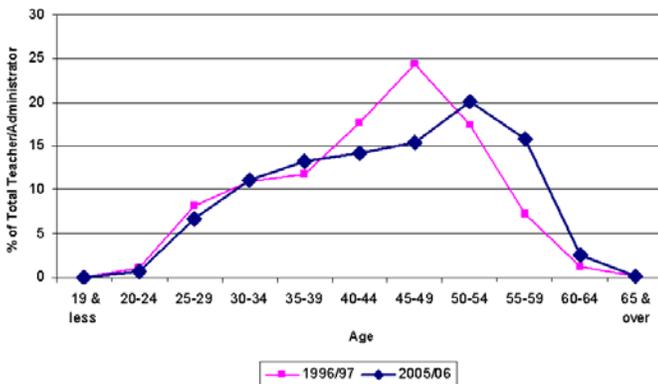


March 10, 2006

Last week we talked about British Columbia's achievements in education and the performance of our students - among the best in the world. We also alerted you to a changing context in terms of student enrollment in British Columbia. We raised the idea that we need to transform some of our thinking and way of doing things if we are to continue to improve achievement levels and reach the goal of becoming "the most literate and best educated jurisdiction in North America." We cannot reach this goal by doing things in the same way within a changing environment.

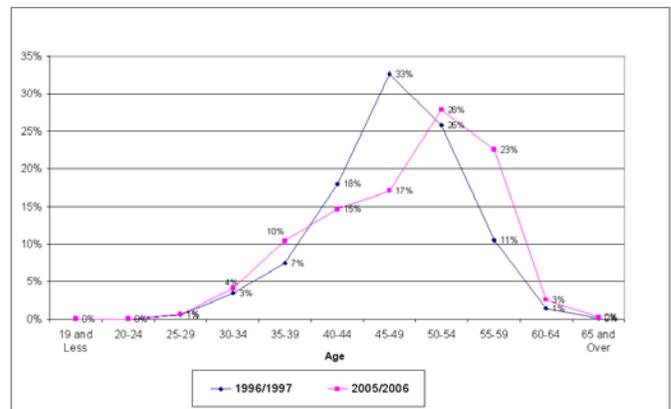
**What other changes are in store for us?** One major change affects us directly – many of us will retire within a few short years. The demographics of teachers and administrators are illustrated below.

### Average age of teachers and administrators, 1996/97 and 2005/06 (Public Schools)

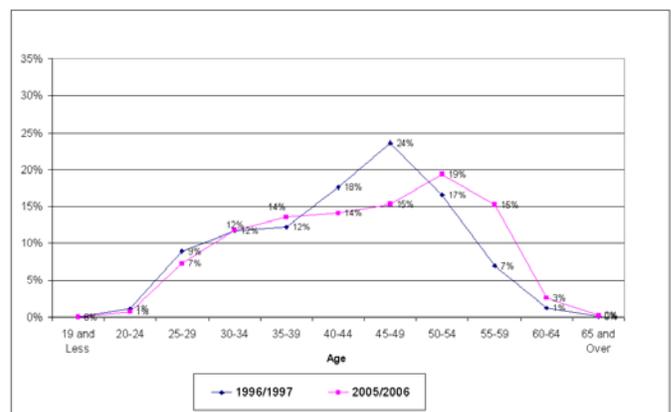


A picture is worth a thousand words, isn't it? 20.4% of all teachers and administrators are in the 50 – 54 age range. Almost 40% are in the 50+ category. Let's drill down a little further and look at teacher and administrator distributions separately.

### Age of administrators alone (Public schools only)



### Age of Teachers alone (Public Schools only)



These graphs show some important differences.

- Not surprisingly, administrators are older. 54% are over 50 and over 26% are over 55 – in the retirement range.
- Only 16% of administrators are under 40 – This is the group that we would usually look to for succession planning to assume leadership roles in larger schools or take on district leadership challenges. Fortunately, 32% of administrators are of an age between 40 and 50. As these individuals achieve advancement, their own retirement window also approaches.
- By contrast, 37% of teachers are over 50 and 18% over 55. While not as severe as administrators, this foreshadows significant numbers of retirements over the years ahead – losses to the system in terms of expertise and knowledge.
- Note the distribution of teachers below 50 is “flatter” than that of administrators resulting in a more uniform supply. 34% are under 40 and 29% between 40 and 49.

	Administrators	Teachers
<b>Most common age</b>	50 – 54 (28%)	50 – 54 (19%)
Over 50	54%	37%
Over 55	26%	18%
Under 40	16%	34%
Between 40 and 49	32%	29%

Potential teacher shortages have been getting media attention over the past few months. Reports have focused on Teacher-on-call shortages. This should not surprise us after hiring more than 1,100 teachers this year over last year, 550 just this past January with the \$20M allocated to schools from the illegal strike savings. Many school districts have opened their TOC lists and are adding new TOCs now.

Like enrollment, this aging workforce signals significant change in our system. With over 1,000 principal vacancies forecast in the next 5 years and district staff positions changing by 25% per year, there are major challenges to provide leadership to promote continuous improvement in student achievement. Similarly with the retirement of many teacher leaders in schools, schools and districts will face challenges in succession and mentorship. Schools will lose significant contributors to student leadership and school culture.

What challenges do these demographic changes pose? Research indicates something we all know – that the teacher has the greatest effect on student learning. (Nye, Konstantopoulos, Hedges – Fall, 2004 – The Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis Volume 26, Number 3, pp237 – 257). This study states that “The variance due to differences among teachers is substantial compared to the variance between schools...Teacher effects are much larger than school effects”. Further, “...variation in actual class sizes...cannot explain teacher effects”.

### For the record

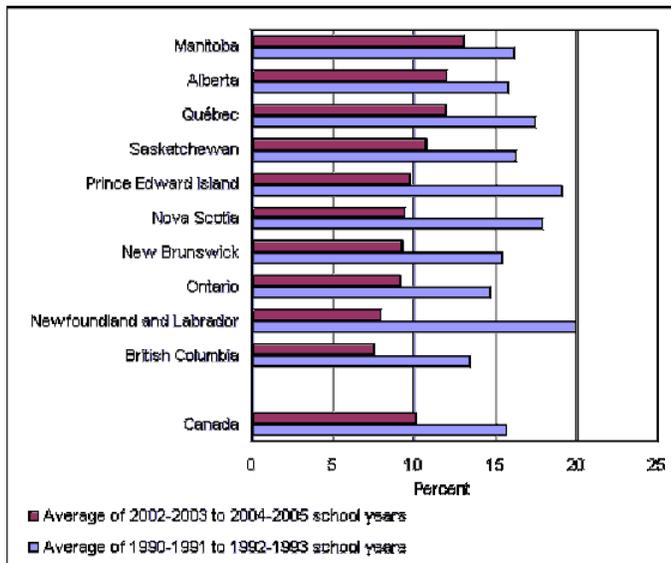
The February 24th, 2006 edition of this Report on Education included a graph showing funding increases to education between 2000/01 and 2005/06. We understand from principals that some claims were made that these funding increases did not keep pace with inflation and wage pressures. Actually that is not true. The block is the amount allocated to school districts. If we look at the block alone it increased from \$6,262 per pupil in 2000/01 to \$6,548 in 2005/06, calculated in constant year 2000 dollars. This amount will increase further to \$6598 (estimated) in 2006/07. That is a total increase of \$336 per pupil in constant dollars.

This same study also tells us that the school a student attends has great impact on achievement. Again the effect of the school is much greater than the effects demonstrated by class size. You know the impact a principal has on a school. As the Effective Schools research since the 1980s has shown us, effective principals make schools effective.

The provision of effective leadership in schools is the most important way to continually improve student achievement as we face the challenges of large numbers of retiring principals. Principals can create effective schools that promote student learning. Principals can support and assist teachers who ultimately have the greatest effect on student achievement.

**More good news about BC student achievement** – Since last week, this study was brought to my attention bolstering our belief that BC students are doing very well compared to others in all provinces. Celebrate this one!

### High school drop out rates as a percentage of all 20 – 24 year olds, Canada and the provinces.



(Source – Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada.)

**Next week** – I know that in most school districts, you will be enjoying spring break – relax and enjoy. The next edition of our report on education will be out on Friday, March 24. In that edition, we will discuss some of the work designed to meet the challenges of leadership succession in schools and districts.

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