

Teacher

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PETER OWENS PHOTO

Surrey Teachers' Association members Peter Ellis, John Wadge (STA president), and Kerry Richardson were among the hundreds of teachers who worked to ensure that public education was an issue in the Surrey by-election. The local put up 20 billboards around the community, contacted every teacher living in the community, printed special bulletins for its members, had a brochure mailed to every household, organized workers in the riding, and endorsed NDP candidate Jagrup Brar. The results: Jagrup Brar, NDP—53.5%; Mary Polak, Liberal—33.4%; Adriane Carr, Green—8.4%; David James Evans, Conservative—2.2%; Shirley Ann Abraham, Reform—2%; Joe Pal, Independent—0.5%.

by Peter Owens

In late September, the B.C. Liberals announced that October 28, 2004, would be the date of the by-election in Surrey, to fill the seat vacated when Liberal MLA Gulmar Cheema stepped down to run, unsuccessfully, in the federal election. During the subsequent 28 days, the government announced more than half a billion dollars in spending projects. (See "539 million in promises," page 3.)

The strategy to secure a commitment to public education through the provincial election adopted by the 2004 BCTF Annual General Meeting called for teachers to participate in the upcoming provincial election to ensure that public education is protected and properly funded. Teacher locals decide the best way to protect public education in their ridings. Some locals will run non-partisan campaigns to make public education a vote-deciding issue in the campaign. Other locals will endorse specific candidates in the election.

Surrey teachers knew in May 2004 that there would be a by-election within six months, but they had no idea when it would be called. The Surrey Teachers' Association decided that it would endorse Jagrup Brar, the NDP candidate in the by-election, and began work immediately in case the by-

election was called over the summer.

During the campaign, the Liberals did not want to talk about their record of cuts to education. They wanted to talk about the schools that were built in Surrey, without mentioning that they had been built by the NDP. The Liberals did not want to talk about the fact that there are 1,844 more students in Surrey and 133 fewer teachers

The Liberals did not want to talk about larger classes, closed libraries, lack of textbooks, reduced services for students with special needs, or the unsafe conditions in oversized shop classes.

since they came to power. They wanted to talk about the 77 teachers who were hired, without mentioning that they were replacements for retirees and teachers leaving.

The Liberals did not want to talk about larger classes, closed libraries, lack of textbooks, reduced services for students with special needs, or the unsafe conditions in oversized shop

classes. Instead, they wanted to talk about twinning the Port Mann Bridge.

The STA contacted all the teachers who live in the riding. It called on teachers to elect an MLA supportive of public education. Mary Polak, a school trustee and the Liberal candidate, was a trustee in the forefront of banning three children's books in 1997. She also claimed that there was "fluff" in the system as the Liberals started cutting the education budget in 2002.

Teachers helped canvass the riding. The STA published a special bulletin called *Speak Up* to keep its members informed about the election. STA members were interviewed in the 17 schools in the riding to find out what was happening to the riding's students and schools. Their stories were recounted and circulated, some in a pamphlet delivered to each household. Radio ads ran on the Punjabi-language stations. The STA put up 20 billboards around the riding with the message "2,500 fewer teachers, 113 schools closed. Our students. Your kids. Worth speaking out for. Send Gordon Campbell a strong message."

Teachers from other locals worked alongside STA members, members of community organizations, and members of other unions to remind the voters of the Liberals' record. Teachers

also worked on election day, getting the vote out and serving as scrutineers at the polling stations.

On October 28, 2004, the people of Panorama Ridge overwhelmingly elected Jagrup Brar to represent the riding in Victoria. Brar took 53.5% of the vote (The Liberals had taken 60% in the 2001 election). Brar said the results are a warning to Campbell and the Liberals that "three-and-a-half years of mismanagement, scandals, cuts, and broken promises have come home to roost in one of their strongest ridings."

Brar was born and raised in India. His parents never had the opportunity to get an education, so young Jagrup saw education as his passport to a better life. Brar has two masters degrees. He is committed to a strong public education system that allows all children to achieve their potential.

Education became a major issue in the campaign, as witnessed by two front-page articles in *The Vancouver Sun* about teacher involvement in the electoral process. There is absolutely no doubt: Teachers made a difference in the campaign.

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

President's message



Jinny Sims

Over the last few months, I have had the pleasure of meeting teachers in their schools and locals across this province. In every community I visit, teachers talk about their day-to-day experiences.

Education underfunding has led to 2,500 fewer teachers—so teachers are facing class-size/class-composition problems, less support for students with special needs, and less support in learning assistance and counselling. At the same time as the government makes pronouncements on literacy, we have seen a 25% reduction in teacher-librarians.

The accountability mantra, with its focus on very narrow measures of achievement, and the new teacher-supervision crusade by principals pose real threats to our profession.

Teacher supervision attempts to control not only what we teach but also how we teach. Teachers feel the disconnect between what we know to be best practice and these attempts to de-professionalize teaching.

We know that B.C. has the best-trained teachers in the world. Despite all the challenges, teachers are doing the very best they can under very difficult circumstances.

During these times, it is important that we find ways to support one another and to look after ourselves. While I was visiting Decker Lake Elementary School, in Burns Lake, teachers in the staffroom were sharing their stories. In the middle of the discussion on job intensification and the growing pressures, a card arrived for one of the teachers. She opened it and found a thank-you card from one of her students, and we had tears of joy.

This speaks to the passion we feel. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your colleagues.

Share your stories And thank you for the amazing job you do.

Teacher-librarians essential

Randi Louise Hermans' article, "The School Library," in your September issue, is like the broken record I heard as school-librarian for most of my career. "They're still fighting the good fight," I commented to my husband. When, oh when, are we going to show some respect to librarians in schools? They lend something special to children, but few on staff or in the ministry appreciate it. Some of my own members thought all I did all day was play with books and kick kids out of the library. In spite of invitations, few took advantage of working with the librarian in a team setting. I was often sent rafts of misbehaving children to babysit or made to take prep for other teachers with no prep time for myself. Finally, at the school I was in before my retirement, the library was turned into a classroom. Gone were the pretty invitations to children to come and read new books, gone were the library clubs, gone were the AV fun times at recess and noon, gone were the skills classes and storytimes that the pupils loved. Librarians come before basketballs on the cutback list.

My heart goes out to all the librarians who are carrying on the good fight. Keep it up, folks; you're the technicolour, the wide screen, the Disneyland of the school. You can give what no one else can.

Murrie Redman
School-librarian 1971 to 1990

Hermans' article on school libraries reminded me how essential the library and the resident teacher-librarian have been during my teaching career. Teaching requires support from many areas, and I strongly feel the school library is a key area of that support.

As a lifelong reader myself, I first encourage traditional book borrowing. The teacher-librarian facilitates this with a September welcome for the entire class, an ongoing table of new books, an open door policy. Authors are celebrated in the library; the Dewey Decimal system and therefore access to research is taught; fiction and non-fiction are regularly showcased. This is all achieved through a professional and engaged teacher-librarian.

Research calls upon many skills: reading, notetaking, categorizing, bibliography constructing, oral presentation. The library provides access to all those skills. It is the best location in which to learn the how-to of research.

What can replace the joy of discovering a great novel from the library shelves? I still remember reading with such enjoyment Walter Farley's *The Black Stallion* in Grade 5. The joy of reading has followed me for 35+ years. And that gift came directly from my school library.

Hermans' championing of the library and its teacher-librarian champions education. Learning, teaching, and the library all complement one another.

James Harcott
Vancouver

Accountants disagree with ministry's claims: Per-pupil spending decreased by 3.5%

The recent dustup between Education Minister Tom Christensen and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of B.C. about the decline of public school student funding over the past three years, is a classic example of the emperor's new clothes fable taking on a naked truth.

The accountants, in their 118-page report entitled "British Columbia Check Up 2004," caused a major kafuffle in Victoria by revealing that in the past three years, and even with declining enrolment, per-pupil funding in B.C. schools had dropped 3.5%, thereby undermining one of the Liberals' repeated claims that they had increased funding for public schools since coming to power, in 2001.

Christensen even called for a recalculation of the numbers by the accountants' institute in the legislature. This was a major setback from an unexpected hard-to-dispute source, not from the usual agitators: parents, teachers, and trustees.

As a publicly elected trustee in my third year in office, I have watched two successive highly competent secretary-treasurers at the Vancouver School Board table several reports, documenting in astonishing detail, the loss of over \$100 million in programs and services (over a decade) to Vancouver schools. The budget shaving has accelerated dramatically under the Campbell government.

The provincial government's claim that it is adequately funding our elementary and secondary schools is flatly disputed by the massive increase in parents' undertaking fundraising events through casinos, seasonal fairs, book sales, chocolate-bar drives, raffles, and Christmas-card and gift-wrapping events, not to mention the controversial levies by some schools on individual parents.

To stem the escalation of these local events, which raise funds for an expanding number of basic resources including textbooks and classroom supplies, the provincial government can and should allocate the \$300 million+ back into education.

Noel Herron

Vancouver

Connected magazine is "unconnected"

Letter to BC College of Teachers (October 15, 2004).

Please find enclosed returned copies of your BC College of Teachers' magazine, *Connected*. My wife and I both find this magazine to be wasteful and insulting. Several reasons for these opinions are listed below.

It is full of multiple colours and glossy photos on expensive, thick,

non-recycled paper. Our fees are used to produce this expensive magazine that we do not want and did not request. Those fees have been increased by you, without member input, in part to pay for this magazine.

The magazine is largely a PR exercise for the college rather than for the teaching profession.

We object to much of the advertising in the magazine, which is for private educational institutes and commercial interests. We believe in a public education system. Expensive tourism advertisements do not belong in a magazine we are forced to pay for.

Education-related articles in *Connected* largely duplicate issues covered in the BCTF's news-magazine, *Teacher*.

By publishing discipline case summaries in your magazine, you devalue the whole teaching profession. The public, reading this PR exercise called "Connected," is likely to make the connection or get the impression that there is a large, significant proportion of the teaching profession who are child molesters, fundraising thieves, etc.

Therefore, we'd not only like to stop receiving the magazine personally, we'd like to see it entirely discontinued. How about surveying members to find out if the majority feel as we do?

Des Belton and Dawn Germyn
Aiyash

Environmental education critical

Thank you, David Chudnovsky, for pointing out that teachers have a critical role to play in ensuring that environmental education is addressed in the classroom (*Teacher*, October 2004, "Environmental Record of BC Liberals").

Given that students will indeed inherit the world (however we manage or botch it), we all need to collectively educate young people that our actions and behaviours today will make a world of difference tomorrow. And, more important, we need to get youth involved in making change for the better. But teachers can't do the job alone. Community leaders from government, industry, and NGOs must provide teachers with financial or in-kind support, learning resources, and knowledge-building workshops to make that happen. It clearly involves much more than mailing a teacher a video or sponsoring an industry tour of a worksite, or embedding environmental learning outcomes in curriculum. Teachers tell us they need ongoing access to professionals in the environmental sector who can visit classrooms, mentor students who want to start a stewardship project such as a stream cleanup, and provide balanced learning resources and workshops that don't cost the earth.

FORED BC (our non-profit environmental education organization) provides many complimentary lesson plans that are downloadable from our web site www.landscapesmag.com on

subjects from endangered species to water conservation that complement curriculum. We also provide resource packages distributed through BCTF Lesson Aids. Our international award-winning magazine, *Landscapes*—free to teachers—also strives to enhance environmental knowledge, inspire student stewardship, and build education partnerships.

As Chudnovsky noted, we all depend on clean air and water. By providing opportunities for students to learn about these important environmental-citizenship and social-responsibility issues and about the many stakeholder viewpoints and to prepare for their eventual decision-making responsibilities, teachers and other education partners are taking higher ground.

For some great examples of successful, youth-led environmental initiatives with many donors, teacher, and community support, visit www.spiritbearyouth.org or www.dreamnow.ca.

Cheryl Ziola

President, FORED BC

Exchange teaching

The article in October 2004 issue of *Teacher* by Bonnie Sutherland on her exchange teaching experience, while entertaining, does not in any way reflect the wonderful exchange teaching experiences of the thousands of teachers who have participated in exchange teaching in British Columbia over the past 80 years.

As with any teaching experience, whether here or abroad, the situations and experiences are rich, rewarding, frustrating, and fascinating. I'm certain most teachers can look at their own teaching experiences here or in a neighbouring school and find many differences and similarities. The same can be said about the exchange Teaching experience.

Presently there are 47 exchange teachers here in Canada from over eight different countries. Each one of these teachers will have some ups and downs in their days, as we all do. For Sutherland to base her entire article on the frustrations, interruptions, and social concerns, gives a totally biased view of the exchange teaching experience.

continued on page 3

BCTF winter holiday closure

The BCTF office will be closed at noon on December 24, 2004, and will reopen at 8:15 a.m. on January 4, 2005.

Deadline for AGM resolutions

The deadline for submission AGM resolutions is December 15, 2004, 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*.

Articles contained herein reflect the view of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.

The B.C. Teachers' Federation does not endorse or promote any products or services presented in the advertising sections of the newsmagazine.

All advertisements will be reviewed and approved by the BCTF. They must reflect BCTF policy and be politically, environmentally, and professionally appropriate.

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#2 October 2004

#3 Nov./Dec. 2004

#4 Jan./Feb. 2005

#5 March 2005

#6 April 2005

#7 May/June 2005

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\$539 million in promises

The provincial government made these funding announcements following the announcement of the date for the Surrey by-election.

Oct. 1: \$82,000 for post-fire weed control to protect Okanagan parks

Oct. 5: World Teachers' Day \$200,000 to administrators to supervise teachers and \$425,000 for online courses and literacy initiatives

Oct. 6: \$8 million to create B.C. trust for public lands

Oct. 6: \$15 million creates new opportunities for First Nations

Oct. 6: \$135 million northern development initiative introduced

Oct. 7: \$6 million calf program eases BSE pressure on markets

Oct. 12: \$1.2 million promotes industry training to secondary students

Oct. 15: \$4 million over two years to protect and enhance wildlife and fisheries habitats linked to highway projects

Oct. 19: Federal and provincial governments provide \$418,500 to fund business services society

Oct. 20: Province reduces sales tax—\$270 million

Oct. 21: \$7.5 million to enhance SFU's Segal School

Oct. 21: \$800,000 to support caribou recovery

Oct. 22: \$15 million scholarship program

Oct. 22: Vancouver to receive \$10.2 million in traffic-fine revenue

Oct. 22: Local governments receive 100% of traffic fine revenues—over \$31 million

Oct. 24: \$2 million over two years for cycling program

Oct. 26: \$33 million to improve childcare access, flexibility

The government was also spending taxpayers' money on television ads and full-page ads in newspapers telling British Columbians that B.C. is the best place in the world to live and work.

READERS WRITE continued

Yes, the systems abroad are different than here. If you wanted things to be the same, then stay at home. Exchange teaching for thousands of B.C. teachers has been wonderful, exciting, and the very best professional development available to teachers.

As president of the B.C. Exchange Teachers' Association, I constantly receive letters, e-mails, and phone calls from past and present exchange teachers extolling the wonderful adventure that exchange teaching has brought to their lives. Many experience some form of culture shock and some growing pains adjusting to a new educational system. However, the final outcome for all the exchange teachers is that they had a wonderful life-altering year teaching in another country.

Sutherland chose to write about the hectic nature of a teaching assignment while on exchange teaching in Australia. I'm certain she, like every other exchange teacher, experienced many more positive, rewarding adventures.

General provincial election May 17, 2005

A new voting system? It's as easy as 1, 2, 3

by Susanna Haas

The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform recently recommended that British Columbians adopt a new voting system—the Single Transferable Vote (STV) process that's often called "as easy as 1, 2, 3." Now the decision is up to the voters of B.C., who will cast ballots on STV in a referendum in the next provincial election, on May 17, 2005.

Educators can now bring this unique moment in Canadian history into the classroom. Capture this opportunity to teach about political and electoral systems, active citizenship, voting, and critical-thinking skills.

Students and educators can participate in the process by learning, developing opinions, and getting involved in the debate.

Learn

A package for teaching about the citizens' assembly has been recently published at www.citizensassembly.bc.ca.

"Assessing Electoral Systems: Opportunities for political education and active citizenship" is written by Paula Waatainen, a teacher at Rockridge Secondary School, in West Vancouver, who held a model assembly at her school last spring.

The citizens' assembly web site is a fabulous resource for educators. Available at www.citizensassembly.bc.ca are:

- Fact sheets about the recommended system and other electoral system concepts
- Learning resources: readings and presentations provided to assembly members
- Video and audio recordings of assembly meetings
- Links to classroom activities and new-media teaching tools.

Prescribed learning outcomes are met brilliantly through addressing the citizens' assembly in Grade 11 classes as well as for classes in Grades 5 and 8-12.

Develop opinions

Hold a model assembly in your school using the Assessing Electoral Systems guide. Or invite a member of the citizens' assembly to speak to your class by contacting the assembly office at info@citizensassembly.bc.ca or 1-866-667-1232. Also, news reports on the citizens' assembly are effective *skills and processes* teaching tools.

Get involved

Attend as a class, or organize public discussions in the months leading up to the referendum. And encourage your senior students and colleagues to *vote* in the May 2005 referendum!

The recommendation

After almost 10 months of study, research, and debate, plus 50 public hearings and 1,603 written submissions from the public, citizens' assembly members overwhelmingly chose a made-in-B.C. proportional STV system as their recommendation

to the people.

The provincial government says that if voters approve the STV model in May, it will introduce legislation so that the new system can go into effect for the 2009 election.

The STV model was custom-built by members to meet the needs of B.C. and to address three overriding values: local representation, voter choice, and increased "proportionality"—the concept that each party's share of seats in the house should reflect its share of the popular vote.

The voter using STV would see two key changes from the current system:

- First, instead of writing on the ballot a single X for a single candidate, the voter would be able to rank candidates (1, 2, 3, and so on) according to the voter's personal preferences.

The voter would mark preferences for as many or as few candidates on the ballot as the voter wishes. The voter thus can cast preferential votes for candidates of more than one party, for independents and minorities, or all for the same party. After the polls close, the

counting system gives the proper weighting to the "1, 2, 3, etc." preferences expressed by the voters, ensuring that the candidates with the highest preferences are elected.

- Second, B.C.'s constituencies would no longer be single-MLA electoral districts as now. There would be geographically larger ridings, each with more than one MLA. The legislature would remain at 79 seats, though, so the ratio of MLAs to population would be the same as now. This system would not result in any reduction in the number of MLAs representing rural areas.

STV in various formats is used in Ireland, Malta, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, and a number of municipalities. Ireland has had STV for most of the last 100 years.

The current first past-the-post system (technically called the single-member-plurality system, or SMP) was described by members as a familiar and understandable model that has served B.C. well, produced stable majority governments, and elected local MLAs who could represent local issues and concerns.

One member said, "I want to give to the voters of B.C. the same privilege that we have been given as members of the assembly, and that is to decide their electoral system for themselves." The assembly will draft and approve the wording of the referendum question to appear on the May 17 ballot.

The assembly will produce its final report by December 15, detailing and explaining the reasons for and implications of its recommendation. Then the assembly and its office will disband.

Susanna Haas is the project co-ordinator for the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.



Paula Waatainen holds a model assembly at her school, Rockridge Secondary School, West Vancouver, using the teaching resource she developed: "Assessing Electoral Systems: Opportunities for political education and active citizenship"

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

Good discipline is necessary to obtain the best results in classroom procedure. Discipline is a matter of proper relationships between teacher and class. It is a question of all living together in harmony and working steadily toward the objectives of school education. All requirements and decisions must be reasonable and fair; i.e., in the interests of the pupils. Fairness does not mean treating all children alike. For example, the sensitive child needs different treatment from the self-confident one. Discipline is not keeping order; it is effective leadership. The efficient teacher is not a dictator but the leader of a social group.

— The BC Teacher, Nov. 1934

50 years ago

Unless the peoples of the earth succeed in building a world government within the next decade or so, civilization is very probably doomed. The imperative need for world citizenship has been thrust upon us by the inexorable course of

events, without any regard for our acceptance of it or our qualifications for it. That we are not now qualified for world citizenship is shown by the fact that we are at present drifting toward atomic warfare faster than toward world government. To say that the blame for our present drift toward war lies with some other country, such as Russia, is to ignore the axiom that it takes two sides to make a quarrel.

— The BC Teacher, Dec. 1954

30 years ago

What's in this term? my cynical teacher friend inquired. "I remember away back 12 to 14 years ago when it was Bruner, the structure of the discipline, and the teaching of it in an intellectually honest manner. About 10 years ago, it was programmed learning—or was it programmed instruction? Then, about 8 years ago, it was team teaching—or was it cooperative, or parallel teaching? After that, things really speeded up, and we had open areas, and next it was outdoor education and environmental education—I

know that they were different, though I can't quite remember how. Then we had multi-disciplinary studies and interdisciplinary studies—but I never knew what the difference was. Last term it was open classroom, or family grouping, or multigrade grouping."

— The BC Teacher, Nov./Dec. 1974

10 years ago

We have long held the conviction that the empowerment of teachers through technology would result in greater learning opportunities for students. Unfortunately, in most districts technology for students has preceded technology for teachers. This has slowed the implementation and appreciation of these tools in our nation's schools. Teachers will spend time learning computer software and the use of other technology only when they are convinced it will make a difference to them and to their students.

— Teacher, Nov./Dec. 1994

Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich

What does the ministry mean by class size?



by Mavis Lowry

When the Ministry of Education releases information about class size it is not talking about teachers in actual classrooms with real students. Each year, each school is asked to complete Ministry Form 1601. From that information, class sizes are "calculated." *Calculated* is the key word. Class sizes are not reported, nor are they actually known by the ministry. They are calculated.

Since September 2002, the Ministry of Education is no longer interested in collecting your actual class sizes. The ministry cannot tell anyone how many identified students with special needs are in classrooms today, how many classes are excessively large, how many split classes there are in your district. The ministry cannot tell anyone: media, parents, or members of the public, ministers of education in other provinces—how many Grade 1

classes at the new legislated limit of 24 children. It doesn't know.

Under the Liberal government, provisions on class size were stripped from teachers' collective agreements. When the courts ruled that the stripping should not have taken place the way it did, government simply passed another law to override the court decision and make the stripping legal.

But that was not enough. Government decided it no longer needed to know the actual class sizes in place. A simple revision was made to Form 1601, which had collected elementary class sizes up to 2001. Schools would no longer identify the size of each elementary class on that form. The number of students in each class, the grade levels of the students in each class, and how many students were identified in the various special-needs funding categories, would no longer be reported by schools to their districts for Ministry of Education data collection.

When the Ministry of Education reports the average class size for elementary schools in your district, it is simply dividing the number of elementary divisions in the district into the number of elementary students. That does not tell us the real conditions in actual classrooms.

We don't know

Here are some sample questions the ministry would have to answer with "We don't know":

- How many regular primary class sizes in B.C. include three or more identified children with special needs?
- How many elementary classes in B.C. enroll more than 30 children?
- How many elementary split classes in B.C. have more than three grades in one classroom?

My guess is that government would say this is a fine state of affairs since it is the school district's responsibility to determine and report on class sizes at the local level, should it wish to. Others say, No, it is not a fine state of affairs. The provincial government provides all the funding to operate our schools. Government has removed school districts' right to raise tax revenue for schools. Government should take responsibility, then, for at least knowing about the level of service provided to students with the funds it allocates. Government is accountable for the conditions in the schools that it funds. Why would it not want to even know what those conditions are? That makes no sense.

It is like saying, as a parent, I will provide \$50 a month for my child's food. I will not be interested in, nor will I determine, what my kids buy and eat with that money. It will be the child's job to decide what to buy and eat. I don't want to know nor see the results of a shopping trip.

The Ministry of Education and

this provincial government will say it is student outcomes it wishes to be accountable for and it is interested in. If the FSA scores and Grade 12 exam marks are fine, the class sizes must be fine or don't matter. That is like my weighing my kids and determining I must have given them enough money for food since they seem to be gaining weight.

The Liberals removed class-size provisions from collective agreements. It only makes sense that the Ministry of Education determine what changes in

classrooms have resulted. What will that legislation mean to children? How are children being served? What kind of government would say, "We are making this profound change in the education system, in how schools are organized, but we don't want to know what the results are"? Does that make any sense? Not to me, especially for a government that promised to be open and accountable.

Mavis Lowry is an assistant director in the BCTF's Field Services Division.

Class-size reduction cited as top spending priority in education: Public-opinion poll

According to a recent Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) commissioned poll, most Canadians believe that reducing class sizes should be the number-one spending priority in education. Some 76% of those surveyed agreed that class sizes in public schools are too large.

The 2004 poll shows that 26% selected class-size reduction as the highest spending priority, followed by 22% for curriculum improvements and 15% for services for students with special needs. Province-wide student achievement tests ranked the lowest, with only 5% of the public and 0% of teachers supporting this exercise as a spending priority.

"The public associates small classes with better discipline and with teachers' giving more personal attention," says CTF President Terry Price. "More individualized attention for students means achieving the level of performance that matches the students' abilities and learning skills."

"The stress that crowded classrooms is putting on young or beginning teachers was also noted by those surveyed. According to the poll results, 77% believed that young or beginning teachers leave the profession after a few years because of large class sizes and increasingly heavy workload."

"Teachers with small classes can spend time and energy

helping each child succeed. Smaller classes also enhance safety, discipline, and order in the classroom. When qualified teachers teach smaller classes, kids learn more. It's simply common sense, and studies show that it works to increase student achievement.

There has been significant research, including Project STAR, the Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio project, conducted in Texas in the mid-1980s. The study, involving 2.4-million students in Grades 1 through 7, found that student achievement fell as the student/teacher ratio increased for every student above an 18-to-1 ratio. It also found that students in smaller classes significantly outperformed students in regular-sized classes and regular-sized classes with a teacher aide.

"The research is clear: Class size is vital to the success of our students. If small class size does improve achievement, then cost should be no obstacle especially if one compares the human and financial costs associated with dropouts and remedial education."

The poll was conducted by Vector Research + Development Inc. from May 6 to 11, 2004, with 1,001 Canadians throughout the country. In 19 cases out of 20, the results based on a random sample of 1,001 will differ by no more than plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

— CTF News Service, Ottawa

Web page launch: Teaching to diversity

Specialist Association).

The web page is intended to:

- offer union-led, professionally oriented solutions for both classroom and specialist support teachers who are working to meet diverse student needs.

- provide a source of "information as needed" to teachers, so that teachers can access the site when faced with an unfamiliar area of exceptionality, or when they wish to check out different teaching strategies appropriate to a given exceptionality.

- encourage utilization of the page as a source from which professional development units could be built and shared.

While the web site will be in construction during the rest of this school year, many great resources are already there:

- The *Resource Inventory*, with its learner profiles, teaching approaches/strategies, adaptations, and lesson plans. Teachers in combined ESL/LA/Special Ed roles will find sections on assessment and documentation of utility.

- A PSA-developed *Glossary*

of Terms, with almost every acronym known to teachers. A great resource for newer teachers or for pre-service teachers.

- *Provincial policies and reports* (Special Ed and ESL), as well as the widely used BCTF/CUPE report outlining teacher/teacher-assistant roles and responsibilities.

- *Links to B.C. community organizations' web sites* (that have a focus on inclusive education), with many more links to come.

- *Online journals* including publications from the International Reading Association, Council for Exceptional Children, and Learning Disabilities Online.

- *Monthly highlights*, where we will feature sections of the page relevant to topical issues in the media or events during the school year, such as reporting.

- *A moderated discussion group*, where you can share ideas or pose questions to the group moderator and a panel of teachers from the PSAs.

- Information about an ongoing pilot project in

Nanaimo, Coquitlam, and Prince George, where the BCTF, local teacher associations, and the school district are collaborating to build inquiry-oriented approaches to supporting inclusive education.

One of the strengths of the project has been the partnership between the three provincial specialist associations and the BCTF, now expanded in the pilot project to include the PD chairs of local teacher associations and district staff in each of the three school districts and locals. Representatives from the three PSAs recommend online resources, and they have also contributed print-based resources that the BCTF is making accessible online. Their time, expertise, and enthusiasm have made the project possible.

We will be providing updates on both the site and the pilot project in future issues of *Teacher*, and posters of the site will be mailed to staff reps in schools. But check out the web page as it evolves for the latest on approaches to including all students in B.C.'s public schools.

— Charlie Naylor

In 2002-03, the BCTF Research Division, with the support and assistance of the Coquitlam Teachers' Association and the Nanaimo and District Teachers' Association, conducted a research project in Coquitlam and Nanaimo. The project considered how funding, legislative, and contractual changes affected students, classroom teachers, and specialist support teachers (special education, learning assistance, and ESL). Fourteen teacher researchers from the two school districts, and BCTF research staff collaborated in collecting data from over 500 teachers and dozens of parents. They also accessed enrolment and staffing data, and wrote 45 reports—the most extensive current B.C. research into this province's inclusionary practices and issues. The reports are published on the BCTF web site at bctf.ca/education/InclusiveEd/ResearchProject.

Two findings prompted the development of the web page:

1. In a BCTF survey, 43% of teachers in the two research project school districts stated

Do teachers need a college?

by Ken Novakowski

Teachers in B.C. walked out in protest on April 28, 1987, shutting down every school in the province. They were united in protesting government legislation that introduced a college of teachers: they hadn't asked for a college of teachers, and they didn't want one.

The BC College of Teachers was an idea introduced by the Social Credit government of the day. At that time there was only one other college of teachers in the world: in Scotland. The BC College of teachers was the first, and remains the only, professional regulatory body in British Columbia that was imposed upon a profession rather than introduced at the request of, and in consultation with, the profession.

The government had a clear political objective in mind when it introduced the college: it wanted an end to the professional leadership the B.C. Teachers' Federation played in the lives of B.C. teachers. Here's what happened.

The government introduced legislation that on the one hand granted teachers collective bargaining rights they had long been denied, but, on the other hand, with a college of teachers, attempted to split the professional aspects of teachers from the BCTF. The headline in the *BCTF Newsletter* of April 9, 1987, stated GOV'T ATTACKS BCTF. "Never in the 71 year history of the B.C. Teachers' Federation have the collective professional interests of teachers been as seriously threatened as they are today" went the story. What the government attempted to do with the introduction of a college of teachers was threefold:

1. To split off the professional elements of the BCTF (professional development services, provincial specialist associations, lesson aids, etc.) into a separate organization with mandatory membership, i.e., the college of teachers, and make the BCTF solely a bargaining organization with compulsory membership

previously granted by statute removed. This was intended to divide teachers and seriously weaken the BCTF.

2. To download the costs of teacher certification from government to teachers.

3. To submit teachers to yet another level of discipline, creating for them double or even triple jeopardy. Unlike most other professionals who have colleges, teachers are employed professionals. They always have been and continue to be subject to discipline from their employer over matters of conduct and competence.

While teacher protests to stop the imposition of a college were unsuccessful, the BCTF had tremendous success on another front. They voluntarily signed up 98% of the teachers in the province to membership in the BCTF, a sign-up success rate unparalleled in Canadian trade union history.

After debating the merits of boycotting the college or participating in the college to neutralize it and limit its scope of activity, the BCTF decided on the latter. Over the 15-year history of the college, teachers, and sometimes administrators, made up the 15 elected members of the 20-member governing college board. The BCTF attempted to mitigate the negative aspects of an imposed structure by supporting teacher candidates for the council, with a modicum of success. But even with teacher leaders on the college council committed to a limited mandate for the college, teachers facing possible discipline by their school boards also faced the prospect of college hearings on the same matter. And teachers continued to pay to operate a structure they never asked for or wanted.

So why did we fight so hard to regain democratic control of a college we never wanted? When the current Liberal government, in the spring of 2003, fired the 15 elected college councillors and put in place 20 political appointees to strip teachers of their professional autonomy and other professional rights, it insulted every teacher in the province. Teachers could not

accept and pay for a regulatory body they did not democratically control. The solidarity we demonstrated against the punitive actions of a government with 75 seats out of 79 in the legislature was awesome. We actually got the government to change its position and its legislation. There are very few instances in the history of this country or any of its provinces where that has been done.

Through our struggle for a democratic college, we learned the power of solidarity. Our professional lives are demanding enough in the current context of funding cuts and reductions in support and services to students. We didn't need an appointed college imposing yet more demands upon us. As long as we have elected representatives in the majority on the college, there exists the potential for influencing its direction and operations.

B.C. teachers are members of one of only three teacher colleges in the world: Scotland had one before we had it introduced here in 1987, and since then the Ontario government introduced a college in that province, also against the wishes and will of that province's teachers. The current minister of education in B.C., Tom Christensen, in a meeting with BCTF officers on October 12, 2004, opined that his government "is really indifferent as to whether or not a college of teachers should even exist."

Soon after the college of teachers became a reality in B.C., the BCTF adopted a position that favoured a limited role for the college, namely to deal with certification and decertification matters as well as to provide teacher input into teacher-education programs for pre-service teachers. Both these goals can be accomplished without a college of teachers. If we again challenge the need for a college, we'll need to ensure that we do not have the government create new or different structures that we don't need or want.

Ken Novakowski is the BCTF's executive director.



South Island teachers Brad Myers, left, Shirley Myers, and Saanich Teachers' Association past president Bob Stoddart pose with placards in honour of World Teachers' Day, which they displayed on the Royal Oak overpass as drivers passed below on the way to Victoria. During their time on the overpass, 2,000 to 3,000 vehicles drove by.

Decisions of the October 2004 Representative Assembly

Disposition of the BCTF Democratic Fund

That the 2004 fall RA recommend to members that the 2004-05 college fees that were paid to the BCTF Democratic College Fund be returned to individual members who contributed to the fund.

Payment of college fees

That the 2004 fall RA recommend to members that as an interim measure, BCTF members pay the 2004-05 BC College of Teachers' annual fee and that the BCTF initiate an ongoing review of that decision.

Interest on money

That interest on the money collected in the BCTF Democratic College fund be donated

to charitable women's and children's agencies and that the decision as to the distribution of these funds rest with the BCTF Executive Committee, with a report to the membership.

Connected magazine

That the 2004 fall RA recommend to our BCTF-endorsed councillors to the BCCT that the BCCT publication *Connected* be discontinued.

Receipt of per diems

That the BCTF college councillors not accept a per diem for attending BCCT functions except for expenses in accord with the practice of BCTF-elected representatives at both the local and provincial levels.

December 6: Don't just remember, organize!

by Jane Turner

A friend sent me a copy of an article by Lee Lakeman, of Vancouver Rape Relief. Lakeman wrote the article a number of years ago, but it resonates today. The article is entitled *Women, Violence, and the Montreal Massacre*.

The images and words of popular culture have entered our souls, collectively and individually, and our souls are suffering.

December 6, 1989. Hard to believe it is 15 years ago that Marc Lepine entered l'Ecole Polytechnique and murdered 14 women: *Geneviève Bergeron, Annie Burcotte, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Maria Klueznik, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclerc, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, and Annie St.-Arneault*.

It was not, as so many wrote, an "incomprehensible act of violence." For women all over the world, it was indeed comprehensible. The murderer hated women, feminists in particular, and he acted on that hatred. Just like the person who killed so many women whose DNA has been found on a farm in Port Coquitlam. Just like Jack the Ripper. There are too many other 'just likes' for us to believe it was a random act of violence. Lakeman's article provides the analysis that violence against women in our society is systemic and as such must be opposed through the organization of women—in women's groups, rape crisis centres and shelters, and other feminist political groupings.

What does this have to do with us, teachers and students in the schools of British Columbia? For almost 25 years, the BCTF had a Status of Women Program. The aim of the program was to achieve equality for men and women. As a member of the S/W committee and a local contact, I was part of

a network of women throughout the province who worked for almost three decades to eliminate sex discrimination from our work and personal lives. We failed. Sex discrimination still exists. There is much work that remains for us to do in our communities and through our BCTF Social Justice programs.

Women are still murdered for being women. Women are still abused, battered, and raped because they are women. Recently *The Vancouver Sun* ran an article about women still getting fired for being pregnant. As well, it ran a story about girls and women being taught to accept their lot in life as good wives and mothers, then to be trafficked as 'wives' for fundamentalist Mormons. Women are still being targeted in the workplace for layoffs and reduced pay; just ask the members of HEU, predominantly women. Governments are still cutting back programs that protect and support women and children.

Then there are the women of popular culture. If I hear one more young person tell me it doesn't mean anything when rap songs or hip hop videos refer to women as bitches and whores (oops sorry, that's hos) I may completely lose it. As Sue Montebello, an administrator from Burnaby, said at last year's professional-day conference, "Words enter your soul." The images and words of popular culture have entered our souls, collectively and individually, and our souls are suffering.

On December 6, please remember the women who were killed in Montreal, but do more than remember. Use the anniversary of the death of those 14 women to spur on work that helps us eliminate the same roots of misogyny that caused the Montreal massacre. In your local association, in your classroom, December 6 should be a day of action; a day to begin or continue organizing to eliminate sex discrimination.

Jane Turner is an assistant director in the BCTF's Professional and Social Issues Division.

NFB Film

A new film called *After the Montreal Massacre* is available for \$49.95. For audiences 15 years and older, order from www.nfb.ca.

Teachers' tips

Time management: Who has time for it?

by Rob Taylor

Much of teachers' time is actually managed for us: timetables, bell schedules, meetings, and conferences. In addition, we plan our routines carefully with daybooks and previews. However, many teachers increasingly feel that there isn't enough time in the day to get everything done. Perhaps some of the following ideas will help you manage your time and stay sane, all at the same time.

- Start with a master schedule for a week, a month, or a year, depending on how optimistic you feel.
- Block out time commitments that are not going to change, such as report card time, interview days, meetings, and professional days. Then block out other work-related tasks and, if you wish, personal commitments: fitness, hobbies, etc.
- Try to plan for at least an hour block of time before or after school to ensure that you can actually accomplish something, not just get started.
- Be aware of your up times and your down times. For example, some teachers prefer to get up early to do their marking because they are too tired in the evenings.
- If you feel that 10 hours of marking a week is sufficient, don't feel obligated to do more.
- If you find you are spending more time planning and preparing a task than your students take to complete it, you might consider giving more of the preparation to your students. For example, don't cut out all the shapes you need for a craft project. Have the students be responsible for that.
- Determine where your valuable time is wasted. If it is impossible to photocopy at 8:30 a.m. because there is a line up, photocopy after school.
- Remember Murphy's Law, and stay flexible. Anything that can go wrong will, and it will take longer than you planned, so make sure you leave some breathing room.
- After you've made the schedule, review it. Is it realistic? Can you really mark 39 English 10 essays while running on the treadmill and cooking supper? If you can, stick to it. If you can't, change it.
- If everything works, and you find you have some extra time, then reward yourself by doing something you wouldn't normally have time for—a cup of coffee, a visit with a friend, 10 minutes of stillness. You deserve it.

Rob Taylor teaches at Nesika Elementary School, Williams Lake.



But I changed the words around!



Preventing cheating and plagiarism in the classroom

by Diane Gallagher-Hayashi

You have handed out a math test to your class. You have arranged the desks to make copying difficult. You watch the class closely. A boy in the back row catches your eye. You stand up, stretch, and wander around the room. You can see nothing wrong in what he is doing, so you go back to your desk. He keeps checking his watch, but you figure he is just nervous about getting the test done on time. When you mark the test, you find that he has done all the questions correctly. Obviously he knew his stuff—you were worried for nothing. Or were you?

Changes in technology outstrip our abilities to keep up. Perhaps the boy in the math class really did know his stuff and passed the test fairly. Or perhaps he had downloaded all the formulas into his digital watch. Sound outlandish? Not according to Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss, who wrote *Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era*. "Students today enjoy the challenge of discovering what they can accomplish with each new high-tech toy. Unfortunately, many are quick to see the possibilities of using the new technologies to cheat on tests and homework." (Lathrop *et al.*, p. 10). Hand-held computers and programmable calculators can store and send information and questions to other devices (and other students) outside the classrooms. Pagers and cell phones can be set on vibrate,

The teacher-librarian can help the classroom teacher when a suspicious paper has been submitted.

and text messages can be sent quietly to students writing tests. Access to the Internet has changed student research. The Internet has become a valuable tool for students, but it has also become a supermarket of term papers for students who wish to cheat.

The problem is not just accessibility to tools allowing students to cheat and plagiarize. Attitudes about cheating have changed too. Studies on student cheating show a marked increase in frequency and tolerance. A 1998 study of the academically top 5% of American students showed that 80% cheated (Lathrop *et al.*, p. 30). Another 1998 study by the Josephson Institute of Ethics surveyed over 20,000 middle- and high-school students and found that 70% of them had

If the student could find the assignment on the Internet, so can the teacher-librarian or the classroom teacher.

cheated within the past year (Lathrop *et al.*, p. 31). More disturbing is the change in attitude. Schab's longitudinal study on cheating showed that in 1969, only 34% said yes when asked if they had ever cheated on a test; whereas in 1989 a full 68% said yes. In 1969, when asked if they agreed with the phrase, *Honesty is the best policy*, 82% said yes, but in 1989 only 60% said yes. For many students today, the issue is not, Should I cheat or not? but How can I avoid getting caught when I cheat? (Lathrop *et al.*, p. 30).

The change in attitude and the increased access to technology that will allow students to cheat has teachers trying to create situations that make cheating and plagiarism difficult AND policing students' assignments after they are done. Classroom teachers are not alone in their battle against plagiarism. Every school with a teacher-librarian has a ready-made expert in research. Giving assignments that are generic or using the same assignment year after year invites plagiarism and cheating. Trained and experienced, the teacher-librarian can help develop research units and assignments that are difficult to plagiarize. Compare these two assignments: 1) Describe Hamlet's state of mind just before his death. 2) You are Hamlet's psychiatrist. Write an

entry in his file for the day before his death.

Both assignments would have the same criteria. A paper matching the first assignment would be very easy to find on the Internet. A paper matching the second assignment would be much more difficult to find.

The teacher-librarian can help the classroom teacher when a suspicious paper has been submitted. The teacher-librarian has an arsenal of tactics that can help find papers that have been plagiarized. The simplest is to take a doubtful line from the assignment and search for that line, enclosed in quotation marks, in a search engine such as Google, Yahoo, or Dogpile. If the student could find the assignment on the Internet, so can the teacher-librarian or the classroom teacher.

Working with the teacher-librarian to teach students good research and note-taking skills, and to require students to follow every step of the Ministry of Education's Research Quest

To become lifelong learners, students must know where to find information, how to evaluate and use that information...

when they research will make plagiarism difficult and unnecessary. To become lifelong learners, students must know where to find information, how to evaluate and use that information, and how to evaluate their research performance. Once students become comfortable with this process, the temptation to plagiarize will be much less.

Diane Gallagher-Hayashi is a teacher-librarian at Stelly's Secondary School, Saanich.

Resources

Lathrop, Ann, and Kathleen Foss. *Student cheating and plagiarism in the Internet era: A wake-up call*. Englewood: Libraries Unlimited, 2000.

Aboriginal education conference

The Aboriginal education conference, jointly sponsored by the BCTF Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, the BCTF's First Nations Education Association, and UBC's Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP), was held October 21 to 23, 2004. Close to 400 participants and facilitators attended the conference at the Longhouse, University of B.C.

BCTF President Jinny Sims kicked off the conference with an official acknowledgement of the Musqueam territory. She gave the opening welcome from the BCTF and raised her hands to NITEP for its leadership in Aboriginal teacher education. She congratulated NITEP on 30 years of perseverance and dedication to Aboriginal education.

A student panel of three generations of NITEP graduates gave their impressions of their lives since graduation and of being teachers.

David Rattray opened the conference with a keynote that engaged all participants to break out of their comfort zones. He asked the participants to speak to one another about why they were here and about what they were passionate about. Rattray set the tone for the conference and left participants feeling good about what they have been doing in Aboriginal education.

The various workshops ranged from Aboriginal history and culture, students' experiences in public school, literacy for young children, and how to take care of new Aboriginal teachers.

In the evening we had a banquet for all the participants to attend and feast and marvel in the festivity celebration for NITEP's 30-year-old program.

Saturday featured more workshops and a luncheon for local presidents and their designates at which enhancement agreements were discussed. Designates were picked because of their willingness and or commitment to Aboriginal education as well as to bring back information on enhancement agreements.

Comments ranged from "I would never have gone to an Aboriginal Education conference, because I am not Aboriginal" to "I feel so very lucky to have learned so much. I found out I know so little and this experience has changed my perceptions about Aboriginal education."

After the panel discussion, lots of questions were raised regarding education funding for Aboriginal students in both the public and band systems, why unions?, employment equity, and more. Our panelists did a fantastic job answering the questions.

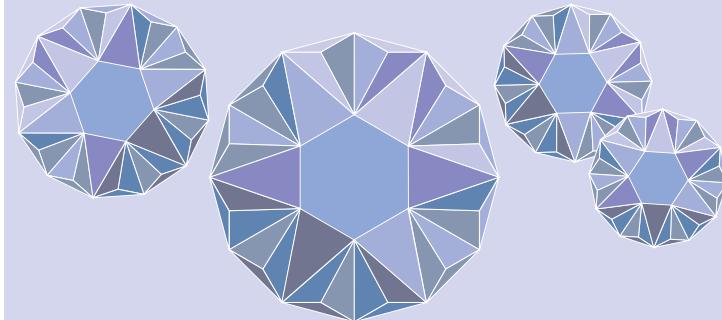
Our ending keynote was Rita Bouvier, here from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Her presentation spoke to us all about the importance of anti-oppressive education. She spoke about the nature of oppression and implications for bringing about change. Rita Bouvier infused her own experience within the context of teaching for social justice.

The weekend was a great success, despite having to move among three buildings. The conference feedback was uplifting and very positive.

—Chris Stewart

Health and Safety

10 gems from the members' guide



by Maureen L. MacDonald

The Members' Guide to the BCTF contains all the Federation's policies and procedures adopted since 1953, the goals, the local and provincial fees, the Code of Ethics, the Simplified Rules of Order, and lots more. The whole book is a treasure trove of information, well worth reading. Here are 10 of my favourite policies about health and safety.

1. 39.59, p. 142—*That custodial staff be provided at all times that schools are in session and that sufficient custodial time be provided each day for thorough cleaning of school facilities and grounds.* – 2001 AGM

Biohazardous materials need to be removed right away. It's the law. No one wants to walk through goose droppings on the front steps of the school, or step around vomit that the custodian will clean up in the evening. Teachers are not required to do the cleaning. That's one reason each school has an administrator.

2. 40.01, p. 142—*That students and teachers have the right to a learning and working environment*

free from sexual harassment.

– 1982 AGM

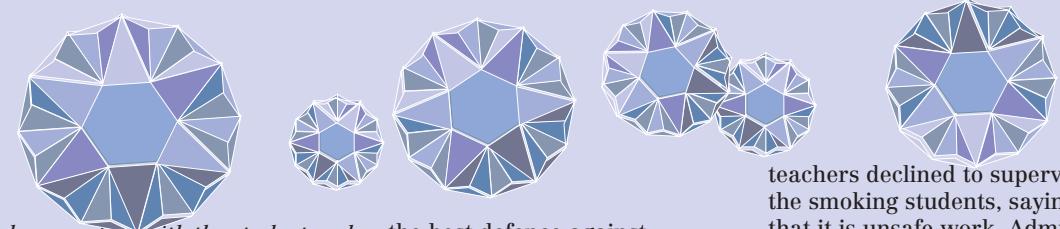
Too many teachers have used their sick leave to avoid the distress of being harassed. Some have gone on to use the Salary Indemnity Plan that all members pay for.

Don't put up with harassment. Grieve using the provisions of the collective agreement. Report the harassment to the Joint Occupational Health & Safety (JOH&S) Committee at your worksite. There'll be an investigation.

3. 53.A.15, p. 156—*That the BCTF urge the Ministry of Education to ensure that every teacher has access to in-service training necessary to teach violence-prevention programs.* – Dec. 1993 Ex.

This request has not been dealt with adequately by a long list of ministers of education. Let's try to fix that on May 17, 2005.

4. 53.A.29, p. 156—*That no student new to a school be in attendance at school until a background check has ascertained that the student poses no risk or until a plan has been written and communicated to all staff likely to*



have contact with the student and adequate resources are in place which eliminates or minimizes the risk of violence and which includes a response-to-critical-incidents strategy detailing roles and responsibilities. – AGM 2001

Risk-assessment procedures for violence in the workplace are found in WCB Regulation 4.28–4.31. Some schools now delay entry of new students for at least one day, pending the arrival of more information and giving staff a bit of time to make the right placement. Raise this with your JOH&S committee. One day is a start, but is it enough?

5. 13.D.09, p. 97—*That locals and district health and safety committee members (a) encourage all health and safety representatives to utilize their entitlement to an eight-hour annual education leave under S. 135 of the Workers Compensation Act, and (b) request the BCTF/WorkSafe course as the content for the educational leave.* – Nov. 2000 RA

All members of all JOH&S committees are entitled by law to release time annually for eight-hour training. That means all teacher reps, all support staff union reps, and all employers' reps. The BCTF offers excellent, extensive tripartite training under the auspices of the WCB WorkSafe program. Get your committee to request it, and tell your local H&S rep.

6. 39.51, p. 141—*That instruction in hand washing be given in schools.* – 2001 AGM

Delegates to the 2001 AGM poked fun at the idea of singing "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" while washing their hands, but they knew that hand washing is

the best defence against contagious diseases. Teach it to your students, young and old. Download a copy of the hand-washing poster from the BCTF web site www.bctf.ca/education/health/.

7. 12.09, p. 82—*That only nutritious foods should be sold in school cafeterias.* – 1974 AGM, Oct. 1980 RA

12.35, p. 84—*That the Ministry of Education provide monetary incentives to schools to ban the sale of junk food and drinks from their premises.* – May 2004 RA

It is as if the headlines were snatched right out of our policies!

8. 13.D.13, p. 97—*That a safety plan for working alone as required by OH&S Regulation 4.21 be provided by the employer for all BCTF members who work alone.* – 2001 AGM

School districts in which teachers have keys to schools have procedures such as phoning a central number to state the expected time to be spent in school on evenings or weekends, and phoning back to check out. Others have a buddy system in place so a teacher is never working alone.

Reporting time is coming. If you teach in a portable or an isolated classroom meet parents in the library or the office for safety.

9. 13.D.12, p. 98—*That all schools and worksites be non-smoking areas.* – 1987 AGM, 2004 AGM

Did you know that there are still some schools where students smoke on the property? Staff members haven't done that for years now! Last year, some

teachers declined to supervise the smoking students, saying that it is unsafe work. Administrators took over the duty. Let's encourage school boards to go a step further.

10. 39.01.6., p. 140—*That construction protocols must be in place before any renovations or alterations, including painting, start.* – Jan 2003 Ex

The BCTF Construction/Renovation/Maintenance/Repair Protocol is found at bctf.ca/education/health/ConstructionProtocol.html. Refer to it in discussions about changes to your school facilities. You don't have to be allergic to paint fumes to care about the noise levels, the safe passageways, and the visitors' identification badges.

What do you think?

Did I pick your favourites? Do you have others? Let me know. Or write a letter to the editor.

Will you help?

All the above statements are policies, not procedures. They deal with matters over which the BCTF does not have complete control. By promoting BCTF policies at every opportunity, members increase the chance of implementing them. At least we'll feel better for trying. Be safe out there.

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

To put your name on the BCTF occupational health and safety e-mail list, e-mail your request to Whitney Burgess, wburgess@bctf.ca.

NOTE: The Members' Guide to the BCTF is sent to all schools on a two-copies-per-staffroom basis, and distributed to other members on request.

On being well

by Julia Johnson

Did you know that October 25 to 30 was Canada's Healthy Workplace Week? Since October 2001, this yearly event has been initiated by the National Quality Institute (NQI) to celebrate both organizational and personal health. During the week Canadian organizations are encouraged to learn about and participate in organizational health, and prevention and wellness strategies designed to increase awareness about the importance of healthy workplaces and the relationship a healthy workplace has to the long-term success of an organization. According to Dan Corbett, president and CEO of the NQI, research on workplace health is clear: "The lack of a comprehensive approach to workplace health is having a negative impact on all aspects of work and society. Low morale, employee absenteeism, decreased productivity, and high turnover create a ripple effect throughout society on families, businesses, and the healthcare system."

The World Health Organization states that the number-one world health issue is stress in the workplace. Lyle Hargrove, director of Health, Training, and Safety Fund, in Toronto, spoke to this issue in 2001 when he tried to negotiate wellness initiatives for the Canadian Auto

Healthy workplace week

Workers' union. He said, "Stress in the workplace is the number one issue and the speed of change [which affects the degree of stress employees experience] is only going to accelerate." Hargrove believes that employers have an obligation to look after their employees at work and at home, and the way to do that is to make workplace wellness and health promotion a business priority.

From a business perspective, wellness in the workplace has become an issue for companies today because of their need to stay competitive in the global marketplace. The view being held by many business visionaries and some CEOs is that corporations need to reinvent themselves so the workplace attracts the most talented people. To do this, companies need to create the most nourishing environment for personal growth, where their employees can flourish. The belief of the business community is that companies without effective, comprehensive worksite wellness and health-promotion strategies will find themselves at a competitive disadvantage. The Buffet Taylor National Wellness Survey Report of 2000 revealed that just 17% of the 414 employers surveyed were providing comprehensive wellness programs.

In education, the need for workplace wellness programs

has never been greater. Daily stressors of increased class size, disregard for class composition, insufficient teaching resources, classrooms that no longer accommodate the increased number of students, decreased support for students with special needs, increased demand for testing and accountability, greater expectations for increasing student performance, devaluing of best teaching practices by political leaders, inadequately thought out initiatives, etc., all create a teaching and learning environment with low morale and conflict among colleagues—far from enabling or flourishing.

Workplace wellness programs remind individuals to take care of themselves.

Dr. Martin Brokenleg, in his keynote address to teachers in Quesnel on October's professional development day, stated, "every child is at risk today," and the way to reach an "at-risk child" is to focus on her or his wellness. With today's teaching and learning conditions, in addition to every child's being at risk so is every teacher.

Workplace wellness programs remind individuals to take care of themselves. For school districts that do not have a universal wellness program, for

schools that are too busy to make wellness a workplace priority, I offer the "12 Gifts for Workplace Support" adapted from the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health.

1. The gift of helping out: Go out of your way to ask your neighbour at work if she or he needs help.

2. The gift of clear expectations: Make sure people know what is expected of them.

3. The gift of job fulfilment: A pay cheque buys bread for the table. Job fulfilment buys bread for the soul. Employers need to make sure that employees have the tools and the time they need to do the job they are qualified to do.

4. The gift of sharing success not just work: Make an effort to share the credit for the things that get done well at work.

5. The gift of inclusion: Make sure your colleagues at work are included in meetings, going to lunch, sharing information.

6. The gift of casual chat: Make an effort each day to connect with as many people as you can. Ask your colleagues how they feel about something that is important to them.

7. The gift of listening: Seek first to understand and then to be understood to avoid misperceptions.

8. The gift of trust: Co-workers need to show one another their trust.

9. The gift of being home:

During these stressful and fast-paced times, each of us needs to be respectful of the various home demands for which our colleagues are responsible: an ill child, elderly parents at home or in the hospital, needing to be home when children return from school.

10. The gift of fairness: Ensure that fairness is an established practice.

11. The gift of humour: Laughter is the best medicine, then school environments are in need of heavy doses. Look for humour in the everyday things that are a part of your work life.

12. The gift of forgiveness: Be ready to say you are sorry when workplace conflict occurs. Stressful work environments are breeding grounds for a multitude of troubling situations.

It is important during these taxing times that we support each colleague with her or his teaching assignment. When we give one another the 12 gifts of workplace support we can create healthy workplaces together in spite of our working and learning conditions.

Julia Johnson, a learning resource teacher at Red Bluff School, in Quesnel, is a BCTF-PD wellness associate. E-mail johnson@abccom.bc.ca

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

Supervision of learning: The new panopticon

by Pat Clarke

Panopticon: A building in which a lone guard can supervise a large number of prisoners (or workers) without their knowing they are being observed at a given time.

Panopticon, if you look that word up in a standard dictionary such as the *Gage Canadian*, you won't find it. That is probably because it is a word so old and so seldom used that it has entirely fallen from even occasional usage. But in keeping with our so-called education leaders' rushing headlong into making every discredited, unproved, and generally dubious neo-conservative fad a part of the foundation of our public education system, we teachers are about to be placed in a metaphoric panopticon.

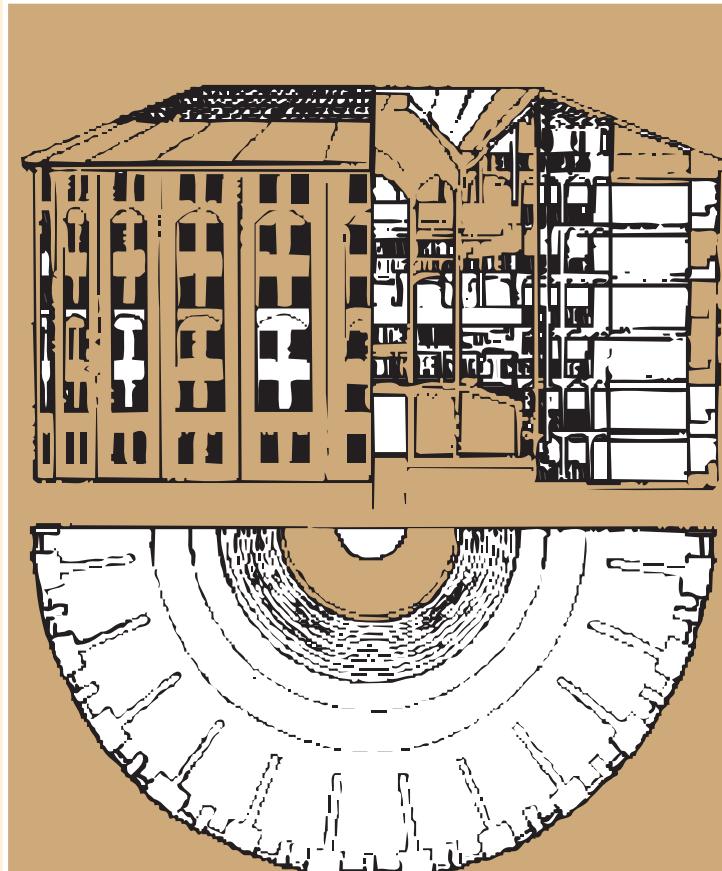
A great deal of the language reveals a deep distrust of teachers and an attitude that sees teachers as widgets to be fixed rather than professionals to be supported.

The panopticon was an idea of the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the early 19th century. He believed schools could be well served by the same principle of supervision as that offered from the panopticon, that is, "constant and universal inspection."

Bentham went on to describe an approach to education that fixated on standards, information gathering, and recordkeeping. These were to be monitored by a system of "hierarchical observation" and "normalizing judgment." He coined these terms and the panopticon concept in 1816, in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. Isn't it remarkable that while all of the most nefarious features of that time, child labour (except for B.C.), company stores, and indentured labour have been assigned to history's dust bin, the language and mechanisms of hierarchical control still have credibility in some places. Some people still believe those things work, and, astonishingly enough, a good number of those people live here and work as administrators and bureaucrats in the B.C. public school system.

Our evidence that this vestige of the Industrial Revolution has found a home here in B.C. is coyly named the "Supervision for Learning" project currently being shopped around the province by a team from the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association funded by a grant from the Ministry of Education. It is, metaphorically speaking, a panopticon, an instrument for surveillance.

There is an important difference, however, between the blunt instruments of the Industrial Revolution and the modern-day mechanisms of control with which our educa-



Panopticon: A building to which a lone guard can supervise a large number of prisoners (or workers) without their knowing they are being observed at a given time

tion leaders are so besotted. In our times, we have what is known as manufactured consent. Under a shroud of marketing babble, just the right turns of phrase, those being

...supervision is a part of the accountability framework and now someone is minding the store again...

controlled, in this case teachers, become convinced that they actually have some status in the whole scheme. So the control of our professional lives that naturally follows from industrial-style supervision is made palatable by compelling descriptors like "a spirit of inquiry" and "reflective dialogue." We are not ordered to comply, but our consent is managed, and we become unwitting victims of management by slogan.

The challenge for us is that the slogans are beguiling. At first glance, the Supervision of Learning project has a certain appeal. It looks as if it could be a genuine effort to support us in our ongoing interest in improving our teaching. There are, for example, references to giving teachers opportunities to "dialogue about teaching and learning." The problem is that

the velvet glove of a professed interest in supporting teachers has iron digits poking out. Those digits point away from supporting teachers and toward surveillance and evaluation.

A closer reading of the documents being used in promoting the project reveals that the authors' idea of supervision of learning is really about intimidating teachers into supporting an accountability strait jacket that has more to do with administrative empire building than improving student learning. A great deal of the language reveals a deep distrust of teachers and an attitude that sees teachers as widgets to be fixed rather than professionals to be supported. Some examples: "the spectre of teacher autonomy is in decline," "supervision is a part of the accountability framework and now someone is minding the

The Supervision of Learning project is a regressive, unnecessary, and unhelpful nuisance.

store again," and perhaps most demeaning of all, "by focusing on learning and results teachers have been forced to come to terms with the fact they are not self employed."

Spirit of inquiry? Reflective

dialogue? This conveys the mind set of a small plant middle manager not a so-called education leader. The plant-manager mentality is further revealed in one of the practices the principals' road show is promoting. It is called the five-minute walk or walkabout. (Perhaps small plant manager is the wrong comparison, how about Prince Philip?) The apparent purpose of the five-minute walkabout is to reveal "a strategic plan of scheduled observation of student learning" and to make "regular purposeful visits to classrooms to gather explicit data on learning and teaching." In five minutes? Why not just settle for checking out the room temperature and the state of the waste baskets. This is not about supporting teachers; it is about hierarchical observation and managing minutia.

The BCTF has for more than 15 years had a Program for Quality Teaching. It is a teacher-developed, collegial approach to improving teaching. It recognizes that practising teachers are more than able to identify issues and problems in teaching and work together to resolve them, supporting one another in the process. Two years ago, ministry officials and representatives of the principals and

Any project that is so blatantly committed to control more than support is doomed to fail.

vice-principals' association wanted to discuss with us the whole matter of improving teaching. We offered the Program for Quality Teaching. They went away and never came back. Some months later, they launched Supervision of Learning. It is clear that they never were interested in improving teaching—only in coming up with a surveillance instrument that would grease the wheels of the accountability pie wagon.

The Supervision of Learning project is a regressive, unnecessary, and unhelpful nuisance. It will not improve teaching any more than any other of the many poorly planned, autocratically implemented fix-the-teacher schemes. The modern language of "dialogue," and "rich and deep discussions on teaching and learning" cannot mask the fact that this is regurgitated pablum. Any project that is so blatantly committed to control more than support is doomed to fail. It won't work because most teachers won't let it work and we won't let it work, because it won't help us with the two really important questions: Why should we teach this? and What is the best way to teach this child? So go ahead and mind the store. We have something more important to do.

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

Is this supervision or is it evaluation?

by Peter McCue

How do you know if learning is being supervised or if you are being evaluated? There is a difference between supervision and evaluation. Under Section 4.5 (7) of the *School Act Regulations*, principals do have the authority to supervise. Under Section 4.5, they also have the responsibility to evaluate. Our collective agreement, the contract between the employer and ourselves, gives the framework on how the evaluation is to be carried out.

We're seeing that legitimate supervision is becoming snoopervision.

Evaluation and supervision are not interchangeable.

Administrators supervise by:

- bringing ongoing and emergent issues to staff committee meetings or staff meetings.
- checking all report cards that are sent to parents.
- checking to see that teachers arrive at school on time.
- dealing with parents.
- ensuring that teachers submit attendance records.
- ensuring that files are kept, IEPs are developed, the resources needed to do the work are provided, and year-end records are completed.
- possibly asking for previews and course outlines.

Permutations are arising from some over enthusiastic attendees of a B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association (BCPVPA) workshop on supervision of learning, being offered to administrative officers (AOs) around the province. Part of it is a condensed version of Charlotte Danielson's "Framework for Teaching," designed for work with student teachers. We're seeing that legitimate supervision is becoming *snoopervision*. Rather than a climate of collegial improvement, we see an abuse of power and a selective model of progressive discipline that

Rather than a climate of collegial improvement, we see an abuse of power...

violates the contract language around evaluation.

Local presidents and BCTF field service staff are seeing memos and notes with expectations, letters of direction, and letters of discipline containing evaluation that addresses issues out of context or without discussion of events. Many of those letters and memos that refer to issues out of context are ending up in individual personnel files. Some contain language that is disciplinary and should involve representation. Contact your local president or consult with your staff rep when that happens. Such missives could have ramifications for you later in your employment, or with the BC College of Teachers.

Some members report increased detail and expectations arising from the previews and overviews, with requests for teachers to indicate how they are meeting the school goals through instruction and to make links to the accountability-contract language. Particular emphasis is being placed on literacy goals.

We are seeing attacks on the use of professional development, teacher

Request copies of any notes made, and discuss any notes taken.

autonomy (referred to as the "spectre of teacher autonomy" in one of the BCPVPA workshops), unilateral changing of the name of professional days to "staff development," and significant attempts to redefine language around leave approval to approval of the professional development activity itself.

Workshops with such titles as "Getting the Deadwood to Bloom Again" and "How to Assess Effective Instruction With the Five-minute Walk Through" are being offered.

How do you know if your principal is supervising or evaluating when she or he drops into your classroom?

- If she or he comes in with pencil and paper and sits down and takes notes, it's evaluation.
- If she or he comes in to see that you're teaching what your timetable says and doesn't stay long, she or he is supervising.
- If she or he comes in and takes a reading group, it's team teaching.

If evaluation is taking place, ensure that the contract language on evaluation is being followed. There are processes that are to be followed, and, where there is need, plans of assistance should be developed and offered. Many are offered in co-operation with the BCTF and the local. The Peer Support, Program for Quality Teaching, and professional-

Contact your local office with any concerns.

support initiatives are examples.

If you feel that you are having a significant number of unhelpful classroom visits or that it appears supervision is becoming evaluation, there are things you should do:

- Document the time, length, number, and purpose of visits.
- Request copies of any notes made, and discuss any notes taken. (If notes are taken, the evaluation language comes into play and should be followed.)
- Contact your local office with any concerns.
- Know the evaluation language in your collective agreement, and play an active role in your evaluation.

The collective agreement was reached through a process of give and take over many years. The contract is not only the teachers' contract. It is the way both parties have agreed to operate. The BCTF workshops that are being offered to our school reps on teacher supervision are a beginning. We all want what's best. The way to have that happen is by involving teachers in the process.

Peter McCue is an assistant director in the BCTF's Field Service Division.

by David Denyer

Early in this present government's assault on education and teachers, the deputy minister of education introduced documents setting the agenda. Emblazoned on the front page, and much repeated ever since, has been the mantra "It's all about achievement."

It is somewhat surprising that this slogan has never been challenged or subject to critical appraisal. There is no knowing what it's refers to or what defines achievement. These words appear to be a thinly veiled exhortation to relentless striving.

Noticeably absent from this "achievement" vocabulary is any notion of enjoyment, pleasure, or recreation. Instead there are accountability, data collection, and, most recently, supervision-supervision of teachers, conducted by principals who are themselves supposedly super-

vised by directors and superintendents who are in turn supervised by the deputy minister and the ministry. It is a top-down, paternalistic model of continuous surveillance ostensibly aimed at improving instruction (no longer teaching) and of course "achievement" (as measured by tests).

It is a top-down, paternalistic model of continuous surveillance ostensibly aimed at improving instruction...

Aside from the totally absurd and insulting assumption that lurks behind this initiative—that somehow teachers and teaching are running amok—what will this do to our concept of and practice of teaching and education? Teachers, I fear, are

going to be increasingly cajoled and intimidated into using an ever restricted, defined, and officially sanctioned pedagogy (thinly disguised as "best practice").

That pedagogy will be directed at serving a narrow, compressed curriculum in which the only things that matter are literacy, social responsibility, and, to some extent numeracy. But above all, what matters most will be improved FSA scores and measurable results.

Any notion of meaningful teacher autonomy (critical to being a professional) will be lost and teachers will become mere functionaries charged with manipulating prescribed materials and strategies in the service of a cynical political agenda aimed at portraying a system that can somehow be successful despite vastly reduced support.

In concert with the other political directions this government is pursuing, we are witnessing a war on childhood.

Schools are becoming "work camps" and children simply compliant human capital to be equipped with marketable skills. To ensure attainment of government's "deadening" goals

Schools are becoming "work camps" and children simply compliant human capital to be equipped with marketable skills.

and objectives, the establishment of which teachers have never condoned or been part of, supervision will be a key component.

David Denyer is an assistant director in the BCTF's Field Services Division.

It's all about achievement



Photo contest: win a copy of *The Corporation*

Take your camera around your school and photograph examples of commercialization or privatization. Send the best to the BCTF Task Force on Privatization to enter the Commercialization Photo Contest. Attach the photos to an e-mail message to lkuehn@bctf.ca or mail them to the task force at the BCTF.

The photo that best demonstrates commercialization will win the DVD of *The Corporation*.

Please send your photos in by January 14, 2005.



Michelle Hernandez

Au palmarès du bien-être en immersion et au programme francophone

par Josiane Parrotty

Afin de mieux gérer le quotidien, il faut vivre l'essentiel et développer l'art de vivre au sein d'une société complexe.

Nos enseignantes et enseignants dans les programmes d'immersion et francophone s'efforcent de donner à leurs élèves une éducation scolaire éclectique qui tient compte de leur nature et de leurs besoins affectifs.

Dans la vie il n'y a pas de solution. Il y a des forces en marche : il faut les créer et des solutions suivent.

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

En ce début de millénaire, la mission des enseignants est d'éduquer pour aider à être

Au-delà de la scolarité, l'éducation passe par le jeu, l'observation, la télévision, les amis, sans parler de l'exemple permanent des parents et des professeurs. Enfin, l'éducation véritable, c'est celle qui ouvre l'esprit sur la vie. Il ne suffit pas d'exceller en mathématiques, en sciences humaines ou d'être bilingue, il faut développer des facultés mentales qui permettront à tout individu de gérer son apprentissage et son stress.

Éduquer par rapport aux besoins de l'apprenant

De nos jours, l'éducation situe l'apprenant dans un environnement global et elle l'initie à des domaines complexes, inclusifs de conscience, nécessitant le développement de sa capacité de prendre des décisions et de développer ses intelligences. Éduquer signifie stimuler chez l'enfant le désir d'actualiser son potentiel personnel inné.

Au sein du 21e siècle, nous remplissons nos coeurs de savoir et nous oublions parfois que nous sommes des êtres humains. Notre ambition technologique ne vise pas à la production d'individus psychologiquement sains. Il suffit de lire les programmes

éducatifs avec un regard transpersonnel pour s'apercevoir qu'il y a des possibilités d'ouvrir les horizons des jeunes. Nous avons la responsabilité de les mettre au courant de toutes les cultures humaines et particulièrement de la francophonie dans le monde.

Chaque heure de cours dans la classe de français pourrait être une occasion pour développer l'intelligence émotionnelle des jeunes. La motivation et la richesse intérieure de l'enseignante ou de l'enseignant seraient le modèle de choix dans la classe d'immersion ou du programme francophone.

Quelle que soit la méthode pédagogique choisie, les vertus telles que la tolérance, l'empathie, la gestion du stress, la curiosité, la créativité, la tranquillité, la persévérance, l'amitié, le courage, le succès et la compréhension développeraient la potentialité des apprenants.

Quelques suggestions pour minimiser le stress des élèves :

- Être à l'écoute des jeunes que nous accompagnons sur le chemin de la vie
- Accepter leur imaginaire
- Développer les dimensions du bien-être de l'enfant
 - Dimension physique (le corps) : exercice, relaxation, nutrition et repos
 - Dimension mentale (les intelligences multiples) : lecture, écriture, mathématiques, sciences, sciences humaines, apprentissage de nouvelles habiletés et éducation générale
 - Dimension émotionnelle (le cœur) : développement de bonnes relations interpersonnelles, le sens de l'humour, le rendement de service dans la communauté
 - Dimension psychologique (l'esprit) : développement de l'intelligence intrapersonnelle, l'estime de soi, la compassion
 - Dimension spirituelle (l'âme) : méditation, visualisation, journal intime, réflexion, visionnement de média de qualité.

Au palmarès du bien-être de l'enseignante et de l'enseignant :

- Comprendre l'interdépendance du bien-être physique et émotionnel
- Gérer le stress et réagir aux changements de façon responsable
- Être flexible et capable de s'adapter

- Gérer son temps et son énergie
- Prendre le temps de réfléchir et de trouver la paix
- Être capable de se renouveler et avoir le goût d'apprendre
- Prendre du temps pour soi
- Cultiver l'amitié et respecter les autres
- Être fier de ses accomplissements et de ses réussites
- Développer une intégrité personnelle.

Un maximum de bien-être est une condition nécessaire pour un niveau rehaussé de performance individuelle à l'école et dans la vie.

Josiane Parrotty enseigne à l'école Laity View à Maple Ridge.

Synopsis

Teachers can assist their students in developing coping skills to deal with their daily school life. Learning to manage stress must remain an important goal.

Correction

Dans notre dernier article du mois d'octobre, crédits auraient dû être attribués à P. Darveau et R. Viau, auteurs du livre *La Motivation des Enfants*. Nous regrettons cette omission.

L'Alphabet Vivant

by Kathleen Cherry

With music, movement, artwork, and stories, *L'Alphabet Vivant* inspires, interests, and teaches the ABCs to French-immersion students.

The book is the brain child of three Kitimat teachers: Madeleine Christiansen, Audrey Rainville, and Maureen Atkinson. Christiansen and Rainville wrote the text; Atkinson provided illustrations.

The alphabet book incorporates music, movement, art, and stories for use in Kindergarten through to Grade 2.

"We wanted to present the alphabet in a way that would stimulate and use all the senses, and we knew the resource wasn't out there."

They created a simple version for use in their classrooms. "It was just a framework."

Originally, we had no intention of publishing. It was meant as a classroom resource."

L'Alphabet Vivant has come a long way since those early days, and it has taken the teachers into book publishing, recording, and, most recently, conference presentations. Authors Christiansen and Rainville presented at APPIPC, (Association Provincial des Professeurs d'Immersion et du Programme Cadre), October 21-23, in Richmond.

"It was a very exciting step for us," Rainville said.

The project has involved a number of exciting steps and hard work.

"We took that very simple framework and wrote alliterative stories for each letter. We also set them to the music of traditional children's songs like *London Bridge* or *Frère Jacques*. We would go around humming and laughing. It was a lot of fun," Christiansen remembers.

The work was originally completed for a masters of education course through the University of British Columbia.

"Later, we decided to try for publication. We sent it to about nine editors. Of course, we got some rejections, but we did get a positive response from Éditions Soleil Publishing. We were delighted, although I don't think we realized the time and effort involved before actual publication," Rainville explained.

As illustrator, Atkinson had some of the hardest work. She had to take her original ink drawings and make them into

larger black-and-white water colours. She also assumed responsibility for the front cover and drew several full-colour pieces for final selection by the editor.

"That pretty much took care of one summer," she said.

Even more challenging, Rainville and Christiansen were asked by their publisher to develop a CD to accompany the book.

"This was something we had not expected, but we found a recording studio in Terrace and spent many, many hours there. When we hit a wrong note, we had to go back and redo it," Christiansen said.

"I had not had voice lessons, so this was quite new to me," Rainville added.

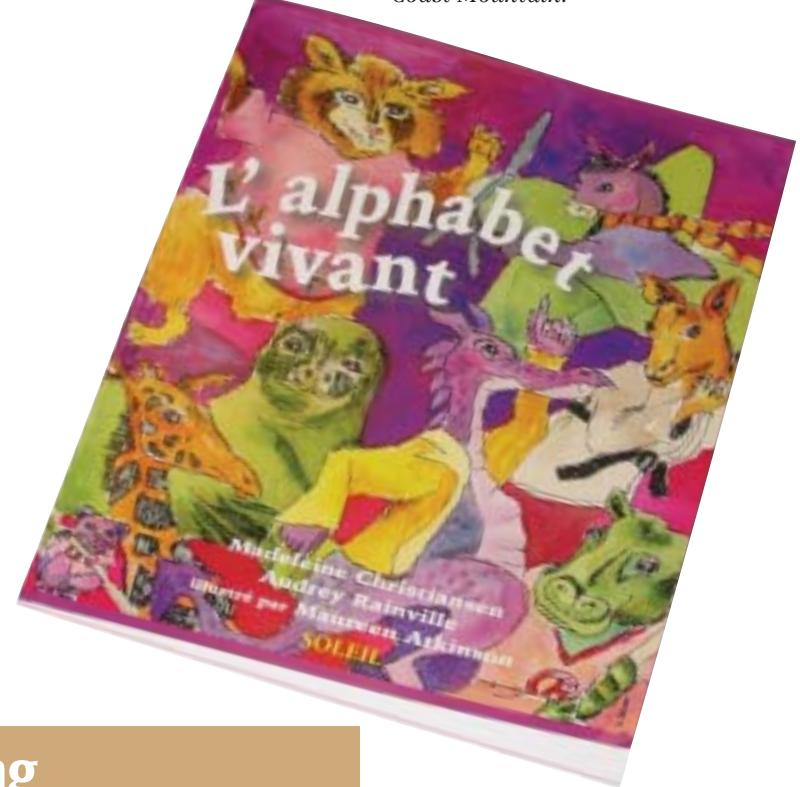
Even the weather acted up, and both Christiansen and Rainville remember a particularly snowy drive that made them decide that the life of a recording artist might be more dangerous than glamorous.

Despite obstacles, Rainville, Christiansen, and Atkinson are thrilled with the end product.

"It is very concrete, very visual. It is specifically written for French-immersion students, and it is very Canadian. I think it offers a valuable resource to teachers and something that will interest, excite, and teach students," Christiansen said.

Anyone interested in *L'Alphabet Vivant* may contact Éditions Soleil Publishing Inc. at 1-905-788-2674 or the fax order desk 1-800-261-0833.

Kathleen Cherry is a district counsellor, School District 82, Coast Mountain.



Yours for the asking

kit, please contact Elections BC at electionsbc@gems3.gov.bc.ca or call toll-free 1-800-661-8683.



the Corporation

The grassroots team at The Corporation announces the release of the paperback book, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, which is available online at www.thecorporation.com for \$14.99 USD.

There are also three VHS tapes reflecting the three-part documentary series that explores the history, inner workings, controversial impacts, and potential future of big corporations. Part 1: The Pathology of Commerce, Part 2: Planet Inc., and Part 3: The Reckoning.

The DVD includes the feature film version, chapters and language options (French, Spanish, English Subtitles) as well as access to a study guide.

To buy the VHS or DVD go to www.thecorporation.com/canadaedu.

Animals in your classroom

The BCSPCA has curriculum-based classroom resources for teachers exploring our relationship with animals, people, and

nature. The lessons help build empathy and critical-thinking skills in a co-operative learning environment.

Kindness Counts (K-2) explores the similarities and differences between people and animals. *Friends for Life* (3-5) focusses on responsible animal care and how that relates to our attitudes toward, and treatment of, all animals. *Cluck! The Life of an Egg-Laying Chicken* teaches students about where their food comes from and the needs and natural behaviours of chickens.

Bite Free (K-5) is a guide to teaching dog-bite safety. All the units (except *Bite Free*, which includes an award-winning video) are in PDF format and can be downloaded free of charge at www.spca.bc.ca/Educators.

Many BCSPCA shelters provide presentations to your classroom. Check with your

local shelter for availability. In the Lower Mainland, humane educators are available in all school districts and have temperament-tested animals that will visit your classroom. To book a presentation in the Lower Mainland, call 604-599-7297.

For classroom animal guidelines, animal care information, and information about the BC SPCA Kids Club visit www.spca.bc.ca.



Ten new BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 9972 Teaching for Social Justice: Vancouver, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge Teacher Research.

Edited by Mohammed Shamsher and Elaine Decker, 200 p. ©2004. This book includes research by teachers on teaching for social justice. This collection of research reports by a diverse group of 16 Lower Mainland teachers reflects their passion for, and commitment to teaching for social justice. One of the most striking themes that emerges is that the teacher authors care deeply about their students as human beings and at the same time, care just as deeply that all students have rich opportunities to learn and succeed. \$10

2 LA 8769 Music and Writing

by Rhonda Draper, CD and 18 p. ©2003. Using this CD as a tool, your students will learn how to make a simple sentence, learn about the noun, the verb, the adjective and the adverb, and learn how to "dress up" their writing using the simile. Each exercise is set to a catchy beat or melody allowing your students to develop their musicianship while they learn these important writing concepts. Check out the author's website at www.themusicteacher.ca to listen to a 30-second MP3 sample. Grades 1+ \$25

3 LA 9167A Cowboy Up, Cole

by Iris Tuftin, 113 p. ©2002. This novel is a story about a 12-year-old abused boy from Vancouver who, after a family crisis, is sent by his social services officer to her twin sister's family ranch in Alberta. At first Cole is bitter and reluctant but soon begins to respond to his new friends in the Hollis family who are determined to introduce him to their world of horses and rodeo. Before long Cole is riding and roping but his attempt to influence his young friend negatively, by getting him to join him in smoking, leads to a set-back and his need to redeem himself with heroism. This novel is a good story, and provides a teaching tool to learn about horses and the inside story of ranch life and rodeo, as the author brings a lifetime of experience to her writing. Grades 5-9 \$12.95

LA 9167B Cowboy Up, Cole—Teacher Resource Unit and Novel Study

45 p. This novel study for "Cowboy Up, Cole" contains a variety of types of lessons and activities. Includes reproducible lessons and teacher guided information in a variety of subject areas such as language arts, math, art, drama and equine studies, research activities, group projects, and web site links. Grades 5-9 \$14.95

4 LA 3113 Exploring Aboriginal

Culture: Pow Wow by FORED BC, 262 p. ©2004. This learning resource package includes lesson plans on Totems Tell A Story, Soap Sculptures, Pow Wow Dances, and Traditional Aboriginal Food. Also included are the following resources: basic guide to First Nations names; map of First Nations of Canada; recommended book and website guide; aboriginal perspectives video resources; When Teaching About Aboriginal People; an Historical Look at Canada and BC's Relationship with First Nations; guest speaker information; "Claire and her Grandfather"; learning circle classroom activities on First Nations; It's a Pow Wow game sheet; aboriginal book list for children and seven information booklets. Grades K-3 \$39

5 LA 9502A Life on the Edge: A Guide to Pacific Coastal Habitats

Produced by Earthwise Media LLC, 34-minute VHS videocassette, ©2004. In this beautifully filmed video, explore different marine habitats along British Columbia shores. Meet the residents of sandy beaches, eelgrass beds, rocky shores, estuaries and kelp forests, all struggling to make a living. The emphasis is on adaptations to a variety of coastal conditions. Also included are the forces shaping the shores, tides, and coastal geology. An 11-page teacher's guide is included with suggestions for review, discussion and independent research for each of the seven chapters. Grades 6-12 \$29.95

LA 9502B Life on the Edge: A Guide to Pacific Coastal Habitats—DVD

\$29.95

6 F8512 J'observe les insectes : fourmis, mouches et grillons,

Brillon, Gilles. Éditions Michel Quintin, 82 p. ©1992. Ce livre est un guide d'activités et d'expériences scientifiques faciles à réaliser sur différents invertébrés qui nous entourent. Le livre incite les élèves à observer, à éléver et à faire de petites expériences pour découvrir la vie de ces petites bêtes. 2e-4e année \$15.95

7 LA 1072 A Teaching Unit on Consumerism and Media Literacy

Produced by Victoria International Development Education Association, 20 p. ©2003. Part of VIDEA's Global Learner Series. Other available units in this series from BCTF are LA 1073 "A Teaching Unit on Music and Society," LA 2031 "A Teaching Unit on Global Warming," LA 2032 "A Teaching Unit on Peace and Conflict," and LA 2033 "A Teaching Unit on the Coffee Trade." Includes five lesson plans about consumerism. Students read a case study about consumerism in North America, and they take a critical look at how advertising affects society. Includes overheads, handouts and worksheets. Suitable for use in English and Communications 11 and 12. \$8.95

8 LA 9170 Nonfiction Reading Practice, Grade 6

Produced by Evan-Moor Educational Publishers, 176 p. This resource book provides 20 topics in the following content areas: social studies (the Parthenon, U.S. court system, Queen Hatshepsut, Ancient Olympics and Erik Weihenmayer); science (ultrasound, manatees, Apollo 13, International Space Station and Rachel Carson); health and safety (dangers of smoking, Internet safety and Joseph Pilates); mathematics (the euro, investing for the future and time zones); and the arts (jazz, special effects, Drum and Bugle Corps and Frank Lloyd Wright). Includes a teacher resource page, a visual aid that presents the topic graphically, articles on the topic for three different reading levels, and worksheets. Note that the book is published in the USA. \$19.95

9 LA 2009 Do Some Great Thing

by Anthony F. Brown, ©2004. This 40-min. DVD is a documentary that relates to the story of the first Black pioneers who arrived in B.C. in 1858, establishing settlements on Vancouver Island and Saltspring Island. The documentary presents the trials, tribulations, and accomplishments of the first black pioneers who came to Canada with the intent to integrate not segregate. The documentary deals head on with the issue of racial persecution, which spans two centuries and three countries—Canada, USA and Great Britain. A printed teacher's guide is also included. Grades 10+ \$29.95

10 LA 9662 Portraits of Our Culture

Produced by the Vancouver School Board, 130 p. ©2004. This hard-cover, full-colour book features the art work of Vancouver School district students. Art teachers from 32 different schools helped secondary students mentor elementary students on a variety of collaborative projects around the theme "portraits of our culture." The students painted their portraits on everything from paper to stone, ceramic tile, and found objects. They did wool felting, photography, sculpture, and multi-media. Whatever the medium, the children enthusiastically depicted their diverse cultures in brilliant colour. The images in this collection are powerful in so many ways, and the students gained confidence through shared creativity and new friendships during the process of this successful project. K-12 \$36.95

More curriculum resources and information are available at www.bcalmer.ca.

To order any of the above lesson aids, enclose a cheque payable to the BCTF or authorized purchase order to BCTF Lesson Aids Service 100-550 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 or telephone 604-871-2180 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, Local 2180, with a Visa or Mastercard. GST and postage/handling are included in the prices. Orders are sent by return mail. Lesson Aids office and display room hours: 9:00-5:00 Mon. to Fri. from Sept. to June; 9:00 to 5:00 Tues. to Fri. during July and Aug.; 9:00-12:00 on Sat. during Sept., Oct., Jan., and Feb. bctf.ca/lessonAids

Pension-planning tips for all teachers

by Dale Lauber

If you, as I am, are planning to retire this year, there is some planning to do. The key to preparing for a happy and successful retirement is good planning that starts early and is thoughtful and thorough. The two dimensions essential to good retirement planning are financial and psychological. While the power of investment returns generally encourages an early start to the financial aspect of planning, preparing mentally for retirement is an equally important aspect of planning and should also begin early, well before the event. What can you do to plan well for retirement?

1. *Attend a BCTF Pension Seminar early in your career.* Pension information seminars review the basics of the Teachers' Pension Plan and incorporate changes to the plan rules and regulations as they occur. The information in the seminars will help you maximize your pension benefits and help you to make informed pension decisions throughout your career. The schedule of seminars, held for one half day on Saturdays, appears in this issue, and a poster is sent to each school. There is no cost for the seminars, and registration is unnecessary.

2. *Visit the BCTF web site on pensions.* That web site has a great deal of helpful information regarding the Teachers' Pension Plan. Topics such as purchasing leaves of absence and tax implications of such purchases are covered. You will also find a link to the Personalized Pension Estimator and the Purchase of Service Cost Estimator. Visit bctf.ca/pensions/.

3. *Visit the Teachers' Pension Plan web site.* This site is another good source of information about the Teachers' Pension Plan. Under "Publications" you will find information about purchasing leaves of absence, transferring service from other provinces, applying for child-rearing credit, and even a copy of the Pension Plan Rules. Under "Tools" you will find the Personalized Pension Estimator and the Purchase of Service Cost Estimator. There is also a section of "Forms" so you can

print out and use the application forms for different services. Visit www.pensionsbc.ca, then select "Teachers."

4. *Consider purchasing your leave of absence.* The purchase of a leave of absence will increase your pension. In some cases, however, that purchase may not be cost effective. For example, the purchase of a maternity and parental leave of absence, as defined by the Pension Plan Rules, is always cost effective, as the employer is required to pay its share of the contributions. On the other hand, the purchase of a general leave of absence may not be cost effective for you. For more information on the purchase of leave of absence, visit the Teachers' Pension Plan web site, and use the Purchase of Cost Estimator. This will give the cost of purchasing a leave of absence. Then use the Personalized Pension Estimator to determine your pension at a specific date. Calculate your pension, then go back and add in the pensionable and contributory service being purchased and recalculate the pension for the same date. Compare the increase in the pension with the cost of the purchase to determine if the purchase is cost effective.

All leaves of absence since April 2002 must be purchased within five years of the termination of the leave or termination of employment from the employer, whichever is earlier. Old leaves, leaves that terminated before April 1, 2002, must be purchased before March 31, 2007.

5. *Do some financial planning.* The power of time and investment return on savings makes financial planning an important part of planning for retirement. The earlier in your career you start these savings and investments, the more time they have to grow. If necessary, use the assistance of a financial planner or the services of a financial institution.

6. *Contact the BCTF Income Security Division.* Though we are not able to provide personal appointments, we will certainly respond to specific questions. Use e-mail, alambert@bctf.ca or dlauber@bctf.ca, phone 604-871-1921 or 1-800-663-9163 or

fax 604-871-2287.

7. *Contact the Teachers' Pension Plan.* Your specific pension information is held by the pension plan, and the plan staff can also assist you with your pension questions. Contact Teachers' Pension Plan, P.O. Box 9460, Victoria, BC V8W 9V8, toll free: 1-800-665-6770, Vancouver: 604-660-4088, Victoria: 250-953-3022, fax: 250-356-8977. Web site: www.pensionsbc.ca, e-mail: TPP@pensionsbc.ca

Other pertinent pension issues

Reinstatements

A reinstatement repays to the Teachers' Pension Plan funds that were taken out of the pension plan at some date prior to 1996. The refunds, plus interest, may now be reinstated in the pension plan. There is no time limit on the reinstatement; however, the interest will accrue until the application for the cost of reinstatement is received by the pension plan. Application forms are available from your employer, your local, the BCTF, and the pension-plan web site.

Purchase of less-than-half-time service

A new provision of the Teachers' Pension Plan allows current active members to purchase the time during which they may have worked less than half-time and did not contribute to the pension plan. An application form and detailed information in a publication entitled *Pensionfacts* is available from your employer, your local, the BCTF, and the pension plan web site.

Joint trusteeship of the Teachers' Pension Plan

The Teachers' Pension Plan is a jointly managed pension plan. The Joint Trust Agreement, reached in April 2001, established that the BCTF and the government are the two partners of the Teachers' Pension Plan. Each partner appoints five trustees to the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees. The trustees manage the administration of the pension plan and the investment of the pension fund.

Dale Lauber is director of the BCTF's Income Security Division.

Medical travel insurance

Many teachers are looking forward to travelling during holidays. But 70% of teachers don't carry enough extended health insurance through their employer plans to cover a major medical emergency when travelling outside B.C.—across Canada or out of the country. Almost 100% of the extended health benefits plans (EHB) *don't pay up front* for emergencies. You must do the paperwork and seek reimbursement after you have paid medical bills. This can tie up your funds for months.

One member suffered from fainting spells while just across the border in Washington. He was taken to hospital, checked out, kept overnight, and released the next morning. The bill was \$5,000 U.S. Fortunately, he had purchased out-of-province medical coverage, and

all was taken care of.

Do not assume you are adequately insured before you travel. If you are leaving B.C. for any reason, for any length of time, obtain adequate insurance. You may not wish to risk using up the entire lifetime-coverage limit through your employer's Extended Health Care coverage.

As a BCTF member, you have access to the BCTF-sponsored MEDOC Out of Province/Out of Country Emergency Medical Insurance Plan if you choose. The plan provides travel insurance in one convenient package at a reasonable cost per month:

- Flexible plan options offering multiple-trip annual plans of 17, 35, or 60 days to use as many times a year as you want.
- Premiums as low as \$6 per month include \$5 million of

medical coverage and \$2,000 of trip cancellation and interruption with each trip.

- Medical emergency claims are paid UP FRONT and all the paperwork, including the government portion is taken care of for you.
- Also covers return of your vehicle, your children, pets, extra expenses, emergency dental, and much more.

For more information, call 1-866-799-0000 or visit www.johnson.ca/medoc_bctf.

Have yourself a safe and happy holiday.

— Dave Scott



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Darlene Swan

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Sandra Smith

Clemence Spence

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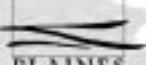
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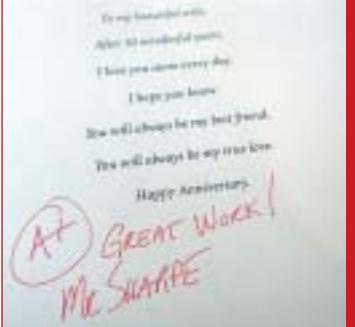
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Lord Roberts School multicultural mural

by Catherine Charnell

The south-facing wall of Lord Roberts Elementary School, on Bidwell Street, in Vancouver's West End, which was previously targeted by graffiti, is now a multicultural mural. The mural project involved students from Kindergarten to Grade 7.

The mural project represents the extremely multicultural student population of Lord Roberts Elementary School. Forty-three countries and 37 languages from around the world are represented by the student population. Many students speak more than one language; some, three or more. Lord Roberts Elementary School is in the heart of Vancouver's West End. On the students' doorstep are Stanley Park and English Bay. Many students live close to the school; multiethnic Davie and Denman streets are their reference points. Some students live in Vancouver's Coal Harbour, a newly developed area of Vancouver along the south shore of Burrard Inlet. Their neighbours include the Bayshore Inn and the Vancouver Rowing Club to the west and the PanPacific Hotel to the east. Until recently, students attending Lord Roberts came from as

Forty-three countries and 37 languages from around the world are represented by the student population.

far away as Yaletown, also a newly developed area of downtown Vancouver, built on the Expo 86 lands. Elementary students who live in Yaletown now attend a new school named Elsie Roy Elementary School; secondary students attend King George Secondary School.

George Secondary School. Teachers were invited to direct their students to submit designs that would depict the students' cultures. Once the drawings were received from the student body, a committee looked over the drawings and chose 11 intermediate students

to be on a design team. The design-team students worked with artist-in-residence Richard Tetrault to incorporate into the mural drawings from the entire student body. The design team consisted of Mandy Behnia, Lydia Chou, Erika and Julia Cottrell, Neil Goltiano, Angela Hu, Michelle Jaramillo, Alexandra Kolesnikova, Yan Marquez Lobik, Marimo Miyamoto, and Andrea Vukobrat. Most of the Grade 7 students who worked on the project have gone on to study at King George Secondary, located on the corner of Barclay and Denman.

The project began with a

proposal for an artist-in-residence grant from the Vancouver School Board. First Baptist Church, of Vancouver, provided additional funding, and Cloverdale Paint generously discounted several cans of paint for the project.

Care was taken by the design team to keep the images as close as possible to the children's original drawings.

Richard Tetrault, an experienced mural painter, was chosen for the project. His murals are visible throughout Vancouver, in community centres, housing developments, banks, and schools. Tetrault has explored various dimensions of collaboration while working with groups including Arts in Action, a Vancouver-based public art group, post-butoh Kokoro Dance, and schools. In 1998, Tetrault was artist co-ordinator for the community-based Walls of Change, a six-month project designed to give the community of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver an opportunity to express both its

uniqueness and its concerns. Other mural locations include The Jim Green Residence, Carnegie Centre, The Four Corners Bank, Ray Cam, Strathcona and Britannia Community Centres, The Four Sisters' Co-operative, and Keefer Street Overpass.

Once the design was agreed upon by all involved, the work went quickly and smoothly. The weather in May co-operated, and the community of Lord Roberts School came together to create a work of art that represents involvement, validation, respect, and inclusion of all cultures. Care was taken by the design team to keep the images as close as possible to the children's original drawings. Students could immediately identify their designs on the mural.

“It is beautiful because it is something that comes from the heart.”

The statements by the students and parent volunteers speak volumes in describing what the project meant for them. An intermediate student, Julia Cottrell, said she felt honoured after it was finished and that every time she looks at it she feels great. Her twin sister, Erika, said that she was "delighted to be involved and loved to feel the stroke of the brush." What was important to Angela Hu was seeing the excitement and happiness in her parents' eyes when they saw the mural. Several parents helped with the painting of the mural, and what they had to say was touching and poignant. Kelly Jogpal said, "When I was painting the mural, it was a nice feeling, seeing the students and parents working together to make the community come together as one! It is beautiful to see what a community can do when they come together." Also, in the words of another parent, Marija Igic Antonijevic, "It is beautiful because it is something that comes from the heart."

Catherine Charnell teaches at Lord Roberts Elementary School, Vancouver.



Back row, left to right: Yan Marquez Lobik, Neil Goltiano, Patti Lefkos (principal of Lord Roberts School), Richard Tetrault (artist in residence), Catherine Charnell (co-ordinator), Andrea Vukobrat, Mandy Behnia. Front row, left to right: Erika Cottrell, Julia Cottrell, Alexandra Kolesnikova, Lydia Chou, Marimo Miyamoto, and Anaela Hu. (Michelle Jaramillo absent.)