



CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
BRITISH COLUMBIA DIVISION

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March 1, 2012

Via email and fax

Dear CUPE members working in K-12:

Re: BC Teachers Federation (BCTF) Job Action Update

Following a province-wide vote of its membership, the BCTF has announced that teachers will launch a full strike for three days beginning Monday, March 5, 2012. BCTF President Susan Lambert announced the strike action Thursday, March 1, 2012. CUPE stands in solidarity with the BCTF against the government's legislation and fully supports the BCTF's efforts to maintain free collective bargaining in British Columbia.

CUPE members always respect picket lines wherever and whenever we encounter them. However, in this dispute, the **BCTF has asked that CUPE members continue to work during this BCTF strike action, as BCTF and the employers have agreed there will be no pickets.** (A brief summary of the legislation is on the following page.) This agreement was made to ensure that the BCTF would be in a full-scale strike position without lengthy Labour Relations Board hearings. While this is unusual, CUPE respects the right of all unions to run their strike action as they see fit.

BCPSEA, the employer, has assured us that schools will be closed to students but will remain open for support staff to report to work as they normally would. **CUPE members should report to work and perform their regular duties.** School District employers will not close schools or layoff members during the dispute. Regular duties should be continued. This may include dealing with backlogged work, special cleaning, meetings or Pro-D. This should not include student supervision, which is teacher and administrator work.

We remain in constant communication with the BCTF. Expect more information as it becomes available. Please direct any questions to your Local President.

I know this will be a difficult and challenging time for CUPE members as well as for our sisters and brothers in the BCTF. I will update you as soon as any new developments occur.

In Solidarity,

Barry O'Neill
President
CUPE BC Division

Attachment
BOM:CUPE 378
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Barry O'Neill, President
Mark Hancock, Secretary-Treasurer



Information on Bill 22

BCTF members are seeking a negotiated collective agreement. Despite 78 bargaining sessions, on Monday, February 27, 2012, a very confrontational Liberal government introduced Bill 22, the *Education Improvement Act*. Bill 22 institutes a cooling off period that forbids strike or lockout and includes terms of reference for a mediator who will assist the BCTF and the employer to reach an agreement within those terms. The terms include a two year agreement under the net-zero mandate, and matters pertaining to professional development, teacher evaluation, and scheduling and selection of teachers. The legislation imposes hefty fines for Teachers and the BCTF if they take strike action after the legislation is passed.

Summary of Essential Services Order – BCTF Escalation of Job Action

- In addition to Bill 22, on February 28, 2012 the Labour Relations Board issued its interim essential service order on BCTF Escalation of Job Action. The interim order provides, in part, that:
 - Teachers may withdraw their services fully for up to three consecutive days upon giving notice of no less than two school days;
 - After the initial three day withdrawal, the BCTF may withdraw their services fully for 1 out of 5 school days per week upon at least two school days notice;
 - While teachers are at work, they must perform at least the duties they were performing under their Phase I job action;
 - During any job action, BCTF will not picket, block access or egress or otherwise restrict or cause to be restricted in any way, the full and complete access to schools by CUPE and other members of support unions or impede the operation of other employers who occupy the same premises as schools or other districts;
 - This agreement was made to ensure that the BCTF would be in a full-scale strike position without future lengthy Labour Relations Board hearings;
 - The parties will work with the Board to complete a final essential service order.