

BULLETIN

BCTF news release: Teachers will withdraw services to protest Bill 22, worsening classroom conditions

March 1, 2012

Next Monday, March 5, teachers across British Columbia will begin a legal three-day full-scale withdrawal of services, as permitted under the Labour Relations Board interim essential services order. At 6:00 a.m. today, the BCTF issued notice of the escalation to the BC Public School Employers Association.

This step follows a province-wide vote conducted February 28 and 29, 2012, in which 87% of teachers voted -yes" to escalating job action from the limited -teach only" campaign that began last September. In all, 32,209 teachers voted, of whom 27,946 said -yes."

In a morning news conference, BCTF President Susan Lambert noted that the 75% turnout and 87% yes vote demonstrate to the provincial government that -bullying legislation like Bill 22 will not fix a broken relationship."

-Teachers take this step very reluctantly," she said, noting that their -teach only" job action was specifically designed to limit the impact on classrooms while still maintaining an effective voice. -We articulated our objectives as clearly and respectfully as we could, but unfortunately we were pleading to deaf ears," Lambert said. -The bill tabled on Tuesday was a sign of the appalling disrespect for the profession of teaching, for students, and for public education in BC."

She urged parents and other concerned British Columbians to contact their MLAs, Education Minister George Abbott, and Premier Christy Clark to urge them not to impose Bill 22 but rather to negotiate a fair agreement with teachers and invest in public education to meet diverse student needs.

Lambert acknowledged that the walkout will inconvenience parents, but asked them to consider that conditions in classrooms have deteriorated over the past decade and will not improve unless teachers take a strong stand. -Bill 22 means children have to wait another two years for any possible hope of guarantees on class size or any real funding increase for students with special needs," she said.

Lambert pointed to the BCTF's long history of social justice advocacy "for inclusion of all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, for the rights of girls and women, against racism, homophobia and bullying. -Sometimes "even though you're afraid, even though the threats seem overwhelming "you have to stand up to a bully," she said.

The BCTF provincial Executive Committee is meeting today to make further decisions about how actions will unfold in the upcoming days.

See [original BCTF news release here](#).

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