

Teacher

Features

2005 AGM Round up	3
Liberal education legislation	4
Why unions matter	6
Liberals target women and children	7
Will school boards be back in the red after the election?	7
Rush to mediocrity	8
The hinterland is hurting	9
Voice les raisons qui ont conduit les enseignants de la C.-B. à prendre part à l'élection du 17 mai	11
Report-card templates for primary and kindergarten grades	12
College of Teachers 2005-06 fee information	12
Commercialization in B.C.'s public schools	13
Prince George district school closures	14
HEU support for BCTF	15
Under 18s to vote in provincial election	20

Columns

President's message	2
Readers write	2
Looking back	3
Health & safety	10
On being well	11
Teachers' tips	14
Ten new BCTF lesson aids	15
Pension seminars	16
Classified ads	18
PD Calendar	19

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

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More than 700 BCTF AGM delegates marched to the provincial legislature carrying 2,500 red balloons to mark the 2,500 lost teaching positions, and placards bearing the name and location of each of the 113 schools closed by the Liberal government since 2001. Local presidents delivered to a representative of the government, petitions signed by teachers demanding a restoration of contracts, bargaining rights, and learning conditions stripped from collective agreements.

Think of the 3Rs May 17

Rights, resources, and respect

by *Jinny Sims*

"A child is a child only once." This sentiment surfaced in the 1986 provincial election following four years of cutbacks to education funding by a government that also slashed funding and support in virtually every realm of public service. It's an important statement about public education and the role it plays in a democratic, pluralistic society. And it is relevant today.

Children cannot and should not have their education depend upon how well the economy is doing while they are in school. The education we provide in the K-12 system is a foundation for

Locals have developed plans to help get a change in government direction through this election, and I encourage you to become involved in that campaign.

the life and future of the individuals in our classrooms at any given time. Funding for that education should be stable and adequate to ensure that every student gets the educational resources and support that she or he needs to be a successful learner and future citizen.

Over their four years in government, the Liberals have underfunded public education, downloading major costs to school boards, forcing them to

cut services, change school calendars, close 113 schools, increase class sizes, reduce the services of specialist teachers, and terminate the employment of over 2,500 young and able teachers. The Liberals didn't have to do that!

The decision of the Liberal government immediately after the election in 2001 to give tax cuts to a well-to-do segment of the population set the stage for the underfunding and resultant cuts in education services that are the hallmark of their four years in office. And 28 one-time education-funding announcements in 26 months is symbolic of the government's inability to manage secure and stable funding for one of our most important public services.

The Liberal government has been unapologetic about its attack on the rights of B.C.'s teachers: our bargaining rights as employees, our professional rights as teachers and our citizens' rights as parents. In four short years, the government took away our right to full and free collective bargaining by removing our right to strike and by making it illegal to bargain major terms and conditions of our employment. And when we have had minor legal victories against their assault along the way, they have simply changed the law. They have created an imbalance at the bargaining table in favour of the employer that takes us back almost 20 years. We have had favourable rulings against government actions from the International Labour Organization of the United Nations. But the rulings have been ignored by the

Campbell government. And central to its education-funding cuts was the government legislation that stripped from our collective agreement existing provisions on class size and composition and specialist teacher staffing ratios. That allowed school boards to cut the services to students that were

Work for change. It is the only reasonable response to the Liberal government's damaging policies, for teachers, for students, and for public education in B.C.

protected by the agreement. And the government completely eliminated agreements in a number of our locals in amalgamated school districts.

Not satisfied with removing our basic collective-bargaining rights, the government launched a major attack on our professionalism when it took over the College of Teachers. It was an insult, and remains an insult, to every teacher to say that we are incapable of regulating our own profession through a process of democratic elections. Add to this the government's decision to deny teachers the right to serve as parent representatives on school planning councils in their children's schools, and you begin to get a sense of the contempt this government feels for teachers.

Respect comes when our rights are recognized and accepted. It is not possible for a government to say it respects teachers and the work that we do in the classroom when it is not prepared to grant us the basic rights accessible to other organized employees and professions in society.

The lack of respect for the teaching profession by this government is further demonstrated by its unwillingness to consult with teacher representatives on matters of education policy that directly impinge upon our work as teachers. An example is the unwillingness of the Premier's office to include your representative as a participant in his recent Literacy Summit. How is it possible to discuss literacy initiatives without representatives of teachers present? How can a government responsibly shape the direction of education in this province without listening to the advice of its teachers?

When you examine the history of BCTF involvement in provincial elections, major efforts have always occurred when teachers want a change in government. That was certainly the case in 1972 and again in 1991. The underfunding of public education, the assault on our rights, and the lack of respect for the profession is each by itself good enough reason for us to want to work for change.

So, as we teachers go to the polls on May 17, the issues of resources, rights, and respect will be foremost on our minds. But experience in past elections

President's message



We are approaching one of the most important moments in the history of public education in our province. The provincial election campaign will be one of the tightest races ever, and the stakes have never been higher for students and for teachers.

You are well aware of the devastating impact of BC Liberal policies in our schools and communities. Just imagine what the situation will be four years from now if those policies are not reversed.

At our recent Annual General Meeting, we heard from Jukka Sarjala, a Finnish educator, who inspired us with his account of the respectful relations between the teachers' union and government, and the outstanding results that system creates through a deep commitment to quality and equality.

Closer to home, we have the example of Ontario, where the Harris Tories intentionally created a crisis in education. Like the BC Liberals, they cut hundreds of millions of dollars and destabilized the system through rapid, unfunded changes.

Ontario teachers knew they had to get engaged in the political process if they were going to stop the Harris wrecking ball. And their hard work paid off with the election of the Ontario Liberals, an education-friendly government that recently signed an accord that provides for 5,000 more elementary teachers. It will significantly improve teachers' working lives and enhance learning opportunities for students.

What's the lesson for us from Ontario? We have to do everything in our power to elect a government that respects teachers, restores our bargaining rights, and provides the resources necessary to do the job professionally and with pride.

Over the last three years, we have managed to keep education front and centre in the public dialogue. In recent months, we have made it a vote-determining issue. In the coming days, we need to ensure that people get to the polls and vote for public education.

Thank you for all your hard work, in your classroom, community, and constituency.

Jinny

Schools can be saved

Thank you for the quality articles that are written in the *Teacher* newsmagazine.

I was touched by the article about Aldergrove Elementary, written by Sue Mackenzie and Monica Zurowski. In Coombs (near Parksville on Vancouver Island), our little school is a heritage site that has suffered the similar threat of closure for many years, too. Recently, a hard-working committee got "Community School" status for us, and it saved our school. Our elementary school, with Kindergarten through Grade 5, is now called French Creek Community School. I suggest that may be an option for Aldergrove Elementary to pursue, as well.

Thank you!
Cathy Van Herwaarden
Qualicum

Teacher has great insights

Kudos to Pat Clarke and Lori Robinson for providing a focus on the impact of current political/economic trends on the education system. The articles provide a context for understanding a profound shift in the culture and climate of public education over the past decade or so. As a recently retired teacher who maintains a consultative relationship with a large school district, I have been able to reflect, with increasing objectivity, on a pervasive ennui approaching, despair and cynicism, within teachers.

Prior to retirement, I wondered if it was just me. Asking different questions now, and comparing the climate with that when I began teaching, in the 1970s, I believe that Clarke's analysis provides some way of understanding why teachers, both young and old, seem less than enthusiastic about their vocation. "Back in the day," as my daughter says, we were excited to be engaged in a profession that put holism, creativity, spontaneity, cultural and political emancipation, and environmental awareness on centre stage. Today, particularly around reporting periods, classes and staffrooms are infused with the pervasive sense of surveillance and evaluation, flowing from the demands for accountability. These forces permeate the system from Kindergarten to post-secondary education.

Writing in *The Vancouver Sun*, on March 1, Michael Stevenson, president of SFU, typifies the trend. For him, education is about "investing in and nurturing the rich and lasting economic potential" of our province. Cultural diversity is, for him, a means to the end. Once, educators I knew were driven by a different proposition: that a vibrant economy could be the basis for a richly diverse culture.

The grey pall of despair that saturates the halls of learning has multiple sources. Svi Shapiro, writing in the March/April issue of *Tikkun*, notes that "the real curriculum of our children's lives is their subjection to the constant

influence of a culture that turns every aspect of life into a commodity." The alternative narrative, which flourished so brilliantly and briefly a few decades ago, though currently submerged and subjugated, is still available. It would mean that students be engaged in the totality of their beings, not as repositories for literacy and numeracy. It would mean that students be provided space in which critical thought and the problematization of knowledge can be encouraged and develop. It would mean that education centrally concern itself with the ethical quality of our lives and that, as Shapiro puts it, "awaken in each person the sense of beauty, wonder, and preciousness of all life on the planet and the interdependence that makes continuation of this life possible." May the BCTF and *Teacher* be a vehicle for such a resurrection.

Scott Lawrance
Manson's Landing

Teacher wow

I have been enjoying *Teacher* newsmagazine so much lately.

In particular, the Jan./Feb. 2005 issue, with the web of control, the letter from the principal of Magee, and the revelation about how much money goes to the Fraser Institute. Wow—it's worth keeping for reference.

So thanks to everyone who works so hard and does such an excellent job.

Kerry Richardson
Surrey

Teacher wonderful

I am a special education teacher with SD 69 (Qualicum). I just wanted to write to tell you what a wonderful magazine you publish. The articles are written in a superior way and are always of timely interest. My husband is a chemistry professor at Okanagan University College (soon to become UBC—Okanagan). When he comes home to visit, he always picks up my *Teacher* and tells me what a great magazine it is. Being a professor at the post-secondary level, he finds that the articles provide him with information about what is happening at the secondary level for students.

C V

Stay out of same-sex debate

I am not at all pleased that the BCTF has decided to get into this same-sex debate. What gives the BCTF the right to support this matter on behalf of teachers? The BCTF cannot and should not be a part of this debate on my behalf as it does not express my opinion on the subject. How can the BCTF support writing to MPs and imply that teachers in general are in support of this anathema? All teachers should have a free "vote" on this subject, and the BCTF should keep its collective nose out of this type of debate and get on with the job of supporting teachers on things pedagogical. Period.

This debate is not part of any homophobic hysteria—it is an all-

out attack on the family unit as it was designed and created to be multi-millenia ago by the God of this universe. He ordained it, and we mess with it at our extreme peril. It is time to put this legislation where it belongs—in the trash. Marriage is a sacred institution and is fundamental to our existence as human beings. Let gay folk have their legal and tax status, etc., but do not call it marriage, for marriage it is not.

Rupert Gruen
Kelowna

BCTF and gay marriage

As an openly gay teacher who recently married my partner of 17 years, I applaud the BCTF's public position in support of same-sex marriage. Part of our work as a social justice union is to support the full inclusion and equality rights of all our members as well as those of the same-sex families we teach. As professionals, we must check at our classroom door, any personal, religious, or moral opposition to homosexuality we have. Our responsibility is to teach the provincial curriculum and model in words and deeds that every family has equal value within society.

I attended public schools in Surrey and Abbotsford, graduating in the latter some 25 years ago. My public school experiences were ones of daily harassment and terror at the hands of homophobic bullies. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) teens of today tell me little has changed in many public schools. Indeed, the B.C. Safe Schools Task Force reported in 2003 that homophobia was commonplace in many B.C. schools.

In July, my husband and I were married in the heart of Conservative MP Randy White's riding in Abbotsford. What a powerfully emotional event to come full circle and publicly affirm our love for each other in a community that once caused me so much harm as a youth. Attitudes of social conservatives like Randy White, including colleagues within our profession, need to be challenged as archaic. In the public school system, we should strive to truly support LGBT students and take pride in their achievements. Our union's public support of same-sex marriage is just one step in that long process.

James Chamberlain
Surrey

In honour of 100 years

Glenwood Elementary School, in Burnaby, formerly Riverway East, and known as Dundonald in 1905, is holding an open house from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., on October 5, 2005, World Teachers' Day. We are looking for students, teachers, staff, parents, neighbours, and district associates to bring the history to us prior to the open house. We are holding an afternoon tea on May 26, 2005, and guests will be interviewed by student teams. Please contact us at wkanno@glenwood.sd41.bc.ca, or call 604-664-8800.

B.C. is back!

The B.C. Liberals and their supporters have been running ads claiming "B.C. is back!"

Unfortunately, they are right. Under the Liberals, B.C. has moved back. It is disturbing to realize how far back.

B.C. is back

to 1993, the last year the minimum wage was \$6 per hour.

B.C. is back

to 1987, the last time there were no class-size limits for Grades 4–12.

B.C. is back

to 1979, the last time people had to work more than 40 hours a week without overtime.

B.C. is back

to 1927, the last time employers could hire 12-year-old children.

Another broken promise: stable funding

"Give school boards multi-year funding envelopes, to improve long-term education planning and budgeting."

(A New Era for British Columbia, BC Liberals, 2001)

Between December 2003 and April 6, 2005, the BC Liberals have made 28 one-time-funding announcements regarding education: 28 one-time-funding announcements in 26 months. The announcements total \$148 million, of which \$60 million goes to places other than the classroom.

Some examples:

- \$2.1 million to the B.C. Public School Employers' Association
- \$250,000 for a private special-needs school
- \$300,000 to CanWest papers' Raise-a-Reader Campaign
- \$12 million for public libraries
- \$150,000 for AOs to supervise teachers
- \$5 million to train AOs
- \$11.3 million to parent advisory councils
- \$5 million to TELUSphere, formerly Science World (Over the last two years, Telus has given the BC Liberals almost \$100,000.)

Timing is interesting. Between September 3, 2004, and the Surrey by-election, on October 28, there were seven one-time-grant announcements, totalling \$16 million.

The totals do not include announcements for capital projects or seismic upgrades. Teachers receive the announcements through the media.

General Provincial Election

May 17, 2005



Newsmagazine of the B.C. Teachers' Federation
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ISSN 0841-9574

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Volume 17

#1 September 2004

#2 October 2004

#3 Nov./Dec. 2004

#4 Jan./Feb. 2005

#5 March 2005

#6 April 2005

#7 May/June 2005

Copy Deadline

August 20

September 17

October 22

December 17

January 19

April 1

April 22



PRINTED IN CANADA BY MITCHELL PRESS LIMITED



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AGM keynote speaker

2005 AGM Roundup

by Glynis Andersson



PETER OWENS PHOTO

Professor Jukka Sarjala, of Finland, explained to the AGM delegates how stable long-term planning, respect for teachers, and a focus on teaching and learning keep Finnish students at the top of international tests.

Impressions of my first AGM...



Laura Barker
Invergarry Learning Centre, Surrey

All teachers should have the opportunity to go to at least one AGM and experience the democratic process in action. The vast variety of issues that were covered emphasized the importance of strong involvement in our local unions to stay informed on important issues in working and learning conditions. The passion expressed on so many issues—from socially responsible investment in pensions to membership in the Canadian Labour Congress—was both moving and invigorating. I am astounded at the level of commitment and depth of knowledge of the hundreds of delegates who gave up their spring break to work on improving the profession for students and teachers. It was a fascinating experience.



Carl Janzé
Templeton Secondary School, Vancouver

I come away from my first AGM with my passions rekindled. The obvious commitment and vision of the delegates to protect and nurture the students in B.C. classrooms has quashed the cynicism I had felt was looming ever larger, what with the stories we hear about teachers in the papers and on television/radio. I can only offer my heartfelt thanks and relief that there still are those who are prepared and able to voice their anger over the state of our classrooms thanks to this government.

To paraphrase an anecdote related to us by Maude Barlow, of the Council of Canadians, "Fighting for what's right is like taking a bath... If you don't do it every day, you stink."

The 89th BCTF Annual General Meeting, in Victoria last month, was a tremendous success.

Jinny Sims was returned as president, Irene Lanzinger as first vice-president, and Susan Lambert as second vice-president. Jill McCaffery, George Popp, Lynda Toews, Fran Robinson, and Val Windsor were all elected members-at-large.

Jim Sinclair brought greetings from the B.C. Federation of Labour, Barry O'Neill brought greetings from CUPE, and Penny Tees, from the B.C. School Trustees Association, also addressed delegates. CTF President Terry Price spoke on the activities of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Keynote speaker Jukka Sarjala delivered a fascinating presentation on why Finland is ranked number one in education. Professor Sarjala, former director-general of the National Board of Education in Finland, told delegates what he believes are the reasons behind Finland's extraordinary success in public education.

He spoke of the principle of equity integral to Finnish culture, of how students' health and welfare are of primary consideration, of how learning is student-centred, and how teachers are highly respected and given extensive autonomy. He also informed the audience that few private schools exist in Finland and that there are no standardized tests other than the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Sarjala also pointed out that Finland has many small schools, noting that only 3% of schools have more than 500 students, and no schools have more than 1,000 students. He discussed philosophy and pedagogy with regard to heterogeneous groupings, special education, and collaborative practice between teachers and school authorities.

Equally captivating was Maude Barlow's informative presentation on the American agenda for trade relationships with Canada and its impact on education and virtually every other aspect of our lives.

BCTF AGM delegates listened attentively as Barlow exposed the agenda being set for Canada by George Bush, Paul Martin, and a very powerful business lobby, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. She painted a truly frightening picture of what the future holds unless we unite to resist American dominance and the nearly unstoppable march toward privatization.

Imagine a North American passport or, a North American logo that would be promoted throughout public schools. Unfortunately, these aren't merely figments of the imagination. They are actually being planned in meetings between government and business officials.

According to Barlow, we are now at the point where nothing is "off the table" in Canada's trade negotiations with the U.S. Our water and our oil is up for grabs. The oil from our Athabasca tar sands is feeding the American war machine.

Maude Barlow also spoke about privatization in health-care, education, and welfare services as well as the danger posed by the U.S. Patriot Act.

She said that the goals of those setting the trade agenda are contrary to what Canada is about, but "they will not take the soul out of us because we are the keepers of democracy, the keepers of public education!" Barlow thanked the BCTF for being a leader in Canada in speaking out against this trade agenda.

The 2005 Annual General Meeting also included a summary of the recent BCTF Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey. The response rate to the survey was excellent, with more than 14,500 submissions. Some key issues highlighted by the survey include an increase in students with special needs yet fewer resources to deal with this situation and dissatisfaction with large class sizes. Furthermore, a full 90% of respondents indicated that their workload had increased to meet accountability requirements. (*Editor's note: A big thanks to all of you who took the time to send in your survey.*)

Since the overarching theme of this year's AGM was privatization, it seemed only logical to hear from the BCTF Task Force on Privatization. Delegates were shown a seven-minute video that captured the highlights of the *Public Education Not For Sale II* conference held in February. That was followed by a very compelling talk given by Rick Guenther of the Task Force. He spoke about the work the task force had been engaged in over the last year and why it is so important

to make resisting privatization a top priority. He concluded by stating that the role of the task force "is to impede the insidious encroachment of the market into the public space."

And given that the AGM was held in Victoria, there was a rally at the provincial legislative buildings. Over 700 BCTF delegates marched to the legislature carrying 2,500 red balloons to mark the 2,500 lost teaching positions, and placards bearing the name and location of each of the 113 schools closed by the Liberal government since 2001. Local presidents delivered petitions signed by teachers from their locals demanding a restoration of contracts, bargaining rights, and learning conditions stripped from collective agreements to a representative of the government.

BCTF President Jinny Sims told the media covering the rally that the BCTF has three key demands: restoration of students' learning conditions to where they were in 2001, restoration of fair collective bargaining rights, and a fair and reasonable wage increase.

The 2005 AGM had many moods. Delegates mourned the loss of teaching positions and closed schools, they celebrated the contributions of their peers including Mavis Lowry and Dale Lauber, they decried the injustices foisted upon teachers and students by the Liberal government, and at the end of it all, they went back to their schools and communities with a commitment to spend the next

year working to improve public education.

Glynis Andersson is an administrative assistant/writer in the BCTF's Communications and Campaigns Division.

AGM sets priorities for 2005-06

In order to support members in their day-to-day work with and for students by providing effective leadership and advocacy in support of public education and by involving members in the professional, economic, and social justice initiatives of the Federation, delegates to the 2005 Annual General Meeting set the following priorities:

1. Advocate for full, free collective bargaining.
2. Reclaim a strong professional leadership role for teachers.
3. Highlight and extend the social justice initiatives of the Federation into the work of locals, PSAs, and other programs of the Federation.
4. Expand organizational capacity with a focus on engaging new members.
5. Increase our involvement in the labour movement through affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress and continued affiliation with the B.C. Federation of Labour.



PETER OWENS PHOTO

BCTF Executive Committee 2005-06

L-R: Jill McCaffery, member-at-large, Susan Lambert, 2nd vice-president, George Popp, member-at-large, Val Windsor, member-at-large, Jinny Sims, president, John Chisamore, member-at-large, Fran Robinson, member-at-large, Jim Iker, member-at-large, Kathleen Thomson, member-at-large, Irene Lanzinger, 1st vice-president, and Linda Toews, member-at-large.

LOOKING BACK

70 years ago

Today that young corporal, still only 45, is Commander-in-Chief of the German army, Chancellor and President of Germany for life, Der Fuhrer, or leader, of hundreds of thousands of brown-shirted Nazis. Adolf Hitler, the Austrian, wields more power in Germany than ever did either Bismarck the Iron Chancellor or Kaiser Wilhelm II. In him Austria has avenged her defeat by Bismarck in 1886. Upon his shoulders rests the fate of 65,000,000 Germans and the peace of 400,000,000 Europeans. Who and what manner of man is this who has climbed to such dizzy heights of power?

— April 1935, *The BC Teacher*

50 years ago

There are several signs that those in education are becoming more public relations conscious—a trend we heartily support. It has been said that

effective public relations consists of doing a good job and getting credit for it, but we submit that the ratio should be at least 90% "doing" and 10% "credit seeking." Newspaper, magazine, radio, and television publicity serves a real purpose but there is no substitute for individual contacts in school public relations. Each of us is a public relations officer.

— April 1955, *The BC Teacher*

30 years ago

Despite the importance of their contribution even now, schools are not invariably deeply committed to improving teacher training programs since, quite rightly, they do not view it as their responsibility. What incentive is there to take on extra work? The situation would be entirely different, however, if the school system were made responsible for teacher training and teaching loads were adjusted in accord with degree of participation in the training

program. Only within the school is there a genuine opportunity to shape the practical experiences of the student teacher.

— March/April 1975, *The BC Teacher*

10 years ago

"Clarence Notree barely had time to act when a gunman burst into the elementary school gym," reported the Associated Press. "As the bullets flew, the physical education teacher spread his arms to shield the children and pushed them out the door to safety. He got shot in the wrist. His school and community lauded Notree as a hero, but the Chicago Board of Education insisted that he wasn't entitled to workers' compensation benefits. It said that saving children's lives was not part of his job."

— April 1995,

Teacher newsmagazine
Chris Bocking, Keating Elementary School, Saanich.

Liberal education legislation

TEACHER March 2002 11

10 TEACHER March 2002

January 28, 2002: A day of protest

MORE THAN 38,000 TEACHERS RALLIED IN 40 COMMUNITIES

Victoria: 7,500



"...both [sub-locals] marched in -32° weather, bearing coffins with slogans condemning the government."
-McBride/Valemount

Vancouver: 14,000

"Woe, I never expected the solidarity—the anger. They should have seen our members today!"
-Armstrong



Surrey: 3,500



"...over 250 teachers and other supporters briefly blocked Highway 99 on their march to the park school trustee Constance Fuka spoke to a hushed crowd. Spirits were very high."
-Hoare Sound

"This is an uphill battle, but today we felt there just might be wheels on the wagon!"
-Vernon



"Our members travelled for 100 miles with banners and marched in the villages and communities with blaring horns, all in -18° weather!"
-Nisga'a

Windermere: 175



"...headline in local paper reads: Teachers swarm courthouse in protest—dozens brace the bitter cold in response to Campbell's end to labour dispute. ...Princeton needed this day because lost their collective agreements and our members are devastated."
-Princeton



"Close to 100% of members showed up buoyant and determined to oppose legislation that will likely see Kimberly teachers face a salary reduction. This is an unprecedented level of solidarity in our local."
-Kimberley

"...we set out 400 chairs, which were all filled and 200 to 250 more people standing."
-Maple Ridge

"...over 300 teachers at the rally."
-Peace River North

Prince George: 1,000



"...three separate rallies in three communities and -37° weather be damned! For a cold day in hell, this was a pretty good day."
-Nechako

Legislation or action	Description	Impact
August 9, 2001 (3rd reading) <i>(Protection of parent volunteers) Amendment Act, 2001</i>	Authorizes parents to be volunteers at schools. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)*	Undermined collective agreement provisions that differentiated between support staff roles and volunteers. It was used to imply that volunteers were not welcome when in fact teachers encourage parents to be involved in schools. Attempt to create division between parents and teachers.
August 16, 2001 (3rd Reading) <i>Bill 18—Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2001</i>	Makes education an essential service under the <i>Labour Relations Code</i> . (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	Limited teachers' bargaining rights. The Liberals did not repeal the law despite a ruling by the International Labour Organization that declared their legislation to be in violation of international labour conventions.
October 3, 2001 Liberals announce they intend to freeze public education funding until 2004		Liberals break their campaign promise to protect education funding. Downloaded significant additional costs onto school boards, thus creating a total funding shortfall of over \$300 million. Resulted in cuts to programs and services for students, closure of 113 public schools, loss of over 2,500 teaching positions, fewer specialist teachers, and introduction of the four-day week in some areas.
January 27, 2002 (3rd Reading) <i>Bill 27—Education Services Collective Agreement Act</i>	Provides for the constitution of a collective agreement between the BCTF and BCPSEA and provides for the appointment of a commission to review procedures for collective bargaining in the education sector.	Imposed the teachers' collective agreement. After falling behind inflation for the past nine years, teachers' salaries increased by two-and-a-half percent in each of three years. In several amalgamated districts the contract of one local was unilaterally imposed upon the other. "Collective agreements negotiated by teachers in Fernie, Kimberley, Golden, Creston-Kaslo, Keremeos, Princeton, Lake Cowichan, Kitimat, Armstrong-Spallumcheen, and Burns Lake have been effectively ripped up by the government," said David Chudnovsky, BCTF President.
January 28, 2002 (3rd Reading) <i>Bill 28—Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act</i>	Gives school districts, colleges and institutes the power to determine class sizes and to set the school calendar. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	Eliminated key provisions that teachers have negotiated over many years. Class size limits were stripped from the collective agreement. Class size limits for primary students have been increased province-wide, and have been placed in government policy, not contractual guarantees. Kindergarten class sizes increase from 20 to 22 students, and Grades 1-3 increase from 22 to 24. Government policy on Grades 4-12 class sizes are now based on district averages, not firm limits. Guaranteed services to students with special needs and guaranteed support from specialist teachers, such as librarians, counsellors, ESL and learning resource teachers, were removed from the collective agreement and handed over to the discretion of school districts. Resulted in larger class sizes, particularly in intermediate and secondary grades, less support for students with special needs, and fewer teachers. Paved the way for school districts to introduce the four-day week, extended spring vacations, and other cuts to the school year.
February 5, 2002 Liberals announce they will not fund the cost of the imposed contract for the second and third years.	School boards required to fund teacher salary increases for 2002-03 and 2003-04.	Forced boards to make cuts to public education, including school closures and reduction in teaching positions, less support for students with special needs, fewer specialists. Since September 2002, the size of classes has increased and the services provided by specialist teachers such as librarians, counsellors, learning assistance teachers, ESL and others have been cut. At the same time as the number of students in each class increased, support for students with special needs were reduced.
March 1, 2002 Liberals announce a new education funding formula. In previous years, teachers have been included in developing the technical aspects of education funding, but they were shut out of the discussion.	The new formula eliminated targeted funding, except for Aboriginal education, and eliminated the cap on administrative spending. Offloaded the accountability from the ministry to local school boards.	The Liberals gave school boards the autonomy and control to decide which services and programs to cut. A confidential cabinet briefing document outlined how the new funding formula could insulate government from criticism and hold boards accountable for the consequences of provincial policies.

Legislation or action	Description	Impact
March 28, 2002 The Select Standing Committee on Education released its report on the mandate, governance, management, and service delivery in the K-12 and post-secondary systems.	The report contained a number of recommendations unacceptable to teachers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further measures to undermine teachers' right to strike and to bargain collectively; • Establishment of a College of Educators and recommendation that membership in that organization be the only compulsory membership for professional educators. • Privatization measures 	The report provided the Liberals with a blueprint for furthering their attack on the professionalism of teachers and increasing the privatization of educational services.
May 13, 2002 (3rd Reading) Bill 34— <i>School Amendment Act, 2001</i>	Establishes school planning councils and district parent advisory councils. Enables school boards to conduct entrepreneurial activities. Makes various amendments regarding enrollment, catchment areas, and allocated funding. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	Minister Christy Clark said that the bill would give parents a greater role in school decision-making. Bill 34 was tabled in the legislature the same day that Vancouver parents went public with their criticism of the cozy relationship between the B.C. Liberals and the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils. Declares that school board employees cannot serve on the school planning council at their own children's school. Under Bill 34, the minister and the lieutenant-governor were granted expanded powers to fire school boards. Allowed school districts to set up school district business companies to facilitate profit-making.
September 20, 2002 Ministry reneged on special purpose technology grants which totalled \$10 million per year. In 2001-02 the ministry did not make payments for the final 30% of the grants, and did not inform school districts that the payments were cancelled.		Some school boards had already purchased computers or other technology resources, and were told to cover these expenses out of the per-pupil funding. This is another example of the ministry downloading significant costs to school boards which do not have budget funds available. Implication is cuts to programs and services for students.
April 23, 2003 Ministry Christy Clark tabled changes to the Grad Program in an open cabinet meeting.	Includes Grade 10 in the Graduation Program, and mandatory Grade 10 and 11 exams.	May impact students who have borderline marks and result in an increase in the Grade 10 drop-out rate.
May 1, 2003 Task Force on Rural Education report released. May 29, 2003 (3rd Reading) Bill 50— <i>School Amendment Act, 2003</i>	Report recommends reviewing the funding for rural schools. Provides for the appointment of students to school planning councils and amends the rules for determining priority for enrollment in education programs. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	The majority of schools closed due to lack of funding are rural schools. Report signaled online learning, private partnerships and regional administration as alternatives for rural school districts. No significant impact on teachers.
May 29, 2003 (3rd Reading) Bill 51— <i>Teaching Profession Amendment Act, 2003</i>	Restructures the composition of the College of Teachers' governing council to add government appointees, provides for interim council appointed entirely by government, and requires college members to report professional misconduct.	B.C. Liberals took over control of the College of Teachers to implement their vision of professional standards (teacher supervision, recertification, etc.). Teaching was no longer a self-regulating profession. Majority of college councillors appointed by government. Teachers were required to report on colleagues' professional misconduct. The college no longer had a say in approving teacher-education programs. Members of the public can directly file complaints against teachers. The college must report directly to the minister on college matters, including competence of members. The minister has the power to disallow college by-laws. Appointees on the council gain additional powers. The operations of the new, undemocratic college will still be paid by members' fees. In October 2003, the college developed "Standards for the education competence and professional conduct of educators in B.C." without any input from people who actually teach children. Many of the "professional standards" are so general they are meaningless but some of the others appear to threaten teachers' democratic rights as citizens.
October 8, 2003 (3rd Reading) Bill 37— <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2003</i>	Amends provisions governing the employment of children. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	Allows employers to hire children as young as 12 with nothing more than a note from home. Removes onus on government to inspect and determine safety of worksite for children. Employers no longer need permits for hiring children aged 12 to 15. British Columbia now has the weakest labour standards for children working in North America.
April 22, 2004 (3rd Reading) Bill 19— <i>Education Services Collective Agreement Amendment Act, 2004</i>	Makes retroactive changes to the teachers' collective agreement. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	The legislation ensures that there can be no contractual guarantees of class-size limits, services to students with special needs, or support from specialist teachers in B.C. schools. Section 1 took the provisions stripped from the collective agreement by arbitrator Rice in August 2002, and restored at least in part by the B.C. Supreme Court in January 2004, back out of the agreement, retroactively to July 1, 2002. Section 3 deleted from the <i>School Act</i> the provisions which created the stripping arbitration process in the first place, retroactively to January 28, 2002. Section 5 prevents adjudication of grievances which rely on stripped language, no matter when they were filed. It does not change the scope of bargaining permitted by the <i>School Act</i> for the next collective agreement. It does not endorse Arbitrator Rice's interpretation of the permissible scope of that bargaining, nor does it overturn the Supreme Court's decision on that issue.
May 18, 2004 (3rd Reading) Bill 55— <i>Teaching Profession Amendment Act, 2004</i>	Makes amendments to the B.C. College of Teachers' governing council and the duty to report professional misconduct. Merges certification and membership in the college. (Source: <i>B.C. Legislative Digest</i>)	Bill 55 provides for a 20-member council comprised of 12 elected members, eight appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, at least three of whom must be college members, and one nominated by the deans. Eight college zones to be established by regulation. Teachers must report on colleagues' professional misconduct. A member who has reason to believe that another member is guilty of professional misconduct must report to college registrar. Report must be made even if belief is based on privileged information or is confidential and forbidden from disclosure by other legislation. This change makes two improvements. The professional misconduct that must be reported is limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct in relation to students. "Student" is defined to mean what it means in the <i>School Act</i> and the <i>Independent School Act</i>. • "physical harm to a student," "sexual abuse of sexual exploitation of a student," and "significant emotional harm to a student." The "reason to believe that a person is guilty" still applies. This makes the duty to report more consistent in scope with duties applicable to other professionals.
October 5, 2004 Minister of Education announces the maintenance and expansion of the supervision of learning program.	The province will provide additional funding for the program, which focuses on enhancing the supervisory skills of school principals and vice-principals.	The BCPVA has received at least \$400,000 to train its members in teacher supervision. Has created a climate of fear and low morale in schools. Workshop on supervision of learning being offered to administrative officers around the province. 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 violates the contract language around evaluation.
December 16, 2004 The Minister of Labour releases the government commissioned report on teacher collective bargaining.	The report by Commissioner Don Wright recommends the further stripping of teachers' bargaining rights. The report accepted 14 recommendations from the employer's side and none from teachers.	Recommends final offer selection as the dispute resolution mechanism. Institutionalizes government interference in teacher bargaining. Proposes reduced bargaining rights for teachers.

* *B.C. Legislative Digest* is edited and published by the British Columbia Courthouse Library Society, Vancouver, B.C.

Effects of cuts on home economics

by Jenny Garrels

Thirty excited Grade 8 students stream into the foods room ready for a lab. Their teacher is busy at the front of the room getting supplies ready, making sure everything needed for the lab is in place as she knows that once they begin there will not be time for anything else. The students will be doing another flour-based lab, which is not popular with them, but flour is cheap and the budget will not allow for much in the way of fresh fruit and vegetables or high-quality protein items. The teacher has just rushed in from the textiles room, where she spent the lunch break helping students with their projects. The school fashion show is only two weeks away, and the pressure is on to finish projects. She notices that the teaching assistant who usually accompanies the four designated students with special needs in the foods class is absent. She must be away from school, which means no replacement, so the foods students sit in their seats eager to begin, but have to wait until the work groups are reorganized to accommodate the change in staff. Once the lesson is under way, the teacher moves around the room checking on progress, dodging backpacks and coats; there is barely room to move in some units. Perhaps it is a good thing the inadequate budget limits labs using fruits and vegetables—that would mean the crowded students would be using knives! It used to be that the teacher could take the time to mark as she went and stop to give one-on-one assistance. These days, there is time for trouble-shooting only.

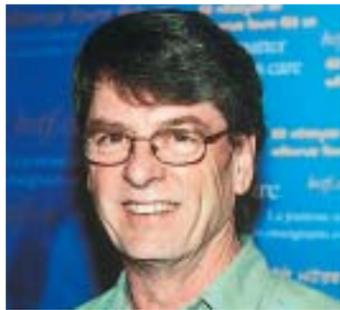
The inadequate budget means that equipment is not repaired or replaced, so resources are scarce, and she now spends much of her time shunting equipment from one unit to another. As the students leave the room at the end of the class, she walks around picking up stray laundry items and forgotten binders; the room had been so crowded, it was not apparent

These days, there is time for trouble-shooting only.

that the items had been forgotten. Thirty students in a room designed and equipped for 24 takes its toll on the condition of the room and the teacher.

Does this sound like fiction? It is the reality played out in home economics rooms across B.C. Larger class sizes, more students with special needs, less support, and shrinking budgets are the ingredients in a recipe for trouble for home economics. Teachers know the conditions are a safety hazard for themselves and their students, and they go home exhausted, still having to face marking, prep work, report cards and, in many cases, grocery shopping. Home economics teachers love their jobs, and they are doing the best they can, but it is taking a heavy toll. Many of us can't believe how difficult our jobs have become. After 10 or 20 years of teaching, it should be getting easier, not impossible!

Jenny Garrels is president of the Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association.



Lorne Landry, Cariboo-Chilcotin speaks out

Class sizes increased at all levels after the Liberals stripped our contract.

At one high school, we have 24 classes over 30, the largest being 36.

Now we have as many as 9 out of 30 students on IEPs in regular classrooms.

In at least one of our high schools, we have up to 80 students wandering the halls because they cannot get the courses they want and need.

We have to use science texts from pre-1980. Some students are having to share textbooks.

Effects of cuts on mathematics

by Marc Garneau

Increased class size affects all teachers. Issues arise in some of the other content areas in a more critical way perhaps than in mathematics classes, but there are a couple of concerns I would like to point out. First of all, many mathematics students benefit from one-on-one support from their teacher. Support occurs in class and also outside of class time. For the students who struggle with the increasingly difficult concepts, and those who are striving to achieve top marks given the highly competitive university entrance and/or scholarship requirements, that support often makes the difference. As the number of students requiring such support increases, the ability of teachers to provide it decreases—hence student achievement declines. Second, with a larger number of students it becomes increasingly difficult for teachers to assign and collect performance tasks or regular homework—the assessment of which provides crucial information to the teacher and the student about problems with mathematical process and understanding. Unit tests and quizzes end up having a greater impact on students' marks, and the opportunities to assess "for learning" diminish.

The new graduation requirements have also zapped the time and energies of teachers as schools and districts grapple with how to support student portfolios, course selection, and Grade 10 provincial exams. While the Grade 10 provincial exams will count for only 20% of a student's mark, the external reporting of student performance, coupled with the data's being used for District Accountability Contracts, artificially increases the importance of the exams, and can ultimately drive instruction. The richness of learning experiences commonplace in our Grade 10 mathematics classrooms will be grudgingly discarded for the oversimplified accountability of high-stakes standardized testing. This is especially true for the Essentials and Applications courses, whose students' success is due, in part, to the more project- and inquiry-based approach to instruction,

learning, and assessment. That the exams are 100% machine scorable is also a concern; it sends the message that the correct answer is to be valued over the process. By eliminating the opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding in thoughtful and creative ways, the examiners ignore crucial principles of mathematical development. Further, the cost savings of having machines create and score exams (after the initial development) is seen as outweighing the system-wide benefit of including educators in writing, revising, marking and thus learning more about expectations for good teaching and learning.

We are also concerned that both the Grade 10 and 12 exams are now held secure. The valuable experience for both teachers and students to sit after the exam session to discuss how it went is now much more difficult to attain.

With so many cuts to the ministry staff, curriculum development, among many other things, suffers. On the plus side, we have been fortunate that the ministry staff has kept open lines of communication with us and has shown a willingness to listen. This is most recently true with the support for getting feedback on the proposed new WNCIP Mathematics K-9 curriculum.

Marc Garneau is president of the B.C. Association of Mathematics Teachers.

Ontario teachers reach accord

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) announced that it had reached a four-year accord with the provincial government. The accord will see the provincial government provide sufficient funding to local boards in order that each elementary teacher will receive 200 minutes of preparation time by 2008. (The current range for prep time is 130 to 200 minutes per week.)

Other features of the accord include funding that would provide for:

1. caps on class size and supervision duties (specifics not provided).
2. salary increases of 2% in 2004 and 2005, 2.5% in 2006, and 3.0% in 2007.
3. additional staffing for 1,300 teachers in the areas of art, music, and physical education. (As many as 5,000 additional teachers could be hired over the term of the accord.)

The cost of the accord is estimated at \$500 million.

The current work to rule (no staff meetings or other administrative duties) will be lifted as of Monday April 18. This will allow individual boards and teacher unions to reach an agreement within the framework of the accord. If contracts are not reached by June 1, 2005, ETFO will resume its work to rule.

Gerard Kennedy, the education minister, said this of the agreement reached, "I think we have a very good deal if you look at what's involved here that is beneficial, and I believe it will stand up to whatever scrutiny is applied... In some ways, peace isn't expensive in education because everyone desperately wants it."

Why unions matter: Are we lions or lambs?

by Virginia Brucker

"Do I believe in arbitration? I do. But not in arbitration between the lion and the lamb, in which the lamb is in the morning found inside the lion. I believe in arbitration between two lions or two lambs. When a man puts a pistol to my head and tells me to deliver, there is no arbitration. There can be arbitration only between equals. Let us organize: then we will stand on an equal footing with the employers."

—Rocky Mountain News, February 10, 1888

Yesterday was one of our local union's two important general meetings. I was anticipating a large turnout—these are troubling times for educators and our students. We and thousands of other employees in B.C. have lost much, and face losing much more, in the coming years. As I looked around the church hall, I was glad to see so many familiar faces. We were predominantly a graying group—the majority of us are over 50 and will be leaving in record numbers over the next few years. The attendance was not what I'd hoped for.

As we hear more about the Wright Report, I began to worry about the working and learning conditions and long-term well-being of our younger colleagues. If accepted, the report has very troubling implications. And who will fight to have it overturned? Many of our union's executive members will retire over the next few years. Will our younger colleagues come forward to take on roles in our local and in the BCTF? Can we take for granted the future of the B.C. Teachers' Federation, which has always been such an advocate for political, social, and economic justice for our members, for our students, and for the working people of our province? Will the hard-won benefits the Federation and our members have achieved be legislated out of existence by the Liberals? Once lost, they may be gone forever.

Teachers care deeply about social justice and equality—we are caring people. It's what we do. And we know that our working conditions are inextricably bound to our students' learning conditions. When we stand up for working conditions, we stand up for children. Why are many of us reluctant to attend union meetings? Are we lions or lambs?

I've had many discussions with colleagues about the role of our union.

"My family didn't belong to unions," was one response. "We don't believe in them."

"I'm not political," said another. "I can't do that stuff."

"Unions served a purpose in the 1970s, but they aren't really necessary these days," was another comment.

Although I am only 51, I remember when we were not members of a union. I can remember when teachers and public-sector employees in B.C. had few or no rights. Benefits were nonexistent. Salaries were so poor that teachers worked evenings, weekends, and summers at other jobs. We weren't the only ones. I remember the years before medical and dental plans—it took my grandfather years to pay the debts incurred

when my father and his sister had serious childhood illnesses. Visits to the dentist were infrequent—many people had full dentures by their early 20s. My father grew up in a home filled with elderly relatives. Dad jokingly called it the Marpole Infirmary and Old Age Home—there were no pensions and wages were very poor. It wasn't much different on my grandmother's side. Aunt Bertie had no permanent home. Deaf from the age of eight, she had no income and lived a few months at a time with various relatives until my Aunt Stell took her into her two-bedroom 800 square foot home. Another aunt worked for Eaton's in Winnipeg for over 50 years. Her pension in 1975 was \$147 per month for her service. When she lived past 80, it was reduced to \$123. She was fiercely loyal to her employer and took great care to tell me that "Mr. Eaton will look after us." We had some lively discussions about unions when she came to visit. It was hard for her to envision a world in which loyalty, commitment, and hard work were not enough to protect employees. Is history about to repeat itself?

The actions of the B.C. Liberal Government over the past four years have eroded collective bargaining and working and learning conditions for educators—inadequate funding has severely impacted teachers and students. Despite pre-election promises that health-care would not be privatized, we've watched friends and neighbours in the health sector lose their jobs when services were contracted out. We've seen HEU employees accept a 15% pay cut in order to prevent the loss of more jobs. We've watched BC Rail be dismantled. We've seen jobs at BC Hydro and our medical records plan lost to international corporations. Election promises are easy to make—we know that actions speak louder than words. And yet, in our heart of hearts, many of us continue to believe that it will be ok, that it isn't appropriate or necessary for us to be "political."

If accepted, the "Wright Report" recommendations will further erode the rights of teachers. One of the recommendations is that benefits be reduced for part-time teachers. This would particularly impact our younger members, who often work part time for several years before obtaining a full-time position. It would also affect teachers who work part time while bringing up their children. Will the maternity leave and care of sick child days that unions have worked so hard for be available in the future? Will sick days be available for any of us?

Another recommendation of the Wright Report affects our salaries. The report states that the government can claim they don't have the resources to pay increases. Yet this year, the Liberal government is claiming a \$1.9 billion dollar surplus. Don't get excited—none of it is intended for you. Over the past decade, we have had many years of little or no salary increase. Sometimes we've accepted no raise in order to protect our class sizes, only to lose class-size limits later on. The increase in the cost of living is an enormous concern. Despite

government claims that inflation has been low, we know that statistics about inflation don't reflect the actual increase in the cost of living—housing and energy costs are not included. Volatility in energy prices has been a real concern. Many communities in B.C. have had a 28% increase in property values this year—what will that mean to our younger colleagues and their futures? What will another decade of wage freezes mean to teachers of all ages? Many of our parents will need financial support in the years ahead. Our children will need help as the

tuition fees at technical school and colleges soar. If this is a “new era of prosperity,” as the Liberals claim, are we to be excluded?

It's hard to imagine what B.C. will look like in the future if the Liberals are re-elected. I think we can assume that the rights of teachers and other public-sector employees will continue to be under attack. What will happen to the thousands of hardworking public-sector employees in B.C. who have lost their jobs to contracting out recently? How will they retire? What will happen to our local businesses

as disposable income becomes scarce. What will happen to the children of our province as many of their parents' jobs are contracted out for slightly above minimum wages? It is up to all of us, those nearing retirement, and those just beginning our careers, to take an active part in our local union and our Federation. It is essential that we become involved in the upcoming election. Our very futures depend upon it.

Virginia Brucker teaches at Nanoose Bay Elementary School, Nanoose Bay.

Pre-election smoke and mirrors

The Campbell government seems to have trouble with numbers. After inflicting overwhelming cuts on almost all services in government, on the eve of the election it is restoring a fraction of the cuts and hoping that partial restoration of funding is welcomed by voters. One of the latest examples is funding for special education.

On February 11, 2005, a news release from the Ministry of Education was headlined: Province to do more for students with special needs. It went on to say “The province will provide an additional \$3.7 million as part of a plan to increase support for students with special needs.” According to the release, government's commitment in the throne

speech was to increase funding for special education students by a projected \$28 million next year to a total of nearly \$260 million. There is one very big problem with the \$260 million figure. On

Giving a few crumbs back after stealing the loaf may backfire on the Campbell government because it reminds voters of what was taken away.

March 22, 1999, a Special Education Review Team was established. Its report is on the Ministry of Education's website. According to that report: “In

1999/2000 the Ministry of Education allocated \$422,790,218 to special education. A preliminary review of the 1999–2000 school board preliminary budgets shows that \$54,000,000 above the Ministry of Education target minimum has been budgeted for special education.” In other words, after the recent government funding announcements are implemented, the amount of funding for special needs will have been cut by \$162.79 million (38%). That makes the \$3.7 million look rather small. Giving a few crumbs back after stealing the loaf may backfire on the Campbell government because it reminds voters of what was taken away.

Source: David Schreck, strategichoughts.com

Liberals target women and children



by Jane Turner

Don't believe the Liberal Party ads you are seeing on TV as the election nears. Things are not rosy in Lotus Land. According to the evidence, women and children are getting roasted in Gordon Campbell's British Columbia.

At the 2005 Annual General Meeting of the BCTF, the Status of Women Social Justice Action Group gave a presentation detailing the litany of cuts brought to bear on women and children by Gordon Campbell's Liberals. The cuts affecting any single sector of our society are bad enough, but the package of cuts because the Liberal version of a tsunami—devastating and overwhelming.

The following are just some of the facts contained in the Status of Women Action Groups' PowerPoint presentation sent to local presidents. The cuts will affect mostly women, children, and immigrants, many of whom are part-time workers.

- \$860 million has been cut from social services.

- Despite inheriting a \$1.3 billion surplus, medical premiums were increased by 50% or \$494 million dollars.

- Of the over 20,000 public-sector jobs cut since 2001, 75% were held by women.

- Employees are now paid for statutory holidays only if they have worked 15 of the last 30 calendar days.

- If employees want to lodge a complaint under the *Employment Standards Act* they only have access to an English-language, self-help kit. Once a complaint has been made, there is no obligation on the part of the government to investigate.

- The Human Rights Commission has been abolished. Human rights are no longer a matter for civil society; they are only a matter between individuals.

- Women with children over the age of three do not qualify for social assistance, but \$24 million was cut from daycare spending and a \$7-a-day cap for before- and after-school care was eliminated. While the \$24 million has now been restored to daycares, those centres that lost the funding have closed and often, licensed daycare is no longer available.

- 4,000 beds in residential care facilities have been closed.
- An estimated 6,000 to 8,000 seniors no longer qualify for

government assisted elder care facilities.

- All government core and operational funding for women's centres was cut in 2004.

- Legal aid was cut by 40%, most of the cuts coming from family, immigration, and civil law. Criminal law, mostly accessed by men, was only reduced by 10%. Now a woman who is abused by her spouse doesn't qualify for legal aid, but her spouse, the abuser, does.

- Post-secondary tuition fees are up 67%, and education grants have been eliminated.

The conclusion of the report states, “Last year, the government claimed a surplus of \$865 million. This surplus was achieved on the backs of the middle class and the poor.” The title of the presentation says it all: “The damage has been done.”

All local association offices received a copy of this PowerPoint presentation. To see the full text, ask your local president for “The damage has been done.” It's well worth watching.

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

Will school boards be back in the red after the election?

by Noel Herron

Funding freeze looms after 2006

Only three small newspapers across the province zeroed in on the alarming likelihood that once the BC Liberals' increased pre-election education funding grant was accounted for, that school boards would find themselves back in the red after the election.

School trustees, parents, and other education partners emerging from four years of damaging, cumulative cutbacks were so pleased that, their cash-strapped schools were about to begin a rebuilding process that most of them missed the looming funding freeze the BC Liberals had cleverly inserted into their three-year, projected plan.

But the proposed rebuilding of schools and, with it, the hope of sustained reinvesting with stable funding vanishes once the pre-election funding is spent, after 2006, as the appallingly inadequate \$20 million for 60 school districts is divided up across the province.

And now that the initial euphoria is evaporating, B.C. secretary treasurers who have done the math are pointing with growing alarm to projected deficits for many, if not all, school boards in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Thus, on examination, what we have in place, after the initial boost, is an *ipso facto* funding freeze for public schools in B.C. over the next few years. (See table.)

Using their massive public relations machine (30 press releases in education alone, not counting recycled announcements, since January), the BC Liberals are once more endeavouring to bamboozle a dubious public that they are adequately funding public schools.

Their ongoing doublespeak drew an outraged letter recently, to the *Nelson Now* newspaper, from Bruce Schimpf, principal of Salmo Elementary School, who wrote:

“There are times when one gets so angry when reading the [Liberal] news releases in the paper that one has to respond...” In one particular piece of the article Mr. Sufferdine (the local Liberal MLA) suggests that there have been no cuts to education since the Liberal government has taken over.

Bruce Schimpf nails the issue on the head when he points out, “The influx of millions of dollars is, in my opinion, simply a good portion of the money that was taken from the education system in the past few years and now as an election approaches is simply being returned. Somewhat similar to what the government has done to the healthcare system, money being taken away and now being miraculously returned to the system. Hello Mr. Campbell, the people of the Kootenays are not that naive.”

You will be told that the provincial government is generously funding public schools, that the per student grant is at record levels, and on and on with the self-congratulatory and deceptive bulletins. But

when the projected provincial \$20 million annual grant is divided up across the province, school board budgets will tell a vastly different tale.

Even with the current boost in election funding, a few boards will be compelled to run deficits this year.

The sad but undeniable fact remains: Despite the BC Liberals' manipulation of figures, if re-elected, based on their three-year service plan, they will again put in place a pattern of three years of cutbacks followed by a substantial infusion of funding on the eve of another election. This yo-yo funding pattern guarantees instability in our public school system, with cuts to programs, services, and supports for our students the order of the day. The all too familiar pattern of staff layoffs will start all over again.

Education funding is not a tap that you turn off between elections and turn on when you are seeking re-election.

No wonder a recent national poll finds that politicians head the list of people who are viewed with tremendous distrust by an increasingly skeptical public.

It must be stated, with great clarity, that the provincial government's \$20 million will not even cover the basic, on-going statutory and non-statutory costs that school boards must meet over the next few years: pensions and benefits, BC Hydro heating bills, a new provincial student information system, provincial curriculum initiatives imposed with no added implementation funding, increased transportation costs, and other inflationary costs.

The projected Consumer Price Index are 2.6% for 2006 and 2.9% for 2007, while the proposed provincial increase of \$20 million to school boards amounts to a pathetic increase of 0.5% of the total provincial education budget.

Once more, the Liberals are planning to download costs to school boards. Recall the unfunded increase in teachers' salaries in 2002, that was suddenly dumped on boards and the all too familiar smoke and mirrors game the BC Liberals play so well with education underfunding emerges. Their repeated use of one-time grants, criticized by school trustees at the trustees' recent annual general meeting, which provide only temporary relief from cost pressures, will continue.

One hopes that that trenchant old adage, “You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time,” comes into full play during the election now under way.

One person the BC Liberals are not fooling is Bruce Schimpf, the principal of Salmo Elementary School, in the Kootenays.

Year	Funding
2005–06	\$150 million
2006–07	\$20 million
2007–08	\$20 million

Source: Ministry of Education operating budget document, p.1, March 15, 2005

Noel Herron is a Vancouver School Board trustee. He chairs the VSB's Personnel and Staff Services Committee.

Rush to mediocrity: The BC Liberals' campaign against quality teaching

by Pat Clarke

Since their election in 2001, the BC Liberals have engaged in a willfully thoughtless mission to make teaching a "normalized occupation" rather than a "caring profession." The BC Liberals see teaching as meeting quotas, performance standards, and measurable outcomes. In their world, teaching is more comparable to an industrial trade. The consequence is that the art of teaching and the creative energy inherent in quality teaching are submerged in a morass of frantic activity focussed on outcomes and goals rather than on the vital questions of how, why, and what children should be learning.

Teachers spend less time on what makes our teaching really matter, or the art of teaching, and more time on the technicalities of meeting norms and standards. We are driven from quality teaching to an imposed mediocrity that disregards individual student needs in the interests of standardized results.

The BC Liberals and their agents have led the march to mediocrity through bureaucratic pronouncements and slogan-driven system management.

These are the signposts on British Columbia's low road to mediocrity in teaching:

"If it can't be measured, it doesn't matter."

We have encountered this pearl of pedagogical fascism or other manifestations numerous times in sessions with ministry officials and their minions in school districts. The obsession with data gathering, testing, and re-testing is borne out in the emphasis on testing in the Graduation Program and the predominance of FSA results in school "goal setting."

The downside of a data-obsessed school system is simply ignored or mowed over by the tub thumping crusaders for the "best education system in the world." Best at what, and for what purpose? Don't ask.

The message to teachers: Teach to the tests.

"It's all about achievement."

We hear this mantra more often than "If it can't be measured..." probably because it has such an irrefutable air. Who can criticize "achievement"? The problem, however, is that the BC Liberal/ministry view of achievement is distressingly narrow. Achievement is tied to success on tests or what the "data" tell us. The tests really don't test very much. They are narrow in scope and tell us relatively little about what students are doing in school. In that narrowness and simplicity, they do serve a useful political purpose: They give politicians and bureaucrats a pedestal from which to trumpet success.

The message to teachers: Keep it narrow, keep it simple, dumb it down.

"Any learning, any place, any pace"

In this is the BC Liberal/ministry hallucination that the school system is a sort of 24-hour convenience outlet. Distance education, online courses, learning by web conference—whatever the format—learning is a commodity, and teachers are purveyors of a product. Never mind the traditions of neighbourhood schools, the importance of community-based, community-oriented schools, and the irreplaceable value of one-to-one, face-to-face teacher-student interaction. This is about education for the global marketplace. Communities, lasting relationships, and meeting individual needs of students are of little material value, so they are expendable.

The message to teachers: You're an interchangeable part.

Teacher supervision, or "supervision of learning"

The supervision-of-learning scheme is the business end of the accountability hammer. It is supposed to be the "check" on how teachers are doing at meeting school and district goals. Teachers who are not cutting the mustard are to be "corrected." Monitoring systems like this one usually have the

opposite effect of that intended. While they may ensure some adherence to the plan, they throw a blanket over creative teaching and generally discourage risk-taking by teachers. They don't improve the system; they stultify it.

The message to teachers: Watch your back. Don't take any creative risks.

"Flexibility"

One would think flexibility and the enhanced local decision making that goes along with it would be a blessing. In fact, it has become a curse. All the BC Liberals mean, at least as far as public schools are concerned, is the flexibility to decide what cuts to make. Closed schools, staff cuts, and altered school calendars are the legacy of Liberal "flexibility." Teachers know that bogus "innovations," like adding a few minutes to a school day to allow for whole-day closures later on, are only about saving money and not about what is good for student learning.

The message to teachers: Cost cutting first; quality education second.

Professional autonomy for teachers? What's that?

The accountability project (testing, school goal setting, teacher supervision), combined with resource shortages brought on by a cost-cutting-obsessed management, allows very little space for teachers to exercise professional judgment. The work of teachers is increasingly a job and less a profession as we are preoccupied by the demands of system management. What we can do to meet the individual needs of students, a concern that should be the focus of our work as professionals, is a consideration secondary to the necessity of coping with the effects of scant resources and short-sighted, misguided management.

The message to teachers: You are an employee, not a professional. Just follow the directives.

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



PETER OWENS PHOTO

Jennifer Auld, Vancouver Island West, speaks out

Prior to 2002, my school had the services of a teacher counsellor. After 2002, our contract was stripped of non-enrolling-teacher ratios, which meant school boards do not have to provide students with librarians, counsellors, LAT, and the like. What has hit Zebellos students the most is having no counsellor support. In the past two years, our community has seen the murder of one of our students, the death of a young mother of six children, and a suicide pact, and despite all these events we still have no counsellor. We need a trained professional who can meet these needs and work proactively to alleviate the stresses of tragedy, poverty, and isolation that our students face on a daily basis.

Liberal values

A wealthy entrepreneur once said, "Money is a way of keeping score." It is interesting to check the score by looking at some of the financial decisions the B.C. Liberals made once they came to power in 2001.

The Liberals cut taxes mainly for the wealthy and corporations. The 8,000 people with the highest income in the province receive \$200 million a year, thanks to the tax cut.

The Liberals increased the pay of deputy ministers by 32%. The heads of crown corporations had pay increases as high as 750%.

Paying people not to work

Gordon Campbell made a lot of changes at the taxpayers' expense. *The Vancouver Sun* reported on July 27, 2001, that the new government had fired 170 people and spent over \$9 million on severance pay. Since that report there has been at least another \$3 million to pay people not to work for the government. Here are a few examples:

- Lecia Stewart, president of the Millenium Sky Train Project: fired; received \$402,000 in severance.

- Jaap Tuinman, CEO of the Open Learning Agency: fired; received \$430,000 in severance.

- Chris Haynes, former Ministry of Children and Families deputy minister: received \$289,000 severance and \$233,000 in accumulated vacation pay as a result of the Doug Walls scandal. Total payout: \$522,000.

- Nick Geer, president and CEO of ICBC: forced to leave; received \$477,000 in severance.

- Bob Smith, CEO of the Fraser Health Authority: fired; received \$323,000, equivalent to one year's salary.

The Liberals have spent at least \$12 million to pay people not to do their job.

Cutting the pay of the people who work

Although the Liberals promised not to privatize health care, that has been one of their major projects. Thousands of

support staff jobs at hospitals have been privatized, and the pay for those jobs has been cut in half. Jobs that once paid \$18 an hour are now paying between \$9 and \$10.

The workers who did not have their jobs privatized have had their pay cut by 15%. By defying a court order to return to work, the workers stopped a retroactive wage cut and the privatization of another 6,000 jobs. The Liberals tried to compare the work performed by the Hospital Employee Union members to that of hotel staff, but concern is growing about security, rates of infections, quality of food, and the cleanliness of our hospitals.

The score appears to be slightly lopsided, in favour of those who least need government support.

Tens of thousands of students in oversize classes

Almost 43,000 B.C. high school students are crowded into oversize classes for some academic courses, according to BCTF research.

Recent analysis of data collected by school districts reveals that secondary school classes have grown far beyond what would have been acceptable only a few years ago. Since 2002, when the B.C. Liberals stripped class-size protections from the teachers' collective agreement, classes have grown larger in every grade.

"It's no surprise that learning conditions have deteriorated without contractual protections, but we were surprised at the scope of the class-size problem," said Jinny Sims, president of the B.C. Teachers' Federation. "With almost 43,000 kids in oversize classes, it's a huge issue for students and teachers who are under intense pressure to constantly improve achievement."

The Ministry of Education has stopped collecting class-size data. However, legislation requires school boards to maintain a district-wide average of 30 students per class and therefore districts do collect the information. Because teachers believe so strongly that reasonable class sizes are key to quality education, the BCTF filed a freedom of information request for the class-size data reported by districts last September. The BCTF was able to use the information to build a database that represents about 90% of the classes in the province. Elementary data will soon be available as well.

There was too much data to explore the situation in all secondary classes, so several courses were selected for close examination: Science 8, Social Studies 9, Biology 11, English 11, and English 12.

At the provincial level, the classes with more than 26 students in Science and Biology and 30 students in English and Social Studies were identified. On an aggregate basis, at least 26,227 students are in Science classes with more than 26 students and 16,558 students are in English and Social Studies classes of more than 30.

The data has been provided to locals on a provincial overview basis and on a school-by-school basis for secondary schools.

—Larry Kuehn

Presentations at the AGM



PETER OWENS PHOTOS

Above (left) Pat Brady is awarded the AGM gavel after chairing his last AGM. Brady has attended 45 AGMs and chaired for approximately 25 years. (Right) Alan Crawford, Vancouver, is this year's recipient of the G.A. Memorial Fergusson Award.



AGM delegates rally at the Legislature carrying 2,500 red balloons, symbolizing the teachers lost to underfunding, and cards with the name and location of the 113 schools closed in four years under the BC Liberals.

Campbell Liberals are repeat offenders

With an election just around the corner, the Gordon Campbell government's outlaw status in the international community has been confirmed by a key United Nations' agency.

In a March 23, 2005, response to a complaint lodged by several labour organizations including the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, the Health Sciences Association, and the Canadian Labour Congress, the International Labour Organization (ILO) concluded that legislation passed in 2003 violated international conventions that protect workers' rights to freely associate and organize.

One of these laws, Bill 94, attempts to deny contract workers in healthcare the basic successorship rights enjoyed by workers in other sectors. Bill 94 was designed to sharpen the attack on healthcare workers first introduced via the contract-breaking provisions contained in Bill 29.

The ILO wants the B.C. government to repeal or rewrite Bill 94 to bring it into line with international labour standards.

The latest finding makes the Campbell Liberals repeat offenders.

In 2003, the UN agency found the Campbell government in violation of the same convention on freedom of association after it passed Bills 27, 28, and 29, which gutted collective agreements in healthcare, education, and post-secondary education.

Campbell's response at the time betrayed a shocking contempt for international labour standards when he stated that he had no intention of making the changes needed to comply with the ILO ruling.

Source: *HEU Guardian*, April 2005.



Elena Hutchinson, Vancouver, speaks out

Class size has increased in many intermediate classrooms. Last year, I had a class size of 33 Grade 5/6, including two international students, four First Nations students, one child with severe autism, and five ESL students.

This school year, I have 28 Grade 5/6 students, of which five are ministry designated. Eight students are awaiting testing and as a result are currently not receiving any services.

We have lost the services of a youth-and-family worker. Counselling time, speech-and-language-therapist time, psychology time, teacher-librarian time, and resource-teacher time have all been cut.

I am currently teaching a Grade 5 math with 10 textbooks for 20 students, a textbook that is outdated and doesn't reflect the prescribed learning outcomes of today's IRP.

The hinterland is hurting

by Kathleen Cherry

In the past four years, Coast Mountain School District has closed five elementary schools, increased class size, decreased staffing, both teaching and support staff, and adopted a four-day school week.

On March 16, the board voted to keep schools closed one day a week. "We're not dealing with what's best, but rather looking at what is the least harmful of several options," explains Peter King, a school trustee for the amalgamated district, including the communities of Terrace, Kitimat, the Hazeltons, and Stewart.

The controversial four-day week was first implemented during the 2003-04 school year, and trustees openly admit that the change was considered for budgetary, as opposed to educational, reasons.

"I would have a four-day school week rather than vote to close another school," says Barry Pankhurst, a Kitimat trustee. Two of the community's five elementary schools were closed in June 2002 and closure of a third was discussed in spring 2004.

According to trustees, a chronic lack of government funding and declining enrolment have forced rural boards to take drastic measures. Ironically, a vicious circle has been created as parents lose faith in public education, choosing to enrol their children in private schools, home school, or leave northern communities, further decreasing school enrolment and adding to the district's financial difficulties. Enrolment at Coast Mountain School District has decreased by 1,445 students since January 2000, with further drops anticipated.

The four-day week is one of the more controversial measures implemented by the school board, and both teachers

and parents have been outspoken about its impact.

"Our children are the guinea pigs. We will not know the results or the damage this has caused for many years to come. I truly feel it will harm them (children) at the university level," says parent Catherine Mercer, who has been tireless in advocating increased ministry funding.

According to trustees, a chronic lack of government funding and declining enrolment have forced rural boards to take drastic measures.

Educators second those concerns. Kindergarten teacher Pat Mouland explains that it is hard to cover even the basics and impossible to spend much time on esoteric subjects like the fine arts. She also notes increased difficulty in establishing routines when such young students are away from the classroom for three days every week.

Similar worries are noted by elementary special education teacher JoAnn Hildebrandt. "The longer day is particularly difficult for children with learning challenges," Hildebrandt explains. "Work is being presented at a faster rate, and they have less time to absorb and understand."

Like Mouland, Hildebrandt finds that many children forget newly taught material over the three-day break.

Nor is it any better in the higher grades, as secondary school teachers also struggle with the shortened week. Days at Mount Elizabeth Secondary School (MESS) run from 8:30

a.m. to 3:38 p.m., with only 45 minutes scheduled for lunch.

MESS teacher Tina Watchorn says her personal teaching style has changed into a "read, and answer the question format," which allows for little creativity for teacher or student.

"Afternoon classes are very trying for exhausted students and teachers, resulting in a negative ambiance and personal perceptions, neither of which supports learning," says Watchorn.

This has been compounded by increased class size, particularly evident at the high school level. During the last year, trustee Peter King says that the district class-size average increased from 26.2 to 27.

The long days make it difficult to find time for parent phone calls or meetings, negatively affecting on parent/teacher communication. Watchorn reports increased stress in both herself and her colleagues. "You know what needs to be done, but you have no time or energy to do it."

MESS is also run on a semester system, which means that all teachers have one semester without a prep.

"The stress is evidenced through depression, sleeplessness, defensive behaviour, and withdrawal from friends in attempts to conserve energy," Watchorn says. She adds that she may choose to purchase a prep next year and, although glad for the option, she is also keenly aware that that choice, brought about by the four-day week, will cause her to lose monetarily in salary and pension.

Nor does the three-day weekend compensate for the stresses of the week.

"In a five-day week, I had enough energy left over that I could enjoy my weekends, not just try to recuperate for the

upcoming week," says social studies teacher Reid Nelson.

Parents and students also find it hard to maintain a balanced life during the four-day school week. "If my kids aren't at school, they're at home doing homework four days a week. I appreciate that their teachers are trying to fit the curriculum in as best they can, but the four-day school week does not allow for a balanced life," says, mother of two, Pat Mouland.

And concerns for education in the Coast Mountain School District are not limited to the four-day week or larger class sizes. Trustees and teachers also recognize that it is increasingly difficult to recruit teachers with sufficient expertise. Morale is also at a low ebb in Coast Mountain School District.

Teaching resources are also sadly inadequate, and janitorial, secretarial, and all CUPE jobs have been cut to the bone.

Moreover, according to trustee King, the Coast Mountain School Board has not received any capital funding for repairs to the district's aging facilities. MESS alone requires a \$6 million physical upgrade, but no money has been allocated to the project.

"The longer day is particularly difficult for children with learning challenges..."

Meanwhile, King adds that given this massive underfunding, he sometimes feels he's "rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*" as opposed to properly meeting the education needs of local students.

Kathleen Cherry teaches at Kildala Elementary School, Kitimat.

Fool me once, shame on you.

Liberal promises 1996

Tax cuts for wealthy
Reduce government
Privatization

Liberal promises 2001

Tax cuts for lower-income levels
Protect government services
No privatization

Liberal Actions 2001-05

Tax cuts mainly to wealthy and corporations
Cut government services
Privatized—BC Hydro, BC Rail, hospital services

Liberal promises 2005

Tax cuts for the poor
Improve government services
No mention of privatization

Fool me twice, shame on me.

The premier's words

"First of all, I don't believe in ripping up agreements."
— Gordon Campbell in an interview with a representative of the Hospital Employees' Union, November 2000

"My government's goal is to leave British Columbians confident that they can trust us."
— Premier Gordon Campbell, speech at Cabinet swearing-in ceremony, June 5, 2001

"What I always try to do is follow what I understand the rules to be."
— Premier Gordon Campbell, quoted in *The Vancouver Sun*, February 18, 2005

The premier's actions

- Ripped up the teachers' agreement.
- Ripped up the hospital employees' agreement.
- Ripped up the nurses' agreement.
- Ignored a ruling by the International Labour Organization that he had overstepped his authority in ripping up agreements.
- Brought in legislation to overturn a court decision undoing his stripping of part of the teachers' agreement.
- Overturned an arbitration award for doctors.
- Sold part of BC Hydro after promising not to.
- Sold BC Rail after promising not to.
- Privatized BC Ferries after promising not to.
- Spent \$6 million attempting to privatize the Coquihalla Highway.
- Privatized services in hospitals.
- Passed legislation encouraging school districts to set up private companies.
- Overturned an arbitration award for provincial prosecutors, March 1, 2005.

There is a disturbing difference between Campbell's words and actions.

On May 17, 2005, we have the opportunity to let him know that we do *not* support his agenda of privatization and attacks on workers and their rights.



Duane Morelli, Chilliwack, speaks out

Class sizes have exploded in some areas, while in others, enrolment has dropped drastically. Schools in wealthier areas have services that lower socio-economic schools/areas don't have. Parents are pulling their students from our inner-city schools and moving them to schools they perceive as "have schools."

Our teachers are becoming overwhelmed with the number of students placed in their classrooms who previously received support and/or funding and no longer receive those supports. Often, students who receive supports have to share those supports with other students, and there has been a severe loss of TA support. Many teachers have been inundated with IEPs; essentially they teach "ungraded classrooms."

Several of our inner-city neediest schools have lost learning assistance time and have seen their teacher-librarian time reduced. Overall there has been a loss of 60% of our librarian time in the last three years.

Massive cuts have affected our students' ability to succeed in class. They come to school hungry, they often lack supplies, and without childcare before or after school, they are often alone. More and more children are forced to work as their families are unable to meet basic needs.

Health & Safety

Gordon Campbell and the Liberals hurt workers

by Mark Keelan

The BCTF and its locals have done an outstanding job making education an issue in the upcoming election. The policies of Gordon Campbell and his government have had a seriously detrimental effect on teachers and students. At the same time that the Liberals have been vapourizing collective agreements, closing schools, and laying off teachers, they have also been busy eliminating important health and safety protections and Workers Compensation benefits.

Prior to the 2001 provincial election, employers complained that health and safety regulations and compensation benefits were "job killers" and got in the way of British Columbia business's being "globally competitive." Campbell promised that he would cut regulations by one-third and would revamp the compensation system. Unfortunately for workers, that was one promise he kept.

In 2001, a panel of administrators governed the Workers' Compensation Board. As the Liberals were coming to power, the panel had put the finishing touches on a tough antismoking regulation. The new government asked the panel to water down the regulation, and it refused. In response, the Liberals used Section 229 of the *Workers Compensation Act*, a section that entitles the government to overrule a WCB decision. The panel was replaced by two temporary administrators, an accountant and an actuary. One of the new administrators' more regressive decisions was to eliminate the payment of interest on retroactive compensation benefits.

The Liberals' next step was to amend the *Workers Compensation Act*. A seven-person board of directors, made up of one worker representative and six employer representatives, was named to run the WCB. Compensation benefits for workers who were injured, or developed a disease on the job were changed from 75% of gross salary to 90% of net. For workers earning \$40,000 per year, the change meant a benefit reduction of about \$225 per month. Previously benefits were indexed twice a year to the rate of inflation. The Liberals changed indexing to once a year at a new rate: inflation minus 1%. The changes have taken \$700 million away from workers and have put it into the pockets of employers.

Amendments to the act went further. Lifetime pensions were eliminated, replaced by reduced pensions that end at age 65. The system where workers could appeal WCB

decisions was altered significantly. Three levels of external appeal were replaced by one internal WCB review and one external appeal. The number of issues that could be appealed was reduced.

Twenty-five hundred teachers were not the only workers laid off by the Campbell government. At the Workers Compensation Board, 550 positions were eliminated. Those out of work include inspection officers, first-aid staff, WHMIS co-ordinators,

WCB offices in Cranbrook, Williams Lake, Vernon, and Campbell River were closed.

ergonomists, laboratory staff, education training staff, hearing staff, and information officers. The rehabilitation clinic at the WCB office in Richmond was closed. The board's excellent publications department was contracted out, and previously free publications, such as the regulation and prevention booklets, now cost as much as \$65. WCB offices in Cranbrook, Williams Lake, Vernon, and Campbell River were closed.

Employers have been given more control over protections provided to workers. Many very prescriptive regulations were replaced, without any real consultation with workers, by regulations that give employers the power to decide for themselves appropriate protections. For example, prior to the election of the Liberals, first-aid regulations covered more than 26 pages in the regulation books. Now, first-aid regulations in the single regulation book cover little more than three pages.

What has been the effect of the changes? Consider the chart below.

It is easy to see that the decrease in workplace inspections, in orders written, and in penalties to employers who break the rules has not reduced the number of worker fatalities and has produced an alarming increase in young worker fatalities and permanent injuries. (Sadly ironic is the fact that Liberal changes to employment laws put people as young as 12 in the workplace, creating the potential for even more young-worker injuries and fatalities). But how can the decrease in the injury rate be explained?

There are a number of reasons why the injury rate is down. The injury rate is based not on the number of injuries, but on the number of claims accepted by the WCB. So, if there are fewer claims, or if

fewer claims are accepted, the injury rate goes down.

The decrease in inspections, written orders, and financial penalties makes it easier for employers to institute incentive programs, such as prizes or cash, for workplaces with the fewest claims. Such programs generally do nothing to decrease the number of injuries at a workplace but usually decrease the number of claims, because individuals do not want to ruin things for everyone else or because they like the trinkets supplied by the employers. Changes to WCB policies have meant that fewer claims are being accepted. For example, it is now more difficult to make the connection between some diseases and occupational exposure. Of significant concern to BCTF members is the change in the act that eliminates compensation for chronic stress. Being driven from work by an unmanageable class or by a bullying principal is no longer accepted as a WCB claim.

Is there any hope for workers devastated by Gordon Campbell and the Liberals? Absolutely, but not unless we fight back! There is still time to get involved in the upcoming election. Share this information with your colleagues, friends, and neighbours. Ask Liberal candidates to explain why workers are worse off now than we were four years ago. Find a candidate in your constituency who is willing to stop the Liberal agenda. Go to work for that candidate. Register to vote, and ensure that people you know are registered. And, on May 17, vote for change!

Mark Keelan is the BCTF's health and safety officer for prevention.



Janine Fraser, Surrey, speaks out

Since the Liberals stripped our contract, class sizes have grown! And class composition is horrendous. A teacher at my school last year had 24 students in her Grade 2 class, and among those were three officially on the social development program with severe behaviour problems and many more on the list for behaviour concerns too!

A student in my class last year left the district after Grade 1 and then returned a year later for Grade 3. For K and Grade 1, he had an SEA, but when he came back for Grade 3, he no longer qualified, but he hadn't changed!

I buy the resources I use, or I make photocopies and I get penalized for photocopying. Textbooks! What textbooks?

I am concerned about the demoralization of my colleagues!



Take five! May 17

On May 17, take five people to the polls. Teachers live in every riding, so we can make a difference.

On May 17, vote for change.



Vote for:
public education
public healthcare
protection for the vulnerable in our society
a clean and safe environment



Vote against:
privatization
cuts to government services

Vote for a caring society.
And don't forget—take five!



	2001	2002	2003	change from 2001-03
Workplace inspections	122,305	108,517	88,845	-27%
WCB orders written	42,865	34,168	24,176	-44%
Penalties recommended	184	138	135	-27%
Penalty dollars imposed	\$1,750,000	\$1,760,000	\$620,000	-62%
Permanent injuries	4,001	4,962	5,292	+32%
Worker fatalities	168	157	170	+1%
Young worker fatalities ¹	5	5	9	+80%
Young worker injury rate ²	3.6	3.2	3.0	-17%

¹Young workers are workers aged 15-25.

²The injury rate is based on the number of claims accepted per hundred employed.

On being well

Broken promises

by Julia Johnson

The BCTF, through *Teacher* and the *School Staff Alert*, does an excellent job of keeping teachers informed on education, provincial politics, teaching practices in developing countries, our health, safety and wellness, and our professional and personal growth. The information on *Staff Alert* #25 regarding provincial politics and Gordon Campbell's broken promises caused me to ponder the act of making promises from a wellness perspective and the behaviour and qualities of a person who makes or breaks promises.

Throughout our lives, the promises made to us, the promises we make, and the broken promises we endure influence our choices, which eventually defines how honourable we are. A promise is an oral or written agreement to do, or not do, something, and making a promise gives assurance to another for a particular expectation. A promise upheld enables the one to whom the promise has been made to trust the one who has made the promise. With trust comes a confidence that the person making the promise is honest and reliable, that the person has integrity.

Prior to the federal election in June 2004, CBC radio, broadcast a program with Michael Enright as host on the practicality of election promises made by political leaders and to what degree the electorate could expect election promises to be kept. In the discussion were political-science professors from the universities of Saskatoon and Windsor and a former Reform Party MP from

When we make a promise to ourselves and keep it, we establish an inner integrity, and people begin to notice.

Saskatchewan. The professors said that election promises are made by political leaders to get elected, and that there was little expectation for the leaders to keep their promises.

What surprised me about this view was the acceptance that election promises are a means to an end and that the question of integrity was not part of the discussion. If professors of our universities think that our expectation for political leaders to keep their election promises is of little importance and that is the message they share with others, then it explains why the

leaders we elect fail to meet our expectations for honesty, reliability, and integrity and why political leaders lack commitment to accept responsibility for running a trustworthy government.

A very simple way to relearn how to make and keep promises is to begin with promising yourself to do a wellness activity each day.

Even though this view of our political leaders is symptomatic of the breakdown of societal values, manifested in corporate scandals, swelling prison populations, growing divorce rates, and increasingly dysfunctional relationships, when it is supported by our institutions of higher learning, our hope for finding something different, something we can count on, something we can believe in, is undermined, and we become disenchanted with the possibilities for change.

How do we reclaim integrity and the associated values of honesty, reliability, sincerity, and righteousness in our leaders? If we want a citizenry that values those qualities in our leaders, we must relearn the art of making promises.

We first learned about promises from our parents. We learned that a promise is something we make to someone and there are times when a promise can be broken if there is a good reason. If the promise was kept, we learned about expectations, obligations, commitment, sincerity, reliability, and responsibility. And if the promise was broken we learned about disappointment, restitution, and forgiveness.

We developed a belief system about promises, and over time, we learned to make promises of our own. We made promises to our parents, teachers, friends, mentors, partners, and children. We learned that when we made a promise we did so with the intention of keeping it and when a promise was broken, we were greatly troubled. However, somewhere in our journey to adulthood, the simplicity of making a promise and keeping it became more complex.

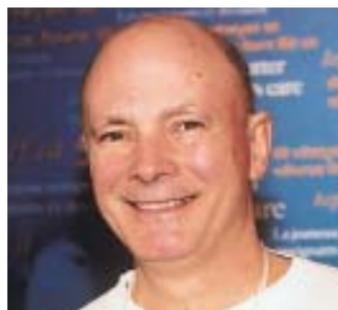
Today, promises are more about getting something, winning affection or position, and appeasing guilt. Promises have been sacrificed in the busy lives we live. In our efforts to respond to increasing family expectations and work-related demands, we began to put the needs of others before our own

needs; consequently promises became too difficult to keep. We learned to make and break promises, and we believed that that was all right.

If we want quality leaders and a society that respects the value of a promise, we must relearn how to make and keep promises. We do this by making a promise to ourselves. When we make a promise to ourselves and keep it, we establish an inner integrity, and people begin to notice. They see us as someone who "walks the talk," someone who is dependable, and means what she or he says, someone who can be counted on to get a job done, someone people can trust.

A very simple way to relearn how to make and keep promises is to begin with promising yourself to do a wellness activity each day. That simple promise becomes your expression of the value you place on yourself, and it is a safe way to learn the importance of accepting responsibility for a commitment through which respect is earned. When we make commitments to ourselves and keep them, we execute the priorities in our life with integrity, and we become as the change we want to see in the world.

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



Marty Bowles, Prince Rupert, speaks out

Class sizes have increased since the Liberals stripped our contracts—especially in specialized classes. Some of our classes have numbers not seen in decades.

Class-composition problems were emphasized 23 times to Tom Christensen in a recent visit. Teachers, administrators, and trustees united in letting the minister know the problem.

Learning assistance teachers are so overloaded with paperwork that their contact time with students has been greatly reduced.

Cutbacks to the social safety net have caused teachers to deal with ever increasing social problems in schools.



Lynda Nicholson, North Okanagan/Shuswap, speaks out

Classes are larger despite a concerted effort by the board to keep them small. They have had no alternative without the protections our contract provided—the money is no longer there. Hardest hit have been secondary science classes.

Students are in classrooms without support; before the contract was stripped and costs downloaded, there would have been SEA support.

Voici les raisons qui ont conduit les enseignants de la C.-B. à prendre part à l'élection du 17 mai

Engagement en faveur de l'enseignement public

1. Les enseignants participent à l'élection provinciale en vue d'élire des Membres de l'Assemblée législative qui militeront pour l'importance, les avantages et les réussites de l'enseignement public,

- qui reconnaissent le rôle crucial de l'enseignement public dans l'édification d'une société démocratique, égalitaire et juste ;
- et qui soutiennent les principes et idéaux énoncés dans la Charte de l'enseignement public.

L'école publique de quartier constitue le cœur de la communauté : c'est là que se réunissent parents et élèves pour célébrer les succès des élèves et partager des idées en vue de constituer des communautés plus solides encore. Chacun est accueilli à bras ouverts et se sent accepté. Un système d'enseignement public à la fois solide et stable est à l'avantage de tous. Nos élèves méritent notre soutien.

2. Nous participons afin d'élire des Membres de l'Assemblée législative qui amélioreront et stabiliseront le financement pour permettre aux écoles d'enseignement public de posséder les avantages suivants :

- des programmes adaptés aux besoins de tous les élèves ;
- un niveau de personnel suffisant pour ces programmes ;
- des limites de taille de classe appropriées pour les sujets enseignés et les installations disponibles.

Depuis 2001, 113 écoles publiques ont fermé leurs portes, plus de 2 500 postes d'enseignement ont été perdus, moins de soutien est disponible pour les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers et le nombre d'enseignants spécialistes a diminué. De plus grandes classes, moins d'options et moins de soutien rendent la tâche de satisfaire les besoins individuels d'élèves plus difficile pour les enseignants. Nos élèves méritent mieux !

3. Nous participons à l'élection des Membres de

l'Assemblée législative qui respecteront les droits professionnels des enseignants et les droits des employés,

- en soutenant les droits professionnels des enseignants de prendre des décisions en matière d'éducation dans l'intérêt de leurs élèves ;
- et en soutenant le droit à une négociation collective complète comprenant le droit de négocier des conditions d'apprentissage et de travail.

Les enseignants ont de fortes connaissances professionnelles et un intérêt profond pour leurs élèves. La voix des enseignants doit être entendue et leurs droits doivent être respectés. Les conventions collectives des enseignants garantissaient les conditions d'apprentissage des élèves. La perte des droits acquis imposée par le gouvernement a supprimé des protections et, en résultat, les conditions d'apprentissage se sont détériorées. Nos élèves méritent mieux.

4. Nous participons à l'élection des Membres de l'Assemblée législative qui reconnaîtront l'importance de la contribution des parents à l'éducation de leur enfant

- en soutenant un dialogue ouvert et empreint de respect entre enseignants et parents ;
- en acceptant chaleureusement les parents comme défenseurs de leurs enfants et d'un enseignement public de qualité.

Les parents et les enseignants forment un partenariat dans l'enseignement public. Il est à l'avantage de nos enfants de collaborer ensemble à l'école pour défendre leurs intérêts. Quand le gouvernement essaie de créer une barrière entre parents et enseignants, nous y perdons tous. Nos élèves méritent mieux.

Les principes de l'engagement à l'enseignement public ont été adoptés par l'Assemblée des représentantes et représentants du printemps 2004.

Pour vous inscrire : www.electionsbcc.ca

Pour de plus amples renseignements : www.bctf.ca/worthspeakingoutfor

Vous désirez vous impliquer, communiquez avec votre syndicat local.

Le 17 mai, faites-vous entendre en allant voter.

Synopsis: Translation of the BCTF brochure "Here is why B.C.'s teachers are involved in the May 17 election: Commitment to Public Education"



Kerry Richardson, Surrey, speaks out

Since the Liberals removed learning conditions from the collective agreement, class sizes have increased. Last year, in my small school, four intermediate classes had 31 students. That number included students with special needs and their assistants, as well as varying numbers of students needing learning assistance (SLD, learning disabilities, etc.).

Report-card templates for primary and kindergarten grades

by Lori Robinson

This is a letter the B.C. Primary Teachers' Association (BCPTA) sent to Minister of Education Tom Christensen in February 2005.

The BCPTA submitted a brief to your predecessor, Ms. Clark, expressing numerous concerns about the proposed report-card templates. Since then, with limited public participation, your office has released a revised template. The BCPTA has serious concerns about this report card format. Please consider the following:

Inconsistency with the Primary Program: The Primary Program bridges Kindergarten and Grade 1, and Grade 2/3 goals. These goals are not separated by individual grade. All IRPs also bridge the K/1 and 2/3 goals. This was a deliberate decision based on current, valid educational research that supports that children develop at different rates and at different times. Not only are these templates contrary to the

The daily data collected by teachers comes from a rich source of activities, observed, discussed, collected, marked, heard, and experienced within a very expansive context.

Primary Program philosophy, but the ministry goal of revising all of the existing IRPs to provide learning outcomes and achievement indicators for each grade is contradictory to evidence supporting the learning process and child development. By raising the achievement bar in the five areas of development, of which Intellectual Development comprises one part, it is unreasonable to assume that students will simply comply and learn faster.

Learning Outcomes and Performance Standard report materials are set for

end of the year expectations. How do teachers writing report cards in November and March use these curricular materials to effectively assess and report on progress? Is it the ministry's intention to have teachers estimate how the student will finish, or measure them on the end-of year criteria and find students not meeting expectations for the first two terms? Teachers cannot be expected to predict how a student will finish at the end of the year—there are too many factors which make this highly unreliable.

Work Habits: This is a highly subjective area. We do not want to see a provincial set of standards, because Work Habits are contextually dependent—there are rural/urban, cultural, age-based, and teacher-influenced factors that change the needs in each B.C. classroom. More importantly, teachers set goals for individual students based upon areas that need attention. This is another area that would be better served with anecdotal comments describing specific areas of growth and future development.

Ways to Support Learning: It is educationally questionable that the comment box for support is twice as large for Kindergarten students, when compared with the space provided on the primary grade template. Does the ministry believe our youngest learners need remediating more than the other grades? This also puts a strong emphasis on students being *at risk*, more than *at promise*. Again, this comes back to the research on brain development and individualized learning rates.

Simplification: Teachers will find the proposed format more complicated—13 boxes, comments for each, taking two full pages. Most teachers feel that this will extend the assessment, evaluation, and reporting processes—and take even more time.

Computer access: Not every teacher has the software and computer operating system to support these templates at home and/or at school. Many schools have struggled to maintain their computer equipment and networks. Access to secure computers and servers that will

safeguard privacy is inconsistent across the province. Furthermore, there is an unreasonable expectation that teachers will want or have computer and/or server access from home. Many locals across the province have technology change clauses in their collective agreements that will need to be respected and adhered to.

If we are trying to build ties to the homes and parents of our students, failing children as soon as they start school is absolutely not the way to accomplish it.

Lack of recognition of Kindergarten as unique: There is more reporting space for reporting on reading, writing, social studies, and science than there is for social and emotional development. Kindergarten teachers will tell you that the most important goal is helping our new learners become accustomed to school, adjusting to the process, and becoming lifelong learners. The emphasis on intellectual development in the report templates is in conflict with the intention of the Primary Program—that there are five areas of development, equally important. There is also serious concern that Kindergarten teachers are expected to specifically comment on 13 specific areas (boxes) after two months of school, given that most Kindergarten students attend school for half days (150 minutes daily).

Integration of subjects: According to the annotated template, if science and social studies are integrated with other subjects, they must be reported on in the other boxes and the spaces will be reallocated by the computer program. This would work if teachers only integrated two subjects, but most teachers work with a multidisciplinary approach to learning. Some expert teachers can combine four or more subjects/goal areas of the Primary Program all in the

same lesson!

Performance Scales: Children are wonderfully complex learners. Given that there are currently almost 700 prescribed learning outcomes in the first four years of school, it is very difficult to imagine that a student would be achieving at the same rate within any subject. This is especially evident in the Artistic and Aesthetic Development—this category includes dance, music and the visual arts, each a different process, with different subskills within. Within each grade, classroom, and even individual student, there are different objectives for the term, the week, and the day, and further contextualized by the activity and learning style of each learner. There is a complex science to teaching that cannot be reduced to sliding scales of progress.

Some children are more vulnerable than others. Many special education students are not identified, by ministry standards, until after starting school. Many more children with learning disabilities are not identified until the intermediate grades. These are children who would, with the proposed templates, be identified as “not yet meeting,” in most areas. Some children, as supported by the best research in child development and education, need more time to learn and are not ready at the same time as their classmates. Regardless of the source or cause of the delays in development, these children deserve the best supportive educational environment. Receiving a report card sprayed with “not yet meeting,” marks could potentially damage a child's self esteem. Further, that report card would not adequately reflect the progress each learner makes. This is a group of children who often have to work harder than their counterparts—and this template does not give credit for that growth.

The Ministry of Education is trying to provide districts with a tool to standardize reporting for data collection and accountability purposes. However, given the assumptions and generalizations this report format requires of teachers, there are actually more opportunities for insinuations and oversimplifications. Teachers will be asked to rely on “intuition,”—not a reliable method. The consistency sought by your ministry is simply not possible with this rigid reporting format. It may look the same, but

will it mean the same, or convey the same depth and breadth of knowledge as an anecdotal format? The templates do not reflect the importance of conferencing with parents as part of the process. The daily data collected by teachers comes from a rich source of activities, observed, discussed, collected, marked, heard, and experienced within a very expansive context.

Our youngest learners face additional challenges from these templates. Many students do not have access to preschools, and this has never been a prerequisite to starting school. Many students come from homes in which English is a second language or dialect, which will have a direct effect upon language acquisition, and therefore literacy skills. If a child is behind when first starting school, when there are no requirements to be able to attend school other than being five years old that year, are we assessing their learning, or are you asking teachers to assess children and the home education they received from their parents for the first five years? If we are trying to build ties to the homes and parents of our students, failing children as soon as they start school is absolutely not the way to accomplish it. Nor will this instill the love of learning.

It is important to us that best practices in our schools and classrooms reflect the current, valid research in learning and teaching methods.

We would appreciate being able to meet with you or your staff on this critical matter. We represent our teachers, but also our students and the B.C. Primary Program: *A Framework for Learning (2000)*. It is important to us that best practices in our schools and classrooms reflect the current, valid research in learning and teaching methods. We ask that you please include us in this process and take our professional experience and training into consideration.

Lori Robinson is president of the B.C. Primary Teachers' Association.
lori_robinson@shaw.ca.

College of Teachers 2005–06 fee information

The annual certificate fee remains at \$90 for the third consecutive year. (The college changed its certificate year to begin July 1. Accordingly, last year your fees were pro-rated to \$75 to account for a 10-month certificate year.) Certificate holders are responsible for ensuring their annual certificate fees are paid. Non-payment results in certificate cancellation.

Fee deadlines

April 1, 2005: Online fee payment available at www.bcct.ca.

June 30, 2005: Last day to pay annual certificate fees without penalty.

July 1, 2005: Certificate suspended for non-payment of fees. Reinstatement requires payment of the annual certificate fee and a late charge of \$30.

August 1, 2005: Certificate cancelled for non-payment of fees.

Fee categories

• **Category 1: Practising—\$90**
Employed in B.C. in K–12 system, or in related position in B.C. for which a college certificate was used to gain employment.

• **Category 2: Practising on LTD—\$0**

Working less than 0.6 FTE and on long-term disability.

• **Category 3: Non-practising*—\$45**

Not employed in B.C. as described in Category 1, but not on a pension. Must complete Non-practising Undertaking form, unless college has a signed form on file.

• **Category 4: Non-practising on pension—\$0**

Collecting pension related to teaching. Must complete Non-practising Undertaking form, unless college has a signed form on file.

*If you are unsure whether you will be working in 2005–06, you can pay the non-practising fee and upgrade to practising status at a later date. To upgrade, pay the balance of the practising fee.

Payment methods

• **Credit card online:** Visit the www.bcct.ca/fees/members/member_login.aspx, Certificate Holders Area.

• **Credit card authorization:** Download a www.bcct.ca/fees/documents/cca_form.pdf, Credit Card Payment Authorization Form for mailing to the college.

• **Pre-authorized payment:** Download a www.bcct.ca/fees/documents/pap_form.pdf, Pre-authorized Payment Form, which must be received by the college by May 31, 2005.

• **Cheque:** include your certificate number on the back and deliver to the college.

• **Payroll deduction:** Talk to your payroll department or employer.

** Please include your certificate number on all correspondence.

Certificate-holder cards are mailed within three weeks of payment.

BCTF-endorsed college candidates

The following members are the BCTF-endorsed candidates for the 2005 BC College of Teachers'

Council elections are:

Zone 1 (North Coast)
Rena Neufeld (Nechako)

Zone 3 (South Central)

Dale Townsend (North Okanagan-Schuswap)

Zone 8 (Lower Mainland East)
Pat Dyer (New Westminister)

Zone 10 (Lower Mainland West)
Jim Gill (Vancouver Secondary)

Locals in these zones endorsed these members in accordance with BCTF policies and procedures and will be encouraged to vote for them in the BC College of Teachers Council elections in April/May 2005.



Gurpreet Bains, Surrey, speaks out

Our district has 4,500 students in oversized classes—627 in oversized Kindergartens.

We have lost the services of librarians, integration support, speech and language pathologists, and school psychologists.

We have textbook shortages, less money to buy resources, and fewer teachers to support our students.

Since the Liberals came to power, education has been demeaned. Teachers have lost a say in the teaching and learning conditions in their classrooms.

Navigating copyright in schools

by Francine Filion

A booklet on copyright will be made available to every teacher and school board in Canada. The Copyright Consortium of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), the Canadian School Boards Association (CSBA), and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) have jointly announced the release of an updated *Copyright Matters!*, a booklet designed to answer frequently asked questions about copyright in schools. Copies of the booklet, which can be found online and in print, will be distributed broadly across Canada.

Copyright in Canada is evolving, not static. The first edition of *Copyright Matters!*, published in 2000, proved to be highly popular with educators because it demystified complex copyright issues and acquainted them with basic copyright rules. Since then, a number of significant changes have occurred in copyright, and this second edition will bolster the growing awareness of and respect for copyright in education while providing up-to-date information on copyright law, copyright collectives, and how they relate to the use of resources in educational settings.

New information is provided on copyright related to radio and television, while the information related to school libraries, copyright exceptions, and copyright collectives has been expanded. The booklet provides simple answers to questions such as Can teachers copy print materials? What is the cost of copying radio and television programs? and Can teachers and students copy from the Internet?

"Copyright policy is an area of growing concern for Canada's school boards," said Gord Comeau, president of CSBA. "Certainly, school boards want to ensure that their employees are able to access the most relevant information in the timeliest and most cost-effective manner. *Copyright Matters!* gives educators balanced information on both respect for copyright and access to information. The booklet allows school boards to lead by example on the issue of copyright."

"Teachers and their students need to know what current Canadian copyright policies are in place. It can help them understand how copyright law and copyright collectives relate to the use of resources in the classroom," said the Honourable Jamie Muir, Nova Scotia's Education Minister.

"This booklet is a handy guide that provides clear and concise answers to teachers' questions about copyright," said Terry Price, president of the CTF. "However, current copyright laws and consequently this booklet provide limited guidance on the educational use of the Internet," she added. "We hope and expect that the federal government will act soon to open windows of learning to our students and teachers by ensuring they have reasonable access to publicly available Internet materials."

Online copies of *Copyright Matters!* are available at www.ctf-fce.ca/.

Francine Filion is the communications officer for the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Commercialization in B.C.'s public schools

by Colleen Hawkey

Commercialization in Canadian Schools—A National Survey, measured the extent to which sponsorships, fundraising, incentive programs, and advertising exist in public schools across Canada. Conducted by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement, the study involved 15,000 public schools across the country.

In British Columbia, questionnaires were sent to one teacher in each school in the province in the fall of 2004. Each staff representative was asked to consult with other teachers and administrative staff to fill out the detailed four-page questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were received from 565 schools, representing 33% of the approximately 1,700 public schools in the province.

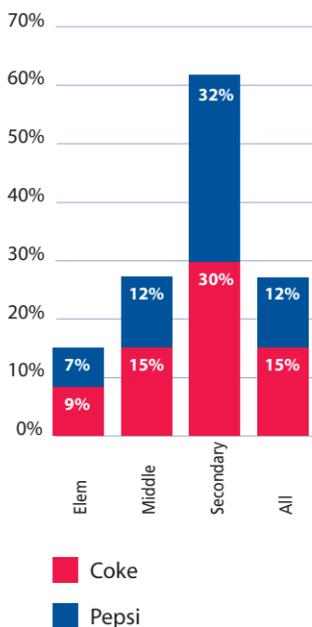
The data from British Columbia show significant corporate presence in B.C. schools:

Exclusive marketing

Schools can receive additional income by entering into marketing arrangements whereby they agree to sell exclusively one product. With such arrangements, the company not only sells its product but also excludes competition, limits student choice, and builds future brand loyalty. Results from this study show that exclusive marketing arrangements with either Coke (15%) or Pepsi (12%) exist in 27% of schools in British Columbia, ranging from 16% at the elementary level to 62% and the secondary level. This is virtually unchanged since 2000, when a BCTF survey found 28% of schools had an exclusive arrangement with either Coke (15%) or Pepsi (13%). With a government commitment to eliminate junk food and improve student health within four years, we should see a substantial decline in soft-drink vending machines in schools.

Chart 1

Schools with exclusive marketing arrangement with Coke or Pepsi



Fundraising

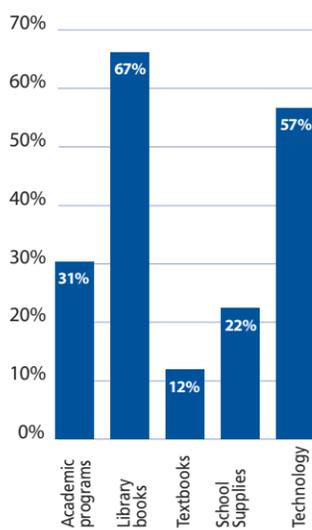
Since 1990, real per pupil funding in B.C. schools has declined by over \$570, or over 8%. As per-pupil amounts decline, alternative sources of funding to support core academic and extracurricular programs are sought. The study shows that schools and parents have turned attention to fundraising initiatives not only for traditional extra-curricular activities such as school trips and clubs, but also for library books, textbooks, and technology.

One of the most significant findings from the study is the extent to which schools and parents fundraise to support core academic activities.

One of the most significant findings from the study is the extent to which schools and parents fundraise to support core academic activities. In 67% of schools, money is raised to purchase library books, 57% of schools fundraise for technology, and 31% fundraise to support academic programs. Even textbooks, often outdated or in short supply, are singled out for fundraising initiatives by 22% of schools.

Chart 2

Fundraising by parents and schools



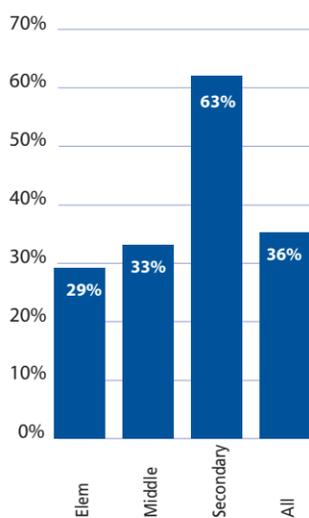
Advertising

Corporate advertising exists in over 36% of B.C. schools. Although less prevalent at the elementary (29%) and middle school (33%) levels, at the secondary level that is the case for 63% of schools. The majority of advertising is in hallways and cafeterias (19%) and on school supplies (12%) with additional advertising (14%) in the gymnasium, on vending machines and vehicles.

Much of the advertising is in the form of vending machines for soft drinks, milk, and juice in hallways, but advertising on student backpacks (e.g., Costco), mouse pads (e.g., shaw.ca; Seanix computer systems; Pearson Education), school supplies, and agendas is also prevalent.

Chart 3

Ads in or on schools



Hallways and cafeterias: 19.6%
School supplies: 12.1%
Other: 13.9%

- vending, pop and juice machines
- gym (banners, score boards)

Dollar amount raised

Survey data show that the average amount of money raised by schools from commercial activities is just over \$19,500. As schools rely more and more on alternative sources of funding, there is a greater risk of creating "have" and "have-not" schools as those in richer areas and with greater money-raising skills and capacity attract more funding. Among schools that raise money through corporate involvement, the amounts range from as little as a few dollars per student to several hundred dollars per student.

Conclusions

Underfunding, market ideology, and powerful child and youth consumers contribute to the commercialization of public education. An extended period of underfunding, combined with a prevailing world view that values market forces in the public sector, encourages schools boards, teachers, parents, and administrators to seek alternative funding to maintain education programs, buy textbooks, or attempt to keep up with technology in the classroom. In addition to funding pressures, contributing to the commercialization in schools is the fact that children, teens, and teens have millions of dollars in disposable income and influence the spending of millions more. It is not surprising that schools and children are the target of corporations and businesses bent on securing a share of that lucrative market. As evident in the results of the survey, what may be surprising is the extent to which corporations and business have become a strong presence in public schools.

Further information on the results of the study is available at the BCTF web site bctf.ca/NotForSale

Colleen Hawkey is a researcher in the BCTF's Research and Technology Division.

Cradle-to-grave marketing

by Dan Blake

If you notice the one-year-old craning its neck when the volume rises during the commercial break, don't be shocked. Baby Jane really does recognize the sound of the Pepsi ad. Advertising agencies and marketers know that, and that may explain why we have an infant commercial web site. Pepsi has licensed its logo to appear on baby formula packaging. It really is cradle-to-grave marketing. So said Julie Schor, professor of sociology at Boston College, to participants at the second Public Education Not for Sale Conference in Vancouver February 19, 2005.

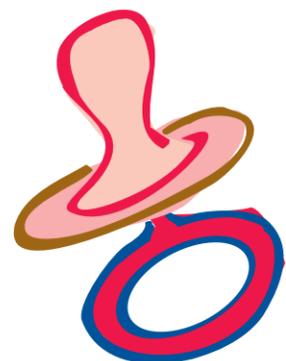
The ad business is constantly re-inventing itself. People tire of the repetition of TV advertising, even if it is funny and engaging. Schor's talk was a fascinating tour of latest trends. Take viral marketing, for example.

Individuals are recruited by a marketing company to use a particular product with friends and family in such a way as to encourage discussion about the product. Typically, they don't reveal what their purpose is. There is no formal pitch. The situation is meant to appear as normal as possible. You may wonder how a few people using a product can affect sales. What most people don't realize is that the company has several hundred people similarly engaged. The marketing agencies that engage in viral marketing are very careful about whom they recruit. Recruits are typically young and outgoing.

For teen products, the marketers recruit the cool kids. Agencies employ individuals as "cool hunters," whose job is to recruit the cool kids. The cool teens drink the latest pop, wear the latest fashions, and so on. If you think it sounds bizarre, you're probably right. But the viral marketers and their clients don't care; they know that the strategy works, and that's where their interest begins and ends.

To learn more about the latest trends in advertising and how you can help your students understand and combat the daily barrage of advertising, consider signing up for the media literacy institute:

Media Literacy: A Five Day Summer Institute, August 15-19, 2005, at the BCTF Building. Presenters include John Pungente, co-author of *Media Literacy: A Resource Guide*, *Meet the Media*, and *More than Meets the Eye*, and Carolyn Wilson, co-author of *Mass Media and Popular Culture*. For more information and registration, contact Dan Blake, 604-301-1247, deblaca@telus.net.





by Garth Holmes

Judging by our sign story, May 17 is going to feature a petulant election. My wife and I hung two large signs on our fence. They both said, "2500 fewer teachers 113 schools closed." Our house borders a school's property and backs onto a busy street. One sign faced the school at the corner of the street; one paralleled the street.

After a few days, there was a knock on the door. A school district employee told my wife that he had been ordered to determine whether the sign was on school board property or not. He had been called in on his day off to do that. They tried to find the survey posts for our property. The search was unsuccessful, so he said he would come back the next day to determine the property lines.

The discussion was cordial. We said that if the sign was not on our property, we would move it to our front lawn, right next to the street where parents pick up their children.

The employee pointed out that if the sign was indeed on our property, one option was for the board to build a bigger fence in front of it, to prevent its being visible. My wife countered with the possibility of the sign's being put on poles taller than the board's fence. That was the last we heard of it. We did not see anyone surveying, and no fence went up. We were never told that the issue was closed.

Apparently a member of the public had complained to the

district administration about the sign. The employee received orders to check the signs. Cooler heads then prevailed. A phone call from a trustee to the superintendent averted further action.

Too bad. All sorts of fun things could have happened. The local and provincial media would have been invited to showcase "The Fence." My wife's original concept of putting the sign on long poles grew to include wheels, so that we could run it easily past any fence the district put up. There were visions of their building us a really high fence as they moved to cut off the sign from its new positions. We could have mounted our sign on the lilac bushes that we are thinking of removing. Voila, instant new fence.

There are two less pleasant parts of the whole story, however. Someone in a decision-making role in the district demonstrated the belief that the current underfunding of education is not a suitable topic for public discussion. As well, there appears to be enough money in the board's budget to pay the employee whatever his call-out cost was, but not enough to fill simple requests for classroom resources.

By April 18, the signs had been knocked down twice. Someone isn't comfortable with the Liberal record.

Garth Holmes teaches at Columneetza Secondary School, Williams Lake.

Prince George district school closures



Lakewood Elementary School
200 students uprooted



Gladstone Elementary School
178 students uprooted



Highland Elementary School
186 students uprooted



Hart Highway Elementary School
143 students uprooted



North Nechako Elementary School,
194 students uprooted



Blackburn Jr. Secondary School
283 students uprooted



Wildwood Elementary School
120 students uprooted



Mountain View Elementary School
193 students uprooted

Aldergrove Elementary will stay open

Laurence Greff

The Langley School Board will keep Aldergrove Elementary School open.

Parents and staff at the school are so happy. In their final presentations, parents challenged the board to make the right decision and keep the school open. Board members spoke eloquently about the need to look beyond the neo-conservative agenda of fiscal efficiencies and base decisions on educational soundness. Aldergrove Elementary is an inner-city school that serves students well; it has a vital role in the community.

The great win for Aldergrove Elementary is a tribute to the spirit of the community. The parent committee out-organized everyone. They worked with the staff to make presentations to the board. They prepared 35 special presentations at a consultative meeting. They had media coverage on the school closure from January to March. They had CTV, Global, and City TV cover the whole proceedings. Students gave impact statements in a multimedia presentation.

Parents travelled to Victoria on the last day of the Legislative Assembly to meet with MLAs

and the deputy minister of education. They set up an effective e-mail campaign, and the March issue of *Teacher* newsmagazine had a story about that wonderful and vibrant school.

We included one of the parent presentations in the Langley newsletter, *The Link*. Grandparents played an effective role in telling about the history of the school and its positive role in the community. Community members came out in droves to overflow the gallery for the last five board meetings.

Our colleagues at Aldergrove worked with the parents to support them in their efforts to keep the school open, and after their great victory, the LTA sent a bouquet of yellow roses to the staff to say thanks for working so hard to achieve their goal.

The staff wants to carry that victory into the provincial election campaign because they feel so strongly about the importance of small community schools.

Their message to us was simple: Take a risk, and fight back, because we have a responsibility to defend public education.

Laurence Greff is president of the Langley Teachers' Association.



Teachers' tips

Parents: A great resource

by Anne Louise McFarland

There are many ways to maximize parent involvement in your classroom. Even at the secondary level, parents can be an invaluable resource. Here are eight ways to get parents onside and supportive of what you do.

1. At the beginning of the class, take an inventory of what parents do, not only for work but also as hobbies or special interests.
2. Make an e-mail list of parents.
3. When doing a project, consult the inventory, and ask parents for help.
4. Keep in touch with the parents, not just to communicate problems but also to tell the great things their children are doing.
5. Following the lead of some schools, consider using a personal web site to post homework so that parents are aware of upcoming due dates for projects, as well as quiz and test dates.
6. Let the parents organize the fundraising for trips, etc.
7. Invite parents to observe student presentations in class.
8. Invite a parent rep to district department head meetings. For example, in Saanich, the French immersion department heads, the superintendent, a French immersion administrator, and a parent rep have a breakfast meeting every six weeks to discuss the budget and the activities we are all doing together.

Involving parents reduces your workload and gives your students some extra incentive to do well. Parents who see what amazing work teachers do become advocates for public education.

Anne Louise McFarland teaches Français Langue 9-12 at Stelly's Secondary School, Saanich.



Jon Preston, Qualicum, speaks out

Class sizes have increased dramatically! Intermediate and middle school classes are bursting—the rooms in our newer schools were not designed to accommodate 33 students.

A school calendar change has been imposed—seven fewer days of learning affects our ability to teach and students' ability to learn, and it has a negative financial impact on our CUPE colleagues. Bussing fees further download cuts in education funding onto parents.

The manner in which this government deals with its public-service employees, the undemocratic practices and lack of respect for collective bargaining, is not only shocking, but scandalous.

Seniors' bingo raided

The B.C. Liberals are intent on upholding the laws for unlicensed seniors' bingo but not for violations of class-size legislation. The following headlines tell the story of the shutdown of seniors' bingo games on Galiano Island:

- "Police sting shuts down seniors bingo: Minister defends stakeout of seniors: 'The law is the law.'" (*The Vancouver Sun*, February 19, 2005)
- "The great Galiano granny-bingo bust: ILLEGAL GAMING: It took four agents and a night in a luxury B&B to investigate" (*The Province*, February 20, 2005)
- "Hitting the jackpot with a vengeance: It's getting easier and easier to place bets in B.C.—so why go after small-town bingo?" (*Victoria Times Colonist*, February 22, 2005)

When Comox DTA President Richard Walker read the stories, he sent off a letter to Attorney General Geoff Plant to inform him of laws being broken in the

Comox Valley school district.

"I am writing to advise you that there is a violation of the legislated maximum class-size provisions occurring in School District #71 (Comox Valley). I received information that a Grade 2 class in this district now has 25 students.

"It is clear that the legislation regarding primary class size indicates the maximum allowable number of students is 24.

"I am writing to ensure that you, as the attorney general, are aware of this violation of the law. I am also asking you to respond in order that I will know what steps you will take to rectify this situation."

The attorney general replied: "As this issue falls within the jurisdiction of the education system, I am referring your letter to my colleague, the Honourable Tom Christensen, Minister of Education."

Once again, the losers are B.C.'s seniors and children.

—Kathleen Smith

HEU supports BCTF in defending free collective bargaining

This letter was sent to HEU local secretary treasurers, February 3, 2005 and copied to BCTF President Jinny Sims.

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The January 20, 2005 Action Agenda included a joint letter from the B.C. Federation of Labour President, Jim Sinclair, and the B.C. Teachers' Federation President, Jinny Sims.

The letter and attached analysis described how a commission on teacher bargaining, headed by Don Wright, wrote an incredibly biased report that accepted 14 employer proposals but none of the union's proposals. Wright's recommendations are now in the hands of the provincial government.

The HEU Provincial Executive has reviewed the

Wright report, and believe its implications should deeply concern every HEU member.

If the Liberals legislate the recommendations, teachers will be stripped of the right to strike. They would be forced into a predetermined schedule, with set dates for conciliation and mandatory final-offer selection arbitration to decide their collective agreements. The arbitrator would be bound to consider the "affordability" and the employer's ability to pay.

In addition, their scope of bargaining would be severely limited. They would be prohibited from negotiating such matters as class size, staffing levels and ratios, and other issues that are important both to student learning and teachers' working conditions.

We have no doubt that if the Liberals succeed in taking these rights away from teachers, the recommendations will be used as a template for all public-sector bargaining—including the HEU.

We have written to Sister Jinny Sims to offer our support and desire to actively participate in the BCTF campaign to defend teachers' right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike.

Please let your membership know about the Wright report and ask them to be prepared to assist in the campaign.

As always, our individual struggles against the Campbell Liberal agenda are all linked. When one union wins—we all win.

In solidarity,

Fred Muzin, HEU president

RIGHTS from page 1

has shown that while voting is important, it is not enough. If we want a government that will properly fund public education to support student learning conditions, grant us the rights available to other organized employees and professionals, and respect our input and advice on education matters, we need to do more.

Three years ago, the BCTF established a long-term Public Education Advocacy Plan and a Public Education Defence Fund to support its implementation. We knew then and do now that the fight for rights, resources, and respect would take us to this election. Locals have developed plans to help get a change in government direction through this election, and I encourage you to become involved in that campaign. Work for change. It is the only reasonable response to the Liberal government's damaging policies for teachers, for students, and for public education in B.C.

Jinny Sims is president of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.

Jinny Sims (right) speaks to media at rally in Victoria, and a legislative employee (bottom) accepts petitions from locals around the province.



David Komljenovic, Kamloops-Thompson, speaks out

We now have classes exceeding 30 students, and some exceeding 40.

More students with IEPs end up in classrooms with little or no support. We have classrooms with 10 or more students with special needs in classrooms of 30 or more students.

We have had a 41% reduction in teacher librarians. We have outdated resources for classrooms, and teachers are forced to pay for many of their school supplies.

We are concerned about the layoff of teachers and the lack of respect for court decisions.

Ten new BCTF lesson aids

1 LA 2230 — Making Decisions: Grade 8, Produced by the Alcohol-Drug Education Service, 114 p. ©2004. This resource for teachers and students of Grade 8 is designed to provide learning activities that promote the development of skills in making major decisions, particularly to help prevent substance abuse. This unit is based on current research on adolescent development, what is known about the importance of decision-making, and problem solving. The modules focus on development of key skills in critical thinking, self-confidence and assertiveness, and on healthy and positive adolescent development and learning. "Making Decisions" provides accurate information, enhances skills in thinking critically and independently of peers, gaining the tools to make healthier choices, and about reducing the harms of substance abuse to individuals, families, and communities. The program reinforces and builds on the skills and information taught in "Making Decisions: Grade 6" (BCTF LA 2396) and "Making Decisions: Grade 7" (BCTF LA 2397). Easy to use student worksheets and activities are included in the package. \$45.95

2 LA 9922 — Middle and Secondary School produced by Learning Assistance Teachers' Association, 155 p. Fall 2000. This issue of LATA's *The Vital Link Journal*, vol. 5, no 3, features articles and strategies for learning assistance teachers in middle and secondary schools. Grades 6-9, \$12

LA 2047 Not So Natural Disasters: Secondary School Edition, 94 p. ©2002. Grades 8-12, \$20.95.

3 LA 2033 — A Teaching Unit on the Coffee Trade produced by Victoria International Development Association, 16 p. ©2003. This unit includes four lesson plans. Students learn about how the coffee trade works, and consider the relationship between consumers, growers, and coffee companies. Includes overheads, handouts, and worksheets. Part of VIDEA's Global Learner Series. Other units in this series from BCTF are LA 1072 "A Teaching Unit on Consumerism and Media Literacy," LA 1073 "A Teaching Unit on Music and Society," LA 2031 "A Teaching Unit on Global Warming," and LA 2032 "A Teaching Unit on Peace and Conflict." And VIDEA's Global Citizenship website. Suitable for use in Social Studies 9 to 11. \$8.95

4 LA 3225 — North American Indian Silver Craft by E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), 53 p. ©2004. This book is based on a series of essays by the famous Canadian poet E. Pauline Johnson, also known as Tekahionwake. It's one of the few books about jewellery fashioned by First Nations silversmiths. Johnson revised the information but died of cancer in 1913 before the manuscript could be published. It appears now, in a pocket-sized edition, complete with her own drawings of several key pieces. This book will be of particular interest to artisans and to those interested in First Nations history, art and jewelry. Grades 4 and up. \$10.95

5 LA 2056A — Antonio's Story Co-produced by Analee Weinberger, Valerie Dare, Patti Fraser, Pacific Cinematheque, 16-minute VHS video and 28 p. guide, ©Britannia World Music 2004. This video is a documentary of Antonio Joao's flight from Angola at age 11, when his parents were killed, to Port Elizabeth on the southern coast of South Africa - a journey of 2,566 kilometers. Here he lived hand to mouth, finally stowing away on a freighter bound for Southeast Asia and Vancouver. Antonio arrived in Vancouver on September 2, 2001, only nine days before the September 11 terrorist attacks. Consequently, his treatment as a refugee claimant under the Canadian refugee system was different than it would be today. Antonio tells his story in his own words. The study guide uses Antonio's experiences as reference points to investigate social justice issues in Africa and Canada. For Grades 8-10. \$19.95. DVD format: LA 2056B, \$19.95.

6 LA 9534 — British Columbia Wetlands produced by British Columbia Wetlands Society, CD Rom, ©2004. This CD Rom, compatible with PC and Apple computers, contains the following four teacher's guides on B.C. Wetlands. "Exploring Estuaries and Wondrous Wetland: Teacher's Guide to Field Trip Explorations" with practical, hands-on activities for classroom and field trips. Includes 150 illustrated pages for ages

13-18. "Ecoscope for Sustaining Saltwater Wetlands" stresses sustainability and the interaction between environment, economies and society. Features 104 illustrated pages dealing with saltwater estuaries and marshes for ages 15 to 18. "Discover Boundary Bay: A Teacher's Resource Guide" covers the ecology of Boundary Bay, its global importance as part of the Pacific Flyway and current threats. Includes 300 illustrated pages, with 120 activities and hand-outs, field trip suggestions and bibliographies for ages 6 to 13. "Protecting British Columbia's Wetlands: A Citizen's Guide" is written in two parts on wetland protection: an overview of wetland types, where they are found and how they work and an introduction to legal protection for wetlands. Glossary and endnotes. Grades K-12. \$5

7 LA 8050 — Canadian Stories (Including Hockey Stories): Lessons for Literacy and School by Beatrice Marshall, 78 p. ©2004. The literacy lessons and blackline masters in this resource were designed by the author who used picture books from different areas in Canada to complement the Grade 3 social studies curriculum. The 24 popular story books listed are contained in many school and public library collections. Each lesson is based on a story and describes current strategies that develop reading comprehension. For Grades 2 to 4. \$7.95

8 LA F9114 — La mise en oeuvre et l'évaluation d'un programme de lecture animé par les pairs en milieu scolaire, Chipman, Mary, Roy, Nicole, Naylor, Charlie, Bournot-Trites, Monique, Lee, Elizabeth, 40 p. ©2001. Cette ressource comprend une vidéocassette (disponible en français ou en anglais) d'une durée de 25 minutes et deux rapports (disponibles en anglais seulement). Le premier rapport de 23 pages, l'oeuvre de M. Chipman, N. Roy et C. Naylor, décrit les aspects pratiques de l'organisation et de la mise en oeuvre du programme. Le programme veut que les élèves des 5e, 6e et 7e années soient assortis aux lecteurs des 2e et 3e années et que ces équipes de jeunes se réunissent deux fois par semaine pour des séances d'enseignement individuel par le pair (2 fois 30 minutes). Le rapport comprend des renseignements concernant la sensibilisation et la préparation, le budget et l'espace nécessaire, les critères de sélection, l'organisation, et la formation. Une brochure au sujet du programme, une lettre aux parents et des suggestions pour les tuteurs sont joints au rapport. L'évaluation du programme par M. Bournot-Trites et E. Lee (du département de Language and Literacy Education à UBC) fait l'objet du deuxième rapport de quinze pages. La vidéocassette a pour sujet l'exécution du programme en milieu scolaire. 2e à la 7e année. \$14,95

9 LA F8426A and LAF8426B — Résolution de problèmes ~ 4e année, Isabelle Melançon, 61 p. ©2001. Un cahier de problèmes à résoudre nécessitant l'application de différentes stratégies tout en développant le vocabulaire de français et de mathématiques. Les Éditions - À Reproduire. Niveau 4e et 5e. \$31,95. F8436B - Résolution de problèmes - 4e année, Corrigé de l'enseignant, 61 p. \$11,95

10 LA F9408A and LA F9408B - Math de tête ! 6e année, Annie St-Amand, 60 p. (c)2003. Un cahier d'activités reliées aux nombres et leur valeur, les quatre opérations, les fractions et les nombres décimaux, les mesures, la logique : stratégies, connaissances et applications. Les Éditions - À Reproduire. Niveau 6e et 7e. \$31,95. LA 9408B - Math de tête ! 6e année, Corrigé de l'enseignant, 60 p. \$11,95

More curriculum resources and information are available at www.bcalmr.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

Teachers' Pension Plan

Reinstatement to "family" pension plan and transfer to the TPP

After March 31, 2007, Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP) members will no longer be able to reinstate a refund taken from the B.C. College Pension Plan, B.C. Municipal Pension Plan, or B.C. Public Service Pension Plan and then transfer the service to the TPP to increase their pensionable and contributory service.

Canada Revenue Agency has determined that the provision that allows this (Section 24 (2) of the Teachers' Pension Plan Rules) is not consistent with *Income Tax Act* regulations. Therefore as of March 31, 2007, the Teachers' Pension Board will be forced to repeal Section 24 (2) of the rules.

If you have taken a refund from one of the plans and are considering reinstating the service, you should do so very soon. Reinstatement of the *first* refund is always worthwhile, and the cost is usually recovered within three or four years of the start of pension. The *second and subsequent* refunds from a pension plan are more expensive and should be reviewed carefully.

You must apply to reinstate a refund from one of the plans listed above while you are an active TPP member.

Deadlines for purchase of service

Don't miss an opportunity by missing the deadline. You may be able to increase your future pension benefit by purchasing service, but there are deadlines.

For example, you must apply to purchase the following before April 1, 2007, and while an active member:

- a leave of absence that ended before April 1, 2002.
- arrears for which you received notice before April 1, 2002.
- non-contributory service if you were already an active member on March 31, 2002.
- reinstatement of a refund if you were already an active member on March 31, 2002 (this also applies to reinstating refunds taken from the BC Municipal Plan and the BC Public Service Plan; the deadline for reinstating a refund from the BC College Pension Plan is February 28, 2007).

There are other deadlines. For example, you must apply to purchase the following by the deadlines shown:

- Leaves of absence that ended on or after April 1, 2002 (within five years of the end of the leave period, or before you terminate your current

employment, whichever occurs first)

- Arrears for which you received notice after March 31, 2002 (within five years of when the plan sent written notice to you, or before you terminate your current employment, whichever occurs first)
 - Non-contributory service where you became an active member after March 31, 2002 (within five years of the date you enrol in the plan, or before you terminate your current employment, whichever occurs first)
 - Reinstatement of a refund where you became an active member after March 31, 2002 (within five years of the date you begin to again contribute to the plan, or before you terminate your current employment, whichever occurs first)
- Please contact the Teachers' Pension Plan, or visit the plan web site at pensionsbc.ca for fact sheets and other information on this topic (click on Teachers' Pension Plan in the left-side navigation bar). The web site has a Purchase Cost Estimator to help determine the cost of purchasing a leave of absence. You can then use the Pension Estimator to determine how much the purchase will increase your pension. You may also contact the BCTF Income Security or visit bctf.ca/pensions for more information.

Maximizing contributory service when transferring service under a reciprocal transfer agreement

If you are eligible to transfer service under a reciprocal transfer agreement, you may be able to maximize the contributory service you are credited with by completing the transfer by March 31, 2007. Please contact the Teachers' Pension Plan or the BCTF for details.

Notice to former Manitoba teachers

If you are an active teacher in B.C. who previously taught in Manitoba and left your pension contributions in the Manitoba Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF), it may be to your advantage to transfer your pensionable service to the BC Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP). A temporary amendment, which will expire December 31, 2005, to the Inter-Provincial Transfer Agreement provides more generous transfer values to former TRAF members who now teach in B.C.

If you would like to transfer your Manitoba service, apply in writing by completing the online application form *Interprovincial Reciprocal Transfer Agreement—Application Appendix A* (available at www.pensionsbc.ca, go to Teachers' Pension

Plan, then to Forms). Print the form and submit it to *both* the TRAF and the TPP. Make sure you keep a copy for yourself.

You will then receive from the TPP a copy of Appendix B, the "Transfer Estimate and Acceptance Form." Appendix B provides details regarding the dollar and service amounts available from TRAF and the dollar and service amounts recognized by the TPP. In a separate letter, the TPP will also inform you of the amount by which your B.C. TPP pension income would increase if you complete the transfer.

You can also determine the increase to your pension at various retirement dates yourself by inserting the additional recognized contributory and pensionable service amounts from the Appendix B form (6.A.1 and 6.A.2 respectively) into the online personal pension estimator. This added information should help you decide whether it is to your advantage to complete the transfer, or have two pension incomes on retirement (one from TRAF and the other from TPP).

Contact: Teachers' Pension Plan, Box 9460, Victoria, BC V8W 9V8, Victoria: 250-953-3022, Vancouver: 604-660-4088, Toll free 1-800-665-6770, f: 250-356-8977, TPP@pensionbc.ca.

Manitoba Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund (TRAF), 330 Johnson Terminal, 25 Forks Market Road, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4S8. Telephone: 204-949-0048, Toll free: 1-800-782-0714, Fax: 204-944-0361, info@traf.mb.ca. Web: www.traf.mb.ca.

You may also contact BCTF Income Security for assistance: BCTF, Income Security, 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4P2, 604-871-1921, toll free 1-800-663-9163, f: 604-871-2287, alambert@bctf.ca, cprellwitz@bctf.ca, or dlauber@bctf.ca.

Factor 88? Don't wait!

Teachers who have reached the age of 64 or the factor 88, age plus contributory service with the teachers or municipal pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan: Long Term.

If you have reached age 65 or factor 90, you are no longer eligible for long-term benefits and *should* withdraw. It is necessary for you to apply to withdraw.

Send a completed form, available from Income Security, local presidents, or online at bctf.ca/pensions/salary/LT-WithdrawalForm.shtml, to the BCTF Income Security Division.

Pension seminars 2004–05

- Saturdays (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with a question period following)
- Seminars cover such topics as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Purchase Rules, Pension Options, On-Line Tools and Retirement Issues.
- Pre-registration is NOT required.

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Let's celebrate our students and the teachers that support them!

Contest deadline: June 30, 2005

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For more information or questions, contact:
Verna_Duckworth@sd34.bc.ca

Karen: Teaching in the U.S.A.

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Damage can't be repaired at any cost

I would have preferred to have seen the article on the education infusion of \$150 million by the Liberals go into more detail (*Quesnel Cariboo Observer*, Feb. 2, 2005).

Gordon Campbell is saying that he will spend an extra \$150 million provincially on education this year.

What must not be forgotten is that he froze education funding in 2001. In the last four years this freeze has been in place, school districts everywhere have been required to pay for

rising costs in gas, electricity, transportation, and a teacher salary increase.

At the end of the day, these costs are in the neighbourhood of more than \$350 million.

Provincially, class sizes have increased, schools have been closed in many rural areas, teachers' jobs have been cut, special needs programs compromised, and other important programs cut all together.

Some districts have even resorted to a four-day school week just to make ends meet.

This is what has happened to our education system under Gordon Campbell's leadership. This is what has happened to the education of our children in B.C.

Some \$350 million out and \$150 million back in.

And the damage that was done? That cannot be repaired at any cost.

George Natalizio, school trustee, SD 28 (Cariboo-Chilcotin)

— Quesnel Cariboo Observer, February 2005.

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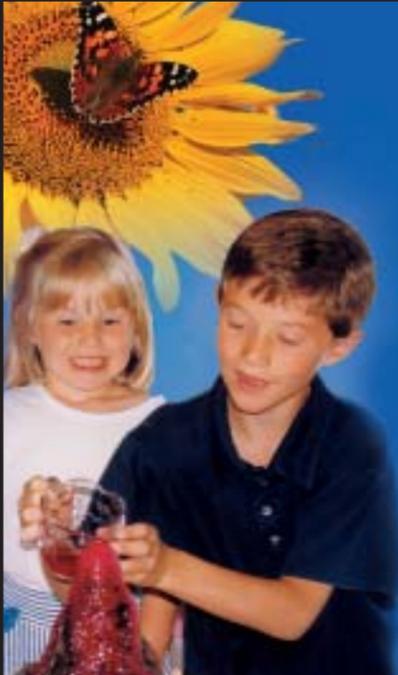
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PD CALENDAR

MAY 2005

7 Vancouver. Investigating Our Practices 2005, 8th annual conference, where participants from different educational contexts share investigations, understandings, and questions, Scarfe Education Building, UBC. \$20 (students \$10) includes refreshments and lunch. Door prizes! Contact Judy Paley, 604-822-2733, judy.paley@ubc.ca, eplt.educ.ubc.ca/workshops.

30-June 1, Vancouver. 13th Annual David Berman Memorial Concurrent Disorders Conference, sponsored by Vancouver Coastal Health Dual Diagnosis Program and UBC Interprofessional Continuing Education. Provides clinicians/delegates having previous knowledge in mental health and addictions with advanced training in dual diagnosis and an integrated model for treatment of concurrent disorders. Contact 604-822-2801, ipinfo@interchange.ubc.ca, interprofessional.ubc.ca.

JUNE 2005

9-10 New Westminster. Living on the Razor's Edge: Solution-Oriented Brief Family Therapy with Self-Harming Adolescents, presented by Matthew Selekman, MSW, LCSW, at The Inn at the Quay. Visit amigabc.com, or call 1-877-264-4222.

23-24 New Westminster. Anger and Aggression: A Life Span Treatment Approach, presented by Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., at The Inn at the Quay. Visit amigabc.com, or call 1-877-264-4222.

JULY 2005

3-8 Victoria. The Canadian Youth Climate Change Conference, motivating youth to lead the challenge of climate change—speakers, challenging workshops, skill building, and critical thinking—all in an empowering atmosphere and setting. Visit yc3.net.

4-8 Victoria. Summer Geotechnology Institute, an exciting programme developed to meet the needs of teaching professionals in Grades 6–12 who are interested in learning or advancing their understanding of Geotechnology (GIS, GPS, Remote sensing [satellite imagery], digital images, file management) for use in the classroom. St. Michaels University School. Visit smus.ca/campus/extension/ed_inst_gti.html.

4-21 Quebec City. Institut de Français, UBC Québec, French Bursary Program for Teachers. This French-immersion program is intended for all teachers and administrators interested in learning or improving their French language skills. Visit frenchcentre.ubc.ca, or call toll-free 1-866-528-7485.

4-26 Victoria. University of Victoria, Summer Studies, French for Elementary Teachers, a review of basic structures, pronunciation, vocabulary, and expressions, through communicative/experimental approach, with an emphasis on oral expression. Use of thematic units based on the

intermediate school curriculum. Detailed study of the language teachers require for classroom management. Contact Danielle Piercy, 250-721-7363, french@uvic.ca, <http://web.uvic.ca/reco/summer>.

13-16 Vancouver. Engaging the imagination in teaching and learning, Third International Conference on Imagination and Education, featuring Dr. Maxine Greene, Coast Plaza Hotel. Contact Josh Coward, event & conference co-ordinator, jcoward@sfu.ca, ieryg.net.

25-29 Drumheller. Palaeo Week for Teachers, Dinosaur Provincial Park and Royal Tyrrell Museum. \$400 includes taxes, materials, field trips, lunches. Visit tyrrellmuseum.com, or call toll-free 3100-0000 then 403-823-7707.

AUGUST 2005

15-19 Vancouver. Media Literacy Summer Institute, introducing the basics to teach media literacy in the classroom: Key Concepts of Media Literacy, Prime Time Television, News, Global Issues, Movies, Advertising, Gender, Diversity, the Internet, and classroom resources. Presenters are John Pungente, host of the national TV show Scanning the Movies, and Carolyn Wilson, president of the Association for Media Literacy in Ontario and co-author of Mass Media and Popular Culture. Cost \$50. Contact Dan Blake, 604-301-1247, deblaca@telus.net.

22-26 Nanaimo. Summer institute with Dr. Gordon Neufeld, The Teachability Factor, sponsored by Qualicum/Parksville and Nanaimo districts with Malaspina University College. \$350. Contact Lis Kroeker, kroekere@mala.bc.ca.

25-26 Surrey. A Living Values Education Workshop, Teachers for Peace and Global Education, Surrey Conference Centre, 9260 140 Street. \$50. "A wonderful, user-friendly resource for integrating the teaching of social responsibility across the curriculum." UNESCO-supported program gives participants opportunities to reflect on their values, practise creating a value-based atmosphere, and explore lessons. Contact Gudrun Howard, 604-517-1350, canada.livingvalues.net, or Beata Hittrich, 604-433-9765, bhittrich@hotmail.com.

25-26 Vancouver. Summer Institute 2005, 100 Ways to Raise Boys' Achievement, with Barry MacDonald, a part-time teacher/counsellor in School District 35 (Langley), Coast Plaza Hotel. Visit mentoring-boys.com.

25-26 Abbotsford. Blueprint for literacy K–10: The teacher, the learner, the text, with Miriam Trehearne, Faye Brownlie, Karen Hume, Jeff Wilhelm, Adrienne Gear, and Colleen Politano. Contact kwright@sfu.ca, educ.sfu.ca/fp/si05.

PSA PD Day—October 21, 2005

PD Calendar web site
<http://pdonline.bctf.ca/conferences/PD-Calendar.html>
Additions/changes? E-mail
Debby Stagg, dstagg@bctf.ca

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ORIENTATION MEETING

Saturday, May 14, 2005, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Schou Education Centre, Canada Way, Burnaby

To register, contact: Terri Maltais, President of BCETA

tmaltais@telus.net

For further information, guidelines, and an application form, visit our

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Canadian Educators Exchange Foundation

Under 18s to vote in provincial election



by Dawn Wilson

When we open our newspapers on May 18, we will read two sets of election results: the official ones, and those from the student vote, which will be held in schools across B.C. the day before the provincial election.

This will be the second time a student vote has been held in B.C. The first occurred last June, during the Federal election, but given the timing of that election (June 28), most secondary students were gone, and schools were winding down for the summer break. With the legislated provincial election date, Student Vote BC has spent the last six months organizing this event with the goal of engaging 100,000 students from across the province.

Many concerns have been raised recently about the growing trend of non-voting over the past five elections. From a healthy 70.34% turnout in the 1983 general election to a worrying 55.44% in 2001, fewer people seem interested in exercising their democratic rights. The trend is particularly noticeable among young people; in May 2001, only 27% of 18- to 24-year-olds voted. Young

people are losing the opportunity to have a voice in issues that affect them directly, now and in the future—issues in which their generation has a vested interest: tuition fees, transit costs, youth employment opportunities, the minimum wage, and environmental protection to name just a few.

On Student Election Day, students will take on the roles of voting clerks, voting officers, and returning officer.

The goal of the student vote program is to inspire a habit of active citizenship among Canadian students. After the Federal student vote last June, a post-election analysis assessed the effectiveness of the program and examined participant outcomes. Pre- and post-election student survey results showed significant increases in students' future intentions to vote, their being informed about current issues, government and politics, and their interest in reading the newspaper. Students' knowledge of political parties also increased. Student vote participation had a positive influence

on attitudes concerning electoral participation.

In conjunction with Alberta's provincial election last November, another student vote was held. Lacombe Composite High School (LCHS) in Lacombe was one of 500 schools in the province that participated. Teacher Corvin Uhrbach has led two successful student votes in the school, and reports, "We have found it to be a very positive experience in our school." His goal was to make students aware of the issues, and to create a mindset that students should vote when they reach the legal voting age of 18. He also hoped that the student election would create a dialogue between kids and parents, perhaps even motivating older, disillusioned parents to get out and vote.

At LCHS, the Social Studies Department decided how to run the election so that it would not take an overwhelming amount of time. The election was held during the first period of the day, and all classes in the school were invited to participate. The requirement for participation was to discuss the election in class and make 15 minutes available for voting on Election Day. Only 5 classes of 27 opted out. The actual voting process

was run entirely by the students, with Grade 10 and 12 Social Studies classes paired. Teams of three or four students took ballot boxes and polling booths to each class. One person explained the process, one handed out ballots as students individually went to the polling booth, and one signed and put the ballot into the box. An advanced poll was held for classes that had opted out, and students who were on spares were allowed to vote in the library on Election Day. After all the ballot boxes were collected, ballots were counted using the tally sheets from Student Vote 2004. Boxes were then exchanged, and a second count

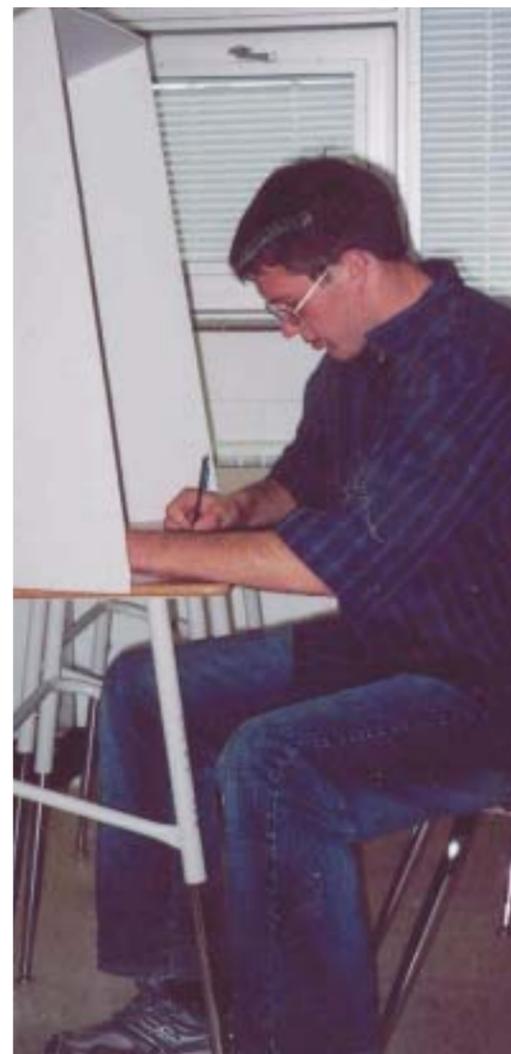
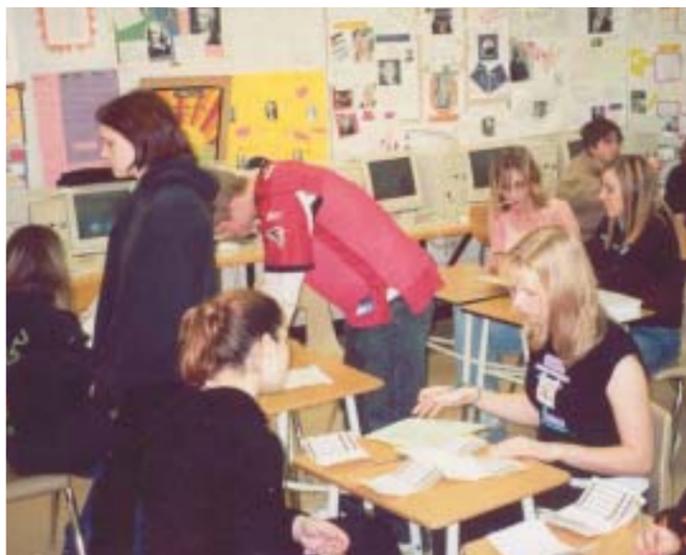
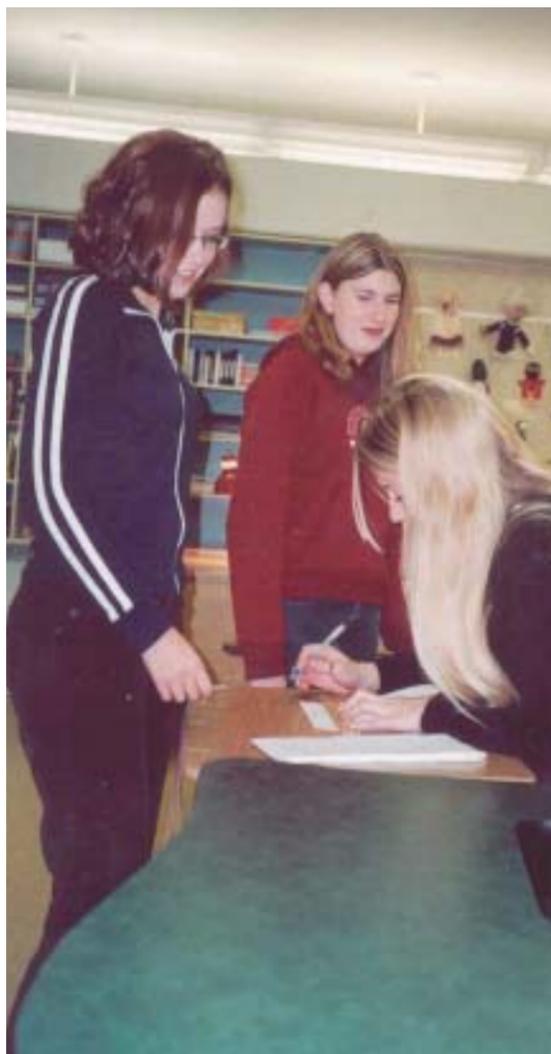
We are looking forward to hosting a stimulating learning experience and to helping our students become better citizens in the process.

was done. With the exception of a few adults present as observers during counting, the entire process was student driven.

The school where I teach, Reynolds Secondary School, in Victoria, has registered to hold a student vote for the upcoming election. The school will receive instructional resources and posters, electoral district maps, authentic ballot boxes and voting screens, riding-specific ballots, and referendum ballots. We will host an All-Candidates Forum and invite other guest speakers to social studies classes to generate interest, debate, and discussion. On Student Election Day, students will take on the roles of voting clerks, voting officers, and returning officer. The student vote team has already set up an effective communication network with the school, and has proven to be very helpful in answering questions and anticipating our needs. We are looking forward to hosting a stimulating learning experience and to helping our students become better citizens in the process.

For more information on how to organize a student vote in your school, go to www.studentvote.ca, e-mail info@studentvote.ca, or call 1-866-488-8775.

Dawn Wilson teaches at Reynolds Secondary School, Victoria.



Students in Alberta vote in the provincial election in November 2004.