



TODAY

Issue # 1

August 31, 2006

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Column

If school is back in session, it must be time for another teacher vote! This time, however, the vote is to ratify the agreement in committee that was signed by the BCTF and BCPSEA at 9:45 pm on June 30. For the first time in many years, teachers of this province were able to negotiate a collective agreement with the employer – with a little help from the government. The BCTF bargaining team and Executive committee are recommending acceptance of this collective agreement. Working and learning conditions will continue to be issues raised by the BCTF at round table discussions.

The BCTF is sending an Issue Alert to all members. Dated September 5, 2006, the Issue Alert features a concise */Summary of the June 30, 2006 Agreement-in-committee/*. Details, including the salary grids will be explained at a DTA General Meeting at Seaquam Secondary on September 7 at 3:30 pm. School Staff Reps have been given a copy of the salary grids to share with their colleagues prior to the General Meeting.

Providing the contract is ratified, the signing bonus will be paid out once the Board has submitted the necessary documentation of teachers' employment information from last year to the Ministry and the Ministry releases the funds to enable the Board to pay the bonus.

Also, pending ratification, the Board is working on the optional 12 month pay period for teachers who are interested in receiving their salary over the summer. The DTA and the Board are discussing the details of this plan. Teachers will be notified once the plan is available.

The BCTF expects to announce the results of the vote on **September 8**.

/Grid Harmonization/

The Board hopes to have the monies for the harmonization agreement in teachers' bank accounts by September 5. Every salary grid in Delta except PB+15 maximum will receive an increase because of harmonization. Delta's PB+15 max step is above the provincial average which is why there is no harmonization increase however, teachers on this step will receive the negotiated increases as outlined in the Issue Alert.

General Meeting
Thursday, September 7
3:30 - 6:00
Seaquam Secondary
Auditorium

Ratification Vote

Voting Locations and Times

Advance Polls - Wed. Sept 6

8:00 - 5:00 DTA Office

11:00 - 5:00 NDSS Conference
Room

2:45 - 5:00 SDSS Library

Thursday, Sept 7th 3:00 - 6:30
Seaquam Cafeteria.

Implementation of Bill 33: DTA Advice to teachers

Besides the new Provincial Collective Agreement, Bill 33 is the second most pressing issue of importance to teachers this fall.

The BCTF Issue Alert, Vol. 18, No. 3, May 30, 2006 provided extensive background on the provisions and context of Bill 33, the Education (Learning Enhancement) Statutes Amendment Act. DTA members can access that document by copying the following URL into the address bar of their web-browsers:

<http://bctf.ca/alert/Archive/2005-06/2006-05-30.html>

For teachers in Delta, the most significant provision of Bill 33 are the specific limits on class size and composition it places on classes in Kindergarten through grade 12, such limits not to be exceeded unless “. . . the superintendent and principal agree that the organization of the class is appropriate for student learning educationally sound without the **consent** [grades 4-7, my italics] or **consultation** [grades 8-12, my italics] with the teacher of the class affected.”

Significantly, the Act also requires that there be no more than three students for whom IEPs must be designed in any class, K-12, unless . . . “the superintendent and the principal agree that the organization of the class is appropriate for student learning and the principal has **consulted** [my italics] the teacher.”

The DTA is actively involved in making sure that teachers have the support they need as Bill 33 is implemented. DTA table officers have already met with senior District staff to discuss issues arising from Bill 33 and further meetings are planned. It is important to teachers that the gains made in Bill 33 be fully realized, and that specific procedures for the seamless exchange of accurate information with the Board be developed.

To that end, the DTA is providing the following advice to members:

1. Maintain an open dialogue with your school's staff rep. Seek and provide accurate and relevant information about the size and composition of your class. Raise any matter of concern to you.
2. Request that a union representative be present at any meeting where you are being asked to give consent or consultation with regard to the size or composition of your class. BCTF policy is clear: no meetings with regard to Bill 33 shall take place between an administrative officer or designate without a union representative present.
3. If you are unsure of which students in the classes you teach carry Ministry designations, ask your school's principal to provide you with that information. Accurate information is crucial in establishing the validity of the consent/consultation process.
4. Do not sign any document which attests to your having provided consent or consultation until, after a broad discussion with colleagues which includes Staff Reps, you are confident that it is advisable to do so. The DTA is in discussion with the Board about developing a form which all parties may sign – teachers, staff union representatives and administrative staff – to document the consent/consultation process and teachers' agreement or disagreement with proposed class sizes or compositions.

The promise of Bill 33 is grounded in the understanding that it is not just the size of classes, but the composition of those classes which affect the working and learning conditions of students and teachers. The challenge for teachers is to gather accurate and relevant information concerning class size and composition, and to ensure that the provisions of the Act are implemented. The DTA is committed to working constructively with the Board in this respect and in seeing the working conditions of Delta teachers and the learning conditions of Delta students improve as a result.