

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 47 (POWELL RIVER)

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Jeanette Scott –Chair, Doug Skinner – Vice-Chair

Steve Formosa, Mary James, Aaron Reid - Trustees

September 2, 2014

Ms. Teresa Rezansoff, President
British Columbia School Trustees Association
4th floor - 1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 5K9

Dear Ms. Rezansoff:

On behalf of the Powell River Board of Education, I would like to express our support for the goals and objectives of the Back to School Action Plan. Like other districts in the Province, we are concerned by the failure to reach a negotiated settlement with the teachers' union. The longer the impasse, the more stress is placed on families, on teachers and the system as a whole. And, inevitably, the continuation of conflict will have a long-lasting negative impact upon relationships within our classrooms, our schools and our community.

Over the past several months, we, like many other boards, have written letters to members of the Government as well as to the President of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, expressing our concerns and urging both parties to engage sincerely in the process of bargaining - a process that should be taking place at the bargaining table rather than through the media.

We believe that the decision to take public tax dollars that are intended to support public schools and redirect them to pay for daycare is both an inappropriate use of tax dollars as well as an insult to the public education system which, despite on-going funding challenges, has continued to provide high quality learning opportunities for our young people.

Further, we believe that creating and promoting a parent information website a week prior to the scheduled beginning of a new school year indicated that the government clearly had no intention of moving forward to resolve the on-going dispute. Then to see the Premier refusing to become involved but still posting comments on social media was particularly disturbing.

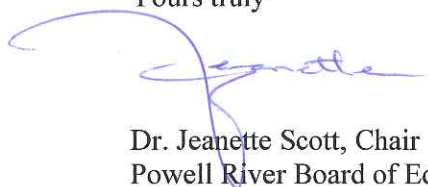
When bargaining with our teachers was shifted from the local to the provincial level, this Board expressed concern and, for many years, held to the position that there was a greater chance of achieving labour

peace at the local bargaining table. Nevertheless, we always had strong and committed representatives serving on BCPSEA.

But that was then and this is now. BCPSEA no longer exists as a representative bargaining agent of local school boards. And, the further into the "bargaining" morass we are drawn, the more evident it becomes that there is no real bargaining occurring and that trustees are simply being complicit in the Government's agenda.

As strong advocates for children and for public education, we urge you to reconsider BCSTA involvement in BCPSEA until such time as trustees are able to have some real influence at the bargaining table.

Yours truly



Dr. Jeanette Scott, Chair
Powell River Board of Education

JS/jg

c: All Boards
The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier
The Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education
BCPSEA
BCTF
BCCPAC
Cathy Fisher, PRDTA
Daphne Ross, CUPE Local 476
Nicholas Simons, MLA
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