

A Letter from Your Neighbourhood Teachers

Dear Families,

We are teachers. Our purpose and our passion is teaching. We bring the best of our training and our experience into our classrooms to support and nurture every child in the best way we know how. We are proud of our contribution to our community and value the relationships we have built with families. However, the government's lockout of teachers has severely compromised our ability to continue to provide the same level of service as we have in the past. This is neither our choice nor our wish.

The hours we are allowed to work have been cut and we have endured a 10% pay cut. The government has told us we should volunteer to do the work despite the conditions they have imposed. The resulting loss of support, services and activities for our students has then been described as "our choice" by the government. We have decided to stand up for our students and for the education we know they deserve and the education you want for them.

We can no longer cover up for the profound lack of services in schools. The courts have shown we have the right to negotiate our working conditions. Our working conditions are your children's learning conditions. In 2002 there were agreements in place to provide for specialist teachers. Currently, there are no guarantees in the teachers' contract for these specialist teachers and hiring is determined by school districts.

In 2014 we are asking our government to provide the following guarantees* for your children:

Learning Assistance Teachers:	<i>one per 350 students</i>
Special Education Resource Teachers:	<i>one per 250 students</i>
Teacher Librarians:	<i>one for every 702 students</i>
Teacher Counsellors:	<i>one for every 600 students</i>
ESL Support:	<i>one for every 74 ESL students</i>
School Psychologists:	<i>one for every 2,000 students</i>
Speech Language Pathologist:	<i>one for every 1250 students</i>

**as reported in the Vancouver Sun and sourced from the BCPSEA, BCTF and Ministry of Education*

The government describes these ratios as unreasonable and unaffordable. Ask yourself what seems reasonable and affordable for our province and what learning conditions you value for your child, your grandchildren and children yet to come.

In the coming days you will see us outside the school at recess and lunch as dictated by the terms of the lockout. You will see us on the picket line. It is the only way we have to show the government that we will stand together and say, "No More." We will cope with the monetary losses because we are fighting not just for ourselves, but for our students, your children and for the future of public education.

Please join us by letting the government know the importance you place on education and the ability of teachers and schools to do the best for each child where and when they need it most.

Thank you.

Collingwood Neighbourhood Teachers