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BCPSEA Responses to BCTF and Local Teachers' Association Statements

Comments by and attributed to BCTF President Glen Hansman in two recent articles inaccurately characterize the employers' proposals and require correction (*The Globe and Mail*, May 28, 2019, "Labour peace prospects in BC schools dim as teachers accuse NDP of backpedaling on 2016 ruling;" *The Vancouver Courier*, May 27, 2019, "Threat of strike looms as B.C. teachers and province appear far apart on big issues).

BCTF Statement	BCPSEA Response
<p>"We still want a deal, but it can't be any old deal. We definitely need to make sure we are not going backward"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The restored language actually dates back to the 1980s — classroom organization and student designations have changed significantly since then. ▪ If the language had remained in the collective agreement it would have been the subject of negotiation by the parties in the bargaining rounds since 2001 and would have evolved as classrooms and student designations have evolved. ▪ Both the union and the employers recognize that the language needs to be updated to reflect the classrooms of 2019 and beyond. ▪ The BCTF is also proposing changes to the restored language. ▪ It's no surprise that both parties are looking for changes.
<p>"What is on the table are proposals that would remove each and every word of the teachers' Supreme Court win of November, 2016, and replace it with watered-down language on class size, no language on class composition and less onus on the employer to ensure certain special-needs teachers are there."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is untrue. The BCPSEA proposals ensure that the new money the provincial government put into the public education system to address the restored language and hire more teachers will remain in the system. ▪ BCPSEA put forward opening proposals to start the discussion and subsequently amended the proposals given the discussion at the table, which is how bargaining is supposed to work. ▪ BCPSEA said to the BCTF that we're also prepared to explore any ideas that address both the employers' and the union's concerns. ▪ There is not "less onus on the employer..." It is the statutory responsibility of the employer to provide services to students. Services are set through the policy direction of the Ministry of Education and as set by boards of education. Services are not driven by the collective agreement between teachers and their employer. There is no intent to reduce services to students.

<p>“Hansman said the employer’s proposal calls for bigger classes in most districts, lesser provisions for special needs students than are in place now in many districts including Vancouver, and no guaranteed numbers of specific specialist teachers like librarians or counsellors.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is a mischaracterization. The employers’ proposals provide the ability for teachers and principals to work together to decide, at a local school level, how best to use resources to organize classes, including making classes smaller. ▪ The employers’ proposals guarantee the same or greater minimum number of non-enrolling (non-classroom) teachers, but don’t restrict the hiring of those non-enrolling teachers based on a rigid formula. Rather, our proposals allow each learning community to decide what non-enrolling positions need to be hired to address the unique learning needs of the particular learning environment. ▪ This approach allows districts to determine student learning needs BEFORE determining the assignment of non-enrolling teachers, which they are not able to do under the current language.
<p>“BCTF did its own modelling, based on the employer’s class size data, and found that hundreds of teachers would be laid off in some Metro districts, Hansman said.</p> <p>Districts with smaller class sizes and more specialist teachers — such as Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond, Victoria, Sooke, Saanich, Nanaimo and Langley — would be the hardest hit, Hansman said.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is highly unlikely to occur. The union has not engaged in any fulsome discussion of this concern at the bargaining table — instead, they have been raising it in the media and online instead of countering the opening proposal to start discussions. We remain hopeful that the union will engage in meaningful discussions at the bargaining table that will result in no disruption to districts. ▪ School staffing processes are complex and require a number of considerations. The assertion that the employers’ proposals would result in layoffs suggests simplistic staffing processes, and is misleading. ▪ The employer proposed a baseline class size and the ability to provide additional resources to allow local school districts to lower class size and to customize what workload supports work best for the teachers in that particular learning environment, including providing more classroom support, more teacher preparation time, etc.