



the *Newsletter*

of the **British Columbia Alternate Education Association**

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2

FALL 2003

Thanks so much for the camping trip

by Larry Mattin, Chemainus Alternate School



Chemainus students experience the excitement of discovering fun at Long Beach. The group used grant money provided by BCAEA for their year-end celebration. Look inside for more information on BCAEA Awards and Grants.

IN THIS ISSUE

Cyber Predators 5

Service Learning 6

Bill 51- Changes 12

Child Protection in Russia 14

In June of 2003, Chemainus Alternate School students participated in a 3-day camping trip thanks to a Student Activity Grant received from the BCAEA. Staff and students would like to extend a warm thanks to the BCAEA for making the trip possible.

After a stop in Cathedral Grove to view the ancient and really large trees, students spent two nights out. The first night out we camped on the beach at Kennedy Lake. After a simple dinner several students braved the cold water

and went for a swim.— well, more like a wade. We watched a brilliant sunset, lit a campfire and stayed up late eating s'mores, pistachios, and telling ghost stories.

The next morning we set off for Long Beach. After a short hike along the beach, some kodak moments, some tidal pool chats, and lunch, we went to our new campsite at Mackenzie Resort. The students enjoyed swimming in the Resort's indoor pool. After a quick swim and a snack we set off for another hike up Radar Hill. From the lookout on the top

continued on page 4

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:



Rob Purgavie, Editor,
...out looking for his desk.

A year of new beginnings! I have taken on the task of newsletter editor for the BCAEA. Note sign ahead: Steep Learning Curve! Full Speed Necessary!

Big thanks to past newsletter editors, Maryann Cardwell and Charlie Mayer. Not easy shoes to fill. Even bigger thanks to Jim Lawson for taking on the responsibilities of President. Jim has what it takes: blocker pads for his entry into the political arena and a big net to catch the shots that get by.

Not everyone gets to the conference each year, so the best way to share important info with people is through the newsletter. Keep those cards, letters and ideas flowing this way.

Special thanks to contributors for this edition: Heather Mallory, Steve Innis, Anita Chapman, Dave Mackenzie, Larry Mattin, Meryln Horton and the ever-present Kathi Hughes.

President's Message



BCAEA's new President, Jim Lawson, modelling his new uniform for his role as head of Team BCAEA.

As the new president of the BC Alternate Education Teachers' Association, I am eager to assume my responsibilities to the BCTF, the executive of the BCAEA and most importantly, to the membership of the BCAEA PSA.

On behalf of the BCAEA executive, I express our concern and sympathies for all of you who have been affected by the forest fire situation throughout British Columbia. While many of us have been stressed over the usual difficulties of school year start-ups, so many others are dealing with the loss of homes, schools, and even livelihoods.

The BCTF has initiated the Forest Fire Relief Fund and have posted a web site page dedicated to helping teachers help students cope. Thanks to the BCTF for their efforts.

We are all faced with significant challenges in this current political

climate; the introduction of Bill 51 (the Teaching Profession Amendment Act, which eliminates teachers' ability to govern their own profession), the closing of 93 schools over the 2002/2003 & 2003/2004 school years, serious cuts to programs and services, removal of learning conditions from the collective agreement, and class size increases, to name a few. I urge you all to keep informed through the BCTF web site or your district locals and to continue to advocate for programs and services that benefit kids.

The executive membership is very enthusiastic about the upcoming conference; "Challenge and Change 2004", at the Sheraton Wall Center in Vancouver on January 22nd and 23rd. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Ruby Payne, author of *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*.

continued on page 3

President's Message

continued from page 2

Her message, "that children of poverty need not suffer through an educational system oblivious to their needs" is not only relevant to the work we do every day in our schools, but also timely, given the current state of educational reform. Her website, <http://ahaprocess.com/> will offer you a great chance to preview her message.

Again, the selection of workshops and sessions is superb, including the very popular "Downtown Eastside Walking Tour", Gord Robinson's "Cheap Science Project" demos, Gary Anaka – the "Brain" guy, and many many more. And if that doesn't do it for you, there's always our Reception, the Best Darn Social Event of the season, on Thursday evening. We really look forward to seeing you there!

I wish to remind all of you, whether you work in the room at the end of the hall, that portable that no one else would take or a totally detached campus across town, you need not work in isolation.

The BCAEA sponsors a listserv, hosts a web site and lists the names and contact information for each executive member. We are all available to help and support you (or point you in the direction of someone who can), in your commitment to working with at-risk youth.

See you in January,
Jim Lawson

CONFERENCE 2004 KEYNOTE SPEAKER BIO:



Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

has been a professional educator since 1972, serving as a high school teacher and department chairperson, elementary principal, and central-office administrator.

Since 1994 Dr. Payne, founder and president of aha! Process, Inc., has been sharing her insights about the culture of poverty – and how to help educators and other professionals work effectively with children and adults from that culture – in more than a thousand workshop settings throughout North America.

Her seminal work, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* teaches the hidden rules of economic class and spreads the message that, despite the obstacles poverty can create in all types of interaction, there are specific strategies for overcoming them.

Since publishing *Framework* in 1995, Dr. Payne also has written or co-authored nearly a dozen books surrounding these issues in such

areas as education, social services, the workplace, faith communities, and leadership. This led to the development of other program series, Learning Structures, Meeting Standards and Raising Test Scores, Preventing School Violence by Creating Emotional Safety, Identifying Giftedness in Poverty, and Bridges Out of Poverty, are among them.

She received her B.A. in English Education from Goshen (IN) College. She earned a master's degree in English Literature from Western Michigan University and her doctorate in Education Leadership and Policy Studies from Loyola University (IL). She lives in Baytown, Texas, with her husband, Frank; they have a grown son, Tom.

Camping Trip *continued from page 1*



of Radar Hill we were able to see most of Long Beach. Our final evening was spent playing cards and board games.

The students all thoroughly enjoyed our camping trip. Thanks to the BCAEA, some students experienced their first trip to Long Beach, and some, their first camping trip ever.



Here are some impressions and comments from students:

Natalie: I loved spending the day at the beach and taking pictures– it was awesome.

Justin: We went to this campsite where there was a pool and a hot tub - now that was camping!

Robbie: Long Beach was awesome: huge waves, nice sandy beach and little caves along the shore.



Ryan: My favourite part of the camping trip was camping on the beach at Kennedy Lake.

Gordon: The spot where we had our tent was all lumpy. It took awhile to get comfortable. Every time you moved you could feel another lump.

Angela: To tell you the truth it was the most fun I have had in a long time.

Julie: Obviously, we should go again!

Photos From The Field



Kathi Hughes, bold adventurer and gourmet cook, showing off just a few of her favourite things. Look closely, rumour has it she takes her new lap-top everywhere with her. Kathi's leadership both as mentor within the BCAEA and as an adventuring-role model are but a few of our favourite things!



The people in this pic are from 2 programs: Discovery Program in Vernon and CAFE program in Coquitlam. We met at the conference because we recognized their program name as a program that one of our students moved to when she left Vernon in the middle of the year. We (the Discovery Program) were excited to hear that our student was OK and being take very good care of at CAFE. This chance meeting was one of the highlights of the conference for the Discovery Program. It showed us that although our province is very large, the ALTERNATE EDUCATION COMMUNITY IS VERY SMALL.



Cyber Predators

by Merlyn Horton

Just by looking at the news reports, it's becoming obvious that predators and pedophiles are using the Internet to sexually exploit children and youth in previously unimagined ways. Youth are at risk of being emotionally manipulated, coerced to create child pornography or being lured out of their homes to become involved in the sex trade. Youth, exploited or abused by predators who utilize the instant intimacy they can establish with young people in chat rooms or instant messaging environments, are at risk of emotional trauma. The impacts on sexual development of young people viewing pornography are unknown. Traditional sexual exploitation practices are being modified by technology.

Caregivers, parents and youth themselves are grappling with the questions that arise when technology, youth and online culture collide. What is online sexual exploitation and how is it different from face-to-face sexual exploitation? Is it possible to use Internet technologies to enhance youth work practices? What risk assessment practices will have to be updated to reflect the changes in how youth use media?

The focus of Safe Online Outreach Society workshops is to educate parents and professionals about the risks to children and youth created by online exploitation. Parents, caregivers, teachers & program staff often feel children know more about using the Internet than they do. These workshops provide an overview of sexual exploitation on the Internet from a basic introduction to Internet environments to online pedophile activities.

Topics include: web 101, online activities of Canadian youth, risks factors for online sexual exploitation, online activities by adults with a sexual interest in children, and Internet safety and education strategies.



SOLO has been developed and guided by Merlyn Horton, a former youth outreach worker. After working with high-risk youth for 13 years, she has embraced geekdom and cyberspace as a logical extension of outreach work with youth. She is Executive Director for SOLOS. Her areas of research and writing include Online Commercial Sexual Exploitation (OCSE), child pornography and the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). An experienced speaker, her style is energetic, dynamic and blunt.

Service Learning and Developmental Assets: | A Powerful Combination for Empowering Alternate Education Students

Submitted by: Heather Mallory – SD 70, Port Alberni, LAT/Advisor - VAST and Alternate Ed Programs
 Susan Dunbar – Alternate Education Program for Girls
 Holly Gibson – Youth Care Worker



ABOVE:
 VAST Student, Amanda,
 assists with
 Kindergarten duties.
 Wood Elementary
 School students love
 our work experience
 students

It's 12:10 and two girls from Project (Girls' Alternate Program) class have already arrived to assist with Kindergarten projects. Our 16 active five and six year olds look forward to Molly and Natasha's arrival.

Some of Molly and Natasha's duties include: helping students 'check-in' by making sure they sign in and supervising the students at the activity of choice before 'carpet time' or when our lessons/routines begin. It's also a time for the Project students to practise some of the 'internal assets' from the HERO Project (Helping Everyone Reach Out). These assets include:

educational commitment, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

For the past eight months, Project students have come every week to assist Kindergarten students in making crafts, reading stories, serving and cleaning up after snack time and marking students' work. They have also accompanied us on field trips to the Fall Fair, swimming at Echo Pool, Arrowvale Farms, the Dinosaur Exhibit at the museum and the Wildlife Recovery Center in Errington.

Not only do these students do an excellent job, but they also 'enjoy' working with the younger children and feel valued in a different environment. They also show empathy for others when the situation arises. For example, a Kindergarten student had been apprehended by the Ministry and her mother had come to Kindergarten to talk to her child. After the mother left, the child was extremely upset and started crying. Molly, one of the Alternate students who was there helping, scooped the little girl up in her arms, took her out of the classroom to wash her face with cold water and then took her for a walk outside until the child calmed down.



AT LEFT:
Molly and Ruth from
the Girls' Project help
with Mother's Day
projects. They were a
great help!

I complimented Molly later on how well she had handled the situation. Also, I was able to carry on and teach the rest of the class without losing any momentum. With the increased class size in Kindergarten to 22 students, it can be very difficult to attend to every child's emotional, academic and social needs. The Project students are valuable assets when these crisis situations arise.

In the BC Performance Standards for Social Responsibility, the section on Solving Problems states that "students can clarify problems or issues, generate strategies, weigh consequences and evaluate actions." In the scenario that I just described, my evaluation would be that Molly had "fully met expectations".

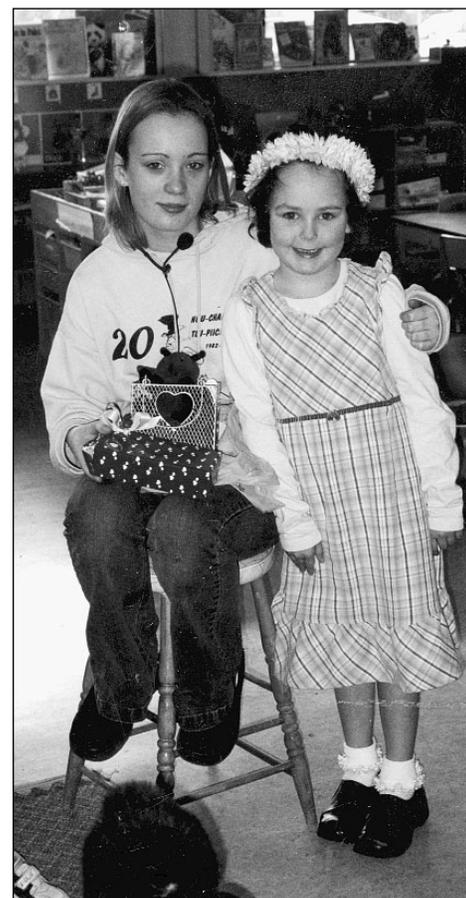
Also, the Alternate students' comments are very positive regarding their work experience in the Kindergarten environment:

Ruth states "It's fun, you get to help little kids". Lena commented "It reminds me of when I was in Kindergarten - fun times. It feels good. It makes me realize what I was missing in not helping others". These students are able to experience 'hands-on' learning experiences. Most Alternate Education students learn best this way!

In his article on *Creating Communities of Support*, Jones states that "in order to experience a sense of significance, competence and power, students need to work with their teachers and peers to define the qualities of an effective learner, be introduced and set goals regarding their use of effective learning methods, and be actively involved in meaningful learning. This may involve real world problem-solving, community service, and other projects". (Jones 2002)

To conclude, I would highly recommend other classroom teachers approach Alternate Education Programs to do work experience in their classrooms. The benefits to both the classroom teacher in terms of assisting with their work load, and 'buddying-up' with the students in that classroom, are too numerous to include. Also, the Alternate students become empowered, increase their self-esteem, develop a sense of responsibility and feel valued in a different environment. It's a win-win situation! ■

Please see bibliography on page 19



ABOVE:
Kailey receives a 'thank-you' gift from a
kindergarten student

SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

I've heard it said that intelligence is the ability to learn from our own experiences, but wisdom is the ability to learn from that of others. In Alternative Education, we don't get as much opportunity as do some of our colleagues in the "regular" system to be wise in this way, since there are fewer of us and we are more thinly spread. For many of us, our first entry into the field was not because of some special training or experience, but sheer good fortune or because someone saw that we had a knack with difficult personalities and situations.

People and personalities are at the heart of alternative education, and without a healthy dose of that special sense called common sense most of us would have left for other work long ago. Without staff who have that ability to "get it" when it comes to human situations, most of our students, and ultimately most of our schools and programs, would be doomed to failure.

For all that, there are some things beyond individuals who are perceptive, empathic and inventive. How courses are laid out, how attendance is handled, how staff make group decisions, the kinds and timing of special events – all these, and other aspects of a program, can shift the balance in favour of good outcomes, and can help save staff inventiveness for the various bumps, curves, and never-heard-of-that-one-before situations that inevitably arise. There is no one right

answer to these kinds of things, but there are many more wrong ones, as even the brightest and savviest alternative education workers know from personal experience. It makes sense, then, to visit and talk with our colleagues and borrow ideas. Some alternative programs and schools get good results year after year, even if the founding staff long ago moved on. The people in these programs are definitely worth talking to.

For the past couple years, I've coordinated a session at the BCAEA provincial conference at which series of people from successful programs give short talks and provide handouts and examples, explaining the nitty-gritty of what they do and why it works. I've been in Alternate Ed for some time now, and have visited and worked in a number of good programs, but I always learn something new by participating. These presenters have been excellent, but there is always room for schools or programs we haven't heard from yet.

If you have a successful alternative school or program you would like to talk about, or if you know someone else who does, please contact me:

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A Framework for Understanding Poverty

by Kathi Hughes

I attended this two day workshop in May. The trained presenters were from Fort St. John. The workshop was facilitated by the North East Aboriginal Education Boards.

Dr. Ruby Payne's A Framework for Understanding Poverty teaches the hidden rules of economic class and spreads the message, that, despite the obstacles poverty can create in all types of interactions, there are specific strategies for overcoming them.

The workshop had nine components:

1. Definitions and Resources
2. The Role of Language and Story
3. Hidden Rules Among Classes
4. Characteristics of Generational Poverty
5. Role Models and Emotional Resources
6. Support Systems
7. Discipline
8. Instruction and Improving Achievement
9. Creating Relationships

Key points of the workshop included:

1. Poverty is relative.
2. Poverty occurs in all races and all countries.
3. Economic class is a continuous line, not a clear-cut distinction.
4. Generational poverty and situational poverty are different.
5. This work is based on patterns. All patterns have exceptions.
6. An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised.
7. Schools and businesses operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of middle class.
8. For our students to be successful, we must understand their hidden rules and teach them the rules that will make them successful at school and at work.

9. We can neither excuse students nor scold them for not knowing; as educators we must teach them and provide support, insistence, and expectations.
10. To move from poverty to middle class or from middle class to wealth, an individual must give up relationships for achievement (at least for some period of time).
11. Two things that help one move out of poverty are education and relationships.
12. Four reasons one leaves poverty are: It's too painful to stay, a vision or goal, a key relationship, or a special talent or skill.

This workshop totally impacted my perceptive understanding of my students, their families and the community around me.

A quote from the workshop to help us start the new year:

"No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship".

Dr. James Corner

RESOURCES:

Payne, Ruby K

A Framework for Understanding Poverty,
revised edition

(workbook – 79 pages) 1998 \$7. USD
ISBN 09647437-0-1

(book – 207 pages) \$22 USD
1996 ISBN 0929229143

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The Twelve Commandments

submitted by Dave MacKenzie

Excerpted from Hobbs, 1982, Habel, 1988.

(Hobbs credits the idea of the importance of joy in the life of children to the Russian Educator and youth worker, Anton Makarenko.)

1. Life is to be lived now, not in the past, and lived in the future only as a present challenge.

We really don't look backward, we don't retreat, we don't try to repair something so that life can be caught up again we start with the assumption that each day is of great importance to young people; when an hour is neglected, allowed to pass without reason and intent, teaching and learning go on nevertheless, and the child or adolescent may be the loser. In Re-ED, no one waits for a special therapeutic hour. We try, as best we can, to make all hours special.

2. Trust between child and adult is essential...

Trust is the glue that holds teaching and learning together the first step in the re-education process is to help the young person make a new and very important distinction that adults can be counted on as predictable sources of support, understanding and affection. The teacher-counsellor, to nurture trust, must be a whole person, not a therapist no amount of professional training can make an adult worthy of the trust of a child or capable of generating it.

3. Competence makes a difference, and children and adolescents should be helped to be good at something, and especially at schoolwork.

School is near the center of a child's life and that is the natural fulcrum for efforts to help children in trouble we regard it as sound strategy to attack directly the problem of adequacy in school, for its intrinsic value as well as for its indirect effect on the young person's perception of his worth, and his acceptance by people who are important in his world.

4. Time is an ally, working on the side of growth in a period of development when life has a tremendous forward thrust.

A broken bone knits more rapidly at six and sixteen than at sixty; we assume a comparable vitality in the psychological domain. Re-education may simply speed up a process that would occur in an unknown percentage of children anyway. A long stay in a treatment center may actually slow down the process of learning to be oneself we try at least to avoid getting in the way of the normal restorative processes of life.

5. Self-control can be taught and children and adolescents helped to manage their behaviour without the development of psychodynamic insight.

Children and adolescents get rejected in large part because of identifiable behaviours that are regarded as unacceptable by family, friends, school or community a first step in this process is to help them unlearn particular habits that keep high the probability that they will be rejected by people whose support they must have if they are to grow.

6. Intelligence can be taught. Intelligence is a dynamic, evolving, and malleable capacity for making good choices in living.

Children and adolescents coming into a Re-ED program frequently have deficits in both concepts and problem-solving ability the program provides many formal experiences in problem solving— especially in interpersonal relationships with other people, about their futures.

7. Feeling should be nurtured, shared spontaneously, controlled when necessary, expressed when too long repressed, and explored with trusted others.

Positive feelings are important, too. The simple joy of companionship is encouraged. We are impressed by the meaningfulness of friendships and how long they endure we contrive situations of controlled danger in which children can test themselves, can know fear and become the master of it feelings also get expressed through many kinds of creative activities that are woven into the fabric of a Re-ED school.

8. The group is very important to young people, and it can become a major source of instruction in growing up.

When a group is functioning well, it is difficult for an individual student to behave in a disturbing way. Even when the group is functioning poorly, the frictions and the failures can be used constructively discussion of difficulties or planning of activities can be a most maturing experience. And the sharing of adventure, of vicissitudes, and of victories, provide an experience in human relatedness to which most of our students have been alien.

9. Ceremony and ritual give order, stability, and confidence to troubled children and adolescents whose lives are often in considerable disarray.

At Pressley Ridge Wilderness School, a very simple but important ritual has evolved. Before the noonday meal every day, the campers gather and sit in groups on "ready-logs." The camp staff (plus visitors) lines up at the entrance to the mess hall. When the dinner bell rings, the campers, one at a time, walk through the line of staff and visitors. There is a handshake, and from the staff a personal, appreciative comment. It is a powerful event, asserting comradeship and community.

10. The body is the armature of the self, the physical self around which the psychological self is constructed.

The Peace Corps program involved rock climbing, survival treks, surf kayaking, physical fitness exercises, and other similar activities designed not to train volunteers to do this sort of thing on their jobs, but to give them a greater awareness of what they thought they were capable of doing. It was an exercise in self-discovery. The basic notions seemed applicable to work with young children and especially with adolescents.

11. Communities are important for children and youth, but the uses and benefits of community must be experienced to be learned.

Many children and adolescents who are referred to our schools come from families that are alienated or detached from community life Re-ED programs for adolescents have worked out dozens of ways for students to participate in community projects ... distributing boxes of food and toys to needy families at Christmas, gathering migrating birds injured by flying into a television tower at night and taking the birds to a shelter, participating in a neighbourhood clean-up day, and so on.

12. A child should know some joy in each day and look forward to some joyous event for the morrow.

There is an extensive literature on anxiety, guilt and dread, but little that is well developed on joy. We thus go beyond most contemporary psychology to touch one of the most vital areas of human experience. We try to become skillful at developing joy some of the most satisfying moments are generated by successful achievement in school. To do well in spelling or arithmetic, especially for students who expect and dread failure, is to know a sharp delight. ■

OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

Bill 51 Teaching Profession Amendment Act, 2003

Revised June 20, 2003

On May 12, 2003, Education Minister Christy Clark tabled legislation significantly altering the Teaching Profession Act. The legislation was proclaimed on May 30, 2003. Following is a summary of the major changes in the legislation.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES	PREVIOUS LEGISLATION	WHAT IT MEANS
<p>Council composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All existing council members were fired on May 30, 2003. Minister appointed 20 persons to sit on transitional council. They generally represent parents and management. • College Council composition changed. Once election zones are announced by the minister, political appointees will hold the majority of votes on council. Council will consist of eight elected members, 11 cabinet appointments and one person named by the deans of education. 	<p>College Council consisted of 15 elected members, two cabinet appointments, two ministerial appointments and one named by the deans of education.</p>	<p>Minister has taken control of the College—teachers pay for it. College is no longer a democratic, self-regulating professional body. The democratic college election process that was underway was negated. Others are to be consulted on appointments; not teachers.</p>
<p>Teachers must report on colleagues' professional misconduct A member who has reason to believe that another member is guilty of professional misconduct must report to College registrar. Report must be made even if belief is based on privileged information or is confidential and forbidden from disclosure by other legislation.</p>	<p>No specific provision for a member to file a report existed. Complaint could be filed in writing, if signed by five members.</p>	<p>Jeopardizes ability of members to share certain information with teacher union reps. What is "reason to believe" and "professional misconduct?" Could have chilling impact on collegial relationships. Challenges BCTF Code of Ethics Article 5. Higher College investigation and discipline costs.</p>

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES	PREVIOUS LEGISLATION	WHAT IT MEANS
<p>College will no longer have a say in approving teacher-education programs. College only has authority to set standards for teacher certification, but not approve how programs are taught or administered.</p> <p>NOTE: This provision only comes into effect when proclaimed by the cabinet.</p>	<p>College used to approve, for certification purposes, the program of all B.C. teacher-education programs.</p>	<p>Practicing teachers no longer have a say in the approval of teacher-education programs. Teacher-education programs could be out of touch with the realities of today’s classroom. Each certification request will need to be considered individually by the College. Higher fees for individual certification processing. Could lead to proliferation of private teacher-education institutions and teacher testing.</p>
<p>Public can file complaints against teachers. A written complaint about the conduct of a member can be filed directly with the College by a member of the public.</p>	<p>Complaints about members could be received by the College in a report from a school board, a complaint in writing signed by five members, or a report from the registrar.</p>	<p>Will increase the number of complaints to College. Could escalate and prolong issues between parents and teachers. Will affect school board policies regarding process for resolving student/parent concerns and problems. Affects School Act provisions regarding student and parent appeals. Will increase number of College investigations and discipline hearings.</p>
<p>College must report directly to the minister on all matters, including competence of members. College Council reports annually to minister on College matters and adds competence to the list. Minister issues compulsory guidelines for reports, to be made public. Minister can disallow any by-law of the college.</p>	<p>Cabinet could set regulations requiring the College to report to the minister on the financial affairs and administration of College, the performance of members, and education matters generally. No such regulations were ever passed.</p>	<p>Minister now sets the agenda for College. Could impact on collective agreement provisions regarding teacher evaluation. Will promote the ministry/BCPVPA teacher supervision project. College costs will increase.</p>
<p>The appointees on council gain powers. Bill 51 gives appointees on council the same power as elected council members.</p>	<p>College councillors who were members (hold teaching certificates) were granted additional responsibilities because they were certificated teachers (i.e., majority of Discipline Committee members were elected members).</p>	<p>College committee (Discipline, Qualifications, Teacher Education) majority are now councillors who do not hold teaching certificates. Political appointees will be in the majority on the Discipline Committee. They will make decisions affecting the lives of teachers. Key leadership positions on council (chairperson, committee chairpersons) are held by political appointments.</p>



Russian Child Protection an Integrated Model by Anita Chapman

As teachers we often look to other jurisdictions for direction in education. In Canada, we often look to the United States, England, Australia, and New Zealand, but seldom to Eastern Europe, or Central or South America.

Just over four years ago, my husband and I adopted sisters, then age 9 and 11 from St. Petersburg, Russia. During the course of the adoption and in the subsequent years, I have had the opportunity to find out about the education and child protection systems in Russia, and I think there are some things we could learn from their systems.

I am not suggesting that their educational or social services systems are superior to ours. By most

overall measures, like international assessments, our education system is superior. In Canada, we do not warehouse disabled children, have a million children living on the street, or routinely see elderly widows and war veterans begging on the street as I did in St. Petersburg. But it would be arrogant to think that every part of our system is better than every part of theirs.

In Russia, child protection services are part of the Education department, an admirably integrated model. Like other adoptive parents, we say that our daughters lived in an orphanage, but none of the various Russian names for these institutions (Baby Houses, Children's Houses, Boarding Schools) translates as orphanage. Our daughters were

residing in a Social Rehabilitation Centre for Minors.

After a year and a half of scrutiny and various interventions, these sisters had been apprehended by child protection authorities at age 7 and 9. They came to the rehab centre with some of the disadvantages and emotional baggage we see in children in our foster care system – malnourishment, untreated infections, spotty school attendance, low literacy skills, symptoms of post traumatic stress, and anger management problems. They both smoked, and were, in the words of the police report “well-known and accomplished thieves”.

In Canada, these children would have gone into foster care, received

learning assistance and perhaps counselling at school, and perhaps received additional counselling through social services.

In Russia, they went into an intensive rehabilitation program. They lived in apartments with up to a dozen other children, boys and girls. Each apartment had six caretakers, two on each of three shifts, who cooked, cleaned, and planned activities. One caretaker in each pair was a trained child psychologist. The centre also had a doctor, nurses, trained massage therapists, and crafts and life skills teachers. After varying lengths of time in rehab, children went into foster families, or were adopted (depending on their legal status), or sent to boarding schools if no foster or adoptive placement was available.

The older sister, the more resilient but very angry, was sent to regular school. She had to follow her caretakers around practicing her times tables as they made beds and did laundry. She received daily massage therapy for relaxation, daily counselling in anger management, and a twice a week karate class to give vent to her pugnacious tendencies. The counselling was short on talk therapy and long on playing the hand you were dealt. She was taught to crochet, embroider, weave on a four-foot wide loom, and do leatherwork. She went on an endless number of field trips – to swim or skate, to the zoo, to the Hermitage museum, etc. Her favourite caretaker, a child psychologist, sometimes took her

home on weekends, and they still keep in touch.

The younger sister also adored one of her caretakers and asked me to talk to her on the phone. Imagine my surprise when I found out that the woman who changed wet bedding in the middle of the night, comforted her after nightmares, and tucked her into bed with her, was a child psychologist with three university degrees and absolutely fluent English. However, this younger sister, more damaged emotionally, and with the language skills of a 3 year old, could not handle regular school so she was put into the “little school” at the rehab centre.

Her class had only six students. There were four teachers, three with specialized degrees in early literacy and the fourth a child psychologist. They concentrated on early literacy skills, art therapy, and building self-esteem and self-efficacy. In 18 months, they raised her language skills by four years, and deemed her ready to start regular schooling.

I do not think the intense early educational and social-emotional intervention and rehabilitation that my daughters received in Russia when they came into state care would have been available to them in Canada. And that bothers me, because we are a much richer, more stable country that has more capacity to offer such services to at-risk children. ■

ANITA CHAPMAN is the BC Teachers' Federation staff liaison for the BCAEA.

OF NOTE:

RECOMMENDED READING

A great little book: 'Know Your Rights under the Child, Family and Community Service Act...A guide for young people in care'. Contact the BC Federation of Youth In Care Networks at (604) 572-7762

THIS IS QUITE AMAZING!

From an anonymous source we have received this and publish it here for your info:

Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are wretitn, the olny iprmoentn tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteers are at the rghit plcae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by it slef but the wrod as a wlohe.

Ceehiro.

PS That'll scerw the splchekcer

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The draft Revised English Language Arts 11/12 and the Planning 10 IRP are available at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts

Responses and feedback for the Language Arts 11 and 12 are requested by October 31, 2003. Time is of the essence!

2004 Grants, Awards & Bursaries

BCAEA ACTIVITY GRANTS

Four grants totalling \$2,000 maximum.

This grant must be used to benefit “at-risk” students who are receiving alternative programming.

Application Process:

- applicant must be a BCAEA member
- provide a statement of rationale for the project, including how it will benefit the program and/or individuals involved
- provide a balance sheet (breaking down all expenses and all funding sources) for the activity
- provide the name and address of the sponsoring teacher and other staff
- provide a statement by the program Administration Officer that she/he is familiar with the project and supports the proposal
- after the event, Activity Grant recipients are asked to report on the activity that took place by providing dated photos and student accounts of the activity
- unused funds must be returned to the BCAEA

Submissions can be made throughout the year. All grants need to be approved at an executive meeting.

BCAEA SPECIFIC PROJECTS GRANT

Up to \$500

- This grant is to support an activity such as curriculum development, policy or directory update, membership recruitment or another project that furthers BCAEA goals.
- Applications will be adjudicated by the full executive at the year-end meeting.
- Submissions will be judged on the degree to which the project facilitates the Association’s goals at the regional or provincial level.
- Funds will be issued on completion of the project in the case of honoraria, or in the submission of receipts in the case of reimbursement of expenses.

Deadline for submission is March 31.

KATHI HUGHES INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARD

One award of \$500

This award will be given to an Alternate Education teacher who is willing to share a unique aspect of his/her existing program at the Annual BCAEA Conference in January.

Objective: To encourage Alternate Education teachers to share their programs and workable strategies with others.

Application Process:

- applicant must be a BCAEA member
- outline the program (2 page max.) including how your program is meeting the needs and aspirations of your students
- indicate how your program would use the award
- include pictures of program ‘in action’
- submit article for possible publication in the June Newsletter
- include proposal for sharing of program at annual BCAEA Challenge and Change Conference (i.e., workshop, booth, or...) BCAEA may provide limited travel subsidy for award recipients presenting at conference.

The Program must:

- have been in operation for at least one year
- focus on the social/emotional and/or career development of students
- be shareable and transferable

Deadline for submission is March 31. Award presented May 31.

BCAEA STUDENT BURSARY

Four grants of \$500

This grant is available to a graduating student who is, or has been, in an Alternate Program.

Application Process:

The Sponsoring Staff must:

- be a member of BCAEA
- comment on the student's achievement of personal and/or academic goals
- verify attendance at a school or community-based Alternate Program for at least eight months
- provide a written statement of support that includes the rationale for recommendation. (Please include contact information, i.e. phone, fax, Email.)

The Student must:

- provide verification of registration in post-secondary training or educational institute
- provide a written statement indicating future plans and the progress made towards goals
- submit a resume including two written references
- include a personal photograph which can be published in the BCAEA Newsletter

Deadline for submission is March 31. Award presented May 31.

BCAEA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANT

Four award gift certificates valued at \$250 each

This grant is available to a student who is demonstrating responsibility for behaviour, a significant level of self-motivation, improved self-esteem and self-confidence, mastery skills, and readiness for a new educational program or job.

The Sponsoring Staff must be a member of the BCAEA.

The Application is to include a short write-up (100-200 words) from the student that covers the following questions:

1. What have you been able to accomplish at the program you are attending?
2. What are your future goals and aspirations?
3. How would you use this award?

The application is to include:

- two letters of reference (including one from program staff sponsoring the application)
- a copy of the student's last report card
- a photograph of the nominee that can be published in the BCAEA Newsletter

Deadline for submission is March 31. Award presented May 31. One award per region will be distributed. In the event that no applications are received from a region, award monies will be distributed to a qualifying student from another region.

Region 1 - North

Region 2 - Southeast

Region 3 - Lower Mainland

Region 4 - Vancouver Island

BCAEA STUDENT DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Ten award gift certificates valued at \$100 each

This grant is available to a student who is demonstrating responsibility for behaviour, a significant level of self-motivation, improved self-esteem and self-confidence, and mastery skills.

The Sponsoring Staff must be a member of the BCAEA.

The Application is to include a short write-up (100-200 words) from the student that covers the following questions:

1. What have you been able to accomplish at the program you are attending?
2. What are your future goals and aspirations?
3. How would you use this award?

The application is to include:

- two letters of reference (including one from program staff sponsoring the application)
- a copy of the student's last report card
- a photograph of the nominee that can be published in the BCAEA Newsletter

Deadline for submission is March 31. Award presented May 31.

Application forms for awards can be downloaded from the BCAEA Website:

www.bctf.ca/bcaea

Please forward completed applications for all awards, plus supporting documentation directly to:

Rick Fitch
29574 Taise Place
Mission, BC V4S 1B8

BC ALTERNATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS (see Note)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2003

Balance, July 1, 2002 \$ 110,739.19

Receipts

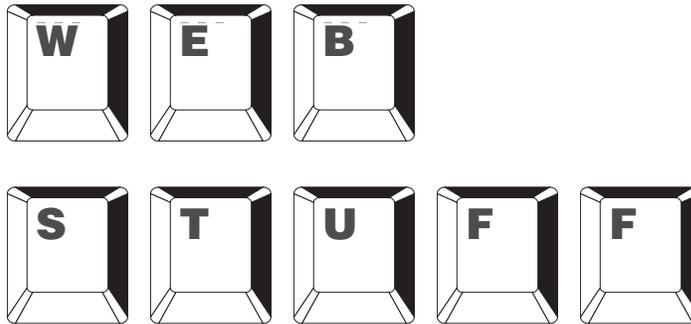
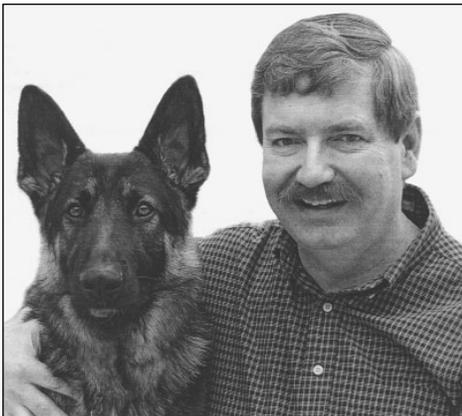
BCTF grant	6,177.50	
Membership/subscription fees	9,066.50	
Sale of back issues	230.00	
Other	295.00	
Interest	2,710.09	
Conference fees	65,505.00	
Conference exhibits/sponsorships	1,615.00	
		85,599.09

Disbursements

Executive meetings	14,219.39	
Subcommittee meetings	299.80	
Annual general meeting	2,092.97	
TOC costs	3,002.30	
Publications-newsletter	9,776.33	
Publications-other	1,723.71	
Operating expenses	218.23	
Chapter support	317.56	
Scholarships	5,700.00	
Miscellaneous	1,276.77	
Conference-operating	2,537.32	
Conference-facilities	428.00	
Furniture and equipment purchase	4,236.48	
Conference-catering	12,437.96	
Conference-printing	3,209.44	
Conference-promotions	1,491.07	
Conference-committee costs	2,393.51	
Conference-entertainment	10,384.45	
Conference-equipment rental	4,890.48	
Conference-miscellaneous	231.64	
Conference-speakers	24,690.20	
		105,557.61

Balance JUNE 30, 2003 \$ 90,780.67

Notes: This statement reflects only funds held by the BC Teachers' Federation on behalf of the BC Alternate Education Association.



by Mike Shaw
 Online Manager
 BCAEA

Interesting Links

- The Draft Revised English Language Arts 11 and 12 Curriculum and Response Forms are available for review and feedback at:
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts>

Responses are requested by the Ministry of Education before October 31, 2003. There are a number of drafts available as well. Of specific note is the new Planning 10 IRP. Please check these out and give your response ASAP.

- Aboriginal Education website – article on "Development of Aboriginal Counselling" –Section 7
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/reports/welcome.htm>
- The BC Federation of Youth In Care Networks website is:
<http://www.fbcyicn.ca>
- This link (with home page shown below) may prove useful to all of us in several subject areas:
<http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/index.html>

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 2000. BC Performance Standards.

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 H.E.R.O. Project. Developmental Assets: A Profile of Our Youth.

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