

STA Examiner

Surrey Teachers' Association

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Minister Blinks

In the face of mounting public condemnation and unshakable unity on our part, Christy Clark has promised to return democratic control of the College Council to practicing teachers. Twelve of the 20 councilor will be elected teachers. The remaining 8 will be government appointees. The second major concession is that the act will be amended to mandate that local problem solving processes be exhausted before a College complaint is acted upon.

These concessions are a start, but we must be cautious before we agree to call off the boycott. "The devil is in the details" as they say and it is very apt in this case. We need to remain in a position of power until we are clear on what the changes really mean. One immediate concern is that 75%, or 15 council members are required to pass or amend a by-law. By the time the changes are implemented the current council

of political appointees may have entrenched much of the minister's agenda in the by-laws, and with only 12 members we would not be able to get rid of them. The BCTF has asked for a meeting with the ministry to seek clarification and ask for further change. The "snitch clause" for example, must be deleted.

This is not the time to settle hastily. This may be our only chance to effect further change in the College. According to our action plan, the funds in the Democratic College Fund will only be released by a vote in the locals on recommendation of the Representative Assembly. (January 23, 24).

In the meantime, we can all relax and take pride in the fact that we would not be bullied and had the courage to stand up for our profession.



Happy Holidays
from the Office

The Numbers Game

Everyone likes to play with numbers these days, so I thought I'd play, too. How many teachers are there in B.C.? How many are participating in the boycott against the College?

Since the College was created there has been confusion between the BCTF and the BCCT. I understand that this was deliberate on the part of the government that created the College, but that is an old story. In order to minimize the confusion here, I'll use the terms "College" and "Federation."

The College has 54,000 members according to Tarry Grieve, the non-elected chairperson. Not 80,000, as has been reported recently. These members include Teachers (both BCTF members and non-BCTF members), Principals, Vice-Principals, and Superintendents. The BCCT also includes some members who have moved on from these jobs, and for whatever reason, wish to keep their certification current.

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Report Cards—Version 4.1



Judging by the number of phone calls to our office, there appears to be a fair degree of variation between how the report card writing/editing process is handled by different administrators. Some take it upon themselves to act as editors-in-chief, insisting that reports be written, and re-written until they suit the administrator's individual taste and style. Others, more appropriately, act as proof-readers, ensuring that grammatical, spelling or typing errors are noticed and corrected. These administrators leave the choice of phrasing and content to the teacher, who best knows their curriculum, their

students, and their parent audience. This is not to say that discussing best practices is not a valuable experience. Beginning teachers especially can benefit from an interactive discussion of good report card writing techniques and tips, from both administrators and teaching colleagues.

According to our collective agreement (Article 6.20) and subject to the *School Act and Regulations and Article 54 (student/parent appeals)*, the assessment/evaluation process is under the individual professional autonomy of the teacher. It is always helpful to have a second set of eyes look for mistakes that the writer may have missed, and everyone appreciates having such mistakes picked up. However, suggestions for other changes,

such as different phrasing, word choice, etc., are just that—suggestions. Some of those suggestions might be ones that you totally concur with, and will act upon. Others, you will choose to disregard. You do not have to write, and re-write your report cards until they match your administrator's style—report cards are YOUR work, and should reflect YOUR style. You are an educated professional who is more than capable of recognizing constructive criticism and integrating suggestions for improvement as you see fit. Hand your reports in for proof-reading, look at the suggestions your administrator may have made, make any changes you agree are needed and hand them back for final signing — that is the appropriate process.

Elementary Convention Committee

Thank you to those people who “took the plunge and” volunteered to work on the Elementary Convention Committee.

Joining Tammy Stubbings, Ryan Stubbings, and Philip Wong are the committee's new members: Jagdeep Deol, Alexandra Vrabec, and Bonnie Chapman. The committee can always use volunteers to help with specific tasks, so if you would like to help out in this

way, please e-mail Tammy Stubbings (First Class) or call her at Coyote Creek Elementary.

The Secondary Convention Committee can also use extra hands. If you're interested in helping out there, please e-mail Julia Poole (First Class) or call her at Frank Hurt Secondary.

We look forward to another awesome convention this year!

The Numbers Game cont...

Continued from front page

The Province paper today (Tuesday, December 9, 2003) says that the College has received fees from about 30,000 members. Who are these people? How many of these are members of the Federation? The very short article also reported that the 24,000 teachers are now suspended from the College for non-payment of fees.

Now, the Federation claimed on October 7 that about 26,000 teachers had asked that the automatic deductions be stopped, and we received updated reports of increasing numbers up to about 29,000

after that date. So what happened to those 5,000 teachers?

Well, consider this: in at least one district, Abbotsford, the Board pays the fee as a collective agreement benefit; in some other districts, Nanaimo and Maple Ridge are two examples, fees were deducted and submitted to the College against the wishes of teachers. The districts that are in situations like these comprise about 2700 members. Teachers in these districts are now writing letters to the College asking that their fees be reimbursed. Do you suppose the College factored in the reimbursement requests?

The real question is, how many members are needed to maintain the boycott, and make it effective? In other words, what is the minimum number? I don't know what that number is, but I suspect that it is much, much smaller than 24,000.



Congratulations! Katalin Toreky-Paziuk of South Meridian, winner of the November 19th General Meeting Pro-D Draw - \$250 & 1 day TOC cost.

LST School Development Funds

By now I'm sure that your principal has consulted you about what to do with the LST development funds. If not, you should know that each school has received funds as follows:

- ◆ elementary school base amount of

- \$500
- ◆ secondary school base amount of 1500
- ◆ and \$590 per 1.0 LST staffing entitlement

This money is down 29% from last year's LST start up grant.

The funds can be used to buy materials, resources, or to support collaboration and professional development.



New Standards for College

Last week's STARA meeting passed the following motion regarding the upcoming College conference on their new standards: That the STA not use professional development funds for teacher attendance at the college conference.

And not a tear was shed.

Job Descriptions

The board wants to review the job descriptions for the following positions:

- Special Ed teacher BASES
- Special Ed teacher Low Incidence
- Integration Support Teacher
- District Hearing Teacher

We will appoint two STA representatives for the review of each description from those currently working in the programs. If you are interested please contact John Wadge at the STA office before January 16.

Appointments for STA Representation on District Committees Fall 2003 (for 2 year terms)

Thank you to the following people who have been appointed to sit as STA representatives on District Committees. Your input and expertise is much appreciated.

Fine Arts Advisory Committee	—Margaret Coe (David Brankin)
French Immersion	—Lori Riel (Riverdale), Mariette Calvert (Earl Marriott)
Health and Safety	— Sandra Whyte (Guildford Park), Stewart Schon (Sullivan Elem), Mark Keelan (STA)
ICT Advisory	—Lynda Dyck (Martha Currie), Al Maxwell (Enver Creek)
Improving Student Learning	—Patti Turner (STA)
Inter-A Advisory	—Bobby Samra (Kwantlen Park), Peter Ellis (TOC)
Learning Resources/Library	—Ian Kennett, (K.B. Woodward), Lisa Singer (Johnston Heights)
Montessori	—Sylvia Hamilton (Sunnyside), Kathy Dyck (Sunnyside), Suzanna Filipovic (Tynehead)
Multicultural Advisor	—Rajneil Deo (Westerman), Maureen D'Ercole (Johnston Heights), Carl Beach (North Surrey)
PP/CAPP	—James Chamberlain (Dr. F.D. Sinclair), Kelly Shields (Student Support Services), Karen Kilbride (alt), (Colebrook)
School Meals Advisory	—Dave Way (Frank Hurt)
Traditional School	—Brian Schuppert (Surrey Traditional), Kelly Shields (Student Support Services)

Completing 2 year terms: 2002-2004

International Baccalaureate	—Michelle Vybiral (Semiahmoo), Marlow Irvine (Semiahmoo)
Learning Resources/Library	—Vicky-Lynn Strom (Elem TL, Betty Huff), Daphne Elwick (Sec. TL, Guildford Park)

We are still looking for people who would be interested in working on the following committees:

Aboriginal Ed.	—1 elementary or secondary rep
Discovery	—2 elementary reps
Fine Arts Advisory—	—1 elementary rep
Improving Student Learning	—1 secondary rep
Integrated Studies	—2 secondary reps
Learning Resources/Library	—1 elementary French-Immersion Teacher-Librarian
School Meals Advisory	—1 elementary or secondary rep

If you are interested, please complete a district committee application form and FAX it in to the STA office (604-594-5176). To get an application form you can call the STA office (604) 594-5353 or download one from the STA website—www.surreyteachers.org. Committee appointments will be made as applications arrive.

LABOUR NEWS

BC Federation of Labour

The annual convention of the BC Federation of Labour can be compared to...quite honestly... nothing else at all. As a teacher I arrived making comparisons to the BCTF annual general meeting or a political party convention. That was misleading, because the Fed has a different history, different traditions, different participants. It is a huge forum, at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre at Canada Place, for the gathering of representatives of various unions across the Province to attempt to establish consensus on the most important issues confronting working people.

We arrived on a Monday morning—some 150 or so teachers from all over BC. We all wore blue t-shirts saying “Proud to be a teacher” and “Proud to be affiliated.” In a hall of about 900 delegates we formed a significant section, but definitely a minority. The largest delegations were from CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees), BCGEU (BC Government Employees Union) and BCNU (the nurses), but there were also many delegations from smaller unions which included only a few members.

The convention began with enthusiastic renditions of Oh Canada and Solidarity Forever. We were introduced warmly by Jim Sinclair, the president of the

federation, and the assembly gave us a standing ovation! It was the first, but certainly not the last time that delegates welcomed the arrival of teachers to the gathering.

Rules of order are very different at the Fed. Resolutions are carefully vetted by an all-powerful “Resolutions Committee” which decides beforehand on the wording of everything that will be discussed. No motions are permitted to arise from the floor and motions may not be amended. Speakers rise to support the resolutions and are allowed five minutes each. Usually they spoke with great passion—the speeches frequently being punctuated by clapping, cheering and applause. We got lots of exercise as were constantly leaping to our feet in support of some stirring statement of solidarity.

The content of the resolutions tended to revolve around an identifiable theme. Campbell’s Liberal (liberal?) government has thought of more ways to attack ordinary working people than any other government in the history of our province! For us, as teachers, it was instructive to see how Christy Clark’s budget cuts, her lies about the cuts and her attacks on teachers’ professionalism all fit together into the larger picture of government perfidy.

The guest speakers were extremely encouraging: Jim Sinclair of course, Larry Campbell (Mayor of Vancouver), Ken Georgetti (Canadian Labour Congress),

Joy MacPhail (NDP outgoing leader and BC legislature pit bull), Lorne Calvert (NDP Premier of Saskatchewan), Jack Layton (National leader of the NDP) and Carol James (NDP incoming leader).

We also attended workshops which gave useful suggestions about what actions might be helpful for us in their future. The Saskatchewan experience is particularly encouraging—they have actually mobilized voters to elect an NDP government for four terms in a row. That government has acted in the interests of the people of Saskatchewan even when those interests have conflicted with those of multi-national corporations! At the same time they have produced economic improvements and balanced budgets. This is not what Gordon Campbell would have us believe. Another highlight was Caroline Leckie, a Socialist Party member of the Scottish National Parliament. Now she was a fiery speaker! She explained the damage that the right wing has done to the welfare of working people in the UK since Margaret Thatcher and the destruction of the Cal Miners’ Union in the 1970’s. She also had significant success in organizing care workers in Scotland so that they are able to have some rights instead of just being treated as expendable indentured labour.

*Simon Truelove,
Senator Reid Elem.*

New West and District Labour Council

Last Wednesday at the NWDLC monthly meeting about a dozen members including the president took the “Oath of Obligation” ushering us into the council. We received a very warm welcome and people were clearly excited at having teachers in the fold. Langley teachers were sworn in as well. We updated the meeting on our battle over the College and received

a standing ovation. Those in attendance represent thousands of working people, many of them parents who will hear our message thanks to our involvement in the labour movement.

NWDLC DELEGATE VACANCIES

The executive has appointed the following members as delegates:

Dan Blake, David Chudnovsky, Simon Truelove, Ren Morley, Mark Keelan, Gavin Hainsworth, Peter Bonell, Alison Kirkley, Trish Kelley, Karen Kilbride, Derek Imai, and John Wadge

However, there are 3 regular delegate, and 15 alternate delegate positions vacant. If you are interested in becoming a delegate please contact the STA office.

NWDLC STANDING COMMITTEES

The Council has a number of standing committees open to any member of an affiliate.

Education: This Committee will be responsible for all educational activities of the Council.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE BULLYING?

Last issue we printed a summary of a report being prepared by the BCTF on adult bullies. We received a tremendous response. For many people reading the article was a revelation. Unfortunately, it appears some of our colleagues are the victims of bullying, often at the hands of administrators. We had many requests for more information. This article was gleaned from the Andrea Adams Trust website. You may want to visit the site and explore some of the links. It's at: www.andreaadamstrust.org

One of the difficulties in approaching the problem of workplace bullying, is that it may be hard to recognize and its effects may be attributed to something else, for it creeps up on you long before you are able to appreciate what it is that is making you feel the ill effects.

Bullying is a gradual wearing down process that makes individuals feel demeaned and inadequate, that they can never get anything right, and that they are hopeless, not only within their work environment, but also in their domestic life.

EUPHEMISMS FOR BULLYING

A good deal of workplace bullying can be overlooked or excused because of a number of euphemisms which are frequently used to justify bullying behaviours:-

- Bad Attitude
- Personality clash
- Strong management
- Poor management style

DEFINING WORKPLACE BULLYING

There really is no simple definition of bullying because it can take so many forms, occur in a variety of situations and crosses gender, race, age and can involve one or a number of individuals. However, the Trust defines this behaviour as:-

- "Unwarranted humiliating offensive behaviour towards an individual or groups of employees"
- "Such persistently negative malicious attacks on personal or professional performance are typically unpredictable, unfair, irrational and often unseen."
- "An abuse of power or position

that can cause such anxiety that people gradually lose all belief in themselves, suffering physical ill health and mental distress as a direct result."

- "Bullying can be regarded as the use of position or power to coerce others by fear, persecution or to oppress them by force or threat. It has been identified as a more crippling and devastating problem for both employees and employers, than all the other work related stresses put together."

Workplace bullying can range from extreme forms, such as violence and intimidation, to less obvious actions, like deliberately ignoring or excluding someone at work. Yet the disturbing manifestations of adult bullying in this particular context are widely dismissed.

STRONG MANAGEMENT OR BULLYING ?

Bullying is a sustained form of psychological abuse and often emanates from a senior person taking what they feel is a "strong line" with employees. There is, however, a fine line between strong management and bullying. That line is crossed when the target of bullying is persistently downgraded with the result that they begin to show signs of being distressed, becoming either physically, mentally or psychologically hurt. It can be distinguished from other work related problems, in that it is not the intention of the perpetrator, but the deed itself and its impact on the recipient or target that constitutes workplace bullying.

Experts agree that bullying thrives where it is common behaviour across the management hierarchy. This is especially the case in highly competitive environments where many individuals consider bullying as the

accepted method of motivating staff. In organizations that pride themselves on strong management, bullying can soon become part of the company's culture and management will be seen by their employees to have condoned such behaviour simply through their inaction.

Employees may feel that they have to put up with bullying behaviour as part of the job, and may not wish to complain for fear of further victimization or of being labelled a troublemaker.

Yet, what sort of workplace can really condone a form of behaviour, which engenders fear in their employees. People cannot contribute their best when under fear of bullying or abuse.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

How to tell if you are really being bullied. If you feel:

- The working relationship feels different from any you have previously experienced
- You are being persistently "got at"
- Your work is being criticized even though you know that your standards have not slipped
- You start beginning to question whether these mistakes you are supposed to have made, really are your fault.

If this is an accurate picture of what is happening to you at work, reflect on what has happened in the recent past and ask yourself, if everything was alright before, then why not now?

- What has changed?
- Do you have a new boss?
- Has pressure on your current boss increased?
- Have you recently changed jobs?
- Are your objectives being repeatedly altered?

- Have you been asked to do things outside your job description?
- Are you under more personal scrutiny?
- Are you feeling less involved?

Something about you may make the bully feel threatened and want to get rid of that threat, intentionally or otherwise. The bully will be looking for any reason to accuse you of poor performance, which could lead to your eventual dismissal. It is essential at this stage to maintain your self-respect.

WHY ME?

A victim is usually selected on the basis that they are either more attractive, competent, successful, popular. It is a sad fact too that the victims of office bullies are often usually above average performers, efficient and often better at what they do than those who bully them. These reasons stand well above the usual reasons for being targeted such as standing up for a colleague who is being bullied, being highly qualified or experienced, inability to fight back, vulnerability, low assertiveness, whistle-blowing, being 'different' etc.

TAKING ACTION

Before you decide to take action through official channels, it is worth considering an informal approach. Bullying at work usually affects several members of staff at any one time. The more people experiencing the same type of conduct, the less likely any complaint will be thought of as a personality clash on your part. So, check to see if any of your colleagues are experiencing the same treatment as you.

Initial tactics recommended to deflect the bully are broadly to stand firm, remain confident and keep calm. Asserting yourself by keeping a detailed record of every verbal or other attack will provide sound evidence to confront the bully with at a later stage. The need for proof is essential.

If you feel you are being bullied at work you should not suffer in silence but should seek immediate advice from your union, personnel or health and safety officers.

Those who are the prime targets often feel ashamed to talk about it with colleagues because they feel their professional credibility is being called into question. Be strong, it is not your fault.

Loss of confidence, the confusion of professional and personal characteristics and abilities, the feeling of shame and degradation, is all part of the victim experience.

Do not become isolated, seek support and remember you also have a position of power because your ability or popularity threatens the bully -that is why you are the target.

Bullying is a severe offence that must be taken seriously by all employers. Your complaints must be believed and dealt with swiftly and sensitively, all too often, however, this is not the case.

THINGS TO REMEMBER TO DO

Make sure that you know exactly what your job description is so that you can check whether the responsibilities you are given match it.

Keep a record of all incidents which cause you distress or are undermining and any disparaging attacks on your character or personal competence - log dates and details and write down your feelings after each such occurrence together with your own response.

Keep copies of all annual appraisals and correspondence relating to your ability to do the job.

Try to get witnesses to bullying incidents — try to avoid situations where you are alone with the bully. Talk to colleagues and see if they will support you.

If the bully has made any disparaging claims against you then send them a memo refuting them. Any reply will add to your evidence, as will a refusal to respond.

Find out if your employer has a policy on harassment or unacceptable behaviour, which may cover bullying.

Take evidence of your experience to your trade union

Stand calm and firm and do not allow yourself to be a victim but do not take action alone if you are afraid of losing control.

Sick leave need not be a sign of weakness, it can be a strategy to take time over decisions about what to do next.

Make sure you keep all those you have asked for help informed of all developments.

Follow the grievance procedures with the help and support of your union or personnel officers.

Seek stress management and assertiveness training. Apart from being generally beneficial to you, it will help you to cope more effectively should you face a similar situation in future.

Talk to friends and family for emotional support. Find out from your GP if counselling is available and make an appointment.

Remember that you are the most important person in all of this and to look after yourself is of paramount importance.

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

This widespread phenomenon is one of the most destructive forces eroding the professional lives of men and women who have to go to work. The unpredictable behaviour and the often unseen aggression of a bullying boss engenders fear and paranoia in large numbers of employees. It makes their working lives utterly miserable, leaves people full of self doubt, affects performance and is the source of both high absenteeism and in many cases, prolonged sick leave.

Bullying at work is the precursor of alarming and unimagined misery for its recipients and is synonymous with tragic consequences. There are documented cases of major physical impairments of health and many more cases involving nervous breakdown,

psychological distress and personality change, besides the intolerable pressure of acute financial repercussions and the total fracturing of careers. It has a devastating effect on the bullied person's family. Divorce is common, and a loss of marital affection and diminished attention to one's children have been reported.

People who find themselves being bullied - and this is a subjective test - often suffer from the following symptoms :-

PHYSICAL

- Disturbed sleep
- Headaches
- Panic attacks
- Sweating
- Frequent aches/pains/infections
- Numbness, trembling
- Loss of appetite

PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Acute anxiety
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling isolate
- Loss of self-esteem and motivation
- Depression
- Clinical depression
- Mood swings
- Tearfulness

Many individuals who bully will excuse such behaviour as a necessary means of motivating an employee in the highly competitive commercial environment of today. However, the impact on an organization can be devastating :-

- Increased sick absence
- Increased absenteeism
- Reduced productivity
- High staff turnover
- Low staff morale
- Demotivation

Bullying in organizations is, therefore, not only a problem for the individual but also for the organization as a whole. Where bullying is accepted as

good robust management, it filters from the top down. Regardless of the long term effects on employees, the emphasis here is short term success.

Profit is what matters, regardless of the fact that it is people's efforts that make it possible. In general, staff are not listened to, valued for the contributions they have to offer, or respected as individuals. And therefore, treated with dignity. In this type of hostile atmosphere, paranoia will prevail as staff think of little else other than the bully's next outburst. Not surprisingly, people lose their ability to concentrate or to be creative for levels of commitment depend on the attitude of those in authority.

WHAT TYPE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

Bullies are often insecure people who do not trust others and see them as a threat to their own positions. Their techniques range from outright aggression such as shouting and swearing and humiliating their victims in front of others, to psychological torture.

Bullying can begin innocuously enough, so that the victim is at first unsure of their suppressor's intentions. A bully will give somebody tasks to do they know can not be achieved in the time given, designed to set up somebody to fail. They also remove responsibilities, giving somebody very trivial tasks instead, or they constantly change instructions, persistently nit pick or freeze the target out.

These are covert things that are not seen by outsiders and the victims of this behaviour do not realize what is happening to them until they are so drained and weakened they haven't the strength to fight back and start to stay away at work.

OBVIOUS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Repeatedly shouting/swearing in public or private
Public humiliation
Persistent criticism

Constantly undervaluing effort
Personal insults and name calling
Persecution through fear or threats
Dispensing punishment out of the blue

Increasing responsibility whilst decreasing authority
Being overruled, ignored, marginalized or excluded

LESS OBVIOUS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Setting individuals up to fail
Setting un-contracted tasks
Setting unrealistic deadlines for an increased workload
Removing areas of responsibility and imposing menial tasks
Deliberately sabotaging or impeding work performance
Constantly changing guidelines
Withholding work related Information

HELPING YOURSELF

Perhaps the most common piece of advice given to those being bullied is **CONFRONTATION**. However, this apparently straightforward and common sense approach is more likely to enrage than to persuade the person to see reason. It will almost certainly result in an increased vindictiveness towards the accuser.

Confrontation is too unsafe an approach to be made by the individual alone. **GET SUPPORT AND ADVICE**. Speak to your working colleagues who may also be suffering the effects of the same bullying behaviour. **Contact your union**.

If objectives or instructions are unclear, ask for written clarification. Explain that this will provide an aide-memoire to help you achieve the aims within the given time. **IF THINGS DO NOT IMPROVE, YOU ALSO HAVE VERY IMPORTANT EVIDENCE**.

Check with previous work appraisals to confirm that it is not your performance that has altered. Ask your colleagues for their honest assessment. It may well be that without realizing it you have allowed the bullying to go on for too long. Without any other clues to recognition, the clearest indicator that something is seriously wrong is your health and the levels of stress that YOU are under.

ENDPIECE

Raising awareness is the primary aim

of this factsheet, however, until organizations react in a positive way towards bullying at work, individual professional survival is down to three options:-

- ◆ Leave to escape the problem altogether
- ◆ Accept what is happening because of financial commitments and your desire to work
- ◆ Stand firm and take action

Leader	Bully
Decisive	Random, impulsive
Has a good appreciation of short, medium and long term needs, goals and strategy	Rigidly short term, often no more than 24 hours
Accepts responsibility	Abdicates responsibility
Acknowledges failings	Denies failings, always blames others
Consistent	Inconsistent, random, impulsive
Fair, treats all equally	Inconsistent, always critical, singles people out, shows favouritism
Values others	Unable to value, constantly devalues others
Includes everyone	Includes and excludes people selectively
Leads by example	Dominates, sets a poor example
Truthful	Economical, uses distortion and fabrication
Confident	Insecure, arrogant
Assertive	Aggressive
Delegates	Dumps
Builds team spirit	Divisive, uses manipulation and threat
Uses influencing skills	Alienates, divides, creates fear and uncertainty
Motivates	Demotivates
Listens, guides, instructs	Tells
Has high expectations (that staff will do well)	Has low expectations of everybody
Shares information freely	Withholds information, releases selectively, uses information as a weapon
Always strives for clarity	Revels in confusion, divide and rule etc
Allows and trusts people to get on with the job	Constantly interfering, dictating and controlling
Focused on the future	Obsessed with the past

Degrees Just Paper

One of our members asked a reporter to question Christy about her post secondary education. The member believed that she has not completed any course of studies or

received a degree. The reporter put that to her. Here is part of Christy's response:

“ He's right, I got involved with work too soon. If I had completed the years I would have received the paper”

With insights of that caliber it's no wonder public education is in trouble.



The Columbian Teachers' Federation

The STA International Solidarity Committee has been in touch with Education International (EI), a Brussels-based organization that represents organizations of education personnel worldwide. We have learned that Columbian teachers and educators continue to be murdered, tortured and disappeared. Each year some forty Columbian teachers are murdered. For many years the persecution of trade unionists in general, but educators in particular, has been well known.

Assassination, disappearances, beatings and threats have become a regular occurrence. Teachers in particular are targets of paramilitary groups who commit violent acts without being brought to justice.

Since the beginning of the year many colleagues have been assassinated. Hundreds have received written warnings from the paramilitary United Self Defense League that they are targets and will be killed. These sinister letters are distributed to the individuals concerned and to the media, and some letters indicate the government has been advised of the plan to kill parasites.

FECODE (the Columbian teachers union) activists are targets as are all the members of the Executive Committee of the union. Over 1,000 teachers are internally displaced in Columbia and the numbers are growing. All sectors



of the education system are targeted from preschool to tertiary teachers and other education personnel. No group is exempt.

Families are divided when teachers are forced to move to safety. In some areas of the country, it is possible to be given a status that indicates authorities are aware an educator has to go into hiding. This helps teachers who must flee to maintain some employment rights even though they are not on the job. Most, however, cannot stay in their home villages long enough to get such a status and sometimes as a result, they are also prosecuted for leaving their position without permission.

Families are persecuted when the prime target of the paramilitary group is in hiding. Some teachers' children have been murdered or tortured because the teacher has gone into hiding.

EI has passed a resolution asking teachers around the world to dedicate December 10, 2003 the International Day of Human Rights, to Columbia.

We are asking that STA members do the same thing. The International Solidarity Committee, through the

Executive of the STA is sending a letter of solidarity to Jorge Guevara, the president of FECODE. EI asks teachers around the world to send letters of protest to the President and the Minister of Justice in Columbia with a copy to FECODE. The President's

name and address is:

S.E. Dr. Alvaro Uribe Velez, President de la Republica, Palacio de Narino, Carrera 8no7-26, Santafe de Bogata, Columbia.

Fax 571-566-20-78

Email: auribe@presidencia.gov.co
rdh@presidencia.gov.co

The Minister of Justice is:

Sr. Fernando Londono Hoyo, Ministro del Interior y Justicia, Palacia Echverry, Carrera 8a no8-09, piso 20, Santafe de Bogata, Columbia Fax 571-566-45-73
email mininterior@myrealbox.com

The teachers' union can be reached at Sr. Jorge Eliecer, Guevara, Presidente FECODE, Carrera 13A no 34-54, Santafe de Bogata, Columbia FAX 57-1-285-3245

Or email fecode@fecode.edu.co

*Submitted by the
STA International Solidarity
Committee*

New West and District Labour Council cont..

They will organize in conjunction with the Canadian Labour Congress weekend seminars, education forums, new delegate seminars etc. as well as, be responsible for the distribution of educational material to Labour Council delegates and affiliates.

Political Action: This committee will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Council on municipal political action, including municipal candidate endorsement. They will organize civic candidate and campaign workshops or conferences in

cooperation with the Labour Council Education Committee and CLC, work in conjunction with the CLC and B.C. Federation of Labour Political Action programs during Provincial and Federal election campaigns, and other related activities.

Strike Support: This committee will be responsible for ensuring that whenever the Council is called upon to provide assistance to a union which is involved in a labour dispute, we are in a position to respond

quickly and effectively. This could involve providing pickets and coordinating with the affected union, as requested.

Community & Social Action: This Committee will be responsible for developing links with community agencies and encouraging labour participation on community boards and committees, support and encourage labour's role through Labour Councils in the activities of the United Way.

If you are interested in participating in any of these, contact the STA office.

Gordon Campbell a Liar- 71% of British Columbians think so



Robbins SCE Research between November 24th and 27th 2003 conducted a province wide random survey of 1020 British

Columbians. The survey asked questions with respect to Joy McPhail calling Premier Campbell a liar, Carol James the new leader of the NDP, and how British Columbians would vote if an election were held tomorrow. This survey has a margin of error of 3.5% 18 times out of 20, at 98% competency factor.

Question #1

Former NDP Leader Joy McPhail called

Premier Campbell a "liar" over his intention to sell BC Rail to American interests.

In your opinion is it fair for longtime NDP Cabinet Minister Joy McPhail to be calling Premier Gordon Campbell a "liar" in the legislature?

Yes-71% No-29%

Question #2

Now that Carole James is the new leader of the NDP will you strongly consider voting for her in the next provincial election in May 2005?

Yes-44% No-46%

Question #3

If an election were held in British Columbia tomorrow which of these following leaders and political parties would you vote for?

Carole James and NDP	34.5%
Gordon Campbell and BCL	27.0%
Ron Gamble and Reform	27.0%
Adrienne Carr and Green	09.0%

Commentary:

The vast majority of respondents in this survey believe Joy McPhail is right. Gordon Campbell is a "liar" over the BC RAIL sale. This is reflected more acutely in areas most

affected by the sale. However the Premier does not impress other regions of the province.

Carole James is a no name, however, despite the misgivings of the press, this is what British Columbians want.

The BC Liberal Party is less popular than the Premier is. Reform BC and BC Liberals split centre right vote.

Both Reform and BC Liberal futures depend upon the upcoming Canadian Alliance/ Progressive Conservative merger vote, and the anticipated Federal election in 2004.

Insight:

Contrary to what the press is saying, I cannot see how Gordon Campbell can possibly win another term, or even a minority government. British Columbians mistrust him, don't like him and as one Prince George respondent said "I'd like to meet him.. so I could shove my foot up his a!!". This is how the public really feels right now.

Glen P. Robbins

Bargaining Report

The recent Bargaining 2004 survey produced 270 returned surveys from Surrey teachers. In those returns there was overwhelming support for the BCTF's proposed strategy.

What was that strategy again? It has two points: a limited number of items in a traditional bargaining package, and a broad-based, community-built, public support program aimed at increased education funding.)

The number one concern of members is salary, but working and learning conditions issues, including class sizes, non-enrolling ratios, and services to students were a close second. Preparation time was the primary concern for adult education teachers.

WLC/Bargaining Committee

The BCTF has resurrected the provincial Working and Learning Conditions Committee. Lynda Toews from Surrey has been appointed to this committee, which met for the first time last weekend. We look forward to the committee's first report.



NO NAME-CALLING WEEK: MARCH 1-5, 2004

ASCD has joined with more than 30 other organizations to address name-calling and verbal bullying in American schools. In conjunction with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and Simon & Schuster's Children's Publishing, ASCD will support the first-ever No Name-Calling Week in March 1-5, 2004. Visit the **No Name-Calling Week Web site** at <http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/templates/nonames.html> to learn more.



LETTERS



Reprinted from *the Now Clark's War on Junk Food Hard to Swallow*

The Editor,

After 15 years of shiny Pepsi and Coke machines lighting up the halls of public schools, the education minister and the media have finally noticed, and are now expressing their horror that schools today are now - gasp - businesses!

The government and the public must decide which way they want it, because they can't have it both ways. Either schools are adequately funded, or they are forced to fund themselves. Until that is resolved, junk food should stay in schools. Why? Because it reflects a government-created problem: obesity begins at home and not at school, and because students, being good consumers, will spend their money elsewhere.

The government that promotes private enterprise is the same government that is righteously stripping school budgets, eliminating teacher assistants and special

programs, closing schools and increasing class sizes in the name of fiscal downsizing. And the same government that tells school board to run their affairs more efficiently, just like private enterprise.

It would appear that Christy Clark only approves of some kinds of private ventures. Coke machines are not one of them because they contradict Clark's anti-obesity movement. She has obviously decided that schools with pop machines have more obese students than those without.

Obesity starts at home. It is not the schools that take kids to McDonald's for Happy Meals, or to Dairy Queen for birthday parties, or Burger King for those drippy, greasy, calorie-rich burgers that North America has come to love.

According to Time magazine, 46 per cent of two-year-olds in America on a daily basis eat adult portions of french fries, hot dogs and sweetened beverages. Teachers, on the other hand, are trained to educate, and that is what they do. Good nutrition and good life habits in general have always been taught to students - but when schools

are crippled by continually slashed funding, and told to do more with less, it leaves only bleak choices.

The ultimate irony, however, is that in the spirit of free enterprise, teens will simply go elsewhere to get the items they want. This generation has been raised on name brands. They have been targeted from birth by major international corporations. And like dedicated consumers, they reflect the corporate philosophy. When the pop machines disappear, their dollars will, too - right into the pop machines at the corner store. That financial re-routing will cost each school hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

Until the problem is recognized as a social, and not educational issue, banning junk food should be reconsidered: it is hypocritical, misguided and financially destructive. Perhaps if the government stopped treating schools as businesses, schools could stop fundraising and get back to what they do best: educate. Perhaps then, junk machines can go.

Alexis Statz,
Grade 9, Earl Marriott Secondary

Reprinted from *the Richmond News, November 26, 2003*

Dear Editor,

As an association of principals and vice principals in the Richmond School District we are deeply concerned about issues surrounding the new College of Teachers and the impact the dissent over these issues is having on our schools.

We feel that the majority of the college council should be elected from those actively engaged in the education profession, rather than the new process whereby the majority are appointed by the government. This may mean that teachers elect a certain portion, school administrators another portion, and school district personnel superintendents, assistant

superintendents still a further portion.

We also feel that in dealing with issues of personal misconduct, the college needs to make use of those processes that are presently working effectively at the local school district level to deal with such issues. To ignore these would be foolish and create greater hardship to all of those involved.

The new college needs to incorporate these existing processes as it establishes a process for dealing with such complaints.

On Dec. 1 there will be a large number of teachers in our district, as in other districts across the province, who are no longer eligible to teach in our schools because they have withheld their \$90 fee to the College of Teachers in protest of the changes the government has made to it. The impact

will not be immediately felt as it will take weeks before the college will be able to report to school boards which teachers have paid and which have not. At some point, however, school boards will be faced with taking action.

As school administrators we see the anxiety and distraction these issues are having on our teachers. All of this is taking away from our focus on the learner. We strongly urge both the Ministry of Education and the B.C. Teachers' Federation to work together to resolve the issue of the College of Teachers as soon as possible so that teachers can work in a positive, supportive environment where they are able to give all their attention to the needs of our learners.

Mark Porter, President,
Richmond Association of School Administrators

President's Perspective



I never cease to be amazed at how we come together when it really counts.

Teachers' political views are as diverse as the general public's. We have everything from communists to Alliance supporters. Clearly, we have members who are at least ambivalent about belonging to a union. But when our backs are to the wall, we are able to stay united.

Our latest fight over the College is a case in point. The support for the boycott has been truly overwhelming. When you think that 78% of the membership, 27,000 teachers, put their names on letters or cards it's really quite phenomenal. We have had strike votes in the past exceeding 90%, but never have 78 % of the membership turned out to vote .

This was a unique collective action. There is an individual relationship between each member and the College that is independent of the union. Each member had a personal decision to make regarding payment of the fee. It is understandable that some members, given their personal circumstances, chose to pay the fee. What makes this

action even stronger is that most colleagues who did not sign cards nevertheless supported the action. However, I have no doubt that those same members will respect any job action that we may be forced to take to protect members involved in the boycott.

We should all be proud that we have been able to turn a potentially demoralizing defeat at the hands of the Liberal government into a powerful collective action that has united us and garnered much support and respect from the public.

Comments?

jwadge@surreyteachers.org



Call For Delegates



Do you have plans for Spring break?

Every year the Surrey Teachers' Association sends 58 representatives to the BCTF Annual General Meeting in Vancouver. You could be one of the lucky delegates! *Read on.*

The Annual General Meeting hears reports from the Executive Committee and other BCTF Committees, sets the annual fee, debates resolutions from local associations and elects the members of the BCTF Executive Committee. We also have a lot of fun getting to know other teachers from around the district and around the province.

Together with two other locals, we host a hospitality suite in the Hyatt Regency and for four evenings teachers enjoy singing and talking with their colleagues. The AGM this year runs from Saturday, March 13 – Tuesday, March 16.

Some of the Surrey delegates

have already been chosen as a result of an office they hold in the association, but there are 42 positions yet to be elected. The election will take place at the STA General Meeting on **Wednesday, January 21, 2004, 4:00 at the Conference Centre.**

Members of the Surrey Delegation should be available to attend all or most of the delegation meetings. These meetings are scheduled as follows:

- 1) Thursday, January 22, 2004, (This is a special welcome wine & cheese event for all Surrey delegates and other interested persons, featuring a panel discussion on "The Politics of the BCTF" with special guests, David Chudnovsky, Kit Krieger and Linda Burkholder.)
- 2) Wednesday, February 4
- 3) Monday, February 16
- 4) Wednesday, March 3 and
- 5) Tuesday, March 9 (all-day meeting)
- 6) Rookie delegates orientation (TBA)

All meetings are held at the Conference Center and begin at 4:00 pm, with the exception of the all-day meeting, which begins at 9:00 a.m. and the Rookie Delegates Orientation which takes place at the STA office.

**So you want to run for the AGM Delegation?
Delegates to the BCTF AGM will be elected at the January 21 General Meeting.**

If you want to run for the delegation you should submit a candidate statement of 50 words or less to the STA by 4:00 p.m., January 9. (Statements will be edited for length.) Statements can be sent to my attention, Lynda Toews, via courier: STA #000, via fax to 604-594-5176, or by email to ltoews@surreyteachers.org.