

BCPSEA Responses to BCTF and Local Teachers' Association Statements

**BCTF Bargaining Bulletin
No. 5, Volume 8, May 15, 2006**

BCTF Statement	BCPSEA Response
<p>"BC administrators...were given 8% but promised a matching increase if teachers get more than 8%."</p>	<p>The Negotiating Framework established by the provincial government includes general wage adjustments of 8% over four years commencing July 1, 2006 (2%, 2%, 2%, 2%) for non-unionized management staff, including principals and vice principals. Although there may be some targeted labour market adjustments where legitimate recruitment, retention or compression issues are in evidence in very specific circumstances, no "promise" has been made to match any increase granted to public school teachers.</p>
<p>"Other public sector settlements have ranged between 10% for government employees, almost 17% for nurses, and up to 19% for some specialist doctors."</p>	<p>The BC Nurses' Union's news release of May 5, 2006 states that, "The agreement will increase nurses' wages by 14.2 per cent over four years – by 15 per cent when the increases are compounded."</p> <p>The doctors' agreement provides for a 10.4% fee increase over four years and for some physicians – especially full-service family doctors in high demand and short supply – there was a fee increase of 19%.</p>

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<p>“Although the benefits that flowed from Vince Ready’s recommendations last October were clearly defined as part of the last round, BCPSEA included them in an effort to inflate the value of today’s offer. Specifically, BCPSEA referred to the \$20 million for class-size/composition improvements, the cost of grid harmonization, and the increase in TOC pay.”</p>	<p>BCPSEA did not include in our offer of May 15 the compensation increases awarded to teachers by Vince Ready. We did reference those increases in our presentation to the BCTF bargaining team, to note that our proposals are in addition to some significant increases teachers have already received, particularly teachers on call. We did not include these increases in our costing of the BCTF proposals.</p>
<p>“BCPSEA’s proposal did not even mention major areas of concern such as pensions, PD funding, local bargaining processes, and teacher workload issues. There was only one minor improvement in benefits (EHB lifetime maximum) and the minimal offer on prep time includes concessions.</p> <p>The BCTF bargaining team let the employer know that they saw this offer as an insult to BC teachers.”</p>	<p>At the close of the bargaining session on May 15, the BCTF told the BCPSEA bargaining team that the three areas of most importance to them are salary, class size within the legal scope of their proposal, and preparation time.</p> <p>The BCPSEA proposal is not a final offer. It is designed to promote serious discussions in order to achieve a collective agreement by June 30. In addition to a double-digit salary proposal, the BCTF proposals include double-digit increases to other areas of the collective agreement, including benefits, professional development, and preparation time. Public school employers are not in a position to conclude an agreement with cost increases of this magnitude. We have asked the BCTF to prioritize their cost items. We are waiting to hear from the BCTF as to when they are ready to resume negotiations.</p>

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<p>Why...would the government think that teachers would accept an 8% salary increase over four years...?</p>	<p>As referenced above, the BCPSEA proposal was made in the context of the entire package of proposals that the BCTF has on the table, which contains significant cost implications.</p>
<p>“Teachers are already 18% behind teachers in Edmonton.</p> <p>A Ministry of Finance study concluded in December 2005 that teachers need a 20% increase to catch up to colleagues in Alberta and Ontario.”</p>	<p>The BCTF has utilized the Catholic Schools grid in Edmonton as the basis for this comparison. Based on a comparison with the Edmonton public school district, the figure would be 13.58%.</p> <p>Further, when comparing to other provinces, it is misleading to cherry pick certain elements of the agreement – the entire collective agreement needs to be considered. For example, most teacher collective agreements in Alberta do not contain provisions for preparation time, which is a significant cost item.</p>
<p>“Under the new agreement between BC and Alberta, BC teachers will be allowed to teach in Alberta as of April 1, 2007.”</p>	<p>BC teachers have been able to teach in Alberta with their BC certification for a long time. The Alberta-British Columbia Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement signed by the Alberta and BC governments on April 28 will allow teachers from Alberta to teach in BC without completing the further course work currently required by the BC College of Teachers.</p> <p>Statistics provided by the BC College of Teachers show that over the past three years, more Alberta teachers sought certification in BC than BC teachers sought certification in Alberta.</p>

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<p>“BC teachers’ salaries at Category 5 Max rank 8th in Canada....”</p>	<p>The BCTF included the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut in the comparator group – areas which have recruitment challenges due to their remote locations.</p> <p>When comparing maximum teachers’ salaries, BC ranks third among the comparator provinces: Ontario, Alberta, BC, Manitoba, Saskatchewan.</p>
<p>“If teachers receive more than 8%, AOs have been promised the same % increase. That will move AO salaries even further ahead of teachers. AOs did not lose salary in October while they supervised empty schools.”</p>	<p>As previously referenced, principals and vice principals have not been promised the same percentage increase as teachers.</p> <p>Principals and vice principals did not lose salary during the teachers’ illegal strike in October 2005 as they are not members of the union and were at work as expected.</p>
<p>“We are experiencing TOC shortages every day. Teachers are making do without proper coverage when they are sick or have to be away from their classes.”</p>	<p>There is no general teacher shortage. However, some school districts have recently indicated concern about the supply of Teachers on Call (TOCs). This is a new concern for districts and emerged partway through the current school year. This is primarily attributable to the October 2005 recommendations of Industrial Inquiry Commissioner Vince Ready that provided additional funding of \$20 million to school districts to hire more teachers — an additional 1,200 teachers were hired as a result. Given the time of year that the funds were made available, many districts hired these teachers from their TOC list rather than conducting a broad province-wide recruitment. This had the effect of reducing the number of available TOCs in a given district.</p>