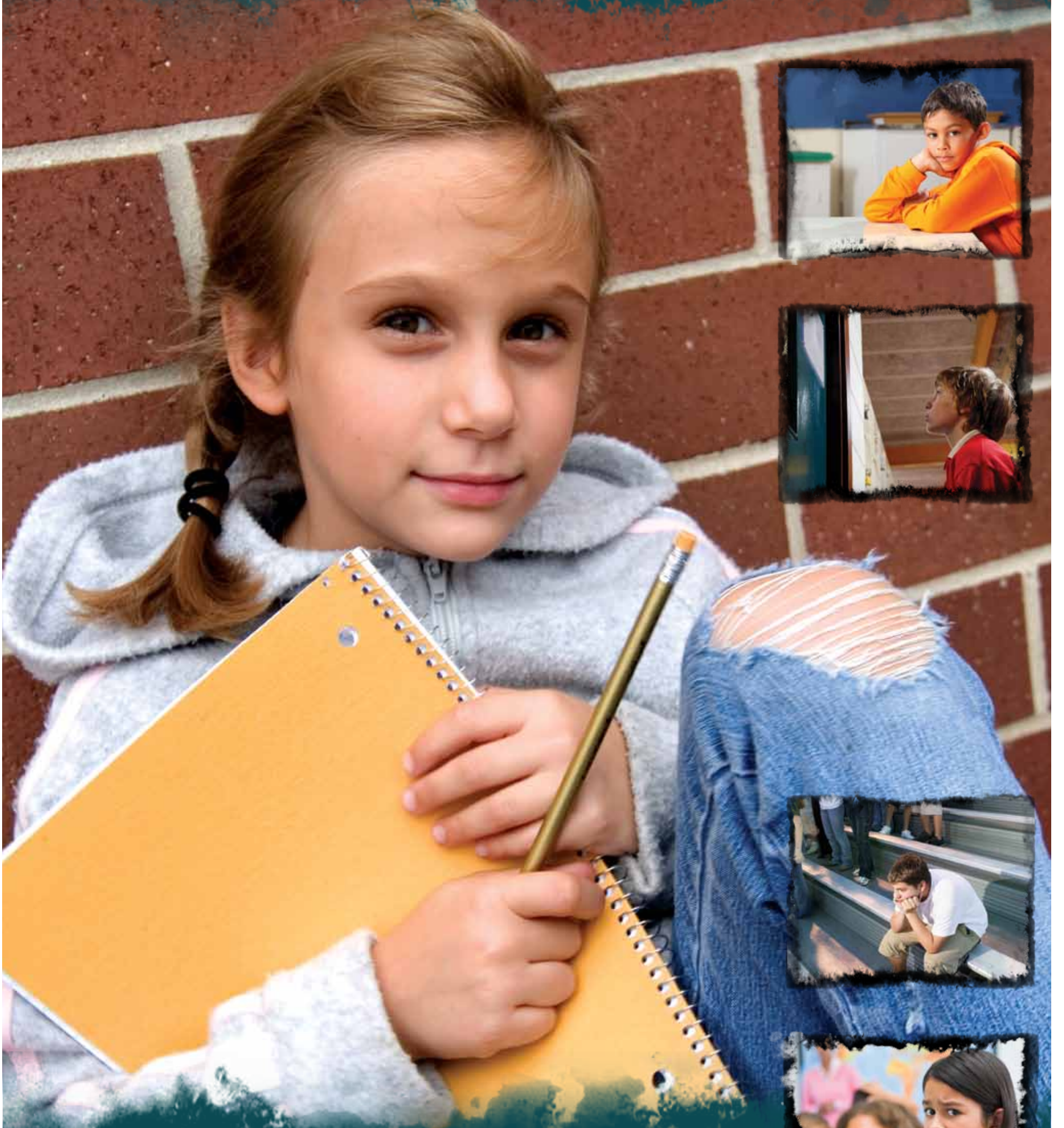


KIDS CAN'T WAIT...



FOR SOLUTIONS TO CHILD POVERTY.



British Columbia Teachers' Federation Social Justice Program | 604-871-1842

See resources on reverse

Taking action on child poverty using a Social Justice Lens

Access

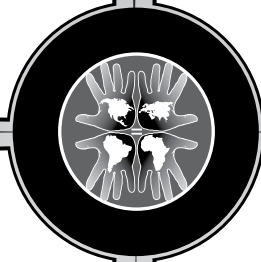
How can you ensure families living in poverty have equitable access to all school opportunities?

- Take the time to become familiar with your students. Is there a situation in the home that keeps them from attending school on a regular basis?
- Field trips: Ensure equitable access for students and support from PAC; don't pressure students to do fundraisers.
- Sports: Provide financial and transportation assistance for low income students so that they are able to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Fine Arts: Make sure that required materials are supplied to students in need.
- Participate in community/cultural events outside school to build connections and trust with low income families.
- Advocate for universal breakfast and lunch programs.

Agency

How can you help students to develop resiliency skills and think critically about child poverty issues?

- Allow children to share their stories in a safe environment by encouraging courageous conversations.
- Foster communication skills that result in students being able to articulate their needs.
- Develop lessons to help students build critical thinking skills about the social impacts of poverty in BC and Canada.
- Familiarize yourself with the Child Poverty Report Card by First Call (firstcallbc.org/pdfs/economicquality/3-reportcard2011.pdf). Use their fact sheets in teaching lessons about poverty and privilege.
- Establish connections with community groups that partner with the school in delivering programs, services, or resources to low-income families.



How can we work together to take action with others on this issue?

- Change school policies through staff committees to ensure that students living in poverty are welcomed at school (i.e., late student procedures, student absences, homework expectations, etc.).
- Build relationships with community services and organizations to support families living in poverty.
- Encourage empathy and an ethic of care amongst staff.
- Write to your MLA requesting a provincial poverty reduction plan with specific targets and timelines for action (seven provinces and territories have them now).
- Challenge negative stereotypes about people living in poverty (i.e., lack of education/skills, unwillingness to work, statements of blame).
- Rather than fundraising, develop school plans that address the root causes of child poverty.
- Through ally building, explore, and calculate the living wage for your community and advocate for families to be paid a living wage.

How can I advocate for children and families in need?

- Speak out about the need for affordable housing in your community.
- Work with colleagues to develop a list of community organizations and personnel who address local poverty issues.
- Connect children and families with support services in the community.
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff to learn and advocate around poverty issues (see descriptions of free workshops listed below).
- Explore the interrelationships among poverty, race, and gender in your teaching and learning.

Solidarity action

Personal goal: Starting tomorrow, what can I do?

- Assess your own bias and privilege.
- Build relationships with low-income families and students.
- Welcome students when they arrive—no matter what time of day.
- Talk to parents and invite them into the class.
- Have school policies that do not penalize or exclude students for being late, not having lunch, or not having their homework done.
- Explicitly teach and model communication and social skills.
- Connect children and families with community resources.
- Affirm the culture and heritage of students in your class.
- Remember that children and families are not to blame for their situation.

Antipoverty Resources:

BCTF antipoverty lesson plans (bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=21358&libID=21348)

BCTF workshops on poverty

Poverty Reduction Coalition website (bcpovertyreduction.ca)

"The Time is Now" video (policyalternatives.ca/multimedia/time-now)

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) (policyalternatives.ca)

First Call Coalition—Child Poverty Report Card

(firstcallbc.org/pdfs/economicquality/3-reportcard2011.pdf)

Living Wage for Families (livingwageforfamilies.ca)

Advocacy

BCTF WORKSHOPS

Poverty as a classroom issue

BC has the highest poverty rate in Canada and 20% of all our children live in poverty. This workshop helps teachers to develop an awareness of the issue of poverty and its implication for our students. It will provide challenges for teachers on the assumptions we make about children living in poverty and provide strategies for teachers on how to support children who may be experiencing discrimination at school due to their socioeconomic status.

Teachers can make a difference for children living in poverty

This new workshop is a continuation from Poverty as a classroom issue. Participants will be challenged to examine their attitudes and beliefs about poverty. Specific strategies and pedagogy will be incorporated that will provide teachers with tools and perspectives to challenge and transform the current poverty crisis in our classrooms, schools, and communities.

To request a workshop, use the Workshop Request form, found at bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/ProD/Conferences/FaxbackWorkshopReqForm.pdf. You may also e-mail Nadia Bove at nbove@bctf.ca, 604-871-1860, or 1-800-663-9163 local 1860.