

Teachers' union not meeting expectations

The notorious British Columbia Teachers' Federation is on its hind legs again, in plaintiff wail, venom dripping from yonder jowls. There must be a provincial election on deck.

How else does one explain its disgraceful opposition to the Foundation Skills Assessment (standardized) testing?

Irene Lazinger, its president, has been uncontainable in her comments: The FSA will "hurt" your children. Standardized testing causes teachers "anxiety." The process is "harmful."

Bull twaddle. They just don't want the Fraser Institute telling you the truth: That St. George's School, Crofton House, York House and Little Flower Academy are the top schools in B.C. (Full disclosure: I am a graduate of St. George's). Further, they attack these schools as "elite" and "bastions of the rich."

Good grief, class warfare psycho-babble still lives. Maybe five per cent of parents who send their children to private schools are "rich." The rest make significant sacrifices for their children's education.

Ms. Lazinger, leading the cult of reactionary intellectualoids of the far and forever doctrinaire left (including many in the media), in typically frenzied tones, is likely more concerned that you see the NDP as something so utterly sensational than the generally destructive force they were every single time they formed government in this province.

Poor Carole James may indeed have her work cut out for her, with such unworthy supporters atop her soapbox.

If there was ever an effort to protect a system that covers for incompetence, the BCTF have manufactured it, and in the midst of an election campaign.

They aren't concerned about Johnny and Mary – they're worried about what the tests show about public school teachers: That as a result of their lack of substantive teacher reviews, inane pabulum-shoveling and diluted audits of student performance, if little Johnny eventually lands in university, he is almost as likely to fail English 100, as he is to pass. Letter grades are replaced with milquetoast, hollow descriptions as "Meeting Expectations" or "Approaching Expectations." "Not Yet Meeting Expecta-

tions," I gather, is an 'F'.

Shall we have doctors diagnose a brain tumour as a head cold, or lung cancer as an abscess on your abdomen? Of course, venereal disease must now simply be jock-itch. You owe GST? A minor mathematical lapse.

So, to send a clear message of support to the fools at the top of the BCTF (and the

Vancouver Board of Education, who have quickly become the union's activist puppy), teachers recently came out in droves to vote against the FSA, right?

Wrong. Barely half appeared, with 15 per

cent bravely still supporting testing. Meaning that approximately 40 per cent of the BCTF membership showed up to vote against the FSA. How is this a resounding, muscular representation?

Hence, the bromide from the BCTF leadership is self-censorship in epic proportions. Either half of their membership doesn't care, or knows the vote outcome on the issue of the Foundation Skills Assessment, is a meaningless, perfunctory exercise at best. And the ones who voted against the FSA are a minority of the membership.

The BCTF leadership's pretentiousness is without bounds – it's teachers before students. If I'm wrong, then why did the union fib to parents by telling them students can just opt out of the FSA, when, in fact, standardized testing is part of the curriculum and all students in Grades 4 and 7 are expected to write the tests.

It is apparent fictional genius that standardized testing is a regressive process. Children need to know that they are wrong, or right. It is an integral part of life that they will be taught to discern the former from the latter. Otherwise, we are preparing these sensitive tadpoles for nothing more than the meaningless nirvana of middle management jobs with some debt collection boiler room or swivel servant positions in Victoria.

To dumb down a child's development just to provide possible cover for the derriere of any substandard teacher belies the very purpose of any august, sacred instructional practice – to teach with integrity. Good teachers, of which there are many, don't ever fear testing. That's how they became good teachers.

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A CLAUSE**
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