



# Bargaining Bulletin

www.surreyteachers.org

April 2011

## WHAT IS AN OPENING POSITION?

By Kevin Amboe

BCTF and BCPSEA opening statements have been made at the provincial bargaining table.

In its opening statement the BCTF made it clear that we intend to renegotiate the split of local and provincial issues as well as make improvements to PELRA issues. PELRA issues include salary, benefits, hours of work and paid leaves. The split of issues determine which are provincial and

which are local matters. BCPSEA, on the other hand, has made it clear that their opening position is a “net 0” mandate. This month the BCTF bargaining team tabled our position on the split of issues. We are awaiting BCPSEA’s response.

It does not bode well that after Minister Abbott spoke at the BCTF AGM, he later made the following comment to the media, “A strike by B.C. public school teachers and an imposed settlement may be

unavoidable this year given the positions of the parties entering negotiations.”

However, when Premier Clark was asked about the BC Supreme Court ruling on Bills 27 and 28 she said, “But clearly, it wasn’t the right bill. The Supreme Court told us that and we are going to have to address that. And we’re going to make sure that we get on different footing with the teachers’ union just as the court has suggested. ♦

## AT THE LOCAL BARGAINING TABLE

By Kevin Amboe,

We know that bargaining is a process. Initial discussions are about establishing protocols, including meeting dates, times, expenses and numbering of proposals. Unfortunately we already had a slow down in negotiations. The employer was insisting on language in the

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protocol agreement that no other local and board have agreed to. The language in question was provided by BCPSEA (the provincial bargaining agent) as a template for locals to use. The six signed protocol agreements in other locals did not follow the template.

After two meetings with representatives from the Surrey

Board of Education, the protocol agreement could not be agreed to. The employer is bargaining with a two-member team. The Surrey Teachers' Association was prepared at our first meeting to complete the protocol agreement and then start with opening statements at the next meeting. At present, the Board of Education is represented by two members, Loris Pante - Director of HR and Ray Prosser - District Principal HR.

We are hopeful the exclusion of trustees is not a sign of the importance placed on negotiations. We have requested that at least one of the elected Board of Education representatives be present or on the Bargaining Team for the employer. The Board of Education is the actual employer. We have been told that bargaining is delegated to staff and not done by Trustees;

however, several Boards of Education have 2 trustees on their Negotiating Teams. The representative for the Board stated that Trustees’ only role in bargaining is to read and review and insists that all authority is delegated to him as a staff member within the district.

On the more positive side, we do have 10 more meetings scheduled between April 26 and June 22 and we will keep you posted of the progress at the Bargaining Table.

Our third meeting occurred on April 18 and we tabled the 25 objectives approved by our membership. The board has also tabled their items.

We have scheduled additional dates to table language. April 26, 28; May 4, 9, 16, 26; June 1, 8, 16, 22. ♦

# CAN YOU IMAGINE? CAN YOU RECALL?

By Kevin Amboe

Surrey teachers have a history of putting the needs of students first. This has included bargaining class sizes. As early as 1972 Surrey teachers fought for a Kindergarten class size limit of 20.

In 2002, working and learning conditions clauses, such as class size, support for special needs, and hours of work, were stripped from teacher collective agreements by the Liberal government. Below are some examples of language that was stripped. It is our understanding that this language is restored and can now be improved upon.

1 FTE for

Kindergarten	20 students	Intermediate Multi-age	26 students
Grade 1	22 students	Intermediate	29 students
Grade 2	22 students	Secondary English	25 students
Grade 3	22 students	Home Ec. & I.E. Shop	24 students

Not more than two (2) low incidence students with special needs (See Article 2.60) will be enrolled in a “regular” class and not more than one (1) high incidence (Severe Behaviour) student with special needs will be enrolled in a “regular” class.

## Adult Education

ESL Beginners	21 students
ESL Inter/Advanced	25 students

## Students with Special Needs Classes

Severe Learning Disabled Alternate or Social Development  
1 FTE per 8 students

Severe Learning Disabled (SLD) Resource Room

1 FTE per 12 students + 0.5 SEA

## NON-ENROLLING STAFFING RATIOS

1 FTE Elementary Teacher Librarian for every 628 students

1 FTE Teacher Librarian in each secondary school.

1 FTE Secondary Counsellor for every 380 students

A district-wide average of 1 FTE for every 41.2 ESL Students

1 FTE Elementary Learning Assistance Teacher for every 410 students

1 FTE Secondary Learning Assistance Teacher for every 550 students

1 FTE Teacher of the Hearing Impaired for every 28 hearing impaired students

1 FTE Integration Support Teacher for every 15 students

1 FTE School Psychologist for every 3,410 students

1 FTE Speech Language Pathologist for each full group of 2,319 students

The recent court decision is a huge victory for BC teachers and students. The British Columbia Supreme Court declared the legislation that stripped teacher collective bargaining rights in 2002 was unconstitutional and invalid. Madam Justice Griffin found that Bills 27 and 28 were a substantial interference in bargaining rights and infringed on freedom of association guaranteed under the *Charter of Rights*.

*“While not a perfect tool, collective bargaining has long been seen as the best vehicle for resolving differences between management and labour,”* states Justice Griffin.

There is no doubt that this ruling restores our right to full free collective bargaining. Teachers now expect the restoration of collective agreement language regarding class size and composition. The court has told government to rectify the situation and we expect government to do so, promptly.

To view the full list of stripped collective agreement language see the following document located on the STA Website:

[http://www.surreyteachers.org/documents/Barg/Stripped\\_Language.pdf](http://www.surreyteachers.org/documents/Barg/Stripped_Language.pdf)

See more detail on the court decision at:

<http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/BargainingContracts/Bills27-28Decision.pdf>

**Days of Bargaining 3**

**Future Negotiations:**

**April 26, 28; May 4, 9, 16, 26;**

**June 1, 8, 16, 22.**