



TODAY

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NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Column

The BCTF sponsored conference on Public Education, held October 27 – 28 was entitled “*Rethinking Accountability*.” The conference marked the beginning of a campaign to heighten public awareness about the excessive focus by government on testing and other data driven accountability measures.

Teachers know that class time spent preparing for and writing tests leaves less time for teaching. Teachers also know that if the focus of effort within schools shifts, if schools focus more on increasing test scores and less on *student learning*, then the real educational purpose of schools – education of the whole child – is, to a degree, lost. Finally, teachers know that after a few years of using “every trick in the book” to achieve better test scores, these will eventually flatten, or “plateau”. The Conference on Public Education – Rethinking Accountability encouraged authentic dialogue among teachers, parents, students and others about what the higher, truly educational purposes of student learning in schools might be.

Premier Campbell’s “Teacher Congress” was held on November 6, at the Wosk Centre downtown. On the same day, across the street at the downtown campus of Simon Fraser University, the BCTF held its own “Teacher Congress”. Very little has emerged from the Premier’s closed meeting, although there have been media reports that some of the “randomly chosen” teachers in attendance complained about classes that are too large, with too much emphasis in schools on standardized testing and too little preparation time. The BCTF meeting included elected teacher reps from every district in the province and invited reps from parent and other groups. As reported by Pat Truelove, the elected teacher representative from Delta, a number of recommendations emerged from the BCTF Congress:

1. The BCTF should meet with Premier Campbell to discuss the current and future needs of the education system.
2. The government should refocus its mandate and resources on teaching and learning, not on the

“unnecessary bureaucratic requirements” the government has been demanding.

3. It was suggested that members resist education related initiatives that, in their opinions, are educationally unsound and damaging.

Of these two gatherings, one was focused on the theme of “accountability”; the other offered an open invitation for dialogue with teachers. In spite of the increasingly hollow ring of the oft-repeated government phrase, “It’s all about achievement,” teachers know better. More than achievement, what really matters to us is that our time, energy, skills and knowledge are not wasted, and that teaching makes it possible for us to teach and for students to learn – and to want to learn – as much as they possibly can. Teachers know that learning matters most. When teachers are free to teach, when student effort is supported, nurtured and encouraged, learning happens. And when learning happens, achievement takes care of itself.

The BCTF New Teachers' Conference

The Federation will be hosting its 12th annual New Teachers' Conference on March 2 & 3, 2007 at the Radisson President Hotel in Richmond.

This year, workshop proposals will be accepted online from November 2 to December 8. See https://www.sporg.com/registration?link_type=reg_info&form_id=65798

Information will be posted on the BCTF web site within the next ten days.

Program and online registration will be available in February. The conference is a professional development opportunity designed specifically for new teachers – those in their first five years of teaching, and for student teachers.

The PD Perspective

As your new PD chairperson I am available to answer your questions. I am in the DTA office on Tuesday afternoons and I can also be contacted on First Class. *The PD Perspective* will be a regular feature in the DTA Newsletter to remind you of upcoming PD opportunities as well as the importance of taking charge of our learning. The Delta *PD Newsletter* will be coming out – WATCH for it – at the end of this month. As PD chairperson, this is what my job entails:

P – participates on committees

D – dispenser of funds

C – continuing to learn, collaborative

H – hand out information

A – advocate for teachers

I – identify needs

R – reliable, skilled organizer

Jacquie Schierer, PD Chairperson

You are invited to a

Public Meeting on the War in Afghanistan

Hosted by Bill Siksay, MP (Burnaby-Douglas) & Peter Julian, MP (Burnaby-New Westminster)

Guest Speakers:

Professor Michael Byers - Political Science & Canada Research Chair in Global Politics & International Law, University of British Columbia.

Lauryn Oates, MA - Professional Human Rights & Women's Rights Advocate. Founder of The Vancouver Chapter of Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan.

Date: **Saturday, November 25, 2006**

Time: **2:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

Location: Operating Engineers Hall
4333 Ledger Avenue, Burnaby

For more information, contact 604 291-8863

K-7 District Overview/Preview Advisory Committee

The deadline for teachers interested in serving on this committee has been extended to Friday, December 8, 2006. For more information contact Jane Chansel at 596-7101 ext. 237 or e-mail at jchansel@deltasd.bc.ca.



The Advocacy Project

This project is grounded in the belief that parents are the natural advocates for their children. Advocacy is a tool that helps people communicate.

Advocates are active resource persons that parents and students can turn to for information and support. They help parents:

- Build the ability to help themselves.
- Help identify, clarify, illustrate and communicate the problem.
- Share information on how to tackle the problem.
- Provide information and sources of information.
- Help make sense of information.
- Explore options for solving the problem.
- Help put follow up plans in place.
- Protect the privacy of others.

Delta DPAC has its own Advocacy Committee Service. Parent advocates are trained and ready to help parents in resolving school based issues.

Advocates do not speak for parents. They help parents develop their voices to speak for themselves and understand policies, procedures, and protocols that exist within the education system in Delta.

You can find out more information about this service at the Parent Centre page of the School District web site under "Advocacy Service."

If you know of a parent who may require the services of an Advocacy Committee parent advocate, please suggest they contact a parent advocate by calling the confidential message line: **604-596-7101, ext. 399**. The Advocacy Committee is strictly confidential.



Elementary Teachers Extra Prep Time

Elementary teachers are encouraged to obtain release codes for **all** of the extra prep time to which they are entitled **before** the Christmas holidays. Release codes will be provided up to the end of June. Teachers can book a Teacher on Call up to 60 days before the date for which they have the release codes. Some dates are already unavailable so if teachers have particular dates they would like the prep time, the sooner they obtain the release code the more likely they will receive the date they request.