



# TODAY

Issue # 10

April 26, 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## President's Column

Beginning the week of May 7<sup>th</sup>, Grade Four and Seven teachers will once again administer government mandated Foundation Skills Assessments tests (FSAs) to their students. Teachers are well aware that FSA testing is assessment of learning not assessment for learning. Such testing does not help teachers teach nor students learn. Teachers do not assess students' learning merely to put marks on report cards. They support student learning by monitoring student progress and adjusting their teaching accordingly.

Districts and schools are under constant pressure to increase test scores. Many schools devote considerable time to practicing FSA-type tests several times a year at the expense of other curriculum. Other schools exempt low-achieving students from the test. None of these represent a real increase in learning. How do these strategies promote student learning?

What you can do:

- Write a letter to the minister of education opposing the FSA. A copy of the letter can be found on the BCTF website <http://www.bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=10668>.
- Encourage parents to write to the school principal withdrawing their student from the FSA assessments.
- Withdraw your own children from the FSA assessments.

*In a meeting with the DTA on April 24<sup>th</sup>, Superintendent, John Anderson, directed that teachers not give students the FSA brochures, even in sealed envelopes, as the Board does not want students to be conduits for delivering the BCTF brochure.* This message, directed by BCPSEA, is being distributed by school districts around the province.

*If you teach grade four or seven, you may hand out BCTF pamphlets but only to your students' parents.*

Please contact the DTA office and printed pamphlets will be sent to your school.

The DTA has also been informed that even though parents request their children not write the FSA tests,

unless the child is excused for very limited reasons, they will be compelled to write the test. If you have any parents who make such a request, please advise them that the principal may be calling with this information. No parent should have to keep their child at home to prevent them from writing FSA tests.

What is the future of FSA tests?

Deputy Minister of Education, Emery Dodsall, reported the following in the March 26, 2007 "Report on Education":

- FSAs will be conducted earlier in the school year in the future – perhaps February.
- Grade 4 and 7 teachers will have to mark FSA tests.
- FSA tests will be available to parents and teachers in mid-May to "facilitate discussions of student progress".

Just two of many questions that come to mind about the earlier writing of FSA tests: Will the ministry cover release time for marking? If marking is done at the district level how will the district ensure consistency?

FSA tests are only one part of the government's Accountability Agenda. The message teachers have been spreading is gaining support from parents and the public. Let's do what we can to keep up the momentum!

### DTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Executive Committee Elections

It is time to think about submitting your name for election at the AGM to the DTA Executive or other committees. This is an opportunity to get involved and to serve your colleagues. If you are interested in letting your name stand, please e-mail [debbie-dta@telus.net](mailto:debbie-dta@telus.net) or call the DTA office at 606.946.0391.

**Tuesday, May 15, 2007  
4:00 pm**

**Seaquam Secondary  
Daycare provided upon request.**



# POWWOW

Being held this year on April 27, 28 and 29 at  
Delview Secondary School, 9111 – 116<sup>th</sup> Street.

### High-Quality Professional Development...

- improves student learning;
- helps educators meet the needs of students who learn in different ways and come from diverse backgrounds;
- allows enough time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring and is part of the normal working day;
- is sustained, rigorous, and adequate to the long-term change of practice;
- is directed toward teachers' intellectual development and leadership;
- fosters better subject-matter knowledge, greater understanding of learning, and a full appreciation of students' needs;
- is designed and directed by teachers, and includes the best principles of adult learning;
- balances individual priorities with school and district needs, and advances the profession as a whole;
- makes best use of new technologies;
- is site based and supportive of a clear vision for students achievement.

(Source: The NEA Foundation)

*Breaking Bread...*



*For Women in Afghanistan*

**POTLUCK**

On District Day in February, several staff members from Delta Manor heard Sally Armstrong talk about the plight of women in Afghanistan, and the potluck

dinners that were being held to raise money to educate Afghan girls and women. As women and educators, we felt that this was a cause that our staff would like to support. When we presented the idea to our staff in March it was suggested that we use our traditional Easter Potluck Lunch as a fundraiser for this worthwhile cause.

Prior to our lunch we distributed a package to each staff member to ensure that everyone had background information about "Breaking Bread for Women." Our package included an information sheet from the DTA, a form to fill in for a tax receipt and an envelope for donations.

We held our potluck lunch on Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> during our regular lunch break. Everyone on our staff was included in the event and brought fabulous food to be shared. This was first, and foremost, a chance for our staff to socialize as friends, so we emphasized that donations to "Breaking Bread for Women" were optional, and at the discretion of each guest. A brightly coloured box, to collect donation envelopes, was placed to one side of the buffet table. A copy of Sally Armstrong's book *Veiled Threat*, was purchased and used as a door prize.

Our staff raised a total of **\$542**, almost enough to hire a teacher for one year in Afghanistan! We were very happy with the generous response we received from our staff, and we hope it gets the DTA fund off to a good start!

### CoDev's

#### Annual Fundraising Dinner and Dance Saturday, June 2, 2007

Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street  
Tickets \$50 (\$25 Low Waged/Unwaged)  
Doors open at **6:00 pm**



Dance to the Sounds of  
The Hot Latin Band "*La Candela*"

Featuring:

- Delicious Latin-American Food
- Fabulous Silent Auction
- Complimentary Oyster Bar
- Excellent Dessert Auction

Can you donate to the silent or dessert auctions?

For tickets contact CoDev at 604.708.1495.

*Congratulations!* To Delta teacher  
**Andrew Lum** who was  
among 14 recipients of

the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence  
honoured in the BC Legislature on March 27, 2007.

Andrew, a teacher-librarian at North Delta Secondary, was recognized for enriching learning opportunities through online resources, activities, WebQuests and video streaming that stimulate learning and motivation.

"The goal of education is to replace an  
empty mind with an open mind."

*Malcolm Forbes*