

Vernon Teachers' Association

VOICES

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DARK DAY IN EDUCATION



Over a single weekend in January 2002, the BC Liberals wiped out decades of advocacy and sacrifice by teachers and launched a decade of cutbacks, school closures, and untold damage to teaching and learning conditions.

In April 2011, the BC Supreme Court found the 2002 legislation to be unconstitutional and invalid.





Reflections.....

*Do what is right
Do it because it is right
Do it right.
Anonymous*

Dear Colleagues:

We sometimes need reminders, wakeup calls and nudges in the ribs. When I read the above quote, it resonated very quickly for obvious reasons: we are on strike in the LRB authorized job action Phase One because we must do what is right.

In the latest news is confirmation about something that we knew all along, that the income gap between the rich and the poor in BC is the largest in the country. B.C. Finance Minister Kevin Falcon makes no apologies for the income gap in B.C., saying B.C.'s Liberal government has pursued a policy of encouraging high incomes through low taxes.

Falcon doesn't dispute the numbers in the study, but he takes issue with the analysis. "I just have trouble with people saying, 'Oh, because there's a gap there that's must be a bad thing.' You know remember, as I mentioned earlier, and I'm not being flippant, but in Cuba they don't have any income inequality because they're all poor," he said.

The BCTF plan "Better Schools for B.C." includes a position statement that B.C. needs a child poverty reduction plan because a child's performance in school is strongly related to socio-economic status and a good education is often the only means of breaking the cycle of poverty for poor children.

When you juxtapose our plan with the Liberal's education plan, it is obvious that there are other major differences besides their ideological differences about poverty. Their plan involves ignoring class size and composition issues in favour of management rights to place whoever they want into whatever class they want. Their plan calls for fewer specialist teachers (and therefore less support for students). And they call their plan 'personalized learning'. Do the math. The solution for declining enrolment in SD#22 Secondary schools is fewer choices for students by keeping class sizes large and cutting electives. How is this 'personalized learning'?

Phase One – Do it Right.

In solidarity,

Bruce

LOCAL BARGAINING - YOU BET!

Here are two parts of the CA that the District doesn't follow (and the VTA agree should be removed or reworked).

B.9 - Pay Periods -12-Month Option - Current language isn't followed in terms of the mid-month advances. The reason that we are stuck with the language is that in 2006, because we had an existing 12-month option we couldn't use the Provincial language. Our language was not addressed at the provincial table and BCPSEA won't let the Board address it at the local table. This clause was written long before computers were our friends and is based on manual calculations.

E.21 - Teacher Intent Forms - These forms are mentioned a few times, but the District discontinued their use a long time ago. If you are given one, it is coming from your principal (during Phase One it can be ignored). Any AO can ask teachers in a casual conversation what they would like to teach next year. If a teacher wants to transfer schools, they can let the Director of Instruction know, and if they have been in a school for 5 years they can use the 5-year transfer process for posted jobs.

VTA GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, February 7th

4:00—5:00 P.M. - VERNON REC CENTRE

Draft Meeting Agenda

- ◆ **Voting will be held to elect 9 VTA Delegates to attend the BCTF AGM on March 17th to 20th, 2012 in Vancouver. Nominations may be made from the floor. (If you would like to put your name forward prior to the meeting please contact Richard Santos at rlsantos2001@gmail.com)**
- ◆ **Guest Speakers — CUPE President, Mark Olsen, CUPE Update on their negotiations. BCTF 2nd Vice President, Glen Hansman, BCTF Provincial bargaining update. “Connect the dots”.**
- ◆ **BC Teachers' Council Update**
- ◆ **Door Prize Draw**





SD#22 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hello from the PD office:

I've been busy helping organize the February 17th Okanagan Zone Conference. Once again, we are holding it at George Elliot Secondary in Winfield. This conference is at no cost for Okanagan Valley teachers and snacks and lunch are included.

Everything is in place and registration is open. You can find the brochure at www.mycota.ca (click on Pro-D) and registration is at <https://ereg.sd23.bc.ca/>.

The keynote speaker this year is Spencer Kagan, a renowned speaker on brain friendly instruction. There are many other workshops for all levels and specialties, so please check it out.

In other news, Bruce and I met with our MLA, Eric Foster last week. On your behalf, I brought up and advocated for increased funding for PD. I cited the wide range of funding among different locals and how our formula and language has not changed in 18 years. I also raised concerns about protecting professionalism and autonomy for teachers.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with your PD questions, queries and ideas.

Sincerely,

Robyn Ladner
Professional Development Chairperson
prodchair@shaw.ca

UPCOMING EVENTS.....

- ◆ Register for Okanagan Zone Conference, February 17th - follow the PD links on the VTA website: vernonta.com
- ◆ Register now for the March 2/3 'New and Beginning Teachers' Conference: <http://www.bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2012/>
- ◆ Pension Seminars are coming to the Okanagan, register now: www.pensionsbc.ca

We are a Social Justice Union! Get involved!

- ◆ February 29th is 'Day of Pink'. Watch for posters in your school - celebrate diversity!
- ◆ April 1st is the Rick Hansen 25th Anniversary Relay. Go to <http://www.rickhansenrelay.com/en/about-the-relay.aspx> for more information.