

## Get your facts straight—BCTF rebuttal to Ministry of Education

BCTF Response to Ministry of Education claims in the INFORMATION BULLETIN, 2012EDUC0019-000236, March 3, 2012 titled *BCTF Claims and Facts*

Ministry of Education statements	BCTF Response
<p>Claim: 700 fewer Special Needs teachers</p> <p>FACT: 2,100 additional special needs teaching assistants in B.C. classrooms.</p>	<p>BCTF analysis of ministry data shows that since 2001-02 there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,601 fewer FTE teachers, including a loss of 752 FTE Special Education teachers</li> <li>• 2,029 more FTE Education Assistants in all programs, including Special Education</li> </ul> <p>Education assistants replacing teachers is not adequate for special needs students.</p>
<p>Claim: Ninth-best paid in Canada</p> <p>FACT: B.C. teachers' salary plus benefits is fourth-best among provinces.</p>	<p>BCTF uses current salary figures (2011-12) for Category 5 (5 years of university) and Category 6 (master's degree) from salary grids in teacher collective agreements across Canada. Based on this comparison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maximum salary for a BC teacher with Category 5 qualifications ranks 9th in Canada, including the provinces and territories.</li> <li>• Based on provinces only, the rank shifts to 6th among the ten provinces.</li> </ul> <p>BCPSEA uses out-dated data and manipulates the rankings by comparing a teacher at Category 4 (only 4 years of university) salary with fewer qualifications, in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec, to a BC teacher with Category 5 qualifications.</p>
<p>Claim: Seniority eroded under Bill 22— Education Improvement Act</p> <p>FACT: Seniority remains key factor but qualifications also considered. Math teachers teaching Math; Science teachers teaching Science.</p>	<p>Existing contracts already provide for qualifications and experience to be considered first, before seniority.</p> <p>The government knows this, and is willfully distorting the criteria for hiring.</p>
<p>Claim: Contract demands are reasonable</p> <p>FACT: A 15 per cent wage increase at a cost of \$2 billion is completely unreasonable, given the current economic reality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ministry is exaggerating the cost of a salary increase by five times the actual cost.</li> <li>• Even BCPSEA estimates the cost of a 15% salary increase over 3 years at \$431 million, according to their February 27, 2012 Information Sheet.</li> <li>• Teachers across Canada have negotiated salary increases to cover the cost of inflation. Why is it only the BC government that claims they cannot afford a cost of living increase for teachers?</li> </ul>

Ministry of Education statements	BCTF Response
<p>Claim: Eliminated class sizes</p> <p>FACT: Class-size caps on all grades with exceptions made by principals and superintendents.</p>	<p>Bill 22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes the involvement of teachers in the organization of their classes by repealing the requirement for teacher consultation.</li> <li>• Ensures larger classes in Grades 4 to 7 because it removes the previous requirement of teacher consent.</li> <li>• Removes parent involvement in the organization of classes by repealing the requirement that the principal consult with parent councils about class size at the beginning of the school year.</li> <li>• Eliminates public transparency and accountability by repealing the requirement that the superintendent provide a report to school trustees in a public meeting about class sizes in the district.</li> </ul>
<p>Claim: Reject net-zero wage mandate</p> <p>FACT: 130 net-zero contracts signed. 25,000 CUPE employees signed net zero contracts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between November 2010 and July 2011, BC Bargaining Settlements Bulletins shows 36 municipal and federal public sector settlements in BC with annual wage and salary increases ranging from 1% to 3% for 2011, 2012, and 2013.</li> </ul>
<p>Claim: Teachers have not been fairly compensated</p> <p>FACT: Teachers received a 16 per cent wage increase; \$3,700 signing bonus for their last contract.</p>	<p>If BC teachers do not receive a salary increase for 2011–12, a Vancouver teacher at maximum salary (Cat. 5) will earn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$13,529 less than an elementary teacher in Toronto,</li> <li>• \$14,463 less than a secondary teacher in Ottawa,</li> <li>• \$21,001 less than a teacher in Edmonton</li> </ul>
<p>Claim: 12,000 overcrowded classes</p> <p>FACT: Of 65,000 classes, fewer than 1,500 have more than 31 students. Fewer than 600 have more than 33 - most of these are band, choir and theatre.</p>	<p>Bill 22 removes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The limit of three students designated with special needs per class.</li> <li>• The right of teachers to be consulted about classes with more than 30 students.</li> </ul> <p>Class size issues need to be put into the context of class composition – the more complex the needs of students, the more difficult it is to meet the needs of all, especially when classes are over-crowded.</p> <p>Ministry statistics show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,627 Grade 4 to 12 classes with more than 30 students in 2010-11.</li> <li>• 12,240 classes exceeded the legislated limit of 3 designated special needs students in 2010-11.</li> </ul>

Updated salary comparisons:

<http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Publications/ResearchReports/2011-TS-02.pdf>

<http://bctf.ca/ResearchRoundup.aspx>