

Newsletter of the Delta Teachers' Association



TODAY

President's Column

Date: April 18, 2012

Issue: #5

Teachers Withdraw all Services for 3 days in March

During the second week of March teachers across BC responded to governments' introduction of The Learning Improvement Act (Bill 22) on February 28th with escalated job-action, escalating to a lawful, three day strike, March 5 through 7.

In solidarity with colleagues across BC, Delta teachers walked leaflet lines, and were acknowledged for their efforts by an increasing measure of fine Spring-like weather over the same period.

On March 6th, at least 50 Delta teachers travelled to a BCFED sponsored rally in Victoria. Others attended the rally scheduled at the Vancouver Art Gallery on Wednesday, the last day of the strike.

Some Delta teachers elected to remain at home rather than walk the leaflet line, but the vast majority of teachers did show their support for their colleagues over the three days.

Two fairly minor incidents of leaflet-line crossing came to the attention of the Union; both will likely not require further action.

For those teachers who leafleted, a first-run of \$150 Strike Pay cheques has recently been distributed. A second-run of cheques will be requested on Friday.

Bill 22, The Education Improvement Act: a Resolution or a Provocation?

If improvement of the educational program was the main motive behind the BC government's introduction of Bill 22, it's hard

to see where these improvements are.



Bill 22 combines collective bargaining issues with the BC Liberal government's response to Madame Justice Griffin's April 13, 2011 decision, which found that the government's 2002 stripping of teachers' collective agreements was "unconstitutional and invalid". Similarly, Bill 22 provides for a "cooling off period", allowing for a government appointed 'mediator', but with a limited mandate and restrictive terms of reference – which must include the 'net zero' and 'strips' provisions -- all subject to a final say by the CEO of PSEC - Paul Straszak.

Government's use of the words and language of the corporate world and its transposition into the realm of public education and the work of educators is troubling for teachers. Teachers' first concern, rightly, is with how best to engender, sustain, and broaden not 'the bottom line', but 'learning' in students; learning not just for a few of their students, but for all of them - up to their fullest potential.

Terms such as "Accountability, Accountability Contracts", "Achievement", "Performance", among others, bring the corporate bias of government into focus for teachers. And when legislation such as an Act for the "Improvement of Education" is tabled by government, a close and careful consideration of the provisions of such a law is warranted.

Here, in summary, are a few of the 'improvements' to education government is making through Bill 22:

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DTA Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, May 8, 2012 - 4:00 pm

Seaquam Secondary Library

This is the first call for nominations. Please contact the DTA office if you are interested in running for an executive or committee position.

Daycare upon Request

- 1) Bill 22 will make it easier to create large classes and classes with unlimited number of students with special needs.
- 2) Minimal protection provided for in the previous, imperfect Bill 33 are eliminated. Minimal class size and composition provisions eroded.
- 3) Consultation with teachers on class size and composition is removed.
- 4) The ability of teachers to negotiate class size provisions, removed in 2002, is still not restored.
- 5) Instead of hard, targeted funding, a soft, Learning Improvement , or "LIF" fund is provided - at the discretion of the Minister - with no legislative guarantees on the amount.
- 6) Onerous offence provisions in the event of a strike during the "cooling off period" from the date the legislation comes into force until August 31, 2012.

For those whose concern with the issues of Public Education extends beyond what is read in newspaper headlines, for those whose understanding is based on more than what is summarized on a short television newscast, it should not be hard to understand why teachers are alarmed, angry and agitated. Far from improving Education in British Columbia, Bill 22 effects further harm, by diminishing services to students and by disrespecting teachers', whose skills and expertise are always necessary in meeting future challenges.

Delta Teachers' vote to Withdraw Extracurricular/Voluntary Work

Delta Teachers' voted by a wide majority on March 9th to 'strongly encourage' all members to withdraw all extracurricular/voluntary work, effective March 16th. While this measure is introduced with great reluctance, the decision has been made to emphasize our concern about the stability and long-term viability of the whole educational system. Extracurricular activities are important, but they exist on the periphery, not at the centre of teachers' main work, which is to assess, plan, organize, teach, refine, evaluate and finally to report on student learning.

Staffing Season

The District's annual Staffing process will soon be underway, with Notices of Layoff set to be issued to some teachers. Watch for further details at your school/work site.

Teachers contemplating applying for leave or retirement for the 2012/13 school year are encouraged to contact the DTA for answers to any questions they may have. Teachers should inform the Board of their intentions as soon as they are set. Doing so allows the Board to make a finer adjustment of where, exactly, they must draw the so-called 'lay-off line'.



2012-2013 BCTF EXECUTIVE

President: Susan Lambert (Burnaby)
1st Vice-President: Jim Iker (Burns Lake)
2nd Vice-President: Glen Hansman (VESTA)
Members at Large: Mike Bell (Nanaimo)
 David Komljenovic (Kamloops)
 Joanna Larson (Prince Rupert)
 Denise Moffatt (Surrey)
 Teri Mooring (Quesnel)
 Paul Steer (Delta)
 Christine Stewart (VSTA)
 Wendy Turner (Cranbrook)

"TAD" BOYES SCHOLARSHIP

Applicants must be the son or daughter of a Delta teacher and graduating from a public school in BC. The scholarship is \$800.00 and the criteria is based on academic excellence.

Application forms for the "Tad" Boyes Scholarship are available from the DTA office or can be downloaded from the DTA website at www.deltateachers.org, under Forms.

Deadline is June 30, 2012

EI WORKSHOP

This BCTF facilitated workshop is sponsored by the DTA TTOC Committee and is open to all teachers.

When: Thursday, May 31
Time: 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Where: Delta Manor Education Centre

This seminar will help TTOCs understand the steps to follow in applying for, and obtaining, EI Benefits.

The BCTF requires a minimum of 15 participants so please register with Debbie **BY MAY 18** at: debbie@deltateachers.org or 604-946-0391

Refreshments will be available.

Condolences



The DTA sends its deepest sympathies to the family and friends of **Line Emond** who passed away on February 13. Line taught the majority of her thirty-one year career at Richardson Elementary.