

F.A.Q.s

Employment Equity for Aboriginal Teachers Letter of Understanding

1. How will the recall procedure work for newly laid off teachers?

The recall procedure is determined according to the local collective agreement provisions.

2. What are the sources of funding for hiring Aboriginal teachers in the district?

There are two sources for funding—core funds and targeted funds. Some boards use only targeted funding to hire Aboriginal teachers. Teachers hired with targeted funds are restricted to Aboriginal programs. This proposal will use core dollars to hire Aboriginal teachers into all areas of the B.C. public education system.

3. Why do we need a special employment equity program for Aboriginal teachers when no special arrangements are being made for other minority groups?

Racism exists for all minority groups. However, Aboriginal students are increasingly at risk for dropping out of school. Many live in extreme poverty, and are at risk for suicide and substance abuse. This is generally not the case for other minority groups. We need this language to attract and retain Aboriginal teachers as role models for our Aboriginal students.

4. What is the Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers?

In 2005, the BCTF and BCPSEA signed a Letter of Understanding to address the under representation of Aboriginal teachers in the public education system. The intention of the LOU is to achieve a proportional representation of Aboriginal teachers within the teaching population in B.C.

5. What are the benefits of Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers?

The intention of the employment equity program is to provide students with positive Aboriginal role models in schools in order to:

- To increase the Aboriginal student graduation rates.
- To reduce risk factors for Aboriginal students (i.e. drug and alcohol abuse, low self esteem, suicide, involvement with the criminal justice system).
- To validate and recognize Aboriginal people's worldview and lived realities.

6. Why do we need Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers, if we can't fill existing postings for Aboriginal teachers?

Employment equity needs to be in place in every district, because unions and school boards will be supporting new applicants who self-identify as Aboriginal.

The BCTF is working with high schools and universities to attract more Aboriginal students into teaching.

7. We already have Aboriginal support workers in our school district. Isn't that enough?

No. In fact, the intent of this language is not to replace or compete with Aboriginal support workers. The intent of the language is to hire and retain more self identified Aboriginal teachers. We need to have more self-identified Aboriginal teachers in the classrooms.

Aboriginal children and other children need to see Aboriginal people represented in all public schools.