

Rotational callout perpetuates centuries of discrimination

I would like to thank Sandra Dueck for her article "Seniority Based Callout." (October 2009, *Teacher*) and Glen Hansman for his article on the importance of eliminating preferential callout, "Support TTOCs by Ending Preferential Callout," in the same issue.

In recent months, I have heard discussion regarding rotational callout as a reasonable interim step toward seniority callout. I have to

disagree.

You often hear people say that rotational callout is the fairest callout system. This is not accurate: under rotation, those among the TTOC population who will be most negatively affected are those who have been on the list the longest. Those senior TTOCs are often middle-aged or older women, who have had a lifetime of unpaid or underpaid work. They have raised the future generation, but lost the ability to contribute fully to our pension plans. Rotational callout perpetuates the centuries of discrimination against women, by not recognizing their past service to the district. In fact, rotational callout actually dismisses their work as not being meaningful. This is unlike other teachers, who gain seniority and security with increased length of service to the district.

Rotational callout does not fit in with a union that supports social justice. For those men who will be caught in this rotational callout cycle, welcome to a woman's shoes, where your contributions are often not valued. It's not fair, is it?

While seniority callout might result in less work for new teachers at first, it offers the prospect of steadily increasing work as a reward for diligent service to the school district. On the other hand, rotational callout offers no hope for improvement. You just keep rotating in an endless circle, like a gerbil on its exercise wheel.

Remember that the average time on a TTOC list in BC is seven years. In some districts, particularly where the lists are long, the wait may be even longer. So if TTOCs think that rotational callout is preferable to seniority callout, they need to think about how they will feel once they have been on the list for four or five years and are still at the same level,

with the same amount of work as when they started. Won't they be wishing then that they had some sort of credit for the years they have put in on the TTOC list? Surely they deserve credit for their years of being available for work, often on very short notice.

Rotational callout is not a 'baby step' toward seniority callout. Instead, it is a serious miss-step for our union. It merely spreads out the poverty and it will spell the death knell for seniority callout. Administrators, who want to save money, would like straight rotational callout because the chances of any teacher getting four days in a row are lost. If we are lucky, TTOCs might be able to get the occasional four days in a row, but only if we are able to negotiate that a TTOC can stay in the same assignment when the teacher she or he is replacing is away for more than one day in a row. So the district would not need to pay to scale very often in a truly rotational system. This would be a loss of income for all TTOCs. Rotational is the best system for management in terms of finances. Once it is entrenched as the system of callout, it would be extremely difficult to get boards to agree to seniority callout, especially when funding levels are uncertain. However, it wouldn't take long for our own members to despise rotational callout.

Moving to rotational callout would be the worst way for our union to represent TTOCs. Seniority callout based on length of service to the district is the only fair and socially just method of callout for TTOCs.

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