



Statement from BCPSEA Board Chair Alan Chell

October 1, 2019

School Districts' Employers' Association Requests Report from Mediator

The BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) has today asked mediator David Schaub to file a report under Section 74(5) of the *Labour Relations Code* in relation to the negotiations between BCPSEA and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) for a renewed Provincial Collective Agreement.

"We asked the Labour Relations Board in June to appoint a mediator in the hope that it would help both parties engage in more productive discussions," said BCPSEA Board Chair Alan Chell. "From the time we commenced bargaining discussions in late January, and including the meetings with the mediator that started in July, we have now met 68 times in total and, despite the efforts of Mr. Schaub, have made no further progress toward a settlement."

"We are concerned that students, parents, and all employee groups in our public school system need stability and need to know there will be no disruption to their schools or workplaces," said Chell. "Given that concern, last week we tabled to the BCTF an offer to renew the current Provincial Collective Agreement, along with the two percent annual wage increases available under the government public sector bargaining mandate, for a three-year term from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022."

"Although this is not our preferred approach, we believe that this would provide the public school system with the necessary stability while we attempt to work with the BCTF over the term of the agreement to address the structural barriers that appear to be preventing productive negotiations."

"Unfortunately, the BCTF declined our offer to renew the collective agreement and provide their members with a wage increase," said Chell.

"I also want to be clear that the issues BCPSEA has on the table, which represent the priorities of the province's 60 public school districts, remain a significant concern and need to be fully discussed and addressed by the parties as we work toward the next round of bargaining," said Chell. "We now look forward to receiving the mediator's report and will reserve any further comment until the report is issued."

"The success of any round of bargaining, as well as mediation, depends on the commitment of the parties to make it work," Chell continued. "BCPSEA believes that an agreement reached voluntarily by the parties is always the best resolution and we will continue to work to conclude a negotiated collective agreement so that school districts can provide the best possible public school experience for our students."

Beyond this statement, BCPSEA will respect the mediator's request to not discuss details of the process and to respect a continued media blackout until his report is complete. He has stated that he will endeavor to complete his report by November 1, 2019.