



President's Column

Date: October 19, 2011

Issue: #2

At the end of the 7th week of our lawful job-action, we teachers are still on strike, but still working. We're on strike, but we're still planning, teaching, evaluating students and responding to parents' reasonable requests for contact and communication.

Our 'teach-only' campaign, which puts the emphasis on teaching-first, ahead of paperwork and other administrative tasks, is intended to release us from the many paper and bureaucratic demands of the system. Phase I should free teachers to put more time into planning lessons and teaching students, and documenting and celebrating our students' learning, which is the best and most important part of our work.

But the reality is that despite voting in favour of a strike by a margin of 90% province-wide, and despite our job-action plan which falls fully within the lawful scope of successive Labour Relations Board rulings, teachers continue to experience varying degrees of concern over our collective decision to say "No" to the employer. This is to be expected. Teachers are so accustomed to saying "Yes" to so many people in so many ways. Such is our dedication.

Report Cards

One of the things teachers are saying no to are formal report cards, including interim reports, but this does not mean that teachers are unwilling to initiate conversations with parents, or to respond to the appropriate requests of parents with legitimate concerns about their child's progress, especially if the student is having difficulty.

The DTA encourages teachers to contact parents of children using whatever method they feel is appropriate to send informal information and messages home.

Similarly, the DTA encourages teachers to respond to the respectful requests of parents who may be concerned about their child's progress and who might contact the school, seeking information.

While teachers will not be keeping to the usual *formal* reporting deadlines, teachers will initiate contact with parents, and will respond to parent requests for information.

A few of the *informal* ways teachers might communicate with parents on student progress during Phase I include the following:

- 1) verbally, when meeting informally, face-to-face;
- 2) a simple and supportive phone call home, especially if the student is struggling;
- 3) send home samples of student work for parents to sign and return;
- 4) written comments in students' agenda or homework book;
- 5) a short email message home to parents;
- 6) explain to parents how they can assess their child's progress online, where this is possible.



Teachers may identify other, equally suitable informal communications strategies, that are also consistent with the "No formal Report Cards or Interims" policy.

The Speech from the Throne

The re-opening of the Provincial legislature on October 3 was marked by the ritual Speech From the Throne, in which the broad legislative agenda of government for the upcoming session was spelled out.

It was disappointing that there was nothing in the October 3 Throne Speech to indicate that government is ready to restore the \$330 million annual funding necessary to restore class size limits and guarantees for students with special needs to 2002 levels. Despite lip-service to the "thousands of dedicated teachers in our elementary, middle and high schools . . .", teachers heard nothing real from government, nothing that would affirm the hard-work of teachers, their use of new and innovative teaching strategies, nothing that would show a return to adequate funding and support for technological innovations.

Government's claim that they will, " . . . act to improve the education system, provide supports to teachers and improve student safety in the classroom . . ." teachers are still waiting to see government take action to meet the needs of students with special needs, to restore illegally stripped class size and composition language, learning specialist teacher ratios and caseloads, and lost funding. Give teachers the tools in the form of staffing and program supports, and teachers will do the job.

Professional Development

October 21 is the BCTF Provincial Specialist Association (PSA) day. In Delta, hundreds of teachers have made

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application to the DTA's Professional Development Fund for reimbursement of the costs of registering and attending one of the many Provincial Specialist Association events, and other teacher-planned Professional Development events. Delta teachers are fortunate to have contract language which provides money each year in support of teachers' Professional Development. Over the past 10 years, while watching the employer's contribution of PD funding steadily erode, DTA support for teachers' PD has remained high.

The DTA wishes all teachers a worthwhile and professionally rewarding PSA day on October 21, and extends to the DTA PD Committee and the teachers elected to serve on it, an extra measure of recognition and thanks.



“Factor 88” ~ Withdraw from Long Term Disability Plan

Teachers aged 64 or whose combined age plus years of service equal “factor 88” are entitled to withdraw from the Long Term Disability Plan provided they have enough sick leave. The combination of short-term disability and 100 sick days will be sufficient to carry them through until they are either 65 years old or have reached “factor 90”. At this point they will be ineligible for long-term disability. Contact the DTA or phone the BCTF at (604) 871-1921 for an application form.

Category 5+ (PB+15) Information

The new provincial language term for Delta's PB+15 salary category is **Category 5+**. As a result of TQS issuing Category 5+ status three times a year, the Board will now upgrade teachers' salary categories for this certification three times a year - August 31, December 31 and April 30. Once you receive your TQS card, forward a copy to the Board immediately. Your pay will be retroactive to the date the card was issued. For example, if your TQS card arrives at the end of May and is dated May 6, you will be paid retroactively to the beginning of May. Remember to have a copy of your transcript sent to the Board for their records.



REMINDER

Staff Rep Training
8:30 - 3:00, Tuesday, November 8
Delta Manor Education Centre

Please call the DTA at 604-946-0391 or e-mail marilyn@deltateachers.org to get a release code.

Lunch will be provided.

Maternity Leave Workshop

4:00 pm - Tuesday, November 22
Education Room
Delta Manor Education Centre

Guest: BCTF Income Security Staff

Topics Include:

- What are your contractual rights?
- What are the implications of Maternity Leave for your pension?

For catering purposes and printed material availability, please RSVP to the DTA office at 604-946-0391 or e-mail marilyn@deltateachers.org.

DTA Scholarship Winners



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|--------------------|-------------------|
| Burnsview | Tiana Major |
| Delta | Claire Henderson |
| Delview | Kelsey McLenaghan |
| North Delta | Gavin Servai |
| Sands | Tory Lawson |
| Seaquam | Patric Kuo |
| South Delta | Kathleen Moore |

“Tad” Boyes Scholarship

Congratulations to Brianna Brown, 2011 DTA recipient of the \$800.00 “Tad” Boyes Scholarship. Brianna is the daughter of Darlene Brown (Sunshine Hills Elementary).

Her career goal is to work in international relations.