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Ministry of Skills Development and Labour

**TEACHER BARGAINING IS BROKEN, NEEDS NEW MODEL**

VICTORIA – A new bargaining model needs to be developed for teacher collective bargaining in British Columbia, a report released today recommends.

The Education Services Collective Agreement Act was introduced in Jan. 2002 to provide a collective agreement for teachers in the public school system. The act also provided for the appointment of a commission to review the structures, practices and procedures for collective bargaining for the public school employers' association, school boards and the B.C. Teachers Federation. In September, Labour Minister Graham Bruce asked Don Wright to recommend terms of reference for the review.

Wright met with a number of parties in the education sector and with organized labour and labour-relations practitioners who provided input on the state of teacher bargaining in British Columbia and across Canada over the past 20 years. He completed his review and provided draft terms of reference to Minister Bruce on Nov. 10.

“The report provides a good history of the rocky road along which teacher collective bargaining has travelled in the past 16 years,” Bruce said. “It concludes that new structures and procedures must be found if we are to improve labour relationships in the school system.”

According to Wright, the past 16 years of teacher collective bargaining have not resulted in a happy legacy and no one seems to believe the existing structure, unchanged, can lead to a collective agreement without continuing the pattern of government intervention.

Wright found 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. He cautions that any solutions will need to deal with many complex issues.

Wright is recommending Bruce appoint a one-person commission after consultation with the B.C. School Trustees Association, the B.C. Public School Employers Association and the BCTF. The commission would have broad latitude to look at such issues as whether there should be a mix of local, regional and provincial bargaining on various matters and how to ensure school financing and accountability aligns with any proposed bargaining structure.

Bruce said he will study the report and will be seeking feedback from the BCTF, employers and school trustees before finalizing terms of reference.

The complete report is available at <http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/teacher-bargaining/welcome.htm> online.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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