



BREAKING NEWS

The BC Federation of Labour representing over 500,000 working people passed the following resolutions unanimously:

The Federation will call upon the government of BC to ensure that the Fraser Institute does not have access to Foundations Skills Assessment data; and the Federation will support the BCTF in any actions they take to oppose the Foundations Skills Tests.

Preserving quality teaching and learning

Teachers know that there is no such thing as a standard student. We understand that students learn and grow at different rates and in different ways. That's why we use a wide range of teaching and assessment methods, and believe that assessment must support student learning.

As professionals, we know how important it is to provide our students with a rich learning experience within a broad, inclusive curriculum.

Teachers have been increasingly concerned about the Foundation Skills Assessments (FSAs), the obsession with data collection, and the overuse and misuse of standardized tests. We know that learning is a complex, dynamic process. Yet, we've seen how **the unhealthy emphasis on testing dismisses the learning process and overinflates the value of a test score.**

- The Foundation Skills Assessment test **do not help teachers teach or students learn.**
- They **take valuable time and resources away** from teaching and learning.
- The FSA **results are misused** to rank schools based on a very narrow measure and set up a false impression of public schools, teachers, and students.
- The FSA and the overuse of standardized testing **narrow the curriculum and reduce the opportunities for students** to engage in meaningful learning experiences.

For far too long, concerns about the FSAs have been voiced over and over by teachers, parents, trustees, researchers, academic, and others. The solution is obvious. **The FSAs should only be administered on a random, sample basis.** This would meet the government's stated need to assess the system while protecting a quality public education experience for students.

Yet, the minister of education and the provincial government continue to deny this solution and assist in the erosion and privatization of public education. With 177 public schools closed in BC, 10,000 overcrowded classes and special needs neglected, **the government appears only interested in measuring, ranking, and finding fault** with public schools, teachers, and students.

The choice is clear. As dedicated, caring professionals, **we have to stop participating in measures that are not good for our students, our schools, or the public school system.** Together we need to take a big step in the right direction and vote yes to resisting the FSAs.

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)

The provincial government has been administering the Foundation Skills Assessments to all Grade four and seven students for the past eight years. This test is not conducive to students' learning or teachers' teaching. The assessments take important time and resources away from the classroom, in turn, undermining public education. Once the assessments are completed in BC, the results are given to a private organization. Schools are then ranked, on a very narrow measure, and students and schools are unfairly compared to reveal winners and losers. This assessment is unfair, unjust, and does not result in any additional funding or support for the students.

As BCTF members, you are able to take part in a province-vote that asks this question:

“Do you agree with the 2008 AGM decision that unless the Ministry of Education changes to a random sampling with neither schools nor students identified, teachers exercise their professional autonomy and not prepare for, administer, or mark the provincial FSAs?”

Voting will take place:

**Advance Poll - Friday, December 5, 2008
8:00 am to 4:00 pm**

**at the Surrey Teachers' Association Office
#201, 9030 King George Highway, Surrey**

**Regular Poll - Tuesday & Wednesday,
December 9 and 10, 2008**

8:00 am to 3:30 pm at each school site

8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the STA office

STARA Meeting

Wednesday, December 17th, 2008

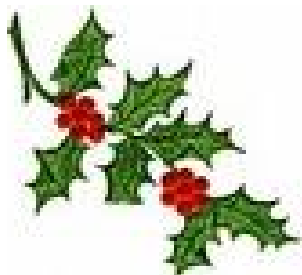
4:00 p.m.

District Conference Centre

Holiday Refreshments to follow

All members welcome to attend

(only staff reps can vote)



New Teachers' and Student Teachers' Conference 2009

The BCTF will be hosting its twelfth annual conference for new and student teachers. This professional development conference offers a broad range of workshops from staying well with teaching and integrating global education into the classroom. This conference is designed specially for new teachers and student teachers that are in their first five years of teaching. You can check out more info at the BCTF Website.

You can apply for TOC funding through the STA to attend this conference. Go to www.surreyteachers.org click on TOC Committee, and click on Apply now for Pro-D funds.

Where: Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport
Richmond, BC

When: Friday, February 27th and
Saturday, February 28th 2009

Registration: A package information and
registration will be available online
starting January 5th, 2009

Contact: Moh Chelali, 604-871-1844 at the
BCTF

New Automated Dispatch System Information Session

On December 22, 2008, the District will be switching to a new automated dispatch system (ADS) to replace the current Subfinder system. ADS will have almost the same features as Subfinder, however there will be some changes.

The District and Teachers' Association will be holding a joint information session in order to notify employees of the changes.

When: 3:30 pm on Thursday, December 11, 2008
Where: District Conference Centre Room #1,
9260-140 Street. Surrey

Surrey School District Workshops

The District provides a variety of professional development workshops.

On FirstClass, click on SD Staff Conferences, then on District Workshops/Focus Days, and then click on SD Workshops. This will take you to an In-District Registration Page. If there is room in a workshop, it will display a green circle. If it is unavailable, it will be red. Double click on the workshop name to sign up.

Upcoming STA Sponsored Workshops

These will be held at the District Conference Centre, 9260-140 Street, Surrey.

Register for these workshops by email via FirstClass to Lorna Sheh or Donna Stewart at the STA. Please register for the Tax Tips Workshop by January 16, 2009

Tax Tips for TOCs



Thursday,
January 22, 2009
Room 3

E.I. Information Session

Thursday,
June 11, 2009
Room 3



The Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

Every employee of the Surrey School District and each member of their immediate family are eligible for up to 12 hours of counselling from Wilson Banwell in each year ending September 30th. EFAP provides assessment and counseling services from registered therapists.

Employees can request services by simply calling 604-689-1717 and setting up an appointment. Immediate services are available 24 hours a day.



TOC Scenarios on the BCTF and YouTube websites

I was recently asked by the BCTF to act out some common scenarios that happen to Teachers on call. These scenarios have been videotaped and uploaded onto YouTube and the BCTF website. They help to shed some light upon the professional relationships between teachers.

YOU



Check them out at:

BCTF Multimedia Centre at <http://www.bctf.ca/multimedia/> at the top of the Issues category or directly from

<http://www.bctf.ca/multimedia/OpenAssetWindow.cfm?asset=195>.

YouTube link is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNGnm47lg3o>.

TOC Committee

I wanted to extend my appreciation towards the new TOC Committee members.

Thank you to Nicole Hurtubise, Jennifer Thibodeau, Jatinder Bir, Christie Runa, Sylvia Vanderhoek, Ravi Dhillon, and Lynda Bergstrand for all of your assistance and contribution to the committee.

Remember that there are many ways TOCs can stay informed

- TOC Hotline 604-592-8396
- TOC Website www.surreyteachers.org
- TOC Newsletter
- TOC Bulletin Board in staffrooms
- TOC Listserv-virtual staffroom for TOCs
(to register email Katie at worboys_k@sd36.bc.ca with email address, employee number and full name)