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# BCTF Research Report

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RR2014-09

**Professional Development funds in  
BC school districts, 2011–12 and 2012–13**

*[www.bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=5630](http://www.bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=5630)*

By Charlie Naylor, Senior Researcher  
Anne Field, Research Assistant  
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BC school districts produce annual Audited Financial Statements, which include a line item for “Professional Development and Travel” on Schedule 2B, under “Services and Supplies”. BCTF Research has accessed these financial statements from district websites and tabulated their spending on PD and travel for the two school years 2011–12 and 2012–13<sup>1</sup>.

The amounts spent by districts on PD and travel are shown in the tables on the following pages.

What do the statements tell us about BC school districts’ PD and travel spending?

### **How much is spent on PD and how much on travel?**

It’s not clear from the available data how much is spent on PD and how much on travel. However, it may be safe to assume that the more-remote districts spend a larger proportion of their PD budget on travel to access PD opportunities than more-urban districts.

### **Variation in spending between districts**

There is considerable variation between districts in terms of their spending on professional development. For example, in 2012–13 the amount spent by the Central Okanagan School District (\$1,950,871, equivalent to 1.09% of its total operating expenses) was over double the amount spent by Vancouver (\$868,350, equivalent to 0.18% of total operating expenses). It should be noted that Vancouver has more than 2.6 times the total operating expenses of the Central Okanagan school district. Prince Rupert reported spending \$478,109 on PD in 2012–13 (1.81% of its total operating expenses), while Mission, which has expenses almost double those of Prince Rupert, spent \$296,431 (0.57% of its total operating expenses).

### **Variations as a percentage of Total Operating Expense**

There is considerable variation between districts in terms of how much is spent on PD and travel as a percentage of the total operating expense. The Comox Valley School District spent 0.19% of its total operating budget on PD, while the Gulf Islands spent 2.15%. Another way to look at this is that the Gulf Islands School District spent 11 times as much of its total expenses on PD as did Comox Valley. Peace River North, where the total operational expenses are approximately one-third those of the Greater Victoria School District, spent \$900,766 on PD and travel compared to Victoria’s \$714,920. While some of this expenditure may be linked to geography and the higher expense of travel, the difference is significant. Comparing two districts of similar size—Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows and Kamloops—Kamloops spent \$1,168,802 on PD in 2012–13, more than double Maple Ridge’s spending of \$538,801. Put another way, Maple Ridge’s total operating expenses are 97.51% of the expenses incurred by Kamloops, yet their PD spending amounts to 46.1% of the PD spending of Kamloops.

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<sup>1</sup> In accessing these data from two years’ audited statements (2011–12 and 2012–13), there are occasional discrepancies between the “Actual” amounts reported for the 2011–12 year as stated in the 2011–12 report, and what is stated for 2011–12 in the 2012–13 data. For this report, we have used the “Actual” figures from each year’s statements. It should also be noted that all amounts calculated are based on the available evidence at the time of writing and should be considered approximations rather than exact figures.

## **Dramatic fluctuations in PD spending within districts from year to year**

There appear to be dramatic fluctuations in spending on professional development within some districts from year to year. Coquitlam School District reduced its 2012–13 PD spending by \$366,397 to \$1,753,938 (- 17.28%), compared to its 2011–12 expenditure of \$2,120,335.

Surrey, the province’s largest school district, in contrast, increased its 2012–13 PD spending by \$172,871 above the 2011–12 amount, an increase of 10.33%.

Kamloops increased its PD spending from its 2011–12 expenditure of \$905,219 to \$1,168,802 in 2012–13, an increase of 22.55%.

School District # 67, Okanagan-Skaha, spent \$276,816 on PD in 2011–12 and increased its spending in 2012–13 to \$596,671, an increase of 115.55%.

Significant shifts in PD spending suggest inconsistency in the provision of PD from year to year. In some cases there may be an infusion of short-term funds, while in some districts, the PD budget may be allocated for other purposes when budgetary problems arise.

## **How are the funds allocated?**

There is no information accessible in the audited financial statements concerning the breakdown of these “Professional Development and Travel” funds, but such information might be of interest to locals. Information concerning the spending on travel rather than PD could be ascertained, as well as the areas of the PD allocation, and which personnel (teachers, district administration, AOs, etc.) accessed the funds. There is no indication as to whether small numbers of educators accessed funds for major conferences with significant travel and accommodation costs, or whether funds were more equitably distributed over a larger number of educators for PD within (or within easy reach of) the district.

## **Contractual amounts of PD funding**

The total “PD and Travel” expenditures identified in the audited financial statements likely include those amounts which are contractually controlled by the local teacher association/union. New Westminster has a contractual agreement to fund each full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher at \$750 per year for PD, with TTOC costs coming from this funding. With approximately 384 FTE in the district in 2012–13, teachers had access to \$288,000 for PD through their local union, or about 73% of the total reported spent by the district in that year (\$409,617). Based on the available evidence at the time of writing, the collective-agreement provision for local PD funds in Maple Ridge, by contrast, gave teachers there access to about 14% of the total reported district PD expenditure in 2012–13<sup>2</sup>, a calculation which includes the \$60,000 allocated annually to pay for TTOC costs for teachers granted leave for professional development. In Nicola-Similkameen, the employer’s contribution to the local of \$220 per teacher amounts to approximately \$31,020, or 11% of the district’s spending on PD and travel (\$282,171) in 2012–13; local contract language does not specify whether TTOC are paid from the local PD fund or separately by the district. These examples reflect a wide range in terms of how much of a district’s total PD spending teachers can access either through PD funds controlled by the local or as an individual by application to the district (for district PD activities), and how TTOC costs are covered.

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<sup>2</sup> These figures are approximations: some new contractual agreements in Maple Ridge have increased PD funding, but the estimate, while attempting to incorporate those improvements, likely needs adjustment. Each local may need to calculate the amounts and proportion of PD funds in the control of the local and in the control of the district, with consideration of any updated formulas which have been contractually agreed, as well as including the range of contributions (some of which are not in contracts), TTOC costs, etc.

### **Learning Improvement Funds (LIF) and other PD funding sources**

There may be allocations of funds for PD which are not included in the audited financial statements. As an example, during the LIF funding phase of 2012–13, each district stated its intent to spend some or none of their LIF funds on PD. There was considerable variation in the allocation of LIF funds. While a total of \$1,757,914 was “budgeted” for PD from the 2012–13 LIF funds across the province, about 20 districts (including Vancouver, Kootenay-Columbia, and West Vancouver) allocated no LIF funds to PD. Richmond allocated \$339,000, with Coquitlam allocating \$218,000, and Coast Mountains \$114,000. However, in recent analysis of the audited statements for LIF (Schedule 3A), there is no line item for PD spending (although it may be incorporated in “Services and supplies”), so how much was actually spent on PD through LIF funds is not clear.

School districts like the Sunshine Coast have also embarked on some ambitious PD initiatives, and these may be in addition to the \$177,442 recorded as spent on PD in that district’s 2012–13 audited statements. So it might be the case that some PD activities and initiatives are funded through sources other than the funds reported for “PD and Travel” in the audited financial statements.

### **Are districts building or reducing their capacity to offer PD?**

There is no way to be clear from funding allocations and reported spending, whether school districts and locals are increasing or reducing their internal capacity to design and offer PD by using some PD funds to hire teachers as specialists in supporting the professional development of their peers. Nor is there any sense from the numbers alone whether PD is being bought as a package (by sending a number of people to an external conference, or by inviting keynote speakers or purchasing a packaged workshop such as those offered by the ‘Solution Tree’ organization). Some concerns have been expressed that more districts may be buying packages, which are often imported from the USA, rather than building internal capacity to create learning opportunities for teachers. There is also some evidence, in districts like Coquitlam, that when budgets are tight, district PD staff positions have been cut. As the professional development literature has evolved to focus on approaches like Inquiry, it might also be of interest to see how funds may or may not be following the professional learning directions identified in the literature.

### **Using analysis of PD funding to discuss PD issues in locals and provincially**

These data provide some opportunities for a consideration of PD funding, allocation, and utilization in BCTF locals across the province. With PD increasingly in focus as a result of BCPSEA’s recent attempts to exercise greater managerial control over teachers’ professional development, it may be of utility for locals to consider their district’s PD spending, where it is being focused, and who controls and has access to the funds. Knowing more in these areas might also inform the bigger provincial picture of how PD is being funded, operated, and evolving, while allowing for some discussion of whether levels of PD funding are adequate, and how PD funding might be best used in future years.

## Professional Development and Travel, 2011–12

SD #	SD Name	2011–12 actual	Total Operating Expense	% of Total Operating Expenses
5	Southeast Kootenay	\$ 486,439	\$ 51,399,128	0.95%
6	Rocky Mountain	\$ 367,402	\$ 33,320,718	1.10%
8	Kootenay Lake	\$ 682,075	\$ 52,291,607	1.30%
10	Arrow Lakes	\$ 133,520	\$ 7,209,271	1.85%
19	Revelstoke	\$ 91,174	\$ 10,366,912	0.88%
20	Kootenay-Columbia	\$ 412,926	\$ 36,689,243	1.13%
22	Vernon	\$ 478,823	\$ 74,691,433	0.64%
23	Central Okanagan	\$ 1,507,779	\$ 174,988,208	0.86%
27	Cariboo-Chilcotin	\$ 411,109	\$ 53,457,396	0.77%
28	Quesnel	\$ 375,488	\$ 36,172,033	1.04%
33	Chilliwack	\$ 787,837	\$ 109,767,470	0.72%
34	Abbotsford	\$ 1,119,660	\$ 161,160,294	0.69%
35	Langley	\$ 617,397	\$ 155,114,588	0.40%
36	Surrey	\$ 1,673,496	\$ 563,406,556	0.30%
37	Delta	\$ 559,431	\$ 138,538,143	0.40%
38	Richmond	\$ 468,575	\$ 183,511,793	0.26%
39	Vancouver	\$ 533,449	\$ 481,087,418	0.11%
40	New Westminster	\$ 393,546	\$ 61,860,025	0.64%
41	Burnaby	\$ 920,940	\$ 211,298,264	0.44%
42	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	\$ 619,547	\$ 126,554,744	0.49%
43	Coquitlam	\$ 2,120,335	\$ 265,719,923	0.80%
44	North Vancouver	\$ 645,037	\$ 135,960,430	0.47%
45	West Vancouver	\$ 771,032	\$ 62,964,258	1.22%
46	Sunshine Coast	\$ 141,405	\$ 35,109,836	0.40%
47	Powell River	\$ 264,418	\$ 23,096,950	1.14%
48	Sea to Sky	\$ 382,852	\$ 41,364,539	0.93%
49	Central Coast	\$ 170,552	\$ 5,047,770	3.38%
50	Haida Gwaii	\$ 192,152	\$ 10,270,161	1.87%
51	Boundary	\$ 233,229	\$ 15,761,358	1.48%
52	Prince Rupert	\$ 387,953	\$ 26,459,958	1.47%
53	Okanagan Similkameen	\$ 194,176	\$ 23,827,512	0.81%
54	Bulkley Valley	\$ 99,592	\$ 23,244,270	0.43%
57	Prince George	\$ 833,872	\$ 124,284,493	0.67%
58	Nicola Similkameen	\$ 252,129	\$ 24,621,008	1.02%
59	Peace River South	\$ 557,796	\$ 43,841,443	1.27%
60	Peace River North	\$ 796,403	\$ 53,960,409	1.48%
61	Greater Victoria	\$ 713,039	\$ 165,911,582	0.43%
62	Sooke	\$ 717,414	\$ 80,731,538	0.89%
63	Saanich	\$ 674,491	\$ 71,419,318	0.94%
64	Gulf Islands	\$ 411,105	\$ 18,814,567	2.19%
67	Okanagan Skaha	\$ 276,816	\$ 56,682,216	0.49%
68	Nanaimo-Ladysmith	\$ 737,437	\$ 122,189,938	0.60%
69	Qualicum	\$ 403,597	\$ 43,101,798	0.94%
70	Alberni	\$ 240,358	\$ 40,052,948	0.60%
71	Comox Valley	\$ 134,936	\$ 76,184,383	0.18%
72	Campbell River	\$ 553,500	\$ 49,433,648	1.12%
73	Kamloops/Thompson	\$ 905,219	\$ 126,103,552	0.72%
74	Gold Trail	\$ 317,458	\$ 19,621,591	1.62%
75	Mission	\$ 417,899	\$ 54,600,216	0.77%
78	Fraser-Cascade	\$ 165,947	\$ 18,571,585	0.89%
79	Cowichan Valley	\$ 414,965	\$ 72,121,007	0.58%
81	Fort Nelson	\$ 69,086	\$ 9,963,523	0.69%
82	Coast Mountains	\$ 541,703	\$ 52,208,324	1.04%
83	North Okanagan-Shuswap	\$ 720,214	\$ 62,718,751	1.15%
84	Vancouver Island West	\$ 261,535	\$ 7,302,364	3.58%
85	Vancouver Island North	\$ 241,527	\$ 18,663,515	1.29%
87	Stikine	\$ 256,343	\$ 5,672,173	4.52%
91	Nechako Lakes	\$ 938,319	\$ 51,354,722	1.83%
92	Nisga'a	\$ 287,540	\$ 8,651,890	3.32%
93	Conseil scolaire francophone	\$ 1,269,492	\$ 64,244,709	1.98%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 32,353,486</b>	<b>\$ 4,934,739,420</b>	<b>0.66% (AVERAGE)</b>

Source: Figures gathered from school district Audited Financial Statements, for the year ended June 30, 2012, Schedule A3, "Operating fund: Comparative schedule of expense by object". Audited financial statements are public documents; they are available on school district websites.

## Professional Development and Travel, 2012–13

SD #	SD Name	2012–13 actual	Total Operating Expense	% of Total Operating Expenses
5	Southeast Kootenay	\$ 535,019	\$ 52,171,968	1.03%
6	Rocky Mountain	\$ 397,345	\$ 32,046,159	1.24%
8	Kootenay Lake	\$ 963,585	\$ 50,266,252	1.92%
10	Arrow Lakes	\$ 170,437	\$ 7,194,028	2.37%
19	Revelstoke	\$ 107,739	\$ 10,540,957	1.02%
20	Kootenay-Columbia	\$ 430,557	\$ 35,788,549	1.20%
22	Vernon	\$ 550,181	\$ 74,394,687	0.74%
23	Central Okanagan	\$ 1,950,871	\$ 179,710,250	1.09%
27	Cariboo-Chilcotin	\$ 450,245	\$ 53,889,646	0.84%
28	Quesnel	\$ 400,672	\$ 36,146,868	1.11%
33	Chilliwack	\$ 891,079	\$ 112,414,177	0.79%
34	Abbotsford	\$ 1,272,498	\$ 159,903,138	0.80%
35	Langley	\$ 791,579	\$ 157,355,990	0.50%
36	Surrey	\$ 1,846,367	\$ 576,564,512	0.32%
37	Delta	\$ 671,621	\$ 144,720,283	0.46%
38	Richmond	\$ 778,935	\$ 184,411,096	0.42%
39	Vancouver	\$ 868,350	\$ 478,132,145	0.18%
40	New Westminster	\$ 409,617	\$ 62,021,691	0.66%
41	Burnaby	\$ 973,156	\$ 213,262,456	0.46%
42	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	\$ 538,801	\$ 124,465,737	0.43%
43	Coquitlam	\$ 1,753,938	\$ 275,932,959	0.64%
44	North Vancouver	\$ 548,039	\$ 137,329,408	0.40%
45	West Vancouver	\$ 837,605	\$ 63,202,307	1.33%
46	Sunshine Coast	\$ 177,442	\$ 34,544,153	0.51%
47	Powell River	\$ 291,598	\$ 22,605,889	1.29%
48	Sea to Sky	\$ 533,071	\$ 42,983,116	1.24%
49	Central Coast	\$ 184,749	\$ 5,172,548	3.57%
50	Haida Gwaii	\$ 220,164	\$ 10,241,307	2.15%
51	Boundary	\$ 245,089	\$ 15,282,885	1.60%
52	Prince Rupert	\$ 478,109	\$ 26,409,400	1.81%
53	Okanagan Similkameen	\$ 198,354	\$ 23,480,577	0.84%
54	Bulkley Valley	\$ 115,652	\$ 22,830,474	0.51%
57	Prince George	\$ 1,044,402	\$ 123,202,906	0.85%
58	Nicola Similkameen	\$ 282,171	\$ 23,572,662	1.20%
59	Peace River South	\$ 551,971	\$ 44,007,863	1.25%
60	Peace River North	\$ 900,766	\$ 54,580,749	1.65%
61	Greater Victoria	\$ 714,920	\$ 169,432,550	0.42%
62	Sooke	\$ 658,912	\$ 81,202,223	0.81%
63	Saanich	\$ 624,815	\$ 73,404,895	0.85%
64	Gulf Islands	\$ 420,359	\$ 19,547,322	2.15%
67	Okanagan Skaha	\$ 596,671	\$ 56,290,243	1.06%
68	Nanaimo-Ladysmith	\$ 725,811	\$ 119,698,871	0.61%
69	Qualicum	\$ 456,902	\$ 42,559,460	1.07%
70	Alberni	\$ 230,480	\$ 37,676,579	0.61%
71	Comox Valley	\$ 146,715	\$ 76,658,469	0.19%
72	Campbell River	\$ 495,352	\$ 48,843,074	1.01%
73	Kamloops/Thompson	\$ 1,168,802	\$ 127,636,406	0.92%
74	Gold Trail	\$ 311,798	\$ 18,253,432	1.71%
75	Mission	\$ 296,431	\$ 51,792,926	0.57%
78	Fraser-Cascade	\$ 176,050	\$ 17,811,790	0.99%
79	Cowichan Valley	\$ 478,485	\$ 73,147,065	0.65%
81	Fort Nelson	\$ 59,042	\$ 9,998,273	0.59%
82	Coast Mountains	\$ 642,490	\$ 51,410,546	1.25%
83	North Okanagan-Shuswap	\$ 692,354	\$ 62,192,481	1.11%
84	Vancouver Island West	\$ 377,904	\$ 7,633,251	4.95%
85	Vancouver Island North	\$ 340,223	\$ 18,945,749	1.80%
87	Stikine	\$ 262,085	\$ 5,249,697	4.99%
91	Nechako Lakes	\$ 1,039,825	\$ 50,630,151	2.05%
92	Nisga'a	\$ 194,468	\$ 8,159,969	2.38%
93	Conseil scolaire francophone	\$ 1,343,674	\$ 65,470,648	2.05%
Totals		<b>\$ 34,909,629</b>	<b>\$ 4,791,895,516</b>	<b>0.72% (AVERAGE)</b>

Source: Figures gathered from school district Audited Financial Statements, for the year ended June 30, 2013, **Schedule 2B, "Schedule of operating expense by object"**.

Audited financial statements are public documents; they are available on school district websites.

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