



## Employer tables language to undo court victory

After cancelling several bargaining dates in the wake of the BC Supreme Court's landmark ruling, Peter Cameron and BCPSEA's bargaining team came back to the table on February 12 and 13. The BCTF provincial bargaining team was expecting the employer's representatives to finally table their comprehensive package, but they continued to stall and refused to table a salary proposal.

However, the employer did table language to counter our position that the 2002 language on class size, class composition, and staffing levels is restored as per the recent court ruling. Despite Justice Griffin's order that our previously negotiated language be restored, Peter Cameron, on behalf of the employer, tabled a proposal that would effectively wipe out what teachers just won back. That means, to date, the employer has only tabled major concessions that are driving the parties further apart at the table.

The proposal essentially replicates the failed consultation process from 2006's Bill 33 in an attempt to once again eliminate all provincially and locally negotiated language on working and learning conditions. To the employer's representatives at the bargaining table, it is as if Justice Griffin's ruling never happened. Their proposal would "supersede and replace all previous articles that addressed class size, composition, and staffing levels."

This unacceptable proposal would give administrators and superintendents full discretion over class size, composition, and staffing ratios, which is in complete contradiction to Justice Griffin's finding that those are our legitimate working conditions. Although the proposal promises "consultation" with teachers, there would be no obligation to address concerns, improve conditions, or provide recourse to teachers with overly complex classes. The result of these consultations will be arbitrary and inconsistent, as opposed to fair and consistent guarantees.

Additionally, the proposal does not come with any new funding.

In response to Peter Cameron during these two days, BCTF President Jim Iker insisted that the employer needs to respect the court ruling, get on with tabling their full package, withdraw the concessions, quit stalling, and bring the necessary funding to achieve a fair deal.

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