



"Together We Learn"

BOARD OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23

(CENTRAL OKANAGAN)

1940 Underhill Street, Kelowna, B.C. V1X 5X7

Tel. (250) 860-8888 Fax (250) 860-9799

Website: www.sd23.bc.ca

June 23, 2014

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Mr. Jim Iker, President
British Columbia Teachers' Federation
100 - 550 West 6th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2

Dear Minister Fassbender and Mr. Iker:

The Central Okanagan Board of Education has been dismayed by how negotiations between the BCTF and BCPSEA have unfolded over the past year. Last July, we were shocked when the members of the BCPSEA Board of Directors were removed from office; however, we were still hopeful that a settlement could be reached with the new BCPSEA model in place.

Most recently, the public statements from both sides have only inflamed what were obviously very difficult negotiations. The impasse that has been reached is not in the best interest of the students we serve.

Over the past weeks, students, parents, teachers, support staff and administrators have all been placed in untenable situations, and our public education system is suffering.

It was then, with some relief, that we learned that government and BCPSEA were both in favour of the BCTF's request for a mediator to be involved in the negotiations. Mr. Vince Ready's reputation suggested that the stalemate could be overcome. However, as we all now know, Mr. Ready is unable to accept the position.

The Board therefore asks that both parties work together to seek another mediator, agreeable to both sides, to assist in coming to a settlement. There must be someone suitable and available.

The climate in our school district is at an all-time low. Over the years everyone has worked hard to build respectful, complementary relationships, and it may take a long time to build that trust again. We have heard that relationships in other districts are also deteriorating. We ask that, on behalf of all students in our public education system, both parties involved in provincial teacher negotiations work to find a solution to the current impasse.

Our students are worth it.

Yours sincerely,

Moyra Baxter
Chairperson

cc: Central Okanagan Board of Education Trustees
The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
BC Public School Employers' Association
All BC Boards of Education c/o BCSTA
Dan Ashton, MLA
The Honourable Norm Letnick, MLA
The Honourable Steve Thomson, MLA
Central Okanagan Teachers' Association
CUPE Local 3523
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