

Data Request: BC Teachers' Federation Membership System

On December 3 and November 2, 2007, we distributed @issue bulletins regarding the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) requests for information from districts for its new web-based membership system. At that time, we understood the BCTF and their local associations intended to contact payroll staff in each district to discuss the electronic conversion of the hard copy payroll reports as well as a request for additional information such as district employee numbers and full time equivalent (FTE) counts.

At the same time, we advised the BCTF of our position that such requests should be made to the Secretary Treasurer in each school district, and any request is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA).

Since then, the BCTF have advised that their request for information is the information specified in the collective agreement and, in most cases, the information that is currently being provided by school districts.

Article A.4.5 of the Provincial Collective Agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF states:

The employer shall provide to the BCTF and the local at the time of remittance an account of the fees and levies, including a list of employees and amounts paid.

At a minimum, it is necessary to provide an individual identifier (e.g., employee number), gross salary, and the dues deducted. For the most part, the reports that school districts have been providing is what is being requested. The BCTF have requested that such information be added to the report being provided if it is not currently a part of the reporting.

The BCTF have advised BCPSEA that they will now begin to maintain member information regarding the individual amounts paid with respect to fees and levies. When representatives from the BCTF contact Secretary Treasurers, they will also request that this limited information be provided by electronic transfer in a format that is compatible with their new system (i.e., Excel or CSV). The BCTF have advised that this new system can work with a number of different formats, although graphic formats such as PDF are not compatible. The BCTF have also advised that they will be seeking both current and year-to-date information to ensure their records are as accurate as possible and in order to limit errors to the greatest extent possible. Ideally, the BCTF would like to receive a consolidated report but would also benefit from multiple electronic reports. Districts may accommodate this request for information in an electronic format, as they may find it more administratively simple and/or feasible when compared to the current manual processes.

Although the BCTF have advised that they do not intend to reimburse districts for administrative time or costs associated with a district opting to provide such information electronically, it is their view that some of the initial administrative costs associated with creating an electronic report are offset by the current costs associated with manual tasks such as mailing and creating a manual report. Electronic data provided in a timely fashion in accordance with the information set out above is not inconsistent with the collective agreement or FIPPA. In addition, it increases the ease with which the BCTF's

reconciliation of fees and levies can occur, and thereby increases the potential for both parties to identify and rectify remittance errors as soon as possible.

We anticipate that Secretary Treasurers will be contacted with this new request for information by the BCTF in early 2008. Please consider the request in light of the information provided above.

If you have any questions, please contact your BCPSEA district liaison.