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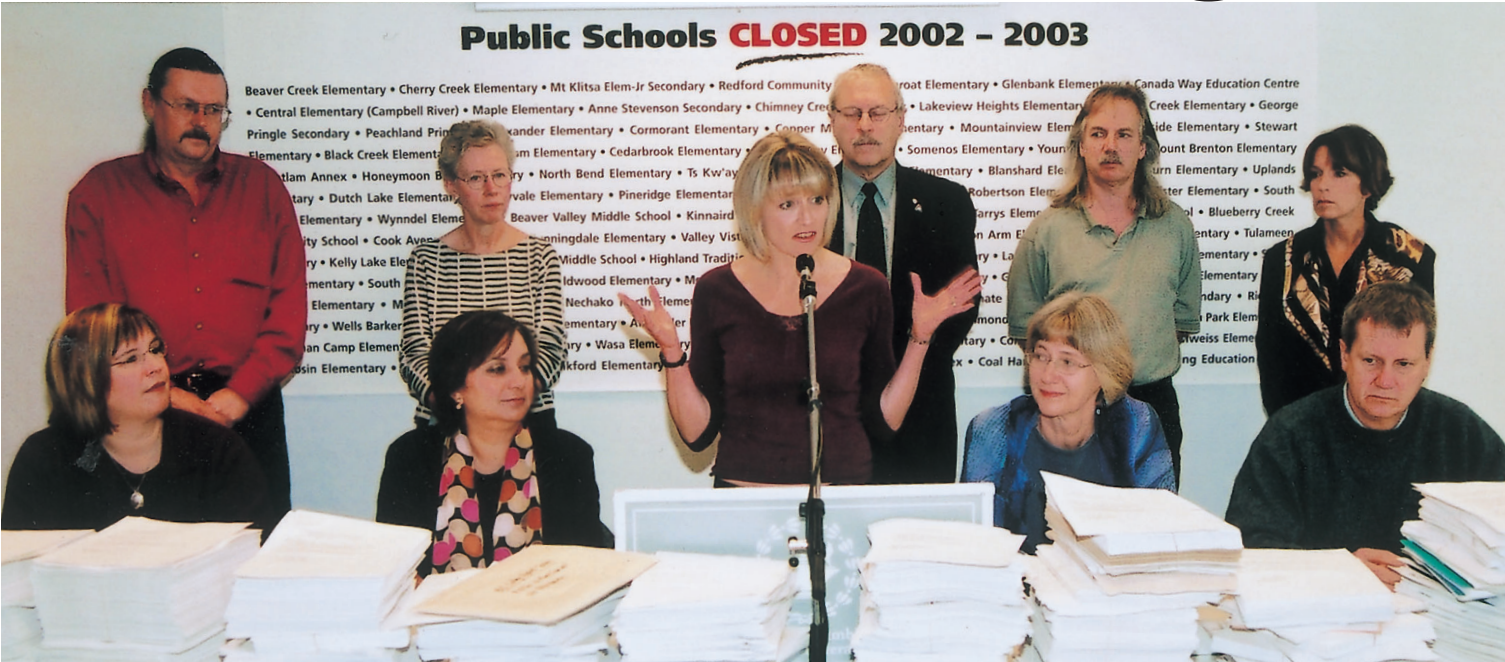
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Teacher

Overwhelming support for a democratic college



BCTF Executive Committee members display copies of almost 27,000 letters from teachers removing their authorization for college fee deductions. The EC also released poll results showing 77% of the public and 74.4% of Liberals supporters agree that teachers should have a majority of representatives on the college council. At least 33 school boards have taken a position critical of Bill 51.

by Peter Owens

We are receiving unprecedented support in challenging the government political takeover of the B.C. College of Teachers.

School boards

At least 33 school boards have passed motions calling on the government to revisit its decision to take political control of the college. Many have written to the minister calling on her to reconsider the decision in light of the disruption and confusion it is causing in our schools. An example of a letter is the following by the Cariboo-Chilcotin School Board:

Dear Minister Clark:

This letter, the result of a resolution approved by the Board of School Trustees on September 25, 2003, is in support of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Teachers' Association and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation in the matter of the makeup of the council of the British Columbia College of Teachers.

Consultation with parties who have a significant interest in a legislative change is a major tenet of democratic government, one to which the board adheres in its policy development. No less should be expected of the senior levels of government. The changes to the *Teaching Profession Act* that resulted in the elected members of the council of the BCCT being in the minority on the council were done without consultation.

The imposition of an undemocratic institution, the newly constituted College of Teachers, on the professional teachers of B.C. has deflected their energies from the important objective of

improving student achievement to an unproductive, and, in the opinion of the Board of School Trustees, unnecessary political wrangle with the provincial government. The board encourages your government to set aside the changes to the college and commence a process of engagement with the teachers, other college members, school boards, and the public, to determine, what, if any, changes should be made to the college in order to enhance the delivery of quality education to the children of British Columbia.

Sincerely,
 Anne Goyette, Chair, Board of Trustees, School District No. 27

An example of a motion is the following by the Nicola-Similkameen board:

"Move that School District 58 urge the Minister of Education, BCPSEA, BCCT, and BCTF to work together to address disagreements regarding new legislation governing BCCT before issues such as teacher fee payment affect students and learning."

The motion was passed unanimously, and it is interesting to note that the board includes Gordon Comeau, chair of BCSTA, and Gordon Swan, a director of BCPSEA.

Retired teachers

The B.C. Retired Teachers' Association and the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers' have sent their support as well as the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

B.C. Federation of Labour

The following motion of support will be considered at the B.C. Federation of Labour November 24-27, 2003:

"The B.C. Federation of Labour fully supports the BCTF

in its efforts to lobby the provincial government and opposition parties to support the following amendments to the *Teaching Profession Act*:

a. To provide for two-thirds of the members of the BCCT Council to be elected in a democratic manner by practising members of the college.

b. To remove Section 27.1 in order to protect teachers' constitutional freedom of association and freedom of expression under the labour code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

c. To limit the interference of the provincial government in the operation of the B.C. College of Teachers.

d. To ensure that discipline citations are initiated only by a college discipline committee that has a majority of elected council members.

e. To replace the provisions of the public complaints with the process contained in the *Teaching Profession Act* prior to Bill 51.

f. To eliminate Section 21.h of the *Teaching Professional Act* which provides for the college to establish and maintain a system of continuing teacher education."

We have received letters of support from:

- Jim Sinclair, president, B.C. Federation of Labour
- Cindy Oliver, president, College Institute Educators' Association
- Fred Muzin, president, Hospital Employees' Union
- George Heyman, president, B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union
- Cindy Stewart, president, Health Sciences Association
- CUPE, Vancouver Island local.

The following labour councils have passed motions of support:

Vancouver and District Labour Council, East Kootenay District Labour Council, and the Quesnel and District Labour Council.

Public support

More than three-quarters of British Columbians agree that teachers, not political appointees, should hold a majority of positions on the B.C. College of Teachers.

Seventy-seven percent of British Columbians agreed that teachers should have a majority of their representatives on the college. And, interestingly, more than 74.4% of Liberal supporters agreed that teachers should have a majority.

"More than 78% of teachers have written letters in opposition to the college changes. More than 75% of British Columbians agree that her government has made a mistake by taking over the college. Almost 75% of Liberal supporters think she made a mistake. We are once again calling on Clark to meet with us because teachers believe that sitting down and talking face-to-face is the best way to solve any problem, whether it's between children in the school yard, between parents and teachers, or even between citizens and government.

We are appealing to Ms. Clark to sit down and problem-solve with us," BCTF president Neil Worboys said.

Of more than 30 professional colleges in B.C., the teachers' is the only one not governed by a majority of practitioners of that profession.

The province-wide poll was conducted October 1-9, 2003, by the Mustel Group and is accurate +/-4.4% at the 95% confidence level.

President's message



Neil Worboys

During the last week of October, 250 Maple Ridge teachers held a "rally in the valley" to protest their school board's decision to insist on deducting their \$90 college fees—despite signed letters from 85% of the local members revoking their authorization to do so. Teachers wore placards with messages such as, "Not my college, not my fee."

At the board meeting later in the evening, some colleagues even taped signs saying "No voice" across their mouths to protest attempts to silence them—and all of us—on fundamental issues of unionism and professionalism. Their gesture is symbolic of the feelings of teachers across the province, many of whom see signs both large and small that government aims to make sure that our voices are not heard.

The worst example, of course, is "Christy's College" itself. With nothing but government appointees on board, we can be sure it will never veer off of the minister's set path. After all, this is the group that passed "Standards for the Education, Competence, and Professional Conduct of Educators" without ever talking to teachers.

Another example took place at a news conference in Surrey, at which Premier Campbell and Education Minister Clark were to speak. On ministry orders, representatives of the BCTF and the Surrey Teachers' Association were refused access to the news conference and ordered off school property.

A less serious, but no less illuminating example can be found on the Ministry of Education's web site. From the home page, a visitor can access dozens of links to education groups from A to Z, but not to the BCTF's award-winning site. The B.C. Chamber of Commerce is there, but there's no mention of the B.C. Teachers' Federation except in the list of members of an advisory committee.

Why would government stoop to such petty political games like kicking teachers out of a news event and removing a link to our web site? Precisely because teachers are refusing to be silenced, and parents are hearing our message. Indeed, recent polling showed that 77% of British Columbians share our belief that teachers should form a majority on the college council. What's more, visitors to www.bctf.ca can find a wealth of information to help them speak up about the issues too!

Neil

Home schooling has its place

Jim McMurtry obviously has a vested interest in keeping kids in public schools (as do I, being a public school teacher). Imagine you are a parent who is home-schooling your children, but considering putting them in public school and someone gives you McMurtry's letter. Are his words going to encourage you to make the leap to public school, or are they going to remind you of the reasons why you chose to home-school in the first place? The latter, no doubt.

McMurtry states that he knows "that parents of home-schooled children question the value of a standard school-based educational experience, many wishing to provide their own form of indoctrination (as opposed to the state's?), usually of a religious nature." So what? Is McMurtry qualified to determine how people should raise their own children just because he is a public school teacher?

McMurtry asserts that parents who home-school "condemn children to an impoverished, friendless, and segregated learning environment." I know families who have chosen to home school, and I have taught many children who have entered middle school after being home schooled for the elementary grades, and in my professional judgment, these children are not subjected to anything that is detrimental to their development. On the contrary, they simply come from families who have chosen an education that fits with their beliefs and/or their child's needs. Are there home-schooling situations that are less than perfect? Of course, just as there are public-schooling situations that are less than perfect.

It seems that in McMurtry's ideal world, the state would have complete authority over how children are raised, and parents who veer off course would be deemed child abusers and punished accordingly. I still can't believe that he used that term, and that you published it. Home schooling "can be perceived as a form of child abuse"? That is an insult to children who have actually suffered legitimate abuses at the hands of parents, and to the parents who decide to spend enormous amounts of time and energy educating their children themselves. And it certainly won't win any converts from the home-schooling community.

Craig Bresett
Langley

Interesting reading in Jim McMurtry's letter (*Teacher* Sept./Oct. 2003). Nothing like a half-baked and uninformed opinion.

Imagine my surprise when I found out that my children have no broad social opportunities, given that they're in dance classes, Pathfinders, and skating lessons, given that they have taken acting classes, participated in community choirs, played softball, performed on stage to audi-

ences of hundreds, assisted in the care of their late great-grandmother, helped move several friends' homes, and given that they participate in my volunteer activities where they encounter professionals, very young children, parents and grandparents, know the neighbourhood children and can, remarkably, carry on intelligent conversations with humans of any age between 1 and 91 (based on their actual experiences in doing so).

I'm not entirely sure how being very strongly indoctrinated in the "you will only associate with people born in the same calendar year as yourself" philosophy of schools is supposed to be better or even more real than that.

Linda Clement
Victoria

Special issue of Teacher appreciated

I enjoy reading the *Teacher* Newsmagazine. There are lots of interesting, informative, and diverse articles. For example, in Vol. 16, No 1, the articles on healthcare and pension assets were of interest. Keep up the good work. Now if only my spouse (the teacher) had enough time-between teaching and prep thereof to read it as thoroughly as I do.

P. Dean-Veerman
Slocan Park

I found the special edition of the *Teacher* excellent reading. Teachers who read it will surely have a clear picture of the precarious position in which our profession is located right now.

Donna Bulmer
Peace River North

Great job. It [special issue of *Teacher*] is an eye-opening convincer to the staffroom readers. Thanks.

Dave Scott
Kamloops

Try working with Liberals

Today I received the special issue of the eight-page *Teacher*. I was somewhat disappointed in the content, tone, and layout of the paper.

To understand and discuss the issue at hand I would have appreciated to have the facts first. But they appear in part in the last column on the last page.

The main contention seems to be that education in B.C. will suffer because of the new makeup of the membership in the college of teachers.

Of the people listed as members of the new college of teachers, 70% are or have been educators and should, from their experience, have some knowledge of education, and parents often have a good grasp of education and know well what is going on in the classrooms from another perspective.

I agree that more active teachers from public and private schools should be members of the

college to achieve a better balance.

I would like to know by what process the members of the college of teachers are recruited. The paper mentions that they are political appointments. Does this mean they have to be members of the Liberal Party, as NPA members serving as councillors in Burnaby have to be members of the NDP?

Can prospective members apply for the position and then be selected on the merit of their experience? and does the BCTF appoint teachers as members to the college?

I wonder if the cause of education would be served better if the BCTF tried to work together with the present government to improve education rather than to boycott every attempt at change.

Helmut Lemke (retired)
Burnaby

College takeover not fair

Never in my 34 years of teaching had I ever been moved to shake my fist and shout, "Not Fair!"

Up to now, the college of teachers has been a self-regulating body with a majority of elected members, just like the colleges of other professions. Christy Clark has changed the ratio of elected members in the college, with parents and political appointees being in the majority, thus effectively giving the college control over teachers.

The by-laws and policies made by the "new" college of teachers make me shake my head, because the control over the college by the minister of education is unbelievable. Even the appointed councillors themselves will be dismissed if they don't follow the agenda of the minister.

Among the multitude of policies made by the new college, one policy is that parents report a teacher to the college rather than discuss a problem first with the teacher, principal, and school board, and then the college if no resolution is found. One can only imagine the added stress for a teacher having to face a college investigation panel for a minor action with the threat of being reprimanded, suspended, or losing her or his teaching certificate.

Even though the teachers' fees maintain the college of teachers, the teachers will have no say in what happens to them. That, to me, is most unfair! Is the government's attack on the college of teachers just the beginning in their zeal to reorganize all the other professional colleges? Just wondering!

Bertha Kwitkoski (retired)
Burnaby

Keep our focus on the goal

A colleague told me that she and many others would not support the BCTF in asking teachers to withhold automatic deductions of the BCCT fees. They just don't see the BCTF as fighting for their rights.

Why do we need a union? It hasn't been able to do much against the force of this government. What are we fighting for, and why aren't we winning?

Wait. What are we fighting? We are against a government whose sole aim is to balance a budget. Its focus is the bottom line. I have worked in private institutions for two-and-a-half decades, and, to me, that is where the government wants us to be—subservient pawns who would do anything to keep their jobs, at the expense, really, of the people we serve. Our focus is to serve the learner, to build community, to guide the child to her or his fullest potential. Clearly, that is not the governments' focus.

In a private school, the powers that be can fire and hire sans categories, qualifications, or specificity to the needs called for by the job. What they are great at, which we definitely need to take lessons for, is marketing, advertising, the gloss and polish that sells. They can sell an empty box. On the other hand, we have not unwrapped our credentials, our specializations, our successes, and our goal of serving each and every child. We have kept quiet because we are busy doing what we need to do. Our quietness has been mistaken as lack of spunk.

The truth is, we are being compared to private schools, for they can run their institutions at less cost to the government. We are scrutinized, the public schools, under a very powerful magnifying glass, and their perspective is narrowed to complaints. How many teachers have asked the ministry to come and see what really happens in the classrooms, to see how effective the teachers are, to see how well public school children learn? Have they come?

United we stand. Divided we fall. That's all it takes. The government has clawed mercilessly at our contracts, collective bargaining, and funding, and now it has taken our college.

If we are upset with our union, the BCTF, this is not the time to abandon its lead for that would be the final blow to our union, to us. Shall we help this government make us crumble and fall?

Let us fight for our college, for it to serve its members, us. Why should we support a college that is run by bureaucrats and not by our colleagues? Our union is our last bastion. Let's keep our focus on the goal.

Thelma Valle-Serrano
Richmond

Supreme Court upholds the law

Much has been said to the effect that the Supreme Court, rather than Parliament is making our laws. As I see it, Canada is governed, not by Parliament, but by the *Constitution Act* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Those two documents define Canada, including how Canada's laws are to be made and enforced. Parliament, within these guidelines, creates laws



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about how Canadians will live. Should there be problems regarding the interpretation of one of Parliament's laws, the Supreme Court weighs the problematic law against its interpretation of the *Constitution Act* and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Should the Supreme Court deem an act of Parliament to be in violation of guidelines, it instructs Parliament to create laws that obey the law.

In Canada, the right to express religious viewpoints is guaranteed by law, so long as that expression does not promote hatred or violence against an identifiable group. Freedom of religious expression in Canada is not just for one particular perspective, it is for every religious perspective.

As I listen to some of the claims of various religious groups, I note that some use the Bible to justify denying full equality to others. This gives me a sense of déjà vu. The Bible has been used to support slavery, the Bible has been used to support anti-Semitism, the Bible has been used to support capital punishment. The Bible is not a book of hate, but some people use the Bible to promote their own superiority, to justify failing to grant equal status as humans to others.

I can't justify using the Bible to tell others how their ways are evil. I'm more interested in joining hands with other humans, listening to and accepting one another, and walking together through life.

There are several legally married same-sex couples in Canada of today. The sun still shines, the birds still sing, children still laugh and play, and the stars still shine at night. My life didn't suddenly get worse because two men or two women who love each other got married. And perhaps their life feels more dignified, more honoured, more whole. I'm in favour of that.

Ron Smuin
Penticton

Cuban student interested in writing

It is an honour to send this letter to you from Cuba, on a small island in the Caribbean. I really hope you receive it and listen to my words and answer me if it is possible.

I'm an English teacher who had the opportunity to receive an English course for a week in July from some teachers from B.C. I'm not a professional teacher yet, but enjoyed that English course for teachers in Habana. Our Canadian teachers recommended that I write to your magazine. I teach English language for teenagers but at the same time I attend the Languages University in Habana and I'll have to spend four more years there. I've finished my first year there. I'd like to ask you if there is any possibility of exchanging ideas with some teachers of the Federation. That kind of communication would be really useful for me. One of our B.C. teachers gave us one of those wonderful newspapers [*Teacher newsmagazine*] and it is really useful. In fact, I can say that it's completely amazing to have that kind of magazine just for teachers. In my country there isn't that kind of newspaper or magazine for teachers. It's like a class but printed in a magazine. I think the idea is remarkable.

If any B.C. teachers would like to contact me, my e-mail address is JhonCarlos@web.correosde-cuba.cu

Juan Carlos Puig
Habana, Cuba



Emma Wallace, a Grade 10 student from City School, questions Premier Gordon Campbell about cutting the education budget while his Cabinet budget increased.

Questioning Campbell difficult

by Emma Wallace

I attend City School, which is an alternative program that focusses on, among other things, using the resources of our city as a learning tool. In lay terms, we go on field trips a lot. However, when our social studies teacher, Donna Lee, told us that we would be going to the opening of AchieveBC and that Gordon Campbell would be attending, it was a shock and an uneasy thought to some.

As class work, each of us was to come up with one question to ask the premier. Most of the questions were about education or health. Mine, like a majority of others, was about educational funding. Donna Lee had also encouraged us to try to express our opinion through visuals, since getting the premier to answer our rather controversial questions might not be easily accomplished—it wasn't.

After arriving at the Vancouver Public Library, I found my classmates and stood anxiously until the premier arrived. He gave a short speech about AchieveBC after which pictures with students were taken. It took me a few minutes and a lot of help before I had enough courage to call out for his attention. I was ignored. I called out again and again. I was still ignored. Some of my classmates pushed me toward

the premier. At that point I was right behind him and still I received no response.

It was now time for the premier to answer questions. "Finally, I thought, he is obligated to answer my question." I began calling "Mr. Premier!" again. That time, I wasn't ignored. I was stopped. I was told by a Mr. Sauer, the Liberal's communications director of education, that this was for media questions only. Now I was annoyed. "I have a question though," I said. "What is your question?" Of course, I didn't tell him my question. I said it was simply about education. I was now being handed a card and told that something would be set up. I didn't want a set up, though. So, when the premier was done with his media-only questions, I went right up and tapped him. I asked:

"You stated on April 21, 2001, on CBC that education funding would not be cut. You said, and I quote, 'you can count on it, you can guarantee it, it's not going to happen.' However, public education funding has been cut and, in Vancouver alone, 400 teachers have been laid off in 2002. In fact, in February, public education funding was cut by \$15 million, while the premier's office received \$7 million. So, were you lying at the beginning of your campaign? Why has education funding been

cut while your own office's funding was raised?"

He responded by saying that educational funding had not been cut and, in fact, it had been raised (he didn't comment on the funding of his office). I retorted by asking if that was true, why were there fewer teachers and more students in each class? I was ignored. Everything after that point is quite blurry to me. I was bombarded by the media. They asked my name, my age, my school, my question, his response, my thoughts on the program, etc. I went home thinking that I had made a statement.

The truth reached very few. There was little media coverage on the incident. Perhaps though, that is the statement. Very few realize how much control the Liberals have over the media and how easy it is for them to lie to the public. After all, it's politics, and not many would want to oppose a political force that makes up such a majority. To be frank, I find that sad. The government is supposed to help us and our economy. Instead, the B.C. government seems to help itself by taking money out of our education funding and putting it in its pocket.

Emma Wallace is a student at City School, Vancouver.

AchieveBC or DeceiveBC?

Dear Mr. Campbell:

You have got to be kidding! A web site of positive thoughts to replace all the services you have slashed? Kids need neighbourhood schools, small class sizes, specialist teachers, and parents who earn a decent living in conditions that support positive parenting. They do not need a message from Mars via the Internet. You got the name wrong—it should have been "DeceiveBC."

Lynne Sinclair, director, BCTF Field Service Division

Thank you for your e-mail regarding AchieveBC.

Our goal is to provide British Columbians and the world with information more efficiently and effectively than ever before. Our new web site is comprehensive and we believe it will be effective and help people and businesses better than previously.

We will be monitoring the site over time and taking into consideration all of the comments people are making, and making improvements on it whenever necessary. This is a web site for British Columbians and for the world—giving everyone an opportunity to find out more about our province, our resources, our people, our programs, policies, and initiatives. It will also provide them with easy access to the kind of information they need to answer their questions, to do business, or to link them to relevant resources and forms quickly.

I appreciate the time you have taken to share your thoughts. This is an exciting new initiative with more attributes than the previous site, and we look forward to the success of our efforts.

Sincerely,
Gordon Campbell,
premier

New teachers' conference February 20–21, 2004

For more information, contact Paule Desgroseilliers, BCTF Professional and Social Issues Division, 604-871-1844, toll free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1844), or pdesgroseilliers@bctf.ca.

BCTF winter holiday closure

The BCTF office will be closed at noon on December 24, 2003, and will reopen at 8:15 a.m. on January 2, 2004.



Deadline for AGM resolutions

The deadline for submission of AGM resolutions is December 15, 2003, and the policies relating to the submission of resolutions can be found in statement 2.C.04 (page 28) of the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*.

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

We extend to the Hon. Dr. George M. Weir our sincere congratulations upon his appointment to the portfolios of Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education in the new Cabinet. It is a matter of great interest that one actively connected with education throughout his life should be called upon to take charge of the educational administration of the Province. His practical experience with the many phases of education will be of inestimable advantage to him in dealing with the many problems of administration of his department. We may look forward with confidence to a sane and progressive development of our educational system.

— *The B.C. Teacher*,
November 1933

50 years ago

Many teachers feel a moral responsibility to respect picket lines established by striking employees, and others believe they should at least go so far as

to refuse to work where hired strike-breakers may be employed. On the other hand, many teachers regard their professional responsibility to pupils and parents, and their contractual obligation to the school board, as the paramount consideration. Feeling itself incapable of recommending a policy that adequately reconciles these points of view, the Executive established a new Labour Relations Committee, and instructed it to bring in a full report to the December Executive meeting.

— *The B.C. Teacher*,
November 1953

30 years ago

The time has arrived for teachers, students and parents to participate in the selection of school principals. This does not mean giving control of the selection process to any one of these three groups, but it does mean that all three should play a meaningful role. The decade of the 1970s has brought a growing acceptance of the idea that those who are affected by decisions

must be involved in the making of those decisions. In the area of education, this means that the three groups most immediately affected by administrative decision-making, i.e., teachers, students, and parents, must participate in the formation of those decisions.

— *The B.C. Teacher*,
November 1973

10 years ago

Teachers from North Vancouver and Nanaimo have proven that class size and mainstreaming provisions in contract make a big difference to the quality of education. Both locals successfully grieved violations of their collective agreements, resulting in two significant arbitration awards. The locals' perseverance paid off not only in better working and learning conditions but also in establishing good case law for the other locals in the province.

— *Teacher Newsmagazine*,
November 1993

Chris Bocking, Keating
Elementary School, Saanich

The B.C. child labour law

by Mark Thompson

The government recently introduced amendments to the *Employment Standards Act* that effectively lower the minimum age for employment from 15 to 12 years.

The act currently forbids employment of children under the age of 15 without the permission of the director of the Employment Standards Branch. The director sets the conditions of employment for each child, including the consent of the child's parent and school if work is during the school year, hours of work, and other conditions of employment. Special and very protective regulations exist for child performers in the film and television industries. A handful of individual employers also have closely controlled permits to hire children. In 2001, approximately 400 child-labour permits were issued, about 50 for work at the Pacific National Exhibition.

The government proposes to permit any child between 12 and 15 years of age to work with the consent of his or her parent. The director may establish conditions for employment of children for industries or classes of

Children do not have the attention span adults do, and they risk accident or injury at work sites designed for adults.

industries, thereby removing the individual attention to the child. The *Employment Standards Act* is enforced through a complaint, followed by an investigation. The number of staff to receive and investigate complaints is being reduced by 40%, further undermining the protection of children.

The amendments will allow employers to employ children under 15 years of age with only limited supervision. The government has presented no rationale

to justify its regressive policy, other than "cutting red tape."

The proposed changes dishonour Canada. Since the 1990s, this country has been an international leader in efforts to ban child labour in less-developed regions of the world. Only last year, the United Nations dedicated a special session to children, highlighting the dangers of child labour. Non-governmental organizations are urging Canadian companies to refuse to purchase goods made by children overseas. Should they impose boycotts on British Columbia products made by children?

Any parent or teacher knows that children are vulnerable when they enter the labour market. They seldom know their legal rights, and they have few skills to command a high wage. They face special hazards. Children do not have the attention span adults do, and they risk accident or injury at work sites designed for adults. The lure of income may cause them to neglect their education.

When children under 15 are employed, they compete with older teenagers or young adults who are attempting to gain job skills and extra income. This added pool of inexperienced workers especially hurts older teenagers when all workers receive a sub-minimum wage for their first 500 hours of employment. Parents care for

British Columbia should not be a society where elementary school pupils are encouraged to choose between a low-wage job and their education.

the well being of their children, but they should not be expected to verify the working conditions of 12-year-olds.

The social development and education of children should be of paramount concern to society

in British Columbia. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, ratified by Canada and virtually every country in the world, establishes this principle. The present Employment Standard policy enables the director to tailor working conditions to the need of the child in those very limited cases when work is necessary or appropriate. Parents should be involved in decisions about the work of their children, but society should put the needs of the children first.

The present standards of protection for children should be maintained. British Columbia should not be a society where elementary school pupils are encouraged to choose between a low-wage job and their education.

Mark Thompson, UBC professor, served as commissioner of the 1994 report *"Rights and Responsibilities in a Changing Workplace: A Review of Employment Standards in British Columbia."*

Cheap and malleable child workers A gift to employers

by Kathleen MacKinnon

The following excerpts are from a letter by Deborah (MacIver) Stead, Jasper, Ontario, July 2, 2003.

"On May 12, 1995, my 15-year-old nephew made headlines, becoming the youngest person in the province of British Columbia to die in an industrial accident. Luke was only five days into his first summer job when he was killed, buried under a mountain of garbage, while working for Wastech Services Ltd., of Coquitlam. My brother (Luke's dad) also worked for Wastech, and assumed, because he worked there, that Luke would be safe. It wasn't until the coroner's inquest, that we discovered that Wastech had previously been fined for other safety infractions.

"This morning, while watching CTV, I listened to your minister of labour, Graham Bruce, try to justify, why he feels the labour laws should be changed to include 12-to-15-year-olds. I can give him 100 reasons why it shouldn't."

On October 8, 2003, the B.C. Liberals passed into third reading legislation that would give British Columbia the weakest child labour law in the country. The changes will take effect December 14, 2003.

Process for employing children aged 12 to 15 as at December 15, 2003:

- Note from one parent or guardian. The note to be kept on file by the employer.

Current permitting process for children ages 12 to 15:

- Employer applies to the Employment Standards Branch (ESB) for a permit.
- An Industrial Relations Officer (IRO) visits the work site, interviews the employer, identifies any potential risks or safety issues for the child, and makes a recommendation to the director of the ESB.
- Director approves or denies permit. Approximately 25% of the permits are rejected.

Permits are kept on file at the Employment Standards Branch.

Why introduce changes now?

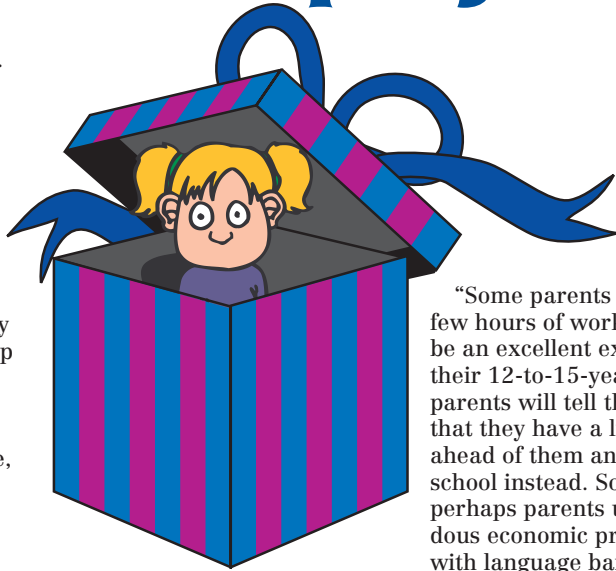
- Graham Bruce, minister of skills development and labour, gives these reasons:

"Over the past year, we've taken a number of steps to give workers and employers greater flexibility in employment standards, to negotiate mutually beneficial relationships that help them compete and prosper, to remove unnecessary regulation and implement employment standards that are fair, effective, and enforceable." (*Hansard*, October 6, 2003)

In Sydney, Australia, children as young as 14 were issued a business licence and sent off on their own to sell ice cream and other products for a company contracted by Sydney's Olympic committee...

- Reverend Dr. Robert Korth, chair of the Justice and Peace Unit Anglican Diocese of New Westminster and a member of our child labour coalition, speaking at a vigil against Bill 37 held at Robson Square on Wednesday, October 15, 2003:

"Young children are now at risk as never before; primary benefits will go not to children but to business; and the provincial government will save money as well as follow through on its promises to deregulate business. Bill 37 will clearly benefit business, which will gain enhanced access to a large pool of workers that is less assertive and cheaper than experienced, organized workers. Certainly the \$6 'training wage' is a powerful incentive to employers to hire young, inexperienced staff."



"Some parents will think a few hours of work a week will be an excellent experience for their 12-to-15-year-old. Some parents will tell their children that they have a lifetime of work ahead of them and to focus on school instead. Some parents, perhaps parents under tremendous economic pressures or with language barriers, are not well-informed about the workplace. Finally, the sad exception is those parents or guardians who are irresponsible or even unscrupulous and might approve employment that to a reasonable, fair-minded third party would put their children in harm's way. We would not have a minister of children and family development if all parents were equally equipped to care for and

...by the time the children paid their GST and super-annuation, their take-home pay was an average \$5/hour.

make decisions for their children. That is why having an objective third party, such as the Employment Standards Branch, is a critical part of the check and balance in the system." (Jenny Kwan, MLA Vancouver Mount Pleasant, *Hansard*, October 8, 2003)

Does a school/educator have to give permission?

At the moment, the director can only grant child employment permits after receiving written consent from the child's parent or guardian and the child's

school. As of mid-December 2003, however, no formal permit will be required; the only requirement will be written permission from one parent. Teachers will not even know if one of their students is working since only the employer will have the written consent. Parents who are divorced or separated may not know the other parent has given permission for a child to work.

Is the minister of skills development bringing in new regulations?

After the Opposition in the Legislature pointed out that the *Act* contained no provisions regarding safety, supervision, and hours of work, the minister promised to introduce regulations to cover them. Amendments attempted by the opposition prohibiting children working between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. were defeated.

The BCTF has asked for input into the new regulations. You can provide input too. Fax the minister a letter, or call your MLA to register your views on these changes. Demand that the new regulations, at a minimum, restrict the hours of work for a child aged 12 to 15 to no more than two hours on a school day, that no employer schedule children to work during school hours or between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., and that children work under the immediate and direct supervision of an adult, meaning within sight and earshot.

We do not believe the changes to B.C. child labour law are a step forward for our society nor for the children of our province. Childhood is a time for growing, learning, and playing, not for jobs. For more information on child labour in British Columbia, check our web site: www.bctf.ca/social/ChildLabour/.

Kathleen MacKinnon is an assistant director in the BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division.

Misleading ministry ads

by Noel Herron

On the same day the Ontario Tories ran into trouble with their pre-election, taxpayer-financed ads promoting their support for public schools, the B.C. Liberals launched their second round (the first round was in late June) of full-page newspaper ads claiming that they are generous funders of public education.

Repeated requests in writing, and by telephone, to the Ministry of Education and to the government agency responsible for Liberal advertising on overall costs drew vague and evasive responses such as “Sorry; this information will not be available until the end of the year.” “These expenses do not come from the Ministry of Education budget but from the government office responsible for all advertising,” and the old standby “We will get back to you.” A written request wasn’t even acknowledged.

One-day, full-page ads in *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* combined, cost \$21,000. Conservative estimates from advertising agencies place the two-day, June/September, province-wide, Liberal advertising blitz at between \$350,000 to \$400,000.

No wonder government officials and Genesis Media, the government’s Victoria-based company, which produced the ads, are reluctant to respond to questions about their media campaign.

It’s okay to demand openness and accountability from school boards, but expecting openness from government is another matter.

Apart from the cost, the question remains: Are these ads believable, and are they accurate?

Only half the picture is given by Victoria. No mention is made of legislated contract settlements imposed on school boards without accompanying funding. No mention of the decade-long cutbacks, downsizing, and freezing that left school boards reeling in their struggle to catch up.

But even the fancy figures the Liberals presented in the ads have been challenged. In a trenchant written analysis of the Liberals’ all-too-slick presentation, Neil Worboys, BCTF president, notes, “For example, they (the Liberals) claim to be increasing funding for Kindergarten to Grade 12 education by \$143 million, the amount announced in the February budget. But after the budget was

tabled, Deputy Education Minister Emery Dosdall hosted a briefing for leaders of the organizations representing trustees, teachers, principals, support workers, and secretary-treasurers. Ministry officials clarified that only \$50 million will actually go to public school classrooms, and not until 2004–05. The balance of the \$143 million will go to private schools, changes in accounting practices, debt service and amortization, and other non-classroom related expenditures.”

It is this attempt to manipulate public opinion with misleading ads in the face of the continuous erosion of programs and services in our schools that has a growing number of trustees and students very angry.

The public shellacking that Christy Clark received at the annual B.C. School Trustees’ spring conference in Kamloops is but one example, while in September, Richmond secondary students debunked the minister’s claim about added school choice by pointing to new school closures and growing wait lists for assessment.

That the B.C. Liberals felt compelled to launch this ad campaign at this time indicates their concern about growing public disenchantment of their policies. Expect more of the same over the next 12 months as 2005 draws near.

The Liberals may believe their claim that they are “funding (note, they do not say adequately funding) a first-class education system,” but they seem unable to respond to questions such as:

- Why are so many trustees being compelled to seek alternative sources of revenue to maintain key programs?
- Why are more and more parent advisory committees holding raffles, teas, casino nights, and book sales to purchase basic classroom texts and supplies?
- Why have almost 100 schools (mostly rural) been forced, with devastating results, to close their doors since the Liberals came to power?

Massaging information for public consumption with taxpayer-funded ads, while denying thousands of kids access to quality schooling, underlines the bankruptcy of the B.C. Liberals’ policies in education.

Noel Herron, a former elementary school principal, is a Vancouver school trustee.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

The Anglican Diocese of New Westminster holds a vigil at the Vancouver Law Courts to protest the Campbell government move to deregulate child labour in B.C. The Liberal government has changed the law so that children 12-to-15-years-old can work as long as they have a note from one parent.

B.C. Liberals learn from Hogwarts High Inquisitor

by Nancy Knickerbocker

In a bizarre case of life imitating art, British Columbia’s teachers are reporting mysterious parallels between the recent actions of our Ministry of Education and the fictional Ministry of Magic.

As the past school year ended, a literary mania swept classrooms across B.C. and around the world. Students and teachers alike eagerly anticipated *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the latest in J.K. Rowling’s series about the brave young wizard and his struggle against He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.

Potter fans of all ages were desperate to read about Harry’s fifth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the year he must write the dreaded OWLs—Ordinary Wizarding Level exams. High-stakes testing isn’t Harry’s only problem, however. The unexplained absence of his teacher and friend, Hagrid the giant, is another big worry.

But Dolores Umbridge, the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, turns out to be the greatest source of stress at Hogwarts this year. Professor Umbridge begins her introductory speech to the students nicely enough:

“The Ministry of Magic has always considered the education of young witches and wizards to be of utmost importance... The treasure trove of magical knowledge amassed by our ancestors must be guarded, replenished, and polished by those who have been called to the noble profession of teaching.” (p. 192)

Then comes a long discourse on permanence and progress, during which most students’ attention drifts. But to those who were listening, Umbridge gave notice that big change is coming:

“Meanwhile, some old habits will be retained, and rightly so, whereas others, outmoded and outworn, will be abandoned. Let us move forward, then, into a new era of openness, effectiveness, and accountability, intent on preserving what ought to be preserved, perfecting what needs to be perfected, and pruning wherever we find practices that ought to be prohibited.” (p. 193)

Excuse me, professor. Did you say, “Move forward? New era? Accountability?”

The plight of Hogwarts’ students sounds disturbingly familiar. Harry’s brilliant friend Hermione realizes there’s “important stuff hidden in all the waffle” of Umbridge’s

speech. “It means the ministry’s interfering at Hogwarts,” she says, through gritted teeth.

Like Hermione, B.C. teachers have been gritting their collective teeth in the face of Liberal laws that are eerily similar to the many high-handed Educational Decrees promulgated by the bad guys in the Ministry of Magic. Their frightening reforms are applauded in the pages of the *Daily Prophet*. Real-life readers of the daily *Province* and other CanWest papers will recognize the tone of mandatory enthusiasm for ministry initiatives.

**MINISTRY SEEKS EDUCATIONAL REFORM
DOLORES UMBRIDGE APPOINTED FIRST EVER HIGH INQUISITOR**

In a surprise move last night the Ministry of Magic passed new legislation giving itself an unprecedented level of control at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry...

This is not the first time in recent weeks that the Minister, Cornelius Fudge, has used new laws to effect improvements at the wizarding school. (p. 275)

“You ought to know, too, that as High Inquisitor it is my unfortunate but necessary duty to inspect my fellow teachers.”

Educational Decree Number Twenty-Two empowers the minister to overrule decisions made by Professor Albus Dumbledore, the wise and beloved headmaster, who’s trying to protect his students and his school from destruction. It has clear echoes of the Liberals’ Bill 28, which centralized power in the ministry and eliminated provisions to protect learning conditions for children.

Educational Decree Number Twenty-Three creates the new position of Hogwarts High Inquisitor, appointed personally by the Minister of Magic and endowed with “powers to inspect her fellow educators and make sure they are coming up to scratch.”

As Umbridge sweetly explains on first meeting Hagrid: “You ought to know, too, that as High Inquisitor it is my unfortunate but necessary duty to inspect my fellow teachers. So I daresay we shall meet again soon enough.”

The inspection scenes in Hagrid’s Care of Magical Creatures class and Professor Trelawney’s Divination class read like every teacher’s nightmare, especially teachers facing

increased supervision in the climate described by Education Minister Christy Clark: “For too long we’ve had a model that assumes teachers and administrators are enemies and children are widgets. They’re not.” (*Ahem.*)

Meanwhile Lord Voldemort, the scariest enemy of all, is marshalling his dark forces. With the Ministry of Magic in complete denial about Voldemort’s return, Dumbledore and other wizards unite to form the Order of the Phoenix. Harry and his classmates want to help, but they aren’t learning anything at all about Defense Against the Dark Arts from Umbridge, who just makes them read the textbook as per ministry policy. But the students are determined to learn, so they convince Harry to teach them in secret.

When Umbridge gets wind of the existence of their clandestine study group, she responds swiftly with Educational Decree Number Twenty-Four: *Any student found to have formed, or to belong to, an organization, society, team, group or club that has not been approved by the High Inquisitor will be expelled.* (p. 313)

Surrey teachers and students who tried to establish gay-straight alliances also remember prohibitions against such rebellious student clubs. And, of course, Surrey teachers won’t forget being expelled on ministry orders from a recent news conference.

Thousands of B.C. students are enjoying *Harry Potter* and *the Order of the Phoenix* for Rowling’s wonderful characters and energetic narrative. But their teachers enjoy it at another level, and feel a sense of connection with the author. Whether it’s under Margaret Thatcher or Gordon Campbell, we’ve all experienced the same political agenda, and we’re responding with the same skepticism to their educational decrees.

“If only we could wave a magic wand and put everything back to normal,” one B.C. teacher wistfully wrote. Unfortunately that can’t happen here in the Muggle world, the non-magical realm where real teachers, students, and parents are struggling to defend public education.

But, like true Gryffindors, we’re going to give it our very best!

Nancy Knickerbocker works in communications for the BCTF, and is forever grateful to Harry Potter for magically transforming her youngest child from a reluctant reader into an avid one.



Bob Heibredner speaking on National School Librarian Day at General Gordon School in Vancouver. Heibredner is an author of five books that grew out of his experience as a primary teacher and is a recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. Research is conclusive—well-staffed and well-stocked school libraries improve students' literacy levels.

Prime minister's award for teaching excellence

by Mary Locke

Here is a summary of a recent interview with Bob Heibredner, an early primary teacher at General Gordon, who, along with two others from B.C. won the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence.

I came to Vancouver during the Vietnamese War as a draft resistor. Canada welcomed me and ultimately gave me the freedom to teach the way I wanted to teach. To be recognized by a country that accepted me in my time of need is a high honour, and to give something back to that country is important to me.

The main link between me and all the other recipients was the importance to all of us of teacher autonomy, which allowed us to cover the curriculum in a way that was best for particular students in a particular year. It also allowed us to use and emphasize our own talents, mine being language, poetry, puppet charac-

ters, drama, and adventures. The other B.C. recipients were teachers of drama and video."

Coming back to the point of teacher autonomy, Heibredner added that he was gratified that the community recognized his voice in teaching, since this award grew out of the appreciation of the school community and his colleagues.

Heibredner has taught in early primary in three schools in Vancouver: Tillicum, Maquinna, and General Gordon. He has published five books that grew out of his teaching: *Don't Eat Spiders* (1986), *Eenie Meenie Manitoba* (1996), *Python Play* (1999), *I Wished for a Unicorn* (2000), *See-Saw Saskatchewan* (2003).

His book, *See-Saw Saskatchewan*, was a gift to all elementary schools from the Vancouver Elementary Principals and Vice-Principals' Association in the 2002-03 school year.

Mary Locke teaches at General Gordon Elementary School, Vancouver.



BCTF table officers bring a message of support to the 700 teachers in Marysville, Washington, who were on strike for the first month and a half of this school year. The employer wanted to lengthen the working year and move the teachers onto the state salary grid. The BCTF pledged \$10,000 in financial support that was greatly appreciated.

BCTF forest fire relief fund continues to grow

The BCTF Forest Fire Relief Fund started with a BCTF contribution of \$125,000 and has grown substantially with contributions from the Manitoba Teachers' Society (\$15,000) and teacher locals.

Teachers in Arrow Lakes, Burnaby, Burns Lake, Campbell

River, Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Delta, Fernie, Fraser-Cascade, Kelowna, Langley, Nechako, Peace River South, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Queen Charlotte, Sunshine Coast, Surrey, Syndicat enseignant.e.s programme francophone, and Vancouver have contributed more than \$30,000.

Thanks from the Okanagan

by Alice Rees

It is with heartfelt gratitude that the teachers of Central Okanagan have received your many messages of concern and support. They are truly grateful for the generosity of the BCTF. The grants are touching the lives of students and colleagues devastated by the fire.

Teachers responded in the hundreds and became the backbone of the registration facilities of the Red Cross. On the night the fire entered city limits and its potential was obvious, hundreds of teachers simply showed up at the registration centre to volunteer. Red Cross co-ordinators recognized the teachers' talents and asked that the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association call for more members to attend training to support their efforts: "Teachers are exceptional at handling forms and people." Within one hour on Friday

afternoon, in a city where a third of the population was already evacuated and teachers were on holiday, we had 37 teachers in the COTA boardroom being trained. The following Sunday, with a few hours' notice, in a city where now nearly half the population was evacuated, we had another 40 teachers training to volunteer as supervisors. When relocation and renewal of evacuation support started, the Red Cross called for more names. Teachers volunteered many hours in many capacities as the events unfolded.

Caring and support have no limits, and I am so proud that the BCTF, with its locals, is playing such a pivotal role for students and teachers. I am thankful for the locals planning partnering activities for our students and those contributing to the fund.

COTA has taken steps to aid our community, students, and colleagues. We have contributed

\$3,000 to the Red Cross Fire Relief fund, \$1,000 to the Food Bank (it was absolutely desperate for donations at the height of the evacuations), \$5,000 for ads of thanks and school startup, and \$40,000 for interest-free loans to members. We stuffed and distributed 140 backpacks to affected students (local business responded overwhelmingly to our request for donations). The COTA executive moved to contribute \$5,000 to the BCTF fund.

In the midst of all this, teachers are welcoming us into their schools in the early morning, at lunch breaks, and after school to discuss withholding their college fees. Momentum is gathering, and it appears that many may be willing to send a strong message to the minister of education.

Alice Rees is president of the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association.

Monster in the mountains

Marg Boyd's Grade 6 students at Anne McClymont Elementary School in Kelowna, wrote these poems during the first weeks of school. BCTF President Neil Worboys visited the school in early September and the staff appreciated the support as they worked through the first two weeks.

Evil monster
eating away
at the
mountain.
People crying,
heroes try
to save
houses.
Hope dying,
water bombers flying.
Sunday morning
people found
out,
that their
houses were
just an
empty lot.

Streets were
filled with
ash and smoke.
People crying
but
the heros
still trying.
Melted homes,
totally demolished.
It is
something
that we
won't
forget.

by Katie Sutior

A monster in the mountains,
uncontrollable,
a dangerous fire.
Burning the mountain and
everything in its path.
The mountain glows with fire.
Winds start to gust,
the fire blows,
coming closer to the houses.
The frightened people watch in
horror
as the flames come down the
mountainside.
winds change,
the fire goes back behind the
mountains.
Houses are burnt,
ash everywhere,
a horrible sight.

We were worried
at first
sorrow
and sadness,
scared
and helpless.
As the
fire was blazing and
the winds were mad
it ate the
houses
bite by bite.

by Adam Smith

Fire, Fire
burning bright,
like a candle
in
the night
firefighters
tried in
vain
but that
fire is
such a
PAIN!

by Simon Charles Edwards

Fire.
Smoke billowed in the sky,
purple,
orange, grey.
Fire raging in the hills.
Dragons of flame
raced through the trees.
Greedy burning all they could.
Monster in the mountain.
Demon of destruction.
The blaze was horrific.
Would the firefighters stop it?
or would the dragons burn
down our town,
and laugh at our sorrow?
Mother Nature started this,
would she be kind,
and send glorious rain?
Or would she send winds to help
the dragons?
The firefighters have almost
controlled the blaze.
Will it flare up again?

by Madeline L. Rigg

Monster in the mountains
The fire fiercely raged
over the mountain top
nervous and scared
I watched
and waited
no sign of control
rapidly the fire spread
through the mountains
smoke was in the air
the fire's flames were getting
bigger
the sun was going down
and all firefighters were going to
rest
I was frightened
I wish the fire would go away
GO AWAY NOW!

by Claire Macleod

SUPPORT from page 1

Parents/PAC support

A letter to the local Langley paper on October 21, 2003:

Dear Editor:

I teach my children that when they have conflicts with family or friends, it's best to first work it out directly with that person.

Any therapist worth his or her salt would give the same advice. Anything other than that is creating a triangle, detrimental to any co-operative relationship.

Yet our education minister, Christy Clark, would like to see parents do just that ("Teachers raise ante in protest," October 14, 2003, *The Langley Advance*).

Bothered by something your child's teacher did? Well, heck, then just take it to the top. Why try to resolve it simply and efficiently, directly with the teacher, when you can bypass the teacher, the principal, the district, and the entire school board, and go straight to the B.C. College of Teachers?

Why settle for molehills when you can have mountains?

And just to stir the pot up a little more so that we can all be "engaged" in this process, let's fill the seats at the college with a majority of non-teachers. Isn't the governing body of every other profession occupied by individuals not employed in that profession?

Oh, my mistake—that's just Ms. Clark's way of showing her "very deep respect for the professionalism of teachers."

This woman needs to give her head a shake. If I were a teacher, I'd withhold my professional fees too.

I have the utmost respect for the staff at my sons' school, and am proud of the relationships I have formed between home and school. I, for one, will continue to approach my child's teacher directly, if I have an issue, and only if it can't be resolved that way will I take it to the next logical level, rather than leapfrog right to the top.

I'll be damned if Christy Clark and her gang of idiots are going to dictate how I resolve problems between my child and a teacher.

Michele Lavery, Willoughby

The following letter was sent to Christy Clark from a school PAC, October 27, 2003:

It recently came to our attention that Bill 51 included significant changes to the *Teaching Profession Act* and the B.C. College of Teachers, and we would like to express our concerns regarding these changes. Aspiring to boost public confidence in the education system is an admirable goal but it appears that you have unwittingly set off in the opposite direction. *The Province* online poll published October 23, 2003, shows that 67.8% of the respondents said that the ability to bring complaints about teachers to the B.C. College of Teachers did not boost their confidence in the education system. We believe this is, in part, because of the sweeping changes you have initiated with the BCCT.

As a result of these changes, a number of our teachers have asked the Maple Ridge School District not to deduct the \$90 BCCT membership fees from their pay cheques. Membership implies that one has the ability to have some influence over, or say in, the matters of the group you are associated with. As you have summarily removed this ability, we agree fully that they should not be required to pay these fees and are sending a copy of this letter to the board of School District 42 in support of their request.

While professional colleges have historically been governed by a majority elected from among their peers, the BCCT will now operate with a minority of elected professional members and a majority of cabinet appointments. We are of the opinion that registering a complaint to a board that is unfamiliar with the practical applications of teaching will cause more problems than it will solve. Would it be appropriate to ask a teacher to determine if a doctors' medical treatment of a patient was suitable? Of course it wouldn't. How could they possibly know; they are not doctors. So how can you deem it appropriate for a majority of political appointees to determine whether or not a teacher's actions are acceptable? They have never taught.

One of our members was especially upset as she had read that part of the college's mandate was stated as being "to solicit" complaints, not "to address" them. While we applaud the move to allow parents to correspond directly with the college, we are dismayed that it is encouraged as the first step, not the last resort, as it should be.

The parents and teachers in our school, along with many others that we are familiar with, enjoy a rapport based on respect, trust, and a common goal to do what is best for "our"

If your goal is to instill parental trust in our education system as a whole, your first step should be to foster that same environment between your ministry and our teachers.

children. We are worried that we will lose this collaborative effort as a great number of teachers have expressed reticence about participating in open and honest dialogue with parents for fear that if something is taken the wrong way, they will immediately be reported to the college. Misunderstandings are not uncommon when people are engaging in verbal communication, especially if, for example, the parent of an unruly child is being asked to participate in problem solving. Parents often hear with their hearts, not their heads. It will be daunting for a teacher to address such an issue knowing that if there is even the *perception* of a problem, they may be reported without first being given the chance to clear things up with further dialogue. Legislation that erodes the trust and communication we have built up over the years cannot possibly be seen as a positive step.

At a district level, we have achieved successful relationships with our teachers and

administrators based on mutual trust and respect. If your goal is truly to instill parental trust in our education system as a whole, your first step should be to foster that same environment between your ministry and our teachers. The shortage recently experienced in Ontario due to the adversarial nature of the relationship between teachers and their government was a disgrace and it is too high a price for our children—our future—to pay. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that you reconsider the request of the B.C. Teachers' Federation for amendments to Bill 51.

Terrie-Leah Kovesdi, Alexander Robinson Elementary School PAC Executive.

Faculty association support

Excerpt from a letter delivered to the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association:

"The College of the Rockies Faculty Association would like to lend our support in your struggle to oppose the effects of Bill 51 and the amendments it made to the *Teaching Profession Act*.

"This draconian piece of legislation has created a College of Teachers that is no longer accountable to the taxpayers of this province, to the teachers who are expected to pay the bills, or to the students in your classrooms. Most professional governing bodies in this province have at least 2/3 of their members elected from within the profession. We believe that teachers should be represented on their professional body in at least the same proportion. We support you and all members of the BCTF in your fight to keep our public education system student focused and accountable."

Velma McKay, president, College of the Rockies Faculty Association

Vancouver secondary administrators speak up

A letter to Tarry Grieve, the chairperson of the college council:

I am writing on behalf of the Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators to express our initial response to the legislated changes to the College of Teachers. As you are

aware, we are a separate and distinct organization from the B.C. Principals' and Vice Principals' Association, and therefore wish to address our concerns directly to you.

We have reviewed the legislation and the recently released Strategic Plan of the college council, and are concerned that there appears to be a conflict with our basic beliefs in representation, professionalism, and due process. We, as an organization of educational administrators, uphold the following principles, which should be embedded in any structure that governs our profession.

- The governing college council should be representative of, and accountable to, the members of the College of Teachers. The majority should be elected by members and should include a provision which ensures school administrators' representation.
- Existing processes at the school district level governing employer/employee relationships should not be suspended by college regulations.
- Processes used in initiating and investigating professional conduct and practices of members should be respectful of the dignity, confidentiality and the rights of the individual involved; initiation of any question of the performance should first, and primarily, be addressed at the local level.
- Members should have the opportunity to take responsibility for their professional growth, recognizing their individual, rather than prescribed, learning needs.

We would appreciate an opportunity to clarify and explore these issues with you directly. Therefore we are requesting a meeting with you and other representatives of the college council at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at Templeton Secondary School (604-713-8984) or geadie@rsb.bc.ca. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Grace Eadie, president, Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators

Peter Owens is an assistant director in the BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division and editor of Teacher newsmagazine.

Professionalism and unionism in teaching

Excerpt from the Report of the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education, 1988, p. 145-146

Overview

Historically, teachers have worked in organizations. Since the time of the one-room school, the daily transactions between teachers and students have been mediated by a lay school board and its appointed administrative officials. Since their inception, school boards have participated in raising and distributing funds and in supervising teachers through the establishment of rules, policies, and procedures. While the manner and means by which school boards and their officials have exercised control over teachers and over the ways in which teachers practice their craft have changed considerably, the basic organizational context of teaching has endured.

Teachers are salaried professionals. In addition, in B.C. they are now also members of a trade union as defined by the

Industrial Relations Act. Trade union membership, however, does not negate professional status; teachers still possess specialized knowledge, are bound by codes of professional practise, and are still entrusted with a unique educational responsibility.

A close consideration of oral and written submissions to the commission revealed several ambiguities and anomalies associated with teaching. Most noticeably, there appear to be conflict and confusion in the minds of the public with respect to teachers' simultaneous status. Apparently, the public views the objectives of a trade union in marked contrast with those of a profession. A profession is seen to provide a specialized and valued service to the public; in theory at least, it is accountable to the public interest for the conduct and performance of its members. A profession, therefore, typically has a governing body that establishes standards of entry, certification, conduct, and performance, and which

imposes sanctions against members who fail to meet the conditions for continued practice.

Unions exist to advance collectively the interests of their membership. Typically, unions do not establish conditions for entry, nor do they establish standards of conduct and performance. Unions are under no obligation to act in the public interest. Rather, they protect and serve their members and, in so doing, act to preserve their own security. The means by which a union generally serves its members is through the establishment of a collective agreement with an employer.

Put simply, a *union of professionals* is not a contradiction in terms. Professionals of all types are included in bargaining units—in the federal public service, for example, lawyers, accountants, engineers, and architects are included in bargaining units in the *professional and scientific* category. Self-employed professionals often engage in collective bargaining—physicians, for example, collectively negotiate fee

schedules with senior government. In the public service case above, the professions listed are salaried employees, governed not only by their job descriptions and obligations to their governmental employer, but also by the established standards of professional governing bodies.

Teachers are also salaried professionals and, like many others in that category, perform their work in the context of a formal employment relationship with an employer—in this case, the local school board. Such a context does produce some tension in that responsibility to the standards of the profession are separated from the supervisory authority of the school board and its management personnel. To establish formal influence over how they perform their work and the conditions under which they work (two characteristics of a profession), teachers, like unions, take collective action—they bargain.

The results of the collective bargaining process serve to constrain both employer and

employee. The actions of both school boards and teachers are controlled and influenced to varying extents by formal contract. Ideally, the results of teacher-board collective bargaining would require, and bring into effect, genuine board consultation with teachers before management decisions pertaining to teachers' work are made.

Past experience with other professional groups, and with teacher groups in other jurisdictions, leads to the conclusion that collective bargaining, though adversarial in nature, is an appropriate mechanism through which the interests of the public—through the elected school board—and the professional ambitions of teachers can be accommodated. Recent provincial legislation granting union certification to teachers simply formalizes and legitimizes the employer-employee relationship that has always existed between school boards and teachers. Such action does not de-professionalize teaching in any way.

CHRISTY'S

Your education history should be private

Here is a letter that Carol MacNamee, of the Nanaimo District Teachers' Union, wrote in response to an editorial in *The Ladysmith-Chemainus Chronicle*, September 22, 2003, that said a teacher data base open to the public through the college is a fine idea.

Dear Sir:

You have stated in your "View Point" article that a teacher's history including educational background, discipline action, etc., should be made accessible to the public. Your statement

How will knowing where or when a teacher went to university or what she or he studied help a parent or the general public?

begs the obvious question Why? How will knowing where or when a teacher went to university or what she or he studied help a parent or the general public? Will knowing that a teacher taught in another district or province make a student read better or think more critically?

Before a teacher can be certified in this province qualifications must be approved by the College of Teachers. Before teachers are hired in a district, they are interviewed and their applications screened by senior administration. If the college does its job properly and senior administrators do their jobs properly, then there is no question regarding qualifications. For anyone else to have that knowledge is not only an invasion of a person's privacy but useless information for anyone other than senior managers who hire teachers.

You have stated that legitimate privacy concerns should be addressed, and I assume, and hope, that you mean freedom of information and privacy law; I can also assume that you haven't read the Freedom of Information and Protection of

Privacy's statement that "A disclosure of personal information is presumed to be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy if the personal information relates to employment, occupational, or educational history...or if the disclosure may unfairly damage the reputation of any person referred to."

You are correct in saying that disciplinary action resulting from a hearing of the College of Teachers is already public and is published by the college. That information is readily available to the people who need the information—senior management on behalf of school boards who actually employ teachers in this province.

Carol McNamee, president, Nanaimo District Teachers' Union.

Letter to Malaspina College

by Marcie Mehaffey

It has given me great pleasure over the last number of years to take student teachers from Malaspina University College. I went through Malaspina University College's education program a number of years ago and respect the instructors I had and the goals of the education program. I have enjoyed having your student teachers in my classroom, and I liked feeling I was giving something back. In spite of my connection and respect for your program, I am writing to let you know I am no longer prepared to participate as a sponsor teacher.

You must understand that Bill 51 and the appointed college members are causing a great

I am writing to let you know I am no longer prepared to participate as a sponsor teacher.

deal of distress to teachers. The constant attack by Christy Clark on teachers and on public education has parents worried, teachers demoralized, and the system approaching chaos. I find it very hard to believe that the dean of education at Malaspina is supporting Bill 51 and this government by sitting as an appointee on the College of Teachers.

As a classroom teacher, I accept that I have very little control of or say over the

negative politics that swirl around public education these days. However, I can stop those politics from coming directly into my classroom, and I can refuse to support those who promote and create the negativity.

Unless there is a change in either the College of Teachers or Dr. Mike Grant's involvement in the College of Teachers, I will not be taking a student teacher next year. The only reason I took one this year is that I had committed to it in June and felt a professional obligation to honour that commitment.

I am prepared to reconsider my decision if there are any changes to Dr. Grant's involvement in the College of Teachers or if you, as a faculty, are taking any steps to resolve what must be a difficult situation for all of you.

Marcie Mehaffey teaches at North Cedar Intermediate School, Nanaimo.

Letter unpublished by The Province

I am not a teacher but a person who has fond memories of the people who taught me and those who taught my three children—all

I find it disconcerting that your paper is constantly attacking the teachers of today.

successful and good citizens. I find it disconcerting that your paper is constantly attacking the teachers of today. I think it is fair to say that the educational system could use improvements as well as the medical profession, the law profession, the newspaper business, and all levels of government. When may I expect to read your constant belittling of doctors? lawyers? editors? governments? No?

In your paper today you give a thumbs down to the BCTF because a large percentage of the teachers refuse to pay their annual fee to the B.C. College of Teachers this year. Why should they pay? The provincial government has taken control of the college in its increasingly bullying fashion. The fees have

gone up 50% to \$90 in one year, while the government has given less than 2% wage increases for this time. The teachers have been stripped down to 40% of the board yet are expected to pay the full shot. Forty percent of \$61.20 would be more like it.

I believe it is time for newspapers to put far more effort into exposing the lack of accountability in all levels of government. Your Michael Smyth does a good job in his column on the provincial government, but it is a scatter-gun approach. Can you not produce some well-written, fair, and accurate articles on the government? There is certainly enough fodder on deceit and waste alone, to keep your readers interested.

Eric Purdy, North Vancouver

College of oligarchs?

by Pat Clarke

Some of the more vociferous boosters of the new college in our B.C.-Liberal-friendly local media have been performing amazing acts of verbal contortion trying to explain why a regulatory body with no real responsibility to those who pay for it is a good thing and should work well in serving the public good. They would have crafted the same arguments to support such beacons of human rights and democracy as Family Compact and Chateau Clique.

As a former social studies/history teacher, I am feeling a little sheepish about this. It is obvious we did a less than stellar job with members of our current government, and their acolytes on the current BCCT council, in getting them to understand some of the fundamental principles of responsible government and democracy.

One of the nasty attributes of an oligarchy is its total disregard for responsibility to the constituents, the people who pay for it.

A horse is a horse of course, and an oligarchy is an oligarchy. Any way you look at the B.C. College of Teachers as the B.C. Liberals have reconstituted it, it is an oligarchy: a college of oligarchs. One hundred forty years after we thought we got rid of that particular form of governance, here we are in Bizarre B.C. bringing it back again.

One of the nasty attributes of an oligarchy is its total disregard for responsibility to the constituents, the people who pay for it. In the case of the BCCT, 90% are public school teachers. The absence of democratic responsibility and the resulting tendency to high handedness is demonstrated by the procedures at the council meetings. They are mostly in-camera affairs with short, token, public sessions where the actual members of the college *may* be permitted to ask a question that may or may not be answered.

"Appointed and non-representative" is the hallmark of an oligarchy.

And if a peon member thinks she or he can always go to an annual general meeting of the college and effect policy there, forget it. The BCCT annual meeting is advisory only. An appointed and non-representative council makes college policy in secret meetings, just like Family Compact and Chateau Clique and oligarchies everywhere.

"Appointed and non-representative" is the hallmark of an oligarchy. Even after the scheduled election of councillors in 2004, the college will not be representative of and therefore responsible to the majority of its dues-paying members. Most of the members of the college council will be, as with the current 100%-appointed group, there at the behest of someone other than the members. In most cases, that someone will be the minister of education. Given our current minister's tendency to whimsy, we can expect the worst. Her councillors, and they will be "hers," will be inclined to please their benefactor, and with a \$250 a day per diem, they may well find the temptation to do the minister's bidding irresistible.

In doing the minister's bidding, her councillors don't need to be at all concerned with how they spend the money. They don't have to answer to the dues-paying members on that or any other score. They don't have to worry about any approbation from the minister. She could not care less how the money is spent. After all, it is not taxpayers' money, just teachers'.

S COLLEGE

Oligarchies are also characterized by an overweening attachment to control and privilege. The appointed college councillors will have lots of both

We know governance without responsibility and accountability does not work.

to sustain them. Since the new BCCT has virtually no aspect of responsibility or accountability to its own members, it will have lots of opportunity to occupy itself elsewhere. The minister has been quite emphatic. To paraphrase her, this college is not going to be at all concerned with responsibility to members. It is about going after them. To expedite that pursuit, she has invested the college with considerable power and given the new councillors an aura of authority they could become quite attached to. In her zeal to establish a “watchdog” she has set up a kind of star chamber where the appearance of vigilance outweighs any consideration of the basic principles of natural justice. “So go ahead

and make your accusations about teachers,” she is saying. “Don’t worry about proof or libel; just go for it, and this college I’ve appointed will take care of it.”

The historical precedents for this kind of arrangement are unpleasant to contemplate. The power relationships are drastically uneven, and their effects are chaos; mistrust and ill-will are the usual outcomes. What is especially galling about all of this is that we know that. We know governance without responsibility and accountability does not work. The good news is that the college of oligarchs will eventually meet the same fate as all oligarchies. The oligarchs will end up in history’s ash can. But like all the others, they will have to be pushed.

Pat Clarke is the director of the BCTF’s Professional and Social Issues Division.

The oligarchs will end up in history’s ash can. But like all the others, they will have to be pushed.

In their own words

The Liberal takeover of the B.C. College of Teachers is destabilizing schools throughout the province. Interviews with people now running the college reveal their view of teachers.

Any kindness can be viewed as grooming for abuse

College registrar Marie Kerchum was featured in an article by Janet Steffenhagen, published in *The Vancouver Sun*, January 5, 2002, while she was deputy registrar. Here are her comments about teachers and the role of the college:

The B.C. College of Teachers says students are not receiving adequate protection against rogues in the school system because of testy, influential resistance to its demand for a report every time an educator is disciplined. The college, the regulatory body for the teacher profession, says it’s at loggerheads with the professional associations for trustees, superintendents, and principals—along with the teachers’ union—over the issue and has appealed to Education Minister Christy Clark for help...

Kerchum said the college needs to know about all disciplinary actions in order to identify behaviour patterns, particularly when educators are transient. Actions that appear minor in isolation could signal a bigger problem if there have been warnings about the same behaviour at other times, in other districts.

Some districts won’t report disciplines if it doesn’t involve sexual contact, but that could mean they are ignoring the “grooming” of a victim by a sexual predator, which can start off in a way that is seemingly innocent, with car rides or the giving of gifts, Kerchum said.

The only example Kerchum gave of a failure to report was of an unnamed private school.

Not enough complaints about teachers

When asked on *The Bill Good Show*, September 29, 2003, about the extremely small number of complaints, Marie Kerchum, the new registrar of the college stated:

Yes. Since May, I would say, and since this legislation has been announced, I would say that’s very small. However, it could be, as well, that many persons are unaware of the process so there will be an education program launched by the college to ensure all persons, the public in general, is aware of the process.

The “education program launched by the college” is a brochure explaining the “Person Complaint Process.” If anyone has a complaint about a member of the college, past or present, the brochure will explain how to complain

It’s not really a college of teachers

On October 3, 2003, Rick Cluff, host of CBC Radio’s Early Edition, interviewed Val Windsor, president of Delta Teachers’ Association, followed by Carl Ratsoy, political appointee on the College of Teachers’ transitional council. Here is a partial transcript:

Carl Ratsoy: A lot of people believe that the College of Teachers belongs to teachers and it might take a little while to really understand that the College of Teachers does not

belong to teachers. The B.C. Teachers’ Federation, the union, belongs to teachers. The college is something that’s set up by the provincial government, so if anyone owns it, it’s really the government, or really the public owns the body.

Rick Cluff: OK, then. Let me stop you right there, then. Why should they pay 90 bucks for membership in something they don’t own, they have no rights to, that’s just a tax grab?

Carl Ratsoy: Well, the college is an organization that employs people to do the legislative mandate of the college and, to do that, to employ people, you

“Why should they pay 90 bucks for membership in something they don’t own, they have no rights to, that’s just a tax grab?”

need to pay people. So, we need to levy a fee. I suppose it sort of makes sense, in terms of user pay, those who are related to the nature of the work should pay for the work.

Rick Cluff: But you see what I’m getting at, like, I don’t want to speak for Val Windsor, but one of their concerns was if the college is going to be put together by the ministry, and if it’s going to be run by the ministry, then why should they pay 90 bucks to belong to what is their professional association, or used to be their professional association?

Carl Ratsoy: Well, again, it’s not just their professional association. You have to understand that there are more partner groups than public school teachers in education...

Teachers should have a majority of their representatives on the College Council

British Columbians who agree

77.0%

Liberal supporters who agree

74.4%

Mustel Group

Survey conducted: October 1st to 9th, 2003

Methodology: Random sample of B.C. adults 18 years of age and over

Sample size: 505

Margin of error: ±4.4% at the 95% confidence level

Health and safety

Here, there, and everywhere...

by Maureen L. MacDonald

Oh, to be in England

A “stress code” for employers was recently introduced in the United Kingdom. Firms will have to protect their employees from stress or risk legal action. In the U.K., employees can already sue their companies for causing them stress at work, under the *Health and Safety at Work Act*. The Health and Safety Executive (a government agency) believes that the “stress code” will make it easier for employees to bring actions against firms, and will give its inspectors something against which to measure firms’ performance.



The six-point stress code

Demands—85% of employees must say they can cope with the demands of their job.
Control—85% must feel they have an adequate say over their job.
Support—85% must say they have the back-up they need.
Relationships—65% must say they do not have to face unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying.
Role—65% must say they understand their roles and responsibilities.
Change—65% must say they are involved in organizational change.

If fewer than the required 85% or 65% of all staff feel that each standard has been met, the company will fail its assessment and could face court action or heavy fines. For example, a hospital in Dorset has been given until mid-December to assess staff stress levels and introduce a program to reduce it after failing to meet the standards.

The stress code has been piloted in 24 companies ranging from academic institutions to a supermarket chain. It has had mixed reviews. Positive initial comments have fuelled plans to make it more available to others. But some employers, especially some companies with global interests, are asking how the government can hold employers accountable for increased use of the healthcare system. New research published in *Hazards* magazine highlights the health risks of stress in the workplace. If you go home with your jaw clenched and your shoulders at your ears, you are 25% more likely to suffer a heart attack, and you have a 50% greater chance of dropping dead from a stroke.

Effects of stress

Effects of stress include palpitations, digestive problems, muscular strain, backache, bowel upsets, raised blood pressure, weakening of the immune system, increase in minor infections, and aggravation of chronic conditions such as eczema.

Meanwhile, back home

What’s to be done here in B.C. about workplace stress? Unlike our overseas counterparts, we can’t sue our employers. We willingly gave up that option decades ago in Canada to get WCB coverage.

At the bargaining table, workers have never traded safety for other objectives. But health is just as important as safety. Mental and physical health issues are crucial for the members of our union. Our so-called collective agreement expires in June. Let’s take the time between now and then to do what we do best: teach. Let’s educate our employers about the causes and dangers of stress. Let’s talk about the need to feel good about going to work as a valued professional. Let’s generate discussion about healthy teachers making a difference to their students as well as to the use of the public healthcare system. Let’s make the connection between government underfunding of both the education system and the healthcare system—the top two things that citizens need—and increased stress on the individuals who work in those systems. Depression, anxiety, and obesity are on the increase. Those are not entirely individual problems. There’s a societal responsibility too. Our governments should address it.

One thing each member can do is to report all work-related illnesses to the teachers’ union reps on the Joint Occupational Health & Safety (JOH&S) Committee at school. If you are not sure if your illness is work-related, report anyway—everything from headaches, sore throats, runny noses, itchy eyes, and flare-ups of skin conditions to cancer. Stress is not a medical illness. It manifests itself in many ways. Your school’s JOH&S committee makes reports to the district. Maybe a pattern will show up. There is ongoing research on such things as indoor air quality, cancer clusters, and work.

Let’s make health a burning issue.

Stressed. Read it backwards. Desserts. Uh-oh!

Maureen MacDonald is the prevention officer in the BCTF Health and Safety Department.

If you would like your name added to the BCTF occupational health and safety e-mail list, please contact Whitney Burgess at wburgess@bctf.ca.



On being well

The urgency for teacher wellness

by Julia Johnson

On August 26, 2002, *The Vancouver Sun* ran an article related to government cutbacks. Many things were said, but the most poignant statements were “Canada’s nurses, doctors, and teachers are the most maligned workers in the country. They are also the most committed, overworked, and stressed. The health and education professions have been so badly devalued by years of job cuts and poor relations that the country’s schools and hospitals can’t keep or attract workers. They are in crisis. The health problems they’ll experience, along with the age of the workforce and the way they’ve been devalued, will make it very hard to attract people into the professions. And how do you get people to keep working when their mental and physical health are deteriorating?” These conclusions and reflective statements were the result of a massive federal study of nearly 31,500 people, conducted by Linda Duxbury, professor at Ottawa’s Carleton University,

and Chris Higgins of the University of Western Ontario, in London.

One year later, not much has changed. Throughout the province, limited funding continues to stress the system with school closures, teacher

Each of the BCTF workshops uses teachers’ experiences as a foundation to build new ideas and strategies from existing practices.

layoffs, teaching reassignments, increased class sizes, overcrowding of schools, increased use of portables, limited teaching resources, deteriorating curriculum texts, decreasing support for teachers working with students who have special needs or who are ESL, changes to the graduation program, the bumping process, etc. The effects of those daily stressors become evident when

one examines the increased number of teachers on extended medical leave, and when one hears conversations among colleagues related to pending retirements. The common question shared is “How long before you retire?”

The more important question is “How do you keep well enough to do the job of teaching, well enough to avoid becoming an extended-medical-leave statistic, well enough to enter today’s classrooms with peace and joy instead of living in the future vision of retirement, well enough to inspire our youth to become life-long learners?” The answer may be found through the Training Department of the BCTF’s school and teacher leadership development workshops.

During the third week of August, teacher workshop leaders, known as associates, met on the UBC campus for a Summer Associate Institute entitled “Teacher Leadership for Learning.” The purposes were:

1. To create a common focus for teacher leadership by networking with associates from all workshop areas.

Teachers’ tips

Tip number two

Take out the items you can address right now. Deal with them. Never carry back to your room anything that has to end up back in the office or staff room anyway. If it’s a memo from a colleague and the answers are at hand, answer them and put the memo into the sender’s box. You will feel better immediately.

Answer faxes on the same sheet, and fax right back. Don’t worry if the response is not on your school’s letterhead.

Messages that require a phone call response are next. Reply, or leave a message. If possible, answer the question in the message. Recycle that paper. If you miss the person who phoned and it’s important, that person will get back to you. If there’s no answering machine or voice mail, keep the paper and try once more. Then it’s up to the originator of the message to get back to you.



By now you should have little paper left. There may be something that will take some time, like an important BCTF survey. That does not go back into your mailbox. Put it into a file folder that you keep on your desk marked *important things to do*. Work through it later.

With this new column, we hope to give teachers feeling overwhelmed by their ever-increasing work, tools to deal with the new reality of teaching in British Columbia.

We welcome contributions from teachers everywhere. It is an ongoing conversation—kind of a universal staffroom—where we listen to one another and give a hand up or advice when needed.



Paperwork: Mountain or molehill

by Rob Taylor

Computer technology has not lessened the amount of paper we face. In fact, it has increased it. A lot of what we receive might be called fibrous spam. It is an unnecessary and unwanted hindrance. Here are some ways to handle it.

Tip number one

Before you empty your school mailbox, bring over the recycling bin. Discard everything you know doesn’t concern you or doesn’t require a response. Don’t use the garbage can.

Note in your appointment calendar or daytimer when it is due. Don’t mark the day it is actually due, but a couple of days beforehand, so you’re not



stuck with dealing with it when you’d rather be heading home.

Use a large-format calendar with large date spaces for all appointments, interviews, and visits from outside guests. A computer calendar works great—until you have a hard drive crash.

That takes care of all immediate mailbox issues. Check your box *every time* you walk by it. Smile knowingly at colleagues when there is nothing in your mail box, and others are overflowing. Enjoy the fact that there are no paper piles, no messes, and no lost messages for you to worry about.

Rob Taylor teaches at Nesika Elementary School, Williams Lake.

The next “Teachers’ tips” column will tackle your heavy marking load. If you have an idea you want to contribute, or other quick ideas for eliminating paperwork, e-mail them to rtaylor@bctf.ca.

2. To involve the associates in the design and delivery of workshops for Aboriginal education, performance standards, school culture, teacher wellness, teachers on call, social justice, safe and caring schools, and student behaviour/anti-bullying.

3. To strengthen and renew facilitation skills of workshop leaders.

4. To celebrate 25 years of teachers teaching teachers.

Each of the BCTF workshops uses teachers' experiences as a foundation to build new ideas and strategies from existing practices. In the workshops on teacher wellness, for example, stressors in the system are acknowledged; participants are then invited to assess their level of wellness in each area of their lives (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual) relative to their stresses and encouraged to make choices that help them live a healthy balance. In this way, a teacher's worklife is validated, and teachers are supported in the professional choices they make.

One belief system about workshops is that they also provide teachers with skills—skills that will make it easier for them to manage a classroom, teach their curriculum in a more effective manner, be inspired and motivated, be informed, keep current on educational trends, improve communication with colleagues, parents, and management, learn strategies for teaching specialized students, implement strategies for improving student performance, and so on. Even though the workshops are all worthwhile, the issue for me with this belief system is the underlying message that teachers are functioning from a deficit skill base. When I look around at the teaching population in my district, I see teachers who have extensive experience, who are committed, dedicated, and are highly motivated. What interferes with their ability to teach is not their lack of skill, but the stressors that occur daily within and without the educational system. From the perspective of an already overwhelmed teacher, participating in workshops where the expectation is that the business of teaching will be done differently in the classroom is just one more thing on the saturated to-do list.

The time has come to take a different perspective on the way we do the job of teaching, and that perspective is to value the need for personal wellness. When teachers are well and feeling great, they can respond to issues with greater resilience. As you gather in the staffroom to share your stories about the first two months of school and discuss the job of teaching that is still before you, may you do so from a store of well-being that radiates the message "I'm feeling great!" If this is not the case for you, perhaps the time has come to make wellness a priority in your life. The time has come for you to value the significance of the body you have been given; for with proper care, the gifts and talents with which you have been blessed will have greater opportunity to effect change on those around you.

Julia Johnson, a learning resource teacher, Red Bluff School, Quesnel, is a BCTF PD wellness associate.

To book a BCTF workshop, call 1-800-663-9163 (local 1857) or 604-871-1857, or check the web site www.bctf.ca.

Extra-curricular/voluntary activities and WCB compensation

by George Taylor

The BCTF has been successful in appealing WCB decisions denying compensation for members who have been injured while performing extra-curricular/voluntary activities.

The following appeals are examples of successful appeals.

1. On December 4, 2001, a member in Maple Ridge was supervising an intramural lunch-time activity when he injured his knee. WCB denied his claim because it was a voluntary activity and not part of a teacher's work. The BCTF appealed the WCB decision on behalf of the member, and on July 30, 2003, the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) ruled the worker suffered a personal injury that arose out of and in the course of his employment as a teacher. The member will now receive wage-loss and healthcare benefits from WCB and have his sick leave restored as per contract.

2. On October 29, 2002, a member in North Vancouver was supervising a school bike club when he suffered a right inguinal hernia. WCB denied his claim because it was a voluntary activity and not part of a teacher's work. The BCTF appealed the WCB decision on behalf of the member, and on June 12, 2003, the Workers' Compensation Review Division overturned the WCB case manager's decision and ruled that the direct inguinal hernia arose out of and in the course of his employment as a teacher. The member will now receive wage-loss and healthcare benefits from WCB and have his sick leave restored as per contract.

3. On October 24, 2001, a member from Central Okanagan suffered an injury while attending a voluntary workshop after school. WCB denied her claim because it was a voluntary activity and not part of a teacher's work. The BCTF appealed the WCB decision on behalf of the member, and on February 25, 2003, the Workers' Compensation Review Board ruled that the worker suffered a personal injury that arose out of and in the course of her employment as a teacher. The member will now receive wage-loss and healthcare benefits from WCB and have her sick leave restored as per contract.

Appeal arguments

1. Extra-curricular voluntary activity does benefit the employer by offering the students extra school activities.

2. Many of our contracts have similar language: "While voluntarily engaged in extra-curricular activities authorized by the principal, employees shall be considered to be acting in the employ of the employer and, as such, are eligible for coverage by the employer's insurance."

3. Teachers are paid an annual salary; therefore they are being paid during the activity even though the salary is paid over 10 months.

4. We have defined *instructional time* in our contract, but our workday is not defined. Teachers do planning and preparation, report cards, coaching, field trips, and many other activities that are outside the normal instructional day.

5. Under *The School Act*, Regulation 256/89 Duties of Teachers, teachers are always on supervision. Questions panel members asked during an appeal:

- If a teacher failed to help a student who was hurt during the voluntary activity, could, or would, the employer discipline the teacher?

- If a teacher failed to deal with a student who was breaking the rules, could, or would, the employer discipline the teacher?

Because the employer could, or would, discipline a teacher for her or his behaviour while doing an extra-curricular voluntary activity, that establishes that the injury did arise out of and in the course of employment.

6. In some cases, the employers reimburse or pay the member to attend the voluntary activity.

7. Would the activity have taken place if the member had not volunteered?

8. Did the employer approve the activity?

9. Was the member the person in charge of the activity?

10. Was the member covered by the employer's insurance policy during the activity?

11. Employers are starting to support members' appeals regarding extra-curricular/voluntary activities. The employer doesn't want the claim denied because that would be one more reason for teachers to stop doing extra-curricular voluntary activities.

Steps to filing for WCB compensation

1. Inform the principal or vice-principal of the injury or disease you believe is work related. Ensure that the information is documented.

2. Ensure that the appropriate person has filled in the first-aid log at the work site.

3. File a "Workers' Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to Employer." It may be a district-developed form or a WCB Form 6A. The employer is required to file a "Form 7" within three days of receiving a report from a member.

4. At the same time you file the report with your employer, file an "Application for Compensation and Report of Injury or Occupational Disease" Form 6 with WCB. If you are not sure where to get the form or have questions, seek help from the staff rep.

5. Always copy "Form 6A" and "Form 6" for yourself and for the local teachers' association/ union office.

6. Always report your injury or occupational disease to your doctor, and request that the doctor file a "Physicians First Report Form 8" with WCB.

George Taylor is a BCTF health and safety officer.

Yours for the asking

How blind and visually impaired children learn

Connecting to the World is designed to help healthcare professionals, educational professionals, and rehabilitation workers better understand how children who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf/blind learn most effectively.

The video features early-intervention specialists demonstrating 10 principles for working with children who are blind or visually impaired. The discussion guide helps explore the ideas and methods presented in the video and provides a resource list.

Available for \$25 from the CNIB's National Technical Aids Centre, techaidssales@cnib.ca, or 416-486-2500.

Teacher exchange foundation

International Teacher Exchange-Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, is a registered non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating international and inter-provincial teacher exchanges. Destinations include Wales, Spain, France, Denmark, Germany, Scotland, England, Australia, Switzerland, Netherlands, United States, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, and Republic of Ireland. Apply now for the 2004-05 school year.

Contact the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, 705-739-7596, cwiik@ceef.ca, www.ceef.ca.



Road safety program

The Autoplan Broker Road Safety Program has new print announcements in time for the winter-driving months. The images, available free of charge, can be downloaded from www.roadsafety.ca/ via the media resources thumbnail located at the bottom of the web site's homepage.

Autoplan brokers support road-safety speakers for youth in our secondary schools. Their \$2,000 youth scholarships reward 25 youth to attend post-secondary schools. They fund *Way to go!*, a traffic-reduction program aimed at parents of elementary-school-age children, provide road-safety activity books, and organize bike-safety-skills events for children.

For more information, contact Caroline Young, 604-982-4384, or Jasmine Lucky, 604-687-2824.

Let's Go Mozart!

The National Arts Centre is distributing 12,500 copies of its newest teacher resource kit, *Let's Go Mozart!* to 12,500 elementary schools across Canada, and another 5,000 in the United States and Mexico in connection with the orchestra's tour to the United States and Mexico in November 2003.

Let's Go Mozart! includes a double CD recording of the NAC Orchestra with music of Mozart, a 32-page guide on the life, times, and music of Mozart, interviews with international musicians and living composers, suggested activities for teachers, work sheets for students, and an engaging fictional story about Mozart, written especially for the guide by one of Canada's best known children's authors Roch Carrier. If you are an elementary school teacher in Canada, be sure to ask at the office for your school copy; it is also available for download from Artsalive.ca.



Global citizenship

In the *Essential Guide to Global Citizenship*, the Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA) explores global interdependence, encouraging students and teachers to engage in the various aspects of global citizenry to become informed and involved global citizens.

An innovative concept, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Canadian Autoworkers' Union (CAW), the *Essential Guide to Global Citizenship* combines web-based and print curriculum guides—the *Global Learner Series*, aimed at Grades 10-12. The web site: www.vida.ca, takes you on a journey through some prevailing global issues and case studies.



Meet-the-teacher night?

Download parent friendly information from our [web site](http://www.bctf.ca/Parents).



10 New BCTF lesson aids

1 LA ESL219 Teaching Global Unity Through Proverbs, Metaphors, and Storytelling by Vivian Chu 108 p. ©2003. This resource book for ESL and English Language Arts teachers includes reproducible interactive language activities on global issues of peace, war, freedom, justice/injustice, social responsibility, poverty, oppression, racism and hope and universal themes. Also included are thought-provoking discussions featuring international proverbs, collective metaphors, and storytelling focused on illuminating and increasing consciousness of the sacred unity in humanity. ESL teachers can foster intercultural communication and global understanding while facilitating language acquisition. Grades 4 and up. **\$19.95**

2 LA F9309 Explorons le Canada Trudy Mauti and Deborah Sherman 48 p. ©2003. Un cahier d'une quarantaine d'activités traitant de la géographie et de l'économie qui peuvent être reproduites pour la salle de classe. Chaque activité comprend une représentation visuelle, des consignes claires et un court texte de lecture accessible aux élèves du programme francophone ainsi que de l'immersion. 2e à la 5e année (Also available in English LA 9309, \$14.95). **\$15.95**

3 LA 9318 Feeding Frenzy—A Fresh Look at Economics and Technology Through Agriculture by BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, AgAware BC, Open Learning Agency 26-page handbook and 12-minute videocassette ©2002 Host Taheer explores the elements of production, distribution and marketing as they relate to agriculture. From planting to pricing, Taheer's hands-on approach makes the economics of food production something that students can really sink their teeth into. The video takes viewers on a fun, fast-past trip throughout British Columbia to investigate how food is produced. This video has been nominated for Canada's Golden Sheaf Award in the category of Educational/Instructional video. Recommended by the B.C. Ministry of Education. Grade 5. **\$22.95**

4 LA 2227 Seeing the Rainbow by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario 135 p. ©2002. This resource book presents to Canadian educators some of the social and political contexts in which bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender and two-spirited issues in education have been, are being, and need to be addressed. The first section of the book provides detailed information, including how individual teachers and school communities can address homophobia and heterosexism and make schools safer places for all students, staff and parents. Contains lesson plans and activities for students and staff. Powerful stories from Canadian educators, representing diverse geographic regions of the country, make up the second section of the book. The stories offer insight and encouragement. The third and final section, Resources, contains comprehensive lists of teacher resources, organizations addressing BGLTT issues, as well as books and videos for students and teachers. Teachers. **\$18.50**

5 LA 2578 Village Tales by Silk Road Music/Qiu Xia He, 53 p. and 60-min. CD, ©2002. This package includes a 60-min. CD of innovative arrangements of 12 traditional Chinese folk songs arranged for cross-cultural instrumentation and performed in both English and Mandarin by singers from both cultures, and a 53-page study guide. The guide includes notated music for the 12 folk songs with lyrics in English, Mandarin and Pinyin, information on minority peoples in the regions where the songs are from, maps and illustrations of traditional instruments. The CD is the 2002 West Coast Music Award winner for best global album. Village Tales is a locally-developed resource recommended for use with Mandarin, music and social studies classes. K-12 **\$35**

6 LA 3221 The Maquinna Elementary Grade 6 Drum Project. by Colleen Goodrich, Ryan George, Julia Atleo, 16 p. and 20-min. videocassette, © 2002. This package includes print material and a video production of the 2002 Grade 6 class at Maquinna Elementary in Port Alberni, B.C. making 25 drums and performing

songs. The package outlines the budget, material and community resources, drum designs and patterns, drum dedication ceremony and other events for this seven to eight week project. Also included are original songs by Ryan George. Grades 5-7 **\$20**

7 LA 8239 Celebrating Families, Grades K-1 Co-produced by The Critical Thinking Cooperative and BC Ministry of Education, 129 p. ©2002. Eight critical thinking challenges in this unit focus on recognizing and valuing the similarities and differences among families. Throughout the unit, students compile and create materials for inclusion in a family memory box. The activities include creating and presenting clues about family members to other students who try to guess the identity of the mystery family member; deciding which of their family memories are the most powerful; exploring the benefits of different-sized families; and planning key aspects of a culminating event to celebrate with their families what they have learned. Grades K-1. **\$15**

8 LA 2051 Barbie's Trip Around the World: Globalization in the Toy Industry by the Victoria International Development Education Association 30 p. ©2001. This resource booklet looks at the child labour, and the unhealthy and dangerous working conditions which are common place in the international toy industry. This booklet is part of VIDEA's Sweatshops series focussing on the global production line and linking producers and consumers. Grades 8 to adult **\$8.50**

9 LA 9973 Curricular Themes: Adapted Workbook for Children with Special Needs. by Rhonda Dodd and Amy Cocking 111 p. ©2002. This illustrated adapted thematic resource book includes the themes of community, whales, food and dinosaurs, themes that are commonly included in the primary curriculum. This book is written to provide educators, support staff and parents with a ready-to-use resource book that can be applied to a variety of different learning styles. The book provides fun reproducible activities and worksheets that are both developmentally appropriate and curriculum based. The book is an effective way to promote emergent literacy skills, for use with ESL, a resource that saves time, is adaptable, is a way to promote successful inclusion and is a resource that includes activities that can be used with the entire class. All ages. **\$49.95**

10 LA 2066 Immigration in 20th Century Canada, Grade 11 Co-produced by The Critical Thinking Consortium and BC Ministry of Education 139 p. ©2002. Eight critical thinking challenges in this unit explore the historical and contemporary treatment of immigrant groups. After researching the most positive immigration stories in their own family histories, students analyze the uneven reception of immigrant groups from the early Europeans to present-day economic refugees. As well, students examine the racism evidenced in the Komagata Maru incident and in political cartoons in the early 20th century. In studying about current immigration policies, students review hypothetical applicants to determine who to accept as landed immigrants, critique the current points system, establish an immigration quota and send a letter to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, presenting a balanced position on a topical issue. **\$15**

Many curriculum resources and information are available at www.bcalmer.ca/.

For a complete listing of over 1000 BCTF Lesson Aids, consult the catalogue in your school library or the Lesson Aids online catalogue. bctf.ca/LessonAids

To order any of the above lesson aids, endorse 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.

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 bctf.ca/pensions/salary/LT-WithdrawalForm.shtml to the BCTF Income Security Division.



Ten years of rehabilitation

by Elizabeth MacKenzie

The BCTF Teacher Rehabilitation Program, offered by the Salary Indemnity Plan, is entering its tenth year of operation for the teachers of British Columbia.

The 2003 BCTF AGM received a report from the independent firm of AON Consulting. AON surveyed members and presidents in the program and audited the data. There was a high level of satisfaction with services provided and value to individuals.

Major issues raised by the participants, and AON's recommendations on those issues are outlined below:

1. The Teacher Rehabilitation Program is known to the local presidents, the school district officials, and other designates, but it may not be universally known among teachers prior to participation in the program. One member suggested the following: "Give more information to make it known that this program exists. I heard about the program from a friend I was sharing my fears with (she happened to be a staff rep and directed me to get more info)."

Recommendation: Launch a communication campaign on the Teacher Rehabilitation Program and make it known that members may do self-referrals.

2. In the eyes of the disabled teacher, the rehabilitation counsellor plays the lead role, and there is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of the rehabilitation counsellor and the member's perception of the program. Most (86%) of the participants expressed satisfaction with their rehabilitation counsellor. A member writes: "My rehab counsellor was tremendously supportive and provided me with a 'voice' that I was unable to do myself." Another appreciated the support: "My counsellor helped me enormously by listening, encouraging, breaking down daily tasks into small manageable portions. She never expressed doubts about me or my ability to overcome or be well and happily working again."

Recommendation: Secure further improvement on rehab

New and improved retirement planning seminars 2003-04

Our new and improved seminars now end at noon and staff will provide individual counselling following the seminars.

Seminars cover topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, purchase options, pension options, the pension estimators, and retirement information. Bring your personal pension information. Preregistration is not required.

Date	Location
November 29, 2003	Campbell River, Ramada Hotel
November 29, 2003	Trail, BW Terra Nova Hotel
January 10, 2004	Coquitlam, Executive Plaza Hotel
January 17, 2004	Vernon, Prestige Inn/Forster's Restaurant
January 17, 2004	North Vancouver, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
January 31, 2004	Delta, Town and Country Inn
February 7, 2004	Vancouver, Plaza 500 Hotel
February 14, 2004	Surrey, Aston Pacific Conference Centre
February 21, 2004	Kamloops, University College of the Cariboo
February 21, 2004	Nanaimo, Coast Bastion Inn
March 6, 2004	Penticton, Penticton Lakeside Resort
March 6, 2004	Prince George, Inn of the North
March 27, 2004	Richmond, Abercorn Inn
March 27, 2004	Williams Lake, Overlander Hotel
April 3, 2004	Victoria, Holiday Inn
April 3, 2004	Fairmont Hot Springs, Fairmont H.S. Resort

counselling services; continue to run training seminars for all the counsellors with the Teacher Rehabilitation Program; implement and monitor performance measures for the counsellors.

3. A high percentage (78%) of respondents to the survey agreed that the program is effective in returning people to work. Gradual work re-entry and classroom follow-ups were greatly appreciated by those who returned to work. One member responded, "the best thing she (rehabilitation counsellor) did for me was to introduce me to the phased back to work progress. I love teaching and would have been devastated not to be able to return to work, but I had never been able to start full time."

Recommendation: Continue with the existing return-to-work model for teachers.

4. Teachers agreed that the services were appropriate to their needs. One member replied to the survey that, "The rehab counsellor assisted me with all aspects including talking to my AO so I didn't have that additional stress. The equipment I needed to return was in the classroom when I returned and my gradual return plan had already been negotiated." Some members responded that they would like peer support groups to assist in working through their illness; others expressed concern about the confidentiality of the process.

Recommendation: Set up peer support groups and communicate them clearly to members. Ensure confidentiality issues are addressed with the local union and board representatives in the rehabilitation committee meetings.

5. A great majority (82%) of the participants felt it was worth the effort to participate in the program. Presidents who were surveyed also gave strong support for the local involvement. One teacher commented that "I am very pleased to have participated in the BCTF rehab program. I feel the outcome was very good for my students and very good for me." Another wrote, "The BCTF needs to continue this program. Too many teachers need help in

coping with the extreme stress in the school system."

The following quotation from a survey participant is indicative of how the program serves members:

"Without the rehab program, I would most likely not be working and either on LTD permanently or perhaps dead... Rehab encourages me to look for other therapies, supports me when the thought of life with pain seems unbearable, liaisons with all members of my team and most importantly provides a well developed rehab plan, so I am still able to work, which is such a source of joy for me."

The Income Security Committee and the SIP Teacher Rehabilitation Program staff are addressing all recommendations from the AON survey and report, and they will take recommendations to the BCTF Executive Committee.

History

The B.C. Teachers' Federation Salary Indemnity Plan funds a Teacher Rehabilitation Program (TRP) as a component of the disability services provided to teachers throughout the province of British Columbia.

The TRP began in 1993 as a five-local pilot project with 17 districts providing control information. Based on the success of the pilot, the 1999 BCTF AGM passed motions to expand the program across the province.

Under the terms of the program, teachers who are on sick leave and short- or long-term disability, as well as those who need support in dealing with their medical needs, may be referred to a rehabilitation consultant. The rehabilitation service providers working together with BCTF staff and local/district committees will develop and implement a program of medical and work-related rehabilitation assistance for the member.

The TRP, currently offered in 41 districts, covers 85% of the eligible teachers in the province. Another 7 districts are expected to join this year, bringing the coverage to 95% of teachers.

Elizabeth MacKenzie is the BCTF's SIP teacher rehabilitation program co-ordinator.

1 Southeast Kootenay

Walter Blais
Michael McDougall

2 Rocky Mountain

Ruth Ellingson
Raymond Ferguson
Sylvia Hill
Colin Patterson

5 Southeast Kootenay

Maria Altomare
Keith Coates
Heather Farmer
Louis Gentile
Glenn Hildebrandt
Orest Kowalshyn
Robert MacDonald
Carol Mann
Gary Nonis
Florence Reid
Raymond Roy
Gerry Sobie
David Squance
Stan Williamson

8 Kootenay Lake

Jean Boland
Eileen Browne
Valerie Caywood
Allan Collier
Ed Cox
Vi Doerfler
Gail Elder
Elizabeth Farenholtz
Glyn Humphries
Gail Kitt
Marlene Lord
Connie Marrello
Bill McDonnell
Helen Middleditch
Lina Myles
Greg Ottewell
Sandy Pascuzzo
Bruce Paterson
Neill Plotnikoff
Don Robertson
Mary Russill
Janet Sommerville
Milt Stanley
Bridgette Vukusic
Grace Wilson

10 Arrow Lakes

Jean Bassett
Jill Faulks
Rose Jones
Robert Moyer
19 Revelstoke
Eve Fisher
Paul Hills
Anthea Hughes
John Macko
Pat Sieber

20 Kootenay-Columbia

John Bailey
Mary Berukoff
Margaret Crawford
Linda Dawson
Gillian Harrison
Art MacNeil
Bill Sang
Frank Santesso
Jill Shannon
Bonnie Szekely
22 Vernon
Cheryl Altwasser
Grant Armstrong
Patrick Bonin
Carole Bulford
Susan Burrows
Mary Carr
John Hanson
Jennifer McDonell
David Robertson
Carolynn Strilchuk
William Vick
Raymond Worley
Grace Zubyk

23 Central Okanagan

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Frances Bradshaw
Denise Brownlee
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David Cox
Andrew Daley
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Gordon Detta
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Ronald Fazackerley
Peter Forster
Lorina Froese
Margaret Giroux
David Gunderson
Virginia Hallonquist
Sharon Harris
Harry Hollier
James Holtz
Wayne Margerison
Emil Nagy
Joanne Philips
Marguerite Scrimger
Terry Taylor
Loretta Thom
Ordie Towhey
Elizabeth Zaseybida
27 Cariboo-Chilcotin
Barrie Bolton
Eileen Corbin
Lillian Dalles
Dennis Ebbeson
Mary Ellison

Geraldine Farquharson
Bonita Forsyth
Karin Graham
Sandra Hawkins
Bernard Kromhout
Patricia Murphy
Robert Preston
Peter Smith
William Turkel
Mary Turner
Liselotte Weber
Janet Whalley
Cynthia Wilson
28 Quesnel
Katherine Carlson
Daniel Dobrinsky
Heather Dobrinsky
Liisa Reinitz
William Trueman
Marilyn Wells
33 Chilliwack
Jerry Coffman
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Lenora Esau
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Bonnie Giesbrecht
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34 Abbotsford
Patricia Corbett
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Morley Morgan
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Sam Vandermeulen
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Elizabeth Boardman
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Marilyn Bulmer
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Bruni Goodson
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Brent Watson
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Barbara Assonitis
Frank Barazzuol
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Glyn Beard
Joel Bellas
Heather Bolton
Johan Borgen
James Brown
Ian Burton
John Campbell
Beverley Clarke
Sylvia Cole
Thomas Collins
Kathryn Cook
Bruce Cox
Yaya De Andrade
Maira Doherty
David Dougall
Patricia Drake
Maureen Erwin
Dianne Falkner
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Perry Garraway
John Gooding
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Ted Keating
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Mary Low
Wendy Low
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Larry Wright
Heather Yuen
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Karl Jensen
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Wendy Simmonds
Heather Sjoquist
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Irene Hahn
Wayne Hanson
Michael Leahy
Heather Milligan
Hanna Verkerk-English
48 Howe Sound
Barbara Cromack
Carol Cheal
Colleen Polowich
Dave Cromack
Dawn Milne
Dianne Dunn
Eleanor Bowcock
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Don Caskey
Blake Frisby
Lynda Maclean
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Beatrice Rakochy
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52 Prince Rupert
Angus MacDonald
Louisa Sanchez
Margaret Travis
53 Okanagan Similkameen
Mal Bearman
Bev Bygdnes

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David Dickinson
Dennis Courtliff
Bridget Gillespie
Donna Steeves
Kathy Johnston
Lorne Thompson
Margaret Hikisch
Wes Giesbrecht
57 Prince George
Shirley Austin
Jan Beliveau
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Betty Burbee
David Crampton
Colleen Crossfield
Elizabeth DeVore
Renate Dorschner
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Agnes Dunn
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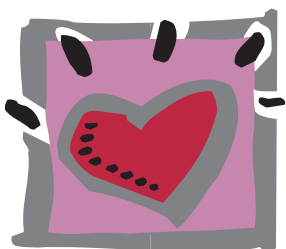
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Heart-healthy study



Four hundred more volunteers are needed for a cardiovascular-health research project by Fraser Health and Simon Fraser University.

The project will focus on people aged 45-64. Those in the treatment group, will receive report cards and telephone-based lifestyle counselling to provide individual recommendations addressing specific biomedical and lifestyle risk

factors. The study does NOT require any travel, and it is NOT a drug trial.

The control group will receive usual care from family doctors. People with history of heart attack, stroke, cardiovascular disease, or diabetes are candidates for the study. Others with at least two risk factors (smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol) may also be eligible.

The study is limited to Fraser Health residents who live between Burnaby and Boston Bar and south to the U.S. border. If you would like to determine if you (or a friend or family member) are eligible for the study, please call 604-412-6492, or call collect if you are long distance. You can also follow the web links at www.harbour.sfu.ca/gero under "Volunteers Needed."

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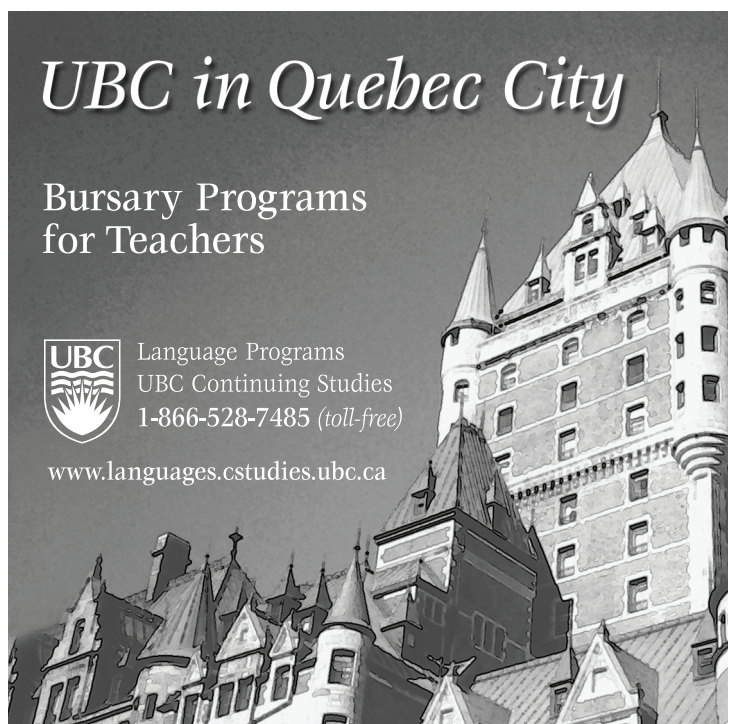
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Teachers speak up for public education

I am proud to be a teacher because...

of the spark of learning that I bring to my students' eyes, the pride that I'm able to help them develop in their abilities and achievements, the respect that is nurtured between teachers, students, administrators, and parents as well as the knowledge that I have one of the most important and terrific jobs in the world!

...I love introducing children to the world of music. It is rewarding to have a child who can't play an instrument or read music learn how to do so.

I work very hard to improve opportunities for young adults. Because I authentically care and work hard for my students, they, in turn, respond by enthusiastically participating in their own learning. I am *honoured* to teach them.

I believe my skills help students learn about a subject I am passionate about. I have genuine, caring relationships with kids from all different backgrounds.

- I love kids.
- Teaching is creative, intellectual, etc.
- I learn each day from my students and the research projects.
- Teaching is not a sedentary job.

As a teacher-librarian, I get to open students' hearts and minds to the joys of reading and the excitement of discovering how to find answers to their ever-present questions.

I can make a positive difference to my students lives and their learning. Through guidance and encouragement my students gain confidence and skills that enhance their lives.

I feel I can make a positive difference in students' lives.

What I do is important. I am helping kids grow into adults. I am preparing them for the future. I am shaping children's lives.

I have had the privilege of being one of the first teachers in the public education of a child, as I am a primary teacher. I have always tried to make each child's experience in my class a positive one. It makes me proud when children I have taught are excited and happy to see me.

I am able to make a difference in young people's lives. I feel I am a great leader and role model. Just being a part of a school community makes me proud. Sadly, as a TOC, I am not working in a school this year. I feel very disconnected from the system

Changes my students have experienced in the last two years...

- larger class sizes
- less ESL, LAC counselling, and behavioural assistance support
- less funding for resources (thus more time is spent copying material off the board, money and paper wasted on photocopies, and time spent scrounging age- and level-appropriate units for themes to fit the curricula).

having teachers become more and more frustrated with their jobs. Also, having teachers becoming more depressed about their jobs and losing the excitement they had when they had more job security.

Class sizes are larger, and there is less time for me to help individual students. Young people have been discouraged about the lack of respect/support the public and government has shown for teachers, so they are not entering the profession. There are not enough math specialists to provide the best support for students.

Bigger classes or classes that are cut completely because of inadequate sign up.

- cuts to everything
- great books out there but no money to buy them
- demoralization of all concerned.

They don't see me or get to use the library under my guidance nearly as often. We went from 21 blocks of teacher-librarian time to 12 last year. We are up to 14 blocks this year. That really means a paltry two days out of five to serve every student and staff member in the school.

Feeling proud and confident that with their best effort they can accomplish any reasonable goal they set their mind to.

In spite of the fact that we are an inner-city school, we are seeing larger classes and cuts in special education (SEA and learning support time).

Larger class sizes, less extra-curricular, and more students with special needs in each room. I am expecting there to be ramifications at school once people have their financial assistance reduced in April.

Lack of support from learning assistance, district counsellors, speech pathologists. These people are always/often in meetings or doing ministry paper work, and this takes away from direct help to the students.

- larger class sizes
- lack of funding

I would really like to tell Education Minister Christy Clark...

1. to scrap Bill 51—the whole idea is going to cause havoc within our school systems and communities.
2. Reinstate our collective agreement. (How about trying to teach a class of 32 students with a few kids with special needs thrown in, all by yourself, for five minutes? I strongly encourage you, Ms Clark, to drop in on a *variety* of public schools and try that! You might have a greater appreciation and understanding of what we do day to day!)

Sophie Aerts, Vancouver

We had (we can have again) the best education system in the world. What you and the Liberal government have done has turned the clock back 30 years. Why are you scared of us? Are we the enemy?

John Ashbridge, Fernie

...to please forget about the few bad experiences you may have had as a student. I welcome you to spend a week with me and see just what professionals most of us are. Please respect us; we know what we are talking about. We have been in schools all our lives. We choose to teach.

Lorraine Baron, Central Okanagan

Why don't you try walking in our shoes for awhile. You could live by the adage that if you show no trust or respect, you'll get no trust or respect.

Jennifer Blake, Coquitlam

- Get real!
- Education is the biggest equalizer of human beings—it is a right under the Canadian constitution.

Almas Godfrey, Vancouver

- Look to the Alberta Report on education and its call for restored funding.
- Look to the recent Ontario election results. Voters were fed up with the battlefield public education had become under eight years of “common sense” divide-and-conquer techniques.
- End the *politics of division* you have brought to our system. Treat teachers, students, parents, and boards of trustees with respect. These children are our future. They deserve a fully funded, full-service system, not cutbacks and closures.

Sandy Goldman, Richmond

I wish I had more time to spend with every student. The large class sizes make it very difficult to work with, assist, and really get to know each student's needs and skills. Please give your head a shake and try to see that low student/teacher ratios are well worth fighting for!

Rachel Liddell, Victoria

We need more library and SEA time desperately! Teachers are becoming ill because of workload, kids are not getting the time they deserve, and behaviour problems are surfacing as a result of student frustrations. Our literacy program is suffering because of cuts in library time; we are unable to schedule kids into guided reading groups in the efficient manner we previously used. Since the focus of the ministry and our school is to improve literacy and have students feeling positive about themselves, it seems to me that it would be in our best interests to address some of these problems. We need more teachers!

Ruth Margison, Surrey

Support your teachers! I have never felt so alone in my entire career. Work with teachers and not against them. I feel this is a witch hunt and the government is out to get to me; it's like you are just waiting for me to make a mistake so you can get rid of me.

Kelly McKinney, Peace River

I have taught for 25 years and recently I was harassed verbally by a parent I had never met. He has now been barred from coming near me. I felt unsafe at work and had to take time off. I worry that you are encouraging parents to “bully” teachers and then rationalize this behaviour by saying “We are doing it for our kids.”

Joanne Nokleby, Chilliwack

I challenge you to be a teacher for one month. I hope that would allow you to see what it is like in a school where there are large class sizes, and the change in our youth today. It is not as easy as you think! There is a lot of planning and adapting for students' needs.

Cassandra Smith, Nanaimo/Ladysmith

You can speak up for public education by going to www.bctf.ca/SpeakUp.html