



September 6, 2014

Mr. Bob Groeneveld
Editor
Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Times
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Maple Ridge, B. C.
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Mr. Michael Hall
Editor
Maple Ridge News
22611 Dewdney Trunk Road
Maple Ridge, B.C.
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Dear Mr. Groeneveld and Mr. Hall,

Re: An open letter to the community from the Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows Board of Education

We want our students and teachers back in school. We are extremely disappointed and angry that the BCTF and BCPSEA have been unable to reach an agreement in the current labour dispute. The theatrics, vitriol, game playing, personal attacks and politics that have characterized this and previous rounds of bargaining between teachers and the provincial government are, quite simply, unprofessional and unacceptable.

We have heard from many students, parents and employees who are directly affected by the current job action. We understand and share their frustrations, and believe a continuation of the dispute will have a significant long-term negative impact on the public education system in this province.

Over the summer, the BC School Trustees Association developed and promoted a [Back to School Action Plan](http://www.bcsta.org/publications/media-releases) <http://www.bcsta.org/publications/media-releases> through province-wide feedback from Trustees. We endorsed that plan but neither the government nor the BCTF have given it any consideration.

Since there is apparently no end in sight, we now call upon the parties to enter into binding arbitration on all of the issues on the table, including wages and benefits, as well as class size and composition funding and the method of allocating such funding. The only preconditions we feel should be set by the parties are that the result be fair to both sides: affordable for citizens and appropriate for teachers, demonstrating the level of respect for the teaching profession our teachers deserve. We also believe the provincial government must commit to providing full funding to Boards of Education to cover the results of binding arbitration. Finally, we want our students and teachers to return to school while the arbitration process takes place.

A complete record of the board's correspondence and advocacy concerning bargaining and education funding can be found here <http://www1.sd42.ca/node/2329>.

We have a great deal to be proud of in the provision of education in Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows School District. That pride comes from a record of innovation and achievement built on the outstanding efforts of our entire school community: students, parents, teachers, support staff and administrators. We must not lose that tradition of excellence as a result of this dispute. Our students deserve nothing less than our collective best efforts to solve the current impasse.

We wish to thank everyone in the community for their understanding and patience. We are hopeful that our students will be returning to school shortly.

On behalf of the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Board of Education,



Mike Murray,
Board Chair

Cc Laurie Meston, Acting Superintendent of Schools, School District 42
Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer, School District 42
Maple Ridge Teachers Association
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 703
District Parent Advisory Council, School District 42
Maple Ridge Principals and Vice Principals Association
District Student Advisory Council, School District 42
The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
The Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education
Mr. Michael Marchbank, Public Administrator, BC Public School Employers Association
Mr. Jim Iker, President, British Columbia teachers Association
Doug Bing, MLA Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows
Marc Dalton, MLA Maple Ridge/Mission
Teresa Rezansoff, President, British Columbia School Trustees Association
Mayor Ernie Daykin, District of Maple Ridge
Mayor Deb Walters, City of Pitt Meadows
All Boards of Education c/o BCSTA