

# CBE Staff Association

General Information Meeting

March 10, 2010

**DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:** Jenica Copithorne, Maxwell Girvan, Dorothy Hall, Lindy Lemay, Daniel McLaughlin, Jean Minifie, Almas Rajwani-Rawji, Lois Robb, Wanda Stevenson and Sherry Vaskovics

**MANAGERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Albert Herscovitch and Mark Johnson

## REGRETS:

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes as there was not a quorum present. The meeting reconvened at 7:15 p.m.

### 2. GREETINGS & INTRODUCTIONS - Jean Minifie

Introduction of Head Table.

### 3. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions.

### 4. FINANCIAL UPDATE - Lindy Lemay

- We are on track and in-line.
- We still have about 60% of our budget remaining.
- There is still a lot of money in the Staff Development Fund and we'd really like to encourage everyone to utilize these funds!

### 5. REPORTS:

#### a. Chair Report – Jean Minifie

**Staffing Changes at the CBE and Staff Association:** There have been many changes in the CBE over the past few months: Naomi Johnson, Chief Superintendent of Schools, David Stevenson, Deputy Chief, John Johnston, Superintendent of Human Resources, Deborah Lewis, Superintendent of Learning Support. Also we have had some changes in Directors which are: Keith Peterson, Director of Partner Services, Karen Demassi, Director of Centres of Excellence and Scott Miller, Director of Operations, Integration Solutions. We have also had some changes at the Staff Association Office. As you know Bill Flookes has retired and we have replaced him with two very competent and knowledgeable people in Albert Herscovitch and Mark Johnson.

**Leadership Meetings:** Leadership Meetings are being held once a month with all the Superintendents, Directors and Principals, along with representatives from ATA and Staff Association. At the last Leadership Meeting there was a RAM review that was included and the message received from the Deputy Chief, David Stevenson was: "Look and ensure that all student needs are being met and reaffirm our approach. We have to figure out how to encourage growth with limited resources. What we have today might not support where we want to go tomorrow!" The current model of RAM is acceptable overall. Management is going to leave the guidelines in place. They need thorough data collection ie: all day kindergarten, work on communication regarding the rationale of decision making. The School Act is being reviewed and Setting the Direction in Education (a workshop that some of us attended in Edmonton last spring) has no final results. Two very specific recommendations were: 1) Decentralized Budget - schools are being penalized by situations that they have no control over; and 2) Level of Decentralized Budget (mainly the sub budgets). Other things that were mentioned were: 1) if the funds could be found - they would support school deficits; 2) discretionary funds would be added to by inflationary funds and would not impact school allocations; and 3) lunchroom issues - this is NOT a RAM fix.

**Budget:**

● April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 is fiscal year	● Student Health Initiative is continuing \$49M
● \$4M reduction in the budget	● Special Education status quo for 2010/11
● May 31, 2010 submission of CBE's budget to government	● \$259M transportation maintained
● Instructional grant rate will be maintained at current level	● \$456M maintenance & operating budget is maintained
● per student amount increased slightly for K-6	● All school projects will continue
● Enrollment province wide is up 7.6%	● 6, P3 schools will open in September 2010
● CBE's growth is up 5%	● 4, P3 middle schools will continue, along with the NW High School and modifications to Western Canada
● AISI is continuing - \$79M - we just finished year 1 out of a 3 year cycle	

- All decisions are based on the needs of the child!
- When the budget was presented to the stakeholders, we were told that we would not have to present our "wish lists" to the Operating Committee any more as both Wayne Braun and John Johnston were going to meet with each group on a personal basis to get our input!

**RAM Roll-out and Return Dates:**

- April 15<sup>th</sup> - RAM to Principals
- April 27<sup>th</sup> - RAM finalized

**Critical Questions Asked of the Leadership Group:**

- 1) How does my budget and resource allocation decisions align with the Three Year Education Plan?
- 2) How will my leadership ensure that all stakeholders are heard and have some level of participation in the process?

**Communication with the Membership:**

Staff Association has tried very hard to keep the lines of communication open, especially with our members. We have monthly FYI (For Your Information) Updates sent out to each work site and these updates are also posted on our Website. We put updates received from the CBE on our Website and there are also updates and changes that are made on the CBE web site in the staff room. Unfortunately, there are still members who feel they don't know what is going on with Staff Association which was very evident with some of the comments made on the recent survey we sent out.

**Negotiation Survey Update:**

**AAWE** - In our last negotiations the salary increase effective September 1, 2009 was tied to the year over year percentage change in the Alberta Average Weekly Earnings (AAWE). Our increase would be 5.99% based on the method in effect when the Agreement was entered into. It was 4.82% and an Arbitrators award was deemed to be 5.99%. The CBE immediately agreed to apply this to all of its employees impacted by the AAWE, which included Staff Association and CUPE. The difference of 1.17% and has been added to this last pay cheque (the one you will receive on Friday) and they are now working on the retro going back to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 which should be done by the end of April.

**Service Gratuity** - The Service Gratuity that was mentioned in the survey is NOT tied to either retirement or LAPP. Those who leave the CBE through retirement or resignation at any age and have at least 10 years of service receive the Service Gratuity as follows: after 10 years, 1 month salary; after 15 years, 2 months' salary; and after 20 years, 3 months' salary.

**Supervision** - Staff Association and CBE have different views of who can be required to supervise students. From our perspective, the only Position Descriptions that specifically include supervision are Breakfast Program, Lunch and Lead Lunch Supervisors and School Assistants, so only persons in those positions can be required to supervise students. The CBE believes supervision can/should be required of those in other positions which do not specifically include it in the PD. Since the issue was unresolved in the last round of negotiations and may remain so going into this round, it was included in the survey to gauge its importance to you.

**First Aid Requirements** - We would like to encourage all of our members to have Standard First Aid with CPR, however, this is only a requirement for those positions that have First Aid as a stated qualification in their Position Description. No member can otherwise be required by their Supervisors/Principals to take First Aid.

**Closing Remarks:**

Staff Association looks forward to working with the "new" administration we now have at CBE -- we have felt included. Also, don't forget that the Staff Association Board of Directors would be happy to organize a "Meet & Greet." We would welcome the opportunity to meet with any interested group and would be more than pleased to help organize such an event -- just call me at the office.

**b. Manager's Report** - Albert Herscovitch

It has been a very hectic start to the school year. As Jean mentioned, we started the year with numerous CBE senior administrative changes, many of which are beneficial to the Staff Association. Jean has already talked about these. Most of these appointees are familiar to us as they are internal appointments and most of them are much more sympathetic to the cause of the Staff Association and our members than were those in the previous regime. Naomi Johnson has made a commitment to all employees that there will be a different relationship, one based on trust, respect and transparency. She has been true to her word and this philosophy has started to work its way through the system, already producing some favourable results. One example is the significantly increased involvement of Jean, Mark and I in system decision making. The relationships between these Senior Administrators and the Staff Association are critical to the improvement of working conditions for all of you and we have spent a great deal of time developing and nurturing these relationships.

- The next significant event was the realization that Bill Flookes, our Manager for 15 years really was going to retire. To provide some continuity, I started as Manager on August 24<sup>th</sup> and I worked with Bill for several months trying to soak up as much knowledge as I could from his wealth of experiences. We then searched the country for a new second Manager and found hidden underneath a rock, a gem, Mark Johnson who has been with us since December. Mark and I are now co-managers, each working part time.
- In October, our arbitration hearing on the grievance against TELUS and the Calgary Board claiming numerous contraventions of Employment Standards regarding the many payroll misfortunes was heard. We had expected to hear the decision from Les Wallace, the arbitrator in January but have just heard that this decision will not be known till May of this year.
- Jean has talked about the Alberta Average Weekly Earnings. As important as the pay increase was the communiqué that the CBE published in the Staffroom stating, "Guiding our work is our strong belief that our teachers and support staff are the best in the country. Their contribution to the education of our students is absolutely critical." This too is a reflection of our Chief Superintendent's focus on relationship.
- This decision was quickly followed up by the Provincial budget in which the Education budget was essentially maintained with no increase or decrease. However, as a result of increasing inflation, employee salaries, general labour costs and energy costs essentially this was a reduced budget for the CBE. The CBE again reacted quickly, indicating that there would be no staff layoffs based on this budget. CBE plans to use up its reserve funds and go into a deficit which it will repay over 3 - 5 years.
- One of the major issues that we have been working on and that have affected many of our members is the issue of repayments of salary overpayments by TELUS. Mark has the dubious pleasure of dealing with this and will talk about it in his speech.
- We also have had several investigations of harassment and bullying against our members and most of those have been successfully concluded.

- We also have two grievances regarding postings and what they mean. A posting should have some meaning and stability. If you apply for a position posted for 30 hours a week, that should be your FTE, at least for the current year once the RAM has been set for the school. CBE believes that they can change the hours of work any time including the week you start in your position. For PSS members, CBE believes that the location for the work is the department which means you could be in Area 1 and then moved to Area 5 at any time. How about our PSS members who work in REACH which has offices in Red Deer and Lethbridge? Can they be moved to a different city since they all fall under the same department?
- Finally, we have had numerous phone calls regarding management's interpretation of clauses within our Collective Agreements. Although we address each situation individually, we have also decided that each monthly FYI will include an interpretation of those especially contentious and most misinterpreted clauses (Collective Agreement 101).
- Lastly, as you know, our Collective Agreements expire on August 31, 2010. We will write a letter to the Calgary Board of Education to open negotiations in May of this year and although we will likely hold several meetings with the CBE prior to the end of June, serious negotiations will start in September. In preparation for this, we have selected our Negotiations team and have been meeting on a weekly basis since January. The team consists of Lois Robb, Sherry Vaskovics, Wanda Stevenson, Dorothy Hall, Jean Minifie, Mark Johnson and me. We have also put out a survey to you and the response has been both tremendous and very informative. Mark will address the survey results in just a few minutes. Once we develop our full proposal package based on the issues you have brought up through the Staff Association office, the survey results and an in depth review of our Collective Agreements and those of other school boards, we will present that package to the CBE Negotiation Team and to you.

**Task Force - Albert Herscovitch**

- The Chief Superintendent/Staff Association Task Force; Jenica Copithorne, Hilary Smith and I have spent many, many hours in Task Force Meetings and in preparations as have a number of you in Task Force sub committee meetings. This is a good news/ bad news story. As you know, this Task Force was created as a response to the deteriorating relationship between the Staff Association and the CBE and unresolved issues stemming from the previous set of Negotiations. I had hoped to be able to give you a very in-depth update based on a meeting that was to have been held last week. However, that meeting has been postponed till next week. This meeting is a critical one because Jean, Mark and I indicated to Naomi and John Johnston that we were approaching a crossroads with a new set of negotiations on the horizon. There is a renewed impetus to resolve the five issues referred to in the mediator's report. We are not far apart on a number of these issues and this meeting will either lead to resolution or inform us that the CBE has not significantly changed its top down management approach.
- The Task Force also developed a process for a new Working Relationship Commitment document and Jean and I and again, several of our members have participated in this process and we have recently concluded a document that has been approved by the unions, management and the Superintendent's Team. The document will be rolled out soon and all staff should be involved in determining what it means for your particular worksite.

**c. Manager's Report** - Mark Johnson

Since this is my first general membership meeting, let me start by saying how pleased I am to have the opportunity to join the Staff Association team and to apply my abilities and efforts to supporting the members. Jean, the rest of the Board of Directors, and Albert, Sue and Dawn in the office have made me feel very welcome and have exercised great patience in providing invaluable assistance to me in the transition into this role. Also invaluable to me was the opportunity to come on-board prior to Bill Flookes leaving and having him share some of his vast knowledge and insights. One doesn't 'replace' a Bill Flookes but what he's done for Staff Association over the years is certainly a benchmark to which those of us who follow can and should aspire!

**Alleged Overpayments** - While there are some advantages to being the "new guy" it can be somewhat fraught with peril in many areas, not the least of which is drawing work assignments - hence my standing here and devoting my time to discussing TSSI and the alleged overpayments issues. Alleged, because that's how every instance should be viewed initially and issues plural because there are many.

- Background
  - Mistakes made in pay over the past several years:
    - Under and overpayments - never under without more than offsetting overpayment.
    - Huge issues in the past around members actually trying to notify them and not being able to get it fixed, only to have them come back a year or more later, admitting there were errors and wanting to recoup the money.
  - Issues around how they approached and notified members:
    - Went ahead and deducted -- against Employment Standards which requires written authorization from individual.
    - Lack of information -- no documentation.
    - Veiled and not-so-veiled threats.
    - Negative-option type approach.
  - Issues around the often small amounts and the timeframe to identify it and approach the members:
    - Less than \$50.00.
    - Close to 2 years after-the-fact.
  - Issues around disseminating personal information:
    - Bank account information.
    - Specifics to supervisors or Principals.
  - Previous communication (last meeting) -- get in touch with us if over 6 months.
- Current
  - Have now had 3 meetings with them to try to come to some agreements around reasonable parameters (amounts/timeframe) outside of which they'd not pursue.
  - No agreement yet and not really any reason to believe that we will/can get on the same page.
  - Fair to say better understanding all around of what each is dealing with.
  - We are considering various options:
    - Try to force each and everyone to come through the Association.
    - Agree to some hard and fast parameters that we wouldn't have to or necessarily want to.
    - Advise our members of what we consider reasonable and suggest they just go with that.
    - Try to come up with a way for CBE to do the right thing (apply parameters we might agree to) without any formal agreement.
- Future
  - Fixing the system that has produced all the errors is the only true solution.
    - John Johnston -- remedial work hopefully completed by the fall -- TELUS kicking in \$1M.
    - Still some common/recurring problems that we've flagged but don't seem to be on their radar.

- If you are approached regarding an overpayment remember:
  - Your written authorization is required before any deductions can be taken.
  - Get sufficient supporting documentation and ensure accuracy.
  - If you agree to repay any amount, the terms can be whatever you need them to be.
  - Send a copy to me if you want assistance.
- Staff Association will keep you advised through our Website and/or FYI's.

**Negotiation Survey** - Just back on Monday and the Committee has not yet met to analyze or discuss. Many thanks to June McFarlane (and Mother) for compiling all of this data -- 50+ hours.

- Stats:
  - 954/2200 - (45%) Main Body
  - 41/160 - (25.5%) PSS
- Survey:
  - Many comments and questions regarding the survey/structure/clarity etc.
  - Heard - will improve in the future (in-depth information on Website/Survey Monkey etc).
- From NUMBERS:
  - Wages - Wide range of options (expand).
  - Winter/Spring Breaks paid - but how will that affect 12 month employees.
  - 10 months over 12 month - fairly even split between critical importance and no importance.
    - Clear nothing can/should be done unless optional.
- From COMMENTS:
  - 30 pages of comments - read and re-read -- in whole, have a good sense of where the membership is overall!!!
  - Salary - tempered by job security concerns.
    - AAWE - clarify we get it for current year.
    - Teachers have 2 more years under AAWE (App. 3% applied to next year) -- should be hard to rationalize less for others.
  - Increase in benefits or in Health Spending Account to cover increased costs of everything health-related.
  - Unused sick leave conversion -- some kind of payout in money or time-off.
  - Hours increase is minimum.
    - Enough paid to cover some prep time.
  - Payment of Vacation Pay for 10 month employees.
    - Some prefer former method of paid before Christmas and Summer breaks.

#### **PSS MEMBERS**

- Health Spending Account increase.
- Staff Development Fund.
- Issues around work load -- Christmas and Winter breaks -- scheduling of work (12.5).
- Adamant about not changing who pays LTD premiums!

#### **d. KIT Team Report** - Hilary Smith

- The KIT (Keeping In Touch) Team – which consists of the many KIT Liaisons in our schools and worksites - is working extremely well in continuing to '**get the word out!**'
- This volunteer program which started almost 8 years ago has assisted greatly in sharing information and ensuring Staff Association members are aware of important information that affects them. Our KIT Liaisons have played an extremely important and vital role in improving the communication between and within the CBE and the Staff Association. Thanks so much to all of the KIT Liaisons – your efforts are very much appreciated.
- All our volunteer KIT Liaisons are accessed through his or her email address. If the person moves locations, the emails, messages, reminders etc. follow that person to their new spot – BUT – I have no way of knowing where that person has moved to!!

- This little bit of technology causes me a problem at times. If you are a KIT Liaison and have changed locations since the beginning of the school year, would you please email me at [hpsmith@cbe.ab.ca](mailto:hpsmith@cbe.ab.ca) and let me know of your new location. As well, if you are a Staff Association member and you are unsure as to whether your school or worksite has a KIT Liaison, please email me and I can double check to see who is filling this important role at your location.
- According to my list – and not knowing if some of my KIT Liaisons have ‘relocated’ – the following schools appear to currently be without KIT Liaison representation, and I’d like to rectify that, if at all possible!!

Altadore	Chinook Park	Hillhurst
Annie Gale	Chris Akkerman	Killarney
Belfast	Collingwood	Kingsland
Briar Hill	Edgemont	Lord Shaughnessy
Cappy Smart	Glenbrook	Vista Heights
Chaparral	H.W. Riley	Woodbine

- If you can assist me in bringing our KIT Liaison list up to date, I’d really appreciate it – and it will definitely play a vital part in our continuing to **'get the word out!'**

## 6. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

*Q. Will we always stick with TELUS for payroll?*

A. We’ve had several conversations with John Johnston and that conversation has been that we will bring the payroll back in-house. John Johnston wants to do one of two things – either TELUS gets fixed or we look at bringing payroll back in-house. We do have a 10 year contract with TELUS and we’ve been in it for 5 years now. John Johnston is trying to bring back as much in-house as he can. It has been costing CBE a lot of money to correct the errors that TELUS has made.

*Q. Are they not breaching their contract?*

A. Breaching a contract is very hard to prove and the contract is not between us and TELUS it is between CBE and TELUS.

*Q. Are the Teachers experiencing the same problems?*

A. Yes they are. A whole lot of recruitment hiring goes through TELUS.

*Q. What do staff dues go toward?*

A. Your dues go toward seeing that you have fair representation from the union, our Convention and the running of Staff Association.

*Q. If I apply for a posting, who decides how much I get paid for that job?*

A. You generally start at step one. If you are good enough to talk with the Recruiter, the recruiter can come to Staff Association and recommend that someone receive more. Staff Association will usually agree then to start someone at Step 3 and no more, so that we remain fair to our members already within the system.

*Q. Can a temporary employee apply for Staff Development funds?*

A. No, you cannot receive that funding until you’re a permanent employee.

*Q. There’s a TCIT course available, can I take this?*

A. You’re usually contacted through student services, and the Principals are aware of this and they may be a good source to talk to.

*Q. The negotiation package won't be available 'til mid-September?*

A. We hope to have our package ready to go in June, but it won't be presented to the CBE ‘til September due to summer vacation. We’ll keep you updated on different areas as we go along.

Q. *I would not like to wait for another 2 year cycle before our new contract is in place.*

A. Unfortunately this is part of the restrictions we have through labour standards and labour codes. We do open them within that term, however, that can't happen until 120 days prior to the end of your existing contract. Unfortunately, what it means for every single union is that there is never an agreement in place in any union prior to the other one expiring. Jean stated that she is in no mood to spend another 18 months negotiating with CBE.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.