

SPECIAL ELECTION EDITION

Teacher

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Now it's our turn. As British Columbians, we have an opportunity to determine the composition of the next Legislative Assembly. As citizens, our vote will be affected by many things. You may come to your own conclusion about what political party can best represent you. As teachers, we need to know the positions of the different political parties on educational issues. As a result of direction from the 1990 and 1991 annual meetings, the federation prepared questions for representatives of the three major political parties in B.C. The questions sought the policy positions of the parties on educational issues. The

responses are the focus of this special edition of *Teacher* newsmagazine. I urge you to review the questions and responses, to consider the kind of public education system you want in B.C., and decide who will best reflect your views in the legislature.

This year, we're celebrating our 75th anniversary as an organization of teachers in B.C. For all of those 75 years we have stood for the interests of the teaching profession, the improvement of the quality of public education, and equality for all students. We advocate for students, for teachers, and for public education between elections (we also want to work as education advocates during the election itself). And we will continue to do so, with whatever government the people of B.C. elect.

As a profession, we want respect. We

want to be listened to when we speak on educational issues. As employees, we want fairness in bargaining. As professionals, we want the resources necessary to do the job well. And along with everyone else who works in the education system, we want stability so that we can do our job with some sense of certainty.

I ask you to share with your family, with friends, and with neighbors the information in this tabloid. I hope you find it useful in making decisions, not only about your choice on election day, but also about becoming involved directly in the election campaign.



Ken Novakowski
President



Get involved in your own way

- **Voter registration...**
are you on the voters' list?
are your family and friends registered?
- **Volunteer recruitment...**
phone for campaign workers
train volunteers
- **Fund raising...**
make a contribution to your candidate
plan special fund-raising events
- **Campaign signs...**
deliver and erect candidate signs
- **Election day...**
work as an inside or outside scrutineer
drive voters to the polls
work at a zone house
- **And throughout the campaign...**
raise education issues
discuss education with candidates
call talk shows; write letters to the editor; speak at public meetings

28 DAYS TO DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				19 Don	20	21 Write
				I		a
				registered		cheque
22	23	24 Phone	25	26 Get a	27 Attend	28
		for		campaign	all-candidates	
		candidate		sign	meeting	
29	30	1 Work	2	3	4	5
		in				
		office				
6	7	8 Phone	9	10 Phone	11	12
13	14 Phone	15	16	17 E-DAY	18	19
Community				drive		
canvass				voters		

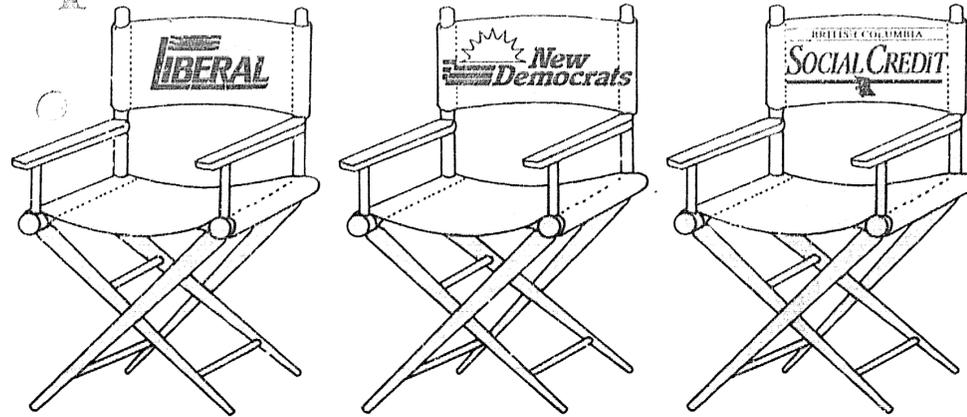
In preparation for a provincial election, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation invited each major political party to respond to an education brief, once in April 1990, and then again in June 1991.

Here are their responses. The New Democratic and Liberal parties responded to all questions in the first brief. The Social Credit party replied to the brief with a response from Wayne Desharnais, Deputy Minister of Education (See Question 1, Mandate, under Social Credit).

Only the New Democratic party formally replied to the 1991 follow-up brief. New questions only are reported on page 4.

We hope that this information will be useful to you as you consider your choices and participate in this provincial election

Major political parties speak out on education



1990 BRIEF - CHANGES TO LEGISLATION

<p>1. The mandate for B.C. schools <i>Will your government expand the statutory mandate of the B.C. public school system to include fostering the growth and development of every individual, to the end that he/she will become and be a self-reliant, self-disciplined, participating member with a sense of social responsibility within a democratic society?</i></p>	<p>Yes. The cornerstone of liberalism is the fundamental rights of the individual.</p>	<p>Yes. Education for self-reliance and democratic citizenship should be reflected in the mandate. We want to ensure that our schools provide a democratic setting to promote social awareness and foster a sense of personal and social responsibility.</p>	<p>Deputy Minister Wayne Desharnais informed us that "the minister did not feel compelled to offer a written answer" to our brief; he had already responded "in the decisions, legislation, and circulars" of his government and the Ministry of Education.</p>
<p>2. Ensuring quality and professionalism <i>Will your government remove from the School Act provisions that undermine professionalism and quality education, specifically those permitting boards to utilize "teachers' assistants" and to contract out the provision of educational programs?</i></p>	<p>A Liberal government will act on recommendations from the professionals in the field as to the best way to maintain quality education. While the Liberal Party holds no direct policy with regard to "teachers' assistants" we will welcome reaction to our view that they should become a part of the BCTF and, as such, should be required to hold certification of some kind.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>3. Professional certification of teachers <i>Will your government limit the function of the College of Teachers to certification, certification review, and decertification, and related teacher education and disciplinary matters; eliminate the duplicate membership structure and provide for a governing council with majority BCTF representation; and provide full funding from government for the college?</i></p>	<p>A Liberal government will repeal both Bills 19 and 20 in favor of a revised B.C. Labour Code that respects the rights of all working people in this province. Teachers, not the government, must determine how they wish to organize. On the specific question of certification, certification review and decertification, and related disciplinary issues, we hold that such matters be reviewed by a certification board whose membership be respected peers within the profession. The minister will have a <i>pro forma</i> role in approvals. Such a board will be funded by the government.</p>	<p>We will eliminate duplicate membership and undertake an immediate and complete review of Bill 20 with the BCTF and all affected parties.</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>4. Full scope of bargaining <i>Will your government remove from the School Act restrictions on teachers' collective bargaining?</i></p>	<p>Under a Liberal government teachers will have the same rights to bargain collectively as every other organized group as governed by a revised Labour Code.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>As above</p>

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

<p>5. Implementing change <i>Will your government obtain professional and public consensus before implementing new curriculum proposals?</i> <i>Will your government lengthen the timelines for change in order to provide for more discussion and consultation?</i></p>	<p>The government is not the appropriate agency to implement curriculum proposals, or timelines. The appropriate people to direct and co-ordinate such a process are the teachers, the principals, the school trustees, the training institutions, and various parent/teacher organizations. A Liberal government in British Columbia will, in consultation with the above mentioned groups, explore establishing a co-ordinating agency, British Columbia Educational Assessment Council (BCEAC), maintained at arms-length from the Ministry of Education and advising government as to the developing educational needs in the province.</p>	<p>We will consult on realistic timelines to ensure full teacher and community collaboration and support in the design of teaching methods and curriculum changes.</p>	<p>As above</p>
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6. Teacher education

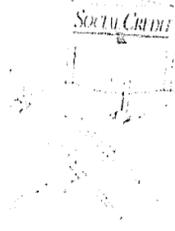
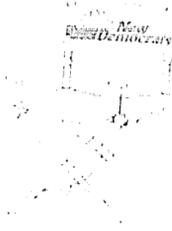
Will your government provide the time and resources necessary to allow the faculties of education at the universities to plan and implement changes to teacher education programs to respond to proposed changes in curriculum and assessment?

Will your government provide resources to the B.C. Teachers' Federation to assist with the review of teacher education currently under way?

Yes. Through the BCEAC, the faculties of education will be directly involved in the ongoing development of curriculum and assessment (consulting others) and will prepare detailed budgetary requirements for the government so that education can be funded in a more realistic and planned manner on an ongoing and long-term basis.

Yes to both questions. We are committed to teacher education and retraining that reflects the innovative nature of the new teaching-learning paradigm. The BCTF's help in reviewing teacher education within a new timetable will be welcomed and funded.

 As above || 7. Socially sensitive curricula | *Will your government commit resources to the introduction of programs aimed at furthering issues of social responsibility in curriculum as well as actively seeking to redress past inequalities and omissions?* | A Liberal government will properly fund a comprehensive curriculum developed through consultation and review. Government must fund a comprehensive curriculum that is developed and recommended by those in the profession and through democratically elected school boards, not pick and choose which programs it will fund and which it will not. | We support such initiatives that promote social awareness and foster a sense of personal and social responsibility on a variety of issues, including AIDS, racism and sexism. | As above |
8. Student assessment	*Will your government support new assessment practices that meet the conditions listed in a to g below?* a. time for the teacher to collect information and for record keeping, analysis, and collegial consultation; b. additional time for formal and informal reporting to parents; c. a realistic teacher workload; d. teacher training on alternative assessment techniques; e. appropriate facilities and resources; f. opportunities for parent education about curriculum, assessment, and evaluation processes; g. time for parent-teacher conferences.	Yes	As with curriculum changes, we will seek the active involvement of teachers and parents on development of assessment practices consistent with the goals found in a to g.	As above
9. Accountability	*Will your government promote a system of accountability that centres on the school-based relationship between teacher, parent and student?*	Yes. A centralized provincial system for collecting demographic data on individual students is an unnecessary form of centralized control.	Yes	As above
10. Royal Commission Recommendation 6.11	*Will your government implement Recommendation 6.11 of the Royal Commission that states: "That the BCTF initiate relevant programs of professional development aimed at improving classroom instruction. That the funding formula of the Ministry of Education provide the means for school boards, in negotiation with teachers, to develop creative ways to make regular, extended periods of time available for such professional development?"*	The best investment a government can make to education beyond adequate base funding is the provision of paid professional leave for the purpose of upgrading, and retraining. The B.C. Liberal Party is strongly committed to a flexible program of professional-development leave.	Yes. We support professional-development opportunities negotiated between school boards and teachers that reinforce new pedagogy and refine teaching methods	As above
11. CLASS SIZE	*Will your government financially support primary groupings no larger than 18 as advocated in the document distributed by the Ministry of Education at its New Beginnings Conference in May 1990?* *Will your government develop a resource allocation plan, in consultation with the B.C. Teachers' Federation, that will see a movement to the above class sizes?*	In keeping with the general philosophy of the B.C. Liberal Party to take the politics out of education and return it to those who are best positioned to advise and direct education in this province, a Liberal government will not impose class-size restrictions but will accept the advice and directions of a council such as the BCEAC. We will respect the various restrictions necessary for pedagogical reasons. We also recognize that a pupil-teacher ratio as a rationale for funding education is a measure that is meaningless except for the most rudimentary financial evaluations that are tied to distorted concepts of "productivity."	Smaller class sizes must be our most important goal. Class size and composition clearly affect a teacher's opportunity to give students the individual attention needed in a new teaching-learning paradigm. We will first tackle overly large classes requiring urgent attention and then begin work in consultation with school boards, the BCTF, and others to develop new approaches to class size and composition.	As above



EDUCATION FINANCE

12. Adequate funding of B.C. schools

Will your government restore British Columbia to a position of national leadership with respect to financial support for public education?

A Liberal government in B.C. will provide the necessary money to meet the on-going requirements of a first-class education system.

A New Democratic government will, in its first term of office, work to achieve:

- funding based on the actual cost of mandated programs;
- stable education funding and taxation;
- improved funding based on education's receiving a fairer share of provincial revenues;
- a fair tax system in support of education;
- clearer accountability by both the ministry and school boards for education costs;
- solutions to problems in communities with special needs, including sparse population, rapid growth, or historic funding deficits.

It is our specific goal, within the first term of office, to achieve a significantly improved position of B.C. compared to other provinces.

As above

13. Local control over local school board budgets

a. Will your government respect the right of elected school boards to determine the needs of pupils and to set local school district budgets accordingly?

Yes, within the provisions of long-range planning that will assist local boards and teachers to develop on-going dialogue with neighboring districts and a provincially based BCEAC.

Yes

As above

b. Will your government rescind legislation imposing a referendum system on local school boards?

Yes

Yes

c. Will your government give school districts the right to set supplementary budgets over and above provincially determined basic program budgets without provincial restrictions?

No. We will establish both short- and long-term budgetary requirements that will allow local boards to develop programs specific to the needs of their communities. We will provide stability in education funding, establishing a greater level of trust between the government as the funding agency and the locally elected boards and thus removing the need for supplementary demand for money.

Yes

PENSIONS

14. Will your government act upon the recommendations contained in the October 1989 brief to government?

All public-sector pensions require review, and, as such, the brief to the government enclosed in Appendix E holds many valid points. We are not prepared at this time to commit fully to implementation of the recommendations; however, we do acknowledge the need for review and revision.

We will consult and take action on those proposed pension-plan improvements that bring teachers' pensions into line with accepted standards in British Columbia and across the country.

As above

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NDP responds to 1991 BCTF supplementary brief

In June, 1991, the BCTF delivered to the political parties in B.C. a "Supplement to the Brief from the British Columbia Teachers' Federation of April, 1990 Regarding Current Educational Issues." The NDP responded.

We said...

The quality of education in our province is affected by the general climate of relations among the major participants in the system, including teachers, trustees, and government. After years of teacher bashing and attacks on the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the Social Credit government improved its approach to the educational climate as it indicated strong support for the 1988 Royal Commission and endorsed a co-operative approach to the involvement of major stakeholders. However, for

the last year-and-a-half, there have been disturbing signs of a return to old ways. Ad hoc policy making, not based on prior consultation with the teaching profession and other stakeholders, has returned. Certain key Royal Commission recommendations have not been effectively implemented or supported.

Specifically, the Education Advisory Council does not appropriately represent the major stakeholders. The number of representatives must be more in balance with the actual responsibilities of the groups and stakeholders in the system.

1. Will your government review the composition and role of the Education Advisory Council so that major stakeholders, such as the B.C. Teachers' Federation and the B.C. School Trustees Association, have a greater role and responsibility in providing advice to government than those groups whose participation and responsibilities in the system are less central?

Yes. We will review the composition and role of the Education Advisory Council to ensure that all organizations with a stake in our educational system have full and effective input on education policy decisions.

2. Will your government recognize the B.C. Teachers' Federation as the legitimate voice of the teaching profession, and will you commit to prior consultation with the teaching profession before introducing legislation or policy changes?

Yes

3. Will your government repeal Bill 82 and honor freely negotiated collective agreements?

Yes. New Democrats are committed to free collective bargaining. Bill 82 will have no place in a New Democrat government. It will be replaced with legislation designed to bring fair and effective collective bargaining to our educational system. We will consult with the BCTF and other

education organizations in developing a new approach and ensuring implementation of those agreements affected by Bill 82.

4. Will your government withdraw British Columbia from participation in the national indicators project of the Council of Ministers of Canada?

We will review the national indicators project in consultation with the BCTF and other education groups and organizations.

The complete response from the political parties is available from your local association office or election co-ordinator.