

2019-03

June 12, 2019

By E-mail: Two Pages

BCPSEA Responses to BCTF and Local Teachers' Association Statements

Statements made by BCTF President Glen Hansman during an interview on CBC Radio's "The Early Edition" on Friday, June 7, 2019, are inaccurate and require correction.

Statement	BCPSEA Response
<p>"Unfortunately, we raised our concerns with the Premier's office and the Minister of Education at the beginning of April, the day after the employers' association tabled their proposals..."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The parties may not agree on proposals that each of the parties has tabled — but that is a normal part of the discussions that occur during negotiations and the place to make progress on those discussions is at the bargaining table. ▪ Both parties have proposed changes to the restored language, which dates back to the 1980s — BCPSEA has concerns with the proposals tabled by the BCTF as well. ▪ BCPSEA has said to the BCTF that we're prepared to explore any ideas that address both the employers' and the union's concerns. ▪ The most productive forum in which to have the necessary discussions is at the bargaining table — that is where solutions will be found.
<p>"...because so far we have seen proposals that would take us backwards and would mean massive cuts to teaching supports to kids in most of the lower mainland school districts, most school districts on Vancouver Island, and a fair portion of the Fraser Valley, too."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This statement is inaccurate — the BCPSEA proposals will NOT result in "massive cuts to teaching supports" for students. ▪ The province's public boards of education and their senior educators asked us to discuss options for protecting teacher workload while maintaining the existing resources in the system — all the new money that went into the system to address the restored language and hire more teachers will remain in the system. ▪ BCPSEA also wants to ensure that students would have more equal access to the services they need no matter where they live in the province. ▪ BCPSEA's proposed model is intended to move the system forward to reflect the classrooms of 2020 and beyond, allowing resources to be allocated more effectively to both protect teacher workload and be more responsive to individual student needs.

<p>“After the teachers won the courts, there were several months that we spent with the BC Liberal government and its representatives to rework a whole bunch of stuff that was done in 1998. Really, the language is only two years and two months old. There is some stuff from before that, too, that was originally locally negotiated.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This statement is inaccurate. ▪ After the Supreme Court of Canada decision, representatives of the provincial government, the BCTF, and BCPSEA worked together to set out a process to implement the restored language. ▪ That process did NOT include a “rework”— the process focused on trying to find an approach to implementing the old language that would cause the least amount of disruption to schools, recognizing how significantly classroom organization and student designations have changed since the restored language was originally negotiated in the 1980s.
<p>“Our approach is to try to identify some gaps and raise services up in some school districts without taking away from any neighbouring one. For example, West Vancouver and Prince George are two school districts where there's no language whatsoever for class size from grades 4 through 12. We want to address that....”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-third of the province's 60 public school districts do not have class composition language — those districts consistently provide a high level of services to students. ▪ 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. ▪ Services to students are driven through the policy objectives of the Ministry of Education and locally elected boards of education — not through the terms and conditions of employment contained in one employee group's collective agreement.
<p>“About 20 of our locals, including the ones in the lower mainland, have some guidance around thresholds for class composition and after that threshold is met, additional staffing gets triggered — that sort of stuff. Instead of taking that approach, the employer wants to go to a bucket-of-money approach...That doesn't provide the certainty for our members. At the end of the day, it would be — unless there was mutual agreement — the superintendent would decide.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our proposals would allow the local parties to work together to figure out what workload supports are needed — they would have the ability to decide, as a first consideration, how to best address the learning needs of students in the particular classroom environment. ▪ Our proposals include a collaborative approach to workload assessment through a committee that allows teachers and administrators to work together to ensure boards can direct funds to address unique circumstances. ▪ That money could be used to lower class size or provide additional staffing supports. ▪ Locally elected boards of education have the statutory responsibility and accountability for delivering public education services to students in their school districts. ▪ The Superintendent, as the senior educator in the district, has the responsibility and accountability to the board of education to ensure the effective delivery of those services to students.
<p>“We've actually proposed a different approach to doing class composition...So from our point of view, there is zero chance of getting a deal before the end of June if the employers' rollback concessionary proposals are still on the table and if there isn't more money brought to the table to try to address some of the other problems that have accumulated.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BCPSEA has not tabled “rollback concessionary” proposals — we have tabled changes to reflect today's classrooms and to better serve students' diverse learning needs. ▪ 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. ▪ We're trying and hoping to have meaningful discussions at the bargaining table that will lead to solutions that address the needs of both parties to the agreement — public boards of education and public school teachers.