

BCTF AGM Resolutions from the Burnaby Teachers' Association

Resolution #1: Communications Advisory Committee (Public Affairs)

That the BCTF create a Communications and Campaigns Advisory Committee, comprised of 5 members (3 elected for two-year terms at the Spring Representative Assembly, and 2 appointed for one-year terms by the BCTF Executive Committee), to meet twice a year for a full day to assist the Communications and Campaigns Division in planning and assessing the effectiveness of campaigns.

Supporting Statement:

Unlike BCTF locals that have political action and public relations committees, there is no BCTF provincial body that solicits input on such affairs from the general membership. Such a committee could enhance the creativity of our Communications and Campaigns Division, and democratize the means by which we, as teachers, present ourselves to the public.

Resolution #2: Electoral Reform (Political Action)

That the BCTF ask the Canadian Labour of Congress:

- i. to research electoral reform**
- ii. propose a new electoral system that provides for the election of governments that more accurately reflect Canadian voters' wishes**
- iii. publicize this proposal prior to the next federal election**

Supporting Statement:

Under Canada's current first-past-the-post electoral system, it is possible for a minority of voters to elect a majority government. (For example, only 39% of voters, and 22% of eligible voters, elected the present majority Conservative government.) This results in governments that do not accurately represent the values of Canadian voters. Canada's archaic electoral system results in wasted votes, shuts out minority voices, and promotes a two party system in which it is harder for new ideas to emerge. This leads to voter apathy and civic disengagement. It is time for Canada to revitalize its democracy.

Resolution #3: Non-compliance with Oppression (Professional Ethics)

That BCTF members, as an expression of the BCTF's commitment to democratic processes and civil society (as expressed by and not limited to policies 9.A.03, 27.01.c and 31.A.02), not cooperate in the identification, transportation, or incarceration of people involved in collective or individual acts of non-violent protest (including civil disobedience) endorsed by the BCTF, or of groups that are the target of unjust negative discrimination.

Supporting Statement:

In October 2011, during the Occupy Wall Street demonstration in New York City, Transport Workers Union Local 100 went to court to seek an injunction to stop police from forcing bus drivers to drive people arrested at demonstrations to holding facilities. Local 100 took this noble stand as recognition of the deep connection between their own collective rights and those of others in civil society. Should BC teachers be asked to cooperate in the suppression of collective rights, or promotion of other unjust policies, we should likewise refuse to comply. We should clarify this position now rather than react later in a disorganized and untimely manner should our services be called upon to assist in the suppression of democratic actors.

Some may argue that teachers' commitment to justice is unshakable, and a resolution to uphold it unnecessary. However, Canadian history shows that resistance to oppression, although celebrated in retrospect, has been the exception rather than the norm – and we know that teachers have not uniformly followed the exception: note, for example, that the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association supported the removal of Japanese Canadians from coastal areas during World War Two. (See page 146 of Roy Ito's "We Went to War".) And, as illustrated by the aftermath of September 11, 2001, it is still easy, even in the 21st Century, to motivate public opinion against certain ethnic groups and political dissidents – examples here being Muslims and those who spoke out against acts of war, respectively. So, while we should celebrate our work in promoting social justice, we must also be vigilant in maintaining our commitment.

Resolution #4: 21st Century Learning Initiative

That the BCTF form a six-member provincial committee on the 21st Century Learning Initiative. The mandate of this committee shall be to:

- i. Build on the research done by the BCTF in order to explore a framework for the implementation of a 21st Century Learning Initiative that is supportive of public education.**
- ii. Investigate methods by which the BCTF can educate members about its 21st Century Learning Initiative that includes, but is not limited to, providing professional literature and in-service training.**
- iii. Commence a public action campaign that informs both parents and the public at large about the benefits of the BCTF 21st Century Learning Initiative and provides an opportunity for them to support the campaign.**

Supporting Statement:

One does not need to reach far back in history to see how the current provincial government has neglected to consult with teachers regarding educational policy changes. Measures such as Graduation Portfolio, Daily Physical Activity, and BCeSIS are a few examples of how neglecting to consult with the professionals in the education system can lead to difficulties in the implementation of new initiatives.

Unfortunately, the government seems to be navigating through a similar process with 21st Century Learning. Currently the government is framing this new initiative in isolation. It is imperative that we, the teachers of this province, present our own framework for 21st Century Learning that is consistent

with the principles of a quality public education system. Along with a research-based framework for 21st Century Learning, we must create a network of support for our members that allows them to successfully implement 21st Century Learning in their classrooms and an outreach initiative that allows parents and the public at large to learn about the benefits of the BCTF 21st Century Learning Initiative.

Resolution #5: Progressive Taxation

That the BCTF investigate partnerships with other public sector unions and progressive organizations such as the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) in order to educate both public sector employees and the public at large about:

- i. The current financial system has led to the inequities that exist in our society, largely due to a tax structure that allows the wealthy individuals and corporations to consistently pay artificially low tax rates.**
- ii. How a fair and progressive taxation system would permit all citizens to benefit by narrowing the income gap, providing access to a quality public education system regardless of one's accumulated wealth, and upholding the right to a sustainable and universal health care system.**

Supporting Statement:

Many of the causes of injustice in society are due to a financial system that allows the wealthy to pay artificially low tax rates, a process that diverts billions of dollars of tax revenue away from vital public services. As a progressive organization, the BCTF should partner with other like-minded groups to promote a system of taxation that allows equal access to a quality K-12 public education system, a sustainable and universal health care system, and the right to an affordable post-secondary education.

Resolution #6: BCTF Pension Investments

That the BCTF Executive Committee request that the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (bcIMC), through which BCTF teachers invest their pensions:

- i. Divest of its stocks in Lockheed-Martin, a leading manufacturer of cluster bombs**
- ii. Reinvest these funds in profitable enterprises that do not manufacture weapons**
- iii. Ensure that this process is completed by the end of 2012**

Supporting Statement:

Lockheed-Martin earns more than 70% of its revenue from the manufacture of weapons, including cluster bombs. These munitions are especially lethal to civilians because cluster bombs typically release hundreds of bomblets over a wide area. Even more problematic is the fact that these munitions often leave behind many unexploded bomblets that can kill or maim civilians long after a conflict has ended. Over one hundred countries, including Canada, have signed on to the Convention on Cluster Munitions which bans the stockpiling, use, and transfer of virtually all existing cluster bombs and provides for the clearing up of unexploded munitions. Unfortunately some of the world's most powerful

military forces (United States, China) have refused to sign the international agreement. Divesting of stock in this company sends a strong message of support for the international agreement and demonstrates the willingness of Canadian citizens to respect the progressive movement towards disarmament. Currently, the bcIMC has an inventory of over 160,000 shares at a retail value of \$12.5 million invested in Lockheed-Martin.

Resolution #7: AGM Documents (Annual General Meeting)

That a new item “3” be added to Policy 2.A.14 (causing the current items 3 through 7 to be labeled 4 through 8) as follows: “That materials for distribution at the AGM, which are produced by BCTF committees, task forces, and PSAs, can be disapproved, or sent back for revisions that alter intent, only by the Executive Committee, Representative Assembly, or the Annual General Meeting.”

Supporting Statement:

In February 2011, Policy 2.A.14, governing the distribution of documents at the AGM, was amended in a way that reduces the number of people required to approve or veto documents. Now, in addition to the Executive Committee, the Representative Assembly, or the AGM, full-time table officers are able to decide which materials AGM delegates have access to on the AGM floor. This concentrates such decision making authority in just three people (or just one person, depending on interpretation of the policy). As an organization that strives to be democratic, we should also strive for greater access to information: decisions to prohibit materials should not be made without the broadest possible consensus.