

Report: BCPSEA Board of Directors Meeting

The BCPSEA Board of Directors met on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at the BCPSEA offices at 300 – 2889 East 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC.

Following is an overview of key aspects of the Board's discussions.

❖ Strategic Plan

The Board reviewed the 2017-2020 BCPSEA Strategic Plan, identifying areas where adjustments are required as the association progresses through the final year of the Plan. The Board also discussed the framework for development of the succeeding Strategic Plan, including time frame and approach.

❖ Occupational Health and Safety/WorkSafeBC Issues

There are several significant WorkSafeBC / occupational health and safety initiatives underway that require awareness and action:

- WorkSafeBC has established a K-12 Violence Working Group, tasked with defining violence in the education sector and creating tools to address issues related to violence in the workplace
- WorkSafe is also planning a Violence Prevention Initiative focused on the K-12 sector
- Stakeholder review of the policy options contained in the review of WorkSafeBC Rehabilitation and Claims Services policies intended to identify policy options for consideration by the WorkSafeBC Board of Directors to restore a worker-centred approach
- The formal review of the workers' compensation system in BC, being undertaken by retired labour lawyer Janet Patterson. The Board was advised that 46 private sector business organizations wrote to Ms. Patterson in August saying they have lost confidence in her ability to conduct the review in an "independent, impartial and balanced matter" and ceased participation in the review.

These initiatives, in tandem with the Safety in the Workplace provisions in the Provincial Framework Agreement reached with unionized support staff — which require establishment of a Joint Health and Safety Taskforce — have broad implications for the K-12 public education sector and highlight the need for expert and informed employer representation to these initiatives at the provincial level.

Given the significance of these issues for the sector, BCPSEA identified that having an in-house subject matter expert will assist in developing appropriate supports for school districts. BCPSEA has therefore seconded Collette O'Reilly from the Vancouver School District on a part-time temporary basis to assist in developing a sector-wide strategy on these issues. Collette is a well-respected specialist in these matters who also served as Chair of the BC School Safety Association for three years, so she is well-positioned to assist us in this role.

❖ **Coordinated Labour Arbitration Support System — CLASS (formerly the EPLP: Employment Practices Liability Program)**

The EPLP Advisory Committee, comprised of school district representatives, approved BCPSEA to consider options to re-name the EPLP to better reflect the purpose and scope of the program. For example, the program covers the legal costs and strategically coordinates labour arbitrations and other labour actions, but doesn't cover the liability costs associated with claims or employment-related litigation. On June 13, 2019, the EPLP Advisory Committee approved changing the name to "Coordinated Legal and Arbitration Support Services" (CLASS).

BCPSEA has developed a new logo for the program. In addition, a regular e-mail communication to districts, along with the annual report about the activities and outcomes of the program, and a survey to districts about their experience with the program, is being distributed to districts in September.

❖ **Support Staff Collective Bargaining**

Local school district–local support staff bargaining continues in the sector. As at the September 4 Board meeting, the BCPSEA Board of Directors has ratified 37 local support staff collective agreements (32 are outstanding — there are 69 support staff collective agreements in the sector).

❖ **Teacher Collective Bargaining**

To date the BCPSEA Board of Directors has ratified 13 local school district–local teachers' union collective agreements, so there are 47 bargaining tables that are ongoing.

Boards have been receiving regular *At the Table* communications from BCPSEA to ensure that trustees and senior staff are updated on events during negotiations and during the mediation process.

In June, BCPSEA applied to the Labour Relations Board to appoint a mediator in an effort to assist the parties to move toward meaningful and productive discussions.

The parties engaged in 13 sessions with mediator Dave Schaub during July and August.

At the last scheduled mediation session on August 30, the mediator recommended that the mediation process should pause until September 23, given that in his view there are too many outstanding issues between the parties. BCPSEA will meet with the mediator and the BCTF on September 23 to determine if a path forward can be identified.

If so, then mediation dates will likely be scheduled in October.

BCPSEA has been respecting the media blackout requested by the mediator. However, BCPSEA did say to the mediator that if the BCTF continues to engage in an active public relations campaign to misrepresent the employers' proposals we will have to respond. BCPSEA is distributing *For the Record* bulletins as well as *Communications Advisory* bulletins and continues to monitor and assess the media landscape.

❖ **Symposium 2019**

The BCPSEA Symposium is scheduled for November 4-5, 2019 at the Coast Coal Harbour Hotel in Vancouver. The draft program, which will be informed by the status of provincial bargaining with the BC Teachers' Federation, will be distributed by BCPSEA in October.