

From the Chair



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Best Wishes

As we come to the close of what has been a challenging year, it's a good time to reflect on what we have accomplished personally and professionally, and our general good fortune as citizens of this great country and province. The struggles of people in many parts of the world to achieve basic freedoms that we as Canadians often take for granted helps to put our own problems in perspective.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, we wish all of you the joys of the season and hope that you will enjoy some well-deserved time with family and friends. We look forward to seeing many of you at our [Symposium](#) and [Annual General Meeting](#) in January; watch for the AGM second notice to be distributed next week.

Support Staff Bargaining

We are very pleased that we were able to conclude collaborative, positive, and respectful collective bargaining with representatives of our support staff this week. The framework agreement achieved on December 14 is the result of work that began prior to 2006, led to a provincial framework in bargaining that year, and another framework in this round. Details of the framework agreement were included in our [Support Staff Bargaining Bulletin](#) and [news release](#) distributed yesterday.

The framework is a prime example of what can be achieved when there is commitment on both sides of the table to work together to get a deal. All the parties understood the bargaining environment, the government's compensation mandate, and the need to have the in-depth, back and forth discussions to explore the other party's issues, concerns, challenges, and priorities. The framework agreement was the result of truly constructive — and yes, sometimes difficult and intense — dialogue intended to reach an agreement.

I found it unfortunate, though, that the focus of many of the interviews I conducted with various media outlets on the support staff framework were more focused on the implications for bargaining with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF). This is due in part, I think, to the very public nature of the way in which the BCTF approaches bargaining, contrasted with the quiet focus of the support staff discussions. As boards of education, I know that we have tremendous appreciation for the contributions of our support staff — and all our staff — in the public education system.

Stay in Touch

Please don't hesitate to contact any member of your [Board](#) or [staff](#) for information or discussion as you deal with issues in your districts.