

Report *from the Chair*

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

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By E-mail: 2 Pages

New Year, New Challenges

I am pleased to provide you my final *Report from the Chair* for 2010 and wish you all the best of the season. I hope you had an opportunity to read the latest *NewsLink Express* distributed at the BCSTA *Success for All 2010* Trustee Academy December 9-11, and sent to all boards on December 12. It is also available on our public website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/nlinkxpress/2010/nle2010-02.pdf>.

2011 will be a time of change and challenge. As I write this it seems to me that every new year is the same in that regard. After the agreements of 2006, we shifted our focus from collective bargaining to the other parts of our statutory mandate. There has been much good work accomplished and now collective bargaining again takes on central importance.

Our 17th Annual General Meeting takes place in Vancouver on January 28-29, supplemented by some important and interesting professional development offerings on January 27. As we are in a bargaining year, our bylaws also provide that:

5.2 During years when collective bargaining is scheduled with teachers, at least one Representative Council meeting shall be held to discuss bargaining objectives.

We are therefore having a full day Representative Council on January 28 to discuss and confirm our bargaining direction for the next round of BCTF–BCPSEA bargaining.

This event is an important part of our consultation process as we head into this round of bargaining. As you know, we have recently concluded a series of regional meetings and are in the process of receiving and tabulating our bargaining survey results. We expect that our Representative Council will include plenary sessions to outline the environment and realities we face as we head into bargaining, as well as a series of interactive facilitated sessions with Trustee Representatives. The issues covered in these sessions include working conditions, education quality, compensation and benefits, and adapting and responding to change. This is an important session that will provide grounding and direction in terms of the general negotiating framework and overall bargaining direction for the BCPSEA bargaining team, and we are excited about your participation.

It goes without saying that we bargain in political — and changing — times, aware of the need to balance the interests of all of you as employers with those of government as the maker of public policy. Our challenge as 60 individual boards is to, as a group of employers, maintain sufficient strength through a unified collective bargaining stance and associated strategies to achieve labour relations objectives, while working with individual employers so they can retain and exercise sufficient autonomy to accommodate individual differences. A tough balance but, working together, we can do it!

Your BCPSEA board and staff look forward to working with each of you through these interesting times. Have a good break and we will see you in January.



Ron Christensen
Chair

PS: If you haven't already done so, make sure you complete the *BCPSEA Survey: Bargaining Objectives* sent to Trustee Representatives and district staff contacts on December 10. If you've already responded, thank you!