

From the Chair



No. 2013-05 June 21, 2013

By E-mail: Three Pages

“A New Roadmap” for Collective Bargaining with Public School Teachers

As you have no doubt read or heard in the various media, Minister of Education Peter Fassbender met separately yesterday with representatives of the BC School Trustees Association, the BC Teachers' Federation, and the BC Public School Employers' Association.

Vice-Chair Silas White, CEO Hugh Finlayson, and I met with the Minister in the afternoon. At that meeting, the Minister advised us that, as noted in the Ministry media release (attached) that followed, he was asking the parties to “conclude negotiations this week and then to work with government and the BCSTA on a new road map forward that respects the roles of all the stakeholders.”

As also stated in the media release, the Minister said, “We need to keep moving and develop this roadmap before bargaining resumes under a new mandate that is consistent with our election commitment.”

The Minister's announcement follows the May 24 letters received by both BCPSEA and the BCTF from James Gorman, Deputy Minister of Education, and Lee Doney, Interim President and CEO of the Public Sector Employers' Council.

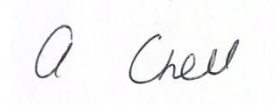
As noted in my [Report from the Chair](#) dated June 4, the letter to BCPSEA advised that, in light of the provincial government's election platform commitment “...to immediately begin discussions with BCPSEA and the BC Teachers' Federation to achieve a 10 year collective agreement” after the election, BCPSEA “should expect to receive a letter rescinding the previous bargaining direction letter and replacing it with one more reflective of the newly elected government's priorities.”

During our meeting, and consistent with government's white paper released previously that there would be different roles in bargaining, the Minister further advised that government would take the lead role in negotiating provincial matters and would therefore appoint a chief spokesperson for bargaining on such matters. The Minister also indicated that the intent is to build on the work and discussions that gave rise to the Agreement in Committee (AiC), the process framework for the current round of bargaining, which was agreed upon and ratified by both the BCTF and BCPSEA in January.

In the meantime, we are taking a “business as usual” approach. If districts have technical questions related to local or provincial bargaining, they should continue to liaise with BCPSEA staff.

The BCPSEA Board of Directors met by conference call this morning and we will continue to keep you updated as events unfold.

Please don't hesitate to contact any member of your [Board of Directors](#) if you have any questions at this point.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A Chell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Alan Chell
Chair

Attachment

STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
2013EDUC0054-000993
June 20, 2013

Ministry of Education

Minister of Education's statement on next steps in pursuing a 10-year agreement with teachers.

VICTORIA - Minister of Education Peter Fassbender has issued the following statement, having just met individually with the BC School Trustees' Association (BCSTA), the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA):

"Today started with a very productive meeting with the BCSTA, where we discussed the importance of co-governance and maintaining a strong relationship. These were the first of many face-to-face stakeholder meetings I hope to have in the coming weeks. In the meetings we discussed a number of issues. Primary among them was the state of negotiations between the BCPSEA and the BCTF.

"I asked the BCTF and the BCPSEA to conclude negotiations this week and then to work with government and the BCSTA on a new road map forward that respects the roles of all the stakeholders. We need to keep moving and develop this roadmap before bargaining resumes under a new mandate that is consistent with our election commitment.

"Starting last October, we consulted broadly and in January we released our framework for a new way of arriving at labour agreements in K-12 education. It aims to create much-needed stability for students, teachers, parents and communities and includes many ideas that have long been sought by the BCTF, like the full right to strike, improvements to the bargaining process, and allowing the BCTF to negotiate directly with government on provincial matters.

"We made the framework an election commitment and we were given the mandate to pursue a long-term agreement. Shortly after the election, the deputy minister of education wrote to the parties advising them to expect a new bargaining mandate. We are now starting our work with stakeholders on a roadmap to a long-term agreement.

"At every step of the way, we will work with school trustees, teachers, parents and other key stakeholders who care about long-term stability in our schools. We will need their ongoing help to craft solutions.

"When we consulted with stakeholders last fall, many expressed their desire for a more open and transparent bargaining process. There is also a strong public interest in greater transparency.

"Providing this statement is the first step in response to these concerns. I intend to be as open and transparent as possible about the process and details, so all interested parties can share the same understanding as we work to strengthen our world-class education system.

"The old way does not work. It is time for a new path, a new beginning. We urge all education stakeholders to join us in this worthy cause."