

Vince Ready's Recommendations: Nine Reasons to Vote "No"

Surrey Teachers' Association

The STA Executive is recommending to the membership that we vote "no". There are two questions that you need to ask yourself. Did we achieve our three goals?

The goals being:

- Full, free collective bargaining for teachers
- A return of our stripped collective agreement language on working and learning conditions
- A fair salary increase

None of these goals have been achieved. The next question is "If we stay out longer will we get anything better?" We can't gaze into the future. We don't know. Will the parents and community still be with us given the bombardment from CanWest and Global, that these are recommendations that teachers should accept. We also have been advised that the BCTF may face criminal contempt charges on Monday, if teachers are not back at work.

Each member should read the recommendations from Ready. They are available on our website at www.surreyteachers.org Each of you will make your own decision. Whatever you decide will be respected. Please find below nine reasons to vote "**No**".

1. The recommendations contain no guarantees for class size and composition limits. The one-time \$20 million dollar infusion will mean 330 teachers added province wide.
2. The proposed changes to the School Act do not include any guarantees for actual limits. Nothing prevents Campbell from amending the School Act with a limit of "40".
3. Parent support was predicated on our fight for learning conditions. The public may perceive us to be ditching class-size and composition in exchange for money.
4. The \$40 million for harmonization represents only an average of a 2% increase for teachers province wide. This is understood to only affect locals below the average income. We need an increase for all members. Teachers in locals above the provincial average will not receive an increase. Teachers across the province have been out for 2 weeks. We all need an increase. An injury to one is an injury to all!
5. The total money included in the recommendations (\$105.2 million) is close to what we have lost in salary during job action. In Surrey, we have given up \$10 million in salary over the last 2 weeks. Thus, even the small monetary gains are simply reassigning our own salaries within the school system.
6. Some of the recommendations are one time only. This includes the extra \$20 million for learning conditions and the \$40 million for Long Term Disability(Salary Indemnity Plan). The greatest costs of our Salary Indemnity Plan are the short term benefit costs. Teachers will continue to fund the total costs of the short term (maximum of 120 days) plan.
7. The recommendations include no improvement to our bargaining rights. Bargaining rights were one of our three principle goals in this political protest. Bill 12 stands and we have imposed working conditions, not a negotiated settlement. The Essential Services legislation stands.
8. The Learning Round Table is not a decision making body, and the increase in teacher representatives still leaves us in a small minority. We cannot expect this body to address learning conditions meaningfully. Ready notes in his recommendations that the Round Table does not have a mandate to deal with collective agreement issues. The BCTF has been a member of EAC(Education Advisory Committee)for 15 years. This group is comprised of every education stakeholder group, including government. The BCTF has hammered away on class size, class composition, non-enrolling specialists for years to no avail. The Round Table is nothing new!
9. Non-enrolling ratios are not addressed at all. This was one of our primary bargaining objectives: ratios to ensure adequate teacher-librarians, counselors, learning support teachers, speech and language pathologists and integration support teachers.