



Report on Education

from the Deputy Minister of Education

June 2, 2006

Last week's media reports on salaries resulted in a number of new questions to me. According to some news articles, teachers in BC were in eighth place on inter-provincial salary comparisons, but BC school administrators were the best paid in the country. As you can imagine, this claim resulted in a number of inquiries.

Data on salary comparisons is confusing to say the least. Different sizes and organizations of schools and school districts make comparisons difficult. Similar positions have different titles. The roles of persons in positions with the same title are different in different provinces and even jurisdictions within provinces. Data can be organized in a way that proves almost any point you want to make. But these media stories made me curious as well, so I set out to learn what I could from the information we have. That is not to say the information is complete. Based on what we have, here is my best analysis of the circumstances.

Superintendents

Superintendent roles are relatively consistent across the provinces. They are almost always the chief educational officer and sometimes, most frequently in BC, the chief executive officer. They always work closely with an elected board that gives policy direction while the superintendents

give operational direction to the district staff, principals and teachers in the district. The following table reflects salary ranges by district size in a few jurisdictions.

The salary levels of superintendents in particular districts gives further basis for comparison.

- Windsor - \$165K
- Peterborough - \$175K
- Ottawa - \$180K
- Winnipeg - \$ 186K
- Regina and Saskatoon - \$153K
- Edmonton Catholic - \$165K
- Surrey - \$163K
- Vancouver - \$166K

The numbers speak for themselves – Superintendents in BC are not the best paid in the country. In fact, in most BC school districts, superintendents are paid significantly less than their inter-provincial counterparts.

District Size	Ontario	Alberta	British Columbia*
0 – 20,000	\$129K - \$142K	\$118K – \$148K	\$93K - \$119K
20,000 – 50,000	\$134K - \$224K	\$148K - \$184K	\$111K - \$145K
50,000 – 70,000	\$151K - \$165K	\$162K - \$184K	\$127K - \$163K

*Compensation plan approved by PSEC – individual incumbents may fall out of range.

What about principals?

Here is some of what we know.

	Elementary Principal Minimum	Elementary Principal Maximum	Secondary Principal Minimum	Secondary Principal Maximum
BC	\$61,964	\$108,575	\$72,299	\$114,777
BC average	\$82,460	\$89,309	\$93,438	\$99,418
Ontario	\$83,949	\$106,266	\$83,949	\$107,369
Ontario average	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notice that the Ontario minimum for elementary principals is over the BC average for elementary principals. While the highest paid elementary principal in BC makes about \$2,000 more than the highest paid Ontario counterpart, on average elementary principals in Ontario do much better. At the secondary level Ontario minimums are greater than BC minimums, but the BC maximum exceeds the Ontario maximum. It is fair to say that some BC principals are paid better than Ontario principals but on average, Ontario principals are better paid.

Data from other provinces is not available to me at this time, but it is clear that BC principals are not consistently the best paid in Canada.

What about teachers? They are consistently third.

First, let's acknowledge that the salaries in the territories are greater than virtually any of the provinces. That is generally true of the salaries of all employees in the territories where distance, isolation and cost of living inflate pay rates.

But, what about teacher salaries in the other provinces – how do they stack up across Canada? The first thing we recognize in trying to do any comparisons is that there are great differences in compensation structures. Most teachers are paid on some form of salary grid that is familiar to you and me. The salary grids across Canada recognize experience and academic preparation. But there are many differences. For example, in Alberta, teachers graduate with a four-year teaching degree and begin work. In BC this is most commonly a five-year Bachelor of Education Degree or a four-year undergraduate degree and a year of professional teacher training. These differences have deep roots from when Alberta had a senior matriculation graduation standard and Ontario had a Grade 13. In some ways it is very difficult to equate salaries, qualifications and experience.

If we adjust for what actually happens in the provinces for which we have data, teacher salaries in BC place consistently third.

	BC	Ont.	AB	MB	SK
Starting	\$41,699	\$43,016	\$46,117	\$41,239	\$39,474
Maximum	\$64,489	\$73,064	\$72,816	\$63,725	\$60,690

This data tries to level out all the puts and takes of qualifications and experience. It is not perfect, but it does paint a fairly accurate picture. BC is about third among the provinces in terms of the compensation paid for teachers.

So - the short story looks like this...I think:

- Of teachers in Canada, BC teachers are about 3rd best paid among the provinces.
- Most principals in BC are paid below rates of other provinces, but some in a few districts have among the best rates of pay.
- Superintendents are generally lower paid than their counterparts across Canada.

Interactive Innovations – A BC triumph over vast distances.

The Interactive Innovations conference held last Thursday and Friday turned into an outstanding success. Delivered from five sites connected by webcasting technology, the program offered by international speakers and break-out sessions provided by BC educators were among the best. Several participants commented that this was one of the best conference programs ever as it connected those in the education community all over BC. The five conference sites, each with a unique theme, were Prince George, Nelson, Kelowna, Whistler and Victoria. While the technology was impressive, it faded into the background and became invisible as the presenters did their magic connecting learners and learning.

Audrey Hobbs-Johnson was the mastermind behind the conference assisted by a conference committee at each site. Dr. Fred Renihan acted as the “imperial wiser”, the wise man who wove the conference themes in a coherent framework. While the conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Education, the education community in each site put the wheels on this ambitious innovation.

Plans are already underway for a conference next year that extends our learning with respect to the power of this conference delivery system. We will be reaching even farther afield and considering connecting with international conference sites.