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June 2nd, 2014

Revelstoke Board of Education
Bag 5800
Revelstoke BC V0E 2S0

Dear Trustees of District #19:

The past two weeks have been very difficult for me. I am not being dramatic when I say sleepless nights and profound disillusionment have become the norm. I feel the foundations of BC society have been breached and education in our province undermined by the very department charged with its promotion. British Columbian students are truly being disrupted and a growing sense of injustice has arisen. As a teacher I teach about our justice system, democracy, and indeed the power of the people. It is so ironic to taste injustice as an educator while teaching about it on a daily basis in social studies.

What injustices do I speak of? I am deeply concerned with the lack of respect and what I believe to be the unethical behaviour of the provincial government. Disregarding the decision of the Supreme Court of British Columbia by way of appealing the decision on class size and composition is irresponsible. The government, of all people should be able to honour and respect the Supreme Court. Furthermore I am moved to utter disbelief that the Ministry of Education (through their negotiating body, BCPSEA) has decided that their lockout and ensuing docking of our pay by 10% is a fair negotiating tactic. I am writing to ask for clarification on why you are not speaking out against these two actions- ignoring the Supreme Court and locking us out with a pay reduction.

I deeply respect the elected trustees in our community, on a professional and personal level. I have been involved in politics for many years and know that your jobs are not easy at all. In fact your responsibilities are most often entirely thankless and extremely time consuming, yet the decisions you make are very important. As the days pass I can't understand how the Board of Education in SD 19 can support the government decisions I believe to be irresponsible and harmful to our children. I hope that you will stand up for teachers and the children in our community by not supporting the tactics at play right now. It really is the children who are being harmed by not respecting the Supreme Court and locking the teachers out during our breaks.

Exactly how is the lock out impacting students? Please read over my list of what I do during recess and lunch, and **consider who is suffering** (other than me at the loss of pay):

STANDARD RECESS AND LUNCH ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS:

Help students finish the preceding lesson that they were struggling with (almost daily)
Help students with overdue work (almost daily)
Help students with work they missed when they were absent (almost daily)
Facilitate conflict resolution between students (daily)
Talk to students who I notice to be struggling emotionally (daily)
Help students find a missing assignment in their desk (almost daily!)
Prepare for the next lesson by getting out manipulatives, resources, stations, etc. (almost daily)
Put away manipulatives, resources, stations, etc from the previous lesson (almost daily)
Review the upcoming lesson plan, to make the next lesson go smoothly (daily)
Supervise students that stay in because of health issues (almost daily)

Technology- load PowerPoints, samples of the upcoming lesson, short video/audio clips (almost daily)
Grab a bite to eat and use the washroom(should be daily, but most often there isn't time!)
Conference with admin, other teachers regarding issues that arise outside the classroom (almost daily)
Photocopy assignments, cut paper, hand out assignments, collect assignments (weekly)
Call parents to discuss a variety of topics- behaviour, meetings, health, homework, etc (weekly)
Call stakeholder agencies (MCF, Community Connections) to discuss students (weekly)
Supervision of students outside on the playground (weekly)
Prepare any support staff for upcoming lessons since there is no other time to do this (weekly)

I ask the trustees of our community what is their personal line in the sand that they are not willing to cross in this crisis? Is it a further pay cut? A more extreme lock out? Declaring our strike illegal? The use of force to stop teachers from picketing? When will our trustees break with protocol and stand up to the tactics that our government believes will bring resolution to the teacher dispute? As a teacher I am striking and picketing for my students. I believe in them unequivocally and it breaks my heart when I think of larger classes, less help, less funding, and less time for me to be with them. They deserve and need much better than what is happening right now. I ask you as the trustees of my students to stand with me and the other teachers on Tuesday as guardians of education and the children of our province.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Newton
Grade 5 /6
Begbie View Elementary

CC Superintendent Hooker
Principal Wang
BCTF President Jim Iker
RTA Local President Jennifer Wolney
Premier Clark
Minister Fassbender