

Teacher

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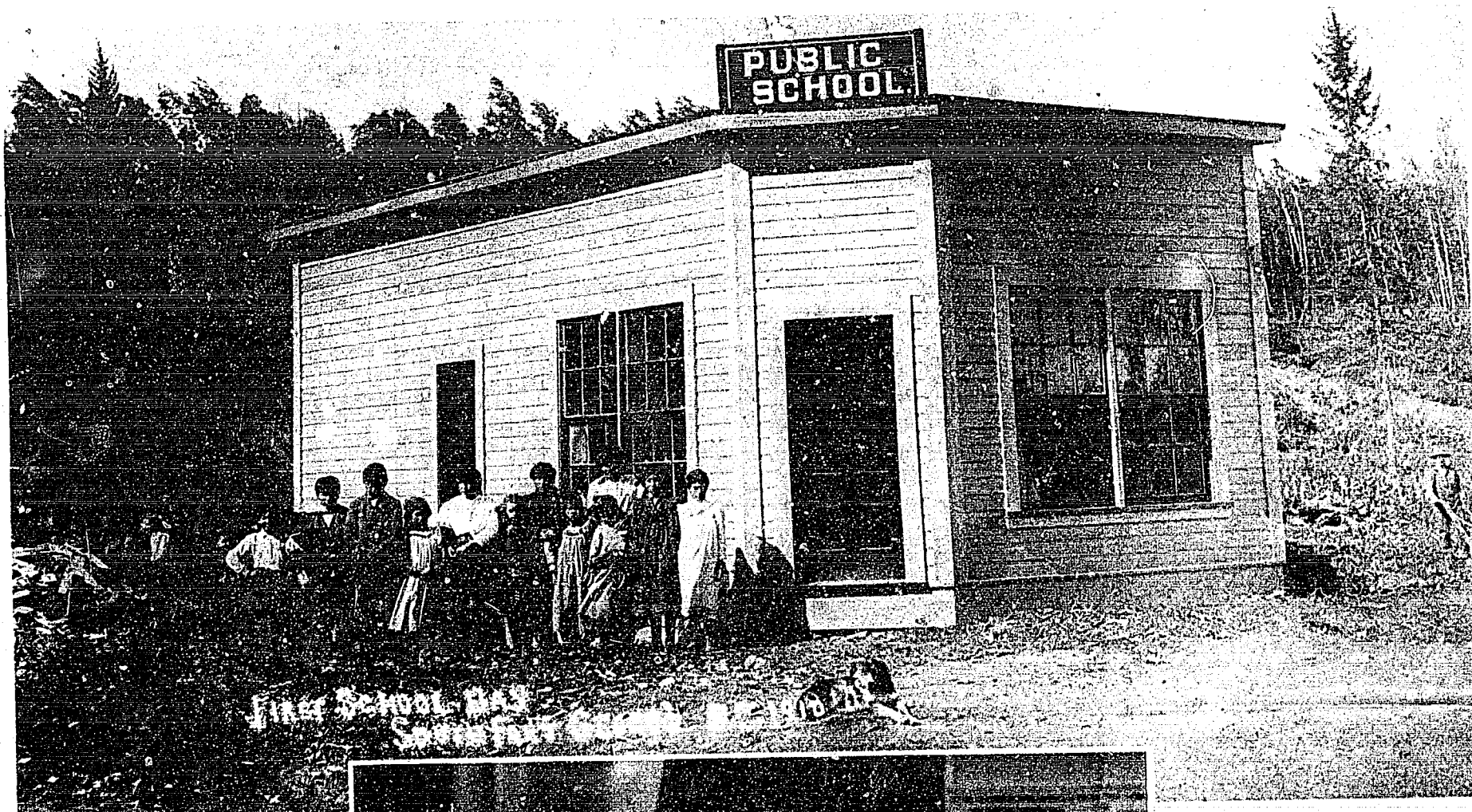
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CTF launches national issues-in-education debate



The expectations Canadians have for their public schools are the focus of a national teacher initiative. CTF President Allan Bacon is crossing the country, speaking to community groups in business and labour, inviting debate on public education.

by Elaine Decker

Canadian Teachers' Federation President Allan Bacon is asking questions. Bacon's questions are the foundation of the CTF National Issues in Education Initiative, aimed at "anyone who will listen," and intended to engage them in the national debate on education and schools.

Bacon says the debate "will succeed if those who participate refrain from hurling insults at each other, offering quick fixes, pointing fingers, and oversimplifying the important complex task of raising a generation to adulthood through public education." He argues that the current pattern of simple answers about schools is "trivializing the significance of the discussion, ignoring divergent opinions, overlooking key elements of

It's time to let the nation know that educators are not the stumbling blocks to progress but the agents of change.

Allan Bacon, president
Canadian Teachers' Federation

society's impact on education, disregarding the complexity of change, destroying public confidence in education and demoralizing teachers."

Bacon offers a list of some of the easy answers: teach reading using the phonics method, provide letter grades on report cards, test students across the country using nationally normed standardized tests, place more emphasis on math, science, and technology, increase competition in schools, reduce

violence in society, organize multi-graded classes, provide vouchers for school choice, make secondary schools more friendly, prepare students for work, stream students, destream students. He then asks, "From this list of answers, can we find the right question? Is it, 'How can we improve our schools?', 'How can we reduce the dropout rate?', 'How can we accommodate diversity?', 'How can we make our economy more competitive internationally?'"

Bacon concludes, "Not only do the easy answers beg different questions. They are sometimes the wrong answers to the questions...or they succeed only in raising other questions." So Bacon plans to address the questions head on, travelling across the country and opening conversations about the expectations Canadians have for their schools.

Allan Bacon knows that living these questions is difficult. He says inviting others to do so would seem impossible. "except that we are teachers." He offers John Dewey's expectations for our profession: "One must take up the attitude of reflection...it includes an active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us."

Bacon urges all teachers to join the discussion in their communities. CTF has produced 10 issue sheets on such topics as schools and jobs, dropouts, violence, education finance, international comparisons, and testing. The sheets have been distributed in B.C. by the

See NATIONAL ISSUES page 11

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Staff give value

I am a retired teacher, and throughout my years as a BCTF member, I heard criticisms about whether our fees were spent effectively. A recent experience has enlightened me.

Late in October, Sam Fillippoff, co-ordinator of the Program Against Racism, asked me to accept a contract as co-ordinator for the National Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education (CCMIE) conference. I did, and I spent six weeks working in the federation's Professional Development Division—"living" in PD.

People who question how well their BCTF money is spent should have that opportunity. I worked very hard, and I would not, nor could I, work like that full time, given the multiple facets of my assignment, the endless problems that demanded immediate answers, the continual interruptions by the telephone, and on and on.

I cannot believe how hard the support staff work, what little direction they ask for, the end-

less deadlines, the necessity to weigh priorities for everything they do, because they always have too much to do. And then there's the telephone. They have to stop what they are doing and deal with the calls, remaining polite at the same time.

Staff are committed to doing a good job. Co-operation is blended with ability to handle varied tasks, handle interruptions, and still complete those tasks. It is enough to say that they made me, another problem, welcome. They were patient with my "dumb questions"; they accepted my lack of understanding of office protocol; they helped me because I was there.

The membership is well served by the staff and get full value for their dues dollar.
Sid Bentley
Retired teacher, Surrey

High praise

I continue to be impressed by the quality of the writing and the level of excellence of the ar-

ticles generally, published in *Teacher*. I only hope my colleagues and other politicians who receive this publication take the time to peruse it as well. Keep up the good work.

Leonard Krog, MLA
Parksville-Qualicum

[Editor's note: Complimentary copies of *Teacher* go to all MLAs.]

Women inventors project

I read "Name one female inventor," by Judith Coffin, in your Nov/Dec. issue of *Teacher*. Science teachers in Ontario are also searching for women in science and technology roles: past and present. A group of your teachers may like to contact is our Ontario "The Women Inventors Project" group, 302-1 Greensboro Drive, Etobicoke, ON M9W 1C8, (416) 243-0668. They have information and student-ready activities, plus a new mobile and book *Canadian women: Risktakers and Changemakers*, by Beth Bohnert (1993). Another good book is *Mothers*

of *Invention*, by Ethlie Ann Vare and Greg Ptacek (1987) ISBN 0-688-08907-0.

I hope this helps.

Penny McLeod
Science Education, University of Toronto

Credit for "Desiderata"

As "Desiderata" is one of my favorite poems, I must write to correct a reference made by Vera Jensen in her article "Speak your truth quietly and clearly" (*Teacher*, Nov/Dec. 1993).

"Desiderata" is neither ancient nor anonymous. It was written in 1927 by Max Ehrmann, who was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, and educated at De Pauw University and Harvard. "Desiderata" is in a collection of Ehrmann's poems titled *The Desiderata of Happiness*, published by Blue Mountain Arts in 1974.

I hope, in the future, Max Ehrmann will be given his due credit for this enduring work.

Lisa Herrera
Vancouver

Seeking teacher "pen friend"

I am 24 years old, and I work as an English teacher in Stavenhagen, a little town in the north of Germany.

I'm fascinated by Canada and its people. I got your address from the Canadian Embassy because I'm looking for a pen-friend in Canada—perhaps a young woman teacher like me.

Please ask interested teachers to write me: Marion Schaar, Hanne-Nuete-Str. 2, 17153 Stavenhagen, Germany.

Write to us

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

Your federation inside out

Say goodnight, Bear

by Berniece Stuart

The BCTF building has been the daytime home to Bear, a big furry black-and-white cat. Bear wanders the halls and the staff room and occasionally drops in on whatever meetings interest him on a given day.

I have made a number of attempts to have him speak on the record, but up until now, he's been reluctant to open up and tell us much about himself. His response has always been, "Hey, all that bare-all, slathering, 'up on your lap' openness is for dogs. I insist on a certain distance."

However, maybe because we're not going to be around much longer, and because he secretly likes us, he has finally agreed to sit down and chat.

Berniece: So, Bear, what exactly brought you to the BCTF?

Bear: Well, one day, a couple of years ago, Vida, my owner, let me out in the morning before she went to work, and accidentally left the cat door latched. It was a miserable day, I have to say, and I wasn't too happy about getting my nicely washed and fluffed coat all soggy. A few days prior to this, I had spotted, just across the street from my house, Kelly, Karen, and Ruth hard at work at their computers, and I had made a mental note to drop by and



DOROTHY ROBINSON PHOTO

visit some day. Anyway, the ledge just outside the Graphics Department is nice and wide, and it wasn't long after I hopped up there, that one of them opened the window and invited me in.

I have to say that those three women have a special place in my heart, what with the comfortable padded chair they provided for sleeping, the soft classical background music, and the colorful pictures and graphics splashed all over the walls.

Berniece: It has been my experience with cats that they tend to be timid. The Graphics Department is a long way from the Staffroom—did Karen walk you down there and introduce you?

Bear: Well, first of all, your experience with cats has obviously been limited; I can hardly be described as timid. But, yes, that hall outside Graphics is pretty long, and you never know when you're going to meet up with some character who has an aversion to felines. So one day, when Karen was heading down to get some coffee, I tagged along and found out the BCTF was more than just fancy brochures and journals.

Berniece: So give us your impressions of the good ol' BCTF.

Bear: Well, I have to say that this organization employs a lot of cat lovers, and I think that speaks well for your employment policies. The

members will be relieved to know that those thorough background checks weed out the undesirable. But, even though you're, by and large, a pretty good bunch of people, I do have my favorites.

Berniece: Do tell.

Bear: Well, I think it was Dorothy Robinson who got me my own name plate placed next to my dish of crunchies. Not that I need further affirmation of my identity, you realize, but it's neat to know that bowl is off limits to anyone else. And, of course, Rosemary Hodgkinson is absolutely wonderful. For some unknown reason (which I am still checking out), my couch near the staffroom was removed, and it was Rosemary

who not only replaced it with a comfy chair, but covered it with a warm blanket so I wouldn't have to lay on vinyl. Have you ever tried to sleep on vinyl? It's not pleasant!

Berniece: Any other staff members of note?

Bear: Well, Wes Knapp lets me doze in his office sometimes, but I have to make sure I don't get up onto the wrong chair. He objects to cat hair on his pants. Fussy, fussy. And Nancy Hinds graciously introduced me to a delegation of Japanese visitors one day when I wandered into Board Room 2 for what I thought was an Administrative Staff Union meeting. (They always have great food.)

Berniece: Bear, I know that many of us are going to miss you when we move to our new building, but are you prepared to admit that, just maybe, you're going to miss us, too?

Bear: No comment.

Berniece: One last thing. Were you aware that Dorothy is having a picture of you enlarged and hung in the new staffroom?

Bear: Is that why those darn flashbulbs have been going off in front of my eyes? Well, it is! #*&~#!—it better be my good side, is all I have to say.

Berniece Stuart is an administrative assistant in the BCTF Organization Support Division.

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

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

Work relationships head local presidents' seminar

by Louise Gorton

Local presidents received a wake-up call Wednesday morning from Stacey Holloway, the session's keynote speaker. She emphasized that building relationships takes skill, knowledge, and time; it takes two to have a relationship, but only one to make a change; and it is a challenge to be responsible and respectful.

Holloway's presentation was followed by a discussion of Bill 78 and the implications of the establishment of an employer's association.

The OSD players provided a good dose of humor during the lunch hour to introduce the new and improved communications workshops.

Presidents spent the afternoon discussing labour/management relationships, focussing on what relationships are currently working well in districts, why they are successful, and what problems exist with relationships in a district. Communications was seen as a key to strengthening working relationships within districts.

On Thursday morning, using the theme "How To Deal with Nasty People Without Becoming One of Them," Stacey Holloway gave presidents a chance to model conflict-resolution skills.

A panel on ethics and colleague-to-colleague relationships spoke on the afternoon of the second day. Panelists were Percy Austin, a representative of the Judicial Council; Christina Schut, an experienced local president; Suzie Simard, from the

Professional Relations Advisory Committee; Alice Rees, a member of the Task Force on Roles and Responsibilities; Randy Noonan, one of the BCTF's staff lawyers; and Ralph Sundby, a member of the BCTF administrative staff. Susan Palmer read typical scenarios composed by LPAC members and the panelists responded.

A hospitality room and a "progressive dinner," which toured three excellent downtown restaurants and a blues bar, provided the social glue for this mid-winter seminar.

Louise Gorton is president of the Prince George District Teachers' Association.

Recruiting teachers with a cultural difference

Teaching—Making a Difference, is a project sponsored by the Provincial Supply and Demand Committee, of which the BCTF is a member. The project is designed to attract students of all cultural backgrounds into teaching to ensure that the teaching population reflects the general population. While some of the materials are specifically designed to recruit First Nations and ethno-cultural minorities, the activities can also be used for career education with upper intermediate and secondary students.

The project includes an integrated video and print package. The teacher's guide to accompany the video includes discussion guides for Grade 6 students, senior secondary students, and parents; student activities,

handouts and information on education in China and India; and information on First Nations education. The kit will be distributed to all secondary schools, district resource centres, and local association offices.

—Margaret Ross

BCTF associates in community-outreach programs will work with parent and community groups to attract diverse cultures into teaching. Postings in staffrooms now, seek teachers who speak Spanish, Chinese, or Punjabi, or are familiar with First Nations issues.

Short course in human relations

The six most important words in our language? "I admit I made a mistake."

The five most important words? "You did a good job."

The four most important words? "What is your opinion?"

The three most important words? "If you please."

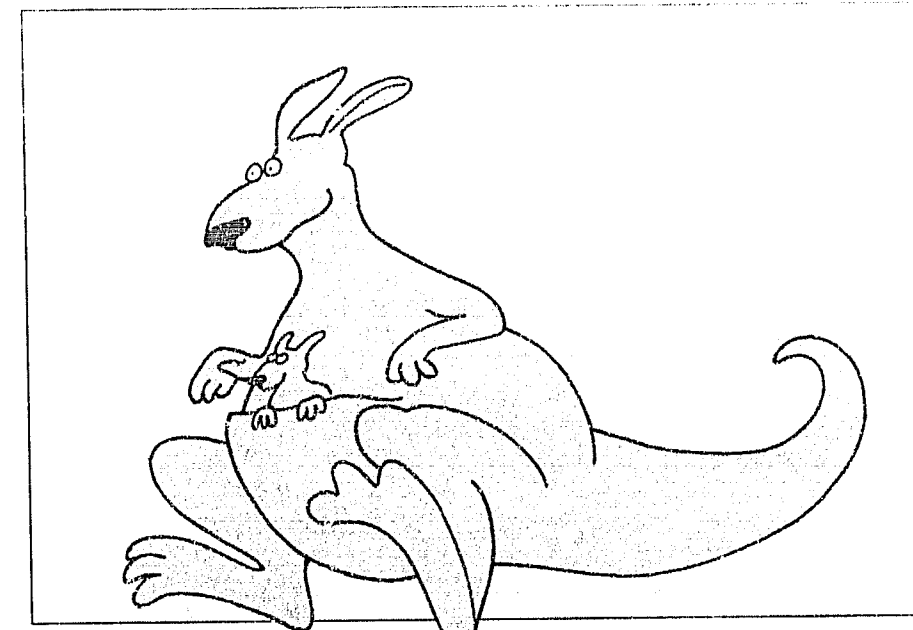
The two most important words? "Thank you."

The single most important word? "We."

The least most important word? "I."

Your not saying anything? SMILE.

Pension portability update



Reciprocal pension transfer agreements remain a concern for a number of B.C. teachers and part of the ongoing business of the BCTF Pensions Committee.

B.C. has transfer agreements with provinces from Alberta to Quebec, inclusive. Those agreements transfer at retirement, double the teachers' pension contributions plus interest. Also transferred is the period of time the teacher was a member of the other province's pension plan. This time period, or contributory service, is combined with B.C. contributory service to determine pension eligibility.

For example, a teacher retiring at age 55 who transfers 12 years of contributory service to B.C., when combined with 23 years in B.C., will be eligible for a non-reduced early retirement pension because total contributory service is 35 years.

The B.C. pension, in the example above, would be composed of a 23-year B.C. teacher pension plus a pension (annuity) purchased with the money transferred from the other province.

The money transferred from the other province does not provide a pension of equal value to a B.C. pension based

on the same period of time. The teacher's option of paying the required difference is usually much too costly.

Teacher organization staff from across Canada, with the help of CTF, have been trying to develop a new agreement recognizing the actual value of the pension accrued in the other province and transferring this value; the result would be an amount of money that translates into a pension much closer to the equivalent B.C. service pension.

To date, no agreement has been signed along the new lines. Quebec and Ontario may be the first to sign with B.C. in the near future.

—Ken Smith

1994 Retirement seminars

09:00 to 16:00

March 5
Holiday Inn (Broadway), Vancouver

March 12
Sunrise Golf & Racquet Centre, Langley

April 16
Village Green Inn, Vernon

April 23
Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria

78th Annual General Meeting
March 20-23, 1994

Topping the list

AGM to debate where we stand on education directions

Monday, March 21—14:00

Where does the B.C. Teachers' Federation stand on:

- continuous learning in the development of curriculum?
- the year-long retention of students?
- written comments for primary report cards?
- the use of letter grades in Grades 4-7?
- standards and accountability?
- mandatory accreditation for elementary schools?
- funding the implementation of education change?
- the role of teacher leadership in education?

Delegates to the 1994 BCTF Annual General Meeting will debate these issues and others during the spring break. Following membership discussions in schools, locals, and PSAs, the Executive Committee is recommending to the AGM the adoption of policy statements on these and other key educational issues.

Following the AGM, the adopted policies will guide the BCTF and locals on educational changes. They will provide direction to teachers, locals, and the federation when responding to

announcements of the Ministry of Education or school districts.

The recommended policy statements will be printed in the *AGM Reports and Resolutions Booklet*. Watch for it in school staffrooms in February.

As a union of professionals, the federation has a proud history of articulating policy positions on issues of importance to the teaching profession. This year's AGM will carry on this longstanding tradition of leadership.

—Mike Lombardi

Teacher

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Executive Committee Candidate Statements

Delegates to the 1994 AGM will get a preview of the report of the Task Force on Changing Roles and Responsibilities. The task force has been working for a year to gather the questions and then find answers to the most vexing relationship issues for teachers in schools today. The draft report, to be finalized by May, challenges teachers to conceive of new ways of managing our school system. It says school governance needs to break from the hierarchical and bureaucratic industrial model and use a more professional model. Such change will be as difficult for teachers as it will be for management, but it will improve and democratize our schools.

The task force believes the fundamental and central relationship in schools is the relationship between teachers, students, and parents. All

other workers in the system are to provide support to that relationship. The task force believes teachers are highly trained and skilled professionals who are not treated with the trust and respect or provided with the collegial environment necessary to carry out their professional roles and direct their work. This lack of a professional environment results in a poorer quality system and models an undemocratic education for students, stress and an unhealthy situation are created for teachers, and needless expense for taxpayers is caused by excessive administration.

Membership focus groups, surveys, and meetings, as well as an extensive literature search, demonstrated that our schools' governance system fits the hierarchical, bureaucratic, or administrative mold. They

cited formal authority of administrators the objective of teacher compliance and loyalty to administrative direction, and top-down management, layers of overseers, and suppression of change and innovation.

The task force believes that an improved style of governance is possible and would free schools from the current bureaucratic controls; teachers and parents would build a closer working relationship; schools would be managed in a collegial fashion, with trust, respect, and control given to the professionals who do the work. While the group does not underestimate the difficulties in such change, it feels the time is right to move to a professional governance model for the sake of students and teachers. The report will likely contain 15 recommendations for change.

— Maris Lowry

For President



David Chudnovsky



Alice McQuade

What a year we're facing! Bill 31 hobbles free collective bargaining. Bill 78 threatens to destroy local autonomy and local bargaining.

The media run daily attacks on teachers and public education. Most voters, and many of our members are convinced that there is no solution to our fiscal problems short of dramatically cutting education and the public sector.

What to do? Our greatest asset is the active commitment of our members and locals. We need

processes and structures to reinforce local teacher control of bargaining whatever changes Bill 78 brings.

We must tell the real story of public education. BCTF members provide quality instruction to hundreds of thousands of children in this province. We teach the rich and the poor, the capable and the challenged, the troubled and the gifted, ESL children and native English speakers. And we do a great job!

We will not allow politicians to solve their problems by

sacrificing the futures of the children we teach. Cuts in administrative spending, a return of school boards' right to tax, and fair taxes for everyone including the wealthy and the corporations—can provide the resources the school system needs.

Our task is to build the consensus which demands those resources.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: BCTF Second vice-president (2 yrs.); Member-at-large, Executive

Committee (2), LARC (2), Staff rep trainer (3), Substitute Teachers' Association, BCTF Committee Against Racism, Association for community education member, Adult basic education association, Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society (board of directors), Local: Surrey Grievance officer (3), Vice-president, Secretary, Chair of anti-racism and bargaining committees, WLC committee and economic welfare committee member; chief negotiator (5); Strike co-ordinator (2). *Teaching:* Nursery school, elementary school, secondary school, and university level in Ontario, England, and B.C. *Education:* BA (honors) York University; B.Ed. U of Toronto.

As society has changed and become more inclusive, the needs of the students in our classrooms have changed greatly. Teachers work to provide an environment which is safe and healthy, where all students learn and are valued and successful.

The needs of our locals and the federation have also changed. The local now is the centre and the strength of the federation. And yet a provincial voice for teachers is essential if we are to be a respected union of professionals. The traditions of

the federation must be protected and enhanced, to speak for the professional, economic, and social concerns of teachers. At the same time we must be prepared to examine critically our most sacred principles and the way we operate if we are to remain relevant to our members and an important advocate for public education.

The challenges we face this next year include adapting to a changing bargaining climate, enhancing the image of teachers and the BCTF, maintaining the

federation's financial health, building effective coalitions, ensuring that education change benefits our students and achieving gains for our members which will improve their working lives.

Through unity and commitment we have faced every challenge. The public needs to hear our powerful and positive voice. I would be honored to serve teachers as president of the federation.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: BCTF first vice-president (1 yr.); BCTF Second vice-president (2); Member-at-large, Executive Committee (1); Staff rep trainer (1); Finance ettee. (2); Pensions ettee. (6); PD associate (2); Status of women workshop facilitator (6); PSA executive (4); Labour affairs advisory ettee. (1); Labour education ettee. (2); AGM delegate (15); CTF/AGM delegate (3). *Local:* Pres., Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Chair, Public relations ettee, and staff rep assembly; Member, WLC ettee., bargaining, French language program ettee., ISA pres. *Teaching:* Secondary teacher 15 yrs. (business education, social studies). *Education:* BA and POP, SFU; Preparatory work for MBA (SFU).

The Teachers' Pension Board* has recommended to government a number of significant changes to the teachers' pension plan.

Details have been circulated to teachers as an *Issue Alert*. The report is a key item for discussion at the AGM. The recommendations ask for:

- formal establishment of the Teachers' Pension Board
- a 90 formula for pension eligibility
- a 3% per year reduction for early retirement
- recognition of some child-rearing time for pension eligibility
- revamped leave-of-absence purchase rules

- revised reinstatement of refund provisions
- indexing of reduced pensions and the CPP bridging benefit
- improved health benefits for retired teachers
- recalculation of pre-1972 disability and survivor pensions
- financing of the changes
- future work of the board: funding policy, rewriting the Pension (Teachers) Act, and appeal process for plan members.

The report, if accepted by cabinet, will require legislative changes to the Pension (Teachers) Act. The board recommends that a number of the changes be effective July 1,

1994. Others will be phased in over the next 18 months.

The changes will be financed from anticipated increase in revenue from diversification of fund investments. No additional contributions will be required from teachers or school boards.

— Ken Smith

*The Teachers' Pension Board has operated throughout 1993 with the approval of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Beneficiary representatives are Arnie Lambert (Summerland), James Cairnie (Retired Teachers), and Ken Smith (BCTF staff). Government's representatives are Alan Barnard (comptroller general), Joan Axford (Ministry of Education), and Lois McNabb (Ministry of Finance).

AGM Agenda

Sunday, Mar. 20

FIRST SESSION

19:00
Welcome Preliminaries
a. Adoption of chairpersons, scrutineers, tellers, Resolutions Committee
b. Adoption of agenda
c. Adoption of 1993 AGM minutes
Report of the President
Constitution and By-laws
Recommendations 2-3 (p.13)
Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards
Recommendations 19 (p.38), 20-22 (p.39), 23-24 (p.40)
Resolutions 118-121 (p.40-41)

21:30

Election Statements from Candidates for Table Officer Positions

22:00

Adjourn

Monday, Mar. 21

SECOND SESSION

09:00
Address – Minister of Education
Art Charbonneau
Question period
10:00
Executive Committee Leadership Report
Recommendation 1(a) and (b) (p.8)
Unfinished business
12:00
Executive Director's Report
12:30
Lunch

THIRD SESSION

14:00
Greetings – Jackie Tegart, President, BCSTA
Education Policy
Recommendations 4 (p.28-30), 6 (p.30), 7 (p.31)
Resolutions 105-106 (p.32)
Professional Development
Recommendation 18 (p.38)
Teacher Education
Resolutions 125 (p.44), 126-128 (p.45)
16:00
B.C. College of Teachers Report
Resolutions 103-104

(p.12-13)
Unfinished business

16:30
Election Statements from Candidates for Member-at-Large Positions

17:00
Adjourn

Tuesday, Mar. 22

FOURTH SESSION

09:00
Address – Heather-Jane Robertson, CTF
10:00
Mainstreaming and Integration
Recommendation 5 (p.30)
Resolution 107 (p.32)
Finance
Adoption of the Financial Statements
Recommendations 8-10 (p.33), 11-15 (p.34)
Resolutions 108-109 (p.35)
Committee Against Racism
Recommendation 26 (p.42)
Unfinished business

12:30
Lunch

FIFTH SESSION

14:00
Address – Moyra Baxter, B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Pensions

Health and Welfare
Recommendation 16 (p.35)
Resolutions 110-112 (p.36)
Report of Task Force on Changing Roles and Responsibilities
Unfinished business

17:25
Final Call for Nominations

17:30
Adjourn

* NOTE: A Tuesday evening session will be scheduled, if necessary

Wednesday, Mar. 23

SIXTH SESSION

09:00
Elections
Address – Ken Georgetti, President, B.C. Federation of Labour
Status of Women
Recommendations 29-30 (p.44)
Sexual Harassment
Recommendations 27-28 (p.42-43)
Resolutions 123-124 (p.43)
Bargaining
Resolutions 101-102 (p.12)
Unfinished Business

12:15
Questions on Committee Reports without Recommendations

a. Bargaining Advisory Committee
b. Children's Rights Committee
c. Local Presidents' Advisory Committee
d. PSA Council
e. Task Force on French Programs and Services
g. Task Force on Violence in Schools
h. Teacher on Call Advisory Committee

12:30
Lunch

SEVENTH SESSION

14:00
Address – Allan Bacon, President, CTF
Hilroy Award
Organization of the BCTF
Resolutions 114-116 (p.37)
Membership
Resolution 113 (p.36)
Publications of the BCTF
Resolution 122 (p.41)
Public Affairs
Recommendation 25 (p.41)
Political Action
Resolution 117 (p.38)
Unfinished business
Late Resolutions
New Resolutions

17:15
Closing courtesy motion
17:30

For First Vice-President



Peter McCue



Carol Whitwell

Never has the need for a clear and articulate defence of public education by the BCTF been greater. The education system and those who provide it are under constant attack from a variety of sources. We need to be advocates for the excellent work that is being done in classrooms around this province.

Our concerns around mainstreaming and integration, school violence, class size, and the resources to deal with meaningful education change pull us in many directions.

Strong federation leadership is needed to build on teacher initiatives in these areas.

To strengthen and build on our tradition of a membership controlled, democratic union we must provide opportunities to our locals for skill development, advocacy and leadership at the school level. This support is needed for the negotiation, administration and defence of our collective agreements and to foster the work of our social programs. Additional skills and expertise must be developed at

the local level.

We need to maintain, support and enhance teacher leadership through both our current staff representative and professional development training. This support will allow us all to better address the issues facing us.

I pledge to continue working on behalf of the interest of all members as your first vice-president. Together we will continue building a responsive and democratic union.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: Member-at-large, Executive Committee (5 yrs.);

Education leave ettee. (4); CTF AGM delegate (3); AGM delegate (16); LAR (2); Staff rep training facilitator (4); Children's rights ettee. (2); Bilby selection ettee. (3); PSA Council & Executive (5); B.C. School counsellors' PSA executive (9, 2 as pres). *Local:* Nanaimo President (3); Bargaining agreements (7); Political action/TR (7); secondary rep on exec. (2); Curriculum (2); Negotiating team (3); District employee assistance (3); Counsellors' ISA exec. (7); Industrial health and safety (3); Education committee rep (5). *Teaching:* 19 yrs. English, social studies, law, counselling, family life, and adolescent development. *Education:* B.Ed (sec.) Uvic; M.Ed. (counselling psychology) UBC.

For Second Vice-President



Jan Eastman



Maureen McPherson

Two years ago we celebrated BCTF's 75th anniversary—75 years of fighting a strong organization.

And while we have much to celebrate, we face no shortage of challenges. The climate in which we operate has changed dramatically. We must focus on key issues, use a communications strategy that both engages members in decision-making and attempts to restore confidence in public education.

A significant imperative is to increase our efforts to defend

public education in the face of inadequate funding. We must also defend our right to bargain collectively. Bill 78 promises greater government control; we need to be prepared for whatever form it may take.

We must continue to address teachers' needs in mainstreaming and integration of students with special needs, and in education change. We can be justifiably proud of the role teachers have played in shaping education change and we must work to ensure their prominent

relationships between locals and the provincial organization. The implementation of a comprehensive communication plan will aid in the restoration of public confidence in our schools.

The key to success will be a strong progressive leadership team. Together we can maintain a strong BCTF, enhance its image as the professional voice of teachers and defender of public education. I offer commitment and proven leadership to address the challenges ahead.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: Executive Cte. (6 yrs.); Committees: Professional relations

advisors' (2); Teacher personnel (6); Labour liaison (2); Political action task force (1); LAR (1); AGM delegate (12); Facilitator, PQT, Speaking for teachers and political action workshops; Charter challenge plaintiff; CTF director (5); CTF committees: Education development, Economic services and AGM resolutions (1); Nominations (2); AGM (5). *Local:* Delta: President (2); Vice-president (3); Committees: Political action (1); Bargaining (6); RA chairperson (3); Sign-up/certification co-ordinator; Langley: various positions; Kitimat: various positions. *Teaching:* 21 yrs. in secondary, mainly learning disabilities and LA; 2 yrs. SFU faculty associate. *Education:* BA, Diploma of Education (Aust); MA (Educ) SFU.

become more sophisticated. It is naive to believe that any political party exists solely to implement our goals and objectives.

I believe that our federation must take a deep breath and shift directions. Bargaining collective agreements is one means by which we meet teacher and student needs in our locals. However, we must increase our efforts on social initiatives. This years' Task Force on Violence substantiated the need for preventative measures in areas such as sexism and racism. We

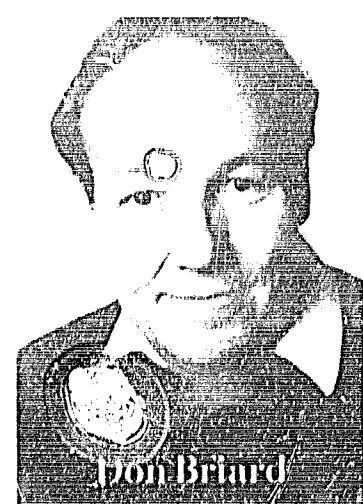
need to re-examine how best to maximize the efforts of our Program Against Racism, Status of Women, and Children's Rights Committees.

I want a federation which models principles of unity, democracy and social conscience.

I would like to be part of a progressive new team that will truly reflect "working locally and thinking globally." I seek your support as we face the challenges that lie ahead.

EXPERIENCE: Provincial: BCTF Member-at-large (4 yrs.); Code of ethics discipline TF chair (1); Labour education ettee. (2); RA attendance (11); PAR contact (2); RA attendance (6); Business ed PSA member (13); Alternate ed PSA member (2); BCTF rep to Ministry facilities ettee. (2). *Local:* President (4); Vice-president (4); Human rights chairperson (2); Bargaining ettee. (6); Negotiating team (6); Sign up certification organizer (1); Staff rep (6); Advocacy during teacher layoffs; Grievance ettee. *Teaching:* 15 yrs. in B.C. (currently teaching a senior alternate program in Duncan). *Education:* BA (Political science and sociology) and POP SFU.

Executive Committee



We are facing crises in declining public support, difficult bargaining rounds and inadequate provincial funding for public education. There is, however, a greater challenge faced by the federation. It is unfortunate enough that the public and the media believe the myth that the BCTF does not represent the teachers of 'its' province, but how often have you heard the BCTF or your local organization referred to as "them," rather than as "us"? Too often.

How can we address this problem? The Report of the Task Force on Violence is one initiative which has begun to raise the professional profile of the BCTF and the 40,000 teachers across the province. When the BCTF is seen as credible, so then is every teacher in every classroom. We must continue to initiate and publicize such activities, thereby expanding member involvement in the federation.

External threats such as Bill 78 also require broad discussion and searching examination if we

are to respond effectively. Education change and the funding crisis will require wide member involvement, as well as flexibility and innovation on the part of the BCTF.

I seek to play a role in turning "them" into "us." I ask for your support.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* LAUGH (10 yrs.); AGM delegate (15); LPAC (11); Staff rep trainer (2); Summer conference workshop facilitator (3). *Local:* Peace River N.E. & Vancouver Secondary; Member-at-large (2 yrs.); Secretary (3); WLC rep (1); Bargaining chair (3); Negotiating team (10); president (5); past president (1). *Teaching:* Secondary teacher, 21 yrs.; Vancouver, 4 yrs.; Ft. St. John, 1 year; Education: P.N., Teacher Training (UBC), MFA, Theatre (UBC).

relationships with government; • greater relevancy at the classroom/staffroom level—teachers really seeing the BCTF as theirs.

I would like to continue representing teachers on the Executive Committee. My experience in a small local and commitment to questioning an issue are an asset in leadership discussions. I ask for your support.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Member-at-large, Executive Committee (1 yr.); Status of women committee (7); Committee Against Racism, WLC committee, Bargaining advisory committee, Teacher ed forum (3 sessions); Staff rep trainer (6); GR/AR (5); AGM delegate (12); LPAC, Ministry GEAC committee. *Local:* President (2); Staff rep; Status of women committee (chair); WLC (chair); LAUGH; Bargaining committee; Negotiating team. *Teaching:* Ontario, B.C., Australia, all primary grades and learning assistance. *Education:* BA (Western), presently MA student at UBC (curriculum).

- equality in the membership—strong programs against racism and sexism; affirmative action for Francophone and First Nations teachers;
- a variety of forums for uninformed teachers and activists alike;
- an effective organization to support negotiation of improved working and learning conditions;
- widespread opportunities for discussion, debate, and influence;
- a desire to retain control and direction at the local level;
- strategies that do not rely on

There is significant agreement among teachers about the major problems facing education today: lack of funding and stability in the school system, mandated education change, violence in our schools... Where we occasionally disagree is on how we should direct/adapt/react to these challenges.

The Annual General Meeting provides an excellent opportunity to examine what we believe about the B.C. Teachers' Federation. Here are some things I'm working toward:



Susan Crowley



Laurence Greff

Last year, I stood for election believing that we needed to make serious changes within the BCTF. I'm running again with the view that the BCTF remains far too remote in the lives of teachers. We have had a year with interference in bargaining, layoffs, unilateral curriculum changes and further attacks on public schools.

Where was the BCTF response? Is the BCTF helping teachers deal with deteriorating working conditions? How is it helping locals take on their

boards? I believe that the BCTF is losing its sense of purpose. The federation is made up of classroom teachers; it is their needs that should drive the BCTF.

Our relationship with government, as with school boards, should be direct and businesslike. Our job is to assertively put our members' case forward when dealing with the employer at either level.

Teachers experience the BCTF through their local. Therefore

the BCTF resources should be directed to the local level and the finances handled responsibly, putting the needs of locals first. Correspondingly, the BCTF leaders have to make sure they are actively aware of the demands on classroom teachers. I offer leadership that puts teachers first and the dedication to make effective changes.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* LAR (2 yrs.); CETA (3); PD associate (3); AGM delegate (7). *Local:* President (PBNTA); Committees: collective agreements, education funding, PAR, mentorship, working and learning conditions, budget advisory, AGM resolutions, membership rural, professional development. *Teaching:* 13 yrs., Gr. 8-12 English, Drama, Social Studies, Geography, Math, Grade 6/7, K-7 PE, currently counsellor for First Nations elementary students. *Other:* Ministry of Social Services (4 yrs.), Alkali Lake Band Education program (3). *Education:* BA Political Science (UBC); B.Ed. (UBC).

discussion of the parties' philosophies, or their platforms. I hope to trigger this debate at the AGM. All these candidates must have a reason for running for their party. It is past time that delegates demanded of the candidates what the *raison d'être* for the parties is.

A second reason for running is the political ineffectiveness of the BCTF. And you can define "political" any way you want. Outside the AGM meeting room, few people care what we say. This includes many of our

members. I want the BCTF to be effective, and will scrutinize every motion at the Executive level with that in mind. No matter where the motion comes from.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* News magazine advisory board (2 terms). *Local:* Staff rep; Strike committee in Montreal; Member-at-large; WLC chair; Economic welfare chair, Bargaining chair for first two contracts in Cariboo-Chilcotin; President of CETA; Editor of local newsletter; served on a herd of committees over the past 17 years, particularly job action related ones. *Teaching:* 25 yrs., including 2 in Ghana with CUSO, 6 yrs. in Montreal, and 17 in B.C. *Education:* BSc (McGill), Class 1 teaching diploma (McGill), MA (Gonzaga University).

our commitment to strong locals not contribute to Balkanization. It is essential that the BCTF be able to speak as the unified voice for 40,000 teachers.

We also face a challenge to increase the involvement of those of our members who joined our ranks after certification. I support an aggressive campaign to inform them of the opportunities their unions provide for leadership in professional development, economic welfare, and social responsibility programs.

The foremost challenge faced by the incoming executive will be to defend collective bargaining in the face of new legislation. Our federation must develop comprehensive strategies to face an array of possibilities.

My candidacy reflects my pride in my profession, my affection for my colleagues, and my commitment to my professional union.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Task force on teaching conditions & professional development (1 yr.); BCTF administrative staff co-ordinator, staff rep training program (4); Staff rep training program associate (1); Teacher news magazine advisory board (1); LAR (1); AGM delegate (4). *Local:* President (3); Member-at-large (1); Staff rep (1); Bargaining committee (4); Negotiating team (4); Professional development committee (3); Committee against racism (1); Budget committee (4). *Teaching:* 20 yrs., experience at secondary level in West Vancouver. *Education:* BA (History) and teacher training (UBC).

with support to find a balance between bargaining and personal and professional growth.

We must maintain strong local bargaining teams with adequate support as requested from BCTF staff; re-establish an expanded summer conference to build the depth of leadership at the local level; expand the role of provincial committees in providing real support for local programs; listen to local leaders and individualize workshops and materials to suit their requests; build support again for education as a social

force in shaping values in our society; re-consider our alliances—expanding some, curtailing others; speak and be heard on the value and central role of education, education is *our* business; expand opportunities for local educators to be active and involved at a provincial level. As a candidate for 1994-95 Executive Committee, I will continue my on-going commitment to strong, active, autonomous local unions supported in the work by a responsive and alert provincial body.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* AGM delegate (7 yrs.); Status of women committee (4); Zone co-ordinator, workshop facilitator and designer, co-chair (2); Alternate LAR (2); *Local:* LAR (2); Vice-president (1); Status of women (2); Bargaining/agreement team (1988, 1992); Staff rep (2); FWTO (Ontario) several yrs. *Teaching:* Toronto (7 yrs.); Terrace (1); Sooke (8); teacher of the deaf & district helping teacher intermediate. *Education:* International China (1.5); Uganda (summer); Guyana (summer). *Education:* Specialist teacher of the deaf; BA; Diploma—computer systems BCTF.

Although we have made enormous gains in our collective agreements since 1988, last year we saw the ghost of bargaining in the future: a stronger, more centralized employers' group; back to work legislation; no action to regulate employer spending. At the same time local leaders were exhausted and local programs once again took a back seat to bargaining and implementing our collective agreements. In the next few years, our central function at the provincial level will be to provide locals



Kathleen MacKinnon

Candidate Statements



Jamie Ross

Teachers in B.C. face many challenges including the issues of bargaining and integrating students with special needs. The success of the leadership of our federation will depend on how well the needs of teachers are met in such areas. Uncertainty caused by recent government initiatives has raised serious concern as to whether local bargaining will continue to be an option. If we are committed to having strong locals, we must ensure teachers in each local engage in open discussion to

examine the direction of bargaining and to help shape responses. We must not equate will to guess to debate issues with a sign of weakness.

Teachers also face the challenge of integrating students with special needs. Limited resources, lack of appropriate training and the never ending pressure of time to balance the needs of all children contribute to ongoing stress. The federation must continue to press government to ensure that categories which provide funding are updated to

reflect the classroom realities. Another challenge for the federation leadership is to provide a provincial voice highlighting the excellent job teachers do under difficult conditions. A recent federation undertaking is the report, *Violence in Schools*, which is a tangible illustration of the difficult working conditions of teachers.

Our schools are open to all children—not just a select few. Yet public education is under attack and at stake. A strong, clear, positive response is needed.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Local presidents' advisory ctee. (2 yrs.); Staff rep trainer (2); AGM delegate (7). *Local:* Copitiam: President (3); Chief negotiator (1); First vice-president (1); Secondary vice-president; Economic welfare member-at-large rep on Bargaining ctee. (1); Negotiating team (1); Committee on teacher assistants (1); Special services advisory ctee. (1); Challenge abroad program and services (1); Superintendent's steering committee on ADS (2); Local canvasser (1). *Teaching:* 11 yrs., secondary, special needs rehabilitation, severe learning disabled, special education. *Education:* MA (Special Ed.) Australia, BA (Special Ed.) & Secondary English (Western Washington).



Rick Turner

Strength is achieved when we work together.

Bill 78, government's conservative economic policies, and a growing trend toward teacher bashing will place tremendous pressures on teachers locally and provincially. Many locals will need support and resources from the federation to resist demands for concessions from their collective agreements. We also need to continue to press for adequate funding for mainstreaming, safe and healthy schools, and other

critical working and learning conditions. Alliances with parents, other employee groups in the public sector, and labour in general will also provide support for a quality public schools system.

We have been successful in achieving our goals in the past when we have worked together and supported each other. We will do it again. Strong leadership welcomes open, frank discussion and debate, and listens to all points of view to prepare for what lies ahead.

The AGM will also examine a proposal for pension improvements that should meet our goals of achieving equity for all members at no additional cost to teachers.

I offer my experience as a local leader, member of several provincial bodies, classroom teacher, good listener, communicator, and team player to meet these needs.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Task force on labour affiliation 1992; Provincial bargaining advisory committee (4 yrs.). *Local:* President, Kamloops DTA (3); Bargaining chair and bargaining team (3); LAR & AGM delegate, numerous committees, currently Past president, LAR, Bargaining and several other committees; President, Queen Charlotte DTA (1). *Teaching:* 21 yrs., secondary, special education, counselling, English, swimming, TOC, Communications, Math, Drama. *Education:* B.Ed. (UBC).

For Members-at-large



Linda Watson

The major issue facing the BCTF and its locals in the coming year is the structure of collective bargaining. Local control of bargaining has been critical to our success as advocates for teachers and students. In consultation with teachers around the province, we must keep all that we can of local bargaining autonomy.

At the same time, it is short-sighted not to acknowledge that ultimate control of the rules lies with government, and governments have been

notorious for changing the playing field, the rules, and sometimes the game itself in the middle of the contest. Whatever an imposed structure might be, we need to be ready to make the most of it. In the past, our unity and resolve have managed to overcome some daunting challenges. In our possible bargaining futures, we will have similar success if we are prepared to meet those challenges rationally and not ignore them until it's too late. We need to deal with the

escalating changes teachers face every day: mainstreaming, violence and behavior disorders, the needs of ESL children, new curricula, new assessment practices, etc. We must push government and school boards to devote resources to the classrooms where the students are, and to find adequate funding for PD programs and teacher in-service.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Member-at-large, Executive Committee (2 yrs.); CTF delegate (2); LAR; WLN candidate, Provincial bargaining

conference; Summer conference delegate; AGM delegate; Special AGM delegate; Capilano cde labour studies advisory ctee.; BCTF rep; *Local:* NVIA president (3); First vice-president (2); Secretary (3); Staff rep and chief staff rep (17); Rep assembly steering ctee, secretary (2); Cites.; Bargaining, Negotiating team, WLC, Grievance, Teacher-trustee liaison, Professional consultative, Mainstreaming and integration, Bi-venue, Contract implementation, Salary appeal, Special needs screening, Educational leadership task force. *Teaching:* 16 yrs. (15 intermediate, 1 yr. LA), North Vancouver. *Education:* B.Ed. (UBC).



Tom Westwater

Two years ago (in this space) I wrote "The election of the NDP will provide no panacea to underfunding, boards will continue to squander on administration." Talk about understatement!

Not only has the NDP exacerbated the underfunding of public schools, it has eliminated free collective bargaining (Bill 31) and reneged on promises to restore local board autonomy.

Federation leadership responses—mine included—have probably not done justice to the betrayal, frustration and anger felt

by 40,000 teachers. • The underfunding is more critical than ever given dramatic shifts in classroom composition, private school media hype, business intrusions and the pervasive power of unbalanced rightwing economic theory (e.g., Canada has no assets, only massive debt). • As the only effective guardian of public education, the BCTF must meet these challenges head on before we succumb to total centralization, big business manipulations and elitist education

for the few.

• We can not be overwhelmed by these reactionary forces, and ignored by Victoria. We require an objective analysis of traditional federation structures and delivery of services to better harness the creativity and intelligence of a much larger number of our members and other education stakeholders.

EXPERIENCE: *Provincial:* Member-at-large, Executive Committee (2 yrs.); Learning conditions committee; Bargaining committee; AGM delegate (20). *Local:* Bargaining team member since 1969; Local president (5); Bargaining chair; Advocate in arbitration hearings; LAR. *Teaching:* 26 years in Scotland, Australia and B.C. *Education:* Edinburgh University (English, philosophy, history); Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh.



Vic Krieger

In the face of persistent attacks on schools, our federation must undertake a public campaign in praise of teachers and public education. Our colleagues need to hear their leaders talk to everyone in the community about the good work that teachers do.

Federation leaders must continue to address issues related to the appropriate balance between locals and the provincial body. Our locals with dedicated leaders, effective training programs, and involved members, are strong. However,

our commitment to strong locals not contribute to Balkanization. It is essential that the BCTF be able to speak as the unified voice for 40,000 teachers.

We also face a challenge to increase the involvement of those of our members who joined our ranks after certification. I support an aggressive campaign to inform them of the opportunities their unions provide for leadership in professional development, economic welfare, and social responsibility programs.

The foremost challenge faced by the incoming executive will be to defend collective bargaining in the face of new legislation. Our federation must develop comprehensive strategies to face an array of possibilities.

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force in shaping values in our society; re-consider our alliances—expanding some, curtailing others; speak and be heard on the value and central role of education, education is *our* business; expand opportunities for local educators to be active and involved at a provincial level. As a candidate for 1994-95 Executive Committee, I will continue my on-going commitment to strong, active, autonomous local unions supported in the work by a responsive and alert provincial body.

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AGM Special Resolutions

The text of Special Resolutions to be considered by the 1994 Annual General Meeting was published in the Jan./Feb. 1994 issue of the *Teacher* (pages 18-20). Notice is given pursuant to section 6.8.2 of the AGM Standing Rules of Order that those motions may be considered "with or without amendments" within the scope permitted by the Society Act.

Ed May Memorial Social-Responsibility Fund

"That the Executive Committee recommend to the AGM that the BCTF establish an Ed May Memorial Social-Responsibility fund to promote socially responsible teaching practices and that this fund be established and sustained by an allocation of \$1 per member per year."

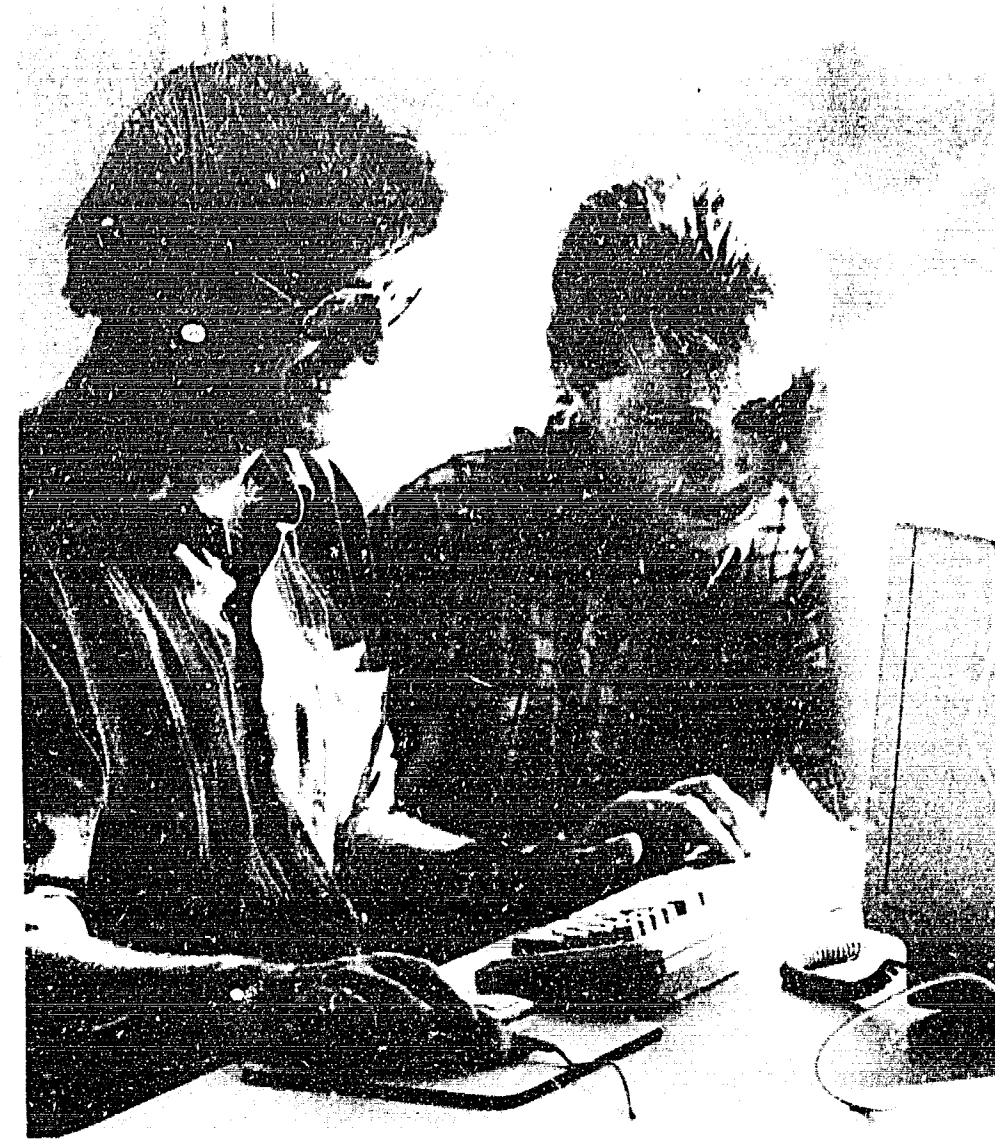
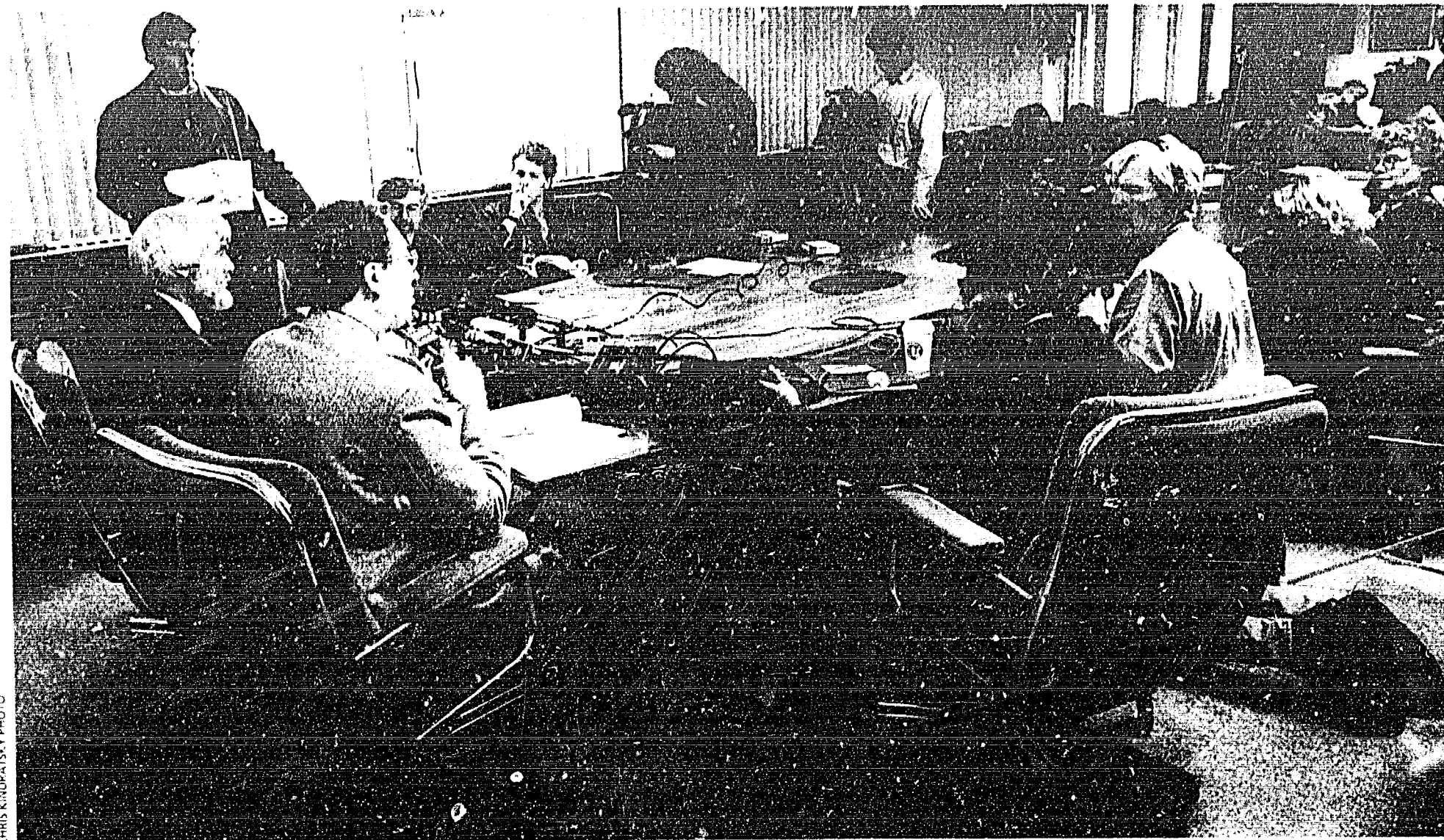
Ed May served as co-ordinator for the federation's Program Against Racism from 1981 to 1985. He was an organizer, writer, advocate, workshop leader, presenter, and mentor. May reached and moved thousands of persons in that time: teachers, students, school-board officials,

community leaders, and citizens. Although he truly saw, and fought, the unfairness and cruelty of racism, he was not poisoned by this awareness. He remained good-natured, and open, and was sustained by a bright vision of a new world of justice, fairness, and kindness. Created in his memory, this

fund will be used to fight all the "good battles," not only to further the battle against racism but also to support global education, peace initiatives, status of women, and like causes. The work must continue. Doesn't this proposed fund deserve our support.

—Sid Bentley, retired teacher

FIRST-CLASS ACTIONS



Teacher leadership on Violence Secondary schools

President Ray Worley and task-force chairperson Eldon Cameron released the final report of the Task Force on Violence in Schools at a packed press conference in January. "We have been heartened in this work," Worley said, "to know that so many organizations, groups, and individual citizens share with us the commitment to making our society and our schools safe places for children." He pointed out that there is no one cause, no one solution, and no one group responsible for solving the problem of violence.

The task force report contains 32 recommendations, each of which has been referred to the appropriate body. It also contains summary research, a bibliography, and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' voluntary code regarding violence in television programming.

Worley highlighted three categories of recommendations: Start preventative measures when children are very young, place a high priority on teaching students how to prevent violence, and address violence in the media. Emphasizing that prevention is better than intervention, Worley singled out peer-mediation programs and youth-theatre projects as particularly effective.

- Elaine Decker

When asked if B.C. schools are safe now but on the brink of chaos, Worley responded, "On the whole, B.C. schools are safe. On the whole, schools are safer places for children than many other places. We are not on the brink, but rather on a slope. We know how we need to change our behavior in order not to slide further down that slope into a society that is not safe for children."

The Task Force on Violence in Schools final report is being distributed by mail to local association representatives, local association presidents, bargaining chairs, PD chairs, SAV contacts, PAR contacts, BCTF advisory committees, those who made submissions to the task force, those who received the Interim Report, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and affiliates, BCTF staff, the press, and interested members of the community.

What's a secondary school? Many metaphors can describe what it is like now: a bridge (some students make it, and others fall off); a series of isolated and independent cells, an assembly line, where knowledge is poured in, and graduates exit the end.

What should a secondary school be? Other metaphors spring to mind: A freeway system with many paths and lanes for lifelong driving; a journey of excitement and challenge to some foreign destination.

These are some of the engaging questions that the changing-secondary-school associates (secondary teachers serving as discussion leaders) have posed to secondary teachers in 33 districts at 43 sessions held across the province from September to December.

On January 20 and 21, 1994, 21 of the secondary school associates met to discuss what secondary school teachers across the province have been telling them. The associates looked for common themes and made interim recommendations for action. Some of the common themes:

What is working? Lots of variety in assessment, evaluation, and reporting practices; a caring, sharing professional group of teachers;

professional autonomy within the classroom; positive relationships that exist among teachers and students; partnerships with business and the community.

What is not working? Great confusion on the vision/purpose/goals for secondary school education; government exams, university requirements, overloaded curriculum, timetables that are driving the system; not meeting the needs of all students; lack of time to do all that is expected; overcrowded and outdated facilities; lack of parental involvement; lack of student responsibility and accountability; lack of time for in-service education, professional development, and teacher collaboration.

What are some solutions?

- Examine with all partners what schools can do and what schools can't do.
- Provide more time for assessment, evaluation, and reporting and more time for in-service and professional development.
- Provide adequate funding to modernize facilities and to organize for smaller schools and "schools within schools."
- Develop flexible timetables.
- Form more partnerships with parents and the community.

Specific interim recommendations

- Examine the purpose of secondary schools.
- Examine the purpose of government exams.
- Encourage a wide variety of assessment, evaluation, and reporting practices.
- Re-examine how university entrance requirements affect curriculum development.
- Provide funding and resources for effective ongoing in-service education, professional development, and collaborative opportunities.
- Determine the relationship between school timetables and student/teacher needs.
- Provide funding for implementing of the Intermediate and Graduation programs.
- Provide funding to accommodate the needs of ESL students and students with special needs.
- Encourage student, parent, and community participation in schools.

Where do we go from here?

Fourteen more sessions in February and March will focus on areas identified as needing more input, e.g., ESL issues in Vancouver, Burnaby, and Surrey; reactions to the Intermediate and Graduation documents; the voice of secondary teachers in other districts.

Then, on March 5, representatives from all the partner groups will discuss these interim recommendations. On April 16, teacher representatives

from all 75 districts will gather to provide feedback on the recommendations. The forums will be followed by an examination of the Changing Secondary School Project Report by the BCTF's spring Representative Assembly. The final report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education May 30, 1994.

For more information and/or to book a session, contact Betty Goto or Wayne Rowley at 871-2283 or toll free 1-800-663-9163.

- Wayne Rowley

Secondary schools: focus of Alberni interaction day

by Gini Eyres

On November 26, 1993, nine BCTF associates facilitated discussions around the Changing Secondary Schools Project for Alberni District's Community Interaction Day. All secondary teachers, parent advisory council members, business and labour representatives, and representatives of the RCMP, public health, human resources, city council, and

media attended. The day was held concurrently with a student forum, another piece of the provincial changing-school project.

Working in small groups participants discussed the uniqueness of the secondary school culture, the positive aspects, and the concerns. After each session, participants returned to a large-group discussion to cite common themes. In the afternoon, groups looked at

possible solutions to their concerns.

The day's evaluation confirmed the value of the opportunity for educational partners to discuss their beliefs about the secondary school system, clarifying first for themselves what they believe and what their goals are for the future.

Gini Eyres teaches at Mount Klitsa Junior Secondary School, Port Alberni.

Class size

Teachers at Queen Elizabeth Elementary School, New Westminster can breathe a little easier following the decision of the school board to hire an additional teacher.

The board's decision to add a teacher to the 12-person teaching staff followed on the heels of eight grievances launched by members of staff that classes violated the contract.

Staff representative Ruth Minto described the workload and teaching situation as "very difficult" for many teachers on staff.

"The combination of class size with special needs and ESL was more than a challenge—for some it was almost an impossibility," said Minto.

Like most other schools in the province, Queen Elizabeth is facing the challenge of teaching a wide range of abilities in the special needs category along with English as a second language students.

"The new contract really helped us," said Minto. "We wouldn't have achieved this additional assistance were it not for strong contract language and the hard work of teachers, NWTU, and BCTF representatives. Teachers are relieved."

- Al Cornes

Waiting for an earthquake

by Dennis Milburn

At a social gathering, a parent was heard to say, "My nine-year-old has been losing sleep because he is frightened; he's waiting for the earthquake." The boy had gone through earthquake drill at school.

Someone, unfortunately, a teacher, said: "better he lose a few hours sleep than not know what to do when an earthquake strikes."

In a real earthquake all your usual points of reference in walking or merely standing still, just go completely. You are not used to feeling like a ship at sea, seeing lampshades swinging, trees bending when there is no wind, or things falling off shelves.

Earthquakes are officially recorded on the Richter Scale, which goes from 1 to 12 in intensity. (All the numbers, quoted in this article signify intensity; thus intensity 6 is a moderate earthquake.) On the West Coast of South America, where they have more experience of earthquakes than we do, they class

intensities 1 to 6 as a *temblor* (tremor); above intensity 6 as a *terremoto* (real earthquake). The earthquake of November 16, 1993, in San Francisco recorded 4.4. One in 1989, recorded at 6.9, lasted 15 seconds.

Earthquakes can occur at any time where there are active faults in the earth's surface. Most people know of the famous San Andreas fault that runs through San Francisco, and movement along that fault was the cause of the great earthquake of 1906 (intensity 8.25). The worst areas for earthquakes are Japan, Chile, Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Iran, all areas where "young" mountains, like the Andes, are unstable.

But because of the way the earth is made, earthquakes could occur anywhere. An earthquake could occur here at any moment or never in our lifetime or not for a few million years. (How many people in B.C. have experienced more than

a tremor?) Pictures tilted on the walls for no apparent reason show that tremors exist. Geographers and geologists do not like the use of the words *tremors* and *earthquakes*; anything above 1 is officially an earthquake.

An earthquake is very rarely as catastrophic as expected. The earth does not open in great fissures swallowing hundreds of people, as the films portray. The usual effects are secondary: fractured gas mains (which can cause fires), broken water mains, and people hit by things flying off the roof. Motto: Don't rush outside. Use the *goal post* technique: Stand in a doorway or get under a table.

The worst effect is probably the *tsunami* or tidal wave, (Japanese) of which many are recorded. Where the epicentre is in the open ocean many

things can occur on the ocean bed caused by the fault movements responsible for the earthquake. The Chilean earthquake of 1960 (which measured three shocks, 8.6 to 8.9 on the Richter Scale) caused a tidal wave of perhaps 95 metres to hit the coast, swamping the village of Coronel, near Concepcion in Southern Chile.

B.C. has had its share of earthquakes, too. The highest recorded intensity in the Vancouver area was 7 and the highest in B.C., intensity 8.1, in 1949.

Today, many of us have earthquake insurance, and the chance to have it or not is a gamble, but then, air-accident insurance is also a gamble. Perhaps the best insurance is to think in millions of years rather than a lifetime. But one never knows. Earthquakes will occur, sometime. *Soon* is a term that is imprecise, even to seismologists.

Because they make good copy, earthquakes are much beloved by the media, who forecast their incidence regularly and urge storing water and provisions. The most comforting statement, by an eminent physical geographer, Professor Arthur Holmes, states: "The incidence of earthquakes is, at best,

overestimated." This at least is an aid to sleep.

However, as this article goes to press, an earthquake occurred in Los Angeles on January 17, 1994, registering 6.6 and lasting for 40 seconds. Everything mentioned here was seen on television. The unfortunate fact was that the epicentre was in an urban area. Vancouver is not in an area of such seismic sensitivity as California, but such events give us pause for thought.

Dr. Dennis Milburn is a retired professor from UBC. He specialized in early childhood education and in Latin American studies. He was appointed a life Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1965. He has personally experienced two major earthquakes, one in Chile, and one in Peru.

References

There are many books on earthquakes, but most are extremely technical. The easiest to read, and very well illustrated, is a chapter (Chapter 25) in *Principles of Physical Geology* by Arthur Holmes. (Published Nelson.)

The Emergency—program provincial in Sydney, Victoria, has information on earthquake preparedness (387-5956). The Geological Survey at 100 West Pender Street, Vancouver (666-0271) also has pamphlets.

Speaking personally

How am I a better teacher today than I was five years ago?



Jamie Cashin
West Vancouver

I'm not. I wish that I could say that I am. It has not been from want of trying. I've become overwhelmed with new ideas, but I've had no resources and little time or training to really put them into practice effectively.

The pressure of keeping up with a high standard of teaching with so many new mandates is staggering. I am expected to make all the changes necessary to make educational change work—and to do it well. However, other jurisdictions are not making changes. The boards aren't, the public isn't, and the ministry certainly is not. Where are the resources? Where is the training? Where are the small classes? Where is the community support?

I was a better teacher five years ago when the pressures were fewer and there was more time to enjoy teaching. I'm angry that my enthusiasm for a profession I love is waning. I want to be the best teacher I'm capable of being, but I'm constantly being pushed and pulled and twisted

in a million different directions.

The potential for every teacher to become better is inherent in the Year 2000, but events are happening too fast for me to assimilate the tried and true with the new.

I'm not better—yet.



Rick Cash
Quesnel

I am a better teacher than I was five years ago. The reasons result from a number of factors: my BCTF involvement, changes in legislation affecting teachers, and my personal circumstances.

Teachers' obtaining the right to unionize and to negotiate all terms and conditions of employment has profoundly changed my ability to assert my professional rights. Collective agreements ensuring class-size limits, professional autonomy, and teacher protections let me exercise my professional judgment to a much greater degree. The better working conditions help me do a better job.

At the same time, the development of the Year 2000 programs has given me the opportunity to choose materials and teaching strategies best suited to my students and my teaching style. I have seized this opportunity to free myself and my students from restrictions imposed from beyond my classroom and school.

For the past two years, while on leave from Quesnel, I have worked as a teacher on call in Lake Cowichan. The experience has been

rewarding in that I have gained a much greater understanding of the Primary Program, having spent time in nearly every primary classroom in the district. More important, I have gained an understanding of the inequity and injustice that is the daily plight of teachers on call. As a result, I have become more sensitive to the frustration of all people who lack power in their daily living. I hope my improved sensitivity will be reflected in the way I work with my students and in my future efforts to improve conditions for my teacher-on-call colleagues.

Finally, my continued involvement in the BCTF and its local associations has always brought to me training, experience, and contact with teachers from across the province. That on-going involvement contributes greatly to my pursuit of excellence in teaching.



David Halme
Lake Cowichan

The recent five years have been my best. The opportunities to change, experiment, and practise new approaches to teaching in my subjects have improved my ability to teach.

The opportunities were provided through Funds for Excellence and site-development grants. I was able to concentrate on process rather than content. The freedom to change has been energizing. I threw out the desks and brought in tables; I moved away from the textbook; I taught through themes and activities. I did everything necessary to prevent myself from being trapped in the ruts of habits.

Most important, I was able to freely and comfortably work with my colleagues through the introduction of integrated programs. There is truly a sense of satisfaction in developing and teaching through the combined efforts of fellow teachers.



Curtis Beaumont
Mission

Better and deeper... My students have pushed me into a conversation with change. They don't want to know how much I'm giving as an educator; they don't need to see the problems with (in) the profession. All they want is how deeply I can be there for them.

For example, in my practice, children ask me for lyrics to songs and want to bring their music to my classes. My answer is an unequivocal "Yes."

When I see five- and six-year-old girls and boys dancing in response to my program of activities (the music), I consider I may be teaching beyond the curriculum—dare I say beyond the Year 2000? Children need communal adults (teachers) to embrace and nurture their joyous and creative conversation with life.

I try to remember who's who in education—children and teachers.

MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION AT VANCOUVER'S CUMMINGHAM ELEMENTARY

Fables, photos, food, and fun

Laughs at a foolish pig

by Larry Lee

This Vancouver school project resulted from the efforts of the multicultural teacher, the teacher/librarian, the English-as-a-second-language resource teacher, the vice-principal, and the artist in residence, Alison Diesvelt.

The work integrated portrait photography, fables, and creative writing reflecting the rich multicultural nature of our school and community. The project revealed a "united diversity" of cultures and the changing family compositions in our contemporary society.

The Grade 7 students took black-and-white portraits of one another's families and friends, and each student created a family fable to accompany the portrait. Each fable ends with a commonly used saying heard in the student's home.

The project, in addition to creating a sense of pride in oneself and one's cultural heritage, promoted aesthetic awareness, an appreciation for another's cultural heritage, and recognition that despite racial, religious, political, and linguistic differences, we have similar needs, feelings, and aspirations.

School's multicultural project honored by B.C. Council for Human Rights

G. T. Cunningham Elementary School received an award of honorable mention on behalf of the B.C. Council of Human Rights. The award was presented to the school on December 10, 1993, by the Honourable Moe Sihota, Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. The photos and fables have been published in book form (available from the school).

(On right) One of the outstanding student photos—Jesse Bemister's family—that accompany the original student fables in this unique multicultural project.

National Issues from p.1

BCTF, one to each local president, and one to each school. They can help start conversations with parents, business groups, trustees, labour leaders, and concerned citizens.

BCTF President Ray Worley echoes Bacon's invitation for all teachers to participate. "The debate about schools is well under way," Worley says, "and will continue whether teachers participate or not. Of course, the debate will be better informed and more productive for schools and society if teachers lend their considerable experience and commitment to the talks."

In its leadership report to the 1994 Annual General Meeting, the BCTF Executive Committee made a priority of strategies to defend public education. Communications activities (see sidebar) are under way to improve both

teacher morale and public confidence by telling the stories of life in the classroom.

B.C. teachers know that the pace of life in the classroom has accelerated, just as it has in society. In *What's Worth Fighting For?*, Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves accurately describe the work of today's teacher as "making discretionary judgments in situations of unavoidable uncertainty." They continue, "Decisions about discipline, classroom management, classroom fairness, the freedom of the child versus the need for teacher intervention and support, all embody complex social, philosophical, psychological, and moral judgments. Yet they are also judgments that have to be made and passed second by second, in the complex hurly-burly of the classroom."

That complex classroom experience in public school is good for most children and

Immature idiot

by Jesse Bemister

One day at the zoo, Owl, Lion, Wolverine, and Mule were all eating. "Urpp! Whoo! I could have won the world championships with that one three years ago!" said Mule. "You are a fat, lazy slob, Mule, and will never be rewarded, because you never do anything but watch TV and belch. If you want to do something productive for a change, clean

up your chaotic cage like the rest of us!" said Owl. "But today is the farm bowl!" Mule said, "Too bad. No TV! Clean up now!"

Creecree! went the cage as the door opened. Mule looked into the most monstrous, messy mule cage he had ever seen.

Hours went by, and Mule did not clean his cage because he was watching his portable TV. Mule was the only one not busy cleaning.

Because the zookeeper thought that the animals (except for Mule) were responsible, he let them go to the mall to watch movies.

When the animals heard this, they were shouting and screaming, "Hoocay! Yippee! Whoa!" Before they left, they all galloped to Mule's cage and laughed at him. "Silly Mule. Why didn't you clean your cage?" "I did not know!" mumbled Mule. As they left Mule was sobbing, "Sob! Sniff! Sob!"

From that day on he used rubber gloves and the strongest Mr. Clean to make his cage, immaculate. Mule now knows to spit and span his cage and he will be rewarded. He will never forget what Owl told him... "Clean up your room!"



NAWEED HUSSAIN PHOTO

Getting the message out is a BCTF priority

We're taking every opportunity to let people know about the successes and challenges in B.C.'s classrooms:

- communications workshops for local association leaders to help them inform members and work with the media.
- release time for teachers to write about education for the *Teacher* newsmagazine and for community media.
- background papers to help local leaders prepare public presentations and articles.
- radio news features to

highlight innovative classroom practices.

- regular teacher stories on *Working TV*, the cable TV show about labour.
- press releases about PSA conferences and workshops.
- a speakers' bureau, providing Executive Committee speakers for public events and community meetings.
- BCTF support for reading through the B.C. Book Awards, Freedom To Read Week, and workplace literacy projects.
- writers' workshop for teacher writers.

Elaine Decker is the BCTF's communication officer and director of the Organization Support Division.

Opinion



Homophobia at school = violence and hatred

We in B.C. pride ourselves on one of the best and safest school systems in Canada—indeed, in North America. We've all heard the negative remarks about the American education system. We hear stories of American urban schools where violence is rampant.

In our own backyard, teachers have a growing anxiety over the safety of their students and themselves. Many Lower Mainland schools have adopted zero-tolerance weapons policies to combat the problems. The report of the BCTF's Task Force on Violence in the Schools is

surrounds gay and lesbian youth. Both adults and peers often reject these youth. Physical violence and verbal harassment lead 28% of all lesbian and gay youth to drop out of school.* Society's hostility also leads to feelings of isolation, extremely low self-esteem, and attempts at self-destructive behavior. Here is what two B.C. youths had to say about their treatment.**

"I told a friend I was gay—at least someone I thought was a friend. He went around telling other students about me. By the end of the year, I was getting beat up at school." — Jack, age 18

"I remember being six years old and being mesmerized by Lou Ferrigno, who played TV's *The Incredible Hulk*. I thought my feelings for men were natural, until Grade 7, when I became the brunt of many fag jokes at school." — Kevin, age 21.

Dropping out of school is a way in which some students attempt to escape such abuse situations. Many lesbian and gay youth face real or imagined rejection from family and a growing sense of having no place of belonging or acceptance. Though some manage to return to school, after finding a supportive adult, many wind up on the streets, out of school and out of home.

Gay male, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual youth comprise as many as 25% of all youth living on the streets*, according to the Massachusetts study. Without an adequate education or vocational training, many are forced into prostitution to survive.

The messages lesbian and gay youth receive about themselves from homophobic teachers and peers are devastating. The hatred and even the mild disdain inflicted on them often turns into self-

hatred echoed in acts of self-destruction. A threatening school environment can contribute to suicides or attempted suicides of gay and lesbian youths.

Gay and lesbian youth comprise 30% of completed youth suicides. They are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.*

Gay and lesbian youth report that by junior and senior secondary school they experience intense feelings of aloneness in school. Often their isolation and pain are misunderstood by adults.

"I felt like the only gay person on earth when I was in school. I wouldn't have dared to come out during high school. I didn't trust the teachers or counsellors. The library had no information available to help me." — Jason, age 25

Feelings such as these may, in some cases, cause an adolescent to contemplate suicide. The belief that dying is the only way out of the isolation is common among gay and lesbian teens. The pervasive threats, name-calling, and anti-gay harassment in school force many students to further isolate themselves from their classmates in order to protect themselves. Schools become places where gay and lesbian students feel cut off. Students in rural areas, far from a visible lesbian/gay community, feel even more alone.

Adults set the tone in the school community. Through both explicit and implicit means, they send messages to students about what attitudes, behaviors, and conduct are acceptable. As educators, we need to think carefully about the verbal and non-verbal messages we convey. What we say or do has a powerful impact on lesbian and gay youth. A homophobic school setting makes these youth daily targets of abuse. Because of this, students rarely come

out to friends, teachers, or counsellors. If they do have the courage to come out, adults must suspend judgments and avoid moralizing. Students are quick to pick up on our reactions. What we do may prove to have a powerful negative impact for years to come, as evidenced by these statements:

"I once made the mistake of

As educators, we need to think carefully about the verbal and non-verbal messages we convey. What we say or do has a powerful impact on lesbian and gay youth.

talking to a school counsellor about some problems I was having with my family. When I got home, I found my parents were furious because the counsellor had called. What was I telling her about our problems? There goes confidentiality. I'm glad I didn't tell the counsellor that I was gay." — Lisa, age 20

"I came out to my high school counsellor. She was visibly shocked when I told her and could only assure me that she would not write that on my record. She never mentioned the subject again." — Marc, age 22.

To add to these uncomfortable experiences is the lack of role models in the school system. Gay and lesbian educators are reluctant to be open about who they are, fearing job loss, negative evaluations, and unsupportive principals and colleagues, thus denying students role models.

A survey of two lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth groups in B.C.'s Lower Mainland revealed that these youth want the school system to change in

three major ways:

1. Schools should provide accurate information about being lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Gay and Lesbian Educators (GALE) and AIDS Vancouver provide guest speakers for schools to talk about topics teachers may feel uncomfortable with.

2. Lesbian/gay books should be displayed in classrooms, libraries, and counsellors' offices. Ask your teacher-librarian to order books from GALE's recommended resource list. All local association presidents in the province should have a copy of this. They were requested to provide these materials to all teacher-librarians and counsellors in their districts in early October.

3. Administrators should be encouraged openly to support teachers who are gay or lesbian. Allow them to be "out" role models for students.

We can make schools safer for gay and lesbian youth. If you want to see B.C. schools become less violent, here is your opportunity. Apathy means that gay and lesbian youth will continue to have poor academic performance and drop out of school. More children will be forced to live on the streets and prostitute themselves to survive. More will attempt or successfully commit suicide. We can make a difference!

The author is a member of GALE and a first-year teacher without a continuing contract. He must remain anonymous for fear of losing his job.

*Statistics in this article have been quoted from "Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth," a report published in February 1993 and released by the governor of Massachusetts, State House, Room 111, Boston, MA 02133.

**All quotations in this article by B.C. youth contacted in late 1993.

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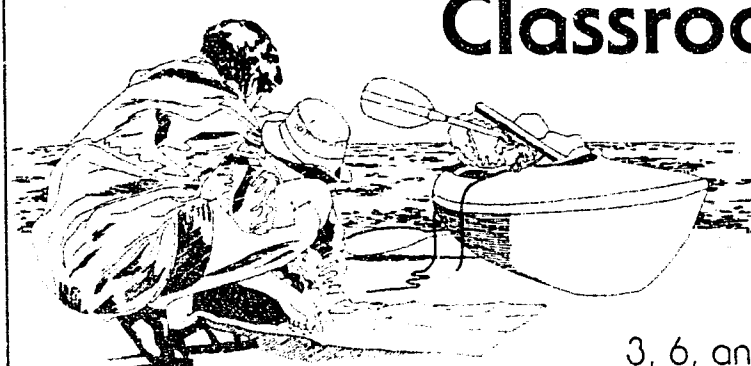
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MARCH

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tion Association conference. "Cross-
currents." Bayshore Hotel. Contact
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Prince George, BC V2L 4N2, 11561-
6293, S: 562-7201, F: 564-7351.

17-19 Calgary. Computer Council
and Industrial Education Council of
the Alberta Teachers' Association
joint conference, "Imaging 94: Vision,
Planning, Reality." Palliser Hotel. Con-
tact Pat Doyle, 11: (403) 239-6949, S:
(403) 280-8335; or Doug Austin, 11:
(403) 640-4807, S: (403) 243-5965.

17-19 Edmonton. Global Educa-
tion Conference of the Alberta Global
Education Proj., "The Global Voyage:
Choosing Our Future." Holiday Inn
Crowne Plaza. Contact Earl Choldin,
(403) 453-2411, F: (403) 455-6481.

24-26 Richmond. Violence and
Abuse in the Lives of People with Dis-
abilities, with Dick Sobsey, Ed.D., and
Linda Graham, M.A., Richmond Inn
Convention Centre. Contact CBI Con-
sultants, Pat Mironica, 937-7719 or
251-1057; F: 937-7201.

APRIL

4-6 Moncton. Canadian Council of
Teacher of English and Language Arts
Annual Conference. "Literacy
Through the Looking Glass." Contact
Simone Hamby, CTEA, Box 4520,
Station C, Calgary, AB T2T 5N3, (403)
244-4487, F: (403) 244-2340.

5-7 Charlottetown. Canadian Asso-
ciation of Second Language Teachers
(CASLT) Annual Conference, "Lang-
uages: Passport to the Future." Prince
Edward Hotel, Contact Debbie
Pineau, Box 86/0, Charlottetown, PE
C1A 8V7, (902) 368-4680, F: (902)
566-9701.

5-8 Edmonton. Health and Physical
Education Council of the ATA confer-
ence, "Active Living." Convention Inn
South, Holy Trinity and Percy Page
high schools, and Millwoods Recre-
ation Centre. Contact Deborah Row-
ley, 11324 35A Ave. N.W., Edmonton,
AB T6J 0A8, 11: (403) 438-5455, S:
(403) 441-6155, F: (403) 425-8759.

10-13 Victoria. Focus '94, "Every-
day Heroes Pulling Together." Achiev-
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ing and behavior problems and
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Victoria Conference Centre. Contact
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5726, F: 384-5743.

14 Surrey. Focus on the Teacher—
Toward a Balanced Life, Balancing
the Responsibilities to Work and Self.
Surrey Conference Centre. Contact
Judith Martin, RR 3, Cobble Hill, BC
V0R 1L0, 748-9964.

14-16 Vancouver. B.C. Business
Education Association conference,
Waterfront Centre. [NEW INFO: Con-
tact Alan Howard, 3860 Garden
Grove Drive, Burnaby, BC V5G 4A7.]

15 Victoria. Focus on the Teacher—
Toward a Balanced Life, Balancing
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Sherwood Park Inn. Contact Judith
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15-16 Vancouver. ADD/ADHD
Conference 94 (Attention Deficit Hyper-
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couver Renaissance Hotel. Sponsored
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Chapter of the Learning Disabilities
Association of B.C. Contact Curricu-
lum and Instructional Services Cen-
tre, 590-2255.

20-23 Victoria. Adult Basic Educa-
tion Assn. of B.C. annual conference,
Building Community Partnerships, is-
sues and challenges facing the literacy
and adult-education teachers within
school districts, colleges, and commu-
nity programs, Ocean Pointe Resort.
Contact Melanie Austin, 11: 383-6203,
S: 388-7225, F: 386-8330, or Jennifer
Drier, S: 652-2214, F: 652-6929.

28-29 Lower Mainland TBA. Inno-
vative Approaches to Challenging Be-
havior for Persons with Disabilities,
with V. Mark Durand, Ph.D., and June
Grodin, Ph.D. Contact CBI Con-
sultants, Pat Mironica, 937-7719 or 251-
1057; F: 937-7201.

29-30 Courtenay. Physical Educa-
tion Provincial Specialist Association
Conference for the Teaching of Physi-
cal Education. Contact Andrea Row-
land, Airport Elementary, Box 40.

Lake, BC V0R 2K0, 11: 331-8614, S:
339-3732, F: 339-1874, or Debbie
Keel, 11418 Apsedden, 12180 McMillan
Avenue, Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 1C8,
465-9847, F: 465-8632.

MAY

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY—MARCH 8

Spanning the years: the status of women

Prim and proper or wise and wondrous women?

by Constance Rulka

I bet you thought of them as downtrodden drudges, leading drab and dreary lives—those women teachers of the past? Well, perhaps you were thinking in the wrong part of the alphabet. How about rash and reckless, or even downright revolutionary?

Although the state did give her a tiny pension in 1886, when she was 83, *Prudence Crandall*, of Connecticut, was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned in her 30s for admitting black girls to the select academy for young ladies that she had established in Canterbury. That experience, and being rejected by society, did not stop her. Only vandalism to her school and threats to her life drove her to settle elsewhere.

Stranded in Singapore in the 1860s, an army widow with two young children to support, *Anna Leonowens*, was lucky to get a job as governess to the King of Siam's children. She was expressly warned not to pass on Western religious beliefs to them, but she did influence the young heir to the throne (she did not teach the king to waltz, as in the movie), got thousands of slaves freed, and taught the concubines.

When she was teaching in the slums, *Maria Montessori* was given a class of eight-year-old "idiots" (as they were dubbed) to teach. She decided that the educational system was defective—not the students. Soon, her students were scoring higher marks on state-administered proficiency tests than were the so-called "normal" children. The book she published in 1909 really established the "hands-on" methods of learning.

In 1888, when she was offered the job of teaching a spoiled little girl, called Helen Keller, *Anne Sullivan* discovered that she had an aptitude for the job. The child of poor Irish immigrants to America, she was almost blind by the time she was 10. Her mother had died when she was eight, and her father abandoned her and her two brothers to the poorhouse, where one of the boys died (in an almost Dickinson scenario of cruelty and neglect). Her later achievements with her blind, deaf, and dumb pupil have been well publicized.

The first reform school for delinquent girls, the Red Lodge, was opened in 1854 by *Mary Carpenter*, and it became famous for its successful rehabilitations. Eight years earlier, Carpenter and her mother had opened a



"A MEETING OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES" BY ROBERT HARRIS. NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA, OTTAWA

"The quality of women teachers' lives is shaped by both gender and profession...women tend not to have discrete 'work lives' and 'personal lives' but rather lives which compete with and complement each other."

—Progress Revisited, the Quality of (Work)Life of Women Teachers

"ragged" school in the slums of Bristol. Children went there willingly, because Carpenter believed in learning through play and rejected the harsh discipline of their Victorian world.

Principal of the school at Onion Lake, Northern Saskatchewan, around the turn of the century was *Elizabeth Matheson*. She was also the only doctor in the area, and would carry her youngest child (she had borne nine and legally adopted five more) on her back like a papoose as she worked amongst the First Nations people. Her husband, the Rev. John Matheson, built her a small hospital as well, where she and two daughters fought

virulent outbreaks of smallpox and diphtheria. *Gladys Aylward's* best-known feat was to conduct 100 children, aged between four and eight on a 27-day march through the mountains. They were orphans, escaping from their war-torn area of

Prudence Crandall was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned in her 30s for admitting black girls to the select academy for young ladies...

China, during the Sino-Japanese War. She was a self-appointed teacher, having been expelled from the training course run by the China Inland Mission for "lack of ability." Her simple approach, however, had proved more acceptable to the rural Chinese than that of her "superiors," and her lessons were respected.

There is no space for more, but even this handful of "tame and timid" women teachers give us ample cause for celebration.

Constance Rulka is a retired teacher currently serving as a school trustee in the Howe Sound School District.

Successes and struggles

March 8, International Women's Day, commemorates women's struggle to achieve equality. It is a time to celebrate successes and to renew the commitment to strive for realizing gender equity that means equal opportunity for women not only to begin but also to succeed in their chosen fields of endeavor. It is also the time to challenge injustice, violence, poverty, and the abuse of power wherever that occurs.

Understanding the role of women in the teaching profession in Canada was greatly enhanced with Canadian Teachers' Federation 1993 publication of *Progress Revisited, The Quality of (Work)Life of Women Teachers*. Heather-Jane Robertson, director of Professional Development at CTF wrote this work as a follow-up to the 1988 CTF publication, *Progress as Paradox: A Profile of Women Teachers* and also as a response to the work commissioned by CTF and written by A.J.C. King and M.J. Peart, *Teachers in Canada: Their Work and Quality of Life*.

Progress Revisited gives new insights into the real world of work of women teachers in Canada because it stretches beyond the consideration of gender differences. Robertson says, "It becomes necessary to understand that the quality of women teachers' lives is shaped by both gender and profession. The nature of our lives, our experiences and our interpretation of these experiences, are mediated by the cultural constructions of gender. As women, we tend not to have discrete 'work lives' and 'personal lives' but rather lives which flow through competing as well as complementary spheres of thought, feeling and responsibility."

As she considers the worklife of women teachers, she leads us through the dual perspectives of "women as teachers" and "teachers as women." Robertson stimulates thought and discussion as she presents a blend of statistical data, commentary, and reflective quotations from women across the country. This publication is available from CTF at a cost of \$15.00 (+GST).

—Carole Caldwell

Watch for Special March Edition of Teacher on mainstreaming/integration under separate cover.

Teacher



BCTF NEWS/MAGAZINE SPECIAL EDITION • MAINSTREAMING/INTEGRATION

MARCH 1994

THE PROBLEM

The gap between policy and implementation support 1/4

THE PEOPLE

Too many and too few 2/3

THE ANSWER

All players working together 1/4



The highly successful mainstreaming program at South Peace Secondary School is featured in the BCTF's first segment of Working TV, a cable television show about labour and labour issues. (Above: special education assistant signing to hearing-impaired student.)

The mainstreaming dilemma

BCTF: working to be part of the solution

by Alice McQuade

The BCTF has heard the message from members that something has to be done to let the school system's services catch up with the demands created by mainstreaming/integration.

A 1991 survey by the Canadian Teachers' Federation indicated that teachers in B.C. were more supportive of mainstreaming than teachers on average across the country. A followup survey by the BCTF (*Teaching in the '90s*) indicated that a majority of primary teachers believe integration is the right policy, but support fell to 37% at the secondary level.

Nearly every teacher, however, agreed that there are serious problems with implementation. In response, the BCTF has taken action in numerous ways to improve implementation.

Teachers have demanded supportive classroom conditions. With the help of the BCTF, many locals have negotiated provisions in collective agreements capping the number of identified students with special needs. The clauses have provided a means for teachers to use the grievance procedure to get the promised conditions.

Teachers have demanded an update of the directions and guidelines for special education (the *Red Book*). The last revision of the guidelines was in 1985, several years before integration became a right for all students. In the absence of provincial policy, districts are having to make up their own policies. Districts are muddling through, with approaches so different that inequalities are significant for both students and teachers.

The BCTF lobbied government to take action. The Ministry Advisory Committee on Special Education was struck last summer and is now

defining new policy and guidelines. The BCTF has two representatives on the committee, First Vice-President Alice McQuade, and Director of Research Larry Kuehn.

The realization by government that this was an issue that needed concrete financial and moral support is a direct result of the efforts of teachers working together as well as working with community groups, trustees, unions, administrators, other ministries, and parents.

An important push for action on integration has come from several of the BCTF's PSAs. Together they have lobbied for action on integration, and proposed federation policy reflecting teachers' needs.

A high priority reflected in BCTF surveys is access to appropriate modified and adapted materials. A key principle of integration is that the student with special needs should, as much as possible, be working on the same objectives as other students in the class. A project of the BCTF's research department is the creation of a package of existing modified materials.

As a result of all of this work by everyone, government released an immediate \$3.5 million for this year, \$400,000 of that will go to a 1-800 hotline project, an original idea of the BCTF. The recent education budget also added \$30 million in targeted funds to this area.

We have been successful because of the efforts of thousands of our members and because we have been able to build coalitions with others. We will continue to work together for the best place and educational program for all students.

Alice McQuade is BCTF's first vice-president.

Inclusion: a public school legacy

by Larry Kuehn

Inclusion is hardly new to the public schools. Today the word is generally applied to bringing students with special needs into the mainstream of school programs, however, it could as easily be applied to other groups in earlier eras.

The history of the public schools is one of increasing inclusion.

At one time, only the children of the economically and socially privileged had full access to education—primarily male children. Excluded groups created the conditions for change.

Unions pushed for public education for children of workers, not just the elite. Activists sought equity regardless of gender. Groups representing ethnic groups demanded the end of systemic discrimination.

Advocates for the 10% of students with special needs have insisted that the barriers come down for their children as well. Many children with special needs had no access to school at all until special, but segregated, programs were developed around the 1950s.

The civil rights movement then inspired calls for people with disabilities to take part in all aspects of social life. Integration in education was the key to jobs, recreation, and independent living.

A law passed in the United States in the 1970s provided extra resources from the federal government to fund mainstreaming of students with special needs. By the end of the decade, government policies in British Columbia were headed in that direction as well, although most

See KUEHN page 4

RESOURCE

Gender equity resource guide

Now we have it! The answer to the question "How can I help my students understand gender equity?" A new resource package entitled *The Gender Equity Resource Guide* is available for purchase through BCTF Lesson Aids Service. Six teachers planned and developed the guide: Cheryl Douglas, team leader (Surrey), Wendy Matsubuchi, Team Leader (North Vancouver), Penelope Kalopisi-Kennedy (Howe

Sound), Janis Nairne (Alberni), Johanne Mabon (Vancouver Elementary), and Helen Wilkes (Vancouver Secondary).

This comprehensive, versatile guide helps primary, intermediate, and graduation level teachers help students understand what gender equity means and how to apply that understanding to daily living.

The learning activities help students recognize gender bias, form attitudes free of gender bias, develop skills for dealing with bias they

encounter, and expand their knowledge of gender issues. Many activities help students investigate their environment and take action for change.

Funding for this project was secured by the Curriculum Services/Professional Opportunities Program (CSPO) as a Ministry of Education Gender Equity grant.

To order this guide, LA WS401, contact BCTF Lesson Aids Service. Cost of \$11 includes GST. Non-BCTF members, add 20% surcharge.

Who is involved?

by Lynn Grants

Good question was the response when I posed that question in a staffroom. The answers reflected both cynicism and wishfulness. Cynicism, because even without the support required, mainstreaming for integration, or inclusion is upon us; wishfulness, because the job could be done so much better if everything were guaranteed, if all the wrinkles were ironed out, if time stood still so that things could be put in place, if money were no object. But time does not stand still, and the child with a head injury who has lost much of his language, and the child with a hearing impairment who attended the neighborhood preschool and is excited about entering Kindergarten with her friends are there at the school door, and the options once available for alternative placement may no longer exist. So who is involved when we talk about

integration (or mainstreaming or inclusion)? Who has you come across? Who has sought you out? Too many people, said one. No one at all, said another. Lots of people sometimes, and at other times, too few. No one when I need someone. Agencies. People who used to work with these kids in separate settings and now want to act the guru in my classroom. Parents. Associations that represent various special-needs groups. Speech and language people, teachers of the behaviorally disordered, specialists for the autistic child, physio and occupational therapists, counsellors, specialist teachers, teaching assistants, and many more.

Ah! Teaching assistants. The most important of the who. A classroom invasion that those of us who started teaching many years ago could not have imagined. What is their function? What of our function as the teacher? Was this yet another body to manage?

Moreover, did we want, as teachers, to be under the scrutiny of other adults? Some of these issues are still unresolved. As we grapple with the challenges of inclusion, we must acknowledge the significance of the teaching assistant.

Teaching assistants have been challenged by the inclusionary movement. Many have been hired to work in special-education classrooms. They had little expectation of moving along thronging corridors to take their place in a Socials 10 classroom or the woodwork shop, or of being the somewhat isolated special-education representative in the Grade 5 classroom, visited twice weekly by the resource teacher. Suddenly they were the ones, along with the classroom teacher, who were putting mainstreaming into practice.

The *who* is involved is a serious matter, compounded by the other issue of the *when* for the classroom teacher, and for the teaching assistant with the classroom teacher and/or the resource teacher, the physiotherapist, who will expect the teaching assistant (if there is one) to carry out the exercises, and

the speech and language person who wants to evaluate the effectiveness of the language-intervention exercises she has recommended, and — oh dear, we have forgotten the buildings and grounds person, who wants to discuss the washroom modifications for next year.

Who is involved? Too many and too few. Classroom teachers need assurances in contract that appropriate support personnel will be available, and that's just the beginning.

Lynn Grants is a member of the North Vancouver Secondary Learning Resource Team.

New organization for teachers' assistants

Paraprofessional Educational Network of B.C. (P.E.N.) promotes PD and exchanges information.

Regular membership is limited to paraprofessionals; teachers can join as associate members and have access to the workshops and publications. All categories of members pay \$15 per year. Write P.E.N., Box 61547, Langley, BC V3A 8C8.

How can the contract help?

by Wes Knapp

Teachers today are increasingly prepared to say, "Give us the resources to make mainstreaming work, or scrap the practice entirely."

Far from being a radical stance, it is a survival strategy.

This fall, four teachers at Thunderbird Elementary School, in Vancouver said essentially that. They decided the time had come to put a halt to more students' being shoved into their overcrowded classrooms.

It was time to file a grievance. They had spent three weeks in the spring on a picket line to achieve some limits on class size and mainstreaming. That strike had to mean something.

They now had access to an expedited arbitration procedure in the collective agreement, something that forced a quick resolution. In Vancouver, an arbitrator now must issue an award within seven days of the expedited hearing—in sharp contrast to the months and months of waiting for a

decision under the regular arbitration procedures.

As the BCTF staff person working with Vancouver teachers, I helped VESTA handle the Thunderbird class-size/mainstreaming grievance—something that let me see how determined the Thunderbird teachers were to establish a good learning environment for all students in their classes.

Like most teachers, they wanted mainstreaming to work. They were not prepared to make it work at the expense of quality, however.

The arbitration resulted in a favorable award for the Thunderbird teachers. The arbitrator, Bruce Greyell, ruled that the oversized classes were due to the inclusion of students with special needs.

The arbitrator said that a plain reading of the collective agreement means that classes containing children with special needs are not subject to the *fudge* factor—a provision that allows employers to exceed the class-size limits.

On the witness stand during arbitration, the teachers talked about the students in their classroom and the neighborhood in which they teach. An inner-city school, Thunderbird has children from many cultures and

language backgrounds. The area has unique social problems, and many of the children have severe learning difficulties.

The teachers explained how difficult it is to teach an intermediate class of 28 students when 7 have English as a second language, 1 has attention deficit disorder, 3 are non-readers, 3 are ministry-designated students with special needs, 2 are underfed, and 3 are waiting for central screening to determine what special assistance is needed for them.

The school board's position in arbitration was that it was entitled to assign up to two more students to each class pursuant to the collective agreement.

The arbitrator had to answer the question Does the school board have the right to apply the fudge factor to classes containing students with special needs?

In Vancouver, students with special needs are defined as students "identified by central screening as requiring modification of school practices or special education services" in specified Ministry of Education categories. Those categories reflect degrees of severity in learning disability.

The arbitrator said no. The school board can't apply the fudge factor to classes containing students with special needs. He concluded that the class-size language in Vancouver is mandatory, not permissive. Two students with special needs in the class, but no fudge. Twenty-eight means 28, not 30.

In what was perhaps the most significant part of the award, the arbitrator cited an earlier award by arbitrator Cherkow that said "the workload limits must be construed as a benefit attained by teachers in collective bargaining."

In other words, the mainstreaming and class-size limits in teachers' collective agreements constitute a restriction on management's right to assign work to teachers at its pleasure.

For the teachers at Thunderbird, the award means some reorganization and elimination of oversized classes.

Wes Knapp is an assistant director in the BCTF's Bargaining and Member Services Division.

Speaking personally

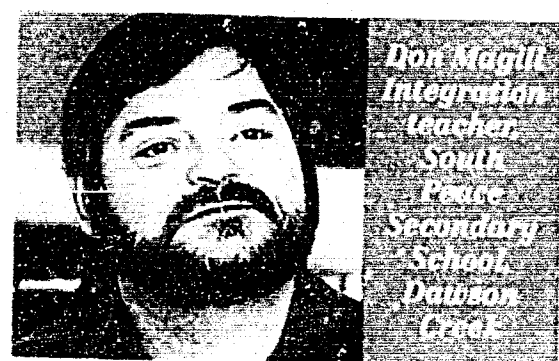
What is your biggest success or issue regarding mainstreaming?



It is vital that the integrated students' needs for the best placement and programming be considered along with the needs of classmates so that all may continue to succeed. For some students with special needs, only a small amount of time in the regular class may suit them; others may spend all day in the classroom.

A second priority is *suitable and sufficient assistance* in the form of in-school support personnel, positive and realistic support from administrators, and well-defined, consistent service from district and community professionals. It is not only enough to

have such support personnel available; there must be time to engage in planned, worthwhile consultation and collaboration.



One success? I introduce the students at the beginning of the semester so that their peers have a sense of the person coming in—not just the disability—but the strengths and the interests of the person. So they have something to base some social interaction on.

...It is a reflection on the strength of our communities, the strength of our society, how we treat people.



This is my first year in junior secondary school, and I am finding it different from elementary school. I have to move to lots of classes and have a new teacher for almost every subject. Driving through the busy hallway is difficult. On Friday, a girl landed in my lap.

This semester was easy for me. I like math, and science is interesting. My teacher, Mr. Brown, makes it fun. School is fun when you have a teacher with a sense of humor. The work takes me a long time even though I have a computer. My final math exam took me five hours.

It's hard for me to always talk clearly. I tighten up when I speak. For the first month or so, I would have to say everything five times, and then if they didn't understand me, my helper, Debbie Brooks, would tell them. The teacher continued to ask me questions, and recently I read out loud from the science book in class. After I read, I was relieved and happy. I am more relaxed with reading now.

Some of the kids are very nice. It's hard for me to join in and make new friends. If people take the time to get to know me, they don't treat me like a baby, just like a regular teenager. I feel bad when people tease me and other kids who have learning disabilities.

Write to us

Teacher is interested in your biggest success or issue regarding mainstreaming. Write to us c/o Teacher newsmagazine.



Learning with your friends at the local school is one goal of mainstreaming/integration. Above, two Sir Alexander Mackenzie students show integration at work.

Integration top 10

What is most important in making integration work?

- 1 Contract limits on the number of students with special needs in a class.
- 2 Appropriate modified curriculum and materials.
- 3 A good working relationship with the parents of students with special needs.
- 4 A supportive administrative officer.
- 5 An effective school-based team.
- 6 Time set aside for consultation.
- 7 A trained teaching assistant working in the class
- 8 In-service training.
- 9 Support from a resource teacher in the school.
- 10 District services for assessment and support available in the school.

This list is in order of importance. However, the differences between the top item and the bottom were so close as to be of no statistical importance. Source: BCTF "Teaching in the '90s" survey.

A typical day in a neighborhood school

by Janet Campbell, Jill Hyndman, Maeve Moran, and Susan Ramsey

08:42 It's a chilly morning, and a special education assistant (SEA) is pacing anxiously as he awaits the school bus scheduled to pull up outside the blue and white facade of Sir Alexander Mackenzie Elementary School, on Vancouver's east side. Built in 1930, this school is rapidly adapting to the changes demanded of public education today. Serving a population of 520 students, 75% of whom have a first language other than English, Mackenzie school faces the challenge of integrating a wide variety of youngsters with special needs. An elevator added to the building in 1981 has greatly facilitated Mackenzie's move to a neighborhood school.

All children who live in the catchment area can attend the school, with the exception of a few students who are referred out to the remaining district class placements still available in Vancouver. Fifteen students have official "special needs" status. Thirteen of the 15 are entitled to the support services of a school-based resource teacher and three SEAs. The students have a variety of physical, mental, language, learning, and social and emotional disabilities.

Since 1993, all resource personnel, teachers, and SEAs have collaborated as a resource team to meet the diverse needs of teachers and students. Increased collaboration between regular teachers and resource personnel, curriculum adaptation, team planning, and evaluation and assessment are on their agenda.

09:00 The resource team, all nine members, meet in the resource room for their once-a-week meeting. One of their regular tasks is to organize requests for coverage of classes for the coming week. On one afternoon per week members of the resource team are not scheduled into classes so they may meet with teachers or cover classes to allow classroom teachers to participate in team planning or Individual Education Programs (IEP) meetings.

09:40 The librarian and the SEAs depart, and the second half of the meeting ensues. In this consultative time, teachers and available resource staff brainstorm possible solutions to problems with particular students in order to cut back on the list of students referred to the school-based team. In the background, several adults and students collect odd pairs of snow pants, mitts, hats, and a toboggan before heading off to Cypress on a cross-country ski trip planned for 105 eager Grade 6 and 7 students, three of whom will require assistance to participate.

10:40 In the K/1/2 class it's centres time and Benson opts for the water table. The astute SEA places a table beside the water area, and soon Benson is lying on his tummy on the table top blowing bubbles with the other boys and girls.

13:00 Katy, a Kindergarten student with spina bifida, is being guided down the stairs by her older brother amid the throng of kids on their way back from lunch. She beams as she takes her place at a table with five other children and heeds the encouraging words of the SEA about staying on her cut-and-paste task.

13:30 David, a boy with severe learning difficulties, is found by the principal as she drives around the neighborhood in search of him and his friend. They had decided to spend the afternoon in a deserted hut in the neighborhood.

14:30 Hui-gan careers around a corner in his new wheelchair. A recent immigrant from Vietnam, he still finds using a wheelchair a novel experience, and he delights in his ability to view the world from new heights.



14:50 The skiers are back, rosy-cheeked and full of stories from the mountain. A volunteer from the Disabled Skiers' Association of B.C. helped Tam to "test drive" a specially crafted seat-on-skis. Another student transferred from his wheelchair to skidoo to ride to his base of operations, the "lodge." From that vantage point, he could watch and call out to friends as they skied by.

15:00 It's time to debrief after another regular day at Mackenzie school. A visiting teacher from Coquitlam, Debbie Birchall, remarks that she has noticed how accepting our students are of differences. She also says, "Students with disabilities are not treated as objects in your school, but rather as friends who sometimes need help." There are smiles all around as we get the feeling that indeed our school is doing a good job of including all the kids in the neighborhood.

Janet Campbell, Jill Hyndman, Maeve Moran, and Susan Ramsey are teachers at Sir Alexander Mackenzie Elementary School, Vancouver.

Teacher

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Funding education for special needs

Critics of the schools like to say, "It does no good to throw money at the problem." That may not be the case with integration, however.

A recent study for the Ministry of Education reports some startling results.

Integration is greater for "low incidence, high cost" students than for those in the "high incidence" categories. "Low incidence" students are those with the most severe disabilities. Much greater resources are provided to ensure the success of integration for these students.

Integration is also greater in smaller school districts than larger ones. Under the funding formula, small districts get more dollars per student with special needs than large ones do. The assumption has been that "economies of scale" apply to services in the larger districts.

More money is not the only factor that leads to success in integration, but it clearly plays an important role. Look at the top ten items teachers cite as necessary to make integration work. Most of them require resources.

A number of changes in the financing of special education are under consideration. The BCTF supports the following proposals:

- **Use a clear system to report funding**

Under the current system, no one can say how much a board is really spending on special education. The money allocated for each student with special needs should be identified. Parents and teachers would then know what boards have been given and what they are actually spending. The money for special education should be targeted so it can't be spent on other things. The Minister of Education announced at the end of January that the system supported by the BCTF will be adopted.

- **Increase the number of categories of students eligible for funding**

Many of the students who require the most attention and resources are those with "severe behavior" disorders. Most are not recognized currently for funding. The most severe cases should be included in the "low incidence, high cost" categories. The minister has also announced that additional money will be available for this most troublesome problem of students with learning disorders.

- **Remove the "cap"**

Regardless of how many "high incidence" students are identified by a district, currently the district can receive funding in this category for only 4% of the its students. Some districts are magnets for parents who want adequate services for their children, but the boards do not receive funds to match the demands.

- **Eliminate the "economy of scale" assumption**

Large districts have received less on a per student basis than small districts. The assumption was that more combining of programs would cost less to serve the same number. Experience indicates this doesn't work. More total funding is required, not shifting money from small districts to large. Such shifts would only equalize inadequacies.

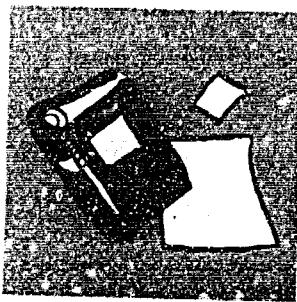
Each of these changes would produce a small improvement. None of them, however, addresses the real problem: inadequate total funding for special education.

—Larry Kuehn



Students with special needs receive assistance to help them join in all school activities. Classmates, teachers, parents, and teaching assistants are all part of the team.

There's no single solution Linking research to practice

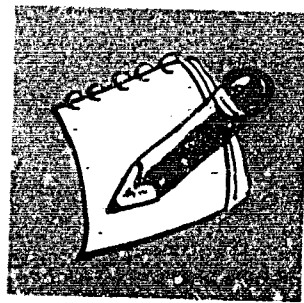


Case studies of good inclusion practices

Learning from the successful practice of other teachers is the purpose of five case studies conducted and written by teachers working with the BCTF Research Department. Research for three secondary case studies has been completed; two elementary studies are under way.

Each study offers ideas for including students with special needs. Appendices include documents such as sample IEPs as models that can be copied for immediate use.

The first of the studies—from Peace River Secondary—has been published and is available through the BCTF Lesson Aids Service for \$7.50 for members.



Modified and adapted materials (secondary)

Identifying and making available existing modified and adapted materials is being made possible through this project. The materials are for use with students who would be able to meet curriculum requirements with modified or adapted resources.

As a pilot project, information packages describing available materials have been sent to all teacher locals and school district offices. A data base describing resources and how they are available has been developed, allowing for computer searching to find materials of interest.

A call is being put out for teachers to share through this project materials they have developed.



Mainstreaming data base

Documents related to mainstreaming policies and practices in B.C. schools have been collected and entered into a data base by the BCTF Research Department.

Materials include surveys of teachers and parents, district reports, PSA position papers, teacher research papers, articles on legal issues, lists of videos for promoting inclusive practices and much more are listed in the BCTF Mainstreaming Data Base.

A list of the first 150 entries is being mailed to all teacher local offices. The data base will also be available on disk using Filemaker Pro software.

To get further details on these projects or information on access, write or phone the BCTF Research Department.

—Charlie Naylor, BCTF Researcher

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Inclusion works in public schools

students with special needs were still in segregated programs.

By the time the integration policy became a part of B.C. school law, in 1989, practice had already started to change. Integration has accelerated significantly in response to the change in the law. According to a 1993 survey conducted for the Ministry of Education, close to 70% of students with special needs are included in regular classrooms 90% of their time at school.

Who benefits from inclusion?

The advocates for children with special needs have no doubt that their children benefit. The children are no longer in dead-end programs. They gain social skills that are essential if they are to participate as adults in

anything other than an institutional setting. Working with other children provides positive models. Integration helps achieve more than would segregation with other students who face the same difficulties.

Other children in the class gain as well. Hundreds of heart-warming stories can be recounted wherein all children learn about difference, acceptance, and caring. Whole classes are made richer, when the promise of integration is actually delivered.

Society as a whole benefits as well in these circumstances. All these children are going to live in our communities. The better prepared they are to take a full part, and to be as independent as possible, the better off we will all be.

If inclusion is such a great idea, why isn't everyone for it?

Opposition to the full integration of all students with special needs comes from various sources. Some of the

negatives can be put down to prejudice or fear. Others, however, demand serious examination.

Some parents think their children are better served in segregated programs that can provide education tailored to specific needs. Some advocates for the learning disabled and the gifted feel this way. Many people from the deaf community see American Sign Language as a language and culture that must have at least the recognition provided to second-language immersion programs.

Some other parents feel that children with special needs are taking so much attention in integrated classrooms and that their own children are paying a price.

Teachers are certainly not unanimous in praise of the policies either. A BCTF survey showed the range of views.

A lot of factors account for these differences. For example, secondary teachers feel more pressure from university and business. As well, the

structure of the school and its timetable allow less of the flexibility required for successful integration.

A couple of things, however, find virtually unanimous agreement among teachers. The biggest unresolved problem in integration is dealing with students with severe behavior problems. The price being paid ranges from violence in the school to increased stress leaves for teachers.

The second area of agreement is that there are serious problems with implementation of integration. The government's integration policy was not accompanied by the guidelines, models, training, supports and resources required to achieve complete success.

Only in the past few months has integration moved to a top spot on the Ministry of Education's agenda. Watch to see if enough is done now to make the reality match the promise.

Larry Kuehn is director of the BCTF Research and Technology Division.