

Report *from the Chair*

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

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By E-mail: 2 Pages

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)

I hope trustees have read the latest information about the Foundation Skills Assessment contained in BCPSEA @ *Issue* bulletin No. 2007-07 distributed last week (October 16, 2007).

As we noted, it appears that the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) is conducting yet another public relations campaign against the FSA. The reality is that whatever personal opinions trustees and staff may hold with respect to the FSA (or any other educational initiative for that matter), the FSA is an initiative of the Ministry of Education and as public school employers we are obliged to ensure that the FSA proceeds as intended without disruption to the workplace.

The @ *Issue* bulletin (also available on our website at www.bcpsea.bc.ca under Publications) outlines some of the strategies and approaches the BCTF is utilizing in its campaign. Of particular concern is inaccurate information that is being provided to parents, to the effect that parents can withdraw their children from the FSA by writing a letter to the school principal.

If a teacher or the BCTF is providing this type of inaccurate information in a public venue, including a parent advisory council meeting, it should be corrected as soon as possible. School boards should also advise teachers communicating on the FSA in any venue to remove any reference to exclusions from participation in FSA (this will include the template letter drafted by the BCTF for parents to sign), except for the exclusion of students which is permitted under the FSA procedure.

School boards can direct teachers that they are not to advise parents that principals can exclude students from taking FSA tests in the manner suggested by the BCTF, as this advice is not consistent with the Ministry procedures on the participation of students in the FSA tests.

Strategic Workforce Planning

The public education sector, like every other employment jurisdiction, is grappling with demographic shifts and the increasing challenge of attracting and retaining qualified personnel. In order to ensure that school boards will have the workforce in place to enable them to meet their strategic goals, BCPSEA has commenced work on an integrated strategic workforce planning initiative for the K-12 sector. To assist us in this worthwhile and complex endeavour, we have contracted with an individual familiar to many of you: Dick Chambers, former Superintendent in School District No. 57 (Prince George).

The central theme of the work of this initiative is answering the question: How do employers compete for talent in a competitive labour market? The answer will be found in a data-driven dialogue and state of the art resources to support getting the right people in the right places at the right time.

Hugh Finlayson and Georgina Johnson, along with Dick, have been traveling the province and have had the opportunity to meet with trustees and district staff on this initiative. It will also be a topic of discussion at our upcoming Labour Relations Symposium on October 29-30.

Labour Relations Symposium

Speaking of the Symposium, I hope to see many trustees at this informative event. As most of a school district's budget is spent on employee salaries and benefits, employment issues are of great importance to staff and trustees alike.

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.



Ron Christensen
Chair