

Update - Class Size and Composition Arbitration

Although it is summer and many of you are on holidays, BCPSEA wanted to provide a brief update as to the status of the Bill 33 Class size grievances. This update builds on the more detailed information provided in our @issue 2009-18 dated June 8, 2009.

@issue 2009-18: <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/aissue/2009/ai2009-18.pdf>

Class Size and Composition Grievances: 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 School Years

As described in @issue 2009-18 there are nine (9) main issues referred to arbitration covering the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. In order to attempt to manage the number of districts and schools being grieved, the BCTF and BCPSEA agreed to use one (1) representative school in each of the following seven (7) school districts (5, 36, 39, 58, 63, 69, 82). Following forty-nine (49) days of arbitration to hear the evidence with respect to the seven (7) representative schools, last week (July 13-17) final argument was presented to Arbitrator Dorsey by the BCTF and BCPSEA. This now concludes both the evidence and argument for these seven (7) representative schools leaving the balance of schools in districts 5, 8, 20, 28, 36, 39, 44, 53, 61, 62, 63, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73 and 82.

Arbitrator Dorsey has indicated that a decision will be issued during the week of August 17-21, 2009. This award will deal solely with the interpretation of the legislation and merits of the seven (7) representative schools. Should remedy become an issue, it will be addressed in a separate hearing.

Although this award will only be binding on the seven (7) representative schools, it is hoped that this arbitration award will:

- assist the parties in resolving some or all of the remaining districts (17), schools (160) and classes (1,600) covered by the 2006-07 and 2007-08 class size grievances
- assist the parties in resolving some or all of the districts, schools and classes covered by the 2008-09 class size grievance. The BCTF grievance presently covers all districts, schools and classes in the province that has classes over 30 (grades 8-12) or 3 IEPs (grades K-12).
- provide guidance for the upcoming 2009-10 school year

Next Steps...

It is expected that in addition to written communication, BCPSEA will be scheduling conference calls during the week of **August 24, 2009** to review the decision and discuss the implications for school districts both for the previous year's grievances as well as for the upcoming school year.

A Special Thank you...

Finally, BCPSEA would like to express our sincere appreciation to the seven representative districts (SD 5, 36, 39, 58, 63, 69, 82) and their staff members for all the long hours and their hard work

throughout the arbitration process. This was truly a group effort! BCPSEA could not have put forward such a complete case on behalf of all districts without the great work from the district staff and, of course, Judith Anderson of Harris and Co. I think she described this as one of the most labour intensive arbitrations of her career!