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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Skills Development and Labour

COMMISSION APPOINTED TO REVIEW TEACHER BARGAINING

VICTORIA – Following meetings with school employer and union groups, Labour Minister Graham Bruce has appointed Don Wright to review and recommend changes to collective bargaining structure for teachers in B.C.

Bruce recently met with the B.C. Public School Employers Association, the B. C. Teachers Federation, the B.C. School Trustees Association and the Principals and Vice-Principals Association.

“Last month, Don Wright provided me with a report that demonstrated a sound understanding of the structure of collective bargaining in the education sector,” Bruce said. “My meetings with these groups have brought me to the conclusion that the best way to proceed is to have Don Wright as commissioner for the teacher bargaining review. Clearly, we want someone who also has an intimate knowledge of the educational system and Don has the qualifications needed to fulfil the broad role of commissioner.”

Wright, a former deputy minister of education, will consult with the employers’ association, school boards, the B.C. Teachers’ Federation and other key groups on the best structures, practices and procedures for a new collective bargaining arrangement before completing his report in the fall of 2004.

In November, Wright’s report entitled, *Towards a Better Teacher Bargaining Model in British Columbia* revealed deep divisions among various education groups over how bargaining should be conducted and what should happen if bargaining fails to result in a collective agreement. The report cautioned that any solutions needed to deal with many complex issues.

“I will ask Don to meet the parties and discuss his process and timetable,” said Bruce. “I will then meet with the BCTF and BCPSEA to discuss bargaining for the June 2004 expiry.”

Wright’s government service totals 16 years and has included senior management positions in the ministries of finance, forests, economic development, and education in the Saskatchewan and B.C. provincial governments. He holds a commerce degree from the University of Saskatchewan, a master’s degree in economics from the University of British Columbia, and a doctorate in economics from Harvard University.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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