

ABBOTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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ADTA BARGAINING BULLETIN

Number 5 – April 17, 2019



Dear ADTA Member,

The purpose of this bulletin is to update you on the progress of both the provincial and local bargaining teams and the current state of related items.

LOCAL BARGAINING

The bargaining team met with the District on March 11th and began discussion on meeting protocols and setting future dates for bargaining. I am happy to report that the District has agreed to seven meeting dates between April 30th and June 27th that will see the two sides rotate between the ADTA building and the Board office for our discussions. Our first meeting will likely establish the meeting protocols that were not set previously and a sharing of the bargaining objectives between the two parties.

For those that were unable to attend, the ADTA held a general meeting on April 10th and voted on the Union's local bargaining priorities for this round. These are all items found in Appendix 2 (you can find this document on page 96 of your CA). We are seeking improvements on a number of items which remain important to teachers and are hopeful that the District will see the wisdom of our arguments and agree wholeheartedly. As all of our business was conducted in committee, should you want to learn more of what was passed please speak with your ADTA Staff Rep or call the ADTA Office and speak with us.

PROVINCIAL BARGAINING

In February 2019, the BC Teachers' Federation began bargaining with the provincial government and the BC Public School Employers' Association, the group that represents school districts. The BCTF's goal is to negotiate a new collective agreement by June 30, 2019, when the current one expires. Since there is a collective agreement in place until then, these contract talks will not affect schools in any way.

What are BC teachers asking for?

Salary improvements

Teachers work hard in busy, diverse, and complicated classrooms every single day to give all students the support they need. They deserve fair pay for their work. But over the past 16 years, teachers' salaries in BC have fallen behind other provinces. This [infographic](#) shows BC teacher salaries compared with the rest of Canada.

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Provincial Bargaining continued.....

BC needs to improve teachers' salaries and offer other recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure our schools and classrooms are properly staffed to support all students.

Class-size and composition improvements

After a long legal battle against the former BC Liberal government, in 2016 the BCTF won a landmark victory at the Supreme Court of Canada that restored class-size and composition standards in our collective agreements. They had been unconstitutionally stripped away by then education minister Christy Clark in 2002. That led to 15 years of teacher layoffs, cuts to specialist teachers, increased class sizes, and fewer supports for children with special needs.

Now that those class-size, class-composition, and staffing ratios are back, they need to be improved. In many school districts, there are actually no standards for class-size in Grades 4–12 or for class-composition. That means some BC students and teachers don't have access to the same level of services

How does collective agreement language help kids and teachers?

Collective agreement standards on class-size, class-composition, and staffing ratios drive increased supports into schools. That means more teachers providing much needed services to students, especially those with special needs.

When the BCTF's stripped contract language was restored by the court, the BC government was required to create 3,700 new teaching positions. Class sizes got smaller and more specialists like school counsellors, teacher-librarians, and special education teachers started working with students. Without the collective agreement provisions, those improved services are threatened. In addition, the standards in the collective agreement are the "floor," not the "ceiling." With proper government funding, supports for students can always be enhanced.

How is the teacher shortage affecting BC kids?

As of February 2019, there were still more than 300 unfilled teaching positions in BC. With more than half the school year completed, that means BC kids haven't received all of the supports they need. The shortage grows when you consider all the on-call teachers needed to fill in for sick days and the historic number of unqualified and uncertified individuals currently teaching in classrooms.

Throughout this school year and the previous one, there were many instances when students with special needs had their specific programs or instruction cancelled because of the shortage. Too often, specialist teachers are being redeployed from their small group or one-on-one work to cover classroom vacancies.

According to labour market projection, BC is going to need 17,000 new teaching staff over the next decade due to retirement and enrolment growth, so inaction will only make the problem worse.

Watch and share the BCTF's latest television ad on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to help let the government know that our kids and their teachers are worth investing in!

Yours in Solidarity,

Doug Smuland

ADTA Bargaining Chair