

# Association of BC Drama Educators



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## Drama students lose under Bill 22

BC’s drama teachers are worried that drama students are going to bear the brunt of the Liberal government’s relaxing of class size limits in Bill 22.

Education Minister George Abbott has specifically mentioned drama classes as ones that would be in a prescribed category of classes that would be exempt from class size limits.

Drama classes, currently capped at 30 students, are challenging for teachers because learning does not occur in a traditional “desk and chair” environment. Teachers in the Association of BC Drama Educators (ABCDE) are worried about being able to effectively teach their drama classes and being able to ensure the physical safety of students in the larger classes being proposed.

Under current class size limits, any drama class larger than 30 must have more than one teacher. Colin Plant, the president of the ABCDE, teaches one such class: a musical theatre class of 55 Grade 9–12 students. At present they are preparing to stage *The Wizard of Oz*. This class configuration works because Plant shares the load with two other teachers: one teacher does music/singing, another does choreography, and Plant directs.

“It is a good way to do it,” says Plant. “The large class allows us to mount large-scale musicals that are elaborate and spectacular. Sometimes large classes are good, but only if there are multiple teachers. A class with 55 and only one teacher is unfathomable.”

Drama teachers welcome the inclusion of students with special needs in drama programs. Plant’s musical theatre class has three. The teachers work hard to provide the support required for participation in drama class to be meaningful and rewarding for students with a variety of special needs. Bill 22 will remove the current limits and allow any number of students with special needs into drama classes of any size.

Noting that the minister also suggested band classes would be exempted from class size limits as well, Plant says, “It appears that the government is more interested in saving money by increasing class size than they are in maintaining high quality fine arts education.”

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