



Issue # 4

October 26, 2006

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Column

Bill 33 – Class Size and Class Composition

At the Board meeting on October 10, Superintendent, John Anderson, presented his report on class size and class composition. After some discussion, the Board voted to unanimously accept the report, concurring that *“the organization of classes is in compliance with the provisions of the School Act and is appropriate for student learning.”*

The following information was contained in the report: Five intermediate classes have more than 30 students (compared with 57 last year). At the secondary level, out of 1958 classes, 146 classes have more than 30 students. Classes with 25 students number 119, 81 classes have 22 students and 524 classes have fewer than 22 students. Several of the smaller classes are located in schools that are undergoing reconfiguration.

The numbers of classes that exceed the limit of three students with special needs that have Ministry designations are considerably higher. *At the elementary level, 72 classes exceed three students and at the secondary level, 416 classes exceed the numbers.* The Board has added 111 Education Assistant hours to schools as a direct result of class composition issues.

These facts are a snapshot of information provided by schools to the Board before October 2. Given the number of students enrolling and leaving Delta schools, these numbers are in fluctuation.

Each school was left to “consult” with teachers and to seek consent from elementary teachers whose classes were likely to exceed 30 students. As a result, the processes used were varied with some being more effective than others. Although the DTA encouraged teachers to have a Staff Rep

present in the consultation meetings; several meetings took place with only the principal and the teacher in attendance. It is important to have Union representation in such meetings. The power of a school principal greatly exceeds that of a teacher; the presence of the Staff Union Representative is meant to address that serious imbalance.

Before the next class organization happens in the spring, the DTA will review the information and present a report with recommendations to members.

Elementary Prep Time

Elementary teachers are encouraged to contact the SEM clerk, Valerie, with **all** of the dates they would like to access the extra prep time they are entitled to in this school year. Valerie will provide teachers with the five-digit code they must include when booking a Teacher on Call. **The release code is 25- Elementary Prep.** Teachers are permitted to book a whole day of prep time. Please be mindful of the work this adds to Valerie and phone in only the one time if possible.

Teacher Congress

Did you submit your name online to the government offering to be a teacher representative to Premier Campbell's Teacher Congress on November 6th? If you were “randomly” selected to participate in this meeting, you should be aware of the following motion passed by the BCTF Executive Committee: ***“That members be advised not to participate in the Premier's Teachers' Congress on November 6, 2006 because government failed to accept duly elected teacher representatives.”*** The Premier is also having a Parent Congress and it is elected District PAC chairs who will be speaking on behalf of parents. The BCTF has sought the same right to send elected members to the Teacher Congress and the government has denied this request.

Factor 88

Withdrawal from Long Term Disability Plan

Teachers aged 64 or whose combined age plus years of service make "factor 88" are entitled to stop contributing to the Long Term Disability Plan provided they have enough sick leave. Phone 604 871-1921 for an application form.

Code of Ethics: When the Parent is also a Teacher

A clear, mutually-respectful, child-focused dialogue between a parent and their child's teacher is very important. But when a parent has concerns, and when that parent is also a teacher, it is important to remember that the BCTF Code of Ethics must always be followed. Clause 5: *The teacher directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague in private, and only then, after informing the colleague in writing of the intent to do so, may direct in confidence the criticism to appropriate individuals who are able to offer advice and assistance.*

DTA advice: If you have concerns that need to be discussed with your child's teacher(s), discuss them first with that teacher(s) -- *in private*. If the concerns are not resolved, you *must* write a short, respectful note to the teacher, saying that you will be referring the matter to . . . [insert name] . . . for advice and assistance. BCTF/DTA members who are also parents must fulfill their professional obligations before acting on their parental concerns.

*Pension Seminars in Delta
2006 - 2007*

**Chalmers Elementary
11315 - 75 Avenue, Delta**

Saturday, October 28
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Contact information for registration:
Telephone: Toll-free 1-877-558-5574
Fax: 250-953-0436
E-mail: TPPseminars@pensionsbc.ca
Web site: www.tpp.pensionsbc.ca

Every Day is Labour Day

Every day is the day after Labour Day...if you are a teacher who works on call. Not only do we get new students, but the staff, the facility and even the curriculum changes daily. Sometimes elementary school, other days high school. Social studies, ceramics, resource room, grade 5, grade 8, grade 12. A really mixed bag! This is why I am so thankful that there is the occasional prep period in the day.

Especially last week when I accepted a job on SEMS for a math teacher. The math 9 stuff looked familiar (I have a child in grade 9 so insider info there!), but the math 11 was all about factoring polynomials and using the factor theorem. Hey, I'm a science major but I don't get much call for higher math these days. Since our latest bargaining has ensured my rights to the prep time of the teacher I am replacing, this was time I put to use reviewing the factor theorem. It's hard to fake it in math, you either get it or you don't! I was able to manage the classes because I could understand what I wanted the students to learn. I was really able to help my students, which is why I can say that for that day they were "my students"!

Susan Yao
TOC in Delta
TOC Representative (Delta)

Public Meeting on Graduation Portfolio



All Delta teachers are reminded that there will be a public meeting, November 1st, 2006 at Magee Secondary, 6360 Maple Street (at 49th Ave.), starting at 7:00 pm for the purposes of the Ministry's Grad Portfolio review. The meeting has not been well publicized among teachers by the Ministry, so all BCTF members with an opinion on the issue are encouraged to attend. The Ministry needs to listen to teachers and be informed by what teachers have to say. Please attend if you are able.