

Parties to a Dispute — Update

On March 9, 2009, arbitrator John Steeves issued a preliminary decision identifying the parties to a dispute in School District No. 34 (Abbotsford). This issue was addressed by the arbitrator as a result of a preliminary issue raised. In his decision, arbitrator Steeves found that both BCPSEA and the school district were parties to the dispute. He also found that the BCTF was the sole party on the union side of the dispute. Both BCPSEA and the BCTF sought clarification from arbitrator Steeves regarding his preliminary decision.

Prior to Arbitrator Steeves issuing the requested clarification, the BCPSEA and the BCTF agreed to engage in discussions in an effort to resolve the issue. Agreement has been reached; key elements of the agreement include the following:

- The parties will make a joint request to the arbitrator to suspend the application of his preliminary March 9, 2009 ruling;
- The parties will withdraw their respective requests for clarification of Mr. Steeves' preliminary ruling;
- Neither the BCPSEA nor the BCTF, inclusive of their respective members, will raise the issue of "the identification of the parties to the dispute" in any arbitration proceedings involving the BCPSEA, the BCTF, or any of their respective members; and
- Neither the BCPSEA nor the BCTF, inclusive of their respective members, will rely on any correspondence that has been exchanged between the parties with respect to the "identification of the parties to the dispute."

The intent of the agreement is to return the parties to the same status as existed prior to the issue first being raised.

Questions

Please direct any questions on this matter to your BCPSEA labour relations liaison.