

AGM 2025 – Chair report

By: Eve Flynn, Qualicum School District, BCPSEA Chair

Introduced BCPSEA Board of Directors (*prior to the elections*):

- Fraser Valley Region: Shirley Wilson, Abbotsford School District, *BCPSEA Vice Chair*
- Kootenay-Boundary Region: Dawn Lang, Kootenay Lake School District
- Metro Region: Donna Sargent, Richmond School District
- Northern Interior Region: Vacant
- Northwest Region: Margaret Warcup, Coast Mountain School District
- Thompson-Okanagan Region: Rob Zandee, Okanagan-Similkameen School District
- Vancouver Island-Coastal Region: Eve Flynn, Qualicum School District, *BCPSEA Chair*
- John Davison, President and CEO, Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat
- Ken Dawson, Executive Director, Labour Strategy and Coordination, Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat
- Cloë Nicholls, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Child Care

Thank you all for your service and continued committed to K-12 public education in BC.

I also want to thank Angie Delainey, who served on our Board for nearly two years representing the Northern Interior Region. Angie stepped down in October after getting a new job that placed her in a conflict of interest position.

BCPSEA's Budget

Like School Districts, it is always a challenge in identifying and prioritizing BCPSEA's services and balancing our budget to address the labour relations and human resources needs of the sector. We have been fortunate over the past three years to get some additional temporary funding support from the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the federal government.

Key Highlights from the last year

Bargaining:

- BCPSEA has spent much of the last year preparing for bargaining. A lot of sector consultation has taken place and will continue today and tomorrow.
- In November, Justin Rempel joined BCPSEA as the new Executive Director, Collective Bargaining to lead bargaining for the sector. We are very excited to have his expertise.
- Teacher local bargaining is well underway. It opened on November 4, 2024, and will close on February 28, 2025.
- Bargaining for both provincial tables can start in March, which is just around the corner! Once we have dates set, we will share this information with you.
- School districts were provided with resources and training for local support staff bargaining. Most bargaining plans have been submitted to BCPSEA and are being reviewed.

Coordinated Legal & Arbitration Support Services (CLASS):

Over the last several years, BCPSEA has implemented numerous strategies to help reduce the rising cost of legal and arbitration costs. Some of these measures include making greater use of associate-level legal counsel with external law firms, using in-house legal counsel, and instituting proactive and ongoing file reviews. In addition, starting this school year, BCPSEA introduced a usage-based component to the fee model. This fee model update is to allow school districts to influence their yearly CLASS program fees and encourage districts to participate in controlling legal costs at the local level.

Conflict of interest:

In October 2024, BCPSEA provided updated advice to boards of education on conflict of interest related to collective bargaining and administering the collective agreement. BCPSEA worked with external legal counsel, government and the BCSTA to create this updated guidance. We hope you find the new guide provides more clarity. In addition, BCPSEA issued another bulletin in January 2025 providing clarity regarding the issue of quorum.

Make a Future:French recruitment:

The federal and provincial governments are continuing to support BCPSEA's French teacher recruitment program. Temporary funding has been provided until June 30, 2026. This new funding will expand services for direct candidate outreach and additional human resources recruitment services. The funding will also be used to enhance international recruitment efforts, strengthen candidate support, and continue French teacher marketing campaigns.

Internationally educated teacher project

Make a Future in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Child Care is developing certification, immigration and employment resources for internationally educated teachers. The Ministry has provided funding to create a website section that will house these new resources, which will be launched this spring.

Symposium:

The BCPSEA learning Symposium was held on November 8-9, 2024, in Vancouver. The main theme of the event was bargaining preparations. Roughly 260 people attended – thank you to all who came.

Thank you:

I would like to conclude by sharing my appreciation for our Board and for BCPSEA staff.

Our Board of Directors works incredibly well together. We are a mixed Board of elected and appointed Directors. We have 7 elected Trustees and 3 appointed government staff members. But we are not a Board of 7 and 3. We are a Board of 10 and we operate as one. We have respectful dialogue. We tackle difficult issues together. We accomplish a great deal. It is an honour to serve as Chair of the BCPSEA Board of Directors. Thank you to all of my colleagues on the Board.

I also want to share how much the Board values BCPSEA staff. We are incredibly pleased with staff's work. They are a well-organized and competent group of individuals providing excellent service to the K-12 sector. The ongoing engagement staff has with the sector is purposeful, important and effective. The progress that has been made towards BCPSEA's Strategic Plan goals is outstanding. Thank you to the team at BCPSEA for diligently giving your best towards ensuring an inclusive and thriving BC public education sector.