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## BCPSEA Responses to BCTF and Local Teachers' Association Statements

### “Teachers take action for education,”

BC Teachers' Federation, Monday, February 27, 2012

BCTF Statement	BCPSEA Response
<p>“We reduced our proposals — even when the employer refused to compromise”</p>	<p>On <a href="#">November 22, 2011</a>, BCPSEA tabled a comprehensive revised package of proposals in an effort to get negotiations moving. This included the withdrawal of 8 employer proposals.</p> <p>The BCTF didn't table their salary proposal until <a href="#">January 17, 2012</a>, which they introduced at a news conference, a full 10 months after bargaining started and a full six months after they started their Phase 1 strike on the first day of school in September. Although the BCTF did substantially revise their proposal on compassionate care leave after it attracted negative media and public reaction, the <a href="#">compensation improvements</a> that the BCTF continues to have on the table would cost an additional \$2.06 billion. (The BCTF continues to dispute our costing of their proposals but has provided no costing of its own, nor have they taken us up on our longstanding offer to sit down with them and work through our costing together.)</p> <p>BCPSEA tabled another comprehensive revised package of proposals on <a href="#">February 1</a>, which included the withdrawal of a further 3 employer proposals. BCPSEA has compromised and has now withdrawn 11 employer proposals from the table.</p>
<p>“Teachers' highest priority is restoration of the class-size and composition guarantees.”</p>	<p>Class size and class composition are <b>NOT</b> the subject of collective bargaining and the current labour dispute. Consultation on these issues arising from the <a href="#">BC Supreme Court decision</a> in</p>

	<p>April 2011 occurred at a <a href="#">separate table between representatives of government and the BCTF</a>.</p> <p>Collective bargaining and the current labour dispute with the BCTF is solely concerned with the \$2 billion of compensation improvements the BCTF has on the table.</p>
<p>“Our salaries have fallen to ninth in Canada.”</p>	<p>BC teachers’ salaries <a href="#">rank fourth</a> in Canada, for both average starting salary and average maximum salary, when compared to the other 9 provinces. The northern territories are typically not included in such salary comparisons due to their “very peculiar labour markets.”</p> <p>“The Far North is characterized by exceptionally harsh climates and high living costs, reflecting geographic remoteness, scattered settlements, and minuscule populations (the three territories together have fewer people than Coquitlam). Pay scales for almost all occupations are higher in the territories than in “southern” Canada. By including the territories in the pay review, the BCTF draws an artificial picture of the true competitive landscape for teachers.” (Source: <a href="#">Op-ed, The Vancouver Sun</a>, February 3, 2012)</p>
<p>“The employers’ team wants to remove due processes and rights that all employees are entitled to expect from a fair and reasonable employer.”</p>	<p>This is absolutely false. BCPSEA has no such proposal or element of such a proposal on the table.</p> <p>There is absolutely no proposal or intention to remove due processes. BC boards of education have always been known as excellent employers and the BCPSEA proposals are intended to maintain and enhance that reputation. BCPSEA would like to engage the BCTF in a discussion of best practices that would lead to agreement on a process of developing and implementing annual individual professional development and professional growth plans to foster professional currency and engagement; set clear and measurable expectations for all employees; and provide a process of regular feedback and support including mentorship options. These are positive and progressive human resources practices common to most “best employers.”</p>
<p>“No cost-of-living adjustments or salary increase for teachers.”</p>	<p>The net zero compensation mandate established by the provincial government for this round of public sector collective bargaining applies to teachers as well as other public</p>

	<p>sector unions. All the other major unions in the province have achieved negotiated agreements under the mandate. Many have arrived at creative solutions to achieve increases in priority areas by modernizing or standardizing collective agreement provisions.</p> <p>BCPSEA has tried to engage the BCTF in similar discussions to identify creative solutions that could “free up” money to be re-invested in other areas of the collective agreement. The BCTF has rejected the mandate and refused to engage in those discussions.</p>
<p>“The government stands ready to impose a legislated contract so there is little incentive for the employer to bargain fairly with teachers.”</p>	<p>From the outset of this round of bargaining, BCPSEA has stated its objective to achieve a negotiated collective agreement with the BCTF. The parties concluded a negotiated agreement in 2006 and there is no reason we should not be able to do so again. Further, BCPSEA and K-12 support staff unions, including the <a href="#">Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)</a>, negotiated a provincial framework agreement in December 2011. The support staff unions <a href="#">stated publicly</a> that those discussions were collaborative and cordial. Our <a href="#">At the Table</a> reports, distributed after each bargaining session, are evidence of our many efforts to engage the BCTF in productive discussions on a variety of issues, including areas to modernize or streamline collective agreements to identify savings that could be re-invested in the agreement to the benefit of teachers.</p> <p>As recently as February 24, in our <a href="#">letter to the Labour Relations Board</a>, we are on the record as stating that, “The primary responsibility to reach an agreement rests solely with the parties themselves, as the union and employer must live with the result of the deal.”</p>

“...teachers started a “teach only” campaign at the beginning of the school year. It means teachers are: teaching, marking, giving extra help to students, and communicating with parents about children’s progress.”

In many cases this statement is true. However, in many others it is not. For example, some senior educators have expressed grave concerns with respect to the [effect of the teachers' strike on vulnerable students](#):

“...special programs designed to intervene when a student is having trouble aren't being carried out. Our data shows that what we've been doing with respect to aboriginal students and completion rates and failure rates has been very effective. But the very nature and the structure of the job action has prevented us from doing the things we would normally do to mitigate those failure rates....Students are being hurt as a result of this.”