



ISSUE ALERT #2

September 10, 2012

Class Size Procedures for 2012-13

ONCE AGAIN, as we start a new school year, the *provincial government has changed the rules for classroom size and composition*. They have repealed many sections of the School Act that refer to the organisation of classes, and the number of students in each class that may be identified with a designation.

There is no restriction on how many children with IEPs can be in a class. There will not be any consultation meetings with principals regarding classes with excessive numbers of designated students, nor can we grieve these classes as contravening the School Act.

Recommended Procedures for Consultations for 2012-13:

- Teachers, who have classes in excess of 30 students that are not excluded, **must** attend the meeting with the principal, as it is outlined under “duties of a teacher” in the School Act Regulations. **There is no timeline as to when this meeting must occur**, which is another indication how little class size matters to this government.
- Teachers use this time to argue for compensation that could include reducing the class below 31 students, asking for additional teaching staff to lower the class size of that and other sections of the same class, or increased prep time. There are no other options.
- The teacher or Staff Rep forwards us the information on the VSTA 2012 consult form, which will give us the information to proceed with a grievance. The form will be on our website, or available from the school staff rep. If no meeting with a principal has occurred by the end of September, teachers should fill out the form and forward it, and indicate in question 6 that no meeting has occurred. This must be done by the individual teacher, as the staff rep will not know there is an overloaded class!
- The VSTA office will initiate a grievance for each school that has classes over 30 that contravene the School Act, and argue each class separately.

Why?

The only limit still in the School Act that applies to secondary classes is that classes in grades 4-12 must not exceed 30 students unless

- “(a) in the opinions of the superintendent of schools for the school district and the principal of the school, the organisation is appropriate for student learning, or
- (b) the class is in the prescribed category of classes.”

The Class Size and Compensation Regulation lists the prescribed classes as:

- An Adult or Continuing Ed class;
- A class conducted by means of Distributed Learning;
- A class that is part of an alternate program;
- A class that meets for the purpose of a work study or work experience program;
- A class that is limited to students enrolled in a special academy;
- A music class, including band, choir, instrumental music and orchestra;
- A performing arts class, including drama and dance;
- A Planning 10 class;
- A board-authorized leadership course.

The School Act has had other sections repealed that include the need for a principal to consult teachers before the teacher is given a class with more than students, and there are no reporting requirements to the Board, SPC, PAC, or the Public.

please see reverse.....

\$Cash For Kids\$

The Ministry of Education is proposing to pay teachers an extra \$312 per student over 30 in some secondary school courses, *depending on where the teacher sits on the salary grid.*

Both of the BCTF's key democratic decision-making bodies—the Representative Assembly and the Annual General Meeting—have voted unanimously to reject the idea of more cash for bigger classes.

Teachers know it's unethical to personally profit at the expense of students' learning conditions. It would be a violation of the Federation's Code of Ethics.

Rather than participating in this appalling "Cash for Kids" scheme, the Representative Assembly has decided that we will file individual grievances. The remedy for such grievances: additional teachers and prep time that will benefit our students and improve our working conditions.

With these changes in mind, the VSTA has taken the advice of the BCTF, and modified it for use in our secondary schools due to the sheer number of anticipated violations. *This will streamline the process and time commitment of staff reps and teachers with classes over 30 that are not in the prescribed category.*

Additional Information

The VSTA will separately grieve all classes that have size or composition overloads when compared to the language that was illegally stripped by unconstitutional legislation in 2002 from our Collective Agreement, just like we did last year. The numbers of classes last year added up to almost 3200 across the city.