

Two weeks into strike, BC parents support teachers over government two-to-one

Two-thirds want BC government to restore class size funding as ordered by the courts

June 9, 2014 – Two weeks of rotating strike action have done little to alienate parents in the dispute between the BC Teachers’ Federation and the BC Government: among those with children in public school, support for teachers is two-to-one over the government (49% versus 25%) with 24 per cent saying they support neither side, according to a new survey from Angus Reid Global.

Overall, slightly more British Columbians support teachers (44%) over the government (31%), while about one-fifth (22%) say they support neither side.

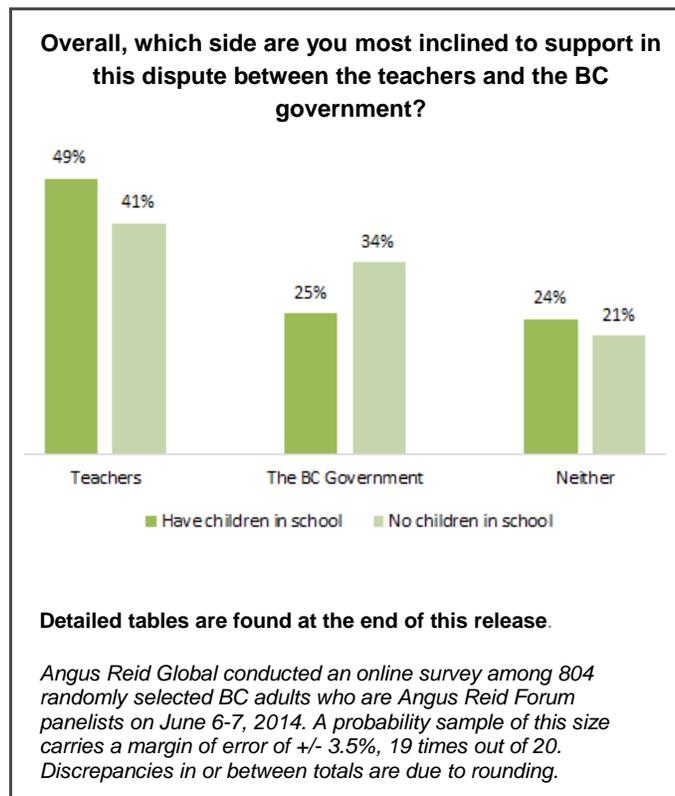
Wages:

The online survey, conducted June 6-7, 2014 for Global News shows most respondents (43%) want both sides to compromise on wage negotiations, while one third (36%) say teachers are asking for too much money, and one-fifth (21%) say they government offer is too low. These views do not differ significantly among parents: 40 per cent want more compromise, 35 per cent say the teachers are asking for too much and 25 per cent say the government is offering too little.

Class size and composition:

The other key bargaining issue in this dispute is over the size and student-teacher makeup, or composition, of individual classes. This decade-old issue has included orders by the courts to restore previous class size and composition requirements. The BC Government is appealing the latest court ruling, arguing the costs involved in restoring previous standards are too high.

Opinion on this issue offers the only majority view in the dispute. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of all respondents say the BC Government should “fund the education system in the way the court has ruled”. This opinion increases to fully two-thirds among those with children in public school (66%). Conversely, some two-in-five respondents (38%) say the “BC Government is right to appeal the court decision.” Among parents, this opinion declines to 34 per cent.



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Impact:

When Angus Reid Global [first asked BC parents](#) in late May about the anticipated impact of the teachers' one-day rotating strikes, 62% of parents said they thought the job action would have an impact, but that they would be able to manage around it. About one-fifth (17%) of parents said the strikes would have a "major impact".

Two weeks later, slightly fewer parents (53%) say they've actually experienced an impact. One-fifth (19%) say the strikes have had a major impact. Nearly one-third (28%) report hardly any effect. This compares to 21 per cent who reported they did not expect to experience an impact at the outset of the strikes.

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Detailed tables are on the following pages.

Overall, which side are you most inclined to support in this dispute between the teachers and the BC Government?			
	Total	Have children in school	No children in school
Teachers	44%	49%	41%
The BC Government	31%	25%	34%
Neither	22%	24%	21%
Don't know/Can't say	3%	2%	4%

Which of the following best describes how you feel about the issue of teachers' wages?			
	Total	Have children in school	No children in school
The teachers are asking for too much money	36%	35%	37%
The BC government wage offer is too low	21%	25%	19%
The two sides should compromise on the issue of wages	43%	40%	44%

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Which statement best describes how you feel about the BC Government challenging the court's decision ordering it to restore past class size and composition standards and funding?			
	Total	Have children in school	No children in school
The BC Government is right to appeal the court decision, there's no way taxpayers should pay so much to meet these former standards.	38%	34%	40%
The BC Government should respect the previous court decision and fund the education system the way the court has ruled.	62%	66%	60%

Based on what you've seen or heard so far, what impact has this labour dispute had on you and your family?		
	Have children in school	
	Early June	Late May
Major impact on us	19%	17%
Impact, but we managed around it	53%	62%
Not much impact at all	28%	21%

Angus Reid Global is headed by Dr. Angus Reid, Canada's best known and longest practicing pollster. He's spent more than four decades asking questions about what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. He is supported by a team of practitioners conducting high quality research for corporations, governments and non-profit organizations.

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