

Teacher

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57 public schools threatened with closure



Muriel Baxter Elementary School, Cranbrook, with nearly 300 students, is one of the largest of the 57 schools slated for closure in June.

by Nancy Knickerbocker

Fifty-seven public schools in British Columbia are threatened with closure in fall 2002 as the result of more than \$200 million in government cuts. The impact is being felt from one-room schools in isolated towns to alternative schools in the inner city.

"Each and every one of these 57 schools is the centre of a community of learning, and many are the centres of community recreation and social life as well," BCTF President David Chudnovsky said. He emphasized that the closures will have a disproportionately negative impact on rural B.C.

"When you close a school in a small community, you attack and undercut and potentially destroy the centre of community life. We have precious few

"A brand new school that's empty of children—it's a perfect symbol of this government's empty promises to protect education and put students first..."

institutions that build community left in our province any more, and 57 of those are about to close," Chudnovsky said. "Teachers and parents at these schools are worried and angry that their students and children are being uprooted and made to travel far outside their

communities to go to school."

The Coast Mountain School District has plans to close five schools: two in Kitimat, two in Terrace, and one in Stewart. A brand new school in Terrace will be closed before it's even opened. Construction of Mountainview Elementary School will be completed at a cost of \$3.2 million, but no students will be enrolled there this fall.

"A brand new school that's empty of children—it's a perfect symbol of this government's empty promises to protect education and put students first," said Chudnovsky. "Those fine words ring very hollow in the face of the facts."

The Prince George School District has the dubious distinction of having the highest number of threatened schools; one junior secondary and 11 elementary schools are on the chopping block. Prince George is followed by the Rocky Mountain School District, with eight schools set to close, and Kootenay-Columbia, with six schools threatened.

Kimberley, a town already hit hard by closure of the local hospital and courthouse, is gearing up to resist closure of schools. In Wasa, 30 km to the east, parents are so determined to keep their elementary school open that they offered to pay higher school taxes; however, under current legislation, school districts have no ability to levy taxes. Wasa parent Linda Lee says, "There's tremendous support in the community for our school. We've got wonderful relationships with our teachers and administration. All the

parents are dead set against closing our school."

Similarly, in Wells, near the historic site of Barkerville, parents of students at the local elementary school are working hard to prevent the closure. Dave Jorgenson, chair of the local Save Our School Committee, says that parents have told school trustees they are not prepared to make their children

"Why does this government think it's important to provide access to alcohol within 20 kilometres, but it's okay to make children travel four or five times that far to go to school?"

travel 80 km each way to the nearest school, in Quesnel. "We've said we're either going to move away or home-school. It's ridiculous what they're going to subject our kids to," he said.

Both Lee and Jorgenson criticized the new education-funding formula for creating incentives to close small rural schools. Under the "unique geographical features" category, additional funds go to rural and remote schools in recognition of the additional costs of providing equal access. The small communities grant of \$100,000 earmarked for each school is to be continued throughout the three-year funding cycle. Thus, the Quesnel school district will continue to receive the \$100,000

grant in each of the next two years even if trustees close the Wells-Barkerville school this fall.

"It looks like school districts around the province are closing rural schools and pocketing provincial grants meant to keep them open," Jorgenson said. "By counting the school this year and closing it next year, they are able to divert the funds to urban schools and subvert the intention of the funding."

In March, when the government expanded liquor sales through beer and wine stores, Competition Minister Rick Thorpe was quoted in *The Vancouver Sun* as saying: "Why should somebody that lives in a rural community have to drive 20 kilometres to buy a bottle of wine for dinner or a six pack of beer to watch the hockey game?"

Chudnovsky posed the same question for rural students. "Why does this government think it's important to provide access to alcohol within 20 kilometres, but it's okay to make children travel four or five times that far to go to school?"

Over the last few years, Stu Dale, president of the Principals and Vice-Principals' Association, has made numerous presentations to Chambers of Commerce and service groups complaining that class-size limits were separating siblings and forcing students from their neighbourhood schools. However, severe underfunding and removal of class-size limits are resulting in far more drastic consequences for significantly more students. Indeed, more schools are now

President's message



David Chudnovsky

Serving as BCTF president is the best job in the world, but in a couple of weeks, I'll be leaving the position.

What I will remember most from these three years is the passion of our members for the work they do with students. I'll recall the Haida-language program in Skidegate, the teacher of the hearing impaired on the Sunshine Coast, the Russian-immersion class in Castlegar, the auto-body teaching shop and the electronics lab in Saanich, the school multicultural festival in South Vancouver, the puppet-making class in Powell River, the alternate program in Mackenzie, and so much more.

I think of two very different events I attended that symbolize all that is good in our BCTF. The first was the Annual General Meeting of our McBride-Valemount sublocal last spring. It was held in a member's living room in the shadow of the Rockies. A couple of dozen colleagues—most of the membership—gathered to discuss the rights of TOCs, the upcoming bargaining campaign, and the need for a labour and community newspaper to counter the propaganda of *The Vancouver Sun* and BCTV. I was inspired by those wonderful teachers who take seriously the work of building a better B.C.

The second event was our marvellous rally at the Coliseum in Vancouver on January 28, when 14,000 courageous teachers made clear to Premier Campbell and Minister Clark that we will never abandon our responsibility to struggle for success for every student, for a strong and stable public education system.

Never have we needed our BCTF more. Never has the need for unity of purpose been more critical. Never have we needed so desperately to build alliances and coalitions with our allies.

You are the heart and soul of our Federation. Thank you for your commitment to public education and to justice. Thank you for your commitment to the most important people in the system: the students we teach.

Have a great summer.

David

Low teacher morale not good for anyone

When I was seven years old, I decided to become a teacher, and I have been teaching for over 30 years. At no time have I regretted my decision; I love working with children. Over the years I have devoted countless hours preparing lessons, marking (the load in intermediate is high), writing report cards, organizing events, helping with extra-curricular activities, tutoring students, taking students on field trips and to special events, and enrolling in extra courses to keep up with changing curriculum. That has certainly been beyond the limits of a 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. job. Even now, as a part-time non-enrolling teacher, I find that not much has changed for me, except that I can catch up on my days off.

Besides being educators, we are constantly being called on to act as counsellors, social workers, nurses, and referees. We are innovators of new materials, constantly "reinventing the wheel" with the myriad of changes in curriculum that keep coming our way, without the necessary resources supplied.

If classes become larger and support is diminished for the students who really need it (i.e., special needs, ESL, learning disabled), where will the help come from? What about the bright children? How do they get a chance to excel in a really big class where the teacher doesn't have time for them? What about the emphasis on literacy—a goal in our district? How can that be achieved if teacher-librarians aren't there to order new materials and run resource centres?

Teachers want good working conditions for themselves because good working conditions go hand-in-hand with good learning conditions for kids. Teacher morale is severely tested right now, and low morale can't be good for anyone.

No one, including relatives, neighbours, and friends, other than teachers, understands the stress that comes with this profession. The stress is there because we care and because we carry on no matter what. We love what we do and we want to make a child's day a positive one.

It worries me that some people are now looking toward the private school system as an attractive alternative to the public education system. Private schools don't have to accept everyone either. Children with learning difficulties, special needs, or behaviour problems are usually in the public system, not the private one. We don't want an elitist system, do we?

I am also a parent, and I know what my children have gained from having many fine teachers over the years. They have had the opportunities for extra help and guidance when they needed it, and they, too, have had many chances to take part in extra-curricular activities including sports, clubs, camps, and trips. I am

grateful to the teachers who made a difference in my children's lives. Teachers don't get thanked often enough, and they should not be taken for granted.

What really bothers me with all the changes the Liberal government has brought in through Bills 27 and 28 is that the changes are being made by people who are not in education. Education is being looked at as a business. How can people who don't work with children know what's best for children? When did Christy Clark last spend a day in a classroom? What does she really know about "putting kids first"?

Judy Johnson
Kelowna

Government undermines validity of contracts

The Campbell government has just set a precedent for those who don't want to pay their debts or who want to show that contracts aren't worth the paper they are printed on. They are no more binding than a politician's promise.

The school boards and teachers assumed that the three-year contract imposed by the provincial government was binding on all parties concerned. Not when provincial politicians are involved. Government now says that it is up to the local school districts to find the money.

So, if you make a down payment on an agreed upon price and say that you will pay the balance over time, you have the right, according to the B.C. government's example, to not bother paying any more. Let the other party find the money.

If someone asks you to guarantee a loan for them, don't worry if they can't make the payments. You just say it is not your responsibility. The precedent has been established.

James Murray
Abbotsford

Support projectionists

I was BCTF president the last time Famous Players went after the projectionists. I can't tell you how frustrating it was to get calls from the head of the beleaguered IATSE local telling me that teachers had taken classes of students to movies, crossing picket lines. I hope that our experience in job action over the last year will make members more aware of what it means to support brothers and sisters in job action. Our losses over the last round of bargaining pale in comparison to those suffered by the projectionists and it looks like the employer is after still more blood.

I hope members will understand the importance of honouring picket lines. I have also sent the following message to Famous Players at their guestservices@famousplayers.ca address:

To Whom it May Concern:

I like nothing better than to go to my neighborhood theatre and take in the latest Hollywood blockbuster. With summer approaching, I was anticipating going to a couple of movies each week with my wife and children. I should add that we are big licorice eaters and we always share a large popcorn and buy a couple of drinks.

This summer will be a video rental summer for our family unless Famous Players reaches a reasonable settlement with its projectionists. By a reasonable settlement I mean one that improves rather than further rolls back the salary and working conditions for the few remaining members of IATSE local 348. The employer demand that projectionists suffer a 33% wage cut is outrageous.

I will be following the progress of this labour dispute with great interest and will make my entertainment decisions on the basis of the outcome.

Furthermore, as president of a teachers' union, I have informed the 500 members of my local to honour all picket lines established by IATSE. I have further advised them to find alternative forms of entertainment until the dispute is ended.

Kit Krieger
West Vancouver

Public education is the foundation of democracy

For the past two weeks, I have attended the various budget meetings held by the trustees to gather input and information on the proposed cuts to the district's budget. Groups of stakeholders gather around tables to analyze, scrutinize, and comment on the proposed eliminations put forward by senior administration. It is, to say the least, a very depressing and deflating experience. While some discussions have generated a few potentially interesting alternatives, generally the comments reflect the dismay and fear that the loss of eight million dollars will inflict on our education system.

The trustees do seem in earnest to listen, question, and debate the ideas and concerns presented in the forums. It is meant to be a democratic process, however distasteful. I cannot help feeling we are all part of a process in which we are assisting in our own demise and witnessing the radical restructuring of public education. The meetings are supposed to be apolitical; yet they are rife with agendas not of our making. The new buzzwords of *flexibility* and *choice* fly around the room like crows at a picnic. It is not "business as usual," but a "new way of doing business." Worst of all, we are now asked to consider not what is essential to public education, but what can we live with in this budget.

I have always considered education and the institution of public education to be something that had a vision: a just society in which equity and equality are the determining factors. In teaching my students, I hope to help them find their vision for their future and give them the skills to realize it. Education is all about connecting the past to develop the present and invent the future. In all these meetings, I see no vision being developed. Several administrators repeatedly have stated that in a perfect world you can hang onto your ideals, but now we have to deal with reality. I suggest to the trustees that we hold on to those ideals and take the moral and ethical high ground. The cult of efficiency occupying the legislature is casting us into an abyss. We are being maneuvered into accepting and creating a system that is not fair, equal, or equitable. I ask the trustees to stand up for a quality public education system and to defend the right of the children in this district to have that system available to them. I ask them to support the vision of democracy.

David Futter
Greater Victoria

Source: *GVTA News*, April 2002.



Write to us

Letters to "Readers Write" may be edited for reasons of legality, taste, brevity, and clarity. To be considered for publication, they must be not more than 150 to 200 words, signed, and include a home phone number for verification.

Delta Hotel boycott suspended

The Executive Committee decided at its May 11, 12, 2002 meeting to suspend the boycott of Delta Hotels. The initial decision was based upon information from the Canadian Teachers' Federation relative to its decision to engage in a boycott. The CTF has indicated that it is using a Delta hotel this summer for its Annual General Meeting. Further, investigation by staff has determined that neither of the Canadian Labour Congress or the B.C. Federation of Labour are engaged in this boycott.

The decision to suspend the boycott was made after consideration of the foregoing information and input from the locals in the Sun Peaks Resort region.

If further information and evidence is forthcoming to support a continued boycott of the Delta Hotels, the BCTF could lift its suspension.

— Peter Owens



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CLOSURES from page 1



Mountainview Elementary School, in Terrace, will be completed at a cost of \$3.2 million, but no students will be enrolled there this fall.

closing than individual students who were ever moved due to the class-size limits.

Chudnovsky acknowledged that from time to time schools do need to be closed because of declining enrolment or deteriorated buildings. "We didn't have 57 schools close last year, or the year before that. It was only a handful," he said. "This is unprecedented. This is government policy causing communities to be ripped apart."

In a subsequent interview on BCTV-Global, Education

Minister Christy Clark disputed the facts, saying "the BCTF's numbers aren't always accurate." She also said "it's impossible to quantify the number [of schools slated for closure]."

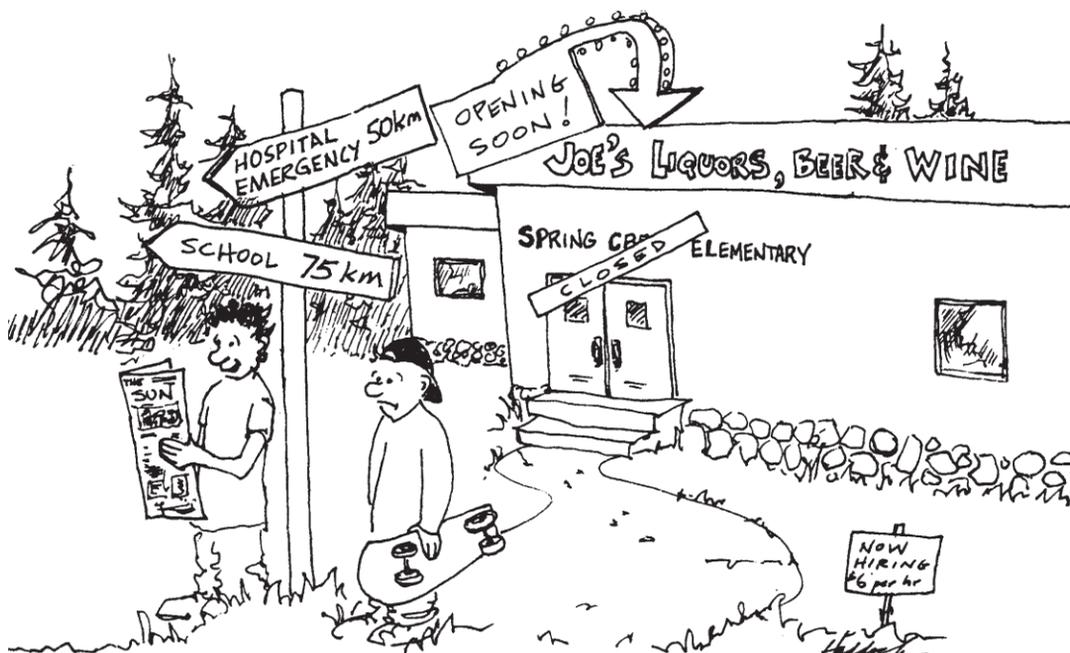
Chudnovsky said the minister is mistaken. "It is possible to quantify the number, and the BCTF's number is accurate and timely. Obviously, in communities where parents and teachers are successful in averting closures, the number could be reduced. We would welcome that news. But at present, 57

schools remain at risk of closure, and the minister's denials will not change that."

Chudnovsky vowed that teachers will continue working with parents and communities to try to save their schools.

For details on budget shortfalls, teacher positions cut, and schools threatened with closure in each school district, see www.bctf.ca/action/cuts/budget/.

Nancy Knickerbocker is the BCTF's media relations officer.



"Hey, listen to what this government dude says!... 'Why should somebody that lives in a rural community have to drive 20 kilometres to buy a bottle of wine for dinner?... Why shouldn't they have the same access in rural British Columbia that all other British Columbians have...?' Right on, dude!"

(Rick Thorpe, Minister of Competition and Enterprise, *The Vancouver Sun*, March 16, 2002)

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

It is quite evident that during the past few weeks a number of School Boards in the Province have taken hasty, ill-advised and entirely unnecessary action in the matter of teachers' salaries. This is to be regretted, for if we are to emerge from our present financial difficulties without irreparable damage to our educational system, it is essential that those who are elected to public office should strive strenuously to avoid anything in the nature of "panicky" proceedings.

— *The B.C. Teacher*, June 1932

50 years ago

Education is being subjected to considerable criticism these days. Much of this criticism represents overburdened municipal taxpayers using this as a safety valve. They attack the standards of our high-school graduates, and by way of comparison point to "the good old days." Before following

these critics blindly, teachers should do a little analyzing. How "good" were the "good old days"? And for whom were they "the good old days"?

Have you ever stopped to consider these points?

1. Twenty-five years ago the top 40 per cent went to high school. Today every child goes to high school.

2. Twenty-five years ago students throughout elementary and high school were taught about five key subjects. Today our Department of Education requires us to teach a much wider curriculum to too many students at a time.

— *The B.C. Teacher*, May/June 1952

30 years ago

Criticism of education is not a modern phenomenon. What is new is the volume and vigour of late. It is time teachers started to listen to the critics—really listen. Throughout the land taxpayers are revolting against soaring school costs. Teachers

may argue that there is no better investment than in the education of the nation's youth, but this does absolutely nothing to ease the hurt in the taxpayer's pocketbook. What disturbs the taxpayer even more is his suspicion that he is not getting good value for his taxation dollar.

— *The B.C. Teacher*, April 1972

10 years ago

Outgoing BCTF President Ken Novakowski: The most significant event for me was the fight against Bill 82, following two successful rounds of collective bargaining. The changes that came with full collective-bargaining rights changed our organization as well. In the last two rounds of bargaining we fought to overcome setbacks from the last period of restraint and the wage-control legislation.

— *Teacher Newsmagazine*, May/June 1992

Chris Bocking,
Keating Elementary School, Saanich

10 New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA F9003 L'enseignement de la langue par le biais du roman Un projet conjoint du Consortium du bas-Fraser et de l'Université Simon Fraser. 178 p. ©1999 Un document à deux volets pour le personnel enseignant de la 3e à la 12e année préparé par une équipe de 30 enseignantes et enseignants sous l'égide du Consortium du bas-Fraser. Partie A : un éventail d'activités expérientielles visant à exploiter la littérature auprès des jeunes. Partie B : un recueil d'activités pédagogiques pour accompagner la lecture de 41 romans pour les jeunes de la 3e à la 12e année. 12,95\$

2 LA 8573 Tropical Rainforest: An Educational Tropical Rainforest Activity Book. Apple Productions 50 p. ©2000. This activity book takes readers on a walk through the rainforest with Emily the caterpillar to meet her friends the parrots, sloths, monkeys, gorillas, frogs, bats, snakes and other creatures who live there. Cartoon characters introduce the "real" animals. Educational pages at the back of the book explain how each of the animals live (with scientific names) and give information on the environment of the tropical rainforest. The activities in the book include mazes, word puzzles and more activities for geography, vocabulary, spelling, art, colour, shapes and life science. K-4, \$5.95

3 LA 9855 Disk Sports. Wilf Wedmann, Jennifer Fenton, Bryna Kopelow, Craig Cornell 52 p. ©2000. This manual includes teaching the basics, curriculum connections, introduction to disc sports, history of ultimate sports, equipment and facilities, safety and etiquette, four "teaching the basics" lesson plans, disc sports drills and games, ultimate glossary and game, disc sports personal skills challenge, personal goals achievement cards, skills challenge record card and skill crests order form. Ages 8-13, \$15

4 LA EE309 The Things We Carry: Sustainable Consumption, Environment and Global Issues. A Project of Environmental Youth Alliance 107 p. and two 15-min. videocassettes ©2001. This curriculum kit explores the emerging idea of consumption that is ecologically, economically and socially viable in the long term. Two young Canadians set out with a camera to ask young people in Canada, England, East Africa, and the USA about "the things they carry." Encourages students to analyze the connections between their daily lives and local and global environment and development issues. Topics: human needs and human wants, mapping local-global links, sustainable development, population and consumption, ecological footprint, lifecycle analysis, true costs of products and advertising and consumption. Grades 8-12. \$27.95

5 LA PD101 Workshop on Workshops—A Training Document for Workshop Facilitators. BCTF PD Division, 173 p. ©2001. Information, activities and worksheets includes the following chapter topics: interactive learning; the designer's mind (gather information about the workshop audience and your relationship to them); workshop framework (plug into a workshop framework and, with the purpose in mind, choose from activity ideas for opening, body, and closure activities); the active facilitator (be prepared to maintain workshop momentum when "on your feet" and actively facilitating); and a list of resources. \$18.95

6 LA 2575 How Music Came to the World and Other Stories. Vancouver Society of Storytelling. Three CDs and 47-page guide ©2000. This three CD set features 12 stories about musical instruments from around the world, enhanced with photographs, text, and video clips. This ground-breaking resource is a collaboration of world music artists and storytellers. Elementary and Secondary \$22

7 LA 8568 Water: Sharing Our Precious Resource. FOREC BC ©2001 This resource kit, produced by FOREC BC in co-operation with government agencies, business, environmental groups and others, contains lesson plans, activity and coloring posters, a workbook, stickers and fact sheets. Concepts include stream or pond ecology, watersheds, energy, water quality and water conservation. If students have access to a pond or stream, they can test the cleanliness of water and investigate the various forms that energy takes. The curriculum links are in the package. K-3. \$14

8 LA 9004 The Memory Box. Produced by Learning Through Drama 13 p. ©2000. Based *The Memory Box* by Mary Bahr. The process drama about preserving memories, comes from suggestions in the text and centres around "creating" a memory box. It can be done in most classroom spaces in approximately two lessons. Prescribed learning outcomes for drama, visual arts, language arts and personal planning. Grades 4-7. \$9

9 LA 9116 Viking Quest. Tom Henighan 120 p. ©2001. This is a novel about 15-year-old Rigg, son of Leif Ericsson, who loves mystery and adventure. In the early 11th century, the boy finds both of these in abundance when his father sails away and leaves him behind in Vinland, the Vikings' precarious foothold on the wild Newfoundland coast. Soon, Riggs makes an amazing discovery. The Vikings aren't alone in this alien land. But who inhabits it with them? Demons, giants, ghouls, or another human tribe, one that equals the Norse invaders in skills bravery? Rigg's quest through the wilderness with the rune master Tyrkir reveals some of the secrets of the new world. But it also brings the boy into conflict with Ivar, the feared berserker, a half-mad warrior who rules in Leif's absence. Ages 9-13. \$8.95

10 LA 9306 The Forbidden City. OLK Productions, 10-minute videocassette, ©2001 This video is a visit to the Emperor's home in the Forbidden City of Beijing, China. It is an inside look at the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven and Summer Palace. The video also tells a story of a very young emperor in the 17th Century, based in part on the book *Inside Stories of the Forbidden City*. Intermediate and up. \$27.95

For a listing of BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the Lesson Aids online catalogue. www.bctf.ca/LessonAids To order any of the above lesson aids enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail.

Check out the web site for the B.C. Association of Learning Materials and Educational Representatives at www.bcalmr.ca/ for a source for contacts for many curriculum resources and information.

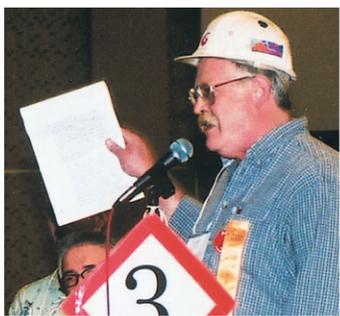
Important notice

BCTF Lesson Aids are primarily intended to provide support for teachers in the development and teaching of units and lessons. They are not "school materials" as described by the February 12, 2002, Representative Assembly. The RA motion covers the purchase of materials that should be the responsibility of a school district. These would include materials used by students such as class sets of books, paper, drawing materials or other stationery supplies. Resources such as those provided by the Lesson Aids Service of the BCTF, which are of assistance to teachers in their preparation for teaching are not covered by the motion. We encourage members to continue to share materials, lesson aids, and resources with one another.

Affiliation with the B.C. Fed: Will teachers wear hard hats?

by Janet Amsden

The BCTF Annual General Meeting debate on affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour was intense. The BCTF Executive Committee appealed to delegates to unanimously endorse the motion to poll members on affiliation. The advantages of affiliation were clear: teachers would gain influence on and support from Labour at negligible cost (\$8 per member per year). Yet the discussion persisted. Delta delegate Alice McQuade reported that teachers on her staff who had unanimously supported recent job action opposed membership in the B.C. Fed. I knew teachers who felt the same. "I worked hard for my degree," one had said. "I don't want to be in the same union as bus drivers."



Norm Nichols

The final speaker in the debate was North Vancouver delegate Norm Nichols, who stepped up to the microphone wearing a hard hat. "I am a worker," he said. "These are the tools I take to work with me every day: my lunch kit, my Thermos, and my briefcase. My grandfather was a worker. He died in 1954 when scaffolding collapsed at Burrard Dry Dock in North Vancouver and he was thrown into the inlet. My father, who was at the founding convention of the BCGEU, died in 1963 moving heavy barrels of Spanish brandy at the LCB warehouse a few blocks from here. I am a worker," he continued, "and by the time I retire, the BCTF will be a member of the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress."

For me, the image of a teacher in a hard hat was cathartic; it exposed the unspoken fear that close ties with Labour would compromise teacher professionalism—a fear rooted in classism. Yet, the reality of teacher unionism is quite the opposite. American researchers have found that states with higher teacher unionism also have higher student achievement. Better working conditions, smaller class sizes and teaching loads, preparation time and high wages benefit students as well as teachers.* Unionized teachers do a better job of teaching.

Affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour will result in no loss of autonomy for the BCTF. We will be sitting at a table with representatives of its 54 affiliates. The largest are the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the B.C. Government Employees' Union, the Hospital Employees' Union, the Health Sciences Association, and the College Institute Educators' Association. There are few hard hats in those groups.

The question was called after Nichols's speech, and I voted proudly in favour of asking

members to join the B.C. Federation of Labour for a three-year trial period.

Janet Amsden teaches at Fairview Elementary School, Maple Ridge.

Reference: * Naylor, Charlie, "Reconciling teacher unionism's disparate identities," January 2002, BCTF Research.

B.C. Federation of Labour: 450,000 members
CUPE: 110,000 members
BCGEU: 60,000 members
HEU: 46,000 members
HSA: 10,000 members
CIEA: 7,000 members

Results count, sometimes

In March *The National Post* ran a 40-paragraph long article touting the wonders of the Edmonton school system. Most of the article is praising the efforts of the former superintendent, Emery Dossdall, Christy Clark's new deputy minister, who introduced a substantial number of reforms. The author claimed that the changes were based on achieving results.

Near the end of the article there are two sentences pointing out that the students in the Calgary system actually perform better on standardized tests with a higher proportion of students graduating. It seems that what is appealing about Edmonton is the market model rather than students' results.

— Peter Owens

High-stakes tests yield poor results

A study appearing in this month's *Education Policy Analysis Archives* calls high-stakes testing a "failed policy initiative."

Two researchers from Arizona State University examined whether scores on college-admissions and placement tests were affected in 18 states that adopted high-stakes tests. They looked at the scores prior to and after the state implemented the tests. Among their findings were these:

- 12 states showed decreases in performance on the American College Test (ACT) after implementation of high school exit exams, and 10 states showed decreases in SAT performance.
- states with exit exams showed a decrease in the percentage of students who passed advanced placement exams.
- the tests did not appear to motivate more students to attend college: participation on the SAT fell in 11 states; on the ACT, participation rose in nine states, decreased in six, and was unchanged in three.

The authors concluded that students are being prepared for state tests but are not necessarily learning.

"You can teach almost any kid to play *Chopsticks* on the piano," said David Berliner, an education professor at Arizona State and one of the researchers. "But by doing that, have you taught the child to play the piano? Does that qualify those kids as musicians? I don't think so."

The study is available online at <http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa/v10n18/>.

Source: National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions Briefing Service that is supported by the National Security Agency (NSA) and ExxonMobil Foundation.

— Erika Shaker, CCPA Education Project



by Tom Potts

Seventy-six trombones led the big parade... with a hundred and ten cornets close at hand... and Robert Preston struts down the main street all uniformed and flashy with the entire town all starry eyed about the wonderful new plan.

After more than 25 years in the classroom, having seen the educational "music man" come to town over and over again, often playing the same tune heard before, I can't help but look with skepticism upon the arrival of yet another methodological parade. Oh, I guess I have to concede that some aspects of some of the things we have had foisted upon us have crept into our repertoires and perhaps a few have become old standards by now in that we can still hum a few bars as we move our students through the curriculum. But, I bought at auction for pennies on the dollar, a magnificent folding mahogany wall that went from being an *open-area classroom* divider... and the trombones disappeared over the hill...to becoming a divider that separates the car bays from the workshop in my garage.

We are into *early literacy* now, and the sheet music of the tunes we have to learn in order to march in this parade are arriving even as we speak. Now don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that there is anything remotely wrong with promoting early literacy. In fact, I have been labouring under the impression that the promotion of early literacy and literacy in general has been pretty much the prime directive of public education since the inception of the whole idea. And every one of us who stands in front of a class every day, regardless of grade or curriculum, is an evangelist in that regard. However, when I hear the trombones coming, I get skeptical when I think about the motives.

Increasingly, we in education and all aspects of education itself, have become objects of measurement rather than subjects of evaluation. Increasingly we are quantified rather than qualified. And, increasingly, the results of quantification and measurement have been cloaked in the jargon of evaluation and quality. So, sweeping judgments about the quality of instruction, programs, methodologies, and other subjective aspects of education are increasingly being made based upon such objective measurements as standardized tests, and the results of the tests are being used to rank order students, classes, schools, districts, provinces, states, and countries. Whenever a hierarchy is established, by definition someone or something has to be at the top, and some other has to be at the

bottom. Immediately it becomes a game of "King of the Hill." Those at the top want to stay there; those at the bottom seek to shed the ignominy of their position by displacing someone higher up. It reminds me of Jim Pattison's sales policy when he had the car lot on Main Street in Vancouver—low person at the end of the month is fired. I suggest that the primary motivation for adopting a specific program in this context is far and away, first and foremost, to look good in the rankings.

Enter the Tennessee Star Project. Tennessee in the mid-1980s found itself in the unenviable position of being dead last in a ranking of the United States relative to standardized test scores in reading and math, particularly in elementary school. Good thing Tennessee wasn't selling cars—Jimmy would have fired 'em. We teachers have long understood from our experience that smaller class sizes have a very positive effect on learning. We campaigned long and hard to get class-size limits in contract,

"This research leaves no doubt that small classes have an advantage over larger classes in reading and mathematics in the early primary grades..."

and it was an uphill battle all the way. The problem, of course, is that as the class numbers decrease, teacher numbers increase, and that costs money. The recent expunging of class-size numbers from our collective agreement reflects the superior value placed on "flexibility." But how could Tennessee climb quickly from the bottom of the rankings? Well, obviously, reduce class sizes to increase learning. So, that's what they did, in a four-year longitudinal study from 1985 to 1989 that followed students from K through Grade 3 at 17 inner-city, 16 suburban, 8 urban, and 38 rural schools in order to assess the effects of class size in different school locations. The sample included more than 6,000 students in each year of the study. Among the conclusions expressed in the executive summary of the study is the following statement by Dr. Jeremy Finn:

"This research leaves no doubt that small classes have an advantage over larger classes in reading and mathematics in the early primary grades. This experiment yields an answer to the questions of the existence of a class-size effect, as well as estimates of the magnitude of the effect for early primary grades."

Tennessee is both a substantial physical distance away from us and also a significant cultural distance away. Yet, when faced with the published rankings of objective achievement as championed by the righteous right of our very own Fraser Institute, those who find themselves in the "tail-end-Charlie" position scramble for ways to change the numbers. No small wonder then, considering that it has always been the case that when Uncle Sam sneezes, Canada catches a cold, that we will grab whatever we can find across the line to fix stuff. So we have Star projects in place now in B.C. that have early primary class sizes of 15 to increase the achievement numbers, and isn't that great?

Well, yes it is, and the numbers should be like that. They should be like that in every primary class, because it provides a better quality education to each individual young person so that everyone will have a better chance of success in our increasingly difficult world. They should not be like that simply to pander to the rank order in the newspaper, because as long as measurement creates a rank order, there will always be those on the bottom, no matter how enormous the general improvement is. So, as we find ourselves jockeying for position in the Fraser Institute rankings, some are adopting the Tennessee solution. Not many know, however, that in the rank order where Tennessee was the last of the 50 states, British Columbia was higher than the highest of the 50 states, and in fact, according to the recent OECD study undertaken in 32 different countries, British Columbia has one of the top education systems in the world. So, I never forget the "76 trombones," and as I modestly take my place as the one and only bass, and I oompah up and down the square, I wonder, Who is leading this parade? Whose music is it anyway? And where are we off to now?

Tom Potts teaches at Kelowna Secondary School and is second vice-president of the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association.

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You're either there or you're not

The poem below was written by a school counsellor, and sent to the education minister. The name is withheld on request, out of respect for students' confidentiality.

Dear Christy Clark

Sometimes what fills my days feels invisible. Counselling doesn't fit neatly on accountability graphs and I know no statistical formulas that tell the truth about what I do.

I think of the sobbing boy who wanted to die when his Mom walked out on him—again, leaving behind only a note and bent spoons.

Or, the parent trembling with worry, needing only some time, some reassurance, some linking with supports.

And, the pictures on my walls of kids trusting themselves to pour their colours onto paper before heading back to their busy classes—lighter.

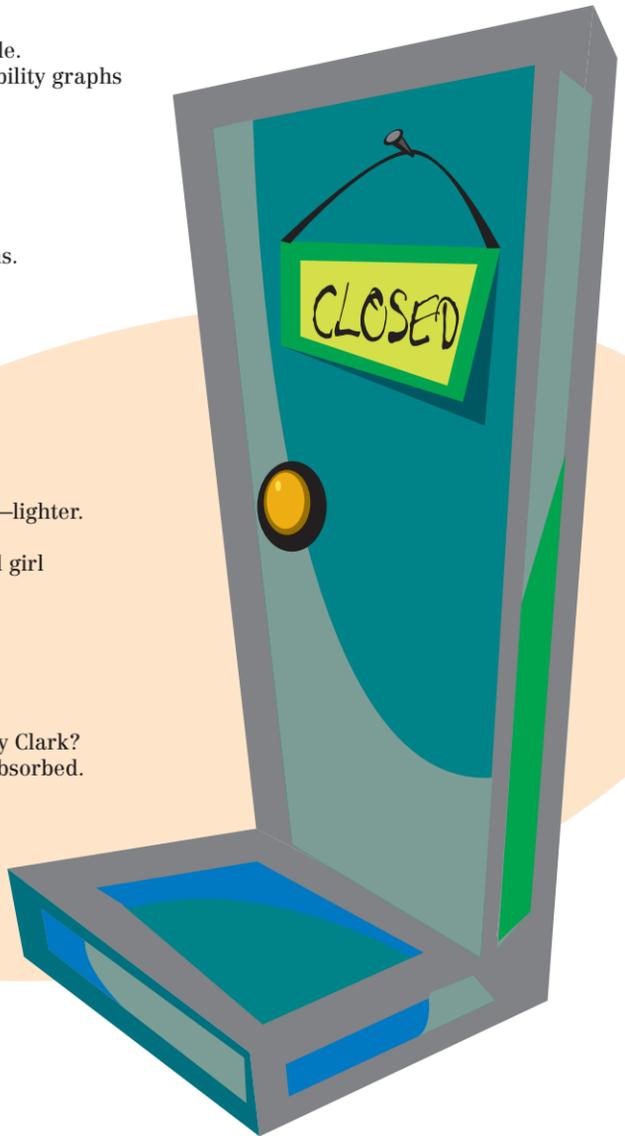
Yesterday I spent time with a five-year-old girl whose mom lies full of tubes and disease, and I wondered who will be here for her when my job falls — no longer considered essential by some accountant's core review.

So, how do you measure my worth, Christy Clark? I picture a meter counting the tears I've absorbed. Or perhaps some official trying to assess whether time with me adds up to increased test scores.

So much of what matters, is being there. Having open ears and an open heart in those unplanned moments when needs crack open.

In the end, You're either there, or you're not.

— a B.C. school counsellor



Yours for the asking

Cultivating Peace in the 21st Century—a free resource for teachers

The tragic events of 2001 irrevocably changed our history as well as our political and cultural climate. How do educators help youth reflect, react, and find meaning in the wake of those events? *Cultivating Peace*, an innovative educational resource, provides teachers with concrete tools to engage youth in the search for a culture of peace in our homes, our schools, our neighbourhoods, and our global communities.

The resource offers a ready-to-use set of activities that examines the basic concepts of peace, security, human rights, and global justice. Designed for Grade 10–12 social science and history curricula across the country, the lessons are complete with ready-to-copy student materials, video components from the National Film Board, full teacher instructions, and suggestions for evaluation. The modular materials allow teachers to integrate the complete unit or choose individual activities.

The resource will be delivered to schools in districts registered with Classroom Connections in August 2002. To find out if your district is registered, phone 1-888-882-8865. The print resource will also be available online in June 2002. Go to www.cultivatingpeace.ca for updates, links, resources, and full project information.

History and social studies teachers, subscribe now for free

Our Roots, Our Future: Experiencing Canada's National Historic Sites in the Classroom, is available free to Canadian teachers by subscribing at www.parkscanada.gc.ca or by fax: 819-997-4831 with "Attention: Teachers Guide" and

your permanent mailing address.

Coming soon: a 62-page teacher's guide and video in English or French, linked to Grades 5–10 curricula, with 10 student-focused activities, learning outcomes/expectations written for your students, insightful teacher tips, a comprehensive list of Internet resources, related activities, and suggested assessment strategies.

Updates and new materials will be posted regularly at www.parkscanada.gc.ca.

Journalism and media literacy teachers

Do you teach journalism or media literacy? Are you interested in professional-development activities in these areas during PSA days or other times? Would you like to lead a workshop on a particular subject in these areas? The journalism department at Kwantlen University College would like to hear from you.

The department is working with the English Language Arts PSA to put on a day of workshops October 25, 2002, and would like to offer or facilitate other professional-development activities throughout the year to interested groups. But we need to know who and where you are, what you're interested in, and what kinds of expertise you have already that could be shared with your fellow teachers—and us. As well, we'd like to create opportunities for you to get acquainted with the journalism department's facilities and faculty, since more of your students are knocking on our door every year.

We know you're busy, but just a quick call or e-mail message would be great. You can call department co-ordinator Frances Bula at 604-599-2573 or e-mail Frances or Joy Jones: frances.bula@kwantlen.ca, joy.jones@kwantlen.ca.

Applaudissons nos efforts communs !

De quoi ont l'air vos finissants en immersion en Colombie-Britannique? Voilà une question maintes fois posée par des gens d'ailleurs qui doutent de la possibilité d'apprendre le français dans un coin de terre si loin d'une réalité francophone. Et bien, ces jeunes diplômés de l'immersion s'expriment dans la langue de Molière avec l'aisance et la confiance d'un francophone, utilisent leur mains pour faire valoir leur point de vue et n'hésitent aucunement à emprunter au lexique anglais lorsque le mot juste manque.

Si nous espérons produire des petits Francophones avec une syntaxe sans faute et un vocabulaire à vous faire crever les yeux, et bien, nous nous leurrions. Le programme d'immersion a été lancé afin d'offrir l'occasion aux jeunes qui ne sont pas d'origine francophone de devenir bilingue. Les parents voulaient tout simplement permettre à leurs enfants d'apprendre le français afin de pouvoir communiquer avec la culture franco-canadienne et leur offrir les mêmes chances de travail au Canada. Leur vision du Canada est celle d'un pays où les Francophones et les Anglophones se respectent et apprécient la langue et la

culture de chaque groupe. Une vision qu'ils transmettent à leurs enfants en les inscrivant au programme d'immersion.

Les jeunes qui se retrouvent dans les programmes d'immersion sont des élèves types : il y en a qui se lancent dans les défis intellectuels et d'autres qui se passionnent pour les arts de la scène et la musique; certains sont les chefs de file de l'école, tandis que d'autres adoptent un rythme d'ado branché. Tous demeurent au programme parce qu'ils aiment l'esprit de collégialité et d'entraide qui anime leur groupe et sont fiers de relever le défi d'apprendre le français.

Les jeunes citent, à peu d'exception, les activités culturelles comme un des points de mire de l'immersion. C'est lors des excursions, des spectacles et des visites littéraires et historiques qu'ils ont l'occasion d'utiliser leurs acquis sans trop de surveillance pédagogique. Ils apprécient les situations qui leur permettent de s'exprimer sans trop d'interventions linguistiques de la part de leurs enseignants.

En tant qu'enseignants, nous avons la responsabilité de les aider à atteindre un niveau de langue communicatif. Ayant à l'appui une gamme de stratégies et d'activités ainsi qu'un

dévouement et enthousiasme sans borne, nous accompagnons nos élèves dans leur cheminement vers un bilinguisme langagier et culturel fonctionnel. En équilibrant notre souci d'amener nos élèves vers une maîtrise de la langue seconde et le désir de ces jeunes de s'exprimer librement sans trop se préoccuper de la qualité de la langue utilisée, nous aidons à garder ces jeunes dans le programme. Tout en visant une rigueur au niveau de l'expression orale et écrite en situations d'apprentissage, ne parlons pas de manque d'intérêt de la part de nos élèves ou d'échec lorsqu'ils communiquent aisément mais avec des erreurs syntaxiques ou autres.

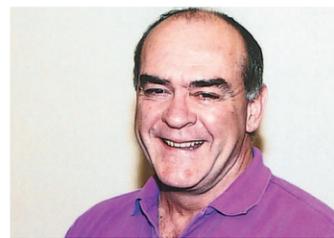
Plutôt, admirons leur courage et leur ténacité. Félicitons-les de tenir l'engagement pris en leur nom par leurs parents, pour la majorité d'entre eux, depuis la maternelle.

Synopsis :

Sometimes, concern is expressed regarding the language abilities of graduates of the French immersion program. The author speaks to that issue, emphasizing the acquisition of communicative abilities in a second language.

— Paule Desgroseilliers

What makes a great day of teaching?



Dewey Lucas, Delta

When each class of the day becomes a teachable moment.



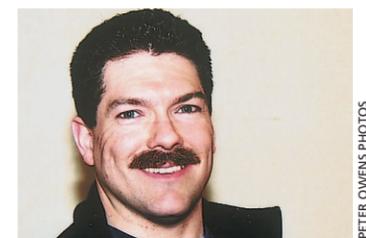
Margaret Paul, Victoria

I regularly reflect on my day of teaching after the children have gone home and again when I relate the events of my day to my husband over supper and dishes. I've had a great day when one of my students has achieved a new level of awareness. Regardless of their starting point, I love it when students move forward in their learning and feel pride in their achievements.

A great day of teaching is a

day when my students have been "on task," engaged in meaningful work, intent on their interaction with the new material and with each other.

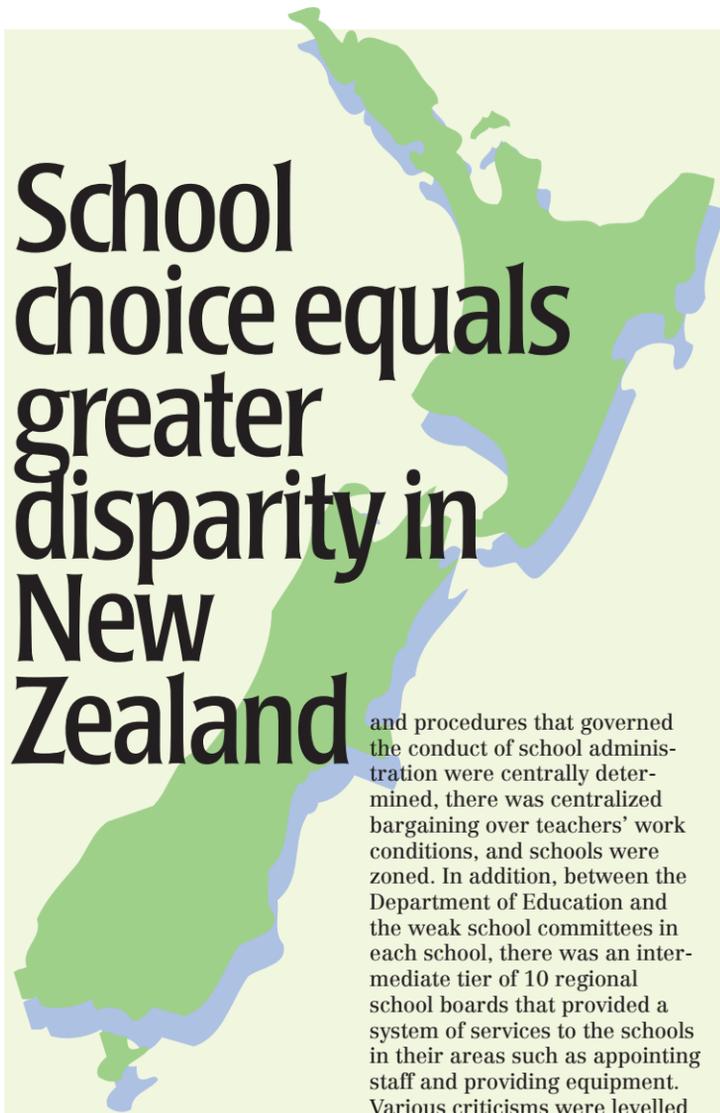
When I've planned and taught well so that the children have acquired new understanding, I am elated.



Jozef Budai, Burnaby

- There's still coffee in the coffee pot when I arrive in the morning.
- No one "forgot" their texts and/or notebooks in their lockers.
- The video machine actually worked and students stayed alert!
- Discussions in class are on-topic and build upon what each previous speaker mentioned.
- When a student says "Thank you" for my efforts on their behalf.
- When my weaker student(s) make a connection and get that "Oh, now I get it!" look!

School choice equals greater disparity in New Zealand



by David Hughes and Hugh Lauder

In 1984, the prime minister of New Zealand, Rob Muldoon, who had run a hands-on, interventionist administration, called an early election. His traditionally right-of-center National Party lost that election to the traditionally left-of-center Labour Party, and David Lange became prime minister. The new government quickly set about implementing a program of reform based on New Right or neo-liberal principles that reversed many of Muldoon's policies.

The reforms were wide reaching and swiftly implemented so that one change was scarcely announced before the next was under way. The dollar was floated, the labour laws were reformed, state-owned enterprises were set up and run on business lines before being sold off to private companies often from overseas, government subsidies to farmers were removed, the market determined interest rates, and so on. Private enterprise, competition, freedom from state intervention, and markets were catch cries.

When Labour won a second term in the 1987 elections, education became a target for reform. Prime Minister Lange took the education portfolio and set up a task force of five members under the chairmanship of supermarket magnate, Brian Picot, to consider the administration of education. The task force's report, *Administering for Excellence*, was presented to government in 1988 and the government's response to it, *Tomorrow's Schools*, was released later in the same year. The Tomorrow's Schools reforms had only one year of operation in 1990 before they were taken a step further by legislation enacted by the National government following its win in the 1990 elections.

Prior to 1988, New Zealand education was run from the country's capital, Wellington, by a centralized, bureaucratic Department of Education that determined approximately 90% of school expenditure. The rules

and procedures that governed the conduct of school administration were centrally determined, there was centralized bargaining over teachers' work conditions, and schools were zoned. In addition, between the Department of Education and the weak school committees in each school, there was an intermediate tier of 10 regional school boards that provided a system of services to the schools in their areas such as appointing staff and providing equipment. Various criticisms were levelled at this system. It was claimed that it tended to be slow and inflexible, that it didn't encourage innovation, and that it was elitist.

Following Picot's task force, Tomorrow's Schools, and the National government's amendments to the legislation after the 1990 elections, a rather different decentralized system emerged. A new "lean and mean" Ministry of Education replaced the old Department of Education and the middle tier of state-provided services was removed with the abolition of the 10 regional school boards. Power was devolved to boards of trustees elected for each school and having responsibility for the governance of their school. So what have been the outcomes of this experiment in New Zealand? In order to examine this question we need to unpack the competing views about the operation of educational markets.

Creating markets pro and con

Supporters of markets believe that parents have the knowledge needed to make decisions about the schools that best meet their children's needs and the ability to act on that knowledge.

Supporters of markets argue that schools will become more diverse as they seek to establish niche markets for themselves giving families even more choice. Supporters of markets believe that school outcomes are a function of good policy and practice over which schools have full control. Competition in education through choice in the market will lead to improved policy and practice as schools strive to attract their share of students.

In a market situation, boards and principals will seek excellence and the quality of teaching will be raised as poor teachers leave (or are removed from) the profession and good teachers' morale, motivation, and performance are enhanced.

Supporters of markets in New Zealand believed that families previously trapped by the "iron cage" of zoning would be emancipated and able to send their children to the schools of

their choice, which would have the effect of making schools more socially and ethnically mixed. Parents who had previously shown little interest in their children's schooling would begin to take a much greater interest as they sought to make choices that would be to their maximum advantage.

Those opposing markets in education essentially believe the opposite of the propositions described above. Markets critics think that parents have unequal knowledge about schools and unequal power to send their children to the school of their choice. They argue that knowledge and power are structured by ethnicity and social class and it is the advantaged in terms of material and cultural capital who are able to exercise choice in an educational market while others are effectively unable to choose. As those with power choose popular schools in increasing numbers, so enrolment schemes will be required to limit roll numbers and the balance of power in the choice process shifts from the family to the school. Because working-class parents have little real choice, their interest in education will not increase and schools will not become more diverse. Rather, as the competition for credentials ever intensifies, schools will be mainly judged on their credential outcomes. Schools with enrolment schemes will tend to select the socially advantaged because this enhances their position in the popularity stakes as these students are the ones who will do well in the race for credentials and so will enhance the school's reputation.

Our findings showed that students from the indigenous Maori population were least likely to be accepted while students from the dominant "white" majority were most likely to be accepted.

The consequence of this is that, rather than becoming more ethnically and socially mixed, schools will become increasingly segregated along ethnic and social lines. Schools in working-class areas will run the risk of entering a spiral of decline as better-off students leave for middle-class schools. As student numbers drop, so too do funding, teacher and student morale, and finally performance so that the market is inimical to excellence in such schools. Opponents of markets believe that boards, principals, and teachers have little control over the factors that affect school outcomes and so there is little they can do to turn a school around once the school's reputation has been weakened.

What the research says

The Smithfield Project was initiated in January 1992 under contract to the Ministry of Education as a longitudinal study of the impact of the reforms on education. During the first two years, we gathered information intended to help us answer the question: *What are the consequences of the creation of educational markets for parental choice?* During the next three years, the focus was on answering the question *What*

is the impact of educational markets on schools' policies and performances? The results of the project have been published in Lauder and Hughes, *et al.* (1999) and space limitations mean that only a brief introduction to the findings can be given here. Another recent text on the New Zealand situation is Fiske and Ladd (2000).

Are parents equal in their ability to exercise choice in educational markets?

We found that parents from different socio-economic backgrounds had the same aspirations for their children. Almost two-thirds of the families in each of the three social groups we studied wanted their children to go to the most prestigious set of schools and only about five percent in each group wanted their children to go to the least prestigious set of schools.

However, at every step in the process of getting their children enrolled in a school, the socially less advantaged were "cooled out." The students from privileged backgrounds were three times more likely than their disadvantaged peers to get into a school in the most prestigious set of schools and four times less likely to attend one in the least prestigious set.

The reasons for this are complex, but one thing we investigated was whether enrolment schemes enable prestigious schools to discriminate on the basis of social background. The schools in the most prestigious set all operated enrolment schemes. We found that whereas 88% of the applications to schools with enrolment schemes from the most socially advantaged families resulted in acceptances, only 72% of the applications from the least socially advantaged were successful. Now, these percentages take no account of the achievement of the students, which may have been influential in the process of selection by schools. So, we undertook an analysis to control for prior student achievement and found that the previous relationship held up. We are not saying that schools consciously discriminated, but the net effect of their enrolment schemes was that they did.

We also studied the effects of ethnicity on the probability of being accepted by a prestigious school. We investigated four ethnic groups controlling for socio-economic status and prior achievement. Our findings showed that students from the indigenous Maori population were least likely to be accepted while students from the dominant "white" majority were most likely to be accepted.

The conclusion, then, must be that while parents do seem to have equal knowledge about schools, those from different SES and ethnic groups have markedly different power to send their children to the school of their choice. It is clear then that on this point the results are decisive in favour of the anti-market position.

Do education markets drive up school performance?

The pro-market belief is that differences in school composition will reduce as parents who have equal knowledge and power in the market make their choices. Given the results found in the previous section it would not be too surprising if we did not find this effect. To investigate the situation, we studied

the intakes of a set of schools between 1990 (the year before the reforms first came into effect) and 1995 (when they had been in effect for five years).

We looked to see who attended their local school and who bypassed their local school for an adjacent school. An adjacent school was defined as clearly not the local school and requiring some travel to attend. Our results showed that students were indeed more likely to attend an adjacent school in 1995 than in 1990. However, when we looked at the SES of the students who bypassed the local school relative to the SES of their communities, we found it was the socially advantaged who were moving. If those who are relatively advantaged tend to move to an adjacent school while the relatively disadvantaged tend to stay behind we would not expect choice to equalize the social and ethnic mix of schools.

We can get a clearer picture of what happened by looking at two particular schools in the same general area that fared very differently when market conditions were introduced. Prior to the introduction of the market, the school we called Kea was solidly working class, with large numbers of Maori and Pacific Islands students, while the school we called Takahe had a high proportion of middle-class, white students.

By 1995, Kea's intake was not much more than a quarter of what it had been in 1990 as students bypassed the school. By way of contrast, Takahe's roll was stable over the period. Takahe had an enrolment scheme that enabled it to choose its intake and this clearly allowed it to sustain its relatively elite roll. The mean socio-economic status of its students remained constant over the period and its ethnic composition was unchanged. Kea's composition, on the other hand, changed dramatically. Its already low mean socio-economic status fell even further as "relatively" advantaged students bypassed the school and its ethnic mix altered substantially so that by 1995 all of its students were from Pacific Islands or indigenous Maori backgrounds.

The conclusion we reached from our analyses is that markets do indeed polarize school intakes contrary to the predictions of supporters of markets.

Do education markets drive up school performance?

Does competition raise educational performance or polarize it? We have seen that intakes tend to be polarized. The central question, then, is what impact, if any, is this likely to have on school performance? As we have discussed, market proponents believe that a school should be able to make a difference irrespective of the student composition of the school. In contrast, market critics see the student composition of a school as crucial to its exam success.

In order to better understand school outcomes, we conducted school effectiveness studies in the Smithfield schools. Of most interest to the question we were trying to answer we found that the mix of the students in the school and the stability of the school roll were significantly related to pupil outcomes. Schools such as Takahe that had high proportions of advantaged students and stable rolls were advantaged in comparison with schools such as Kea with high proportions of disadvantaged students and falling rolls.

The overall conclusion we reached is that markets do have an impact on school performance but they have not produced the outcomes predicted by market proponents. In particular, schools that have lost a well-balanced social class mix of students will have suffered a decline in their performance, partly because of increasing proportions of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and partly through the instability they will have experienced through the decline, sometimes dramatic, in their school rolls.

Conclusion

On balance, our results suggest that school choice within a market context in New Zealand has had effects more consistent with the predictions of the opponents of choice than those who supported its introduction. At least some of the difficulties are being recognized politically. The Education Amendment Act No. 2 enacted by the National Party in 1998 softened some of the provisions of the original legislation and the new Labour-led coalition government elected in 1999 is making further changes intended to ameliorate some of the worst features of the original market system.

David Hughes is a senior lecturer in education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and director of the Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre, New Zealand. Hugh Lauder is a professor of education and political economy, University of Bath.

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Source: Reprinted with permission from *Orbit Magazine*, Vol. 32, No. 1 "1 Greater Accountability for Schools a Good Thing for Kids?" To order *Orbit*: www.oise.utoronto.ca/orbit or 416-923-6641, ext. 2533.

Legislated limits down under

New South Wales has class-size limits in primary set by government as we now have here. What is going on there might be instructive...

The NSW Department of Education and Training does not collect (claims it does not collect) data from schools about individual class sizes despite pressure from the press and the teachers' union. So the NSW Teachers' Federation did its own study and found that:

- one-third of all Kindergarten classes exceeded the government's class-size limits.
- 20% of all primary classes were over the class-size limit set by the government.
- the largest Kindergarten class had 34 pupils.
- the largest Grade 1 class had 37 pupils.
- one-quarter of all primary classes had 30 or more pupils.

A spokesperson for the education department said that schools were allocated resources "according to enrolment-based formula and special needs."

Privatizing hospital support services

by Chris Allnutt

Most British Columbians were sickened by the early-May revelations that major multinational corporations plan to fire and then blacklist tens of thousands of frontline health-care workers as the foreign companies move in to B.C. to cash in on the healthcare privatization agenda of the Campbell government.

Key protections for health workers, like limits on contracting out, were axed to eliminate the barriers to privatization.

The taped conversations between corporate representatives and staff of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union reveal plans for deep wage cuts to as low as \$8 an hour and outline the shocking details of the mass firings and the blacklist to follow.

But they also shed light on what appears to be close collaboration between corporate leaders and Premier Campbell's health authorities that calls into question the integrity of the tendering process for the first wave of health service privatizations launched in late April. That's why the B.C. Federation of Labour is calling on the Campbell government to halt all healthcare privatization pending an independent public inquiry. The call for a moratorium is widely supported by British Columbians—including more than 62% of Liberal supporters.

What would be the largest mass sacking of women workers in B.C. history and the longest blacklist since the McCarthy era in the 1950s is a deliberate and vicious attack. It targets thousands of experienced women and men who've dedicated their working lives to healthcare services for British Columbians.

It would have deep ramifications for the workers, their families, and their communities across the province. It would also compromise our healthcare

system and the well-being of thousands of patients and residents in our healthcare facilities.

But shocking as the blacklist and the huge wage cuts may be, British Columbians should be even more alarmed that the actions of the corporations are linked to the reckless agenda of the Campbell Liberals.

At the heart of the scandal is a conscious policy decision made by the Campbell government about the value of work performed mostly by women in the healthcare system. It happened only months after Campbell himself had pledged publicly that HEU members didn't have to worry about privatization by his government.

In the callous minds of the Liberals—and with the urging of their right-wing allies like the Fraser Institute and big business—vital support services in our healthcare system performed by members of the Hospital Employees' Union could be delivered as "hotel services" and hived off to private-sector contractors at a lower cost by slashing wages and service quality.

But a groundbreaking study by Simon Fraser University economist Marjorie Griffin-Cohen—released in the fall of 2001 by HEU—suggests that

...leaked confidential government documents that exposed the Liberals' blueprint to privatize \$700 million dollars worth of health services and fire 20,000 workers...

such action would be a serious misstep risking patient health and safety.

"Support work is critical to the efficient running of healthcare facilities and, in most cases, to the health of patients," says Cohen. She undertook a detailed analysis of the skills, responsibilities, and experiences of healthcare workers in laundry, housekeeping, food

services, trades, and clerical positions. Some of her findings include:

- Housekeeping and cleaning staff are the front line against antibiotic-resistant organisms (AROs) and follow special protocols when cleaning around patients infected with a host of dangerous organisms. As they keep healthcare facilities safe from disease, they face a range of biological and work-load hazards and suffer from sky-high injury rates.

- Laundry workers must be constantly vigilant to avoid exposure to "sharps," body parts and fluids, and other hazards that could lead to injury or infection. Some laundry workers fold operating-room linens into sterile surgical bundles after checking for lint and loose fibers that could infect a patient.

- Food-service staff develop specialized meals for patients with dietary restrictions and ensure these meals are delivered to the right patient. In long-term care facilities, meal time is the high point in the day in terms of companionship and support for elderly residents. Food-service workers use these opportunities to observe whether patients are eating properly.

"The main point of this analysis is that the level of skills, responsibilities, and working conditions of support workers are significantly different from those of workers in the hotel sector," says Cohen. "These differences, combined with the healthcare specific on-the-job experience and training required, provide the basis for the higher wages for support staff in the healthcare sector."

However, Campbell wasn't about to let the facts disrupt his push to privatize health services. In late January 2002, during the same legislative sitting in which government imposed a contract settlement on teachers and tore up important provisions like class-size limits, the Liberals also gutted healthcare contracts. Key protections for health workers, like limits on contracting out, were axed to eliminate the barriers to privatization.

And in March 2002, HEU leaked confidential government

documents that exposed the Liberals' blueprint to privatize \$700 million dollars worth of health services and fire 20,000 workers—without significant cost savings according to the government's own calculations.

Health Minister Colin Hansen says that one of the companies caught up in the blacklist scandal—the French multinational Sodexo—should still be allowed to provide privatized healthcare services in B.C. Sodexo has a questionable track record. The company is at the centre of a scandal in Scotland where its shoddy cleaning standards at hospitals where it has contracts have brought a litany of complaints and controversy. Patients have died.

Undervaluing the contribution of health support workers and discounting their role in providing a safe environment for patients are important elements of the Campbell government's strategy to dismantle and sell off parts of our public healthcare system.

Undervaluing the contribution of health support workers and discounting their role in providing a safe environment for patients are important elements of the Campbell government's strategy to dismantle and sell off parts of our public healthcare system. But together with the Labour Movement, HEU members will be mobilizing to stop that agenda.

Chris Allnutt is secretary-business manager for HEU/UCPE.

For copies of the Marjorie Cohen study or fact sheets on the corporations trying to cash in on the privatization of health services in B.C., go to www.heu.org, or contact HEU's communications department, 604-438-5000.



CANADIAN AND MEXICAN TEACHERS CONFRONT THE SAME AGENDA

In August 2001, a small group of Surrey Teachers' Association and Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association members journeyed to Mexico to fulfill part of the STA's Mexico Twinning Committee's goal of getting to know, personally, its sister union—Section 9, the Mexico City Elementary School Teachers' Union. We were all profoundly affected by the experience.

During our two-week stay, we made many observations and generalizations:

1. Mexicans see a clear connection between increasing inequality and NAFTA.
2. Mexican teachers realize the need for co-operation between our unions.
3. The Zapatista Revolution was started on the day that NAFTA came into fruition—January 1, 1994.
4. Slogans and posters like "NAFTA means the Death of Indigenous Peoples" resonated strongly.
5. The prices of basic groceries (in Mexico) have risen to approximately equal Canadian prices, while wages have generally fallen over the last decade.

The future of the Mexico Twinning Project

We visited Section 9, which includes 58,000 members, who are teachers and administrators. We visited four elementary schools and two preschools.

In Mexican schools, the teachers are well respected. We

should build strong links with Mexican teachers, and after seven years of NAFTA, we shouldn't delay! It's important that in building our movement together, we not think in terms of North-to-South charity. There are real benefits for both Canadian and Mexican unions. We can politicize, sensitize, and mobilize our members through direct personal experience. We can learn from the decision-making process in Mexican teachers' meetings. Mexican teachers can benefit from Canadian funding for projects such as "Women in Leadership," and "Non-sexist Curriculum" workshops. We all benefit from feeling we are not alone in our struggles for dignity in our work, fair salaries, and bargaining rights. We feel real solidarity!

In 1999, we stepped in at a crucial moment with international pressure through letter-writing and faxing officials to help the CNTE, Section 9, demand that their jailed comrades be released. In turn, they are willing to plan protests at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City to support our right to strike.

Because the steely spirit of Mexican teachers has been forged in the heat of life-or-death confrontations with the powers in Mexico, they can clearly see the direction that neo-liberalism and globalization is taking all of us. Perhaps this relationship will help Canadian teachers to see more clearly the

threats conservative policies pose to public education.

We want to increase the numbers of B.C. teachers who have direct experience with the inspiring struggle of the teachers in Mexico. We want to maintain and perhaps expand the important international solidarity work of the BCTF.

Get your local organized, and join us next summer for a trip that could change the way you see the world.

— Julia McRae

The suffering of the people in Mexico

Seventy percent of the Mexican people live within the marginal or fringe economy. This means that 70% either receive minimum wages of \$8 US a day or earn even less by resorting to street vending or begging as their only source of income.

Fifteen years ago, thriving on a low income was a way of life; adaptations were made while the people became resourceful community builders. However, today, thanks to recent trade agreements and the selling out of the country's resources and land, that income is matched against a cost of living similar to yours and mine. As a result, families are displaced as fathers pursue an income in nearby American resort towns, American border factories, or as undocumented workers in the U.S.A. Increasingly, children are forced onto the streets to supplement the family income, sacrificing their education and

any hope of improving their standard of living.

Yes, they have Coke in every rural village but no drinking water. Yes, they have choices that the big box stores offer, but no cash, only coupons that come in the form of wages, forcing them to choose costly items over their local markets. And, yes they have access to American TV programs to ensure that the consumer dream is inculcated.

The anguish suffered by the poor of Mexico is hidden from us. It isn't written about on the front pages of newspapers. The flow of information is controlled by the media conglomerates. Sadly, many Mexican people have learned to accept their lot in life, blaming themselves for their pitiable lifestyle rather than the oppressive system.

— Dianne Dunsmore

Comparative observations

B.C.	Mexico
Average salary \$50,000	\$12,000 teaching two shifts
Decreasing funding	Decreasing funding
AOs and teachers belong to separate associations	AOs and teachers belong to the same union
Decreasing resource money	Lack of resources in general
Lack of teaching facilities, e.g., tutors in change rooms	Converting houses to accommodation schools
School-funded photocopying	Photocopying at teachers' expense
Subsidized breakfast programs	Subsidized breakfast programs
Term-specific contracts	Short-term contracts common
Shortage of TOCs	No TOCs for absences
One-year maternity leave	Three-month maternity leave
Prep time in collective agreements	No prep time during the day
PAC fundraising for materials	PAC groups pay for computer & science labs
Exclusive corporate contracts requiring logo displays	Corporate sponsorship with contracts
School funds for materials and supplies	Teacher often purchases chalk, shelves, desks, chairs, etc.
Mandatory schooling K-15 years	High quality public preschool for three-five years of age
Low drop-out rate	High drop-out rate after Grade 6 because of schooling costs
Libraries in most schools	Lack of books or no library at all
School gym	PE in school courtyard
School renovations and additions when board decides	Additions only when enough PAC funds are raised
Trends toward privatization, charter schools, erosion of public schools' high standards	Upper class attends private schools; public schools neglected
	Constant sightings of billboard advertisements for private schools

— Derek Imai



Engaging in global democracy

An action institute for educators committed to educating students for democratic citizenship

The BCTF, in collaboration with the CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) Global Classroom Initiative, is inviting B.C. teachers of all grade levels, and all subjects to apply for this opportunity to broaden their knowledge of global education and to develop, pilot, and publish lesson aids.

Features of the project:

1. A five-day institute (August 14-18, 2002), in which you will:
 - broaden your theoretical and practical knowledge about global education.
 - review CIDA objectives and themes (focussing on basic human needs: health and nutrition, basic education, HIV/AIDS, and child protection; gender equality; human rights, democracy, and good governance; and the environment).
 - identify links to the B.C. Ministry of Education's learning outcomes.
 - review existing resources and meet resource developers from NGOs.
 - draft a lesson aid in your area of expertise.

2. A four-month period (September-December, 2002), in which you will:

- pilot your lesson aid.
- complete a formative assessment and written summary of the lesson aid.

3. A day-and-a-half colloquium (late January 2003), in which you will join other participants in sharing and evaluating the resources.

4. Publication of the lesson aids:
 - to be edited by project staff.
 - to be sold through BCTF Lesson Aids (at cost).
 - to be made available on the BCTF Global Education web site (as possible).

What about the participants?

To achieve diversity with regard to geographic locale, subject, and student age, the 24 participants in the project will be selected from around the province. Interested teachers are encouraged to apply either individually or in collaborative pairs. Participants are expected to take part in all aspects of the project. (Please do not apply if you are unable to make that commitment.)

Costs related to attending the institute and the colloquium will be covered by the project.

If you are interested, please contact Leona Dolan, at the BCTF (604 871-2250 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, f: 604-871-2294, ldolan@bctf.ca) for an application form. The form can be downloaded from www.bctf.ca/social/.

Deadline for submission is June 14, 2002. Successful participants will be notified by June 24, 2002.

This initiative is subject to receipt of CIDA funding.

Inequality in the global economy

A new report, "The Global Divide," by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, sheds some light on the pressing issue of inequality in the global economy.

"When countless politicians and business gurus are telling us that we live in a global village," said author Marc Lee, "then we have to look at how the income pie in that village is sliced, and it is not a pretty picture."

The report finds that inequality is both extremely large and has been growing, especially over the past two decades. In 1970, the top 20% of the world's people in the richest countries earned 32 times the income of the bottom 20%. That grew to 45 times in 1980, to 59 times in 1989, and to 74 times by 1997.

This, however, only captures the growth in inequality between countries, and a true picture of global inequality must also consider the growing gap within countries. The report draws on research done for the World Bank that finds that, while the top 10% of the world's people increased their share of world income to 51% in 1993, the poorest have been losing ground. In 1993, the bottom half of the world's population received a mere 8.5% of world income, down from 9.6% in 1988.

The report finds that IMF and World Bank policies of liberalization, privatization, and deregulation have significantly contributed to the rise in global inequality. For many of the poorest countries, the policies

have been forced on them by the IMF and World Bank in order to get access to loans.

"The good news is that the plight of the world's poor is being discussed at the highest levels," says Lee. "The bad news is that the cure emanating from the discussions too often resembles the disease."

The full text of "The Global Divide" is on the CCPA web site: www.policyalternatives.ca.

Canadians want fairness for the unemployed

According to a poll commissioned by the Canadian Labour Congress, only 40% of Canadians know that the government has removed billions from unemployment insurance premiums and used it for other purposes.

After being told this, people were asked, "Do you feel the government should use employment insurance premiums only to pay benefits and provide training to the unemployed, or do you not feel this way?" Seventy-eight percent said they want the premiums used only to pay benefits and provide training for the unemployed. Across all regions and income categories, the proportion who answered this way was the same.

Sixty-five percent said they were in favour when asked, "At the present time, unemployed workers receive benefits that replace up to 55% of their weekly pay to a maximum of \$413 a week. The Canadian Labour Congress has proposed that the government increase the benefits unemployed work-

ers receive to equal two-thirds of their weekly pay. Do you favour or oppose this change?"

"Canadians are fair minded," said CLC President Ken Georgetti. "They want their government to stop picking the pockets of unemployed workers."

The poll, conducted by Vector Research + Development of Toronto, interviewed 1,014 adult Canadians throughout the country between January 31 and February 10. It is accurate at plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

Source: CLC, CALM



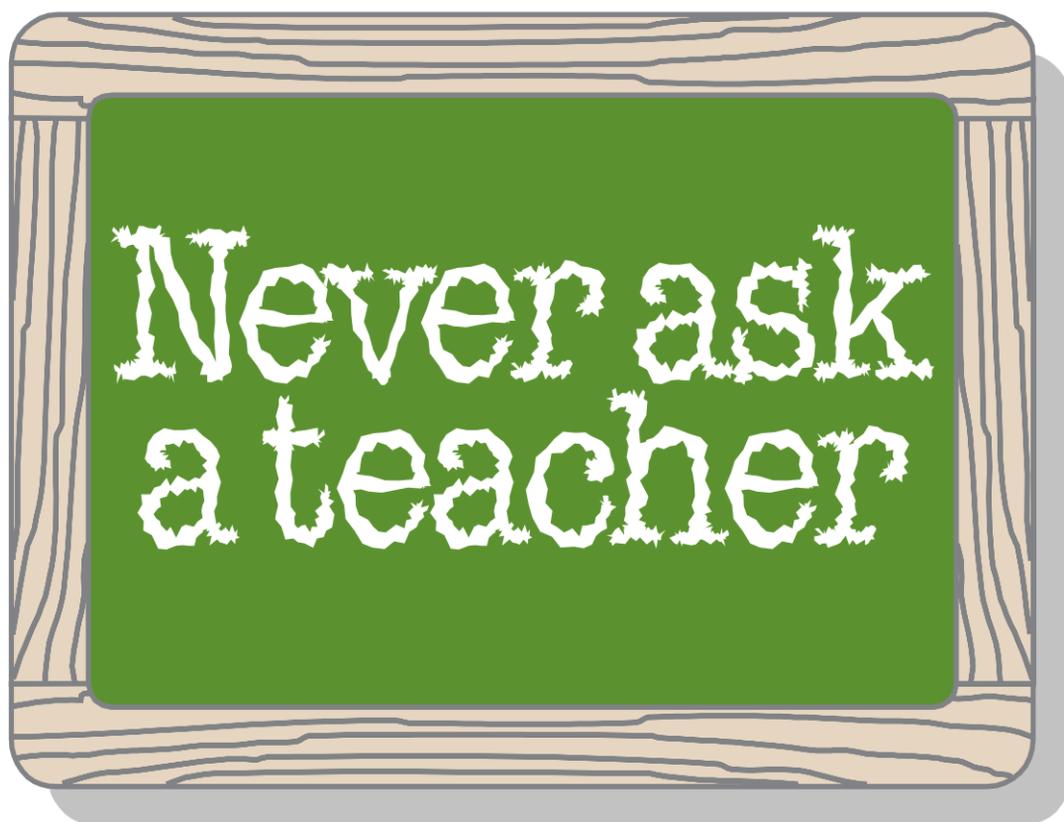
Canadian poverty facts

- The gap between the richest and the poorest grew in the 1990s. At the end of the 1980s, the top 20% of Canadian families earned 35 times the market income of the lowest 20% of families.

- At the end of the 1990s, the top 20% of Canadian families earned 75 times of the market income of the lowest 20% of families.

- During the 1990s, the portion of all Canadians who earned less than \$20K a year increased, as did the portion earning more than \$50K.

Source: *Outfront*, CLC, Spring 2002.



by Don Smith

What would teachers know about education?

Most educators spend only four to seven years at the university level preparing themselves for a career in teaching, so how are they qualified to comprehend what is best for children? All the "hands on" experience in the classroom, responding to the multiple needs of at least 25 individuals, couldn't possibly equip teachers to provide important input into educational policies and system guidelines. Countless workshops, staff meetings, and a few professional development days could never bring the status of the lowly teacher up to the level of authorship of educational philosophy nor promoter of policy changes or innovations.

How could teachers possibly understand the overall educational concerns of parents, even if they have children of their own?

Instead, it is much more important to promote public input through increased control over all things educational. After all, most parents attended school at one time or another, giving them a special expertise in the field. Most persons can quite easily recall experiences with ineffective teachers, for whom they had little respect, using remote examples while tarnishing the whole profession.

Like any other field, there will always be less than satisfactory individuals who do affect general standards. We've all experienced such persons and sadly regretted that they were ever given a professional certificate. However, most public critics would admit that the "misfits" do not represent the majority of classroom practitioners. On the contrary, it would be more helpful to cite those special members of the profession who, through much patience and dedication, made such an impact on children.

Have parents never been encouraged to be part of the educational process?

Statements emanating from the Ministry of Education suggest that parents have had little or no input into their children's scholastic program. One wonders whether anyone

remembers the PTA, the Parents' Consultative Committee, or parents' advisory group designed to encourage parental participation in the workings of each school. In addition, parent teacher conferences, during each reporting session, always took place, as well as extraordinary home/school meetings as required. School-based team meetings often included parental input. Even the promotion of administrative candidates included input from community representatives. The periodic, year-long, school assessment process adhered to provincial guidelines by which all programs were examined and reviewed by staffs, overseen by an outside team of other district professionals. Part of the resulting, year-end-action statements included compiled questionnaire results that were completed by most parents.

Far superior to teachers and elected district representatives is the current provincial minister of education, who is blessed with the rare ability, shortly after attaining office, to fully appraise the overall system and make major declarations about its weaknesses and needs. As a new parent she has the vision for a new process that includes more parental input and control as well as major funding formula changes that will put impossible demands upon systems and district boards. Besides tearing up contracts in which improved pupil-teacher ratios have been established and specialist staffing requirements have been supported, she has refused to cover the imposed teacher salary increases.

Why would we trust teachers to assess school/student achievement?

The Fraser Institute's provincial assessment of all schools, based upon government examinations, is surely an incomplete indicator of institutional program success. Not surprising, the highest results coincide with socio-economic circumstances. The more affluent the school community, the more likely that the exam results will be superior. Could the results have anything to do with the fact that the majority of parents in such areas enjoy a higher level of education and often provide a very positive learning environment? Would a modern

home with all conveniences, ample space, reference material, and computer access make it any more desirable as a learning atmosphere as opposed to an overcrowded household with limited or no access to such benefits? Schools with lower test results often include a large percentage of children among whom English is a second language. Other factors include part-time work, transience, health issues, family break-up, and poverty and urban decay.

In addition to publishing what seems obvious, is the problem of the labelling of "underperforming" schools, which affects staff and student morale. Are governmental tests so all-encompassing and inclusive that they illustrate the most important criteria by which school effectiveness can be gauged? Perhaps successful programs, as defined by examination results, are merely institutions that create superior test writers. To what extent do such devices measure the overall development and growth of each individual? Tests can indeed play an important part in the educational process, providing one guide by which the successful learning of concepts can be measured. However, such devices need not be the only criteria of academic success. Frequent topical tests, oral contributions, and research projects can often establish important proof of academic growth. In addition, attentive instructors can quite readily make valid, subjective assessments about individuals based upon the regular classroom performance of their charges.

Why not ask a teacher?

If the educational system has enough faith in its professional teachers to assign them such a major role in the everyday lives of our children, perhaps their voices should be heeded more readily when it comes to establishing system policy and philosophy. Why ask the teacher? Who better would understand what may be best for children in terms of a sound and purposeful education? Neither elected representatives nor conservative organizations such as the Fraser Institute have the answers.

Don Smith is a retired Vancouver teacher and administrator.

Whither the Surrey book-banning case?

by Murray Warren

"Isn't that case all over and done with?" you ask. "Didn't the Surrey School Board lose?" Sadly, that isn't the situation. You see, there is the little matter of an ambiguous Appeal Court ruling and the need to obtain a final judgment at the Supreme Court of Canada.

It all began back in 1997, when three children's books (*Belinda's Bouquet*, *Asha's Mums*, and *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads*) were submitted to the Surrey School Board for approval for use in Kindergarten and Grade 1 as resources for the personal planning curriculum. The books feature children who have two moms or two dads. The board refused to allow the books to be used anywhere in the district because parents complained that their religious beliefs would be offended by acknowledging in the classroom that some children have same-gender parents.

The case was heard in the B.C. Supreme Court, and the judge determined that the ban imposed by the board breached the School Act, which requires that public schools be conducted on "strictly secular" principles, precluding the board's decision's being "significantly influenced by religious considerations." Those opposing the board's actions were awarded substantial costs. The board by that point had spent over half a million dollars of taxpayers' money in legal costs.

The board then decided to appeal the decision, and the case was heard in the B.C. Court of Appeal in 1999. That court decided that the previous judge had erred in her decision and that the School Act had not been breached. However, much of the petitioners' case rested on arguments based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and those were not addressed by the Appeal Court judges. The petitioners were ordered to return the costs granted by the lower court.

The reasons why we have chosen to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada are substantial. A Supreme Court decision in our favour will have far-reaching implications for educators throughout the country. The case is about teachers' professional autonomy to decide how best to meet the learning needs of all students. It is about

preventing school boards from making educational policy and decisions based on the religious persuasions of some members of the community, at the expense of others. Such a decision will send a clear message to school boards across Canada that they must adhere to the principles of a publicly funded education system, the purpose of which is to serve the needs of all within it.

This case also goes to the heart of children's rights to have their realities, including their families, reflected in their schools and in the curriculum. As educators, we have a responsibility to welcome and celebrate every single student's reality, regardless of whether we personally condone his or her family configuration and makeup.

At stake here, as well, are the equality and freedom-of-expression rights of citizens as guaranteed under the charter. The public education system and the school boards that administer it are required and morally obliged to adhere to the principles of the charter, so that all who access the system are treated in a manner consistent with its values. The national importance of this case has been confirmed by the intervention on behalf of the petitioners of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and others.

My life partner and I employed the lawyer in this case. To date our legal bills amount to several hundred thousands, for which we are personally liable. The school board has spent more than \$760,000 to keep the books out of classrooms. Our fundraising efforts, which have taken an enormous amount of time and energy, have raised approximately \$110,000 (\$80,000 of which was generously donated by the BCTF). We are still short more than \$200,000.

The case before the Supreme Court takes place June 12, 2002, and I would appreciate any financial help members might be able to give. Donations can be sent directly to Arvay Finlay, Solicitors (In Trust), 4th Floor, 888 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1H8.

Murray Warren teaches at *Blakeburn Elementary School, Coquitlam*.

Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C. (GALE-BC) is pleased to announce their newly revamped website at www.galebc.org.

Hospitality High

The Marriott Hospitality Public Charter High School, in Washington, D.C., funded by the Marriott Foundation, the Hyatt Corp., and Loews Hotels and MeriStar Corp., teaches its primarily African-American and Latino student body the finer points of hospitality.

Juniors and seniors work internships in the food service and hospitality industry. According to a volunteer tutor, the school was established because Marriott was having difficulty finding properly prepared desk clerks, waiters, and housekeepers.

Source: *Labor Notes*, CALM

State legislature expands bargaining rights

The trend in Maryland seems to be the opposite of the trend here in B.C. The Maryland State Senate approved a bill to expand collective bargaining to curriculum and teacher assignments and evaluations, among others. The bill now faces a vote in the state House of Delegates, where it is expected to pass easily. School boards and superintendents oppose the measure.

Girls' day conference

by Joanne Dueck

Peer pressure. Family pressure. Media images. Societal expectations. Addressing these difficult pressures and messages, a local organization, the Dawson Creek Girls' Day Committee, recently hosted its third annual Girls' Day Conference.

On April 20, 2002, at the local public health unit, 16 Grade 5 girls, five Grade 12 mentors, and a few interested community women celebrated the unique and special qualities of each participant. The theme came from the book *Girls Who Rocked the World* by Amelie Welden (ISBN: 1-885223-68). The older girls planned and taught games, helped with activities, and shared experiences with the younger participants. According to the younger girls, the day was a hit.

The local Rotary Club provided funds for snacks and lunch and supplies. Sharon Smith, of Rainbow Studios, took a portrait photograph of each girl, and Audrey Nelson, of Picture It!, donated an art poster entitled "Believe" for a draw.

Each girl entered a draw by writing on a slip of paper how she would "rock the world" one day. Thoughts included:

- I would like to help people by helping them solve problems.
- I want to rock the world by helping to feed people who are starving.
- I would like to rock the world by becoming a candy striper and volunteering some time. Then, I'd like to become a nurse.
- I would like to care for sick animals.
- I'd like to become a veterinarian's assistant.
- I would like to ride a dolphin!
- I want to be an astronaut.
- I am going to become a teacher.
- I'm going to be the best mom I can be!
- I'd like to study law and become a famous lawyer.

- I'm going to become a police officer.
- I'd like to help people by becoming a physiotherapist and help whoever I can.
- Being a doctor, then I could help people.
- I'd like to sing.
- I'd like to travel the world and gain a better understanding of other cultures.
- I'm going to become an anthropologist and discover new and great things about the lives of people from past civilizations.
- I'd like to rock the world by just being me!

The aim of the conference was to help girls feel good about themselves. We talked about ways to deflect negative feelings away from bodies, looks, or weight. After each presentation, the girls talked about what they'd heard or seen or done in small groups. Rapport developed in the small groups. By the end of the day, girls were exchanging cards and sincere compliments. It was heartwarming to see girls from different schools connecting in this way.

The input of the older mentor students was invaluable. Those girls have already begun to Rock the World! The theme grew from drama presentations highlighting the lives of women who succeeded despite adversity—Anne Frank, Joan of Arc, Indira Ghandi, and Mother Teresa.

We also explored the nature of female body image over the centuries of human civilization as shown in art work, carvings, photographs, and advertisements. We talked about today's magazine and TV images and thought about what that means for young girls.

Seeing girls come in as strangers, get to know one another, and by the end of the day give such valuable and genuine comments and compliments to one another is thrilling.

Joanne Dueck teaches at Parkhill Elementary School, Dawson Creek.



(Clockwise from upper right) the cookie machine; painting picture frames; an energizer; and the friendship web.

Interprovincial reciprocal transfer agreement reached

Thanks to a new agreement, many members of teachers' pension plans throughout Canada who were ineligible to transfer pension rights in the past may now be eligible to do so.

The reciprocal agreement among the Teachers' Pension Plan Authorities, which came into effect January 1, 2002, allows plan members in all provinces except Newfoundland to transfer pension rights between plans. This major improvement to portability rights within the B.C. plan and elsewhere will allow many more people to improve the value of their pension benefit.

If you are eligible to transfer your pension rights, remember that it's not always to your advantage to do so. To find out if it's to your advantage to transfer pension rights to the TPP, you'll first need to request a transfer to find out the amount of service that the TPP will recognize from your previous pension plan. Contact the Pension Corporation to initiate the application.

You'll also need to consider the following.

- Are you eligible for a pension from your previous pension plan?
- If no, then a transfer is likely the best option.
- If yes, then consider whether one pension from the TPP is likely to be better than two separate pensions.
- If yes, can you take an early pension from the previous pension plan?

You may wish to see an independent financial advisor before making your final decision to transfer or not transfer.

For access to more information about the new agreement, including a members' bulletin on the subject, visit the Pension Corporation's web site: pensions.bc.ca.

To apply to transfer your pension rights under the new agreement, contact your employer or the Pension Corporation to confirm your eligibility and to get more information. The Pension Corporation requests that unless you are retiring this June you wait until fall 2002 to apply for a transfer. Your waiting will assist the plan in clearing up the backlog of purchase-of-service requests.

Contact the Pension Corporation: Victoria 250-953-3022, Vancouver 604-660-4088, toll free 1-800-665-6770, Fax: 250-356-8977, Pension Corporation, PO Box 9465 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9V8.

Important news if you taught in Manitoba?

Changes to the Manitoba Teachers' Pension Act may affect your TRAF pension. The amendments, passed on July 6, 2001, are a result of negotiations between The Manitoba Teachers' Society and the Government of Manitoba.

Purchasing past service

You may apply to purchase past service, providing:

- you are not receiving a pension.
- the service cannot be purchased under any other provision of the Act.
- during that period, you were not contributing to a pension plan, other than the Canada Pension Plan.

If you meet the above conditions, the new legislation allows you to purchase:

1. parental leave(s).
2. service while employed under the Minister of Education, Training & Youth or the minister responsible for universities.
3. service while employed with the Faculty of Education at a Manitoba university.
4. service as a clinician while employed by a school division (service for which contributions were refunded is not included).

The cost to purchase the service is based on an actuarial formula that considers your age, your current salary rate, and the full amount required to fund the increase in your pension as a result of the additional service.

You must apply to purchase past service before the effective date of your pension. For a "Past Service Purchase Request" form or more information, contact TRAF at the address below.

Purchasing maternity leave

If you are a teacher who has taken maternity leave(s) from a Manitoba school division prior to August 18, 2000—and you are not currently collecting your Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF) pension—you are now eligible to purchase period(s) of maternity leave as pensionable service.

If interested, you must apply to purchase those leave(s) before July 3, 2002.

For a "Maternity Leave Purchase Request" form or more information, contact Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, Room 330, Johnston Terminal, 25 Forks Market Road, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4S8, Ph: 204-949-0048, info@traf.mb.ca, www.traf.mb.ca

Saskatchewan and Manitoba teachers

If you have teaching experience in Saskatchewan or Manitoba and have not withdrawn your pension contribution, please contact the applicable pension plan administration. The applicable pension plans would like to inform you of your pension rights but they do not have your current address. The pension plans request that you fax your name, Social Insurance Number, and current address to:

- Saskatchewan Teachers' Pension Corporation, Room 226, 3085 Albert Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4P 3V7. Telephone: 306-787-9188 Toll free: 1-877-364-8202 FAX: 306-787-1939
- Manitoba Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, 330 Johnson Terminal, 25 Forks Market Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4S8. Telephone: 204-949-0048, Toll free: 1-800-782-0714, F: 204-944-0361, E-mail: info@traf.mb.ca.

88? Don't wait

Teachers who have reached the age of 64 or the factor 88, age plus contributory service with the teachers or municipal pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan: Long Term. If you have reached age 65 or factor 90, you are no longer eligible for long-term benefits and should withdraw. It is necessary for you to apply to withdraw.

Send a completed form (available from Income Security, local presidents, or online at www.bctf.ca/pensions/salary/LT-Withdrawal/Form.shtml) to the BCTF Income Security Dept.

Earthquakes happen—Are you ready?

While some areas of British Columbia are more susceptible to earthquakes than others, all of B.C. is an earthquake zone—Canada's most active. In recent years, earthquakes have been felt not only in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island, but also in Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Nelson, and Penticton—areas not thought of as earthquake-prone.

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is working on an earthquake preparedness initiative to ensure that students and their families have the information they need to be as safe as possible.

The project concentrates on learning resources that encourage B.C. youth to make emergency preparedness part of their lifestyle so they develop life-safety practices that will stay with them forever. The final materials will be available to all B.C. schools. The teaching aids support Personal Planning K-7 and Career and Personal Planning 8-12.

Phase II of the three-phase project, intended to proactively educate B.C. students on the threat of earthquakes in B.C.—how to physically and emotionally prepare, how students and their families should respond, and how their community will respond to support them—is nearing completion.

Phase I

Review and analysis of best practices of other existing school programs. The review concentrated on California, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, New Zealand, Quebec, and B.C. The review helped guide PEP's next steps and provided the basis for sound decision making when developing learning tools and teaching aids for students and educators.

Phase II

Identification and development of age-appropriate instructional and learning resources that are informative, interactive, and fun is completed. Two resources have been developed—an elementary school resource for Grades 2-3 and 5-6, and a secondary resource for Grades 8-9 and 11-12.

As well as providing realistic scenarios that support and enhance current curricula for PP and CAPP, the resources also include student handouts, teacher backgrounders, and some suggested adaptations for other grade levels and other curricula such as science, English language arts, technology education, and geography.

To focus-test the materials, PEP consulted with nearly 50 school administrators, teachers, educators, and parents from across the province. The feedback was very positive, and it provided crucial information, most of which was incorporated into the materials.

Design of the resource is nearing completion, and once finalized, the materials will be pilot-tested in eight B.C. schools. Pilot testing will provide an opportunity to receive additional feedback from teachers and students, and PEP expects to make some final revisions based on the feedback.

Phase III

In Phase III, PEP will produce and distribute materials to B.C. schools for use in the 2002-03 school year. Materials will be posted to the PEP web site: www.pep.bc.ca.

Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility, and through the collaborative effort of many agencies and individuals, the resources will help B.C. children develop safe life choices.

Source: The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP), Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education.



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CLASSIFIED

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fsnet.co.uk

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VICTORIA. Lovely home, 3 bd., 2 bath. sun-deck, large private garden, close to shopping, golf, UVic, \$1400/mo. July/Aug. 02, 250-386-6374.

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KITSILANO. 1 bd. apt. Ocean mountain view. 1 blk. to beach. near UBC, Granville Island, Downtown. Close to buses, shops. All amenities incl. utilities, cable, phone. N/S, N/P, suitable for single/couple. Avail. July-Aug. contact 604-732-5604 or liddy@telus.net, \$1700/mo.

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SUMMER IN VANCOUVER. Quiet, furn. 1 bd. top floor character house, mt. views. Bus route to UBC. Avail. July/Aug. \$900/mo. 604-738-8406.

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VANCOUVER 1 bd. furn. apt for summer. \$500 mo. shelton@rapidnet.net, 604-434-1436.

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BURNABY. Furn. bachelor suite in quiet executive townhome. 10 min. to SFU by car. Bus 1 blk. Female. N/S, N/P. \$525. Phone extra. 604-421-5292.

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WANTED. To rent/housesit/exchange. Vancouver accomm. from Sept.-Dec. 02, furnished. Home economics teacher of 24 years. Willing to animal sit if needed. Contact 250-833-4912.

VANCOUVER. Summer sublet, beautiful furn. studio with breathtaking views. Avail. July-mid Aug. West End, close to beach, shopping, transit. \$675/mo. Call Kim 604-608-1518 or ksyer@hotmail.com

VICTORIA. Oak Bay, 4 bd. character home, near beaches, UVic. June and/or July, \$1350/mo. 250-595-0270.

WANTED TO RENT. Vancouver westside, 1 bd. furn. apt. with secure parking for July & Aug. Call L. Cook 604-738-6408.

VICTORIA townhouse, 1900 s.f., on edge of Beaver Lake Park, avail. July & Aug. Quick commute to UVic and downtown. N/S. N/P. Call 250-658-0296.

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N. VANCOUVER. Quiet furn. large 1 bd. condo, 10 min. walk to Lonsdale Quay. \$700/mo. Sept.-Dec. 02. Contact ldube@lynx.net

VANCOUVER. 2 bd. townhouse, garden setting, parkside, steps to Spruce Harbour in False Creek, min. to downtown. July, Aug. \$1500/mo. plus util. 604-681-1931 or jfreer@telus.net

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EXCHANGE 4 bd. townhouse on seawall nr. Granville Island. Exchange for home on Green or Naramata Lake. Aug. 21-31. 604-738-4775.

KELOWNA VICINITY. Waterfront, furn. 3 bd., 3 bath, 20 min. from downtown. Avail. Sept. 1 to June 30. \$1800/mo. 604-522-1282 or willie_smith@telus.net for enquiries.

HOUSE SIT VICTORIA. Planning your summer vacation? Grad student attending UVic will housesit July 1 to July 23, 2002. Excellent ref. avail. Please call Gloria 250-862-2502 after May 24, 2002.

VICTORIA. Gr.fl. of house opposite UVic. 2 bd., kit, bath, priv.entrance. 250-721-2175. davey1870@shaw.ca

SOOKE. 3 bd. custom home, 7 acres, fully furn., dlx spa. N/S. Vegetarians pref. Sept.-June. \$1400/mo. 250-642-6270, cedarcot@islandnet.com

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MISCELLANEOUS

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GERMAN-CANADIAN EDUCATORS' EXCHANGE Program gives you 2 weeks in Rhine area and Berlin. Dates: June 30-July 10, optional stay with German educator: July 10-14. Some highlights: perspectives in education-the German model; Berlin's rebirth as capital city; Germany after re-unification; Rhine boat trip-a journey through history; Palaces and gardens of Sanssouci. This program is offered by Okanagan University College in conjunction with the Rhineland Ministry of Education. Cost of \$1,250 incl. program, entry/tour fees, accomm., meals and local transp. Participants make their own flight arrangements. For more info, contact: Marlene Isaac of OUC International, phone: 250-862-5443, e-mail: misaac@ouc.bc.ca

BENEATH THE SURFACE TOURS. Marine Educational Opportunities with Depth! Conducted by highly experienced biology teacher to illuminate astounding biodiversity of Northern Vancouver Island's waters. From whales to nudibranchs! Customized to suit age and curriculum requirements. Boat tour can be enhanced with slide presentation; ROV to view invertebrate life; tour of marine mammal artifacts; emphasis on link between nature and First Nations culture. Contact us! Stubbs Island Charters 250-928-3185, 1-800-665-3066, stubbres@island.net, www.stubbs-island.com

FINANCIAL SERVICES specializing in legal tax reduction and wealth preservation strategies. Spring seminars. Vancouver locations. yukonsky@shaw.ca or Fax: 604-980-3407.

SOCIAL CLUB The North Shore Group seeking single men and women 50 to 65 for membership for dinners, dancing, theatre, parties, hiking, golfing. 604-984-9463 for details.

RETIRING? Undecided about the Joint Life option? Order *Choosing the Right Options*, a straightforward guide to choosing the best options for your situation. Cost \$15 (taxes incl.) Mail Ken Smith, 5120 Ewart St., Burnaby, BC V5J 2W2 or phone BCTF Lesson Aids Service.

DO YOU BELIEVE telecommunications is the future? Visit 2profit.excelincomesystem.com

www.cougarsafe.com Educational, eco-friendly, true and proven concept. Could help keep those big cats off your back. Save a life, save a cougar. Liberal discount for students and schools.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSN. Vancouver presents Orton-Gillingham training for educators. July 2-18, 2002. Info and registration call 604-873-8139.

TAIWAN, Global Teachers Co-operative/Adventures In Education. Now Recruiting! One year commitment. Excellent remuneration and support. Phone 604-803-0407, e-mail: globalteaching@hotmail.com

BURNS BOG CLASS TOURS. Take your students to one of the rarest eco-systems in the world on a guided tour. Students learn how the bog formed, how to identify bog plants and issues that affect the Bog's future. Ask about our teachers' guides, videos, and other educational material for sale. Call the Burns Bog Conservation Society at 604-572-0373 or 1-888-850-6264. Grades K-12.

THEATRE ALBERTA. Artstrek 2002, residential theatre program for teens-Red Deer, July 7-13 and July 14-21. Dramaworks 2002, PD workshops for adult theatre practitioners-Edmonton, July 6-15. For info on these programs, visit our web site at www.theatrealberta.com or phone 780-422-8162.

EXCHANGE: Primary school teacher (currently teaching pre-primary) in Perth, W. Australia seeks exchange for 2003 to B.C. (preferably Van.) E-mail: selinamaddison@bigpond.com, Ph/fax: 8-93704761

KELOWNA SUMMER WORKSHOPS 3-day workshops offered Aug. 14-21 in Kelowna this summer. Choose from Kindergarten, Fine Arts (music, art and drama) and Literacy. For info. call Teachers' Workshops at 1-877-480-9926 or 250-763-8532 or e-mail teachersworkshops@shaw.ca, more info. at www.welcomekelowna.com/teachersworkshops/

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MANUAL FOR PARAGRAPH & ESSAY WRITING. Designed for teachers/parents of weaker or remedial students. To order send \$10.75 plus \$1.50 postage to Avstan Publications, 8850c Young Rd., Chilliwack, BC V2P 4P5. Ph/Fax: 604-792-0839.

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GO RVing! B.C.'s largest selection of RV inventory at ARBUTUS RV on Vancouver Island. For campers, trailers, 5th wheels, or motorhomes. Contact John Affleck, B.Ed. at Sidney 1-888-272-8888, sidneysales@arbutusrv.com. Check out 600 units online www.arbutusrv.com

LOG HOME B & B. Find your niche in the historic goldrush town of Atlin, BC. Borders Yukon & Alaska. Older log home operated as successful B&B past 2 years. Asking \$179,900. OBO. Serious enquiries only please. Call 250-651-7473 or e-mail leejessie22@hotmail.com

KELOWNA downtown, 2 bd., 2 bath condo. Close to everything-beach, shopping, community theatre, Skyreach. Ph: 1-250-763-9293.

MAZATLAN TIMESHARE. Two weeks annually, Christmas, New Year. Holiday Inn. RCI #1841, Studio condo sleeps 2, beach, pool, sun! \$5000 CDN. 604-465-8388, 3amigos@telus.net

MESA, ARIZONA. Fully furn. park model trailer located in Towerpoint Resort. All appl., w/d, \$120,000 US, 250-428-4768.

ADAMS LAKE. Rustic log cabin with bedroom, kitchen, sleeping loft, washroom, living room. Propane appliances and contents. 100'x300' deeded lot. Beach. Docks. Water access only \$159,900. E-mail: gloria@mercuryspeed.com, 250-674-3298.

PD CALENDAR

PD CALENDAR
Additions/changes: E-mail
Debby Stagg, BCTF PD Division
dstagg@bctf.ca

JULY

25 Langley. Introductory/Intermediate Video Production for Teachers, Brookwood Secondary School, \$399. Contact Dawne Tomlinson at 604-530-2141, dtomlinson@bss.sd35.bc.ca.

AUGUST

10-11 Vernon. Taoist Tai Chi Society of Vernon, two-full-day Health and Wellness Workshop, Introduction to Tai Chi, Fulton Secondary School. \$150 with lunch included both days. Pre-registration; limited to 50 teachers. Contact 1-888-824-2442, f: 250-542-1781, ttsvern@bcgrizzly.com.

12-16 or **19-23** Maple Ridge. Science World's Loon Lake Recreational Science Camp, Malcolm Knapp Research Forest. \$300 + GST. Participants receive a travel subsidy. Contact 1-800-363-1611 or direct 443-7552 or Caedmon Nash, Science World, 1455 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC V6A 3Z7, 604-443-7440, f: 604-443-7430, cnash@scienceworld.ca.

14-20 Golden. Wilderness Leadership for Educators, risk management and skills for outdoor education, includes a six-day backpack trip. \$825. Contact Wayne Pelter, at School District 6 Continuing Education, 250-427-5308, wpelter@sd6.bc.ca.

18-20 Victoria. **21-23** Vancouver. A free Weather and Climate Change Seminar, sponsored by the Ministry of Education's Network for Social Studies Geography Connections project and the Canadian Council for Geographic Education, St. Michael's University School. Accommodation provided if necessary. Contact Dale Gregory, 604-942-5586, dgregory@unixg.ubc.ca, www.cent.org/geo12.

19-20 North Vancouver. 7th Annual Summer Institute on Balanced Literacy Building Bridges: Pathways to Literacy K-7, Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre. For a registration booklet, call 604-530-4060, or register online at thinklangley.com.

26-29 Vancouver. Davis Learning Strategies Basic Teacher Workshop, Granville Island Hotel. Instruction in proven methods designed to reach all children, whether word or picture thinker, and used from Kindergarten to Grade 3. Contact Sue Hall, Positive Dyslexia, p/f: 604-921-1084, info@dyslexiacanada.com, www.dyslexiacanada.com, www.davislearn.com.

SEPTEMBER

20 Regina. The Explosive Child Conference, hosted by Ehrlo Community services, featuring Dr. Ross Greene, clinical psychologist and author of The Explosive Child. It is intended for a multi-disciplinary audience. Early bird: \$125; later \$150. Contact Linda Meyer, 306-751-2412 or l.meyer@ehrl.com.

OCTOBER

18-19 Harrison. Legends by the Lake, B.C. Teacher-Librarians, Association (BCTLA) Conference, with keynoter Bill Richardson. Council meeting Saturday afternoon.

24-25 Burnaby. Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children of B.C. (AEGTCCBC) Conference, Gifted Ed 2002, Metrotown.

24-25 Association of B.C. Drama Educators (ABCDE) Conference. Contact Rod Oslowy, 250-426-5241, studio@shaw.ca.

24-25 Vancouver. B.C. School Counsellors' Association (BCSCA) Annual Conference, Park Plaza Hotel, on Denman. Contact Gwen Struthers, 604-885-3216, f: 604-885-7991, www.bctf.ca/PSAs/bcsca.

24-26 Burnaby. l'Association Provinciale des Professeurs d'Immersion et du Programme francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (APPIPC) congrès 2002, Le français dans toutes ses couleurs, Radisson Hotel. Contact Anne Louise McFarland, 250-544-0304, f: 250-544-0390, almcfarland@shaw.ca.

24-26 Richmond. The 40th B.C. Primary Teachers' Association (BCPTA) Fall Conference, Primary Leadership, featuring B.C. and international speakers Faye Brownlie, Cheryl Macdonald, Dr. Gordon Neufeld, Tony Stead, Carla Hannaford, and more, Vancouver Airport Conference Resort. Includes pre-conference, two day conference, miniconference for teachers new to primary. Two day fee: October 2526: \$140; pre-conference fee: \$40. Contact Grace Sinnema, 604-850-5526, bcptaconference@aol.com.

24-26 Garibaldi Highlands. Second part (Omega) of B.C. Teachers for Peace and Global Education (PAGE) Conference, Let Peace Begin with Me: The Alpha and the Omega, Lions Easter Seals Camp Squamish Retreat. Contact Beatta Hitrich, 604-433-9765, Daniel Shiu, 604-588-4318, Cindy Barrett, 604-536-2131, Pummy Kaur, 604-536-8711.

24-26 Oliver. B.C. Technology Education Association (BCTEA) Technology Education Conference 2002, Technology Education Making Positive Impressions, Southern Okanagan Secondary School. \$120 registration includes golf tournament and wine tour. Contact Lindsay Langill, langillman@yahoo.com, Harold Lang, 250-498-4931, www.bctf.ca/BCTEA.

24-26 Powell River. Horizons 2002 (CUEBC) Fall Conference, Maximizing Your Technology \$\$, Brooks Secondary School. \$155; \$135 early bird. Strands include free software, best web sites, classroom integration, graphics and multimedia, and school and district solutions. Visit www.cuebhorizons.ca.

25 Surrey. British Columbia Association of Mathematics Teachers (BCAMT) 2002 Annual Fall Conference, I Prefer Pi, with keynoter Maggie Przyborowska, North Surrey Secondary School. Contact Marc Garneau, 604-581-4433, f: 604-581-1150, mag@sfu.ca.

25 Richmond. British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) Conference 2002, Learning Language Is Great Mental Exercise, Best Western Richmond Inn. Contact Dave Henry, 250-592-2102, f: 592-2136, bcatml@pacificcoast.net, www.bctf.ca/psas/BCATML/.

25 North Vancouver. B.C. Dance Educators Association (BCDEA) Conference, Carson Graham. Contact Linda Medland, 604-903-3555, f: 604-903-3556.

25 Surrey. B.C. Social Studies Teachers, Association (BCSSTA) Annual Fall Conference, Sullivan Heights Secondary School. Contact Eric Bonfield, 604-543-8749, 604-543-9684, rhinobytes@shaw.ca.

25 Delta. B.C. Teachers of English Language Arts (BCTELA) conference, The Essential English Teacher, Delta Secondary School. Contact Ilene Jo Greenberg, 604-596-7471, f: 604-596-6192.

25 Vancouver. Environmental Educators, PSA (EEPSA) Conference, Changing the Climate in B.C. Schools, an exciting community event on the many facets of climate change, Vancouver Aquarium and Stanley Park. Contact Nichole Marples, 604-853-3018, nmarples@tol.bc.ca, www.bctf.ca/eepsa.

25 Richmond. Learning Assistance Teachers, Association (LATA) Fall Conference, with Dr. Pam Nevills, of California, on students, right to be readers (K12 classroom interventions based on brain research), Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel. Contact Janice Neden, f: 250-377-0860, jneden@sd73.bc.ca.

25-26 Vernon. Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association (THESA) conference, Okanagan Harvest, Seaton Secondary School. Contact majjadb@hotmail.com or sslizak@sk22.bc.ca.

PD Calendar web site
<http://pdonline.bctf.ca/conferences/PD-Calendar.html>

October PSA day
October 25, 2002

EXPLORING CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH ART

by Carolynn Elliot

Imag1 Nations was a major school-wide event created by Fleetwood Park Secondary School in Surrey, after a creative "collision of the minds" of teacher-librarian Barbara Cooper and me. Shared interests and philosophies led from a simple conversation to a yearlong building toward the project that ultimately engaged all staff.

As an art teacher, I was excited about the chance to expose more students to the visual arts and to help students understand that "who we are" is very much infused into what we express in imagery. Barbara and I saw *Imag1 Nations* as a vehicle for exploring First Nations issues, the complexities of living in a multicultural society, various art forms, and the expression of personal identity.

Description

Imag1 Nations comprised four main components. The opening ceremony started the focus week with a bang. Moderated by a student, the assembly featured comments from the minister of multiculturalism, elders and chiefs from area bands, and various school-board dignitaries. Aboriginal student dancers entertained, and an Aboriginal student made a ceremonial presentation to the chiefs. Everyone was then invited to a reception in the library.

During the focus week, 50 presentations were offered. We were fortunate to find presenters of such high caliber. Many had performed or exhibited nationally or internationally or had been honoured with awards for their achievements. All but one of the 18 presenters was Aboriginal. Their occupations included printmaker and painter, carver, weaver, animation artist, photographer, sculptor, button blanket artist, illustrator, author, and historian.

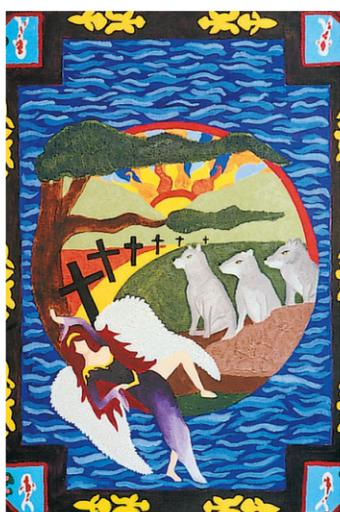
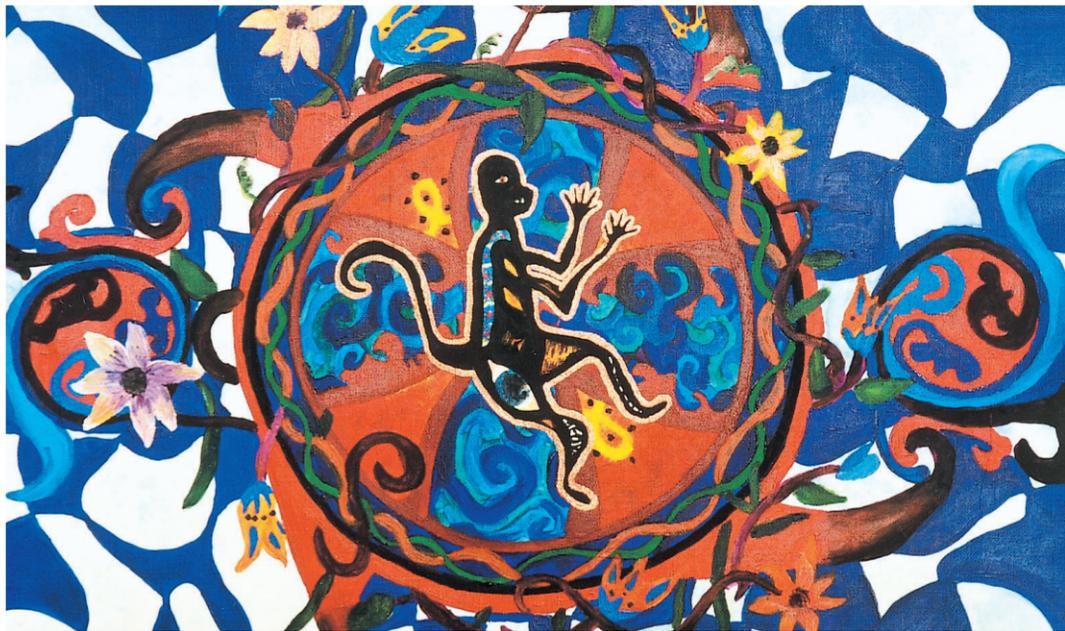
The three weeks that followed the focus week provided interdisciplinary exploration. Ideas and techniques presented during the focus week were developed and applied in various subjects and expanded to include many cultures. Finally, at the closing ceremony, the students showcased what they had learned, expressing themselves through the visual arts, storytelling, poetry, and other writing, a video production, and dance. Food prepared by students in home economics added a tasty dimension to the event.

Planning

The majority of planning time for the project centred on identifying and contacting presenters. Ideas came from many sources, including Richmond Art Gallery's *Embracing the Visionaries* brochure, a variety of workshops, conferences, personal contacts, ArtStarts in Schools, media outlets, library books, publishers' catalogues and reps, Preview-a-Community art events guide, the internet, and presenters themselves.

Lesson planning

Teachers were invited to create lessons, thus sharing



ownership of the project and making it easier for greater numbers of teachers to be involved during the event itself. Many ideas were generated as teachers perused resources on display in the library. Those were formatted and shared with the whole staff.

Staff Involvement

At the first Pro-D session of the year, we presented information to the staff, reviewing the goals and the staff's previous commitment to the project. Each teacher received a resource package containing a one-page fact sheet, program schedule, bibliography of library resources, list of presenters, list of all lesson plans, sorted by curriculum area, and several generic lesson plans. Teachers then had the opportunity to sign up for the guest workshops. Afterward, department heads were encouraged to discuss ideas for *Imag1 Nations* with department members. Once again, the resources were displayed in the library along with the "Art Bag" of supplies available for sign out. Planning committee members made themselves available throughout the day to assist teachers.

Student involvement

Eighty classes were involved, under the stewardship of 25 teachers. Not only did they participate in the focus week, but also an overwhelming majority followed through with extension activities and contributed to the closing celebration. Over the course of the *Imag1 Nations* project, students began to show pride in their cultural heritage. Self-concept was positively developed, and identities were forged as students reflected on their cultural traditions and found ways to express what was important to them and to incorporate their personal imagery into their schoolwork. Some teachers reported that *Imag1 Nations* was a catalyst for students' connecting with the curriculum and learning, creating an academic turning point.

Art and Imag1 Nations

In art classes, the project offered an opportunity to teach culture and history as well as explore different media through the art lessons. Additionally, students were exposed to people in art-related careers. Another big plus was the integration of fine arts and other subjects and the chance to further the legitimacy of art in communicating ideas and personal imagery. First Nations art and culture were explored by students, but class projects also focussed on the culture and traditions represented by the students in the class. Topics included beliefs and symbolism, mythology, current issues, and legends. *Imag1 Nations* also offered an excellent forum for artists to talk about why they make art and the processes they use to create their images.

(From top) Art work by Crystal Pinnell, Alex Barredo, and Christy Jung.
(Bottom L-R) Megan Smith, Karen Lo, Jerica Glassco

CAROLYNN ELLIOT PHOTOS

Carolynn Elliot teaches at Fleetwood Park Secondary School, Surrey.