

BC PUBLIC CONTINUES TO SIDE WITH TEACHERS

Majority (57%) Side with Teachers/BCTF over School Boards and Provincial Government (34%)

Public Split on Continued Strike Action – Half (47%) Support Teachers Staying Out, Other Half Disapprove of Strike Action Altogether (37%) or Just Think It's Time for Teachers to Get Back to Work (14%)



Ipsos Reid

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Vancouver, BC— A new BC Ipsos Reid poll taken over the past weekend shows that teachers and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) are ahead in the battle for public support in their ongoing contract dispute with their employer and the provincial government. Nearly six-in-ten (57%) residents say they tend to side more with teachers and the BCTF in this dispute. About one-third (34%) of residents tend to side more with the public school boards and the provincial government. These results are virtually unchanged from an Ipsos Reid poll¹ taken one week ago that found the public supporting teachers and the BCTF by a margin of 55% to 33% over the employer, the BC Public School Employers' Association.

Overall public support for the teachers doesn't fully carry over to support for continued strike action. On this issue, the public is almost evenly divided. Half (47%) say they approve of the strike action taken so far and think teachers should continue to strike to promote their demands. The other half (51%) of the public either disapproves of the strike action taken by teachers altogether (37%) or approves of the strike action taken so far, but think it's time for the teachers to end the strike and go back to work (14%).

In other findings, British Columbians generally disapprove of the provincial government legislating an end to the contract dispute, but narrowly approve of the BC Supreme Court freezing the assets of the BCTF.

Slightly more than six-in-ten (63%) residents say they disapprove of the provincial government legislating an end to the contract dispute, including five-in-ten (51%) who

¹ Telephone poll of 800 adult British Columbians fielded October 6-10, 2005.

“strongly” disapprove of this legislation. Fewer than four-in-ten (36%) residents approve of the provincial government’s legislation.

The public is more divided on the recent BC Supreme Court ruling that temporarily froze the assets of the BCTF, preventing it from using its funds for any strike activity including strike pay for teachers. A slim majority (54%) of British Columbians say they approve of the Court’s decision, while 43% disapprove of the decision.

Finally, British Columbians are also divided on the issue of teachers’ pay. Just less than half (46%) think teachers are underpaid, while a similar proportion (45%) think teachers are either overpaid (6%) or paid about the right amount (39%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted October 14th to 16th, 2005 with a sample of 600 adult British Columbia residents. The polling was conducted using Ipsos Reid’s “Voice of the West InterActive Forum” – an online panel of more than 1,100 British Columbians who have been pre-recruited to participate in surveys. Forum participants are randomly recruited through telephone surveys to match the overall characteristics of the adult BC population. The results are considered accurate to within ± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire BC adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the final sample’s regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to the 2001 Census.

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