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STA President



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President's Newsletter

September, 2011

Welcome Back

Traditionally this first newsletter of the year would start out by welcoming you back to a new school year, hoping that you enjoyed a restful and relaxing summer. Of course I still hope your summer was wonderful, but this is certainly not going to be a typical school year. For the first time in most of our careers, we are starting the school year on strike. We may not be out on the sidewalks, but we are on strike nonetheless.

BCTF President Susan Lambert has often described our Phase 1 “teach only” job action as a time for joyful teaching... all the good stuff, and none of the adminstrivia to divide our attention. I hope this is the case for you, and that you find yourself able to focus your time and energy on the most important parts of your job. Having said that, to suggest that we will cruise through this job action without any bumps and bruises is simply not realistic. Relationships in schools will certainly get strained. Administrators, support workers, parents and teachers alike will find themselves getting frustrated as we try to navigate this challenging time. As usual, the media will paint us as overpaid and under-worked; asking for the moon at a time when we should be settling for crumbs (in fact, crumbs would exceed the government’s “net-zero” mandate).

So why are we doing it?

All job action is designed to apply pressure. In this case, we need to apply pressure to government (predominantly though school and district administration at this point) to change their net-zero mandate, and convince them that they need to invest in public education. Teachers and students in B.C. have spent close to a decade working and learning in a system that has had close to \$300 million *per year* stripped out of classrooms by the *illegal* passing of Bills 27 and 28.

This round, the BCTF bargaining team has come to the table with clearly defined goals:

1. Teaching conditions that support all students (this also includes prep time improvements).
2. Fair and reasonable salary and benefits.
3. Local solutions to local issues.

BCPSEA has come to the table with zeros and significant contract concessions.

As has always been the case, we stand the best chance of winning improvements for public education by standing together. That’s what job action is all about. It is never easy, and rarely fun, but if we don’t fight for public education (and for the professionals on the front lines), who will?

The 2011/2012 Pay Grid

With no contract in place, we are all working under last year's salary grid (for now).

Basic Scale Effective July 1, 2010

Step	Category 4	Category 4+	Category 5	Category 5+	Category 6
0	43,356	44,238	47,392	50,475	51,558
1	45,371	45,371	49,872	53,159	54,314
2	47,386	47,386	52,351	55,843	57,069
3	49,401	49,401	54,831	58,526	59,825
4	51,417	51,417	57,310	61,210	62,581
5	53,432	53,432	59,790	63,894	65,336
6	55,447	55,447	62,269	66,578	68,092
7	57,462	57,462	64,749	69,262	70,848
8	59,478	59,478	67,228	71,946	73,604
9	61,493	61,493	69,708	74,630	76,359
10	65,414	65,414	74,353	79,633	81,489

* TOC Daily Rate= \$213.90

Your "REG SALARY" on your month-end statement should be 1/10th of the appropriate category and step in the above table if you are working 1.0 FTE. Don't forget to check that your category and step are correct... this information is located directly over the "Earnings" box on your earnings statement.

Speaking of Pay Categories...

Many of you will have recently completed coursework that can be used to apply for a pay category change. Our collective agreement has this to say about applying for such a change:

B.28.1 Any teacher who intends to apply for a change in certification must notify the Secretary-Treasurer in writing by September 15th in which case the change in certification becomes effective for payroll purposes on September 1st in that school year. Any teacher who intends to apply for a change in certification must notify the Secretary-Treasurer in writing by January 15th in which case the change in certification becomes effective for payroll purposes on January 1st in that school year.

So...**you only have until September 15th to email Joan Axford** (I would also copy Paul Standing in HR) if you believe you are entitled to a change in your pay category. Don't throw away your hard-earned money!

Are You "Factor 88"?

If you are 64 years old, or if your years of experience and age adds to "88" or greater, you are eligible to opt out of paying the long-term portion of your Salary Indemnity Plan contribution. What does this mean?... **an additional 1.34% (about \$1000) of your salary will stay in your pocket!** Contact the STA Office if you think this applies to you.

STA Team in Every School

If my ringing phone is any indication, more of you will have union questions this year than any other in recent memory. That is why it is absolutely critical that each and every school has a well-oiled STA team (Staff Rep, Staff Committee, Pro D Rep, Health and Safety Rep) in place to help their colleagues if and when the need arises. These jobs don't need to be onerous (even in a job action year), but I cannot stress enough how important they are.

EVERY school needs to have a Staff Rep (or reps), a Staff Committee, a Pro D Rep, and a Health and Safety Rep.

Please call an STA meeting as soon as possible to elect folks for these important roles (without staff meetings, you're all going to be begging to have a meeting soon anyway). Rest assured that I will be coming to any school that does not elect these representatives, so resistance is futile. And don't forget, we have great resources, training and release time available to help folks in these roles, so please consider taking your turn and stepping up to help your colleagues.

Appropriate Use of Zimbra

The STA and the Board have just reached an agreement that will allow us to continue to use Zimbra as a way of sending STA messages (newsletters, bulletins, etc.) to all teachers for the duration of the Phase 1 job action. Without this agreement, we would have to try to collect 600+ personal email addresses... not a task I want to take on at the moment.

The *quid pro quo* is that the STA has agreed that members will use Zimbra for SD63 work purposes only and that they will refrain from using it inappropriately to comment on union or employer positions with regards to the current dispute. (Remember that Zimbra is about as private as a postcard).

I appreciate that Zimbra is a convenient way of communicating, and that many of you will have strong feelings that you will want to share over the coming months, but I am asking you all to respect this agreement while we are in Phase 1 job action. Thanks for your help with this one.

MyBCTF

Don't forget to sign up for access to the BCTF Member's Only Portal – *MyBCTF*. Not only does this give you access to bargaining updates (I highly recommend that you read the **Reports From the Provincial Table**, especially if you start to wonder why we are on strike), discussion forums, press releases, etc., it also automatically enters you into a draw to win one of nine iPad 2s (I met a TOC this summer who was one of the lucky winners).

Visit www.bctf.ca and click on the BCTF Member Portal flag to get started.

Code of Ethics

September seems like a good time to remind everyone of the BCTF Code of Ethics that governs all of our professional lives. Number 5 is always one to watch out for, and while we are involved in job action, #8 also requires close attention.

1. The teacher speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.
2. The teacher respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare.
3. The teacher recognizes that a privileged relationship with students exists and refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
4. The teacher is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/guardians the quality of service rendered by the teacher and the practices employed in discharging professional duties.
5. **The teacher directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private, and only then, after informing the colleague in writing of the intent to do so, may direct in confidence the criticism to appropriate individuals who are able to offer advice and assistance.** (See note following #10)
6. The teacher acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in his/her professional union.
7. The teacher adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.
8. **The teacher acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of his/her professional union.**
9. The teacher neither applies for nor accepts a position which is included in a Federation in-dispute declaration.
10. The teacher, as an individual or as a member of a group of teachers, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals.

NOTE: It shall not be considered a breach of Clause 5 of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow legal requirements or official protocols in reporting child protection issues.

2011/2012 STA Executive

Here are the folks that have agreed to represent you on this year's full(!) STA Executive. In addition to these traditional positions, Donnie Peterson is serving as our Local Elections Contact, and Amanda Wilson is serving as our Job Action Coordinator. Thanks to all!

President:	Sean Hayes
First Vice President:	Donnie Peterson
Second Vice President:	Amanda Wilson
Secretary:	Rand Howat
Treasurer:	Mark Skanks
Local Representatives:	Donnie Peterson and Mike Ewan (also remains Bargaining Chair)
Professional Development:	Holly Mair and Audrey Hayes (co-chairs)
Program:	Joe Winkler
Professional Communication:	Peggy Watson
Social Justice:	Diane Cacciato
Teachers-on-Call:	Anne Stewart
Health and Safety:	Patsy McCarter
First Nations:	Ginny Underwood