

SURREY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

HEADS UP

On the College

COLLEGE STRATEGY HEATS UP WE NEED A SOLUTION NOW

In the wake of the appointed college's recent decisions and the disappointing court decision which we have appealed, it is important that we turn up the pressure on the government to live up to its promise to restore a democratic college and to find a solution to the college issue.

The BCTF has a meeting with the minister on March 30 and locals and members are being asked to do everything they can to let the public and MLAs know that this appointed, undemocratic college will never be acceptable to teachers - we need a solution now, particularly since the appointed college continues to make decisions that are of great concern to teachers.

WHERE DO WE STAND NOW ?

The council of political flunkies are proceeding with their anti-teacher agenda with a vengeance.

They have virtually rewritten the by-laws, proposing 180 pages of additions or amendments. Many are truly alarming. They developed a complex set of standards without any consultation with working teachers or college members. Now they want to make those standards part of the college by-laws.

Some proposed changes:

- introduce a duty to report misconduct which would require spouses to report on each other and union reps to report on members
- put in place bylaws to monitor teachers' competence, and establish requirements for the continuing education of teachers, i.e. re-certification
- prohibit teacher union activists from seeking election as college councillors
- structure the college elections so that only eight of the 12 councillors would actually be teachers. The remaining four elected positions would be reserved for a principal, a superintendent, an independent school rep, and a First Nations school representative
- require members to pledge allegiance to the college, and sign a statement of professional commitment that involves waiving all legal right to personal privacy
- change the timelines for fee payment so they are due June 1 with the final date for payment September 30 (previous deadlines were September 1 and November 30)

AGM DECISIONS:

Clearly, the battle is far from over. The BCTF Annual General Meeting passed the following motions.

“That the minister of education be urged to meet with BCTF representatives to resolve the outstanding B.C. College of Teachers issues as soon as possible.”

“That the BCTF insist at least two-thirds of the college councillors be elected by teachers.”

“That in the event that the outstanding college issues are not resolved, all members be encouraged to act collectively to achieve changes to the BC College of Teachers by refusing to pay the 2004-05 fee to the college and instead contributing the fee to the BCTF Democratic College Fund, until the conditions adopted by the January 22-23, 2004 Representative Assembly have been achieved.”

These motions were in addition to our previous action plan passed by the Representative Assembly

In brief, the RA & AGM conditions for resolution of the College issue are:

- two thirds of the councillors to be elected,
- the duty to report should be consistent with other professions, and
- that any by-laws introduced by the political appointees must be ratified by the elected council.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Last Wednesday, STARA passed the following motions in support of the BCTF strategy. They passed overwhelmingly.

“That the STA support the efforts of the BCTF to resolve the outstanding B.C. College of Teachers' issues through a negotiated solution.”

“That, in the event that the outstanding college issues are not resolved, the STA advise members to act collectively to achieve changes to the BC College of Teachers by refusing to pay the 2004-05 fee to the college and instead contributing the fee to the BCTF Democratic College Fund, until the conditions adopted by the January 22-23, 2004 Representative Assembly and the 2004 AGM have been achieved.”

Hopefully, progress will be made at next week's meeting with Tom Christensen. However, unless our conditions are met, members will be advised not to pay the 2004-05 fee due likely **this May 31st**.

If you previously filled out a Yellow Card withdrawing you permission for a payroll deduction last November the Board will not deduct fees this June. It is critical that members who have not filled out a card do so now. The chances of a favourable outcome increase with every member who joins the boycott.

STAND UP FOR YOUR PROFESSION SIGN THE YELLOW CARD

- Teachers who previously signed the “Yellow Cards” need do nothing right now! (check last October pay stubs to make sure the card was entered)
- Those teachers who now wish to participate in this collective action should sign “Yellow Cards”.
- Monies in the BCTF Democratic College Fund will NOT be released without a vote of the general membership.
- When the College issue is resolved, anyone who has submitted a Yellow Card will have to inform the Board if they wish to have automatic fee deductions resumed (we will forward more information as it becomes necessary)
- We have had incredible member support for this collective action, and NO TEACHER has been adversely affected. Thank you for your support!