

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING – OCTOBER 11, 2011

Last week, the Provincial Government delivered their Throne Speech and, once again, outlined a number of initiatives designed to improve the education system in British Columbia. In order to accomplish this, they would:

- Recognize the need to ensure that students develop their skills in a more flexible manner that identifies changing technologies.
- Acknowledge that support for teachers in the areas of teacher training, mentorship and professional development is very important.
- Commit to the dedication of additional funding to improve support for special needs students and to address class composition issues.
- Recognize that School Boards and parents are looking for more flexibility and choice as to how, where and when education takes place.
- Introducing changes to the BC College of Teachers with the goal of strengthening the disciplinary process and protect the public interest.
- Continue their commitment to establishing anti-bullying initiatives to protect all students.

Certainly some very progressive goals, though a bit short on detail at this point, but worthy of our support. In response to the Throne Speech, Education Minister George Abbott committed to involving all stake-holders in the process, acknowledging “that teachers are at the heart of our success in education” and that British Columbia is so fortunate to have such a good education system. Let’s hope that these aren’t just words on paper ... and that our Premier is also a part of this buy-in.

With Government/Teacher negotiations in full-swing ... and with both sides looking to be getting more and more impatient with the other ... I’m just hoping that no one loses sight of what we’re all trying to do ... and what we all are continually striving for and achieving in Burnaby with the cooperation of all of our partner groups ... to create and maintain the best public education system possible for our learners. It’s not as lofty a goal as it may seem if we’re all going in the same direction.

Larry Hayes
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