

## School District No. 79 (Cowichan Valley)

### Message to Parents Regarding Teachers' Job Action

The BC Teachers' Federation, the union representing public school teachers in British Columbia, has given notice that job action will begin on the first day of school, September 6<sup>th</sup>. Parents will be anxious about the impact this job action will have on their children's education. Through this series of Questions and Answers, we hope to address your concerns.

**Q: Will schools still be open for students?**

A: Yes. In British Columbia, public education from Kindergarten to grade 12 is an essential service so schools will be open and classes will be in session as normal starting on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Q: Will the school start and end times be changed?**

A: On Tuesday, September 6, there will be no change to the start and end times. Parents are reminded that busses will run three hours earlier at the end of the day because of a short day for students.

Starting on Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, the District will eliminate recess in all schools because we will not have enough staff available to supervise students. Afternoon busses will run fifteen minutes earlier and all schools except Drinkwater Elementary School and Alexander Elementary School will be dismissed fifteen minutes earlier in order to keep our transportation schedule intact. This revised schedule will be in effect for the duration of the job action.

**Q: What impact will have the job action have on how the classroom functions?**

A: On the BCTF website (<http://www.bctf.ca/NewsReleases.aspx>), Susan Lambert, President of the BCTF has given her assurance that "...teachers will be focused on excellence in our classrooms ... offer individual attention to students, and to keep in close communication with parents."

**Q: Are there any other impacts of the teachers' job action?**

A: The Labour Relations Board has decided which activities teachers need not perform in this phase of the teachers' job action. Most services being withdrawn affect communication between the teachers and the school principals; those services withdrawn which will have an impact on students and their families are:

- Teachers are not required to supervise students before school, during lunch or recess or after school if Principals, Vice-Principals or the District's other managers and excluded staff can supervise students.
- Teachers are not required to prepare or distribute report cards.
- Teachers are not required to submit student marks to the Principal or the school office except for marks for grade 12 students for courses required for graduation, post-secondary applications or scholarships.

- Teachers are not required to collect money from students or participate in any fund raising activities.

The LRB decisions can be found at this link: <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/bc-teachers/teacher-collective-bargaining/essential-services.aspx>

**Q: Which activities will continue as normal?**

A: Teachers will continue to prepare and plan lessons, assessment, evaluation and marking, and teacher discipline, evaluation, and investigation meetings. They will also continue to communicate with Administrative Officers regarding student health and safety and be available in the event of an emergency or disaster situation.

**Q: What about extracurricular activities?**

A: Teachers may continue to volunteer for extracurricular activities at their discretion. Schools may continue to enlist volunteers or others to help with extracurricular activities.

**Q: Will there be any picketing?**

A: There will be no picketing under Phase 1 job action.

**Q: What happens if the BCTF wants to escalate job action past Phase 1?**

A: The BCTF will have to inform the Labour Relations Board. The LRB will review and determine essential services levels for the teachers. Any strike activity that has not been through the essential service designation process should not take place.