

Report *from the Chair*

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

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By E-mail: Three Pages

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year!

Annual General Meeting

The BCPSEA 16th Annual General Meeting is scheduled for January 22–23, 2010 at the Hilton Hotel Metrotown in Burnaby. Activities commence at 9:30 am Friday, January 22 with professional development sessions. AGM, which includes elections to the Board of Directors and consideration of the proposed 2010-2011 association budget, opens at 7:00 pm and adjourns at 12:00 noon on Saturday, January 23. This event provides a great opportunity for trustees and district staff to connect and to participate in workshops and plenary sessions on topical issues.

Just a reminder that BCPSEA pays for the travel expenses associated with attending AGM for each school district's Trustee Representative. Contact Silvana Sam (604 730 4503, silvanas@bcpsea.bc.ca) at the BCPSEA office if you have any questions.

Support Staff Collective Bargaining

As reported in our *Support Staff Bargaining Bulletin*, preparation activities for support staff collective bargaining are intensifying. Support staff agreements will expire June 30, 2010; under the *Labour Relations Code* the parties can serve notice to commence negotiations as early as March 1, 2010. Negotiations must start within 10 days of the notice having been served.

The Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC) has released the *Employers' Guide to Mandate 2010* (EGM). The EGM requires employers' associations to complete and submit a bargaining plan for approval prior to commencing negotiations. BCPSEA is in the process of preparing the sectoral plan and is asking school districts to submit their plans for inclusion in the sectoral plan in accordance with the timelines below.

- Conference calls and distribution of a discussion paper — mid-January
- Public Education Collective Bargaining Academy 2010 — February 1, 2, 3 (Vancouver Island, location to be determined); March 1, 2, 3 (Kelowna); March 29, 30, 31 (Vancouver)
- Annual General Meeting and bargaining conference sessions — January 22-23
- Individual bargaining plans submitted to BCPSEA — February 1-15
- Sectoral plan completed — February 19
- Issue identification — analysis of commonality and emphasis as related to bargaining structure
- Recommendation regarding bargaining structure — February 25
- Conference calls and selected regional meetings — early March
- Districts prepared to commence collective bargaining — March.

Please contact your BCPSEA labour relations liaison if you have any questions.

Foundation Skills Assessment

As reported in @*issue* No. 2009-40 dated December 18, 2009 (on the BCPSEA website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/publications/aissue/aissue.html>), BCPSEA and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) entered into a one-year protocol agreement regarding distribution of BCTF material about the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA).

Some media reports have characterized the protocol agreement as a "victory" for the BCTF. While this perspective may be helpful in provoking commentary and controversy, it overlooks the realities of the matter.

The parameters for distribution of FSA materials have been set by previous decisions of the courts and arbitrators. In order to reduce conflict at the school and district levels, the purpose of the protocol agreement is to formalize the rules as set out by those decisions in a constructive manner. The agreement applies to three specific pamphlets only and represents a clear acknowledgement by the BCTF that the employer has the right to vet the material in advance to ensure accuracy and/or raise other restrictions on expression justified under section 1 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

As you will recall, arbitrator Kinzie determined that the BCTF does have a right to distribute material on this issue to parents; however, he also determined that the employer has the right to ensure the material is accurate and to require that it is sent home in a sealed envelope addressed to the parent and clearly marked as emanating from the BCTF.

The protocol agreement has also resulted in the withdrawal of a number of union grievances. It is important to note that the distribution of the pamphlets is in no way an endorsement of the BCTF position on the FSA by BCPSEA or school districts.

We will be monitoring the distribution of FSA material to ensure the protocol agreement is adhered to. If your local teachers' association proposes to distribute material that differs from the three specific pamphlets covered under the protocol agreement, please contact your BCPSEA labour relations liaison.

BCPSEA is currently updating its backgrounder on the FSA and the dispute between the BCTF and the Ministry of Education, which will be distributed shortly to school districts.

Management Development Learning Series

We continue to receive excellent feedback on the professional development opportunities developed and offered by your employers' association, including the management development learning series. Course descriptors and schedules can be found on our website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/events/prodprogram.html> and include:

- Public Education Collective Bargaining Academy 2010
- Navigating Your Way to Constructive Labour Relations
- Productive Workplace Conversations Level 1 and Level 2
- Collective Bargaining Concepts and Constructs
- A Behavioural Approach to Effective Hiring Decisions
- Article E.2 Harassment/Sexual Harassment — Training (Awareness and Prevention of Harassment training is also available online).

For further information, contact Georgina Johnson at 604 730 4507 or georginaj@bcpsea.bc.ca.

Make a Future – Careers in BC Education

In addition to the recruitment portal (www.makeafuture.ca) and assisting districts in filling specific difficult-to-fill positions, Make a Future is engaged in a variety of other initiatives, including:

- A school district executive search pilot project.
- Preparation of a report for the Ministry of Education Early Learning Branch on *British Columbia Full Day Kindergarten Implementation: An Analysis of Human Resource and Labour Relations Implications*.
- Preparation of a full day kindergarten human resources toolkit to be distributed to school districts in January 2010. The contents of the toolkit were developed utilizing feedback from school district responses to a previously distributed survey on this issue.
- Representing school districts at national and international recruitment events.
- Creating cost-effective recruitment advertising strategies for districts.
- Creating a social media and online presence for districts.
- Keeping districts connected to organizations such as BC College of Teachers
- Behavioural interviewing.
- Providing consultation around the process of international recruitment.

Make a Future is an excellent example of how needed initiatives can be accomplished through cost-effective shared service and shared expertise. Please don't hesitate to contact Janet Stewart at 604 730 4523 or janets@makeafuture.ca for assistance with any of your recruitment, selection, and retention issues.

Looking Ahead

As we continue to manage day-to-day issues and prepare for bargaining in this challenging economic and labour relations context, it is important that we continue to work together. Please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Board of Directors or staff to discuss issues of concern or interest.

The Board and staff contact information can be found under Contact Us on the BCPSEA website (www.bcpsea.bc.ca).



Ron Christensen
Chair