

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Music teachers warn parents that Bill 22 will erode music programs**

The BC Music Educators' Association (BCMEA) has released a letter to parents warning that Bill 22 will erode their children's school music programs.

"The parents of our students are incredibly supportive of our music programs," says Mark Reid, president of the BCMEA. "They drive to early morning classes, fundraise, chaperone field trips, and attend concerts. I think they will be upset at what the government is proposing in Bill 22."

Music teachers are concerned that Education Minister George Abbott says that some music classes would be in a "prescribed category of classes" that would be exempt from the class size limit of 30.

Generally, large enrolment in secondary ensemble classes such as band and choir, is considered a good thing. However, large class sizes are not appropriate for other music classes. Non-ensemble courses require smaller classes than ensemble programs, and elementary school music is rarely taught in a large ensemble format. Music teachers are telling parents that the instructional strategies, student activities, and assessment tools used are best suited for smaller classes, the same size as other elementary classes.

Bill 22 removes the responsibility of administrators to consult with teachers about appropriate class sizes and learning situations. The BCMEA is telling parents that music teachers are worried that these decisions will be made without expert knowledge and result in inappropriate learning situations for some of their children.

Music teachers have also warned parents that Bill 22 will remove existing limits to the number of students with special needs per class. "Music educators openly welcome all students into their programs," says Reid. "I have personally experienced the joy of seeing how music can transform the life of a student with special needs. But achieving this joy is a significant challenge because students with special needs often attend music class without an education assistant (EA). Music teachers hope parents will push back against any notion that EAs are not needed in non-academic settings."

The BCMEA feels it must warn parents that larger class sizes with an unlimited number of students with special needs per class will inevitably erode the music programs parents so wholeheartedly support.

For further information, please contact Mark Reid, BCMEA president at 778-896-7343, or by e-mail at [bcmusiced@gmail.com](mailto:bcmusiced@gmail.com).

