

Report *from the Chair*

BRITISH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

No. 2007-02 September 21, 2007

By E-mail: 2 Pages

Happy new year! For those of us in the public school sector, September marks the beginning of a new year, with all of its accompanying excitement and challenges.

Executive Compensation

The new year began with progress on executive compensation. As you know, this matter has been a source of frustration in our sector for some time. We were pleased to be advised by the Public Sector Employers' Council that revised salary ranges for the positions of Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer, as contained in BCPSEA Policy 95-06, *Compensation and Employment Standards for School District Employees Not Subject to a Collective Agreement*, were finally approved by the Ministry of Finance.

I won't review the history of this issue here — *Exempt Staff Issues* bulletin No. 2007-01, dated September 6, available on the BCPSEA public website (www.bcpsea.bc.ca) outlines the recent chronology of events.

What I do think is important is to reiterate that approval of the revised salary ranges is movement in the right direction. As the ranges had not been increased since April 2000, with the exception of the 2% general wage adjustments under the *Public Education Negotiating Framework Compensation Plan – Exempt Staff* (PENFCP), the increases to the ranges are welcome.

There has been some discussion in government of a change to the regulatory regime for administration of compensation for the position of superintendent only. For the time being, however, the current process for administration of executive and exempt compensation remains in place. The salary ranges provide a framework; although the salary ranges have now increased, any increase to salary or any other element of the total compensation package for executive and exempt positions contemplated by a school board must be submitted to BCPSEA for review and approval prior to implementation.

BCPSEA will continue to move forward on this matter. We are currently gathering data through our survey of total compensation paid to exempt benchmark positions in BC, Alberta, and Ontario school districts. We are also gathering data from other relevant public sector employers. Analysis of the data, along with consideration of the impact of compensation increases provided to teachers and the general wage adjustments available to executive and exempt staff through July 1, 2010, will indicate whether the salary ranges remain relevant. If labour market competitiveness or compression issues remain, and if the current regulatory regime remains in place, BCPSEA will go forward with a further submission to government.

You will also have noted that the salary ranges for these two positions continue to be based on bands of school district full time equivalent enrolment and we have heard concerns from some individuals that this approach is flawed. There will likely never be one approach that will satisfy everyone's perspective; having said that, we will be reviewing the efficacy of the enrolment band approach as we move forward. The design of the executive total compensation package has been the subject of initial discussion, and will be explored further, by the Exempt Staff Compensation Working Group (ESCWG), which includes representation from the superintendents' association, the secretary-treasurers' association, the principals' and vice-principals' association, the PSEC Secretariat, a school district human resources practitioner, BCPSEA, and moderated by an external compensation consultant.

A new feature of the revised salary ranges for the Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer is provision for re-earnable annual performance-based incentive pay. As many of you know, this approach is fairly

widespread for executives in the private sector and is also a feature of crown corporations' executive compensation packages. It is new territory for school boards but I think many boards and executive staff have interest in exploring it. We will be distributing to school boards in the coming weeks the guidelines for development of these types of plans and will work with boards on development and implementation of district-specific plans. The plan must be approved by the Board of Education and BCPSEA, and prior to implementing any re-earnable payment under the plan, the board will have to make a submission to BCPSEA.

We are also currently in discussions with PSEC staff about the status of the labour market adjustment process under the PENFCP, and specifically the BCPSEA proposal for allocation of LMA funds for the last school year, 2006-2007. We will be reporting further to school boards as soon as we have more information on the process and timing. So stay tuned for more information on executive and exempt compensation as we move through the school year.

Support Staff Education and Adjustment Committee

The Support Staff Education and Adjustment Committee (SSEAC) continues to meet regularly to set criteria and determine the processes as to how best to allocate the \$10 million Skills Enhancement and Retraining Fund. In addition, the Committee is responsible for allocating trades adjustment monies for Trades Qualified as well as labour market adjustment monies to address recruitment and retention challenges in the sector. In the coming weeks, the Committee expects to be in a position to pay the first round of labour market adjustments and will be sending out applications for those districts interested in apprenticeship opportunities. The process related to the allocation of funds (\$3 million) under the Skills Enhancement and Opportunities is well underway.

Professional Development Programs

BCPSEA has a number of professional development programs scheduled so if you haven't done so already, please mark your calendars.

The annual Labour Relations Symposium will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver on October 29 and 30. We have online registration available for this event so please just go to our newly revised public website (www.bcpsea.bc.ca), which was launched on September 4, and follow the links. The program is also available on our website and it promises to be a very useful and informative couple of days.

Our Behavioural Interviewing workshops have been well received and we are offering additional workshops October through March. Information, including online registration, is now available on our public website.

To assist school boards in meeting their obligations under Article E.2 Harassment/Sexual Harassment of the Provincial Collective Agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF, there are training workshops scheduled for December. Again, please check out the information on our website.

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