

From: The Vernon Teachers' Association Negotiating Team

At the table for these meetings were:

VTA: On May 16th- Barry Dorval, Lisa LaBoucane (spokespersons and lead negotiators), Cori Huizer and Chris Brandle. Eli Silver attended as a resource person. On May 23rd- Barry Dorval, Lisa LaBoucane (spokespersons and lead negotiators), and Chris Brandle

Management: Tammy Sowinski (spokesperson and lead negotiator from BCPSEA), Malcolm Reid, and Sterling Olsen (16th only)

The union and the employer met for two sessions in the last 2 weeks. It is evident that the constructive relationship we have established continues to bear fruit. Our respectful discussions are leading to changes (even if most are quite modest in scope) in areas that are important to teachers and to the Board.

Much of our time on the 16th was spent arriving at a shared understanding of our Post and Fill Language, and our intentions and motivations at the bargaining table in relation to this language. In the preamble to Article E.21 (Post and Fill), we find several definitions for important terms that relate to employment processes. Strangely, these definitions only applied to this specific article. Over the years, this has led to confusion, so both sides felt that it would be helpful to review those definitions to ensure that they are accurate and then see how well they fit in other employment related articles. While this work is not represented formally in a specific proposal, both sides have agreed that the document we jointly produced can be used as the starting place for detailed proposals that both sides will prepare going forward. Finally, we also formally signed off Article E.24 (Transfers) with the changes we had agreed to in the previous session. (Detailed in the last 'Our Side of the Table'.)

On the 23rd, we left Post and Fill language to focus on other articles. We looked at Pro D, Professional Relations Committee, Collection of Monies, Staff Meetings, Parent Complaints, Health and Safety (conditions and committee), and Staff Orientation. Discussions were respectful and productive.

By the end of the day we had signed off some modest changes to the Pro-D, and the Health and Safety Committee articles. The Board also withdrew its proposal on Staff meetings that had them looking to lengthen meetings. We are also very close on Health and Safety (conditions) and Staff Orientation.

Looking forward, we'll be meeting again on the 30th for our next session. At that time we will

once again focus on the other issues besides Post and Fill but we do plan to further discuss Article C.24 (Layoff and Recall). It is important to note that, whatever changes are agreed to at this bargaining table will not change anything that happens in this year's post and fill process.

Finally, your input is critical. We need to know what teachers think about the structures that govern employment relationships in this district. Following on bargaining update meetings (held on May 21, 22 and 27), another survey is being sent out to members. These results will help the team determine if we have a mandate from teachers to explore alternate kinds of employment relationships beyond continuing contracts of employment and TTOCs. Please make sure that your perspective is represented.

In solidarity,  
VTA Negotiating Team