



2006 February 22

To: Elementary Principals and Vice-Principals
Secondary Principals and Vice –Principals

cc: Trustees
District Management Team

From: Paul Wlodarczak
Human Resources

Re: TOC situation

Recent e-mails, phone calls and news articles have expressed concerns regarding our current TOC situation. Generally there are five major areas related to the issues at hand:

- What is HR doing about the shortfall of TOC's?
- Why are Resource Teachers not replaced immediately?
- Are there too few TOC's in total?
- Why are retired teachers not hired as TOC's?
- Why is the TOC hiring list closed?

Below are facts related to each of the above and I ask you to draw your own conclusions.

What is HR doing?

In June and July of 2005 it became apparent that the increased funding for education meant that many of our TOC's were hired into positions in our own and other school districts. It was decided that there was a need to hire many more teachers for our TOC rolls. In late July and early August many principals and vice-principals worked during the holiday time to assist in the hiring process. The hiring continued through the school start up period of late August and through September. By mid-October about 225 new TOC's were hired for our district.

In early December the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced additional monies, as part of the ongoing changes resulting from the October job action, to hire staff beginning in the new calendar year. As a result of this money an additional 105 positions were added to schools in February. Most of the teachers for these positions came from our TOC roster. At the same time other Metro districts were also hiring additional continuing

positions. Using our numbers as a guideline the estimate is that approximately 200 positions were created in surrounding districts. Many of our TOC's were successful in filling those positions.

In December of 2005 we realized that our list of TOC's would be depleted and another round of hiring was initiated. Since January of this year we have hired an additional 104 TOC's.

Resource Teachers

The VSB currently has slightly over 500 non-enrolling FTE in schools. After accommodating for Teacher-Librarian positions, which are replaced immediately upon absence from school, there remains about 410 FTE who are replaced after three or five days. The VSB budget provides for over \$8 000 000 in TOC costs for absence from school. Based on our current FTE this amounts to 12.5 days per FTE. Using these numbers as a guide the estimate to replace all non-enrolling teachers is about another \$1 000 000.

The decision to continue replacing non-enrolling teachers after three or five days is reviewed each year in the budget process. Last year rather than cut 16 FTE (\$1 000 000) from schools the decision was made to maintain the current replacement policy for non-enrolling teachers.

Number of TOC's

Currently we have about 975 teachers active on our TOC list. However, at any given time only one third is truly available. Many TOC's "block out" days available as they work part time in our district or another school district, have other jobs, are completing courses of study, receive short term contracts in other districts, and take personal days for various reasons. On past history when we have over 300 absences from school we start to experience shortages, and definitely by 350 we cannot fill all requests. Currently we have approached 400 absences from schools on a given day. This is for various reasons such as: peak flu and cold season, many schools are utilizing MOE money to purchase release time, due to circumstance there is union release time being booked, and professional development activities are on-going. All of these factors have resulted in a higher than normal activity compared to past years. Combine these circumstances with the loss of TOC's to contracted positions and we have the situation in which we find ourselves.

Retired Teachers

During the past three years, with many people on our lay-off list (D-list) and temporary jobs filled by continuing teachers, the VTF requested that the total number of TOC's be limited to some degree. HR concurred with this request as we wanted to ensure that our new employees had enough work throughout the year, not just a lot of work in the peak periods. About three years ago HR requested of the VTF that we hire retirees on a

condition that we could limit their work to peak periods and /or limit the total number of days a retiree could work. Due to various arbitrations in the province at the time and for other reasons the VTF would not agree with this approach. Contractually the VTF would have to agree to such a limit. Not wanting to “put our laid-off teachers and new employees in a position of not having enough work” HR put on hold the idea of hiring retirees.

In the summer of 2005 the VTF approached HR about hiring retirees for TOC positions. Negotiations on how this could occur were started in September. In December we reached an impasse with the VTF and talks were abandoned. This week we initiated discussions again and are hopeful of reaching a decision that benefit all very shortly. Of note however, is that even in districts where retired teachers are hired there are still many TOC shortages being experienced.

Closed List

Currently our TOC list is closed to applications except for certain specialty areas. This does not mean we are not hiring. Our list was opened in December and January and many applications were received. Due to HR staffing limitations we are unable to process an unlimited number of applications. This requires us to open and close the list on an on-going basis. At this time many principals and vice-principals have or soon will be interviewing candidates for our TOC list. In general we are signing on twenty to twenty-five new TOC's a week and expect to continue this in the foreseeable future.

Overall the lack of TOC's is a provincial concern. Most districts are finding themselves in the same position. The additional funding given in December and the ongoing hiring from the TOC lists has resulted in shortages throughout the province. We will continue to hire TOC's as needed, but it is a slow process.