



SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 51 (BOUNDARY)

September 2, 2011

Dear Parents:

As you are aware, negotiations between the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) are ongoing. Unfortunately, the parties have not yet been able to negotiate a collective agreement and the BCTF has served notice that they will be on strike on Tuesday, September 6, 2011.

Public education in BC is considered an essential service. This means that the BCTF is able to go on strike; however, the employer and the union are required to maintain certain essential services during that time. The Labour Relations Board orders which services are essential.

Currently, the strike activities will not involve any picketing. However, under Phase 1 of the BCTF strike, teachers will continue to teach their classes but will not perform many duties, including:

- Participating in certain meetings with principals/vice principals
- Preparing or distributing report cards
- Collecting money from students or participating in fund-raising
- Participating in any school photo organization
- Attending staff meetings
- Participating in meet-the-teacher activities that are outside of instructional time.

For a more complete list, please see the attached *Frequently Asked Questions*.

Extra-curricular activities are expected to continue provided the teacher continues to volunteer to sponsor the activity. In addition, teachers will respond in an emergency where a student's health or safety is at risk.

We are focused on the education and safety of our students. Schools will remain open, subject to essential services designations. Students will continue to attend classes as they would normally do. During break periods like recess, and bus pick-up before and after school, students will be supervised by the Principal or Vice Principal or by other non-unionized staff. The school district may, however, have to look at shortening or staggering recess breaks to ensure appropriate supervision of students.

Our priority remains that of providing the best possible learning environment for children — to the best of our abilities both during the strike and after.

The School District is asking parents' cooperation with the following:

- **If your child does not ride a bus, please arrange to have your child arrive at school close to the school starting time and to leave immediately after dismissal, since there will only be limited supervision of students at the school during these times.**
- **Please understand that your school Principal may be limited in their abilities to talk to you about your child's progress, as they will also be carrying an extra workload.**

The School District sincerely hopes that this labour dispute will be resolved as quickly as possible. We will keep parents informed through whatever means possible. While we may not always be able to send information updates home with students, we will be regularly updating our website (www.sd51.bc.ca) and sending news releases to the local media.

If you have any questions about the specifics of this job action, please contact the school office, your Principal, or the School District Administration Office at 250-442-8258.

For information about bargaining, you may wish to access the following resources:

- BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) website at www.bcpsea.bc.ca. Under Teachers, Collective Bargaining, you will find a complete list of publications related to this round of negotiations including bargaining proposals, costing of proposals, and essential services information.
- BCPSEA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bcpsea. Information is posted as events unfold. There is also a discussion section where parents are encouraged to ask questions directly.
- Our school district website at www.sd51.bc.ca

We appreciate your patience during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Strukoff".

Michael Strukoff
Superintendent of Schools

Attachment: Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Which activities will continue during Phase 1 of the teacher strike?

Under Phase 1, BCTF members will continue to provide student instruction; prepare and plan lessons; perform assessment, evaluation and marking; and participate in teacher discipline, evaluation, and investigation meetings. They will also continue to communicate with administrators regarding student health and safety and be available in the event of an emergency or disaster situation.

What duties will no longer be performed during a Phase 1 teacher strike?

Following is a list of **some** of the duties that teachers will not be required to perform. For a complete list, please visit www.bcpsea.bc.ca.

- participate in meetings or interviews with parents/guardians and/or district teaching staff outside of instructional time, or during instructional time unless coverage is provided
- participate in meet the teacher activities outside of instructional time, or during instructional time unless coverage is provided
- prepare or distribute report cards
- provide any student assessment data to Administrative Officers or the school office, except Grade 12 marks required for graduation, post-secondary applications and scholarship purposes
- complete and submit student referral forms outside of instructional time
- attend staff meetings
- attend any meeting called by School District management
- participate in any standing or ad hoc District committees
- attend school based meetings called by an Administrative Officer, unless the meetings are related to an emergency
- provide Administrative Officers with any routine printed, written or electronic communications
- accept any printed, written or electronic communication from an Administrative Officer, unless it relates to an emergency
- participate in the preparation or the organization of assemblies outside of instructional time, or during instruction time unless coverage is provided
- participate in any professional development that is not teacher directed
- provide coverage for a teacher who is absent, except for a Teacher on Call hired specifically for that purpose
- collect money from students or participate in fund-raising
- order supplies, textbooks, etc. unless needed immediately to effectively maintain ongoing instruction
- answer school office phones
- prepare overviews or previews for the Administrative Officers, except when associated with a teacher evaluation process
- distribute School District or administrative letters, newsletters, memos or announcements to students, unless it is health and safety related
- perform before school, recess, noon-hour or after school supervision, unless there are not enough management and exempt staff

If there is a strike, how will this affect “beginning of school” planning and preparation?

Teachers will participate as usual in the planning and formation of class programs and composition for a set amount of time at the beginning of the school year:

- Elementary Schools: beginning of the school year until September 10, 2011
- Secondary Schools: beginning of the school year until September 17, 2011.

This includes communication and meetings with the principal for the purpose of organizing class/program composition and formation, and not for other purposes or general preparation for the upcoming year. The school district can organize meetings of non-BCTF members (for example, principals/vice-principals) to ensure a smooth transition into the school year despite the strike.

Will extracurricular activities be affected?

During Phase 1, a teacher may voluntarily choose to continue or discontinue providing a voluntary extracurricular activity. At this point, we do not know how or if extracurricular activities will be affected.

What happens if the BCTF wants to escalate its strike past Phase 1; for example, disrupt instruction and/or picket?

In this event, the BCTF must inform the Labour Relations Board. The Labour Relations Board will then review the situation and determine what services are essential necessary before the strike can be escalated. Any strike activity that has not been through the essential service designation process should not take place.

What if I have further questions?

If you have a specific question relating to teacher bargaining or the potential teacher strike, please visit the discussion section on the BCPSEA Facebook page. BCPSEA will answer your questions in a timely manner. You can also contact your school principal.