

Report *from the Chair*

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

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By E-mail: Three Pages

Annual General Meeting

The BCPSEA 14th Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held January 25-25 in Vancouver. As always, it was a great opportunity for trustees and staff to connect and to participate in some informative sessions on topical issues.

As many of you know, longstanding BCPSEA Directors Heather Hannaford of School District No. 60 (Peace River North) and Andrée Janyk of School District No. 48 (Howe Sound) did not seek re-election to the Board. Heather and Andrée have brought tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to their work. Their participation in discussions at the Board table has always been thoughtful and their input valuable.

Another long-serving member of our Board has also recently left us. Peter Owen, government-appointed Director from the Ministry of Education, had been on the BCPSEA Board since the inception of the association, and brought wise counsel to our deliberations.

On behalf of the BC Public School Employers' Association community, I extend sincere thanks to Heather, Andrée and Peter for a job well done.

I am also pleased to welcome the following new members to the Board: Trustee Directors Melanie Joy of School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake), and Michel Saab of School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap); and Government Director Scott MacDonald of the Ministry of Education.

▪ Exempt Compensation

During the opening plenary of the professional development sessions on Friday — Exempt Staff Compensation: In search of a data-driven dialogue — BCPSEA staff discussed principles of an effective compensation system, including compensation philosophy, development of a rational compensation structure, ongoing administration of the structure, and communication of compensation-related matters. The presentation also included discussion of compensation issues specific to executive positions. As most of you know, the BCPSEA sectoral exempt compensation management plan (BCPSEA Policy 95-06, *Compensation and Employment Standards for School District Employees Not Subject to a Collective Agreement*) contains salary ranges for the two executive positions of Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer, based on bands of district student full time equivalent enrolment. This approach to the structure of the executive salary ranges is rooted in 1999, when BCPSEA was required by the Public Sector Employers' Council to include ranges for these positions in their sectoral exempt compensation plan. Over time, the K-12 sector, like other parts of the private and public sectors, has come face-to-face with ever-increasing labour market pressures including demographic shifts, lack of qualified candidates, difficulty in attracting qualified candidates into leadership roles and/or remote and rural areas. Although size of the organization is a significant factor in determining

compensation levels for executive and exempt positions generally, it is not the only factor. BCPSEA will continue to work with districts to address issues such as geographic location, specific job duties/responsibilities, and issues specific and unique to the district that may inform the level of compensation. If you have any questions, please contact Deborah Stewart at 604.730.4506 or deborahs@bcpsea.bc.ca.

▪ **Service Review**

Wendy Herbert, Consulting Superintendent, Vice-Chair Alan Chell, and I had a great session with trustees at the AGM where we explored our services and how best to continue to meet our statutory mandate. We are looking at service excellence and areas of mandate fulfillment through our Client Services Survey (distributed November 6, 2007) and a series of sessions facilitated by Wendy with trustees, district staff, and sectoral partners. The Board of Directors is looking forward to a report of this review work by the end of the school year. We will use this information as the basis for continuous improvement and will be sure to share the results with you for further input.

Sustainable Workforce Initiative

At the AGM we provided an update of the sustainable workforce initiative, focusing on two elements of the eight-component plan — the Integrated Recruitment Portal and the Foundation Data: Employment. The Integrated Recruitment Portal is entering a critical development phase. This partnership between the Ministry of Education, BCPSEA, and school districts is being developed and will be initiated in April. The development, initial marketing, and start-up will be funded by the Ministry and BCPSEA. As of July 2008, it becomes a true partnership between the three parties. This is an exciting project that puts BC public education in a leadership position in the country. We will be able to advertise jobs, promote our communities, and grow the candidate pool for all positions in the sector. Dick Chambers, the Consulting Superintendent on this project, will be sending a letter early this week to districts that explains the next steps. If you have any questions, please contact either Ron Pound (604.730.4519, ronp@bcpsea.bc.ca) or Stephanie Tassin (604.730.4521, stephaniet@bcpsea.bc.ca).

Foundation Skills Assessment

As Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) testing begins this week, the BCTF campaign in opposition to the FSA enters its next phase. We have provided a series of @ *issue* bulletins as the BCTF tactics evolve. Our staff have remained in personal contact with districts, as the campaign and tactics are playing out differently in different areas of the province. The central thrust of the BCTF campaign seems to be to:

- distribute BCTF-sanctioned information to parents, supplemented by media advertising
- ensure that teachers do not participate in preparation, testing, or scoring
- encourage parents to withdraw their children from the FSA.

The goal appears to be to frustrate the preparation, delivery, and scoring of FSA and, where it proceeds, ensure that the results are compromised.

We are concerned that the politicization of a legitimate educational process is not appropriate, in some cases not legal, and potentially results in a negative view of the K-12 public education

system on the part of parents and the public. We recommend that districts attempt to work with their teachers through a healthy dialogue, based on accurate information, in a mature professional manner. The next days will be critical and we will continue to work with districts to ensure that testing is completed as legally prescribed.

Public Education Benefits Trust Conference

The Public Education Benefits Trust (PEBT) is hosting a province-wide conference February 28-29, 2008 at the Richmond Hotel and Convention Centre in Richmond, BC. Focusing on the PEBT CORE Long-Term Disability (LTD) program, the goal of the conference is to increase awareness and understanding of the CORE LTD program and to address current issues of importance to PEBT members, participating school districts, and local unions.

The PEBT CORE Long-Term Disability program has been in operation in 45 school districts since March 2003, with expansion to an additional 14 school districts effective November 2006. This joint program between districts, support staff, and support staff unions is now present in 59 of the 60 public school districts in the province.

If you have any questions about the conference logistics, please contact Dora Eng at 604.730.4512 or dorae@bcpsea.bc.ca.

Contact Us

Please feel free to contact me, or any other member of the Board of Directors or staff, with your questions, concerns, and comments. The Board and staff contact information can be found under Contact Us on the BCPSEA website (www.bcpsea.bc.ca).



Ron Christensen
Chair