

February 9, 2007

Class Size

Last Monday, this year's class size report was released to the public and posted on the web.

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/enrol/class-size.php

This year's data, when compared to last year's, shows the positive impact Bill 33 amendments to Section 76 of the *School Act* had on the learning conditions for our students. You will recall that the amendments followed discussion of the education partners at the Learning Roundtable. These amendments:

- Created new grades 4-7 and 8-12 cohorts rather than a single 8-12 cohort. The maximum district average for 4-7 was reduced to 28 whereas it had previously been 30.
- Required that the teacher of any grade 4-7 class exceeding 30 provide consent for that class.
- Required that consultation occur between the principal and the teacher whenever a class was organized to exceed 30.
- Required that consultation occur between the principal and the teacher whenever more than three students entitled to an IEP were assigned to a class.
- Required that the principal consult with the School Planning Council respecting the organization of classes in the school.
- Provided for the Principal and the Superintendent to confirm that the learning situation was appropriate for students in all classes.
- Set a framework for reporting that included a report from the School Board to the Minister regarding the organization of classes. This report included a declaration that the School Board was in compliance with the provision of the *School Act*. The report also included a rationale for the organization of each class exceeding 30.

Implementation of these changes created some new work for principals and district staff. The success of the implementation is really a credit to those of you who did this work, and I would like to express my thanks to each of you. Our next steps now are to assess the impact of the amendments and the effect of the processes instituted. We will be working closely with the Principals, Vice-Principals and Superintendents of the province to assess the administrative challenges of implementing the legislation. We will then broaden that discussion to include other partners. The Minister will appoint a committee made of the members of the organizations represented at the Learning Roundtable to consider the feedback from this consultation. The committee may make recommendations to the Minister if changes are seen to be necessary. Stay posted for the results of this consultation but, and I repeat myself – thank you making Bill 33 implementation a success.

School Districts were required to report on the organization of each class as of September 30. These reports included the size of each class and the distribution of students entitled to IEPs, gifted students and English as a Second Language students. This data was collected in a similar way last year, and we now have a basis of comparison between the two years. Following are some of the highlights regarding what we know about learning conditions.

Average class sizes fell from 2005 to 2006

	K	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12
05/06	17.7	20.8	26.3	25.0
06/07	17.5	20.3	25.8	24.4

Reduced class size averages occurred in every district in the Province of British Columbia.

Key indicators comparison

2005/06	2006/07
67,499 classes reported	68,665 classes reported
599,505 students in these classes (headcount)	587,819 students in these classes (headcount)
58,246 classes with 30 or fewer students (86%)	65,423 classes with 30 or fewer students (95%)
14,853 classes with 20 or fewer students (22%)	16,005 classes with 20 or fewer students (23%)
64,590 classes with 32 or fewer students (96%)	67,794 classes with 32 or fewer students (99%)
22,534 classes with no students with special needs (33%)	21,112 classes with no student entitled to an IEP (31%)
63,901 classes with five or fewer special needs student (95%)	65,870 classes with five or fewer students entitled to and IEP (96%)

Number of classes with more than thirty decline

	2005/06	2006/07	% change
K	0	0	0
1-3	0	0	0
4-7	648	85	(87%)
8-12	8,604	3,157	(63%)
Total	9,252	3,242	(65%)

Large classes in grades 4 – 7 were a particular concern for the members of the Learning Roundtable – good progress in this area has occurred.

Number of non-enrolling teachers

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Librarians	704.6	692.6	741.3	746.6
Counsellors	920.2	906.4	901.6	908.6
LAT/SPED	3,455.5	3,311.6	3,357.9	3,442.9
ESL	812.7	827.8	848.6	829.0
Total	5,893.0	5,738.4	5,849.4	5,927.1

The number of non-enrolling teachers has grown by 34 FTE at the same time enrolment has declined.

The total change in teacher staffing between 1999/00 and 2006/07 is a reduction of 5.5%. During the same period the enrolment was reduced by 7.0%. The pupil teacher ratio is as low as it has ever been.

Enrolment declined by more than 12,000 students this year compared to last. In spite of that decline, there are approximately 170 more teachers and 400 more teacher assistants working in our schools.

Distribution of students entitled to IEPs

Classes with # IEP students	05/06	06/07
0	22,534	21,112
1	15,658	16,176
2	11,044	12,239
3	7,321	9,579
4	4,566	4,464
5	2,778	2,300
6	1,577	1,258
Greater than 6	2,021	1,537

I think the results speak for themselves. Through your efforts in implementation, Bill 33 has improved the learning conditions for students in our province.

Interactive Innovations 2007

February 28 - March 2

I would like to remind you about the upcoming Interactive Innovations Conference - February 28 through March 2. The conference will provide you with an opportunity to engage in learning with international experts, as well as to take in sessions with educators representing BC programs that make a difference for student learning:

- Concurrent sessions: An in-depth experience at each site where you will learn from British Columbia experts in your chosen theme.
- Leadership: Building Capacity (Vancouver)

- Literacy: Reaching Across the Curriculum (Kelowna)
- Equitable Futures: Engaging All Learners (Prince George)
- The First Ten Years: Windows of Opportunity (Victoria)
- Middle Years to Secondary: What is Important (Nelson)
- Keynote speakers: An opportunity to hear and interact with seven international experts over the three-day period. These include Richard Allington, Fred and Patrick Renihan, Andy Hargreaves, Marco Torres, Stephanie Hirsh, David Sousa and Michael Fullan.
- New this year: Fine examples of innovative practice representing 50 of our BC School Districts. Learning in Action Teams are set up in each conference site to share with you a wide variety of practices that make a difference for student learning in our schools. These projects represent one of the five Interactive Innovation themes. Teachers are excited to be there to share their knowledge and experiences. We have representatives from 50 BC school districts.
- Student Forum Sessions are part of each site. Students from our secondary schools will be active participants in this year's conference. They too will connect across sites in a provincial dialogue.

When you attend this conference, you are part of an important phase of professional learning in BC. This conference is guaranteed to be intense, interactive and intellectually invigorating.

Student Congress

Please note that, due to unforeseen circumstances, the date for the Student Congress must be changed from March 8, 2007 to April 2, 2007. The Congress location and all other details related to the Congress remain the same. To accommodate those who have already applied to the Congress, their applications will continue to be considered for the new Congress date - they do not need to reapply to the Congress.

However, because key information regarding the date in the original consent form signed by parents/guardians and school administrators has been changed, we must request that students have their consent form completed again and sent to the Ministry. As a result, you may have a number of your students approach you for assistance in completing and returning the consent form.

In order to accommodate this requirement, the new closing date for applications will be 5pm on Friday, February 23rd. The new Congress date and extension of the application deadline provide us with an excellent opportunity to provide Congress information to more students and to encourage their applications. The Congress presents students with a unique opportunity to share information directly with the Minister and their peers from across the Province. We would like to ask for your assistance to ensure that as many students as possible are aware of this opportunity and apply to participate in the Congress. The application can be found on the Congress website at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/asc.



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