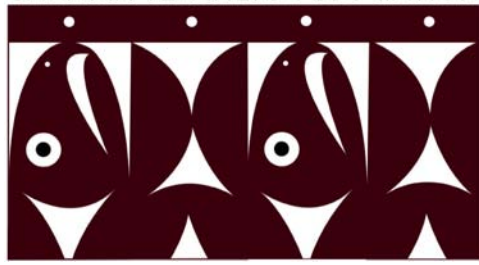




Sean Hayes  
STA President



## President's Newsletter

### Bill 22 Action Plan

On Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, the BCTF announced the results of a province-wide vote that asked members if they were in favour of implementing the Bill 22 Action Plan. Seventy-three percent (21,625) of ballots cast were in favour of the Action Plan.

Shortly after the passage of the plan, the BCTF Executive Committee used the power vested in them by the AGM to modify/clarify the wording of the plan. The newly worded plan is still an "in committee" document, but it can be found on the members-only portal (MyBCTF). I will be sending updated advice on the implementation of the plan as needed through Action Plan Bulletins to teachers.

There is no doubt that the decision by the BCTF membership to withdraw our involvement in extracurricular/voluntary activities is the most controversial element of the plan. However, I think it is important to note that this controversy does not absolve BCTF members' responsibility to attend to all elements of the plan. We are all governed by our Code of Ethics, and item #8 in the code clearly states that a "*teacher acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of her or his professional union.*"

I am not for a second suggesting that the decision to step away from extracurricular/voluntary activities is an easy one. It might not even be the right one. Time will tell. What I am saying is that the decision has been made – democratically, and after considerable debate. We have lots of challenges still facing us on the horizon, including the potential for significant (and I would argue potentially devastating) changes to our Collective Agreement. Now is the time for teachers to pull together and challenge the government, parents and the rest of the public to rethink our priorities around public education. Division and dissention in our ranks will not help. If teachers' jobs are really on the line – and there are many indications from BCPSEA and government that they are – then the stakes are as high as they have ever been. Establishing a situation where we have "good teachers" and "bad teachers" based on the volunteer work that we do is a mistake in my opinion. The last thing we want to do is to give the government more ammunition to argue that some teachers are more "suitable" than others.

Of course, at the end of the day, individual teachers will make their own decisions. All that I ask is that they make these decisions after considering the bigger picture and longer view. I coached two sports in this district for 10 years. It was important and valuable work. I made critical connections with kids that (I hope) significantly contributed to their educational experience. But none of this will ever be fair compensation for larger and larger classes and fewer and fewer supports for kids... and none of it is more important than my job.

## Strike Pay

You can only imagine the logistics involved in accurately recording participation of, and then sending cheques to, 40,000+ teachers who participated in our three-day withdrawal in March. Mistakes were bound to happen, and we have been collecting evidence of errors and omissions here at the office and have sent these corrections to the BCTF. We are expecting a new batch of cheques any day now, and will get them out to affected teachers ASAP.

The BCTF has set a deadline for submitting all corrections and submissions for strike pay of May 31, 2012. **If you have not yet contacted the STA Office to inform us that you were not correctly reimbursed for picket/rally duty, please do so by this cut-off date.**

## Bill 36

In a move that caught all of us off guard, the government tabled new legislation on April 26<sup>th</sup> called *The School Amendment Act* (Bill 36). The bill makes several changes to the *School Act*, and is being sold by the Liberals as adding more “flexibility and choice” to BC’s education system. Bill 36 will:

- extend the option of taking a mixture of traditional school and online courses all the way down to the kindergarten level (currently only allowed for Grades 10-12)
- eliminate the Standard School Calendar making it possible for Boards to now run alternative calendars
- allow Boards to charge fees for programs such as International Baccalaureate (IB)

The government’s Bill 36 press release says these changes will support the BC Education Plan. Time will tell whether these changes are really about flexibility and choice in the way we access public education, or whether they are about allowing government to deliver education at a reduced price point.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy

The Saanich Board has determined that Saanich should join the growing number of districts in the province with a stand-alone Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy. The STA Executive Committee is very supportive of this effort, and has provided considerable input into the policy development process through a Social Justice Committee and Social Justice Chair Diane Cacciato. A draft policy has now been put out for feedback (having received Notice of Motion at the April 18<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting). Please have a look at the draft policy, and send any feedback to Leigh Glancie (lglancie@sd63.bc.ca) by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

The draft Policy 6150 (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) can be found on the STA website at:

<http://saanichteachers.com/?p=316>

## Retirement Banquet

It's that time of year again. Time for us to fete our retiring teaching and administrative colleagues as they head into their "golden years." We are very excited to have booked the Inn at Laurel Point as our retirement banquet venue this year, and hope that you will consider joining us to celebrate the careers of the 12 teachers and four administrators who will soon be enjoying that endless summer we all dream about (especially this year!).

- What: S.T.A./S.A.A. Retirement Banquet  
Who: List of retirees will be sent to Staff Reps shortly  
When: Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 p.m.  
Where: Inn at Laurel Point  
How: Tickets can be purchased by sending a \$25 cheque to Sally at the STA Office. Make cheques payable to "Saanich Teachers' Association"  
Why: Do you need a reason to have a waterfront party in June?

## Purchasing Leaves

Every month of pensionable service a teacher accumulates during his or her career is worth ~\$150 in gross yearly pension income, so purchasing back pensionable service whenever possible can make a big difference to the pension you ultimately receive. Time spent on leaves of absence covered by the *Employment Standards Act* (pregnancy, parental/adoption, bereavement, compassionate care, jury duty and family responsibility leaves) can all be purchased back, and your employer is required to pay their portion of that leave. You also have the right to purchase pensionable service for periods of layoff if you were placed on a recall list and didn't return to work, or if you returned to work and worked less than your previous assignment.

The Teachers' Pension Plan has put together an information sheet that explains the rules and regulations around purchasing leaves. If you think you might benefit from such a purchase, have a look, or call the STA Office for more information:

[http://www.pensionsbc.ca/portal/page/portal/pencorcontent/tpppage/publications/pensionfacts/tpp\\_loa\\_pf.pdf](http://www.pensionsbc.ca/portal/page/portal/pencorcontent/tpppage/publications/pensionfacts/tpp_loa_pf.pdf)

## Welcome Home Scott

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Scott Stinson back to Saanich. Scott will be taking over the role of Assistant Superintendent (Student Services) after the pending retirement of Marlene Dergousoff.

Many of you will know Scott from his 18 years as a teacher and administrator in Saanich, although most recently Scott has been working as a school and district principal in the Sooke School District. Scott's portfolio in Saanich will include supporting student services, elementary education, aboriginal education and early learning. This truly is a homecoming for Scott, who still lives in Saanich with his wife (a Saanich teacher) and two children (both Saanich students).

## Staff Committees

In the April newsletter, I included a section on Article E.15.1. This is the time of year when Staff Committees (or entire staffs) should be getting together with administration to discuss next year's timetable and staffing assignments (**these meetings are still permitted under the Bill 22 Action Plan**). It is critical that teachers embrace their roles as key participants in school planning, and that they are aware that this article compels administrators to engage in consultations about timetabling/staffing for next year. These consultations should be happening now (prior to May 15<sup>th</sup>).

E.15.1 is just one of the articles that mentions the role of Staff Committees in school processes. On top of these, the government has now added consultation between principals and the Staff Committee (or entire staffs) as one of requirements for accessing the Learning Improvement Fund, meaning a strong Staff Committee at every school is more important than ever. Here are some of the articles that mention the roles and responsibilities of Staff Committees (note the rules for staff meetings – a recent hot topic).

### Article E.15: Positions and Assignments

E.15.1 **The administrative officer in consultation with the Staff Committee or staff shall meet prior to May 15 as part of the school planning process for the upcoming school year for the purpose of discussing the timetable and staff assignments available for the next school year and, if necessary, any new or existing teaching positions that require filling in the school.**

### Article A.31: Education Assistants

A.31.6 The Administrative Officer of the school will consult with the School Staff Committee and other appropriate staff when **assigning non-dedicated and dedicated education assistant time.**

### Article D.22: Staff Meetings

D.22.2. At the start of each school year, the Principal shall consult with the school staff or the school staff committee to **jointly determine procedures and guidelines for monthly and emergent school staff meetings.** These procedures and guidelines shall address matters such as: agenda setting, circulation of agendas, frequency of meetings, place, duration, notice and procedures for absences from the meeting. Once determined, these matters will be outlined and copies distributed to each staff member by October 1 of each year.

D.22.3. Regular school staff meetings which are additional to the monthly staff meetings shall be scheduled only with the agreement of the staff through the process described in clause D.22.2.

### Article A.24: School Staff Committee

A.24.1 Teachers assigned to each staff may form a Staff Committee.

A.24.2 The size and membership of the Staff Committee shall be determined by the staff. In smaller schools the staff may decide to act as a committee of the whole.

A.24.3 The committee will have **access to public information concerning its school budget and monthly expenditure statements and information on which school level decisions may be based.**

A.24.4 **The committee may make recommendations to the staff and the principal on any area of concern.** The staff committee shall provide the principal with an opportunity to meet with the staff committee prior to the staff committee finalizing a recommendation for the school administration.

A.24.5 If the principal declines to implement a recommendation, **reasons shall be given to the whole staff.** The committee may forward a copy of the recommendation to the Superintendent when the recommendation pertains to a matter not covered by this Agreement. The Superintendent, or designate from the Administrative Executive, upon receiving the recommendation, will **investigate the matter and respond in writing** to the staff committee.