



BCTF

British Columbia Teachers' Federation A Union of Professionals
100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 bctf.ca
604-871-2283 1-800-663-9163  Executive Offices fax: 604-871-2290

Via email: FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca

June 7, 2018

Honourable Carole James
Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
Room 153, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister James:

On behalf of the 43,000 members of the BC Teachers' Federation, I am writing to thank you for the meeting in Vancouver on May 11, 2018 where we discussed the upcoming round of collective bargaining—as well as important contextual, structural, and logistical matters related to negotiations between BCPSEA and the BCTF.

We would appreciate the opportunity for another face-to-face discussion sometime soon to continue to discuss the matters we raised, including the following:

Commencement to negotiations by December

The current collective agreement expires at the end of June 2019. Under the *Labour Code*, the very latest the parties need to commence negotiations is in March 2019. However, given the complexities of collective bargaining in our sector, recruitment and retention challenges, and the fact that the last two rounds of collective bargaining spilled over multiple school years, the BCTF believes that it is in everyone's interests to commence negotiations earlier than usual.

I note that negotiations between BCPSEA and CUPE's K–12 Provincial Bargaining Committee are beginning, with dates set for the near future. Their collective agreement, like ours, expires at the end of June 2019.

As discussed, the BCTF seeks a December 1, 2018 start for our negotiations.

Enabling more successful negotiations at local tables

The *Public Education Labour Relations Act* sets out a two-tiered bargaining model, with large cost items being negotiated at the provincial table between the BCTF and the BC Public School Employers' Association, and other matters being negotiated between individual BCTF locals and their respective board of education.

Since *PELRA* was brought in, there has never been a satisfactory dispute resolution mechanism for items being negotiated at the local table—other than having hundreds of proposals from local tables referred to the provincial table, which has proven to be unwieldy. The BCTF would like government to work with us to put in place meaningful dispute resolution mechanisms for the local parties to be able to utilize.

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We would also like to discuss with you the possibility of making funds available so that the local parties can, if there is agreement, successfully address some of the cost items that fall within their purview. The bulk of these provisions have not changed for a quarter of a century.

Enabling negotiations of more matters at local tables

Part 3, Section 7 of *PELRA* lists the matters that must be negotiated at the provincial table between the BCTF and BCPSEA. These provincial matters are:

1. salaries and benefits.
2. workload, including, without limitation, class size restrictions.
3. time worked and paid leave.

The BCTF is not seeking a legislative change to *PELRA* at this time. However, for the upcoming round of collective bargaining and on a go-forward basis, the BCTF would like to see all matters not specifically captured by Section 7 of *PELRA* to be dealt with by negotiations by the local parties, where the actual employment relationship exists.

Given the diversity of school districts and local contexts, we believe that there would be many positives to this that will ultimately lead to more productive negotiations in the upcoming and future rounds.

Given the history of collective bargaining in K–12 since the previous government’s unconstitutional legislation in 2002, we are hoping that you share our desire to be proactive in setting the stage for successful negotiations, and that time can be made in your calendar for another meeting at a location that is convenient for you.

I look forward to your response.

Yours truly,



Glen Hansman
President

GH:do/tfeu

pc: Don Wright, Deputy Minister to the Premier
Honourable John Horgan, Premier
Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education
Scott MacDonald, Deputy Minister
Honourable Harry Bains, Minister of Labour
Christina Zacharuk, President and CEO, PSEC
Renzo Del Negro, Chief Executive Officer, BCPSEA