



TODAY

Issue # 6

January 13, 2005

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Column

Happy New Year!

You have probably noticed by now how the "war of words", especially in the media, has started to heat up. The provincial election is, after all, only four months away. The long-awaited Wright Report on teacher bargaining was released on Thursday, December 16, just before the holidays. Lacking media coverage, the report is quietly awaiting government action when the legislature reconvenes in February. Right now, the report has no teeth, but if the Liberal government decides to implement its contents, bargaining as we have known it will no longer exist. David Schreck, Special Advisor to the former Premier of BC wrote an interesting article entitled "Wright's Pre-Election Wedge Issue" for his www.strategichoughts.com website. It is worth a read!

Janet Steffenhagen, education reporter for the Vancouver Sun, wrote in a column last week that elementary class sizes have not really increased as the BCTF is reporting. She also claimed that "BCTF President, Jinny Sims could not be reached for comment." In fact, Sims attempted to contact Steffenhagen but her calls were not returned. What Steffenhagen does not point out is that there is no cap on the number of students in Grade 4 - 12 classes any more. While Delta has not fared as badly as some other districts, the class size limits that were changed for K - 3 and removed from Grades 4 - 12 have resulted in larger classes. Steffenhagen's comments did not mention teacher concerns about class composition, an issue that even the Minister of Education has acknowledged as a problem.

The public needs to understand the reality of student learning conditions **before** the provincial election. According to surveys, the public believes classroom teachers are the most reliable source of information about what is happening in schools. Sharpen your story-telling skills, the public needs to hear from you!

DTA GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, February 15th
Seaquam Secondary
4:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

- Election of BCTF AGM Delegates
- DTA Audited Financial Statements
- Reconfiguration
- Bargaining Report
- PD Initiatives
- DTA Constitution Changes

Please plan to attend

If you require daycare, please call the
DTA office 604.946-0391.

BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING EMPRESS HOTEL, VICTORIA MARCH 19-22, 2005

Contact the DTA if you are interested in letting
your name stand for election as a delegate.

DTA CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES
By now you will have received the proposed constitutional changes distributed to each school on the basis of 1 per 10 members. It is mainly updating. Contact your Staff Rep if you wish a copy.

RECONFIGURATION PROCEEDS

At the Board meeting, Tuesday, January 11, 2005, school catchment areas in the north end were approved. Schools undergoing reconfiguration will now have some idea of the anticipated student numbers for the upcoming school year and, after the first week in February when out of catchment applications will begin to come in, can begin to plan accordingly. The DTA has informed the Board on more than one occasion that timelines and processes cannot be "as usual" and that a comprehensive plan or framework including timelines is required.

At the same Board meeting, the budget development process and timeline for 2005-2006 was approved. The process will see the final approval of the budget on April 26, 2005 which is similar to last year. In schools being reconfigured, all planning and resourcing needs a longer timeline and therefore must begin earlier.

The DTA may bring recommendations on the staffing process for this year to the General Meeting on February 15. In the meantime, the DTA will continue meeting with senior Board management and the Human Resources department to work toward resolution of members' concerns and support for schools and teachers.

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

The BCTF and DTA are advising members to not complete Ministry Satisfaction Surveys. Until the surveys address teacher concerns on issues such as class size and composition there is no point in completing a survey designed primarily to make the government look good.

BCTF RETIREMENT SEMINARS

- **Jan. 29th** – Abbotsford Ramada Inn
- **Feb. 19th** – Delta Town & Country Inn
- **May 17th** – Richmond Hilton Airport Hotel

All seminars are on Saturdays
9:00 – 4:00 p.m.

No registration is required.

Please Note: new venue for Abbotsford



PENSION INFORMATION WORKSHOP

Ken Smith, retired BCTF staff person, will be conducting a small group workshop to answer specific questions about pensions for Delta teachers.

Dates to choose from:

- **Wednesday, Feb 9th**
- **Thursday, Feb 17th**
- **Tuesday, March 15th**

All workshops are being held at the DTA office. The cost is \$20.00 per person and partners are welcome. Call the DTA office 604.946-0391 to reserve your place. Be sure to bring your latest pension statement with you.



Welcome to 2005 and another election in BC. On **May 17**, the BC legislature will take on a new shape. As teachers, we believe that education needs to be a critical issue in the election, and your Local Election Committee is already working hard to make it so. Every political party in this province needs to be reminded that cuts to education are extremely unpopular. Look for more information soon about ways you may wish to support this exciting campaign.

Pat Truelove, LEC/PEAC chairperson

Teachers On Call Meeting

The next TOC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 26th 4:00 p.m. at DSS Staff Dining Room.