

Issue #6

January 15, 2009

President's Column

FSA

In December, teachers in the province voted overwhelmingly to support the BCTF motion that teachers "exercise their professional autonomy and not prepare for, administer, or mark the provincial Foundation Skills Assessment tests."

Delta teachers are encouraged to support this motion in the following ways:

- Sign the postcards that were sent to your schools. Paul Steer and I will deliver them to Liberal MLA, Val Roddick and NDP MLA, Guy Gentner along with a message of teachers' concerns about FSA exams
- Sign the school based letters that will arrive in schools along with this newsletter. Teachers around the province are being asked to show their solidarity with Grade 4 and 7 teachers by signing these letters.
- If you are a Grade 4 or 7 teacher, hand out the information the DTA has prepared for your students to take home to their parents. (Information will be contained in sealed envelopes.)
- If you are a Grade 4 or 7 teacher, do not lose valuable instructional time by having your students do the practice FSAs.
- Refrain from marking FSA exams. Doing so gives validity to FSAs.

The DTA will be giving a presentation on FSAs to the Delta Board of Education on January 20th. Last spring, I attended a District Parent Advisory Council meeting along with Superintendent, Steve Cardwell and District Principal, Judy Marshall to speak on FSAs. After our various presentations, a parent stated that it didn't seem as if any of us were enamoured with the idea of FSAs and he wondered why they had to continue. He gets it, why doesn't Minister Bond?

The BCTF FSA campaign is being discussed at many different levels in the education community - from the Ministry to Boards of Education. As news is available, the DTA will disseminate information through Staff Reps and the DTA Virtual News.

Gag Law

For the first time, the government legislated "gag law",

Bill 42, will be exercised in February 2009. This legislation effectively limits spending by third party groups to a maximum of \$150,000 for the sixty days preceding the campaign period of one month after the election is called. BCTF ability to raise education concerns as a vote determining issue in the May provincial election through a paid media campaign will be severely restricted by the provisions of Bill 42. The provincial government has recently ratcheted up spending on government ads promoting BC as "the best place on earth to be". After the recent snowfall, some British Columbians might not agree with the sentiment, however, suspicious minds believe that the Liberal government is doing some pre-election spending and self promotion compliments of your tax dollars.

This legislation has met with opposition from a very broad range of groups and organizations, including Can-West Global media, the Trial Lawyers Association, the BC Civil Liberties Association, the BC Federation of Labour, political commentators, public sector unions, and the Independent Business and Contractors Association. In fact, Gordon Campbell himself was a very vocal opponent of this type of "gag" legislation when he was in Opposition. What a difference a walk across the legislative floor can make to a politician! (See cartoon on reverse side.)

DTA General Meeting 4:00 pm, Tuesday, February 10th Seaquam Secondary Cafeteria

Agenda Items:

- Election of BCTF AGM Delegates
- DTA Audited Financial Statements
- Report of the President
- Constitutional Amendments

If you require daycare, please call the DTA office at 604 946-0391.

BCTF Annual General Meeting Hyatt Regency Hotel March 14 - 17

Contact the DTA if you are interested in letting your name stand for election as a delegate. Candidates are encouraged to forward a statement (maximum 100 words) to the DTA by February 2, 2009.

The PD Perspective

Jacquie Schierer, PD Chairperson



It is vital that teachers and staff members understand the linkage between learning with students in the classroom and learning with colleagues. When teachers learn to facilitate faculty dialogue, they become better at facilitating classroom dialogue; when they listen well to colleagues, they pay the same degree of attention to their students; when they reflect aloud with colleagues, they enable students to reflect aloud; and when they expect to discover evidence to inform their own thinking, they begin to expect students to do the same on the path to problem solving and understanding.

Similarly, it is important for educators to recognize the connection between our own learning and that of our colleagues. When we think in terms of reciprocity, we understand that we are responsible for our own and our colleagues' learning as well as that of our students. This mutuality is at the heart of professional development.

Excerpt from – “Leadership Capacity” by Linda Lambert (2003, page 21)

Five things you can say or do when you hear “That’s so gay!”

1. Say, “This is a homophobia-free zone,” We do not tolerate anti-gay slurs here,” or “I am offended by that homophobic remark.”
2. Ask, “How would you feel if your name/identity was used repetitively instead of ‘gay’?”
i.e.: “That’s so Bryce/Aisha! etc.”
3. Provide support to targeted students. “You don’t deserve to be treated that way. I am really sorry that happened to you.”
4. Use analogies between homophobia and racism, sexism, ableism, etc.
5. Download classroom posters on this topic from the BCTF web site at bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106.

Source: *BCTF Social Justice Newsletter, Spring 2008*

“Teaching from the Heart and Building for the Future”

New Teachers’ & Student Teachers’ Conference

February 27-February 28, 2009

Radisson Hotel

8181 Cambie Road, Richmond, BC

Hosted by the BC Teachers’ Federation

Registration and TOC costs will be paid by the DTA PD Fund for one new teacher per school. Please contact the DTA at 604-946-0391 for more information.

Visit the BCTF web site for conference registration and updates.

bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2009.aspx



Dates To Remember

Maternity Leave Workshop:

Thursday, February 5 at Delta Secondary School starting at 4:00 pm.

TOC Meeting & Workshop:

Wednesday, February 25 at the District Resource Centre starting at 4:00 pm.

