

CSBA REPORT

BCSTA Annual General Meeting

The British Columbia School Trustees Association held their 113th annual general meeting at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel at Richmond, BC. The AGM featured keynote speaker, Andrew Coyne, Columnist at the National Post, taking the stage to discuss BC's political landscapes. During his session, he spoke to how trustees can keep the focus on public education during the provincial election. The weekend affair featured numerous high impact speakers, workshops and sessions, including a provincial election based candidate's forum, with representatives from the Green, Liberal, and New Democratic parties attending to field questions prepared by the elections engagement committee on behalf of the BCSTA membership.

BCSTA Installs New Board of Directors

During the AGM, membership voted for the 2017-18 Board of Directors. Teresa Rezansoff, who served as the Association's president from 2013 to 2017, did not seek re-election but will continue to hold a position on the Board as Past-President.

The resulting board consists of the following individuals:

President: Gordon Swan, SD58 (Nicola-Similkameen)

Vice-President: Stephanie Higginson, SD68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)

Past President: Teresa Rezansoff, SD51 (Boundary)

Directors: Carolyn Broady, SD45 (West Vancouver)

Alan Chell, SD19 (Revelstoke)

Gloria Jackson, SD28 (Quesnel)

Donna Sargent, SD38 (Richmond)

Advocating for Refugee Student Funding

In response to motions passed at February's Provincial Council meetings, BCSTA has advocated on behalf of boards

of education [that the Government of British Columbia provide continued and coordinated support for refugee students in BC](#). The need is illustrated by recent data concerning Syrian refugees, which states 3050 individuals from Syria came to BC in 2016. In the face of climbing figures, BCSTA has offered to collaborate with government in identifying and addressing specific funding and policy recommendations.

Advocating for full funding for the outcome of the Supreme Court of Canada decision and BCPSEA-BCTF Memorandum of Understanding

Also in response to motions passed by the membership, BCSTA has advocated to BC's provincial government [that full funding for the outcome of the Supreme Court of Canada decision and BCPSEA-BCTF Memorandum of Understanding be realized](#). The request highlights concerns from boards of education that additional capital costs beyond the hiring of more teachers, such as providing more classrooms, as well as the increased operating costs, will be downloaded onto school districts.

BC Budget Improvements

British Columbia's K-12 public school system has recently been on the receiving end of a significant injection of funding. These funds come by way of the Memorandum of Agreement between the BC Teachers' Federation and the province, as well as the usual budgeting process.

Current year improvements include administration support receiving \$25million, coding programs for student's receiving \$6 million, rural education initiatives obtaining \$2 million, transportation services for student collecting \$14.7 million and priority measures to support the hiring on new teachers in response to the Supreme Court of Canada's decision

receiving \$50 million, totalling approximately \$97 million in improvements since January.

For September, government has committed to a \$360 million Classroom Enhancement Fund, as well as a \$20 million addition to the Learning Improvement Fund to address the ongoing requirements of the Supreme Court of Canada Decision.

An additional \$600+ million has also been allotted to school construction initiatives for the coming year. The resulting total dedicated to public school improvement in BC resides at roughly the 1 billion dollar mark.

CSBA Congress and NTGAE Update

Planning for the 2017 Canadian School Boards Association Congress and the National Trustee Gathering on Aboriginal Education is well underway. The [website](#) has been updated with 19 confirmed speakers, including keynote speakers:

- **Charlene Bearhead**, Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba
- **Mohamed Fahmy**, Award-winning journalist imprisoned in Egypt for two years
- **Yong Zhao**, Distinguished professor and international speaker on innovation within education

The CSBA Congress closes with an evening at the Roundhouse Lodge on Whistler Mountain, featuring a world-class gondola ride, live music and a mountain-top BBQ experience.

We look forward to hosting you in Whistler, British Columbia, July 5 - 8, 2017.

BC General Elections and the BCSTA Elections Engagement Committee

In the lead-up to the BC General Elections, BCSTA's Elections Engagement Committee launched an advocacy campaign with the goal of making public education a key issue for candidates in the BC General Elections.

Dubbed "Public Education is the Key," the committee launched a multi-strategy campaign that featured a photo campaign, a "key" kit for Boards, templated guides, a poster campaign, a Pecha Kucha event featuring sector leaders in support of public education, an All-Candidates Forum and a 10-step action guide in the last 100 days to the elections.

You can view the committee's work by visiting [BCSTA's website](#).

Trustee Curriculum Writing Update

Anne Cooper, contracted editor of AZ consulting, recently met with BCSTA's learning guide working group to discuss the new curriculum writing project and review its progress in relation to content development, website design and timelines. Ann will continue to work with the working group as well as the Education Committee and Aboriginal Education Committee to meet the project completion target date of June 30, 2017. ■

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BCSTA

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