

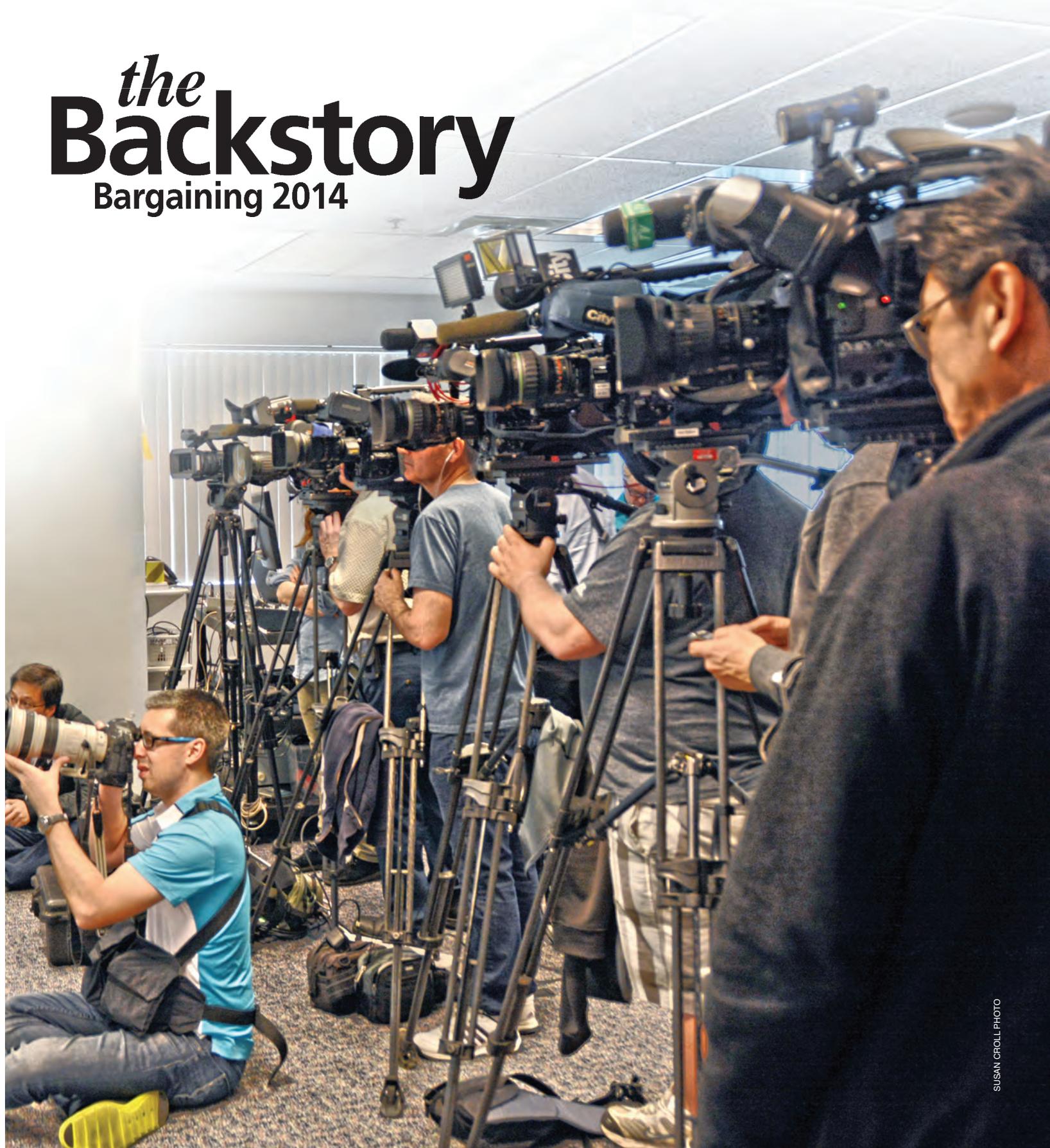
Teacher



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BC Teachers' Federation

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the **Backstory** Bargaining 2014



President's message



SUSAN CROLL PHOTO

Positive change is up to us and our allies

Since our ratification vote, I have been asked many times about what I learned during this long and difficult round of bargaining. There are a lot of answers to that question, but one of the biggest is that positive, lasting change in our public education system will depend on our continued efforts to advocate, engage each other, and build on the public awareness our job action brought to the issues.

We fought back against the government's agenda to cut and control, but there is lots more to do. We need to continue to encourage and inform the networks of parents that came together to support us and our push for better learning conditions. They know what class composition is now and they are not prepared to let the government get away with continued underfunding. For them, the status quo is unacceptable.

We need to harness that new understanding, nourish it, and grow our network of allies who want to see BC's education system improved and properly funded.

That work starts now. On November 15, we need you to vote in BC's municipal elections. Engage with one another and your local associations like you did during the strike. Share your ideas, talk about the candidates, and support those who supported us or are willing to take a strong stand in the future.

School board trustees should be strong and vocal advocates for their schools, not simply government farm team members. We need to support incumbent trustees and candidates who have, or will speak out for adequate funding. British Columbians need more school trustees who are unafraid to challenge the government.

We also need to continue to support our sisters and brothers in other labour unions. The millions of dollars that were made available to us from the BC Federation of Labour affiliates, teacher unions in Ontario, and many others across BC and Canada showed how important solidarity is.

Be mindful that there are workers in communities across this province, perhaps right in your own community, facing struggles similar to ours. Be there for them as they were for us.

Once again, I would like to thank all of you for the work you do to support students and your ongoing efforts to make education in BC better. This month, I would especially like to thank the members of our Provincial Specialist Associations who are busy planning for the PSA professional development conferences on October 24. For a list of upcoming conferences and more information, go to <http://bctf.ca/PDCalendar>

Jim Iker

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The Backstory

By Susan Croll

"Sitting across the bargaining table from your employer trying to improve teachers' working conditions and helping to create a better public education system is a powerful dynamic. Sometimes it can be a bit of an adrenaline rush too, especially when you are trying to make the gains that are needed for members." – Jim Iker

Now that the ink on the agreement is dry and teachers and their students are back at school, I sat down with Jim Iker to discuss this round of bargaining. I asked him many questions, wondering how he and the BCTF bargaining team held up through this round, how he kept his calm demeanour, and how the deal was clinched when it seemed the government was becoming more stuck in their rhetoric. And as the strike continued during the second week of September, it became clear they were even considering legislation.

Setting the table

Despite its overall difficulties, Iker says this round of bargaining actually began on a pretty good footing. BCTF and BCPSEA signed a *Framework Agreement for Bargaining* in December 2012 that was ratified by both sides in late January. They also signed a *Protocol Agreement* in February 2013 which in part was designed to address some of the issues that played out in the previous round, including the provincial/local split of issues and timelines. As part of the framework, both parties agreed to have Mark Brown observe, monitor and make suggestions to support the bargaining table, including the tabling of language with specific timelines.

Regardless of these factors, tension existed for three simple reasons. The government was not supportive of the Framework Agreement agreed to by BCPSEA, and was not prepared to give BCPSEA the necessary resources or



Bargaining Team, FTTOs, and staff at 1:00 a.m. on the final weekend: (back, l-r) Lynda Bennett, John Wadge, Carol Berube, David Komljenovic, Jim Iker, Kathy Couch, Teri Mooring (front, l-r) Cindy Gleb, Glen Hansman, Jessie Hayek.

funding that would have allowed for a fair deal in a timely matter. Major concessions were tabled again.

"You cannot negotiate an agreement out of thin air, you can talk all you want and have good discussions, but if the employer does not bring anything real and tangible to the table other than concessions, then you can't get an agreement," says Iker. "But the real game changer was the provincial election with the government getting re-elected."

The Premier had already floated her 10-year proposal before the election, but forming government again gave it a real boost even though hardly anyone with political credentials took it seriously. "The resurrection of the 10-year deal was a distraction. It only got play because it came from the Premier's office. It had no basis in reality, but dominated bargaining for the first while," Iker says.

Quick off the mark, the newly elected government fired the BCPSEA bargaining team and the elected BCPSEA board of directors. The new education minister, Peter Fassbender, hired Peter Cameron as BCPSEA's chief negotiator, someone who had no experience bargaining in the K-12 system. The employer was not prepared to bargain during summer 2013, so much time was spent at the

bargaining table in fall 2013 bringing Cameron up to speed on BCTF's tabled language.

I asked Iker what he considered to be one of the most surprising moments during this round. He replied it was connected to January 27, 2014. This was the day that Justice Susan Griffin released her decision to restore the stripped language from teachers' collective agreements. Iker says that while he celebrated the victory, he was hugely disappointed with the government's reaction at the bargaining table and in the media. Her ruling could have propelled the government to negotiate a very fair deal for teachers and much better support for kids. Instead, the government chose to appeal the decision and request a stay of proceedings, which was granted.

"The Supreme Court vindicated us. We hoped the government would honour the ruling. They had a real opportunity to right their wrongs from the past, give school districts the necessary funding and sit down with us and work out the implementation of our restored language. Instead, they decided to continue litigation and tabled language to re-strip our collective agreement of the provisions we had

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Front and centre: Stage 1 and 2 job action

Backstory continued

just won back. It was a huge turning point in bargaining," Iker reflects.

Looking at why this government doesn't want to negotiate class size limits, class composition guarantees, and minimum specialist staffing levels into the collective agreement gets to the core of their philosophy about public education and about bargaining.

"This government is opposed to teachers bargaining these limits and levels into the collective agreement because they don't believe working and learning conditions should drive some of the funding for public education. Negotiating these improvements would interrupt their underfunding agenda," says Iker.

Repeatedly at the table and through the media, Cameron stated that high PISA scores and grad rates showed that the system was working fine. It was a crass case of cherry-picking data to defend an argument and one that quickly lost credence with teachers and parents.

"Really, these arguments were an excuse to sidestep the issue of addressing the learning and working needs of students and teachers, closing the salary gap between teachers in BC and across Canada, as well as not recognizing the value of the work that teachers do," Iker says. Simply put, the government did not want to get a deal and this showed at the bargaining table.

After extensive consultation with members in locals, delegates at the winter Representative Assembly in January 2014 debated how to move bargaining forward and adopted a job action plan. Members were consulted again and a vote on Stage 1 job action occurred between March 4-6, with 89% in favour. On April 23, Stage 1 job action commenced. On May 26, rotating strikes began. And on May 27, BCPSEA partially locked teachers out, docking pay by 10%.

The BCTF went to the Labour Relations Board to try and get a reversal but the LRB upheld BCPSEA and the 10% pay reduction stood.

In May, at the spring Rep Assembly, delegates discussed escalating job action, and reconfirmed that any escalation including a full walkout required a province-wide member vote. The RA also supported a revised position on class size that included a placeholder for any future court decision dealing with the restoration of our stripped language. The Stage 3 vote happened in early June with 86% of members voting yes. Full-scale walkouts began June 17.

The bargaining team revised their package and introduced a workload fund as an interim resolution to class size, class composition, and staffing ratios. They also took a second look at the length of the agreement's term and reduced the salary proposal to 8% over five years with a \$5,000 signing bonus. They brought these proposals to what was supposed to be an intensive weekend of

bargaining in mid-June after many fruitless weeks of stalling by the employer. "One of the most frustrating times during this round is what we call the Fathers' Day weekend. We had enlisted the help of Mark Brown to facilitate for the weekend. We were bargaining in a hotel, away from media, away from other distractions. The BCTF bargaining team knew that we had to make a move so we reduced our salary proposals. We were hopeful. And nothing happened. BCPSEA essentially made no move to push bargaining forward, except to introduce two articles, E.80 and E.81, that would wipe out our court wins," Iker recalls.

It's challenging to be at a bargaining table with the other side encased in concrete. When Cameron became chief negotiator, the tone at the table changed. "We endured outbursts and disrespect from the other side. But overall, our bargaining team kept the tone positive and having Brown at the table for a year was helpful." At no point did the Federation lose confidence in Mark Brown. We greatly appreciated his skill and assistance.

It's easy for any bargaining team to feel pressured and disrespected, especially when the other side refuses to bargain meaningfully and piles on the concessions. Wondering how the bargaining team kept its morale strong, I asked Iker how they coped in such an atmosphere. He said that they kept focused, kept their eye on the goal, and refused to bow down to the pressure.

"We had the support of the BCTF table officers, the Executive Committee, our local presidents, and of course our amazing members. There was support from the rest of the labour movement, from parents, from students, and on social media. You cannot underestimate that support. Plus, we debriefed after each session and caucused often during bargaining. We'd have lunch or dinner together too. You have to talk, we'd discuss our roles, discuss the dynamics at the table, and try to have a laugh or two. You can only do it as a team."

Iker also talks about belief. As chief negotiator he did most of the talking at the table, presenting proposals, countering arguments, and putting our case forward. "Yes, bargaining was difficult but I had a strong belief in what we were doing. Trying to get a fair deal for teachers and better support for our students was the right thing to do. Our cause was right and it kept me going."

Long, dry summer

Come the end of June, there was still no deal. Teachers had been out for two full weeks on top of rotating strike days and also had their pay docked 10% by BCPSEA since May 27. Leading up to the full walkout, many teachers were hurting and government was signalling that they still weren't interested in getting to a deal. It begged the question: How could the BCTF up the ante?

"We called for mediation," says Iker. "Part of bargaining is reading the signals. That is why we called for mediation. We could see that the government didn't want to bargain, so what were our realistic options? We were prepared to bargain throughout the summer. BCPSEA hemmed and hawed. Mediation is a tried and tested process. We thought it was viable. Again, we revised our package signalling that we wanted to bargain through mediation and again government sat back and did nothing."

"You have to know when it's the moment. Pressure was huge on the government but also on us."

Mediation fell through. Veteran mediator Vince Ready said he was too busy to get involved early in the process. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Kelleher agreed to mediate. Six days were spent at the end of June including July 1, meeting with Justice Kelleher and Peter Cameron trying to get government to agree to mediation. In the end government put too many conditions in place for mediation to occur. Justice Kelleher had no choice but to say that mediation was not indicated at this time. He made himself available at different points in the summer but government was not prepared to enter into full-scale mediation.

In more ways than one, the summer of 2014 was proving to be long and dry. And despite the education minister's refrain that he wanted "24/7" bargaining, the BCPSEA team was only granted permission to meet with the BCTF bargaining team once. That meeting took place on August 8, only after two weeks of persistent pushing to get them back to the table.

A specially called Representative Assembly convened on August 22 to discuss strategy and future action. Delegates voted on an action plan to continue the strike through the first week of September to ramp up the pressure. The BCTF Executive Committee would plan future strategy if no deal was reached after this first week.

Enter Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and the last week of August. Every summer the premiers of each province and territory meet to discuss their issues of the day. Provincial and national labour leaders also organize their own parallel meeting highlighting the issues affecting working people. This year, Hassan Youssef, the newly elected president of the Canadian Labour Congress, and Gerry Diaz, president of Canada's largest private sector union, Unifor, attended the labour meeting. Much lobbying also takes place at both of these meetings and Youssef and Diaz approached Christy Clark to see if she was interested in meeting with Jim Iker. She indicated she was. Interestingly, Iker had requested a meeting with Premier Clark several times and she turned the overtures down.

Premier Clark and Gerry Diaz met earlier in the year and resolved the truckers' dispute at the Port of Vancouver. Perhaps Clark wanted the glory of solving another strike as Labour Day was fast approaching. Iker discussed meeting Clark with the BCTF Executive Committee. The EC agreed it was an opportunity to make their case and take a step toward a resolution.

On August 27, Iker along with BCTF staff member, John Wadge, travelled to Victoria to meet with Fassbender and Cameron. Despite BCTF and BCPSEA agreeing to a media blackout, Iker was greeted by reporters and cameras. In what turned out to be a publicity stunt, Fassbender proposed that teachers take down the picket lines, set aside the court case along with the retro-grievance proposal, and government might agree to mediation. Iker responded by repeating what he had asked to happen all along: for government to return to the bargaining table and allow real and meaningful bargaining to take place or enter into full-scale mediation with no strings attached. When the meeting adjourned, Fassbender handed out their press release to a media scrum that had already assembled because a ministry staffperson had leaked the fact that the meeting was occurring.

Polling commissioned by the BC Federation of Labour was released just before the Labour Day long weekend. The majority of the public and parents supported teachers. Equally interesting was that neither parents nor the public had an appetite for the government's \$40-a-day scheme that saw the government paying parents of children ages 5–12 money for the duration of the strike. Most British Columbians said this money should go back to where it belongs—in public education.

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Call for binding arbitration

Labour Day came and went, and still there was no deal. In fact, there really wasn't any real bargaining happening. Vince Ready was back in the picture during the long-weekend, meeting with both bargaining teams. Even though this meeting was to occur away from the media, once again someone from the ministry disclosed the location and reporters turned up in droves.

The BCTF, in trying to move bargaining forward into a collective agreement, withdrew \$125 million worth of proposals from the table but again the government offered nothing in return. Vince Ready indicated that the parties were still too far apart to enter into full-scale mediation.

In the meantime, with school not in session, pressure was continuing to grow on both sides. No matter where you went, people were talking about what was going to happen with the teachers' strike. The dispute headlined every newscast and newspaper. Teachers' stories dominated social media. Rallies, burmashaves, and protests in front of MLAs' offices throughout the province were the order of the day.

The BCTF's ongoing efforts to constantly explain the court case, our class size, class composition, and specialist teacher staffing level concerns, in both traditional and social media, began to pay off. The media and the public started to really understand what we were fighting for and our language became the mainstream. Their understanding became

even more apparent when media and the public referred to Article E.80, the employer's infamous proposal that would have signed away our *Charter* rights with the stroke of a pen, as if it was common knowledge. We had worked hard to make sure that people knew what Article E.80 meant and to reveal government's intent to try to undermine future court decisions that weren't favourable for them.

“Yes, bargaining was difficult but I had a strong belief in what we were doing. Trying to get a fair deal for teachers and better support for our students was the right thing to do. Our cause was right and it kept me going.”

The Premier held a special news conference with Fassbender at her side on September 3. She further polarized the negotiations by stating things that simply weren't accurate. She referred to items that were no longer on the table or even had never been on the table to begin with, and adamantly maligned one of our proposals so passionately it bordered on embarrassment. She tried to pit teachers against other public sector workers but it did not fly. The leaders of the public sector workers wrote her an open letter telling her to stop using their settlements as an excuse not to bargain fairly with teachers.

On September 5, the BCTF called for binding arbitration as a way to resolve the strike. This call was a significant move because arbitration can be a risky proposition for either party.

Fassbender held a news conference dismissing the process, claiming a potential settlement through this idea could be too expensive for taxpayers.

The BC Federation of Labour organized yet another rally that afternoon—its eighth in support of teachers—in front of the Premier's office at Canada Place. Thousands attended, spilling off the plaza and onto the street. Contrary to what some pundits and politicians were saying, support for teachers and public education was growing. Parent groups were also forming and organizing an array of creative and supportive events that kept up the pressure on MLAs and other local politicians.

After the rally, Iker met with Cameron and Ready to discuss a framework for settlement that would include mediation and/or binding arbitration. They continued to meet late into the evening and again on Saturday, but once again the government scuttled the discussion, and had a press conference already organized rejecting binding arbitration for a second time.

A critical moment

The second week of September shaped up to be critical in achieving the deal. The call for binding arbitration picked up speed over the weekend and nearly everyone except for the government saw it as a viable solution. New polling showed that the public overwhelmingly saw the BCTF's proposal for binding arbitration as the most reasonable way to get kids back to school.

The BCTF Executive Committee continued to meet via conference calls. Thinking strategically, they decided to put the vote for binding arbitration to members. On Wednesday, September 10, teachers across BC voted and that evening Iker announced the results at a packed news conference. A whopping 99.4% of members who voted said yes to binding arbitration. This vote and its result were too significant to be summarily dismissed. The vote demonstrated that teachers had removed any barriers to bargaining, that we were ready to get schools opened. The only body standing in the way was the government.

Earlier the same day, the BC labour movement lent their financial support, sending the message to the government that starving teachers or their union out was not on.



Iker had taken up Yusseff's offer to arrange a meeting with the Premier, after it became obvious that government had not been made aware of the negotiations that occurred on Friday and Saturday. Clearly, the BCPSEA bargaining team was entrenched and not authorized to actually negotiate a deal. It was time to put the Premier's famous words, "Why fight when you can get a deal?" to the test. Before securing a meeting with Clark, however, Iker had to first meet with Dan Doyle, her Chief of Staff.

Iker, Yusseff, and Doyle met at the Fairmont Hotel in Richmond September 10 and discussed the issues that needed resolution in order for a deal to be reached. Iker was clear that E.80 had to come off the table. He emphasized the importance of allowing the court process to weave its way through the court system and protecting any future win. Second, he reiterated that the retro-grievance issue was a positive way to address some issues at the bargaining table. Third, Iker addressed the importance of entering into full scale mediation with Vince Ready. The meeting lasted an hour and a half. Doyle was receptive and the meeting was very productive. Doyle said that he would let Iker know about arranging the meeting with the Premier.

Another event occurred on September 10. Teachers and parents in Maple Ridge protested outside an event where Clark was speaking. The protesters called for binding arbitration and for better education funding. Their chants were so loud they drowned out parts of her speech even though she was speaking in a room separate from the protesters. She left the event through the back door.

On Thursday, September 11, Iker received a call from Doyle early in the morning indicating he had suggested to Clark that she should meet with Iker. Later that morning, Ready called suggesting that Cameron and Iker meet with him that afternoon.

Iker meets with Premier

During the meeting with Ready, Doyle called to say that the meeting with Clark was set up for Friday. Ready had already been told that Iker had met with Doyle and was now filled in about the meeting with Clark. At the meeting with Ready, Iker indicated that any more talks with BCPSEA had to be through full-scale mediation and that there could be no more exploratory talks.



During the morning of Friday, September 12, Iker and Yusseff met with the Premier and Doyle, essentially restating the issues discussed on Wednesday. The meeting lasted 40 minutes. Both sides acknowledged that there was pressure building and the importance of a negotiated deal at the table. The Premier stated she was facing pressure from her constituents and implied she would instruct that mediation begin later that day. In fact, it did.

Getting the deal done

The bargaining teams began to meet through Vince Ready at the Delta Hotel on the same Friday at 4:00 p.m. and met throughout the weekend. Even though the signals were there that a fully negotiated deal could be achieved, Iker was cautious. "It was government's turn to compromise. Even Peter Cameron had stated in the media that they had not moved on their proposals." That meant pressure needed to continue throughout the weekend and teachers needed to picket until a tentative agreement was reached.

On the night of Monday, September 15, Article E.80 finally came off the table. It wasn't until the early hours of Tuesday morning that the rest of the concessions were removed. "That would have never happened if we had returned to work in good faith," Iker says.

The tentative agreement hit the social media sphere around 4:00 a.m. as Vince Ready told reporters camped out at the Delta in Richmond a tentative agreement had been reached.

After a couple of hours of sleep, Iker and the bargaining team, along with the BCTF First and Second Vice-Presidents Glen Hansman and Teri Mooring, who had been part of the process all weekend, contacted the BCTF Executive Committee by conference call. Collectively, they deliberated on the proposed agreement and recommended acceptance. A province-wide membership vote was set for Thursday, September 18. The vote was in favour, with 86% of members voting yes.

Negotiations weren't over though. From 9:30 a.m. in the morning Wednesday, September 17 until 1:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 18, both teams hammered out the Return to Work agreement. "We tried and we tried to get four paid days for teachers," commented Iker. "It wasn't on. We couldn't blow up the whole agreement over the return to work."

Some people say that knowing when to conclude a deal is an art. Iker says he's not sure it's an art but that it's definitely about signals and timing. "You have to know when it's the moment. Pressure was huge on the government but also on us. Adding up the time in May, June, and September, members

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Backstory continued

had been on strike for over a month. Plus, members had been unfairly docked their pay by 10%. That's a long time."

Iker continued to speak about why he felt good about recommending this deal even though he says teachers deserve better. "Things were culminating this crucial weekend. We had to weigh what would happen if either party walked away. Walking away would not have been good."

No matter where you went people were talking about what was going to happen with the teachers' strike. The dispute headlined every newscast and newspaper.

"We said we wanted E.80 and the concessions to go. We did that. We were able to prevent sick-leave rollbacks, and changes to our work year. We protected the court case and our Charter rights. We were able to deal with the retro-grievance. We got some improvements for TTOCs. We increased prep time for many elementary school teachers. We got more money for the Education Fund and the fund is dedicated to bargaining unit members. While the deal isn't perfect and doesn't address class size, class composition, and staffing minimum levels in the ways teachers and kids need them to be, we knocked the government off their agenda."

He ponders what might have happened if teachers stayed out longer. "Would we have

made any more improvements? Would the little more we may have possibly got made it worthwhile? I don't think so. I think we'd have faced legislation. The government was hinting at it and in my mind, legislation would have been far worse than what we just negotiated."

What's next?

I asked Jim if he had any advice for the next bargaining team. "First of all we can't go into a lull over the next few years. We have to keep engaged, keep active, keep pushing in every way we can to improve funding for our schools and improving the learning and working needs for members. We will also need to keep the public engaged on the same issues. That will set the tone for the next round. We will need to ensure that members are trained in grievance/arbitration handling and negotiations so we can have a pool of active, trained people who will become part of the next bargaining team."

"The future bargaining team will need to be committed to the bargaining goals adopted by the membership and be willing to recommend to the Executive the necessary actions to stand firm against any government that refuses to bargain in good faith. They will need to stay on course, make the necessary moves when the time comes and see it through to the end. They will have to nourish each other, stay strong, stay collected, not take events that occur at the bargaining table personally and have some fun. It will also be important to have a good mix of people who can get along with each other, some with

bargaining experience, and others with different experiences and talents."

"We need to keep our heads up and move forward. Just because we've signed a collective agreement doesn't mean there are no issues to deal with. We've got school trustee elections on November 15. Far too many school trustees sat on their hands during our dispute. We need to elect outspoken advocates for public education."

"The legislative session began October 6. We will have to monitor that closely. Rumours about changes to public education governance have been swirling. The BCTF has always said that local school boards are better than super school boards and we see no reason to change our position on this."

"Better education funding is also on the top of our agenda. We will continue to push and lobby for improved funding that goes right into schools and classrooms."

"We cannot forget curriculum and educational change either. Teachers have to be part of that process and ensure that any changes made work for teachers and their students. We know curriculum change cannot properly happen if it's not funded and teachers aren't given time to familiarize changes, so we'll be working hard on that front too."

"In order to do all of this we need to develop some kind of working relationship with this government. That has always been my goal and I will pursue that goal while I am president."

"I want to thank our bargaining team, Cindy, Carole, David, Jessie, John, Lynda and Kathy for their dedication, perseverance and strength. It was an honour to work with you to achieve this deal—a deal that was not possible until the weekend of September 13 and 14. I also want to thank their families for loaning them to us for the past 18 months."

"Last, on behalf of our bargaining team, I want to thank everyone for their support during this round of bargaining and the strike. We truly appreciate everything you did. Government couldn't crack us. Pundits and others were poking away, looking for the cracks in our membership. We stood strong and united. Members, you were amazing. Thank you."

Susan Croll is Teacher newsmagazine editor



Lawyers deliver arguments at the BC Court of Appeal

On what grounds is the BC government appealing the January 2014 decision?

The government challenges the decision for finding that pre-legislative consultation is irrelevant to the issue of whether government's action, in re-deleting the restored language, violated teachers' freedom of association. Government also challenges the finding that its conduct in the Bill 28 discussions was in bad faith. In the event that it is wrong on the merits, the government challenges the awarding of retroactive damages (by restoring the collective agreement language) and in awarding *Charter* damages (the \$2 million) in conjunction with a declaration of invalidity in relation to the delay in restoring bargaining rights (which was delayed until July 1, 2013).

Why five judges?

The Court of Appeal sees this as an important case in that it will help define the interpretation of s. 2(d) of the *Charter*, the section that guarantees freedom of association.

Who delivers the arguments?

On our side there is John Rogers, Q.C., Diane MacDonald, Steve Rogers, and Amanda Merritt. For government there is Karen Horsman, Howard Shapray, Q.C., Eva Ross, and Keith Evans.

Do you know when we can expect a decision from the Court of Appeal?

The earliest we can expect a decision is next spring but it could easily be next fall. The Court will take the time it needs to properly analyze and write the decision.

How important is the decision?

The decision is important as it may settle important legal issues, especially if it goes all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. If so, it will apply to all governments and unions in Canada. However, it is only one piece of the puzzle. Win or lose, teachers will need to continue to advocate for their working conditions—outside of the courts.



Like bats hanging quietly in a dark cave

Lurkers emerge as online influencers

The combined total of views from all of the posts between May 18 and September 18 was a massive 3.9 million!

By Rich Overgaard

Like bats hanging quietly in a dark cave, our social media “lurkers” (online but not active) were always there, we just didn’t know how many. But once the spotlight of the strike, lockout, and government attacks lit up the cave, we could see and hear thousands of you.

The impact teachers had on social media was unprecedented in this province. Back in the spring, the combination of the strike (solidarity, support, and community) and the lockout (frustration, disbelief, and anger) sparked something the government was completely unprepared for; a sustained and well-informed conversation about public education, led by classroom teachers.

The BCTF’s typical and expected detractors were drowned out, government attempts to engage backfired, and the mainstream media were flooded with ideas, corrections, and perspectives. Collectively, you changed the way print, radio, and TV outlets covered our issues by telling your own stories.

Quickly, your friends, family members, and friends of friends began seeing the stories and messages. For the first time, many of you “came out” as teachers and union members on social media to your community. All of a sudden, our issues and challenges became real and personal for thousands.

In contrast, the government’s attempts to enter the debate usually backfired, culminating in their takeover of the BC Education Plan’s social media handles. The Minister of Education, Premier, or their proxies simply could not keep up with teachers and their far-reaching message. So, in a desperate attempt to gain some traction, they turned the ministry’s @BCedplan Twitter handle into a steady stream of politically charged attack ads.

Subsequently the non-partisan outreach tool created one clumsy and embarrassing social media gaffe after another. But, it showed how desperate the government was to try to push back against the crush of teachers talking to each other, the public, and the media on Twitter and Facebook.

The data showing the impact of social media is staggering. The BCTF Facebook page grew from 4,000 followers in May to over 10,000 in September. Over the same period, the BCTF’s Twitter followers grew from 5,000 to over 18,000, surpassing the BC Liberals and BC NDP accounts along the way.

On Facebook, content posted by the BCTF on our page generated millions of views. Facebook tracked each post over

that period and counted how many unique viewers saw the content. For example, the post about children’s singer Raffi saying to the Premier on Twitter, “nobody believes you,” was viewed by more than 150,000 unique Facebook users alone. The post announcing the 99.4% yes vote for arbitration also hit 150,000.

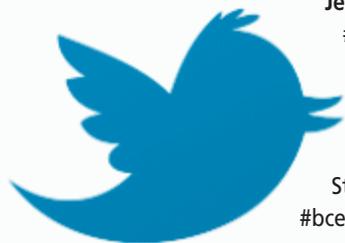
The combined total of views from all of the posts between May 18 and September 18 was a massive 3.9 million!

The social media success of the BCTF’s profiles was because you, our followers, engaged with the content. Every “like,” “comment,” and most importantly, “share,” pushed our content into the newsfeeds of thousands.

Now, let’s keep the conversation going.

Rich Overgaard is the BCTF’s media officer

Tweeters



Jeannine Lode, @jeannelode

#thisismystrikepay I'm fighting for my own boys education but also "my kids" in my classroom!!
<http://instagram.com/plpOz-wBQ4Am/>

Amanda Long, @MsAmandaLong

Strong people stand up for themselves, but the strongest people stand up for others.
#bced #sd43

Shauna Nero, @MmeNero

Will MLA's be docked 10% of their pay for locking themselves out of the public and not doing what they were elected to do? #bced

Patti Bacchus, @pattibacchus

Hundreds of people outside #VAG rallying for #bced & binding arbitration. Great crowd.

Cassidy Oliver, @cassidyolivier

How long will \$8 million last? Sinclair asked. I don't know, he says. But if it runs out, we will find \$8 million more #bcpoli #bced

Laila Yuile, @lailayuile

My wish is now, that parents continue to demand & push for essential supports in classrooms that benefit all kids #bced #bcpoli

Grahame Rainey, @GrahameRainey

Another day starts on the picket line at the SD#74 board office. All we are seeking is a fair deal for teachers and students #bctf #bcpoli

Mike Galliford, @mikegalliford

#iwillremember the BCFED, nurses and many other unionized workers stepping up to support us. Thank you! @bctf #bced

Charles Demers, @charliedemers

Anyhow, whatever the details of the settlement, thank you to @bctf members for leading the charge for public education in this province.

Raffi, @Raffi_RC

what @bcliberals can learn now: dissing teachers won't work any more. pitting people vs teachers won't work. #bced try respect.

CKNW, @CKNW

Parents present 11,000 name petition to #bcleg calling on @bcliberals to say yes to mediation with no pre-conditions with @bctf. #bced

Shaune Gowe, @ShauneGowe

Hearing from more parents that they are donating \$40/day to their school PACs. Want the money to stay in #bced #bcpoli



Get involved in school board elections this November

By Jack MacDermot

Let's answer the frequently heard question "What's next?" for public education in BC by making sure that on November 15 we help elect school board trustees throughout the province who will always keep in mind their own principles:

Public education is the foundation of our democracy.

As locally elected representatives, you and your fellow trustees will be your community's advocates for public education.

– from *Stand Up for Public Education: Become a school trustee*, BCSTA brochure, 2008

This is what we need from trustees:

For BC's teachers, the events of recent months have reminded us again that school boards are only effective when they have trustees willing to:

- advocate for improvements to class size and composition language that would benefit the students in their districts.
- say clearly that their employees deserve to be treated fairly and with respect.
- challenge a government that has greatly increased funding to private schools.
- publicly state that "co-governance" of boards and government is a sham when the government can replace BCPSEA's bargaining team with a single negotiator.
- openly oppose any moves away from locally elected boards toward regional entities.
- consistently and loudly call for more funding and an end to government downloading of costs onto school districts so that annual budget cuts can end.

It's a regrettable reality that in recent months too many trustees remained silent on many key issues, when not actively siding with government.

The BC School Trustees Association rendered themselves largely irrelevant in public discussions over the future of public education.

Trustees complicit with government attacks on teachers and our public education system must be replaced by true advocates, including the handful who fearlessly spoke out.

Here's what we can do

1. Talk to your local teachers' association about what you can do to support candidates who will work co-operatively with teachers and will be strong advocates for public education in your community. Each school district has unique issues, and your local is best positioned to advise you on how to support good candidates and to get concrete commitments for positive change from all candidates.
2. Attend all-candidate meetings and/or other election events. Ask candidates where they stand on the important issues, and what specific actions they will make commitments on. Incumbent trustees must be held accountable for their actions over the past three years.
3. Volunteer on a campaign. Municipal and local elections are often far more affected by "people power" than provincial and federal elections where money plays a larger role. Given traditionally low voter turnout at this level (about 30% as a provincial average in recent elections) volunteer efforts often make the difference.
4. Support labour-endorsed candidates. These candidates have had considerable success in BC local elections and by-elections in recent years. Find out who these candidates are in your area, and consider

working for them and getting out the vote on their behalf. Many of the incumbent labour-endorsed candidates walked picket lines, attended our rallies, and pushed their school boards to support us.

5. Talk to family and friends about the importance of electing activist trustees. The idea of "bring five" to the polls is a tried-and-true way of ensuring that candidates we can support will receive the votes they need to get elected. In advance voting and especially on Election Day maximizing turnout is the key to success.
6. Continue to build on the groundswell of public support for K-12 education issues raised during the strike. The amazing efforts of BCTF members, parents, other union members, and allies who used social media, organized public events, and communicated with elected officials through various means were keys to creating far more public awareness.

It's critical that teachers get involved in these elections. By working to elect trustees who will truly stand up and advocate, we can strengthen the collective voice of everyone who agrees that public education is fundamental to our democracy.

*Jack MacDermot
BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division*

Incumbent trustees must be held accountable for their actions over the past three years.

Holding school trustees to account *By Noel Herron*

Over the past several decades many of BC's elected school trustees have served as mere acolytes to an increasingly authoritarian and bullying Ministry of Education in Victoria.

We reaped the bitter fruits of this indifference, negligence, and ineptitude by both the Ministry and trustee allies in the recently deadlocked provincial negotiations. Our exceptional K-12 public school system (one of the finest on this continent) has been, in the memorable words of the current VSB chairperson, "battered and bruised" by the hyper-partisanship of the BC Liberals.

Intimidation, in the form of a threatened sudden audit of school boards, coupled with the studied withholding of funds for essential programs to the very last minute, have been two of the unacceptable strategies used by Victoria against school boards.

Sadly, BC's network of 60 boards have stood idly by, enduring these repeated insults while literally ignoring their primary elected and sworn role as advocates for our public schools. This year, virtually every one of these boards, as reported by their parent organization British Columbia School Trustees' Association (BCSTA), has been forced into deficit after

decade-long relentless and chronic underfunding. They have allowed themselves to be used and abused as the public front for massive school-based cutbacks.

By allowing themselves to serve as a public front and whipping boys for devastating cutbacks, the weak and waffling resolutions passed by BCSTA at their annual general meetings were mere slaps on the wrist to an uncaring government hell bent on so-called and extremely short-sighted "cost containment."

Otherwise, how does one explain the virtual silence of most school boards as Victoria decimated the province's network of support programs and services for special needs that deprived a full generation of children with special needs—the most vulnerable in our entire system—of the help they so desperately needed.

Like their counterparts under the so-called provincial "administrative unity negotiating umbrella" comprised of school superintendents, school principals, and even the provincial parent group so carefully and cleverly cultivated by Victoria, most school trustees disgracefully ducked their public

responsibility to stand up and speak out on behalf of these vulnerable kids.

This particular avoidance of public responsibility by most boards is in fact the real scandal of the past decade in public education in this province.

In 2011, BCSTA signed a high-flown, formal document on so-called "co-operation," "partnerships," and "consultation" entitled Protocol of Recognition. This document is now renewed every three years.

Given the fact that the record shows that Victoria ignored at every turn the provincial trustees' group over the past five years, bypassed them on all key decisions, ran rough shod over agreed positions, pushed them aside in current negotiations, and proceeded to financially destabilize boards, this formal protocol isn't worth the paper it is written on.

Lastly, since local politics dominate the decisions of the vast majority of rural and urban boards, many fall as they do, into the Liberal-friendly category. Most of these boards continue to adhere faithfully to the mind-numbing and ongoing vilification chorus on the perils of the "Big Bad BCTF," which is promulgated by right-wing commentators and arm-chair critics, who have not darkened a real live classroom in decades.

This viewpoint also ignores the fact that of all the five leading provincial "umbrella establishment associations," the teachers' group is the sole uncompromising advocate for disadvantaged, hungry, and impoverished kids.

The level of ignorance surrounding the burning issue of class size and especially composition as it relates to special needs and child poverty, and the dramatically changing landscape of our public school classrooms, is appalling.

Hopefully with the upcoming November school board elections, citizens will remember the issues raised during the strike and elect trustees who, like teachers, were not afraid to take a stand.

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



Your strike, your stories



By Glen Hansman

Teachers, you were remarkable. Your activism and creativity over the past several months knew no bounds. Whether you live in the smallest communities in the farthest reaches of the province or one of the larger centres, you continually devised events and activities that kept our cause front and centre throughout the strike. You called attention to the issues at the bargaining table and the need for a properly funded public education system. Not only did you ensure solid picket lines at your worksites, you also organized rallies, burmashaves, mark-ins, BBQs in busy pedestrian areas, booths at farmers' markets, leafleting, and singalongs.

You wrote endless letters to your local press and appeared on TV and radio speaking eloquently and passionately about the legacy of underfunding in your schools and classrooms. Your stories were so honest and heartfelt they could not be ignored. You published blogs and wrote opinion pieces that were published in provincial newspapers and on internet news sites.

You contacted your local MLAs, then showed up at their offices, not just occasionally but regularly, refusing to let them off the hook. You lobbied your school board chairs and trustees to take a position and to push the government to negotiate a fair deal for

teachers and better support for kids. You chased down other locally elected officials making sure they were held to account too, and you convinced your families, friends, and neighbours to do the same.

You brought your babies, toddlers, and teens to picket lines turning picketing into a family affair. You even came by horse and stood strong while bears ambled by and cougar sightings were reported. If there was a medal for picket line bravery, it would belong to you.

You inspired parents to come out in support of teachers and for better-funded public education. One minute, a few neighbours were meeting with one another in a coffee shop talking about teachers' efforts, and the next minute a Facebook group of parents was organizing protests outside of MLA offices or community rallies.

In a word, you were AMAZING.

Our job action plan and our objectives at the bargaining table came from you. First, bargaining objectives were discussed at the local level at staff rep assemblies, general meetings, school visits, and other decision-making processes your local uses. Then, they were discussed, debated, and voted on at the provincial level. And before any substantive kind of job action was ever taken, members

had the final say in the form of province-wide member vote. In total, members voted five times in this round through province-wide membership votes.

With 40,000 members in 69 different locals, there is bound to be a wide variety of opinion on all matters, at all times, especially since the current bargaining model was mandated by the government in the mid-1990s. That being said, there was remarkable unity in this round of bargaining. Never before have we seen this kind of activism and solidarity.

You brought your babies, toddlers, and teens to picket lines turning picketing into a family affair. You even came by horse and stood strong while bears ambled by and cougar sightings were reported. If there was a medal for picket line bravery, it would belong to you.

We opened bargaining in February 2013, under a new *Framework Agreement* that the BCTF and BCPSEA agreed to in the hopes of avoiding some of the difficulties that arose in the previous round. And, as it was, we held off on any sort of job action until long after the collective agreement expired at the end of June in 2013 so that members could be thoroughly consulted in the spring of 2013, again in the early fall of 2013, and then once again just prior to the Representative Assembly adopting a job action plan in January 2014. Members around the province were strongly encouraged to participate in that process every step of the way, and it remained important for all of us to do so right until the very end.

Short of knocking on every member's door at home and asking to come in to discuss bargaining, there wasn't much more that locals could have done to involve their members in the decision-making process. We want to heartily acknowledge all local



presidents, local executives, strike coordinators, and other local activists for their hard work. Thank you for all of your efforts.

As well, BCTF Executive Committee members visited locals extensively over the past two years. The EC also received thousands of email letters from members and we did our utmost best to try to answer each and every one.

Now that the strike is over and we are back at school, it is tempting to put advocacy aside. We can't. Not only do we have the civic elections before us in November, we have other issues that deserve our advocacy and attention too.

One matter is education funding. Bargaining only deals with a narrow slice of what affects our work lives as teachers. It's the overall provincial budget for public education that is the most crucial determinant of our working conditions. We can't fix that through bargaining. Improved funding to school districts must be fixed through political choices—think November 15, election day. And no doubt, it is crucial that we maintain the relationships between teachers and parents that have been strengthened during this struggle. We have to encourage parents and PACs to rise to this challenge.

Our strike goes down in BCTF history as “the members’ strike.” Your individual and collective actions shaped and defined it. Your collective efforts contributed to building and maintaining the pressure needed to get a deal. It was a monumental effort and it couldn't have been done without you.

Glen Hansman is BCTF First Vice-President

Your voices, your activism

I have now taught for 28 years, so I have been through a few rounds or more of bargaining. While I always appreciated the work that my union has done on my behalf, it never really occurred to me that I might have an important role to play supporting them and standing up for myself.

All that changed with the most recent job action and strike. The government's provocative move in June, to lock us out at recess and lunch hour and dock us 10% of our pay was a turning point for me. The taxpayer-funded publicity campaign to malign teachers by spouting misinformation just further inflamed my outrage, and ignited a strength and activism in me I didn't even know was there.

It seems this was the case for a great many of us who had formerly stayed rather quiet. We found our voices this spring and started speaking up. We could have cowered and given in to feelings of helplessness and despair, but instead we rose up together and started writing and talking and sharing our stories, our perspectives, and our collective wisdom. It was truly inspiring.

Before this dispute, I couldn't really see beyond my own classroom. Now, I realize that I am part of something much bigger—that there are thousands of educators around our province who share my passion for teaching and my strong belief in the importance of quality public education. I am glad we are back to work, but within my personal and professional life it is definitely not ‘business as usual.’ I cannot go back to my solitary existence as a teacher, and hope that others will stand up for my rights and those of my students on my behalf. I now know I have a responsibility to be an active participant in advocating for what I believe is right. I have really only just begun.

Pam Mcleod
North Vancouver teacher

Becoming active in my union is one of the most important things I can do in my career, outside of my actual teaching. The BCTF is the one body standing against the negative philosophical move to privatize our education system. If members don't stand with the BCTF, the BCTF doesn't have the power to stand up for a fair and quality education system for all kids. It really is about social justice.

Now that we have a collective agreement, we have time to focus our energy to keep education issues in the public eye. Our recent stand opened the public's eyes in unprecedented ways. We need to keep the issues alive in order to keep the pressure on government as the next provincial election draws closer.

Glen Gough
Kindergarten teacher
Fort Nelson

Our recent job action was quite an experience. Over the past number of years I have learned more and more about the importance of being an active member in my union and how it shapes not only my work conditions, but those of our students. Stepping outside of my comfort zone is a necessity; the government needs to hear what we have to say. No longer can I sit idly by and let the wrongs continue.

As a union, we need to keep moving forward, to keep the people of BC informed. Teachers are no longer going to quietly accept what we are handed; we are going to stand up and demand to be heard.

Charlene Wilson
North Vancouver teacher

I am reminded that we live in a progressive society that values the “common and social good” which was won through fighting back. That is our history and we should be proud of it. Nothing progressive came from people being apathetic, not willing to identify what is wrong, and then actively fighting for what collective good. I am also reminded that progressive means to believe in people as a foundation for social policy.

Let's continue the fight for our charter rights. We live in a country where either people believe in contract law or we don't. The government is using the court system as a shield against accountability. Allowing the government to think or behave as if they are above the law is wrong.

Casey Mynott
Technology Education teacher
Delta

Dynamic teaching team Mother and daughter



Kindergarten teachers Jenn and Carol Johns at Highlands Elementary School in Cranbrook, BC

By Susan Croll

“We both have our strengths and understand each other. I think we could say we mentor each other,” says Carol.

We’ve all run across two teachers related to each other working in the same district and sometimes even in the same school. But how often do we know two teachers, mother and daughter, teaching the same grade, in the same school. Meet Carol and Jenn Johns, two Kindergarten teachers at Highlands Elementary School in Cranbrook, BC.

For some people, working in the same school with their actual parent, may not be the ideal situation. Not so for Jenn Johns. As she explains it, her mother Carol, is a fabulous teacher with a stellar reputation. “It’s a bonus that I get to work with my mother,” Jenn says.

She says that sometimes people aren’t sure how to respond and that they have been asked if they are sisters. Regardless

of their unique situation, they enjoy teaching together and describe their relationship as collaborative.

“We both have our strengths and understand each other. I think we could say we mentor each other,” says Carol. These words come from a teacher who understands professional development and mentoring extremely well. Carol was president of the Primary Teachers’ Association from 2000–2004 and one of the authors of the legendary Primary Program. She’s taught for more than 40 years and has witnessed many changes in pedagogy and in working and learning conditions. Most importantly, though, Carol is known for her advocacy on behalf of young children and for her work highlighting the significance of play in helping kids learn and develop.

"When I first began teaching, we had really big class sizes. One year I had 32 and 34 kids in my morning and afternoon Kindergarten classes. That is how I first got involved in the union's Learning Conditions Committee," Carol recollects. "It took me a long time to complete all of those home visits."

That doesn't mean they are exactly alike as teachers or that Jenn is the only one who benefit from their relationship.

Despite the amount of time home visits take, Carol views these visits as an integral part of her teaching practice. "The insight you gain from visiting a child at home is incredible. It helps many parents feel more comfortable. I find the bonding is amazing." While home visits are not as popular now as compared to the past, both Carol and Jenn will carry out home visits this year and plan to keep them as part of their practice.

One could argue that Jenn came by teaching naturally. Her father was an elementary school teacher too and was even her Science and PE teacher in Grades 4 and 6. She said she fought becoming a teacher for a long time, but in the end gave up. "I didn't feel right doing anything else. I am also the older sibling so besides my parents being teachers, I had practice with my brother. And so many good teachers influenced me throughout the years."

I asked Carol and Jenn if their roles as mother and daughter switch as they walk through the doors of their school each day. They both answered, almost simultaneously, that no, they don't.

Carol says that she was a teacher before she became a mother. "Being a teacher influenced me as a mother because I always had a strong philosophy that kids need play time, outdoor time, and reading time. When I became a mother, I included these things in my parenting."

And likewise, Jenn includes the same concepts in her teaching. After all, that is what she experienced growing up.

That doesn't mean they are exactly alike as teachers or that Jenn is the only one who benefits from their relationship. For example, Jenn is more comfortable with using technology with her students. She has incorporated Smartboard activity in her daily practice and has created a FaceBook page with her young students. Carol is learning these skills from her daughter.

Carol speaks about how she's integrated "rough and tumble" play with her kids, something she heard about but actually learned from her daughter. After lunch each day, both Kindergarten classes stay outside and engage in the kind of play that wouldn't be allowed during the supervised recess and lunch times. "The children have to play safely, but they have more latitude to be more physical. It's worked really well and we've seen great results with learning for the rest of the afternoon."

They also began outdoor centres last year and even continued the centres throughout the bitter-cold winter. It's quite a task getting 18 or more children decked out in their snowsuits, boots, hats, scarves, and mittens and speaks volumes to Carol and Jenn's dedication and their love of teaching.

They also share their gym time and Carol says that she's learned from her daughter in that regard too. "My daughter keeps me current."

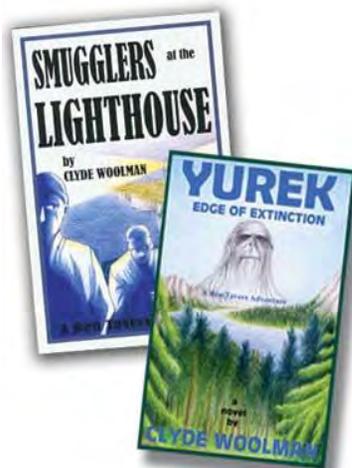
I asked Carol and Jenn what a fair deal for teachers and better support for kids meant to them. As Kindergarten teachers, they feel they do not have the same issue with class size as their colleagues in intermediate and secondary grades do, but that kids' needs are huge and often not met, due to a lack of resources. As Jenn summarized, "I want better conditions for kids and for student learning."

Carol commented on the unprecedented amount of recognition and support teachers received during the strike and lockout. "Both parents and teachers want the best for their kids and their students. Parents have lots of pressure in their lives today. They know what we do for their kids. It makes sense that we had this level of support."

Their Kindergarten classes are now up and running at Highlands Elementary. School routines are under way. The dynamic duo are completing home visits and finalizing their programs for the year. When asked if they have anything else they wish to share about their teaching relationship, Carol says, "What a privilege it is for me to work with my daughter. How many people get to do that?"

It sounds like it's also quite a privilege for students and parents to have Carol and Jenn working together in the same school, teaching and guiding young ones along their individual and collective educational paths.

Susan Croll is editor of the Teacher Newsmagazine



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Worlds apart: One teacher's experience at a private school

By Tara Ehrcke



I will never forget my first days teaching in a public school in British Columbia. It was 2004, and I had just left a job at a small private girls' school to work in a large public high school. I went from class sizes of about 18 to class sizes of over 30. From a school where the adult-to-student ratio was one to eight, to a school where sometimes I wondered where the adults were. From quiet to loud, spacious to cramped, clean to messy, orderly to chaotic, easy to hard. That is how much my job changed.

I had entered a post-degree teaching program in the fall of 2001. "Jobs galore" was the message at our first all-student plenary session. But it wasn't five short months after when the government introduced Bills 27 and 28 and I was standing on the lawn of the legislature with my future colleagues decrying the stripping of class size limits from collective agreements. And by the time I finished in 2003, our local public District was not hiring. So I reluctantly took a position in the private system.

The contrast between my private school job and my first public school position could not have been more stark.

I left for philosophical reasons. I believe in public schools and had always wanted to teach in the public system. I took some risk leaving my private school position, which was almost full time, and unionized, with decent pay and benefits, and where many of my classes had between 15 and 18 students. I left to join the on-call list in a public district and was lucky enough to land a half-time contract after six months. Looking back, I sometimes wonder why I let my principles get the best of me. I had my own classroom. I had a full-time technical support worker assisting me when needed. I wasn't exhausted and I spent most of my time doing what I was trained to do—teach.

At the private school, "classroom management" was a distant memory from a course I had taken. My students were well-behaved, engaged, and motivated. I didn't have a single student requiring adaptation for an Individual Education Plan, and my English as Second Language students all received tutoring, assistance, and regular ESL classes. That was not something I had to worry about. I had the luxury of devoting all of my non-teaching time to lesson preparation, learning new ideas and teaching techniques that I could introduce to my students.

The contrast between my private school job and my first public school position could not have been more stark. In the public school, there were crowded hallways, constant disruptions in class, challenging behaviours, and many students behind grade level, with learning difficulties. I recall walking down the main hallway, where students congregated and ate their lunch, and being taken aback by the crowded space.

There was a lot of bad behaviour in the hallways at break time—homophobic put downs, inconsiderate remarks, throwing garbage on the floor. But one of the things I learned very quickly is that if I stopped to intervene every time I encountered an incident, I would never make it to the lunchroom to eat. And so I, like many other worn out and harried teachers, intervened when it was essential but learned to let go for the student throwing the gum wrapper on the floor. After a time, you get acclimatized and it all starts to feel normal.

At the private school, there was never a time, in my recollection, that any public space had fewer than two adults in it. In the public high school, crowded hallways were often devoid of any adult presence. There were simply so many more students than adults in the building.

Inside the classroom, the difference between the private school and public school atmosphere was just as palpable. In my new position, I found that at least one-third of my attention was needed to monitor student behaviour. Of my daily utterances to students, many were now sit down, please be quiet, or I need your attention. There was, by necessity, a seismic shift in my focus, from students' needs to students' behaviour.

My after-class hours were consumed with meeting students to provide individual help, seemingly endless stacks of marking, and trying to figure out how to teach the student with elementary-level reading skills in my Grade 9 class, or the student who was barely there and traumatized by a family death, or the student with mild intellectual disability who required a whole different curriculum to meet his needs.

Precious little time was left for learning new technologies, revamping my lessons, or planning field trips. With 210 students on my roster per year, that just wasn't possible.

Few with any experience in our school system would dispute the benefits of smaller classes, and of ensuring that each class has a manageable number and range of students with special needs. The simple reality is that as class sizes grow, adult attention per student diminishes, and student behaviours are harder to manage. Some point to the past, when class

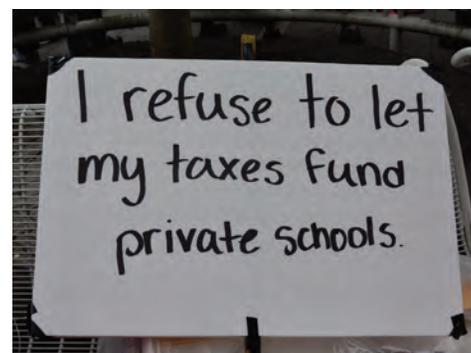
At the private school, "classroom management" was a distant memory...

sizes were 40 or even 50 students, as a way to say class size doesn't matter. Those were also the times of the strap, and when students with disabilities were housed in segregated facilities. Is that where we want to go?

If we want a caring, nurturing, safe environment in schools, we need adequate adult supervision. If we want teachers to be able to devote their time to teaching and learning activities, we can't overwhelm them with oversized classes. Again, the math is simple: if we double the size of a Grade 12 English class, the teacher will need to halve the number of essays each student writes for feedback, because there are only so many hours on the weekend to do the marking. In an 80-minute math class, after going over homework and through the daily lesson, there are only 30 minutes left. That is one minute per child, in a class of 30. No wonder parents who can afford it hire tutors.

Yes, I believe I deserve a raise. But, just like other teachers, that isn't the main reason I voted yes to strike. A society is measured by how it treats everyone. This includes the poor, the disenfranchised, the "ordinary." In British Columbia, children of poor and working-class families get overcrowded in underfunded schools. The children who need the most from education—the hungry, the hurt, the struggling ones—get the least. In contrast, the ones whose parents can pay get the most.

The "public" in public school shouldn't mean just providing a building, with some tired teachers to deliver a curriculum, the success of which is measured by standardized tests. A good public school system should provide high quality opportunities to every single child. While our public schools have many wonderful



programs and many dedicated teachers, the sad truth is that there are also overcrowded classrooms, children falling behind, and a workforce exhausted from trying to fill in the gaps.

Class-size provisions, which were illegally removed from our collective agreements in 2002, are only a fraction of what is needed to move toward a genuine high quality public education system. But they are a necessary start. I hope parents and citizens who want the best for every child join us in this struggle.

Tara Ehrcke, Victoria teacher

Solidarity spotlight

Our strike and lockout took place in British Columbia but support for our cause poured in from across the country and around the world.

Kudos to our support staff colleagues from a host of unions including numerous CUPE locals, Teamsters Local 31, Steelworkers Local 1-80, BCGEU Local 710, CMAW Local 2423, IUOE Locals 959, 963, 882B, WVMEA, CCNSTA, and the VSB Poly Party Local 213. You bolstered our picket lines daily and your incredible solidarity kept our spirits high. Here are the organizations that wrote us letters of solidarity, often accompanied by a financial donation.

The BC Federation of Labour ran this full-page ad in the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province* to thank the teachers of BC for standing up for public education.



Thank you teachers

for standing up for kids and public education.

And to all the support staff, parents, and community members who showed your solidarity,

THANKS!

Our public schools are worth fighting for.
Your courage and commitment make our schools
a better place for students to learn and thrive.

You make us proud.



**BC Federation of Labour
and all its affiliated unions**
Representing 500,000 members in British Columbia

Unions and labour organizations

- Alberta Teachers' Association & ATA Evergreen Catholic Local 44
- Alberta Union of Public Employees
- Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
- BC Association of Speech/Language Pathologists & Audiologists
- BC Federation of Labour and its affiliates
- BC Forum
- BC Nurses' Union
- BC Retired Teachers' Association
- Camosun College Faculty Association
- Canadian Association of Retired Teachers
- Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
- Canadian Teachers' Federation
- Canadian Labour Congress
- CGTEN-ANDEN, Nicaragua
- Compensation Employees Union
- Le Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
- Council of Canadians BC-Yukon
- CUPE 2278 (UBC)
- Education International-Latin America
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and 18 ETFO locals
- Federation Autonome de L'enseignement, Quebec
- Fundación para el Desarrollo y la Educación (FUNDE), Bolivia
- Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation
- Highline Education Association, Tukwila WA
- Hospital Employees' Union, Kamloops Thompson Local
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 258
- International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 502
- International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 505
- Keewatin-Patricia Elementary Teachers' Association
- La Federación Colombiana de Educadores
- La Federación Departamental de Maestros de Educación Rural de Cochabamba, Bolivia
- Lakehead Elementary Teachers of Ontario
- Marysville Education Association, Washington
- Mexican Section of the Trinational Coalition in Defence of Public Education
- Namibian National Union of Teachers
- National Confederation of Educators of Brazil
- National Union of Teachers, London, England
- Northwest Territories Teachers' Association
- Okanagan College Faculty Association
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and 12 locals
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers of Ontario and 4 locals
- Ontario Teachers' Federation
- Ottawa and District Labour Council
- Ottawa Carleton Elementary Teachers' Federation
- Peruvian Teachers' Union

- Pilchuck Uniserv Council, Everett, WA
- Professional Employees' Association
- Public Service Alliance of Canada Local 20106
- Pulp, Paper, and Woodworkers of Canada National Office
- Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers
- Queensland Teachers' Union of Employees (Australia)
- Regina Public School Teachers' Association
- Sindicato de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Educación Costarricense, Costa Rica
- Teachers' Federation Employees' Union
- Teamsters Local No. 155
- Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association
- UBC Faculty Association
- Unifor and 4 locals
- Union of Canadian Transportation Employees
- Unión Nacional de Educadores, Ecuador
- Ursula Franklin Academy teachers, Toronto District School Board, OSSTF Toronto
- Vancouver and District Labour Council
- Vancouver Island University Faculty Association
- Vancouver Retired Firefighters' Association

Educational, Parent Groups, and other Organizations

- Canadian Federation of Students, British Columbia
- Le Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
- Council of Canadians BC–Yukon
- Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC
- Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas
- Mexican Section of the Trinational Coalition in Defence of Public Education
- Okanagan College Students' Union
- Protect Public Education Now
- Reform Front of Panamanian Educators, Panama
- Vancouver Island University Students' Union
- Support for BC Teachers
- BC voters supporting BC teachers and public education (Facebook)
- MLA Playdate (Facebook)
- Parents Join BC Picket Lines (Facebook)
- WE Support BC Teachers (Facebook)
- Parents for B.C. (Website, Facebook)
- Families Funding Teachers

Education International, the global union federation representing teachers around the world, sent messages of support to the teachers of BC from teachers in more than 60 countries. The eyes of the world were on BC.



Jim Sinclair, President
BC Federation of Labour



Hassan Yusseff, President
Canadian Labour Congress





Here's the thing...

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Your collective agreement protects you from discrimination

All public school teachers in the province are covered by the collective agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF at the provincial level, and between their school district and their local at the local level. Every BCTF member's collective agreement contains an article that refers to the employer's obligation to ensure a non-sexist working environment. Likewise, nearly every collective agreement contains a provision that states that no employee shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or family status. Some agreements go a step further by specifically mentioning gender identity.

This language was negotiated by BCTF locals on behalf of their members so that teachers could be themselves in their workplaces without being subjected to sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ablism, or other forms of discrimination. For example, Aboriginal teachers shouldn't need to hide their heritage, or put up with racist remarks. LGBTQ teachers should expect to be safely "out" at work, acknowledge their families and loved ones without fear of reprisals or discrimination. Likewise for women, people of colour, and other equity-seeking groups.

The *BC Human Rights Code* also protects public school teachers from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sex, race, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. Gender identity is also "read" into the code (though having it specifically listed would be an important step at a future date).

If you have a question about your collective agreement's non-discrimination clause or if you feel you are the subject of discrimination, contact your local office.

Ontario schools more equitable

My family recently moved to beautiful BC from Ontario. Back in Ontario, my older son had not one, but two fully outfitted music classes—all Grade 7s could learn strings and guitar for free if they wished to, as my son did. Literally hundreds of students in that school played instruments, sang or danced in the Christmas concert. For poorer families at our school, their children would often have no other opportunity to learn music or dance as a young person. I am proud that both rich and poor kids in our school in Ontario get a decent arts education.

BC has unparalleled physical beauty, but its education system and the discrimination against poorer families is ethically and morally indefensible.

For my younger son to try an instrument here in BC public schools, we have the option of paying \$450 this year. How is it fair that we could choose this option, but many of the children in his class cannot? That is not public education, it is education for those who can afford it.

And now my question for you. Are there any ethical or moral grounds that the government can stand on to defend their position that poorer families with a child with special learning needs gets a lesser education in the public system?

Your own Premier understands this situation very well, with a child in publicly funded private school. Here's the situation here in BC: some of the tax dollars from poorer families go to private schools where wealthier families send their kids. How generous of poor families to help fund education for wealthier families.

There are no ethical grounds that the government can stand on to defend funding private schools when public school teachers have so many unsupported students with special learning needs. Our students deserve better, they could have better, and should have better.

Thank goodness public school teachers are willing to sacrifice their own financial well-being for the benefit of kids' learning environments.

When we moved here, I felt like we had possibly moved to the US—so many fancy cars and some of the most visible poverty in Canada. Shame, shame, shame on this

government for taking from the public purse to fund private schools and to fund their own litigation against public education.

Sometimes as a newcomer to BC, it's hard for me to remember—is BC part of Canada or the USA?

J.E.T., North Vancouver

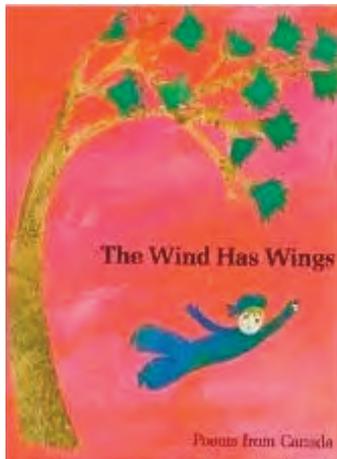


Book reviews

Children's poetry: The forgotten medium

By Lucinda Tooker

Children enjoy the rhymes and rhythms of poetry. Yet we often teach poetry as a big, important subject when some opportunities to read and laugh and "visualize" are all that is needed.

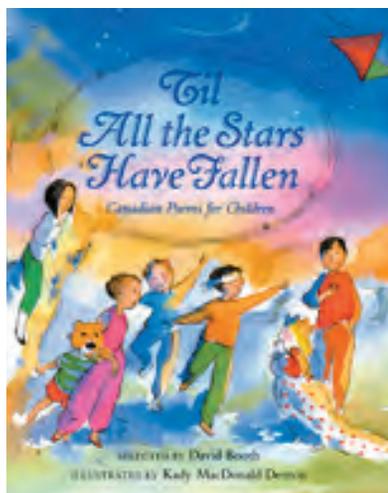


My introduction to good quality Canadian poetry came from an anthology entitled *The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada* (Downie and Robertson, eds.) which I was given for Christmas in 1968. My copy is well thumbed, and I have used its contents in my teaching many times over the years. One of my favourite, chilling images is from "The Shark" by E.J. Pratt:

*His fin,
Like a piece of sheet iron,
Three-cornered,
And with knife-edge,
Stirred not a bubble*

In 1989, David Booth edited another anthology, *Til All the Stars Have Fallen: Canadian Poems for Children*. Like the earlier anthology, these are not poems written for children, rather they are poems that are suited for children. They provide an entryway to Canadian literature in a US-dominated world. The illustrations by Kady MacDonald Denton beautifully capture the whimsy of the poems, as in Raymond Souster's:

*Waiting for the first drop
No-one knows the exact moment
of what hour
the first drop of rain will fall*



Read-Aloud Poems

*for students
from elementary
through
senior high school*

Susan Iouannou's *Read-aloud poems for students from elementary through senior high school* (2nd edition, 2011), is available as a free online PDF: <http://bit.ly/read-aloud-poems>

Her playful tone and use of language will encourage students to read beyond their range, from elementary through middle school and high school. Teachers may wish to read these poems aloud, or ask students to choose one to share.

While reading and enjoying poetry can be sufficient, students are often itching to try writing their own poems after enjoying other excellent examples. The contemporary American poet, Jack Collom, has created a great series of lessons on teaching poetry writing in increasingly sophisticated formats and content: <http://bit.ly/how-I-teach-poetry>

*Lucinda Tooker, teacher-librarian,
Maple Ridge*

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Also supported
by Dr. Samuel Lim



“Bring your money” motto teaches responsibility but shortchanges kids

By **Trish Garner**

My twins were in Kindergarten last year. By the time they had finished their first year of school, they had taken part in two food bank drives and multiple bake sales to raise money for all sorts of good causes. I am glad that the school is fostering a sense of social responsibility and that my children are thinking about others. However, I am concerned that the only solution they are learning to address issues of poverty and hunger is to donate. The slogan of our schools has become “bring your money.”

Where are the lessons about the structural causes of these societal problems and what our political institutions can do about them?

Almost one in five children live in poverty in BC, according to the 2013 Child Poverty Report Card released in November by First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. That’s 153,000 children, an increase from last year that puts us back in the number-one position with the worst child poverty rate in Canada. Not a great title to hold.

The rate is worse for children under six, which is especially worrying because of the damaging impact of poverty on children’s early physical, social, and cognitive development.

The statistics are dismal but the overwhelming response provides hope. Clearly, people are concerned about child poverty in our province and want to take action to address it. However, just like in our schools, our response is often to donate. In fact, BC is one of the most generous provinces in Canada in terms of

giving to charity. And yet, BC’s child poverty rate has been the worst in Canada for nine of the last ten years.

Don’t get me wrong; giving to charity is necessary in this time of great need in order to address the immediate needs of people living in poverty. However, charities can only provide short-term relief that addresses the “downstream” symptoms and we need long-term solutions that go “upstream” to fix the root causes.

Food banks themselves are saying the same thing. In the 2013 HungerCount report, Food Banks Canada highlights that “the root of the need is low income.” Their recommendations look “upstream” and include government commitments to provide affordable housing, education and training, support for low-wage workers, and increased “social assistance so that people can build

self-sufficiency instead of being trapped in poverty.”

Food banks were, in fact, initially meant to be a temporary measure but they have now been around for over 30 years. They have become such a normal part of society that we never question their role and the extent to which they can address these big issues. We give year after year without wondering why children are still going hungry in BC.

With the school year upon us again, perhaps we should start asking that question and look to our government for answers.

When I talk to my children about these issues, I tell them that the government is a group of people that has the power and responsibility to make the “big rules” or “policies” that could really help children in poverty. I tell them that we vote for them to represent our concerns and they are (or should be) always interested in listening and making change for the good of all.

So let’s match our donations with an action. Here’s an idea to take to our provincial government. Most other places in Canada have a poverty reduction plan and they are already saving lives and money. BC needs a comprehensive poverty reduction plan with legislated targets and timelines to really make a difference for families, communities, and our province.

The government’s response to poverty continues to be a reliance on the BC Jobs Plan. However, most people in poverty already have a job, and almost one in three poor children live in families with at least one adult working full-time full-year.

Poverty is a heavy issue and we need everyone to share the weight. Giving to charity is the community stepping up and now we need to ask government to share the weight with us.

We are teaching our children to be charitable givers, and fostering social service from a very young age. Let’s also teach them to be democratic citizens and think about social justice by engaging with their government. At the same time, let’s learn that ourselves.

Trish Garner is a parent and the community organizer for BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.

Resources

- <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca>
- <http://bit.ly/poverty-take-action>



Hermera/Thinkstock

Resources



take action for nature as adults. The Connecting with Nature lessons were created and written by Foundation staff, Toronto District School Board (TDSB) educators, and staff and students from Nipissing University's Schulich School of Education. A group of dedicated classroom teachers also piloted lessons in their classrooms, reporting back on outcomes so we could improve them accordingly.

Each lesson includes classroom and outdoor

components, step-by-step instructions, and ideas for taking lessons further and engaging local communities. Guides can be downloaded for free at getbackoutside.ca. The French versions will be available in early 2015.

SFU Faculty of Science: Free workshops for kids

Have you started planning your field trips for this year? SFU Faculty of Science offers FREE workshops for your classes. Choose interactive and fun science workshops for K–12 students in astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, math and more. All activities are designed to address current BC PLOs and are run by SFU science faculty.

Workshops are held during school hours at the Burnaby campus, allowing students to experience the campus environment.

Virtual workshops will be offered shortly to schools outside of our immediate area.

"The field trip gave us a chance to work in a real laboratory with equipment we didn't have access to at our school...It was a fun trip!" – Alan

For more information or to register for a workshop, visit <http://bit.ly/1vuMse7> or contact science_outreach@sfu.ca, 778-782-6967.

SmartSexResource.com

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has created a sexual health website called *SmartSexResource.com*

The website was developed with guidance and input from the community, public health stakeholders and social media experts. The design, features, and content of the site were informed by research and testing done with youth, outreach clients, the general public, clinicians, educators and outreach nurses.

Website features

- Clinic finder allows visitors to quickly search for the nearest clinic based on a BC postal code or city.
- Nurse Chat is the only known chat service for sexual health in BC. People can sign in with a user name of their choice and chat privately with a nurse about their concerns. The service provides accurate, confidential information from a trusted and reliable source.
- Submit a question to the website and have the answer posted on the site or emailed directly if you want the topic to remain private.
- Sex talk provides suggestions for communicating about issues such as getting tested, telling partners you have an STI, or advocating for condom use.
- Resources for health professionals offers a dedicated channel that features a blog with regular STI-related updates and a resources section with client handouts and brochures.

For further information or questions, please contact Devon Haag (website manager) at devon.haag@bccdc.ca

getbackoutside.ca

This year, in schools across Canada, Grade 7 and 8 students will be out in their schoolyards, making s'mores in solar cookers while learning about sources of renewable energy. Primary students will be measuring air pollutants in their schools using only clothes hangers and tape, then brainstorming ways their families and communities can help reduce air pollution. Meanwhile, Kindergarten students will host impromptu schoolyard band concerts with percussion instruments they constructed out of natural found materials.

These lessons and many, many more are part of a brand new suite of educational guides produced by the David Suzuki Foundation and launching in September. The Connecting with Nature educational guides for teachers of Kindergarten, Primary, Grades 4 to 6, and Grades 7 and 8 will be available online for free download.

Our aim is to help teachers across the country foster a nature connection in their students. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors helps students succeed in school, improving memory, problem solving, and creativity. Children who spend time in nature are also physically healthier and more likely to

Message du Président



Un changement positif pour nous et nos alliés

Depuis notre vote de ratification, on m'a demandé à plusieurs reprises ce que j'avais appris au cours de cette longue et difficile ronde de négociations. Il y a beaucoup de réponses à cette question, mais l'une des plus importantes est que les changements positifs et durables dans notre système d'enseignement public dépendent de nos efforts continus de plaider, de s'entraider les uns les autres, et de bâtir sur la sensibilisation de ce public vis à vis duquel nos moyens de pression sur le travail ont eu le mérite d'exposer au grand jour nos problèmes.

Nous nous sommes battus contre l'ordre du jour du gouvernement de coupures budgétaire et de prise de contrôle, mais il y a beaucoup plus à faire. Nous devons continuer à encourager et informer les réseaux de parents qui se sont réunis pour à la fois nous soutenir et soutenir notre mouvement en faveur de meilleures conditions d'apprentissage. Désormais, ils comprennent ce qu'est la composition de classe et ils ne sont pas prêts à laisser le gouvernement s'en tirer avec un sous-financement continu. Pour eux, le statu quo est inacceptable.

Nous devons tirer parti de cette nouvelle prise de conscience, la nourrir, et accroître le réseau de nos alliés qui veulent voir le système d'enseignement en Colombie-Britannique amélioré et correctement financé.

Ce travail commence maintenant. Le 15 novembre, nous avons besoin de vous pour voter aux élections municipales de la Colombie-Britannique. Entraidez-vous, les uns les autres et engagez vous avec vos associations locales comme vous l'avez fait lors de la grève. Partagez vos idées, parlez des candidats, et soutenez ceux qui nous ont soutenus ou qui sont prêts à prendre une position ferme dans l'avenir.

Les conseillères et conseillers scolaires doivent être d'ardents et dynamiques défenseurs de leurs écoles, pas simplement les membres de l'équipe des moutons du gouvernement. Nous devons soutenir les titulaires et les candidats qui ont ou qui vont s'exprimer en faveur d'un financement adéquat. Les Britanno-Colombiens ont besoin de plus de conseillères et conseillers scolaires qui n'ont pas peur de défier le gouvernement.

Nous devons également continuer à soutenir nos frères et sœurs dans d'autres syndicats. Les millions de dollars qui ont été mis à notre disposition par les affiliés de la Fédération du

travail de la Colombie-Britannique, les syndicats d'enseignants en Ontario, et de nombreux autres à travers la Colombie-Britannique et le Canada ont montré l'importance de la solidarité.

Soyez conscient qu'il y a des travailleurs dans les communautés partout dans la province, peut-être même dans votre propre communauté, qui font face à des difficultés semblables aux nôtres. Soyez là pour eux, car ils étaient là pour nous.

Une fois de plus, je tiens à vous remercier tous pour le travail que vous faites pour aider les élèves et pour les efforts en cours pour améliorer l'enseignement en Colombie-Britannique. Ce mois-ci, je voudrais particulièrement remercier les membres de nos associations provinciales de spécialistes qui sont en train de planifier les conférences de perfectionnement professionnel des APS du 24 octobre. Pour une liste des conférences à venir et de plus amples renseignements, rendez-vous sur <http://bctf.ca/PDCalendar>

Jim Iker



Members at the Pride Parade, August 2014

Factor 90 or 65 years of age? Don't wait

You can save the long-term fee (approximately 1.2%) from the date you reach age 64 or "Factor 88." Members are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan once they hit "Factor 90" (age plus contributory service) or age 65. It is up to you to apply to withdraw from LTD.

How and when to apply

A member who has attained age 64, or has reached "Factor 88," or is in receipt of a retirement pension under a registered pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the long-term portion of the SIP. Ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave, which, when combined with 120 days of benefit from SIP short-term, will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach "Factor 90" or the end of the month you attain age 65, whichever comes first.

To get an application, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/7qrrnxx> or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.



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SFU camp prepares Aboriginal students for coming academic year

By Diane Mar-Nicolle

Do you know of any Aboriginal students who might benefit from a month-long camp that helps prepare high school students for the coming academic year? The first SFU Academic Camp for Aboriginal Students, held this past July, was so successful that plans are already underway for next year's camp.

SFU Mathematics professor and camp director, Dr. Veselin Jungic says, "What makes me personally very happy and proud is that all 25 students who started the camp on July 2 fully participated in all camp activities for the entire month. The fact that we did not lose one student tells us that the camp activities were interesting and valuable for all participants. Moreover, the camp participants have established a tight community. I have no doubt that their mutual friendship is there to stay for the benefit of the whole Aboriginal community."

Students from Grades 8–11 from Metro Vancouver and its environs enrolled in the free camp through their schools' Aboriginal support workers. Mornings began at SFU's Burnaby campus with breakfast, followed by 90 minutes of mathematics, a nutrition break and 90 minutes of English. After lunch, served at a variety of campus eateries, students

participated in activities such as archery, drumming, a forest walk with earth scientist Dr. John Clague, a session demonstrating (and sampling) the science behind ice cream-making and a stab at making pizza and sushi with cafeteria chefs.

Families were invited to the closing ceremonies held on the final day of the camp, with students receiving certificates as well as credit for those enrolled in Independent Directed Studies courses and work experience.

The tears, the laughter and the heartfelt thanks to camp staff and teachers exemplified the richness of the bonding that took place over the month. One student said, "It's helped guide me through post-secondary goals, helped me with public speaking...and helped me gain new friends who are actually some of the closest people...I know, even though we've only been friends for a month. The month has been such a good experience for me, and I'm sad to say that I can't bus up to SFU everyday anymore. The friendly atmosphere, and people really added to this place's friendly

encouragement, and push for success that other programs can't hit right."

Math teacher Natasa Sirotic was equally effusive of her students, "I'm moved and inspired by these young people's initiative to upgrade themselves educationally. They have accomplished a great deal and this will for sure equip them for success in life. I feel privileged to have been part of it."

All BC secondary school students of Aboriginal heritage (First Nation, Métis, and Inuit) are eligible to attend this camp, however, lodgings are not provided and students are responsible for their daily transportation to the SFU Burnaby campus. For further information, visit <http://mathcatcher.irmacs.sfu.ca> or contact Dr. Veselin Jungic at vjungic@sfu.ca.

Funding for this camp has been provided by SFU, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences.



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Vancouver: February 5; Victoria: February 6
- SELF-INJURY BEHAVIOUR IN YOUTH** - Issues and Strategies
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The Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, as mandated by the BC Ministry of Education, facilitates reciprocal teacher exchanges to the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales), Denmark, France, Switzerland (limited), Germany, Australia, and some US states. Applications are now being accepted for the 2015–16 school year.

For information visit www.ceef.ca
contact cwilk@ceef.ca
or call 705-739-7596

BC exchange teachers' information meeting

Saturday, October 25, 2014
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
William Watson Elementary School
16450 80th Avenue
Surrey, BC

Carol Wilkins, from the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, will present information regarding exchange opportunities. Teachers currently on exchange or returned from exchange will attend to answer questions specific to their experience.

To register, contact:
Kulwant Toor, president, BCETA
Toor_k@surreyschools.ca
Or call 604-574-4141 or 778-847-4453

PD Online Calendar
<http://bctf.ca/PDcalendar>

Changes/additions:
msteele@bctf.ca

Future October PSA days:
2014–15: October. 24, 2014
2015–16: October. 23, 2015

Classified ads

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TEACHER EXCHANGE 2016. Australia East Coast, Fingal Bay on Tomaree Peninsular. Primary school teacher wishes an exchange to BC SD 5, 6 or 8. Currently teaching 5/6 split at Tomaree Education Center. Contact Tony or Cheryl Mayers – bigguy@westnet.com.au

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RETIRED PHYS ED TEACHER? LOOKING TO EARN EXTRA \$\$ We're in the process of introducing a terrific new sport to Canadian schools and families across Canada. You are someone who is looking to put some of your spare time to good use, who is physically active, and filled with great ideas about how to reach teachers and parents with our message. \$15 an hour to start, with increases based on setting performance standards and meeting them. Please send your thoughts, background info, and contact info to: 349 West Georgia St., PO Box 2892, Vancouver, BC V6B 3X4

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