

The BCTF Executive Committee is unanimously recommending that members vote “Yes” to ratify the agreement that the Federation has reached with BCPSEA and the provincial government on restoring and implementing the class size, class composition, non-enrolling specialist language, school-based team processes, staffing processes and related integration language that was unconstitutionally stripped from teachers’ collective agreements, and restored by the Supreme Court of Canada. An FAQ has been developed on these issues which is very intensive. For more detailed information, please read the FAQ. This is an overview of the tentative agreement.

- This agreement will be implemented on the first day of school in the 2017–18 school year.
- The existing funding and priority funding that were negotiated in January 2017 will continue for the remainder of this school year (including the hiring of non-enrolling specialists and enrolling teachers).
- Terminology regarding students with special needs will be updated by the provincial parties (BCTF, BCPSEA and government.) It does not include changes to the definitions and classifications of special education designations.
- Non-enrolling staffing ratios for counsellors, teacher-librarians, learning assistance teachers, special education resource teachers and ESL/ELL will be implemented.
- For post and fill purposes, non-enrolling teachers who are learning assistance teachers, special education resource teachers and ESL/ELL can be posted as a single category. However, the district ratios for all three categories must be in place.
- All superior ratios and/or services and caseloads that were stripped from local collective agreements will be in place.
- School-based processes, such as school-based teams, staffing committees and the role and function of school staff committees will be implemented at the commencement of school in 2017
- District-based processes, such as district committees and screening panels, will be implemented no later than January 31, 2018.
- Class-size provisions for K–3 and 4–12 will be restored and implemented at the commencement of the 2017–18 school year. Spring staffing in the coming months will be in compliance with these.

Class-Size Provisions: K–3

- Kindergarten classes shall not exceed 20 students.
- Grade 1–3 classes shall not exceed 22 students.
- A K–1 class will not exceed 20 students.
- Where there is a combined primary/intermediate class, an average of the maximum class size of the lowest involved primary grade and the maximum class size of the lowest involved intermediate grade will apply.

Where locals had superior class-size provisions for primary and combined primary/intermediate classes these lower numbers will be in place. Your local can provide you with this information

Class-size provisions: Grades 4–12

- Grade 4–12 class-size language that was deleted from collective agreements is now restored and will be implemented. Your local can provide you with this information.

Class-composition provisions

Class-composition language will be restored and implemented at the commencement of the 2017/2018 school year in the districts that had class-composition language.

A Class Composition Joint Committee will be in place (BCTF, BCPSEA, and government) to attempt to agree upon how composition impacts class size and teacher workload for those school districts that have class-composition language in contract. If the committee is unable to agree on special education designations, the matter will be referred to arbitration. For the 2017–18 and 2018–19 school years the current Ministry of Education definitions of special education designations and classifications will be in place.

School Districts must make best efforts to ensure that they are compliance with all collective agreement provisions regarding class size and composition. Remedies for non-compliance after a School Board has made all best efforts to ensure compliance but have been unable to do so are in place in the agreement. The remedy will be based on a “time” formula, that guarantees if there is non-compliance for any portion of a calendar month, then the remedy will be provided for the entire month and adjustments to remedy can be made at any point in the school year if there is further non-compliance.

The remedies include:

- additional time for the teacher
- additional non-enrolling staffing added to the school specifically to work with the affected teacher’s class
- additional enrolling staffing to co-teach with the teacher
- other remedies that the local parties agree would be appropriate.

It is important to note that the teacher will determine which remedy they want.

Dispute Resolution

There is a dispute resolution process in place, should a local disagree that a School District has not made best efforts to achieve full compliance with the collective agreement provisions regarding class size and composition.

Each teacher will have an opportunity to vote on ratifying this Agreement-in-Committee. The voting will take place on March 8–10, 2017. Your local president can advise you on the times and locations of the vote. Please contact your local president should you have any questions regarding the Agreement-in-Committee. The wording of the ballot will be:

Are you in favour of the LOU #17 Agreement-in-Committee reached on March 3, 2017?