



Issue # 4

November 22, 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## President's Column

### Ministry Funding Clawback Plans Revised

In an email on October 18, 2007, the Ministry of Education (MoE) informed school districts of a change to the formula used to calculate the funding of full time ungraded secondary students, and students in grades 10 to 12. Previously, school districts had claimed full time funding for secondary students who took four or more courses. The new funding formula provides for districts to receive funds for the actual number courses a student takes. For example, a student taking a half-time load of only four courses will now generate 50% funding, not the previous 100% funding of the old formula.

In talking to Boards, two "budget pressures" were identified by ministry staff. The first pressure came in the middle of the summer when districts were told they could not charge for summer school courses leading to high school graduation. Like other districts, Delta, suddenly found itself in the position of having to refund fees previously collected from Summer School students. A Ministry allocated Summer School grant to school districts, meant to mitigate this unexpected expense, then needed to be recouped by the Ministry – *somehow*.

The second budget pressure was a 30% growth in enrolment in distributed learning programs. Delta's distributed learning program, *Delta Access*, has seen similar growth. In order to encourage students to take distributed learning programs instead of regular classes in "bricks and mortar schools"; the ministry offered apparent revenue advantages to boards to sign students up for online courses. At that time, the DTA cautioned the Board that the extra funding would be "reclaimed" once the numbers of students in these programs had risen to a critical mass and that the Board would once again find itself playing the "catch-up-take-away" game with the MoE.

With a MoE shortfall in the range of \$50 million created by the two "budget pressures" identified above, this recalculation of funding is expected to recoup those

monies. While Education Minister, Shirley Bond, adamantly maintains that the education budget is not being cut, additional expenses are being imposed on Boards. Instead of calling the game "Catch-up-take-away", the game more properly might be called "Fatal Subtraction"!

Now, after a provincial outcry that had all members of the education community united, the Ministry has backed off some of its plans and will allow exceptions to its previous announcement. Students with special needs and those in alternate programs will be exempted. Semestered schools will resubmit numbers when the new school year begins. Students in Career Training will be funded as in the past. The mandatory graduation transitions program will receive one time funding during grades 10 to 12.

Districts will still be forced to calculate student numbers with the new formula and many districts will find themselves in deficit positions. In Delta, the initial announcement had a potentially devastating impact this year; an initial projected deficit ran anywhere from \$1 to \$1.5 million. As a result of the most recent news release, Delta's financial situation has improved considerably. If there is a deficit, it is projected to be no more than \$50,000; and in a "best-case" scenario, Delta would receive an extra \$140,000 in Ministry funding.

When they were elected, the Liberal government promised stability in education funding. The first announcement had districts scrambling to determine what they could cut from their budgets, established and approved in the spring, without impacting classrooms. This latest fiasco demonstrates that the Liberal government has no idea what stable funding in education looks like and leaves many besides teachers wondering what might be coming next!



*"Most people are willing to pay more to be amused than to be educated." ~ R.C. Savage*



## New Teacher Induction and Social Event

Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 4 – 6 pm  
DTA Office  
#210 – 5000 Bridge Street, Ladner

All classroom teachers and Teachers on Call who are new to the profession are invited to attend the New Teacher Induction and social event. Please call the DTA office at (604) 946-0391 to register.



## CONDOLENCES

The DTA sends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of **Diane Cowan**. Diane retired in June 2006 from North Delta Secondary. She was actively involved in the DTA throughout her teaching career.



**Attention new teachers and Teachers on Call!**  
**Mark your calendars!**

### BCTF New Teachers' Conference

February 29 & March 1, 2008  
Executive Airport Plaza Hotel  
7311 Westminster Hwy, Richmond

#### Information to follow

### BC College of Teachers Report

Kelly Shields, College Councillor for Zone 9  
(Surrey and Delta)

Printed copies of the October report are available in all Delta schools.

## Don't Volunteer to Mark FSAs

The BCTF is advising teachers to not volunteer to mark FSA tests or to take the training to mark them. For a number of years now, the BCTF has advised members not to participate in the writing of test items, field testing, or marking of the FSA. You are aware by now of the new ministry requirement that the open-ended portions of FSA tests be marked locally starting this spring. Having teachers mark FSA tests lends the tests and their results undeserved credibility. If you are pressured to volunteer, or have already attended a training session, or have already volunteered to mark in spring, please contact the DTA office for advice.



### REMEMBER.RECLAIM.REACT In Memory of the Montreal Massacre

Come to the Vancouver Public Library  
Learn and listen to feminist dialogue

**Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007**  
**10:00 am – 6:00 pm**  
**Vancouver Public Library**  
**350 West Georgia Street**

Dialogue Among Feminist Activists  
Monologues by Feminist Speakers  
Feminist Films Old and New  
A Feminist "Walk in Her Shoes"

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter  
[www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca](http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca)  
(604) 872-8212



### What have you done for health and safety?

Is safety on your staff meeting agenda? Have you had your hearing tested? Have you received a flu shot? Have you read the posted yellow District Occupational Health & Safety Committee minutes or your site H&S minutes? Do you know who your site H&S Rep is? Does the site rep know the rights and responsibilities of a joint committee? Has your site developed its own site specific safety inspection checklist?

With winter weather quickly approaching, take a moment to **think** what we all can do for one another's health and safety...take a moment to look for icy areas outside or wet slippery floors... where is your supply of salt? A mop or shovel? Are you parked in a darkened area, check for evenness of the pavement? REMEMBER, report all concerns immediately – prevention and awareness is key.

Now we have come to the **E.N.D. Ensure No Danger...** or it could be the end of you!