

# Federation News

*Freedom  
Involves Secure  
Alternatives*

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## ELECTION PREPARATION

The current sitting of the legislature will be concluded with the call, in mid-April, for a provincial election to be held May 12, 2009.

Independent school communities and their supporters are urged to participate in the election campaign by attending meetings of candidates and asking them about their policies for independent schools.

In November 2008 the FISA sent letters to the leaders of the Green Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party requesting a statement about the policy of each for independent schools and funding for them. The FISA has received a response from the Green Party and is awaiting a response from the Liberal and NDP parties.

In early April the FISA will send election campaign participation materials to all independent schools and association offices. Included will be the response of the parties to our request for their policies about independent schools and funding for them.

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION NOMINEES

The FISA thanks the independent school community for its response to the request to submit names for persons to serve on the External Evaluation Teams. Names of 184 persons were submitted from 79 schools and association offices. The Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools will form teams from this list for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years.



## THE LEGISLATURE

### • Fourth Session

The Legislature was recalled to sit on February 9 and the days following, to pass legislation allowing Government to run a deficit budget in the next session. While the NDP signaled they would support the legislation, they did not give consent to passage of the bill in one day, since they wished to have the opportunity to critique Government and also give what amounts to the opening shots in the election campaign. Deficiencies in care for seniors, in care for education, and in keeping streets safe, will likely be prominent NDP themes.

### • Throne Speech (Fifth Session)

The highly unusual recall of the legislature to continue the previous year's sitting, the Fourth Session of the 38<sup>th</sup> parliament referred to in i) above, resulted in the Throne Speech for the opening of the Fifth Session of the 38<sup>th</sup> parliament being postponed from February 10, 2009 to February 16, 2009.

References to education in the Throne Speech were brief. The Government intends to protect the core service areas of health and education from cutbacks. However, its intentions of offering full day Kindergarten beginning in September 2009 will be postponed. Nevertheless, the Deputy repeated the Throne Speech comment at the Education Advisory Council on February 18, 2009 that the Ministry of Education has been asked to continue planning for the future in this area, particularly with respect to staffing and staff qualifications, and to facility requirements.

• **BUDGET SPEECH**

The Hon. Colin Hansen, Minister of Finance tabled the 2009-2010 Estimates (budget) in the House February 17, 2009. The emphasis in the budget was placed on creating stability by protecting core services such as health (which received 90% of the amount by which the total budget was increased over the last year) and education; on providing jobs by stimulating the economy with \$14 Billion in infrastructure construction over three years; and by creating confidence through prudent fiscal management (cutting expenses such as travel, advertising, external contracts; limiting deficits to two years).

In the budget lock-up, which Fred Herfst, the FISA Executive Director attended, only one of the seventeen questions from the media dealt with education. In the Budget Speech itself, education was mentioned in only one sentence, noting that per pupil funding would rise to \$8,242 up from \$8,118 or \$124 i.e. 1.5%). Also of note for future planning is the statement that, while existing contracts will be honoured, the budget planning process for future years does not allow for wage increases. Most contracts will expire March 31, 2010, the end of the fiscal year covered by these Estimates.

Information from the lock-up and follow up meetings with the Inspector, and the Education Advisory Council on February 18 provided the numbers for the following summary.

Grants to public schools will increase from \$4,763,000,000 to \$4,823,000,000, an increase of 60,000,000 or 1.26%. Grants to independent schools will increase from \$243,000,000 to \$248,000,000, an increase of 5,000,000 or 2%. The increase to independent schools is attributed to the per pupil increase in the public school grant flowing through to independent schools by formula (50% or 35% of the public school per pupil grant); an anticipated decline in public school enrolment contrasted with a very slight, if any, increase in independent school enrolment; an anticipated increase in special education applicants.

Expenditures for Ministry of Education operations were reduced by 14% and School Boards will be asked to reduce administrative expenses by 3% and

direct those savings to classroom and teaching expenditures. The Government expects that its increase of public school grants by 1.26% and the redirection of administrative expenses will cover the 2.5% increase in teacher salary contracts.

One additional point needs to be made. This budget is in effect for only a short period. There is an election on May 12, 2009, and it is law that a new budget must be presented within 30 days of a new government being sworn in. We can anticipate going through the budget watching process again in the last part of June.

As always, the FISA cautions independent schools not to use the percentages in this report on the budget for estimating grants to individual independent schools. School district variations will alter these percentages and independent schools should wait for the estimated grants generally released by the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools in late March or early April.

**BC COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

In December 2008 and January 2009, the BC Center for International Education was transformed into the BC Council for International Education. While the former body had been focused on post-secondary education, the new group will encompass K-12 and post-secondary education in respect to international students. The new group takes over the work of the BC Trade Commission for Education and Skills and Development, which had one a one year mandate.

The purpose of the BC Council for International Education is to promote conditions that will increase BC as a destination for international students.

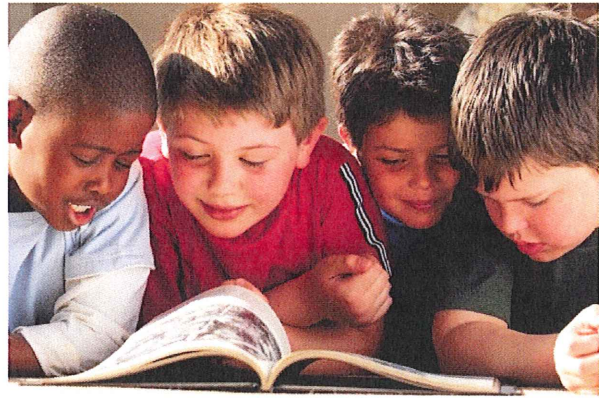
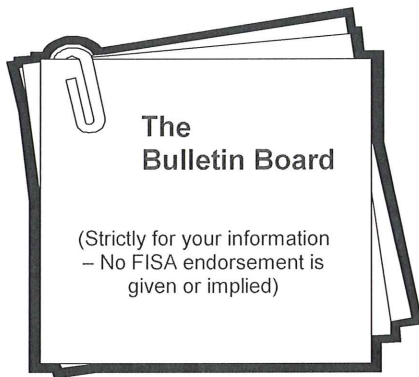
Emery Dossdall, former deputy Minister of Education and former head of the BC Trade Commission will head up the Council. The Board of the Council consists of persons representing both the K-12 and post-secondary sector. Fred Herfst, Executive Director of the FISA, has been named to serve as the representative of the independent portion of the K-12 sector. More news will follow as the Council develops its strategies and projects.

**ASSOCIATION NEWS**

**Membership Growth**

We are pleased to announce that enrolment in schools of the FISA member associations grew by 899 or 1.4%. Enrolment in DL programs of member societies has been included. For your interest we present the following table.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH	ACSI BC Assoc of Christian Schools International in BC	AMG Associate Member Group	CIS Catholic Ind. Schools	ISA Independent School Assoc	SCS Society of Christian Schools	FISA TOTAL
2007-2008	8,862	12,420	21,185	10,646	10,240	63,353
2008-2009	9,544	12,783	20,944	10,919	10,062	64,252
Group Growth	7.7%	2.92%	-1.1%	2.6%	-1.7%	1.4%
2008 Total Group enrolment of FISA	14.8%	19.9%	32.6%	17%	15.7%	100%



### **AIM NATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE**

The Accelerative Integrated Method (AIM) uses gestures, drama, music, dance and storytelling to rapidly accelerate second language acquisition. For the past six years, teachers have come from all over the world to the three-day institute to learn all about the AIM. August 15-August 18, 2009, Quest University, Squamish.



The faculty is led by Wendy Maxwell who created the AIM second language instruction. She has written *Histoires en action !* program. Other presenters are: Shannon Bourbonnais, Karen Oraas. Online: [www.aimlanguagelearning.com](http://www.aimlanguagelearning.com)

### **THE BC RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

The British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association is open to all retired educators from the Province of BC. The mission of the BCRTA is to maintain and enhance the quality of life of its members and that of other seniors. The goals of the BCRTA are to:

- Promote the interests and safeguard the welfare of its members
- Provide information and advice to individual members and their beneficiaries regarding retirement programs and benefits
- Communicate to members regarding the activities of the Association and issues of common interest
- Promote excellence in education.

Please visit website [www.bcrf.ca.rta](http://www.bcrf.ca.rta)



### **WCB COVERAGE**

The FISA thanks the Government and Workers' Compensation Board for changes in policy and regulation made in November and December 2008 effective January 1, 2009 in coverage for students.

The Workers' Compensation Board will extend coverage to independent school students on work experience placement in the same way and under the same terms as it extends coverage to public school students on work experience placement. Detailed information may be found at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/work\\_experience.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/careers/work_experience.pdf)