

## Meeting the Recruitment and Retention Challenge:

### An Integrated Approach and Strategy

Strategic workforce planning is a key element and essential tool for organizations looking to be more proactive about how they manage their workforce

School districts across British Columbia are experiencing ever-increasing workforce challenges as they attempt to attract, recruit and retain employees in a changing labour market. A lack of data makes it difficult for districts to adequately assess their current workforce or make forecasts about expected retirement and attrition rates. Finding teachers for difficult-to-fill positions in rural and remote districts is an ongoing issue. Increasing competition – from both other employment sectors and other jurisdictions – is putting additional pressure on the system. This trend is also evident in leadership positions and selected support staff positions.

Strategic workforce planning is a key element and essential tool for organizations looking to be more proactive about how they manage their workforce, and offers solutions to some of the key challenges experienced by the education sector. But on its own, it is not enough.

It is essential that the BC public education system adopt a strategic approach. BCPSEA advocates a model that integrates human resource planning at both the district and provincial levels, supported by tools and resources that are central to a coherent, coordinated strategy. This coordinated strategy will be a critical tool in building the human resource capacity of the BC public education system, thereby facilitating student achievement.

#### The need for a new approach to workforce planning

School districts are finding it difficult to attract and retain qualified employees. Demographic shifts suggest that the situation will only worsen. While many demographic projections indicate that a general teacher shortage will not be evident until approximately 2014, there are currently many difficult-to-fill positions in specific subject areas, such as French immersion, chemistry, physics, higher-level math, and technology. Many remote and rural districts are struggling to find educators to fill positions; an aging workforce and increasing waves of retirements are also expected to create large numbers of new positions that need to be filled. Changing student needs and parental expectations necessitate different employee skill sets.

These pressures are exacerbated by broader social and economic trends, including precipitously declining populations in many areas of the province, teaching opportunities in other provinces and countries, shifting attitudes toward the teaching profession as a career, the perceived lack of professional development opportunities within

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the education field, and more.

BC school districts are also competing with many other professions and jurisdictions to attract and retain qualified employees. This situation is not unique to education. An increasing number of organizations across numerous sectors are experiencing similar hiring difficulties. With so many sectors in the economy competing for talent, forward-thinking organizations are developing systems to ensure they have the workforce in place to enable them to meet their strategic goals.

### Strategic workforce planning: a proactive approach

Strategic workforce planning is the “analytic, forecasting, and planning process that connects and directs talent management activities to ensure an organization has the right people in the right places at the right time and at the right price to execute its business strategy.”<sup>1</sup>

Strategic workforce planning differs from traditional workforce planning in that the former is a proactive approach to identifying the skills an organization needs to achieve its goals. These skills are then brought into the organization through internal staff development and recruitment of new employees.

It is also a strategic approach. This means that workforce planning tools are aligned with an organization’s strategic plan and targeted to those segments of the workforce that have the greatest impact on the organization. With this information in hand, leaders can evaluate multiple “what-if” scenarios and make better-informed decisions.

Strategic workforce planning requires

employers to adopt a systems thinking approach. Systems thinking can be defined as “...a discipline for seeing wholes, recognizing patterns and interrelationships, and learning how to structure those interrelationships in more effective, efficient ways.”<sup>2</sup>

Traditional decision making is sequential, linear, and often done without considering the impact on other areas. Conversely, employers who make decisions based on a systems thinking approach have a more holistic understanding of a wide range of methods, tools and principles; they see them as interrelated forces and part of a common process. This approach requires an understanding of both the whole and the parts to ensure that solutions in one area do not adversely affect other system components. Employers who adopt a systems approach are more likely to avoid making short-term, reactive policy decisions that have long-term negative implications. Organizations that use a systems approach to address complex human resource issues have found it valuable, as “it produced an understanding...that in complex systems there are ‘ebbs and flows’...preparation for the expected short-term negative conditions made it possible to make insightful decisions to prepare for these conditions instead of being at the complete mercy of the system.”<sup>3</sup>

A systems approach requires communication and integration between departments within the school district and more broadly across the province. Workforce planning issues can no longer be viewed as the exclusive domain of the human resources department or the individual school district; rather, workforce

Workforce planning issues can no longer be viewed as the exclusive domain of the human resources department

1. The Conference Board of Canada. *Strategic Workforce Planning: Forecasting Human Capital Needs to Execute Business Strategy* (2006).

2. Senge, P., & C. Lannon-Kim. *The Systems Thinker Newsletter* 2.5. Cambridge, MA, 1991.

3. Senge, P., R. Ross, et al. *The Fifth Discipline Field Book – Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1994.

planning becomes an integral component of the larger organization and inseparable from other activities within the system.<sup>4</sup>

With strategic workforce planning, all leaders within an organization come together to discuss the organization's goals, the environment within which it operates, workforce trends, and other influencing factors. This systems-based understanding of the organization provides a solid foundation on which to make decisions about current and future workforce needs.

### Five major approaches to strategic workforce planning

How do organizations tackle strategic workforce planning? The Conference Board of Canada's research report, *Strategic Workforce Planning: Forecasting Human Capital Needs to Execute Business Strategy*, outlines five major approaches, summarized below.

#### **Traditional workforce planning: identifying the gap**

Traditional workforce planning is where it all starts. Here, you look at the gap between supply and demand and create a plan to address your staffing needs. Traditional workforce planning gives an organization a clear understanding of its workforce based on headcount projections and simple analyses. Using this knowledge, the organization can then make forecasts about its future staffing needs and create a plan for how to close the supply and demand gap.

#### **Workforce analytics: investigating relationships between key variables**

This approach moves beyond a traditional headcount analysis. While a traditional workforce planning approach looks at current data, workforce analytics examines both current and historical employee

data to identify important trends. This enables the employer to better understand the relationships among key variables – such as how soon employees retire after they are eligible to do so, or the critical periods for employee turnover.

An approach based on workforce analytics allows the employer to identify patterns about the critical factors affecting workforce dynamics and provides a more robust tool for forecasting future workforce requirements.

#### **Forecasting and scenario modeling: bringing in external data**

Organizations do not exist in isolation. As part of a broader social and economic system, an organization and its workforce are affected by changes in the political climate, demographic shifts, and the state of the economy. A forecasting and scenario modeling approach to workforce planning uses internal workforce data and external environmental data to create forecasts and “what-if” scenarios. This provides a more comprehensive picture of the many factors that influence a workforce and enables the organization's leaders to weigh alternative approaches to determine the optimum course of action.

#### **Strategic workforce planning**

This higher-level approach aligns an organization's strategic goals with workforce planning practices. The organization's leaders engage in a discussion of longer-term goals and strategies and explore how these will affect the workforce. This broad-based understanding of future workforce needs is then translated into operational plans using more precise numbers.

#### **Human capital planning**

This approach, sometimes referred to as segmentation, divides employees into segments based on their strategic impor-

4. Website: <http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:Afo2GntfzbEJ:www.calibresys.com/documents/openhouse/CoastGuardWhitepaper.pdf+systems+thinking+approach&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=9&gl=ca>

tance and how “mission critical” they are to the organization. Workforce planning strategies are then developed on a segment-by-segment basis. This approach has been used successfully by Corning Inc.; each year, the company’s management team completes a human capital planning process by:

- Determining the type of talent needed to complete critical business initiatives
- Determining the number of people required over the planning period
- Identifying and prioritizing talent gaps and assessing the best approach for closing those gaps
- Identifying how to align talent with the company’s business goals.

## Perspectives on employment and planning

Given the current human resource management environment, public and private sector organizations are making the strategic link between employment, workforce planning, and the goal of a sustainable qualified workforce. Hewlett-Packard, the BC Public Service, and the Alberta Teacher Supply and Demand Committee are illustrative examples of the link.

## Strategic workforce planning in practice: Hewlett-Packard

The five main approaches outlined above are very different from a reactive or ad hoc approach to workforce planning that addresses immediate needs only. The five main approaches are not mutually exclusive, and many organizations adapt tools from each approach to create an effective human resources strategy.

Technology firm Hewlett-Packard (HP) provides a good example of how one organization has successfully adopted

strategic workforce planning to improve overall performance. The HP process has six components:

- **Scan the environment:** The planning process begins by developing an understanding of the external environmental factors – in terms of the broader economy, global trends, and technology developments – that will affect the organization. These data are incorporated into the workforce plan.
- **Identifying business strategies and their workforce implications:** HP’s business leaders engage in a high-level discussion about their business strategies for the upcoming planning period. The goal of this discussion is to share information so that all members of the team understand both the business strategy of the company and the workforce implications of this strategy.
- **Assess the current workforce:** This stage of the process ties in to the traditional workforce planning approach. Human resources staff look at the location of the workforce, identify the most critical jobs, examine the composition of the workforce, and examine other important workforce variables.
- **Forecast future workforce needs:** With information in hand about the organization’s goals and the current workforce, HP staff forecast future staffing requirements.
- **Define HR strategies:** The team then defines the human resources strategies needed to close the gap between the current workforce and future workforce needs.
- **Monitor and report on the workforce plan:** The team conducts ongoing monitoring of the workforce, the external environment, and HP’s business goals as part of a feedback loop.

## The BC Public Service

The BC Public Service is facing familiar workforce pressures. Forty-five percent of managers and 35 percent of bargaining unit employees will retire by 2015. As well, the workforce does not currently reflect the demographic composition of BC: fewer than nine percent of its employees are visible minorities compared to 15 percent of the provincial labour force. The BC Public Service is also competing with

countless other organizations to attract top talent.

To proactively address these concerns, the BC Public Service developed a Corporate Human Resources Plan for the 2006-2009 planning period. The Plan consists of three goals:

- **Building Internal Capacity:** Investing in people by promoting mobility and providing a wide variety of work experiences, carefully planning and man-

## Survey reveals few employers are taking action to recruit and retain older workers

With the elimination of mandatory retirement in many Canadian jurisdictions<sup>5</sup> and the looming talent shortage, have employers begun planning for the recruitment and retention of “older” workers? The answer would appear to be no.

A study released in April by Manpower Inc. reveals that only 17% of Canadian employers have developed strategies to recruit older workers<sup>6</sup> and only 24% have retention strategies<sup>7</sup> in place to keep older workers participating in the workforce. Employers in Western Canada are slightly ahead of the national numbers, at 24% and 26% respectively.

The survey of more than 1,300 Canadian employers reveals that 67 per cent said that they do not have a strategy in place to recruit or retain older workers.

“Many employers are not considering the percentage of their workforce that is set to retire in the next five to 10 years and the potential loss of productivity and intellectual capital that will occur when those people leave their company,” said Lori Rogers, VP Operations, Manpower Canada.

“If employers don’t act soon, they will fail to win the war for talent, as older adults will be relied upon as one of the most important sources of talent for the future workforce.”

The global survey of 28,000 employers across 25 countries and territories, found that employers in Japan and Singapore are far ahead of their international counterparts with 83 and 53 per cent of employers surveyed, respectively, working proactively to retain their older employees. Conversely, in Italy and Spain far fewer employers, both at six percent, have such strategies in place. In 19 of the 25 countries where employers were surveyed, retention strategies were more prevalent than recruiting strategies for older workers. This appears to be due to the fact that many of these countries have government legislation or programs in place to encourage employers to retain older workers.

The extent to which employers have addressed the recruitment and retention of older workers to ease talent shortages depends upon a variety of complex factors. However, Manpower has found the major variables to be:

5. BC will eliminate mandatory retirement effective January 1, 2008.

6. Survey question: “A large percentage of the population is aging and will be eligible for retirement soon, which is expected to create talent shortages for employers over the next 10 years and beyond. In light of this challenge, has your organization developed a specific strategy to recruit older workers\* into your organization?” (\*By older workers, we mean those workers aged 50 years and above.)

7. Survey question: “Has your organization developed a strategy to retain older workers past retirement age?”

aging the use of external resources, creating more entry-level positions as a “greenhouse” for future capacity, and developing specific internal expertise in key streams.

- **Improving Competitiveness:** Establishing a higher profile for the public service in the external marketplace through marketing and recruitment efforts, opening all competitions to external candidates, modernizing

hiring practices, establishing competitive employment packages, and developing partnerships with post-secondary institutions and other employers.

- **Managing for Results:** Changing the work environment to achieve enhanced productivity, greater innovation, and improved workplace health and employee engagement.<sup>7</sup>

- The size of the national labour pool
- The demographic profile of the labour pool
- The degree to which talent shortages are being experienced at present, and
- Government legislation or programs that either promote or discourage labour force participation by older workers.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 12 million people a year will be exiting the global workforce between 2025-2030.

“Employers can no longer ignore the demographic forecasts and evidence of growing talent shortages,” said Rogers. “The risk of negative impact on productivity and the company knowledge base is so great that employers may not be able to avoid it unless they take proactive measures to engage the older workforce.”

A Manpower White Paper, “The New Agenda for an Older Workforce,” released at the same time as the survey results, explores the increasing reality of the global aging workforce, the resulting gaps in workforce supply, and the demand that this is creating.

The White Paper proposes strategies that companies can adopt to circumvent these talent challenges, recommendations on how employers can help older employees extend their careers should they choose to do so, and suggestions for the role that governments can play to help solve the older worker conundrum.

“The conundrum on the horizon is that the older employees who have the talent companies most need to retain are those who have the financial flexibility and employment options to retire or downshift to a more flexible work arrangement,” said Jeffrey A. Joerres, Chair and CEO of Manpower Inc.

“The best way to attract and retain older workers is to have jobs they want, and what they want is flexible, part-time jobs that interest them. It may be a few more years before employers determine how to effectively offer the part-time roles that mature adults would prefer,” he added.

#### *About the Manpower Recruiting and Retention of Older Workers Survey*

Manpower Inc. conducted a survey of 28,000 employers in 25 countries and territories regarding the recruiting and retention of older workers. The 25 countries and territories that participated in the survey are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the UK, and the US. The full Manpower Inc. report can be accessed at <http://www.manpower.com.au/documents/FINALTheNewAgendaforanOlderWorkforce.pdf>.

*“Employers can no longer ignore the demographic forecasts and evidence of growing talent shortages”*

## The Alberta Teacher Supply and Demand Committee

In 2001, the Teacher Supply and Demand Committee in Alberta issued a report on the supply and demand of educators in the province. An appendix to this document outlined a series of steps for improving teacher recruitment efforts that incorporate some of the strategic workforce planning tools outlined above. These steps include:<sup>8</sup>

- **Bringing together a planning team:** School authorities need to create teams composed of a wide range of stakeholders who will work together to evaluate the jurisdiction's needs, identify resources, collect data, and recommend a list of changes to policies and practices.
- **Forecasting future workforce needs:** Each team is encouraged to consider future workforce needs based on current data. How many teachers will be needed? In which grades or subject areas? Over the next year, five years, ten years? How many teachers are expected to retire and when? Is the area experiencing a growth or decline in student populations? Does the teaching force reflect the area's population (gender, visible minority, aboriginal, etc.)?
- **Assessing the state of the current workforce:** Each team evaluates whether traditional sources of teachers are sufficient to meet expected demands. How many students are graduating from teacher education programs? Will this be sufficient to meet forecasted demand – including high-need subject areas? What about other potential pools of teacher candidates such as mid-career adults who could become licensed teachers? Are there

programs in place to encourage high school students to consider a career in education?

- **Making a plan to address the gap:** Teams decide whether their focus will be on filling a small number of vacant positions or addressing medium-term goals and broader shortages. The team will also evaluate any succession plans that are in place to nurture talent within the organization.
- **Modifying current human resources practices as needed:** Teams evaluate the effectiveness of current practices for meeting short-, medium- and long-term goals. Practices could include updating marketing materials and launching new recruitment programs, putting systems in place to increase the number of applicants by a certain number for the upcoming year or establishing programs to target specific groups of potential new educators, such as high school students, paraprofessionals or mid-career individuals.

### How could BC school districts benefit from strategic workforce planning?

The approaches and examples discussed above are very different from the current approach to workforce planning prevalent in BC school districts. Within school districts, any workforce planning carried out is generally short-term in nature – usually for one year only – and is completed primarily for financial, budgeting and annual staffing purposes. Many factors contribute to this situation, including:

- limited data about the current workforce
- a lack of resources and/or expertise on

8. From Province of British Columbia, *Corporate Human Resources Plan: 2006/2007-2008/2009*.

9. Modified from Alberta Learning, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Future Teacher Supply and Demand in Alberta (2001)*.

the part of district human resources staff

- a belief that, while important, long-term planning is not imperative, given the historically sufficient numbers of employees.<sup>10</sup>

A new approach to workforce planning would benefit BC school districts in numerous ways. For example, school districts would be able to better identify and predict workforce trends – essential information for planning recruitment of new employees or the professional development and retraining of current employees. These are important capabilities in times of both shortage and surplus, since in both scenarios the goal of attracting and retaining the best employees remains the same.

A strategic approach to workforce planning would also help individual school districts create employee populations that more closely reflect the broader student demographics in their area. Visible minorities, members of First Nations, and males are all currently underrepresented in the public education sector.

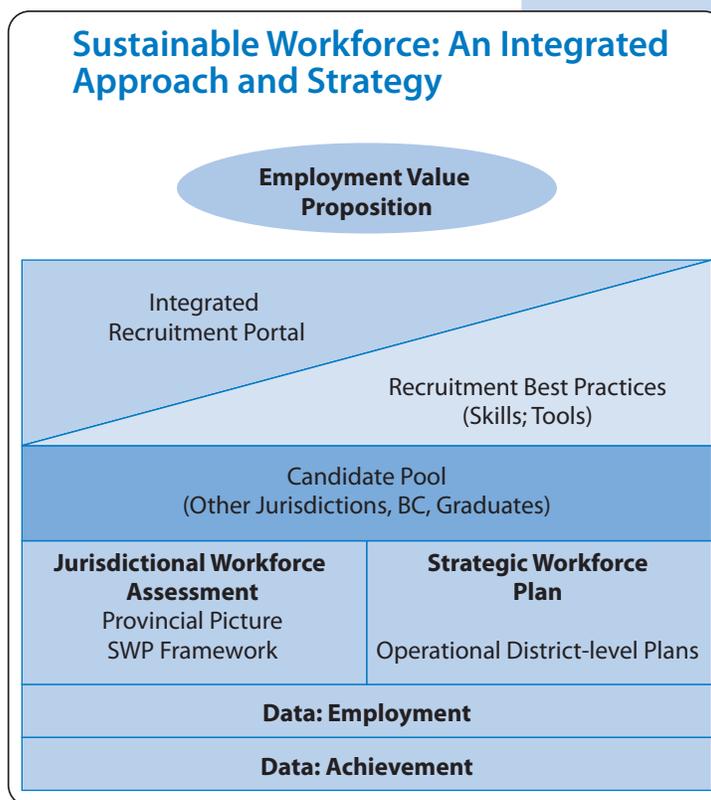
Strategic workforce planning is also a key tool in recruiting and retaining a high quality workforce. Numerous studies draw direct connections between student achievement and the capabilities of the teacher. Similarly, we need a strong base of talent in school and district leadership positions in order to realize our stated goals of student achievement and success.

It is worth keeping in mind that BC is competing with other provinces and international jurisdictions for the best employees. It is therefore critical that we adopt an integrated workforce planning process so that we can successfully recruit

and retain the most talented educators and those who support the provision of educational programs.

### A new way forward: facilitating student achievement by investing in school district human resources capacity

How might the BC public education sector begin to close the gap between our current short-term reactive approach to workforce planning and a more strategic systems-based approach? We advocate creating a new, integrated model for workforce planning for the K-12 public education sector based on the public and private sector best practices outlined



above. Our model combines a provincial-level work force assessment with district-level work force plans.

Both the provincial-level assessment and the district-level plans are grounded

10. This is the prevailing frame of reference concerning human resource planning. Frame of reference: the context, viewpoint, or set of presuppositions or evaluative criteria within which a person's perception and thinking seem always to occur, and which constrains selectively the course and outcomes of these activities.

in the statutory and regulatory framework that governs employment in the province generally and public education specifically. Further, because effective planning requires meaningful data, both are grounded in human resource and labour market data.

The proposed approach to workforce planning adopts a systems orientation: it calls for coordinating recruitment resources and establishing a human resource practitioners' network to connect practitioners with training, tools and resources that enhance recruitment and retention.

### Jurisdictional workforce assessment: the provincial picture

The Jurisdictional Workforce Assessment (JWA) provides a provincial picture of employment in the K-12 public education sector and integrates information about employment in individual districts with provincial policies, initiatives and trends that have employment implications. It also provides a Strategic Workforce Plan Framework that can be adapted by individual employers to develop district-specific Strategic Workforce Plans.

#### The six elements of the JWA include:

- **Environmental scan:** The JWA begins with understanding the external environmental factors that affect the K-12 public education sector generally and each school district specifically.

The environmental scan identifies the probability of future events and their potential effect on the workforce. It looks at sectoral recruitment efforts and circumstances that, if acted upon at the right moment, will be of value in recruiting and retaining employees. These data are then incorporated into the individual district Strategic Workforce Plans. The environmental scan also includes:

- provincial and district enrollment, as well as enrollment projections
- the nature of the student population
- public policy initiatives with employment implications
- political trends most likely to have a major impact on the workplace
- post secondary institutions and the nature and type of graduates
- developments in other public education jurisdictions and the potential implications for British Columbia.

- **Sectoral human resource strategies and their workforce implications:** The employers' association, school districts and the Ministry of Education review public policy and other sectoral initiatives that have employment implications for the upcoming planning period. The goal of this discussion is to share information concerning initiatives and the workforce implications of the initiatives. These may include:

- provincial initiatives to enhance leadership capacity
- shared services initiatives
- the pursuit and adoption of human resources best practices
- coordination of recruitment
- the pursuit of labour relations objectives
- an assessment of district human resources strategy commonalities.

This discussion and analysis should form a basis for exploring economies of scale when pursuing employment strategies and integrating resources and initiatives to best serve individual employers and the sector as a whole.

- **Current workforce assessment:** Examine demographic trends; identify positions that are difficult to fill; and assess, on a district-by-district basis, the implications of enrollment and student needs on the current workforce to provide a provincial employment

picture. An assessment of each district's workforce is used to determine provincial trends and planning implications for considering integrated provincial workforce strategies.

- **Workforce forecast:** Develop a provincial workforce forecast based on information about the provincial environment, employment implications of policies and initiatives, and the current workforce.
- **HR strategies – current workforce vs. forecast:** Attempt to differentiate between provincial strategies to address workforce pressures and individual district approaches. This is intended to integrate provincial initiatives with individual district initiatives.
- **Continuous plan assessment:** The provincial JWA and district-level Strategic Workforce Plans must be evaluated to ensure they achieved their goals. Have they been an effective planning tool for achieving the goal of a sustainable and qualified workforce?

### Strategic Workforce Plan: operational district-level plans

District-level Strategic Workforce Plans are based on the provincial JWA framework, although district-level plans will be more detailed and tailored to the individual district's circumstances and strategic goals. The elements of the Strategic Workforce Plan include the same elements as the provincial-level assessment:

- **Environmental scan:** The Strategic Workforce Plan begins with understanding the external environmental factors that will affect the district. The environmental scan includes the issues identified in the provincial JWA, sectoral human resource strategies and their workforce implications, and any other district-specific factors.

- **Current workforce assessment:** This stage of the process examines demographic trends, identifies positions that are difficult to fill and assesses the implications of enrollment and student needs on the current workforce.
- **Workforce forecast:** A district workforce forecast is developed based on the environmental scan and an assessment of the current workforce. This forms the basis for creation of a *HR Capacity Index*, which projects future employment needs within the context of forecasted students' needs as identified in the *Student Profile Index*. The Student Profile Index is based on student demographic and achievement data.
- **HR strategies – current workforce vs. forecast:** This stage of the process incorporates any provincial strategies to address workforce pressures with the district's approaches. It is intended to integrate provincial initiatives and individual district initiatives.
- **Continuous plan assessment:** As with the provincial JWA, the district Strategic Workforce Plan must be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure it continues to serve the purpose for which it was created.

This integrated model, combining a provincial-level assessment of the workforce with district-level strategic plans, offers a new approach to workforce planning in the BC public education sector. An integral component of this integrated model will be a strategic, coordinated approach to recruitment in the sector.

### Integrated recruitment portal

The competition for talent is intensifying in all sectors of the economy. Demographic shifts in the education sector have contributed to this intensification. The changing nature of the student

population, emerging educational priorities, and specific skill shortages necessitate the maximization of the labour pool. The Integrated Recruitment Portal is a tool for employers and those seeking employment in a competitive labour market to:

- broaden the pool of potential candidates
- make employment opportunities readily accessible
- provide a cost effective way for employers to seek new employees and for potential employees to seek employment.

The Integrated Recruitment Portal provides individuals with interest in employment in British Columbia with a centralized, user-friendly resource. The portal contains:

- access to information about the province in general and individual districts
- advertisements, job postings, etc.
- access to regulatory bodies that govern employment
- a searchable database of individuals interested in employment in a specific discipline or area.

The portal can be broadened to provide employer-specific resources that assist in administrative efficiency, including:

- applicant tracking
- automated e-mail/ mailing capacity
- interviewing templates and resources
- analytical capabilities to identify and evaluate trends.

By investing in the human resources capacity of our school districts – and by understanding that workforce planning is an integral component of the entire system – we will ensure the establishment of a sustainable qualified workforce better prepared to support the success of our students and meet current and future challenges in education.

## Competitive advantage

British Columbia competes in a national labour market for employees and, arguably, an international labour market for educators. What differentiates BC from other jurisdictions as a place to work? What differentiates individual employers from one another in the competition for talent? While the framework we have articulated coordinates resources and activities to broaden the labour pool and employment opportunities as a recruitment advantage, the true competitive advantage comes from the set of attributes that the labour market and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment in the province generally and with individual employers specifically. Referred to as the *Employment Value Proposition*,<sup>11</sup> this notion provides the foundation for a conceptual framework and consequent strategies to develop the set of attributes necessary to differentiate one employer from another as a recruitment advantage.

## Next steps

Strategic workforce planning is the theme of the BCPSEA Labour Relations Symposium, scheduled for October 29-30 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver. We will be discussing the concepts advanced in this article as well as such key questions as:

- What constitutes success?
- What are the deliverables and timelines?
- What resources are required?

For more information please contact Hugh Finlayson, CEO, at 604.730.4515 or [hughf@bcpssea.bc.ca](mailto:hughf@bcpssea.bc.ca) ♦—

11. *Attracting and Retaining Critical Talent Segments*, Corporate Executive Board, Washington, DC, 2006.

# Gap exists between worker, employer values

## Mismatch could cost firms top talent and productivity by Shannon Klie

If employers don't better align their values with those of their employees, they're likely to lose valuable talent, according to a University of Toronto psychiatry professor.

In a new survey by Montreal's Desjardins Financial Security, nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of 1,508 respondents said there is a gap between their employers' values and their own personal values. And that kind of value mismatch can be bad for employees' morale.

"It can lead to disenchantment," said David Goldbloom, adding that it also naturally leads to problems with retention.

Previous generations worked for the same employer for their entire careers, but that kind of loyalty doesn't exist anymore, said Goldbloom.

"Now people are much less likely to attach for the long haul in terms of employment situations," he said. "If retention is indeed a goal, employers need to do the kinds of things that both inspire loyalty and inspire a sense of appreciation. Respecting what it is that employees need and value is part of culture matching."

Many employees don't believe employers fully support their need for work-life balance. Only 25 per cent of respondents said their organization "walks the talk" when it comes to work-life balance and only 29 per cent said

they feel their employer truly cares about work-life balance.

For employees who feel like they can't leave the job, this lack of confidence in their employer will reduce their productivity and engagement.

"People may feel trapped in their situation or resentful in their situation," said Goldbloom.

A recent report from employee assistance provider Shepell-fgi found a lack of engagement can cost employers up to \$1.8 million for every 1,000 employees. Once employers factor in the costs of hiring and training new employees to replace the ones who are fed up with the workplace culture, the values misalignment becomes very expensive, said Glen Thompson, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

For employees who don't leave, but who still feel as if their values aren't respected, this can lead to feelings of stress, which can also be costly for the employer, said Thompson.

"Repetitive and continuous stress sometimes precipitates depression and anxiety disorders and other mental health disorders," he said.

Many employees are cynical about the whole concept of work-life balance, with only 27 per cent of respondents convinced it is attainable.

"Some of the skepticism has been

*"If retention is indeed a goal, employers need to do the kinds of things that both inspire loyalty and inspire a sense of appreciation"*

because of the greater encroachment of work on life outside of work," said Goldbloom.

While technology has blurred the boundaries between work and home, there are steps employers can take to make sure the boundaries are clear.

"Every BlackBerry manufactured has an off button," said Goldbloom. "It's just a matter of knowing when to use it."

One pharmaceutical company shuts down its server so e-mails won't be sent at night, said Goldbloom. While employees can still compose e-mails after work, the recipients won't receive them until the next morning.

"That sent a clear statement that there's a time not to be working," said Goldbloom.

But moving from an organizational culture that simply pays lip service to work-life balance to one that fully embraces it takes time, said Thompson.

"This is a slow, methodical process to make these changes," he said.

One catalyst in the work-life balance movement has been the increasing numbers of women in the workforce and in the higher ranks, said Thompson. Women are traditionally more focused on family responsibilities than men and have been pushing employers for more workplace practices that support their family life, he said.

Giving employees flexibility isn't about giving them time off work, it's about allowing them to choose when it's best for them to do the work, said Thompson.

"The best employees are more likely to be working too long hours than too short," he said. By allowing them flexibility, employers will actually "get more work out of their workers."

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## Changes...

We are pleased to advise that **Mark Grabas** joined the BCPSEA team on October 22 as the Managing Consultant, Workplace Health, Safety and Wellness. Mark brings a wealth of experience from his progression of roles at WorkSafeBC. Mark can be contacted at 604.730.4509 or [markg@bcpssea.bc.ca](mailto:markg@bcpssea.bc.ca).

**Sue Ferguson** will join us on December 3 as a Senior Labour Relations Consultant. Sue will be making the move from Vancouver Island, where she is currently Manager of Human Resources for the Greater Victoria school district. Sue's contact information and labour relations liaison responsibilities will be communicated to districts in November.

We also welcome three new representatives to the BCPSEA Board of Directors: **Chris Trumpy**, Deputy Minister of Finance and CEO, PSEC Secretariat; **Doug Stewart**, Acting ADM, Ministry of Education; and **George Ambeault**, Secretary Treasurer, School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria). Doug replaces Keith Miller as a government representative, and George replaces Larry Paul, of School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) as the Secretary Treasurer Representative. We extend our sincere thanks to Keith and Larry for their service to the Board.

# A recipe for labour peace

Combine a highly trusted senior HR person, a willingness to work with unions and an absence of jargon

by Uyen Vu

Whenever industrial relations make the news in Canada, chances are it's a bad news story. With more than 30 years' experience as an industrial relations professor and 20 years' experience as an arbitrator, Allen Ponak knows there's more to it out there. So, along with filmmaker Bert Painter, he set out to find the untold stories. The result is the documentary *Beyond Collision: High Integrity Labour Relations*, which features stories of union-management collaboration at four workplaces: NorskeCanada (now Catalyst Paper), Calgary Laboratory Services, Canadian Pacific Railway and the Department of National Defence. In 2006, the documentary won a Silver Screen award at the International Film and Video Festival in Los Angeles.

Uyen Vu, *Canadian HR Reporter's* news editor, caught up with Ponak, now a full-time arbitrator and professor emeritus of industrial relations at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business, to discuss lessons he learned while making the film.

**CHRR:** *Why did you set out to do this documentary?*

**Ponak:** Partly because we were approached by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (a program run by Human Resources and Social Development Canada), who knew of my work in general. They felt there was a real absence of any kind of film that was Canadian, and that highlighted positive stories about labour relations in Canada.

There was the feeling that what gets the publicity in the country is the bad news story: the walkout by the NHL players, a difficult strike in a manufacturing plant where there's confrontation at the picket line, a strike by the Toronto transit workers that even if it lasts only a few hours garners publicity. And yet, anybody in the field will know that there are a lot of awfully good success stories out there, where unions and employers have worked really hard to establish very good relationships that are good for the company, good for the employees and good for the union in that they serve their membership well.

**CHRR:** *How did you find the case studies?*

**Ponak:** I hired a PhD student and basically said, "Go look in newspapers, various newsletters, conferences, academic journals, books." With an advisory committee, we winnowed down the list to about a dozen. We then rank-ordered them, looking for different industries, different gender mix, different ethnic mixes, different unions, different parts of the country. Then I picked up the phone and started calling. And we never got past number four. That was a really interesting finding. Don't forget that we had to get co-operation from both the union and management. The people we contacted were delighted to participate. Over and over we heard things like, "Somebody notices us. We've been doing these things, doing them quietly. We haven't solicited publicity and we're really pleased

*"There was the feeling that what gets the publicity in the country is the bad news story..."*

*“...the people who brought about the changes tended to be very experienced people. And this is true of both sides, both the union and the company. It wasn't newbies.”*

that someone looked in from the outside, liked what they saw and wants to do a story about us.”

**CHRR:** *What's your sense of how common these stories are?*

**Ponak:** We found quite a few. I don't know if I would call them common. We were looking over 10 years of media. We did come up with a good list, some of them stronger than others. But there is a lot more going on out there quietly, below the radar that you don't really hear about. And in the end we had really compelling stories of successful labour relations from which lessons can be drawn and which model the way things can be done. And it's good for everyone. It's not that by being nice to the union, an organization somehow loses productivity or lets inefficiency run rampant or lets wages go out of control. These are organizations that act in their own self-interest, but they do it in a way that builds a strong relationship so that the interests of everybody – the unions, the employees, the shareholders – all are being well-served.

**CHRR:** *Let's talk about the lessons that emerged in the four stories.*

**Ponak:** You're not going to have good relationships unless the company accepts the union as legitimate. If the CEO goes to bed at night fantasizing about having a union-free environment, it's not going to work. The senior people at the organization have to be committed to working with a union, not try to get rid of their union, not try to go around the union, but accept that the union is legitimate and has a right to be there, which I think is appropriate if that's what the workers want in a modern, democratic society.

The second we observed at each of these organizations is the senior HR or industrial relations person had a huge amount of authority and credibility with the CEO or board of directors. They were

in a position to make things happen or change things as needed. For example, at the Calgary Laboratory Services: A very messy start up, a public-private partnership in a heavily unionized industry, multiple collective agreements – talk about a recipe for potential disaster. One of the things we noticed was that, after the CEO, the second person hired was a vice-president of HR. That sent an important signal that they were serious about promoting high-integrity industrial relations practices.

**CHRR:** *They were also very senior, experienced people.*

**Ponak:** That was one of the other things we noticed was the people who brought about the changes tended to be very experienced people. And this is true of both sides, both the union and the company. It wasn't newbies. I'm not trying to denigrate someone coming out with an MBA and fabulous ideas about changing labour relations. You're going to get people who do that and can do that, but our experience with the most successful development of high quality labour relations was with people with a lot of experience and a lot of credibility.

**CHRR:** *Apart from the credibility and the seniority of the leaders, tell me about the role of the kind of rapport that had to be in place all through the organization.*

**Ponak:** That's certainly one of the issues – how do you infuse that throughout the organization? We asked that and one of the things we heard, over and over again, is once they had committed to high-integrity labour relations in their hires and in their training, they wanted to be sure the people they brought in shared that commitment. So they were very careful in their hiring. In some cases, they had to let go of people they had hired. A few cases where a person in the HR department or in operations didn't share the

commitment – that person didn't last. As the CEO of Norske said, "Sometimes it was easier to change people than to change people." I love that line.

**CHRR:** *And in order to change people before you change them, there would need to be a lot of training and communication. How much resources and investment did it take for the culture to filter?*

**Ponak:** A lot of these organizations are committed to ongoing training. There was some money devoted to training in the short-line railroad because they were going into a participative style of running the place. There was a commitment at the Department of National Defence to a mediation system. As part of that mediation system, they basically set aside a budget for conflict resolution generally, rather than have people when they have a conflict be in front of a mediator. They spent a lot of time offering programs on conflict management and coaching. That was an expensive program, a five-year program costing several million dollars a year.

**CHRR:** *Some of the people talked about a level of suspicion they get from their members – or from their managers if they're the HR leader – that they're in the other party's pocket. To what extent is that a real fear? When you look at the landscape of such collaborative projects, do a lot end up with one side rolling over for the other?*

**Ponak:** In none of these stories was that the case. I can't emphasize strongly enough that each side was acting in their self-interest. They weren't trying to be altruistic. They weren't after peace at any cost. They were simply acting in a way that while they were pursuing their self-interest, they could do it constructively with the union or the employer. That's why the credibility of the people involved on both

sides was so crucial. I think it's easier for people who already have established their bona fides in their own organizations to do that and take the risk. Because you're right, particularly for the union leadership, there's always the accusation: "Well you gave in. You cooperated. You could have gotten more."

At Powell River, the fact these were people who led the strike in 1997 meant that everybody knew these people weren't pushovers. The executive team at Catalyst – they took a huge amount of heat from the rest of the industry. They were prepared to take the heat. I remember CEO Russ Porter, in one of the comments that didn't make the film, said one of the things that made him try to change the way things were being done was he started out in the mill town. He grew up in that community. His kids grew up in that community. The kids played soccer together. They went to PTA meetings together. He said, "These people weren't my enemy. How have we created a labour relations system that somehow turned them into my enemy?"

That was a motivation for change. You've got to find a better way of doing it. They were willing to take risks. They had credibility and they were able to take some of their doubters along with them.

**CHRR:** *You also observed an absence of jargon in these case studies.*

**Ponak:** I just saw so little of the flavour-of-the-month club or "Here's the latest management guru. We'll invite him in. He'll sprinkle some fairy dust and all the problems will be solved." That was a really nice thing. They, by and large, did it on their own.

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# Bargaining redux

...discussions at the bargaining table would be more constructive if the parties have access to and agree to utilize credible and accepted negotiation data

The first negotiated provincial framework agreement between BCPSEA and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) has now been in place for over a year. The framework agreement was signed within a tumultuous year which included ten days of illegal job action by the BCTF, legislation, and a bargaining structure review by Vince Ready. With all this as the backdrop, a number of questions come to mind: Are we making progress in our sector? Why are there still so many disputes with the BCTF? Where will we be in 2011 as the parties enter into the next round of collective bargaining?

In January 2006, on the heels of the October 2005 illegal job action by the BCTF and in anticipation of the next round of bargaining between the parties which would have to conclude no later than June 30, 2006 if public school teachers were to be eligible to receive the one-time signing incentive established by the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Ready noted that, "It is well known that the bargaining relationship between BCPSEA and the BCTF is dysfunctional. That fact is one of the few grounds of agreement between the parties (although they have very different explanations for it)."

Despite that observation, the parties were able to conclude a negotiated collective agreement on June 30, 2006. Some would argue that this achievement constitutes success. A negotiated agreement sets a foundation for an employer or group of employers and a union to work together to implement and administer the agreed-upon language. Has this agreement really changed anything? What have been the implications for day to day provincial labour relations?

In *A Behavioural Theory of Labour*

*Negotiation*, authors Richard Walton and Robert McKersie consider the interplay between collective bargaining and collective agreement administration. They explain that "existing attitudes have their influence on many aspects of the collective bargaining relationship but perhaps especially on contract administration. The parties negotiate a contract periodically but they must deal with each other almost continuously in grievance handling under the agreement and disputes not covered by the contract."

The 2006-2011 framework agreement contains provincial provisions covering a number of issues including compensation, pay periods, mileage, personal property loss, extended health, seniority, elementary preparation time, middle schools, alternate school calendars, portability, compassionate care leave, employment equity (aboriginal teachers), mid-contract modification updating, supply and demand and a number of working committees. Disputes have arisen around the one-time incentive and eligibility for the incentive, as well as seniority, sick leave and preparation time. Is the large number of implementation disputes reflective of the dysfunctional relationship described by Ready? Perhaps – but the reasons could also be much simpler.

In the case of the current framework agreement, although a negotiated agreement was achieved, the extent of actual negotiations resulting in signed language was limited. The reality of the 2006 round of bargaining was that as the June 30th deadline closed in, the parties signed off on language to meet the deadline but did not actually canvass the issues associated with the provisions in a way that could have minimized the potential for

disputes. This lack of understanding and discussion is now proving costly for both parties. On the issues that have arisen to date, the problems have primarily been a lack of mutual understanding that then has needed to be resolved away from the control of the parties and in the hands of a third party.

Now that many of the implementation issues have been resolved, have we learned anything as we move towards 2011? First, it is clear that how the parties bargain influences the frequency and nature of disputes during the implementation phase. Further, discussions at the bargaining table would be more constructive if the parties have access to and agree to utilize credible and accepted negotiation data. When considering the amount of time leading up to the days spent at the bargaining table, joint planning and preparation are also imperative. In addition, when considering the emerging issues in

our sector such as declining enrolment, shifting demographics, potential challenges in supply and demand, and the rising cost of benefits, the parties will only achieve something if they are able to map out and address complex issues collaboratively prior to the exchange of proposals.

It has already been a year and the next round of bargaining in 2011 will soon be upon us. To move the sector forward in labour relations, discussions between the parties need to be continuous and constructive. A plan as to how to tackle the most significant issues is key to a successful round and, ultimately, greater progress and success. It's also important to be realistic. As was observed by Don Wright and reiterated by Vince Ready, collective bargaining between the parties will not significantly improve *"unless there is an attitudinal and behavioural change on both sides."* ♦—

## Teacher Qualification Service now assigning Category 5+

On May 22, 2007, the Teacher Qualification Service (TQS) began accepting, processing and approving applications for the new provincial Category 5+.

In late March 2007, BCPSEA and the BCTF approached the TQS Board requesting that TQS accept the role of administering Category 5+ provincially. TQS subsequently accepted this role, after tripartite discussions between BCPSEA, the BCTF, and TQS.

Established in 1969, TQS (a non-profit society funded jointly by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation and the British Columbia

School Trustees Association) is responsible for evaluating BC public school teachers' professional and academic qualifications and assigning categories based on these qualifications. These categories were historically 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Prior to TQS assigning Category 5+, the category was assigned by approximately half of the school districts in British Columbia. As part of the Ready Recommendations to harmonize teacher salary grids across the province, BCPSEA and the BCTF agreed to implement Category 5+ in the remaining school districts. The parties subse-

quently reached agreement on the educational qualifications required for Category 5+, to be applied to all teachers in all 60 school districts in the province.

Category 5+ recognizes teachers' educational qualifications over and above their Category 5 qualifications. Category 5 is generally a four-year undergraduate degree and a program of professional teacher preparation. Category 5+ is obtained by a teacher completing an additional 30 credits of university studies, commonly by completing a post undergraduate diploma.

BCPSEA appreciates TQS accepting the role of administering Category 5+ and looks forward to continuing this strong working relationship in the future.

# Support Staff Education Adjustment Committee

As a result of the framework letter of understanding (FLOU) that was signed off on May 23, 2006, the Support Staff Education and Adjustment Committee (SSEAC) was formed. The purpose of this joint union/management committee is to address labour market concerns including labour market compensation, skills enhancements for support staff employees and apprenticeship opportunities.

The first area addressed through collective bargaining was the labour market for qualified trades employees. The committee is to be allocated \$5.796 million over four years to provide a trades adjustment and apprentice sponsor adjustment to employees in positions that required a trades qualification (TQ). This process led to a 60 cent increase in each of the first three years and a 30 cent increase in the last year of the agreement (\$2.10/4years).

The second area addressed was that of general labour market concerns. The committee is to be provided with \$3.321 million over the final three years of the agreement commencing July 1, 2007 to address this issue. This money is available to school districts and locals who jointly apply to the SSEAC. Applications are based on meeting the criteria set out in the FLOU. This process is in addition to the self funded labour market increases which were also established in the framework agreement. School districts will also be able to make labour market applications in each of the subsequent years of the collective agreement should the need arise.

Upon completing the labour market adjustment application process, the SSEAC will turn its attention to the apprenticeship and skills enhancement funds. \$3 million has been set aside for each of these funds to address skills shortages and apprenticeship opportunities. Applications for skills enhancements have been received from some school districts and locals and are in the process of being reviewed. A survey was completed on apprenticeship programs and that work is currently also under review.

A further \$4 million was set aside for workforce adjustment issues. At this time there is no application for this funding. In the event it is not required for workforce concerns the money will be rolled into the skills enhancement and apprenticeship areas.

The final component of the SSEAC is a review of Education/Teaching Assistant hours of work and appropriate pay for hours worked. A sub committee of two employer and two employee representatives has been struck to review this issue.

The SSEAC has now been operating for approximately one year. A great deal has already been accomplished by the committee with many more issues to be addressed. This committee should serve to facilitate dialogue between BCPSEA, school districts and support staff unions as the parties move closer to bargaining in 2010. The hope is that many issues will be addressed or at least canvassed prior to formal bargaining, so that the next round can be as productive as possible for both parties. ◆—

This committee should serve to facilitate dialogue between BCPSEA, school districts and support staff unions as the parties move closer to bargaining in 2010

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# Labour Dispute:

## Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and BC Teachers' Federation, 2007

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), the third largest trade union in British Columbia, employs 41 professional staff including accountants, lawyers, labour relations consultants, and communication specialists represented by Local 464 of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP). The collective agreement between the BCTF and the CEP expired December 31, 2006. Negotiations commenced October 31, 2006.

On March 6, 2007 the CEP served strike notice on the BCTF. That was followed on March 15 by an application to the Labour Relations Board (LRB) for a mediator to assist in the achievement of a collective agreement between the two parties.<sup>12</sup> Grant MacArthur was appointed and commenced mediation on March 27, 2007 but subsequently booked out as mediator on March 29.

On April 4, the BCTF rescinded<sup>13</sup> a letter previously provided to CEP members advising of a reduction to extended health benefits. However, on April 17, "Susan Lambert, speaking on behalf of the BCTF employer bargaining team, said 'our mandate is a concession...There will not be an equivalent trade off, that would be contrary to our mandate.'"<sup>14</sup>

On April 19 the CEP announced that if a negotiated settlement was not reached by April 26, 2007 they would commence strike action.

An agreement was not concluded by the timeline set by the CEP and they proceeded to characterize the impasse as follows:

"After failing to reach an agreement in late-night contract talks...the [CEP said it had] no option but to strike because of proposed 'contract-stripping' and concession demands"<sup>15</sup> by the BCTF. When talks broke down, employer representatives stated, "We have addressed 15 of your issues; they [have] been signed off. You have not addressed our issues. When you're prepared to talk about our two issues at the table, we will come back."<sup>16</sup>

The CEP members walked off the job at 6:00 am on April 26, 2007. This was the second time since 2005 that the BCTF found itself involved in strike action. In their capacity as the trade union representing the province's public school teachers, the BCTF led an illegal strike in October 2005 which closed schools for ten days. This provincial dispute was ultimately resolved with the assistance of mediator/arbitrator Vince Ready.

The 2007 staff strike not only affected

12. CEP News Archives <<http://www.cep464.ca/cep464/newsarchive/newsarchive1.htm>>

13. Ibid

14. Ibid

15. Ibid

16. Broadcast News, 4:53 am, April 26, 2007.

the BCTF Vancouver office but also affected regularly scheduled BCTF activities such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM), set for May 4-6. The AGM had already been postponed once in March, prompting the BCTF to seek an injunction from the LRB to prevent picketing of the meeting, stating the union “should not be allowed to disrupt its meeting at a downtown Vancouver hotel.”<sup>17</sup>

The BCTF subsequently withdrew its application to the LRB and cancelled the AGM, in the process postponing two important items on the agenda: election of a new president and approval of a new budget which, according to the BCTF constitution, must be done by June 30.

CEP members ceased picketing on May 1 in what they characterized as a show of good faith. Only a few hours later, the BCTF proceeded to lock out its unionized staff. On May 5 and May 16 the CEP repeated its original proposal of April 28 to seek binding mediation/arbitration as a mechanism to resolve the dispute. The BCTF continued to reject this proposal.

### The BCTF position

The BCTF articulated the pursuit of their bargaining agenda as “a need to address costs, and the rising...costs of benefits.”<sup>18</sup> It proposed that any evening work no longer be applicable for overtime, and that the retirement bonus – \$50,000 after ten years of service – remain for current employees but not for future employees. The BCTF professional staff earn an average of \$97,000 a year; 34 of those staff are former teachers.<sup>19</sup>

### The CEP Position

The CEP sought a nine percent wage increase. They also took the position that projected benefit costs were actually declining and that the BCTF should not unilaterally change the overtime letter that was jointly agreed to by the parties. Anita Chapman, president of CEP Local 464, stated:

“[The BCTF] really did lead the fight to protect their own collective agreement against contract stripping, against concessions....We helped them do that. That’s what [our] jobs are. So we find it very hypocritical that they would then do the same thing to their employees.”<sup>20</sup>

### An Agreement is Reached

Overnight on June 1, 2007, after more than a month long strike, the two parties reached an agreement. CEP members “voted 22 to 13 in favour of accepting [the] three-year contract.”<sup>21</sup> Details of the agreement include:<sup>22</sup>

- **Term of agreement**

Three years

(January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2009)

- **Salary Schedule**

Recast at December 31, 2006 to reflect rollover of telephone and internet allowances (taxable benefits) into salary.

January 1, 2007 – 2.0% increase

January 1, 2008 – 2.0% increase

January 1, 2009 – 2.0% increase

- **Signing bonus of \$3,500.**

- **Retirement Gratuity and Retirement Benefits**

✦ Employees on staff prior to January 31, 2007 and current retirees as at

17. “BCTF seeks no-picketing injunction.” *Vancouver Sun*. <[www.Canada.com](http://www.Canada.com)> May 1, 2007.

18. Jinny Sims, CBC Radio, 12:32 pm, April 27 2007.

19. CNW Group, April 27, 2007. <[www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/April 2007/26/c2034.html?view=print](http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/April%2007/26/c2034.html?view=print)>

20. “BCTF’s CEP staff on picket lines.” A-Channel, 5:00 pm, April 26, 2007.

21. *CEP Local 464 News*, June 1, 2007. <[www.cep464.ca](http://www.cep464.ca)>

22. BCTF/CEP Settlement, June 4, 2007, Prince Rupert Teachers’ Union website, <<http://prdu.com/?cat=2>>

January 31, 2007 are red-circled for existing retirement gratuity and retirement benefits.

- ✦ Employees hired after January 31, 2007 upon retirement from the Federation shall receive a retirement gratuity equal to 1.5% of annual salary for each year of service with the Federation.
- ✦ Employees hired after January 31, 2007 may access the retirement health benefits available under Article 22 by paying 100% of the premiums.
- ✦ Employees hired after January 31, 2007 will be eligible for the Great West Life Group Insurance Plan on a shared basis: 50% employer paid, 50% employee paid.
- ✦ New article – Early Retirement Incentive Plan: Continuing and term employees on staff prior to January 31, 2007, with four or more years service with the Federation, who retire from the Federation with less than 10 years of service shall receive an ERIP payment equal to 3.0% per year of service with the Federation, and may access the benefits available under Article 22 by paying 100% of the premiums.
- **Right to Union Representation**
  - ✦ New clause added: “If an employee requests union representation at a meeting with the Federation such a request will not be denied.” Existing discipline-related meetings language amended to include, “Such notice will be provided to the Union and the employee in writing with the particulars prior to any meeting being held.”
- **Leave for Union Business**
  - ✦ Added union leave days for attendance at CEP Provincial Council (equivalent to BCTF Representative Assembly).
- ✦ “For predictable events, the union shall provide the employer with five (5) days notice.”
- **Improvements for Term Appointments**
  - ✦ Subject to prior approval one (1) return trip and the cost of overnight lodging to be paid for the purposes of interviews, returning to a position, visiting schools or other work sites associated with return to district.
  - ✦ Payment of the costs of cancellation, transfer, or installation fees for services and utilities involved in the relocation.
  - ✦ When a term employee retires from the teaching profession when their term ends, payment of moving and transportation costs to that term retiree’s original location, or to another location with the cost not to exceed a move back to the original location.
  - ✦ New clause: “All appointees shall receive written information pertaining to employment benefits, moving expenses, and other applicable information attached to their appointment letter.”
- **Holidays and Vacations**
  - ✦ To be scheduled by mutual agreement.
  - ✦ New clause added: “Where the Federation withdraws agreement to an employee’s vacation, the Federation shall compensate the employee for reasonable expenses incurred by the employee that are related to the cancellation.” ◆—

# StrongStart Centres

Earlier this year, the provincial government opened StrongStart Centres, which are intended to offer play-based early learning programs facilitated by qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECE). This is an expanded mandate for school districts. Districts across the province have established new positions to provide these expanded services. A number of districts have now been approached by CUPE representatives to discuss the appropriateness of inclusion of these positions into the CUPE bargaining unit.

Automatic inclusion of these positions into the CUPE bargaining unit will prove problematic for the StrongStart Centres, as some of the current provisions found

in CUPE/school district agreements may not be consistent with the manner in which the programs are intended to operate. For example, most agreements establish a four-hour minimum for workers; some call for as much as a seven-hour consecutive work day. This is not an issue of whether the positions are in the union or not – the issue is finding the best way to deliver the StrongStart program and meeting those needs. It is not best practice to just roll this new mandate into the K-12 collective agreements and force the StrongStart program to fit into the current terms and conditions.

Districts should contact their BCPSEA labour relations liaison for further discussion. ◆—

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# Executive Salary Ranges Approved

The new school year began on a positive note with progress on executive compensation. BCPSEA was pleased to be advised by the Public Sector Employers' Council in early September 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. (For more background, please see the *Exempt Staff Issues* bulletins on the BCPSEA public website at [www.bcpsea.bc.ca](http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca)).

Lack of movement on the salary ranges had been a source of frustration in the K-12 public school sector for some time, given that 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).

There had 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.

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.

The new school year began on a positive note with progress on executive compensation

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 we believe many boards and executive staff have interest in exploring it. BCPSEA 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.

## Exempt Staff Total Compensation Survey

In June BCPSEA distributed to Secretary Treasurers the triennial survey of total compensation paid to exempt benchmark positions in the K-12 public education sector, with a requested timeline for completion of August 31, 2007.

Current and relevant data are the foundation of any compensation administration system that may be in place from time to time. While we continue to be governed by the current statutory framework for administration of exempt staff compensation (the PENFCP and Policy 95-06), the data serve to assist districts in benchmarking the elements of total compensation for executive and exempt staff and support submissions that are brought forward to the employers' association.

The full report of the survey is anticipated to be distributed to districts in March 2008.

The question for many boards now is *where to from here?* What do we do with respect to the matter of compensation for our executive positions?

The answer is largely dependent on the currency of the district's exempt staff compensation structure. Under the

current system of exempt compensation administration, districts wishing to adjust compensation for any exempt position, including Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer, are required to make a submission to BCPSEA. Many districts have worked with BCPSEA in the recent past to review their exempt compensation structures to ensure that the structure is rational, defensible and competitive with the compensation offered by other relevant employers. In several cases, however, BCPSEA was unable to consider salary adjustments for the positions of Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer due to the constraints of the previous salary ranges. If this is the case in your district, the board may wish to review the structure in place for those two positions and determine whether to re-submit a proposal to BCPSEA. If the district has not reviewed its broad exempt staff compensation structure for some time, then the board may wish to conduct a review of compensation for all exempt positions prior to submitting a proposal to BCPSEA.

In any event, the board should be guided by the following considerations when reviewing compensation for executive and exempt positions:

1. For executive positions, the district will be working with the salary ranges for the positions of Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer as set out in *Exempt Staff Issues* bulletin No. 2007-02 dated September 6, 2007.
2. The district's submission should cover the proposed change(s) and the rationale for the proposed change(s).
3. Because the executive salary ranges are based on a set of factors, primarily student enrollment, it is important to connect the rationale to the placement within the range. For example,

*continued on page 30*

# An Update on the Certificate of Recognition Program

At the BCPSEA AGM last January, WorkSafeBC presented an overview on the Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program. This presentation was an update to a presentation done by WorkSafeBC personnel a year earlier. Whereas the presentation the year earlier was able only to discuss concepts, the presentation this past January was based on an organizational framework developed over the previous year through discussion between industry representatives and WorkSafeBC personnel and the experience gained through a small number of pilot programs in high risk industry. BCPSEA occupational health and safety staff attended several meetings over the course of the year during which this structure was developed. The purpose of this second presentation was to initiate discussion among school districts to determine if there was sufficient interest in participating in this program.

The COR program is intended to reduce workplace injuries and disease through the voluntary adoption by individual employers of a comprehensive health and safety program and the implementation of a return to work program for those employees receiving wage loss compensation. Employers meeting the program criteria become eligible for rebates from the annual assessment payments. Additionally, for those employers that satisfy requirements contained in both the safety and return to work programs and experience low claims costs, a third or additional rebate is possible. A rebate of 15% from annual assessment payments is theoretically possible.

The COR program is administered not by WorkSafeBC but by a council established by employers. The cost of the association is assumed by all employers in BC but the rebates awarded to individual employers are charged to the classification unit composed of school districts. Consequently, the cost to school districts to administer COR is minimal but the costs of the rebates can be significant.

A more complete description of the COR Program was distributed to school districts in late May of this year. This resource/discussion paper was designed to provide school districts with the opportunity to indicate interest in this program.

While the thoughts and comments from school districts are still being received, BCPSEA staff continue to meet with WorkSafeBC personnel. These meetings have dealt with issues identified as concerns in the discussion paper and issues arising both from meetings with school districts and presentations to or at school district associations. At the same time, WorkSafeBC staff are evaluating their experience with the pilot programs and identifying issues of concern to them as part of their goal to continue their efforts to improve the COR Program as it presently exists.

At this point in time, several developments/issues have emerged from these discussions.

1. WorkSafeBC has decided that the rebate structure as presently designed; i.e., 5% for safety program, 2% for return to work and up to 8% for low claims costs, will continue; however,

The COR Program represents a major change in how employers can manage health and safety

the amount of claims cost reduction required to earn a rebate may be adjusted. We have suggested that given the low base rate in our classification unit, about 1/3 of the provincial average, school districts should be able to qualify for rebates with a reduction in claims costs of less than 20%.

2. BCPSEA earlier identified concerns that rebates that are not linked directly to actual cost reductions; i.e., 5% for safety programs, might lead to a situation where rebates earned by some districts increase costs for all districts. Some of the smaller school districts were concerned that the rebate structure favoured larger districts who could acquire the resources to satisfy program requirements. We have suggested that sustainability of the rebates could be enhanced by requiring that districts must show a decline in claims costs before any rebate is awarded.
3. WorkSafeBC has indicated that the return to work program criteria are not complete but a draft report is expected to be completed this fall. The absence of this program limits the maximum rebate that an employer can be awarded to 5%.
4. WorkSafeBC has stated that the council or association that will administer COR requirements must be responsible for other duties related to occupational health and safety. Costs associated with these additional duties must be accepted by the classification unit in much the same way that claims costs are charged to school districts.

Specific proposals on what duties the council or association might assume have not been discussed with WorkSafeBC. We are of the opinion that this topic should first be discussed with other school districts.

While WorkSafeBC has indicated some willingness to allow some modifications to the COR Program that will contribute to sustainability of the rebate structure, the demand that the council or association assume duties not directly related to the COR Program will create an extra cost for all school districts. It will also provide a resource that can be accessed by all school districts. It is clearly the intent of WorkSafeBC that the council or association will play a significant role in determining how occupational health and safety is managed by school districts.

The COR Program represents a major change in how employers can manage health and safety. It also represents the first real change, in some 80 years, to how WorkSafeBC is approaching the issue of enforcing/encouraging compliance with standards.

If your district has not yet completed the survey questions contained in the discussion paper, please encourage your district staff to complete this request for information. We will be reporting again on this program over the next several months and hope, with the support of school districts, to be able to present a detailed proposal that fully reflects the operating environment of school districts.



# Public Sector Employers Act review

In 1992, the then-provincial government engaged mediator/arbitrator Judi Korbin as a Commission of Inquiry into the Public Service and Public Sector. The main recommendations resulted in the introduction and enactment of the *Public Sector Employers Act* and the establishment of the Public Sector Employers' Council.

The purposes of PSEC are identified in section 2 of the *Public Sector Employers Act*:

- (a) to ensure the coordination of human resource and labour relations policies and practices among public sector employers, and
- (b) to improve communication and coordination between public sector employers and representatives of public sector employees.

The functions of the governing Council are identified in section 4:

- (a) to set and coordinate strategic directions in human resource management and labour relations
- (b) to advise the government on human resource issues with respect to the public sector, and
- (c) to provide a forum to enable public sector employers to plan solutions to human resource issues

The Act establishes the following mandate for the employers' associations:

- (2) *The purposes of an employers' association are to coordinate the following with respect to a sector:*
  - (a) compensation for employees who are not subject to collective agreements;
  - (b) benefits administration;
  - (c) human resource practices;

- (d) collective bargaining objectives.
- (3) *In addition, it is a purpose of an employers' association*
  - (a) to foster consultation between the association and representatives of employees in the sector, and
  - (b) to assist the council in carrying out any objectives and strategic directions established by the council for the employers' association.

While there have been two reviews of the operations of the structure contemplated by the Act, as well as selected legislative amendments, the organizational and statutory structure has remained the same for the past 14 years. Since the Korbin recommendations were implemented, there have been many changes in key areas related to public sector human resources, in particular labour relations.

With collective agreements in the public sector settled until 2010 (the BCTF-BCPSEA agreement to 2011), the Minister of Finance commissioned a further review. In April 2007 Rick Connolly was appointed as Special Advisor with the Ministry of Finance to conduct an analysis of the key issues, structures, roles and responsibilities of the Public Sector Employers' Council. The review is considered a time to reflect on the current system needs and interests with a view to modernizing the system and planning effectively for the future labour relations structures that fit the needs of each sector. It is not to recommend wholesale changes to our current model. Rather, this is seen as an opportune time to evaluate the progress the public sector has made in the areas of the statutory mandate in order to

The review will pose the questions related to how the roles and responsibilities have shifted and the most effective model for the future

BCPSEA is committed to working with districts to ensure they are able to recruit and retain qualified personnel

ensure future success. The terms of reference are as follows:

### Roles and Responsibilities

There are significant changes that have occurred in a variety of sectors over the course of the last few years. New employers have emerged; services, capacity and need for labour relations expertise have changed; ministry involvement in labour/management relations, particularly in the area of policy has expanded; and roles of the various stakeholders continue to evolve. The review will pose the questions related to how the roles and responsibilities have shifted and the most effective model for the future.

### Structure and Governance

Legislative and policy shifts have affected the governance in each part of the public sector, as well as the central organization of the Public Sector Employers' Council and the Secretariat. In 1993, the vision was based on a level of expertise and scope of authority under the *Public Sector Employers Act* considered appropriate given the strategic and human resource capacity at that time.

This review will consider coordination of strategic human resource and labour relations issues, structure and scope of financial mandates, policy development and direction and whether the current structures are effective to meet the anticipated needs of each sector and government.

### Issues and Scope of Services

The public sector is facing continued challenges in human resource and labour relations management. Issues range from effective negotiation and implementation of collective agreements; assessment, analysis and management of labour costs; recruitment and retention of critical skills; dialogue on key policy and program issues; and assuring effective labour/management relationships. The review will consider historic and current models, best practices in this and other jurisdictions, and the most efficient and effective means of delivering the range of labour relations and human resource services required.

BCPSEA is working with Rick Connelly in the preparation of his report, which is expected to be completed in January 2008. ◆—

*continued from page 26*

if the district is at the mid-point of the student enrolment band and has traditionally paid at the mid point, any change to the practice needs to be grounded in the rationale. Are there recruitment, retention, compression, or competitiveness issues that warrant the change?

4. We recommend that districts work with BCPSEA staff to ensure they pass the "defensibility test." We need employers to frame their submissions in defensible rationale.

BCPSEA is committed to working with districts to ensure they are able to

recruit and retain qualified personnel.

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.

*For further information and discussion, please contact Deborah Stewart, Senior Human Resources Consultant, at 604.730.4506 or deborahs@bcpsea.bc.ca.*

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# Distinguishing between independent contractors and employees

Recently, the Workers' Compensation Board Appeals Tribunal (WCAT) ruled that a truck driver who had registered with WorkSafeBC as an independent contractor and had then entered into a contract with a trucking company to haul material was not, in fact, an independent contractor but an employee of the trucking company, even though the truck driver owned his own truck and was free to accept contracts with other persons. This dispute over status was created when the truck driver was severely injured while servicing his truck. The truck driver had Personal Optional Protection (POP), a condition of registration with WorkSafeBC, but had only the minimum amount that could be taken. This is apparently a common practice as it reduces costs. However, with POP, it is the premiums paid and not the wages earned that determines the level of entitlement to benefits. Consequently, the truck driver's wage loss benefits did not reflect his real earnings. The change in status from independent operator to employee much increased the entitlement to benefits and transferred the cost of the claim to the trucking company, thus adversely affecting the firm's experience rate.

The WCAT ruling to change the status of the truck driver was based on the *Workers Compensation Act* and policy in the Assessment Manual. The Act and manual can be accessed on line at [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com) under Publications.

Section 96(1) of the *Workers Compensation Act* provides that the Board has exclusive jurisdiction to inquire into, hear

and determine matters and questions of fact and law arising under this Part. This exclusive jurisdiction includes, in clause (j) whether a person is a worker, a subcontractor, a contractor or an employer within the meaning of this Part.

## Assessment Policy

### ITEM: AP1-1-6 Coverage under the Act – Independent Operators

*An independent operator performs work under a contract, but has a business existence independent of the person or entity for whom that work is performed.*

### ITEM: AP1-1-1 Coverage under the Act – Description of Terms

*A worker is an individual who performs work under a contract with an employer and has no business existence under the contract independent of the employer.*

*An independent operator performs work under a contract but has a business existence independent of the person or entity for whom that work is performed.*

### ITEM 1-1-3 Coverage Under the Act - Distinguishing Between Employment Relationships and Relationships Between Independent Firms

*... there is no single test that can be consistently applied. The factors considered include:*

- *whether the services to be performed are essentially services of labour*
- *the degree of control exercised over the individual doing the work by the person or entity for whom the work is done*
- *whether the individual doing the work might make a profit or loss*
- *whether the individual doing the work*

Districts should review status with independent contractors and the terms of any contract of service

*or person or entity for whom is done provides the major equipment*

- *if the business enterprise is subject to regulatory licensing, who is the licensee*
- *whether the terms of the contract are normal or expected for a contract between independent contractors*
- *who is best able to fulfill the prevention and other obligations of an employer under the Act*
- *whether the individual doing the work engages continually and indefinitely for one person or works intermittently and for other persons; and*
- *whether the individual doing the work is able or required to hire other persons*

The major test, which largely encompasses these factors, is whether the individual doing the work exists as a business enterprise independently of the person or entity for whom the work is done.

No business organization is completely independent of all others. It is a question of degree whether a party to contract has a sufficient amount of independence to warrant registration as an employer. Many small parties may only contract with one or two large firms over a period of time. Yet they are often independent of the person with whom they are contracting in significant respects. For example, they must seek out and bid on their own contracts, keep their own books and records, make income tax, employment insurance, and Canada Pension deductions. They also retain the right to hire and fire their own workers and exercise control over the work performed by their workers. These factors must be considered.

Some regard must also be paid to the structure and customs of the particular industry involved. Where an industry makes use of the contracting of work, this should be recognized as a factor in con-

sidering applications for registration as employers by parties to contracts in these industries.

## Commentary

As a consequence of this decision and other incidents involving one person independent contractors, we anticipate that Assessments will be reviewing current practice to grant status as independent contractors and may refuse to renew such status. Districts should review status with independent contractors and the terms of any contract of service.

A Clearance Letter indicates whether or not a contractor is registered with WorkSafeBC. It only provides information on assessment status and should not be relied on to provide confirmation of status as an independent contractor. A Clearance Letter does not provide information on the level of compensation contracted for.

A change in status from independent contractor to worker also creates additional requirements with respect to responsibilities under the *Workers Compensation Act* and *OH&S Regulation*. School districts can be held retroactively responsible for compliance with the Act and Regulation when a change in status occurs.

A determination of status by WorkSafeBC is confined only to matters under WorkSafeBC jurisdiction. How the relationship should be considered under terms in your collective agreements or by the Canada Revenue Agency are separate and independent decisions.

Independent contractors who have incorporated are workers of their own companies and would not be affected by this change in practice. ◆—

## Greater Victoria School District wins Power Smart award

For any educational institution, students are the future – it's the nature of the business. For School District 61 (Greater Victoria), however, students are also helping to build the energy future.

They're doing so under the tutelage of Glenn Brenan, School District 61's Maintenance Supervisor and Energy Manager. Since he came on board in 2003, Glenn has been coordinating the district's energy management program and overseeing projects to systematically improve the energy efficiency of all schools. Glenn conducts audits and studies, reviews operating schedules with staff to ensure that systems run efficiently, and supervises the district electricians who carry out the retrofits. He also monitors and tracks the savings once the upgrades have been done.

A key part of Glenn's job is mentoring the dedicated students taking part in BC Hydro's Power Smart Students program – the largest such group in the province. Through this program, the students not only learn about energy but also conduct energy audits of schools. They then make

presentations to the school board about the energy efficiency opportunities they found and provide recommendations on which ones to implement.

By the example that Glenn and his crew set, they are training their team of Power Smart Students to be the energy champions of the future. Now, that's planning for generations.

### Highlights

#### Energy efficiency measures

- Energy management program that includes lighting and DDC upgrades, water conservation, the installation of energy management software, and student participation in Power Smart Students and Destination Conservation

#### Cumulative results since 2003

- Electricity savings of 3 gigawatt hours
- Annual electrical cost savings of \$195,700
- Annual water savings of \$56,000

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[http://www.bchydro.com/rx\\_files/psbusiness/psbusiness51889.pdf](http://www.bchydro.com/rx_files/psbusiness/psbusiness51889.pdf) ◆—

### Legislative Change:

## Elimination of Mandatory Retirement

On May 31, 2007, the provincial government enacted Bill 31, *Human Rights Code (Mandatory Retirement Elimination) Amendment Act, 2007*. The legislation eliminates mandatory retirement, effective January 1, 2008, by revising the provincial *Human Rights Code* (the Code). Currently, "age" is defined in the

Code as "an age of 19 years or more and less than 65 years." Bill 31 amends that definition to "an age of 19 years or more." This amendment extends protection from age discrimination to those 65 and over. Employees will therefore have the choice of whether to continue working past age 65.

BCPSEA distributed *Legislative Update No. 2007-04* on June 22, providing information and guidance on some of the short-term issues. A number of implications flow from the legislation. A workshop on this topic will also be held at our Labour Relations Symposium on October 30.

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# Upcoming events

## Labour Relations Symposium

The BCPSEA Labour Relations Symposium is scheduled for Monday, October 29 - Tuesday, October 30, 2007 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver. Program information and registration details are available on the BCPSEA website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/events/labourrelations.html>.

An informative and interactive professional development opportunity, the Symposium offers a variety of workshops on emergent issues of interest to human resources practitioners and school trustees alike. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Behavioural Interviewing Workshops

By popular demand, we have scheduled another series of Behavioural Interviewing Workshops around the province:

[November 5-6, 2007: Kelowna School District](#)

Registration Deadline: October 22, 2007

[February 18-19, 2008: Langley School District](#)

Registration Deadline: February 4, 2008

[March 3-4, 2008: University of Northern BC, Prince George](#)

Registration Deadline: February 18, 2008

Please refer to the BCPSEA website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/events/prodbehaviour.html> for program information and to register online.

## Article E.2 Harassment/Sexual Harassment: Training

Once again, BCPSEA is offering a variety of harassment training programs to assist school districts in the administration of Article E.2 of the Provincial Collective Agreement between the BC Teachers' Federation and the BC Public School Employers' Association.

[December 3, 2007](#)

Train-the-Trainer - Harassment Awareness Training

[December 4-5, 2007](#)

Investigator Training - Initial Program

[December 6-7, 2007](#)

Investigator Training - Advanced Level

Please go to the BCPSEA website at <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/access/events/prodharassment.html> for program information and to download a registration form.

## Annual General Meeting

Our fourteenth Annual General Meeting will be held January 25-26, 2008 at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites in Vancouver. Watch the BCPSEA website for program information and online registration.

# BCPSEA Launches New Public Website

## A new look for a new year!

On September 4 we launched the newly revamped [bcpssea.bc.ca](http://bcpssea.bc.ca), improving the navigation and design and getting the website ready for its exciting evolution over the coming months, which will include more web-delivery of BCPSEA content and improved capability to access information about and register for BCPSEA conferences and workshops. We've streamlined the content and improved the way it's presented in order to provide a more user-focused experience.

We're listening to you. We know you're looking for an improved web experience – and we're working to deliver what you need.

You will continue to see improvements to [bcpssea.bc.ca](http://bcpssea.bc.ca) over the coming months, including:

- an integrated events calendar
- improved login to the members only websites, and
- a search engine that will facilitate easy access to the information you're looking for.

It's all about continuous improvement. Tell us what you think. As you find your way through our revised site, let us know ([deborahs@bcpssea.bc.ca](mailto:deborahs@bcpssea.bc.ca)) how you like the new format and tools and we'll use your input during consideration for future improvements.

### Q: Why did BCPSEA redesign its website?

It's been five years since [bcpssea.bc.ca](http://bcpssea.bc.ca) was significantly enhanced. With thousands of pages viewed within the website since that time, we envisioned a revised website that would utilize new technology and processes to ensure accuracy and timeliness of information. The revised site will provide easy and fast access to knowledge that users need to do their jobs – organized and searchable in an intuitive way that's relevant to their needs. Many of the enhancements are the result of direct feedback from BCPSEA members solicited through our online survey last year. ♦—

The screenshot shows the BCPSEA website homepage. At the top right, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Members, Contact Us, and Sitemap. Below this is a large banner image of a coastal landscape with mountains and water. Overlaid on the banner is the organization's mission statement: "Our mission is to develop and maintain human resource practices that maximize the benefit for students in our public education system through the effective use of resources and fair terms of employment". Below the banner is a horizontal navigation menu with links for Employee Groups, OH&S, Publications, Events, Research, Media, and About Us. The main content area features a headline "A new look for a new year!" followed by a welcome message about the website redesign. Below this is a list of improvements: a new home page, an integrated events calendar, improved login to members-only websites, and a search engine. To the right of the main text are three news items: "Mandatory Retirement Eliminated", "Upcoming Events" (listing a Labour Relations Symposium on October 29-30, 2007), and "Careers" (listing exciting opportunities in the K-12 public education sector). At the bottom right, there is contact information for the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association, including the address (400-1333 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6H 4C1), telephone (604-730-0739), fax (604-730-0767), and email ([contact.us@bcpssea.bc.ca](mailto:contact.us@bcpssea.bc.ca)). The footer contains a copyright notice for 2007 BC Public School Employers' Association and a link to the Privacy Statement.

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYERS'  
ASSOCIATION

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*O*ur mission is to develop and maintain human  
resource practices that maximize the benefit for students in  
our public education system through the effective use of  
resources and fair terms of employment.