kelowna International Airport. Built to perfection by a custom home builder. Priced under appraised: \$449,000. MLS listing #100713203. Call Wendy and Gary at 250-833-4312.

LORD BYNG VANCOUVER Class of 1967, 45th Reunion, June 2, 2012. For info contact Marty at pinaud@shaw.ca or Judy at jdycharles@gmail.com

AHA MOMENTS RETREAT. Whistler. Push the reset button with a weekend retreat at Whistler Dec 16-18. Hang out with a life coach and counsellor at our cozy Whistler retreat. Focus on what you want to change, and take the first steps as we chat about today's top personal growth thinkers, at least one of which will lead you to an Aha Moment that will change your life. \$600 for Friday to Sunday, includes accommodation and gourmet meals. For more info, email ahamomentsretreat@gmail.com

What YOU need to know. A book about Living and Dying in BC including BC Gov 09/2011 changes. A clear guide for health issues, financial concerns, wills, funerals, and more. Only \$15 + \$2 postage. Order from wrightpublishing@eastlink.ca or download at www.deathwillsandestates.ca

TEACHER EXCHANGE. St. John, NB, teacher and her husband would like an exchange to BC. Teach at the exemplar school for alternative education in NB working with at-risk students. If you are interested, contact Carol Wilkins at cwilk@ceef.ca.

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Post Baccalaureate Diploma with an emphasis on

Adult and Community Literacy Education

Respond to the changing landscapes of literacy and learning

Learn strategies and tools to:

- support literacy instruction for youth & adults
- promote positive community-school relations and community building
- integrate digital technologies and new literacies into teaching practice
- promote participatory adult learning ... and more!



Learn more @
www.educ.sfu.ca/undergrad

PD calendar

JANUARY 2012

19-20 Vancouver. BCAA (BC Alternate Education Association) Annual "Challenge and Change" conference. Keynote: Gabor Mate on *The Hungry Ghost: A Bio-psychosocial 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

2-4 Vancouver. "The 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. For further information, visit the conference website at www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Early_Years.htm. To register, contact us at ian.ipce@ubc.ca or 604-827-3112. The conference brochure is available at www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Brochures/Brochure_Early_Years2012.pdf.

16-18 Vancouver. BCATA (BC Art Teachers' Association) conference "Visual Celebrations." Visual art teachers have a lot to celebrate: teaching, learning and art in our lives while host school Magee Secondary celebrates 100 years of education. Join us! This conference is for elementary and secondary teachers wanting a variety of workshops in the visual arts and media arts. Conference includes a marketplace of vendors. Visit our website at visualcelebrations.wikispaces.com. Contact: Myra Morgan at morgan_m@sd36.bc.ca.

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

20 Whistler. Date Change! 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

5 Vancouver. "Investigating Our Practices 2012," 15th annual conference. Co-sponsored by the UBC Faculty of Education and the BCTF. Teachers from different educational contexts convene at UBC to share their investigations, understandings and questions. Registration fee \$25 (\$15 for students). Lunch and refreshments included. Scarfe Education Building, 2125 Main Mall, UBC. Proposals for presentations can be submitted online at epltd.educ.ubc.ca/iop-cfp. The deadline for submissions is February 20, 2012. For more

information about IOP 2012, visit www.epltd.educ.ubc.ca/iop or contact Judy Paley at 604-822-2733 judy.paley@ubc.ca.

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.

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@xplomet.com.

NOVEMBER 2012

16-18 Seattle, WA. Seattle National Council for the Social Studies 92nd Annual Conference. Theme: Windows Opening to the World. Location: Washington State Convention Center. Accommodation: Headquarters hotel—Sheraton Seattle Hotel (and others). Information coming soon: www.socialstudies.org.

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

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

School Tattoos

1000 TATTOOS WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S LOGO \$149

www.schooltattoos.ca
email: info@schooltattoos.ca
Ottawa, Canada Tel. (613) 567-2636

Educating for the future



Source image: Jack Hollingsworth/Photodisc/Thinkstock

BCTF conference for new teachers, student teachers, and new TTOCs

Radisson Hotel
8181 Cambie Road
Richmond, BC V6X 3X9

MARCH
2-3
2012

- ✦ visit resource fair
- ✦ attend workshops
- ✦ meet with Susan Lambert, BCTF President
- ✦ network with other new teachers
- ✦ collect valuable classroom materials

Conference registration information and program available on the BCTF website
bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2012/

Registration opens January 2012

For registration information contact Marion Shukin 604-871-1804 mshukin@bctf.ca
or Dawn McCormick dmccormick@bctf.ca 604-871-1869 or 1-800-663-9163

For conference information contact Marie-Claude Tremblay, conference co-ordinator
mctremblay@bctf.ca 604-871-1844 or 1-800-663-9163



BC Teachers' Federation

Distribution: BCTF advisory committees, PD chairpersons, school staff rooms, BC university and college teacher education programs, local presidents, PSAs

 PS111 0065