
STATEMENT

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Ministry of Education

Education Minister Peter Fassbender's statement on the status of negotiations

VICTORIA – Education Minister Peter Fassbender has released the following statement on the status of negotiations between the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF):

“Over the past few days BCPSEA and the BCTF engaged in exploratory discussions with Justice Stephen Kelleher to determine whether the time was right for mediation.

“It was recognized that if the parties were in the same zone, mediation might help land a settlement. Unfortunately, through these exploratory discussions it became explicitly clear that the BCTF executive would not commit to tabling a set of demands that fall in the same affordability zone as the other public sector agreements reached to date.

“Justice Kelleher found that mediation is not indicated at this time.

“Our government has a fundamental commitment to balance the budget and we have an obligation to deal fairly with all 300,000 B.C. public sector workers.

“However, the BCTF continues to demand total compensation gains that are more than twice what other unions have settled for. On top of that, they are also pushing for hundreds of millions more each year in other contract demands.

“There is no process and no mediator that can bridge this gap at this time. To pretend otherwise only raises false expectations and serves to delay the tough decisions the BCTF executive needs to make to get to an affordable agreement.

“BCPSEA stands ready to negotiate anytime over the summer, with or without a mediator, whenever the BCTF is ready to commit to a fair and affordable settlement.

“Let's hope that the BCTF executive does not take all summer to realize that the best possible deal for teachers is one that lands squarely in the same affordable zone as the settlements government has already reached with other public sector unions.”

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