

Strategies for Successful Bargaining

Conference Host

Bruce L. Anderson, Chief Executive Officer (he/him)

BC Public School Employers' Association



Bruce has been the Chief Executive Officer for British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) since May 2021. Bruce has more than 30 years of executive human resources and labour relations leadership experience.

Prior positions Bruce has held are: Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer and Chief Human Resources Officer for the Corix Group of Companies; Executive Director of Human Resources for City of Toronto; Executive Director of Human Resources for Simon Fraser University; and Director of Employee Relations & Employment Services for University of Alberta.

Bruce holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Alberta, and a Master of Arts in Labor and Industrial Relations from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also holds his professional designation as a Certified Human Resources Executive (CHRE).

Co-Host

Alissa Perry, Director, Labour Relations (she/her)

BC Public School Employers' Association



Alissa Perry is a lawyer with experience representing employers at arbitration, providing strategic negotiation and grievance management advice, developing and delivering training, and managing investigations.

Prior to joining BCPSEA, Alissa provided labour relations and human resource services with a similar employers' organization in healthcare, and a large organization in Calgary.

At BCPSEA, Alissa provides labour relations liaison advice and assistance to a group of school districts, as well as contributing expertise and advice on a wide range of initiatives including the Coordinated Legal & Arbitration Support Services program.

Opening remarks

Eve Flynn, BCPSEA Board Chair (she/her)

BC Public School Employers' Association



Eve was first elected as a Trustee in 2002 for the Qualicum Board of Education, where she is currently Board Chair. She was her board's BCPSEA Representative from 2005-2010. In 2010, she was elected to the BCPSEA Board of Directors and has held the positions of Chair of the BCPSEA Governance and Finance Committees. In June of this year, Eve was elected Chair of the BCPSEA Board of Directors.

Eve has also been President of the Canadian Red Cross, Western Canada, and was on the National Board of Governors from 2002-2006. She has served in local government for the Regional District of Nanaimo from 1990-2002.



Public Sector Bargaining Overview

John Davison, President and CEO (he/him)

Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat



John Davison was appointed President & CEO of the Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat (PSEC Secretariat) in November 2020. The PSEC Secretariat is responsible for the strategic coordination of labour relations across the provincial public sector, managing and implementing excluded employee compensation policy, and jointly governing the four major B.C. public sector pension plans on behalf of the provincial governments.

Keynote: Ethical and Practical AI Integration in Education

Rebecca Bultsma, International Trainer and Specialist in Ethical AI Adoption in K-12 Education (she/her)



Rebecca is an internationally respected AI trainer, speaker, and consultant who has empowered thousands of people working in and adjacent to K-12 education in Canada and the US to understand and confidently adopt AI. Her mission is simple: make AI practical and easy to understand, advocate for ethical AI adoption, and remind people to always prioritize humans and relationships.

Rebecca describes herself as a relentlessly curious lifelong learner, almost to a fault. She holds an APR designation from the Canadian Public Relations Society and a degree in Professional Communication from Royal Roads University. She sits on various committees within Canada's Digital Governance Standards

Institute and is currently studying and researching Artificial Intelligence Ethics through the University of Edinburgh.

Management Rights – Stuff you can do

Michael Hancock, Partner (he/him)

Harris & Company LLP



Michael acts for clients in both the public and private sectors, with expertise in education law. For the past 11 years, he has been a member of Harris' Education Group. Michael was previously General Counsel for the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) and the Vancouver School Board (VSB). He has previously acted as lead negotiator and spokesperson for BCPSEA in bargaining, including during the illegal withdrawal of services in 2005. At VSB he was responsible for education, real estate, and commercial law matters, in addition to labour and employment work. Michael's experience affords him unique insights into the education sector and the rare perspective of having been counsel, client, and negotiator.

Michael also held the positions of General Counsel and Director of Employee Relations for the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC). His broad range of experience allows him to gain a quick and deep understanding of the operational and human issues to find and implement creative tactics to help his clients reach their objectives.



Case Law Update

Andrew Carricato, Associate Counsel (he/him)

Roper Greyell LLP



Andrew is Associate Counsel at Roper Greyell, advising employers on employment, labour, human rights, and privacy law. His clients include municipalities, regional districts, First Nations, school districts, and societies. His clients also include francophone employers in the education, not-for-profit, arts, and social services sectors.

Andrew has extensive experience advising and advocating for councils and boards on a wide range of workplace and governance related issues. He is a go-to trusted advisor on various public body governance, crisis management, and procedure related matters, including compliance with the Community Charter, Local Government Act, School Act, Codes of Conduct, procedural fairness, and public censure. Andrew is also sought out to advise Chief Election Officers on local government and school district election related matters including judicial recounts and election challenges. Andrew has advocated and appeared before the BC courts, workplace, human rights and privacy related administrative tribunals, and the Supreme court of Canada.

Jennifer A. Hogan, Partner (she/her)

Roper Greyell LLP



Jennifer Hogan is a Partner at Roper Greyell where she advises and represents employers in all areas of labour and employment law, including human rights law. Once a collegiate soccer player, Jennifer's approach is defined by her strong work ethic and team-centered approach. Jennifer's strength lies in her ability to transform complex issues into understandable and actionable plans. She provides proactive, creative and cost-effective solutions to workplace problems.

Jennifer represents employers in various sectors including municipal, education and forestry. She offers advice and representation on all issues related to the creation, maintenance and termination of the employment relationship, including managing employee performance and workplace accommodation. She also has experience in resolving a wide range of collective agreement disputes, including interpretation of collective agreement provisions, dismissal and disciplinary matters, and job selection grievances.

Workplace Safety and Wellness

Candice Roffe, Director, Safety and Wellness (she/her)

BC Public School Employers' Association



Candice Roffe is the Director, Safety & Wellness for the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA). Candice is a board certified Canadian Registered Safety Professional and has been leading occupational health, safety, and abilities management in the public sector for the past fifteen years, most recently in local government.

Candice's work at BCPSEA includes leading the strategic coordination and development of health, safety and wellness initiatives and programs, providing advisory and support services, and representing the K-12 public education sector on emerging issues at the provincial level.



Surrena Craig, District Health and Safety Officer, Rocky Mountain School District
President, School Safety Association of BC



Surrena Craig has been the District Health and Safety Officer for Rocky Mountain School District for the past seven years. Prior to this role, Surrena held positions in Northern and Interior Health as Advisor, Workplace Health & Safety. In that role she was a certified facilitator for the Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum and a subject matter expert on muscle skeletal injury prevention.

Currently, she is the President of the School Safety Association of British Columbia and sits on both the K-12 WorkSafeBC Advisor Committee representing rural school districts, and the CUPE/BCSPEA Joint Provincial Health & Safety Task Force. She participated on the K-12 working group that created the Violence Prevention Tool Kit for the K-12 sector. Surrena has also just recently completed a certification in Psychologically Safe Leadership from the University of New Brunswick.

Mind the Gap! From Minding to Mending: Identifying Systemic Opportunities to Move from Reaction to Capacity in K-12

Lisa Southern, Founding Partner, Barrister & Solicitor (she/her)
Southern Butler Price LLP



Lisa's practice focuses on work as a neutral third party for both public and private sector organizations. She has conducted many investigations and workplace assessments into privacy issues, human rights, harassment, and workplace health and safety. She is frequently appointed as a mediator and also arbitrates labour disputes. She has done much work supporting the health, municipal, education, and sport sectors.

From 2003-2009, Lisa was appointed to the British Columbia Labour Relations Board, first as Vice Chair and then as Registrar and Vice Chair. She was appointed by the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General to the 2019 Judicial Compensation Commission. In 2022, Lisa was appointed as the first Integrity Commissioner for the City of Vancouver. In 2023, she was appointed as the Integrity Commissioner for the Vancouver Park Board.

Lisa has been recognized in the Best Lawyers in Canada since 2021 for achievements in labour and employment law in British Columbia.

Keynote on Bargaining

Alan D. Winter, Partner (he/him)
Harris & Company LLP



Alan has provided labour relations services and advice to employers for over four decades, with a particular focus on collective bargaining in both the public and private sectors. Since 2020, Alan has limited his practice to acting as the Spokesperson for employers in their collective bargaining.

Alan takes an engaged, focused and enthusiastic approach to representing his clients. He thrives on finding creative resolutions while diligently maintaining employer rights to effectively manage their operations. Throughout his career, Alan has presented a collective bargaining workshop for employers, focusing on the practicalities of negotiations so as to provide insight and strategies for employers to use as they navigate the bargaining process from start to finish.



Lindsie M. Thomson, Managing Partner (she/her)
Harris & Company LLP



Lindsie is the managing partner of Harris & Company, Western Canada's leading workplace law firm. Harris has a long history of supporting school boards in their interactions with staff, students and parents. Lindsie came up through the ranks at Harris and was mentored by Eric, Wendy, Terri and Judy – the original titans of education law in BC.

In addition to a full workplace law practice, Lindsie has an established education law practice, representing employers in both the K-12 and post-secondary sectors in sectorally significant arbitration cases and advising boards of education on school act matters.

Bargaining Best Practices Panel

Justin Rempel, Executive Director, Labour Relations (Collective Bargaining) (he/him)
BC Public School Employers' Association



Justin Rempel is the new Executive Director, Labour Relations (Collective Bargaining) for BCPSEA as of November 4, 2024. Justin has provided human resources and labour relations services for public sector education for 25 years with the Province of Manitoba. Prior to joining BCPSEA he was the Director of Human Resource Services & Provincial Bargaining with the Manitoba School Boards Association. Justin has negotiated nearly 100 teacher and support staff collective agreements in his career, including negotiating the recent historic first ever provincial teacher collective agreement in Manitoba.

He is currently a member of the Canadian Education Negotiators group and has served on the board of the North American Education Negotiators organization, CPHR Manitoba, and is currently a board member of the Engineers & Geoscientists Manitoba Association and will serve on the upcoming new organization Canadian Network of Education HR Professionals.

Leanne Bowes, Chief Executive Officer (she/her)
Post-Secondary Employers' Association



As the new CEO, Leanne Bowes leads the Post-Secondary Employers' Association who are responsible for coordinating labour relations for the 19 public sector colleges, institutes and teaching universities. Leanne has had more than a decade of collective bargaining experience with BCPSEA and has been spokesperson at multiple provincial tables, with responsibilities for more than 100 local tables.

Leanne was called to the bar in 2008 (NSW, Australia) and 2019 (BC, Canada).

Leanne believes in focusing on building respectful relationships and has a talent for being candid but kind in bargaining. She is well respected by both employer and union leaders.



Ken Dawson, Chief Executive Officer (he/him) Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat



Ken Dawson has worked in the provincial government since 2011 and is currently Executive Director, Labour Strategy and Coordination at Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat, Ministry of Finance. Ken responsibilities include coordination of labour relations, collective bargaining and compensation matters in the K-12, Post-Secondary and Crown Corporation sectors, including engagement with Employers' Associations. He is a government appointee to the BCPSEA Board of Directors.

His prior roles within government included serving as Ministerial Assistant to the Minister of Education and several roles in the Office of the Premier, including Director of Policy and Director, Cabinet Operations.

Ken served as an elected School Trustee from 2005- 2008 in SD 71 Comox Valley. Ken is a graduate of Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, and the Industrial Relations Center at Queen's University.

David Woolias, Partner (he/him) Harris & Company LLP



David is a partner on Harris & Company's K-12 team and advises on all aspects of employment, labour relations and human rights law. This includes advising on, drafting and negotiating contracts of employment and independent contractor agreements, collective agreements, policies and other materials relating to terms and conditions of employment. David also regularly represents school districts in grievance arbitrations and before the Human Rights Tribunal.

David has been listed as a recommended lawyer in the area of employment law by the Canadian Legal Expert Directory, was awarded the University Medal in Law by the Australian National University for his academic achievements and is qualified to practice

both in Canada and Australia.

Recruitment & Retention Panel

Bailey Blencowe, Senior Manager, Recruitment Services (she/her) BC Public School Employers' Association



Bailey is a seasoned public sector leader with extensive experience in HR management, specializing in full-cycle recruitment, executive talent acquisition, and program management. She is known for her strategic approach to addressing complex staffing needs, fostering collaboration, and driving innovative solutions. Bailey has a proven ability to lead HR initiatives while offering guidance and support to teams in achieving their goals.

In her current role with BCPSEA as Senior Manager of Recruitment Services, she focuses on supporting recruitment and retention in rural and remote school districts.



Andrew Jang, Senior Manager, Strategic Talent Acquisition (he/him)

Make a Future, BC Public School Employers' Association



Andrew manages a diverse portfolio of responsibilities and directs Make a Future's day-to-day operations. His responsibilities include overseeing Make a Future's recruitment website, digital marketing, job advertising, and employer branding. His work directly supports school districts to post, promote and fill their job vacancies. His work also promotes public education in BC has an employer of choice to potential candidates.

Andrew's work involves promoting recruitment marketing best practices, helping BC's K-12 employers improve their candidate experiences, and streamlining school districts' online recruitment practices to attract job seekers to careers in BC education.

Fred Hibbs BPA, MIR, Executive Director, Human Resources (he/him)

Sooke School District



Fred is a senior HR leader who collaborates with internal and external partners to align HR activities with the achievement of organizational strategic goals.

Fred had more than 20 years of experience working in management positions within high technology private sector manufacturing environments. Roughly 8 years ago, following a brief but rewarding opportunity to be a part-time college instructor, Fred made a career change to better align his HR work with his passion for youth education. His most recent efforts have included senior HR roles within school districts in Ontario and British Columbia. Currently, he is a part of the team at the Sooke School District, one of the fastest growing school districts in BC.

Tanya Major, Executive Director, Human Resources (she/her)

Richmond School District



Tanya began her teaching career with the Richmond School District in 1999 as a primary classroom teacher. In 2007, she moved into the role of elementary vice principal and then principal within the district, before accepting the role of District Administrator, Human Resources. During the span of her career, she has been a part of several district committees and advisory groups supporting all partner groups. Over the last three years, her focus within human resources has been on cultivating a progressive workplace, prioritizing the recruitment and retention of top talent, and positioning the district as a premier learning and leadership destination.

Cloë Nicholls, Assistant Deputy Minister (she/her)

Governance and Analytics Division, Ministry of Education and Child Care



Cloë Nicholls is the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Governance and Analytics Division in the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care. She previously worked as the Executive Director, Governance, Legislation & Workforce Branch where she oversaw governance and legislation for K-12 and child care as well as workforce development and international education in the K-12 sector. She has 18 years of experience in the provincial government, mostly in the area of Indigenous relations, governance and legislation, disability policy, immigration, and labour market issues.

Cloë has an honours degree in political science from the University of British Columbia and a Graduate Diploma in Social Innovation from the University of Waterloo.



Mimi W. Lin, Senior Policy Analyst, Workforce Branch (she/her)
Ministry of Education and Child Care



Mimi Lin, a Senior Policy Analyst with Workforce Development at the Ministry of Education and Child Care, brings a rich professional background that includes roles as a classroom teacher, certified immigration consultant, and Evaluator with the Teacher Regulation Branch. Her diverse expertise uniquely positions her to lead efforts in streamlining certification and immigration processes for internationally educated teachers. Eager to collaborate closely with K-12 sector partners, Mimi looks forward to leveraging her vast experience to make a positive contribution to the broader K-12 education workforce.

Tanvir Sandhu, Recruitment Services Specialist (he/him)
BC Public School Employers' Association



Tanvir Sandhu is a Recruitment Services Specialist at BCPSEA where he applies over a decade of experience in full-cycle recruitment across sectors like public service, energy, and education. Tanvir excels in strategic talent acquisition, partnering closely with hiring managers, using proactive sourcing techniques, and advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

He holds a Bachelor in Business Administration (Human Resources) from Kwantlen Polytechnic University, solidifying his expertise in recruitment strategy, onboarding, and cultivating diverse, high-quality talent pools.

At the Table: What you need to know

Tammy Sowinski, Executive Director (she/her)
Okanagan Labour Relations Council



Tammy Sowinski is the Executive Director of the Okanagan Labour Relations Council (OLRC) and works collaboratively with BCPSEA as a district liaison. Tammy provides labour relations, investigations, collective bargaining and district liaison services to seven school districts in the interior of BC. She has been working in the Education sector since 2010 and has over 25 years of experience providing human resources and labour relations leadership in both the private and public sectors. Tammy has been actively involved in collective bargaining throughout her career and has been at the table for local teacher and support staff bargaining and at the provincial framework table for support staff since 2010. Tammy graduated with honors from UBC Vancouver in the faculty of Commerce, majoring in Labour Relations and has her CPHR designation.

Tara Sweet, Senior Manager, Labour Relations (Collective Bargaining) (she/her)
BC Public School Employers' Association



Tara Sweet is Senior Manager, Labour Relations (Collective Bargaining) for BCPSEA. Her role is to support all school districts with local bargaining and the BCPSEA bargaining team with provincial negotiations. Tara has worked in the K-12 sector for 27 years and specifically in Labour Relations and Human Resources for the last 18 years. She previously worked for the Sunshine Coast School District where she participated in many rounds of both support staff and teacher collective bargaining since 2010. She is looking forward to supporting the provincial framework table for support staff in the upcoming round. Tara is a graduate of BCIT and has her CPHR designation.



Communications during the Bargaining Process

Kindrée Draper, Director, Corporate Relations (she/her)
Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat, Ministry of Finance



Kindrée Draper has been working in provincial government for close to 30 years in a variety of increasingly senior roles primarily in communications, coordination and partner relations. For the last 15 years, she has provided strategic advice to the Province and other jurisdictions to best manage the specific challenges of communicating information in the complex world of public sector labour relations.

She has a degree in English and Sociology from the University of Victoria, and has obtained public relations and media training from a number of institutions.

Deneka Michaud, Chief Communications Officer (she/her)
BC Public School Employers' Association



Deneka is Chief Communications Officer at BC Public School Employers' Association where she oversees communications, partner relations, government relations, Human Resources, administration, governance, privacy, and IT. Prior to this role, she was Director, External Communications and Brand Management at BC Housing. She also spent nine years in school districts as Communications Manager at the North Vancouver School District, and Manager of Communications and Marketing at the Delta School District.

Deneka originates from a journalist background, earning an honours degree in journalism from Carleton University and spending nearly a decade as a television and print reporter. Since joining the PR field, Deneka has obtained a Master's degree in communication, leadership and conflict management, and a graduate certificate in professional communication management, both from Royal Roads University. Deneka is also an Accredited Public Relations (APR) practitioner.