
Kluwer Mediation Blog

Mediated Settlement of BC Teachers' Strike

Rick Weiler (Weiler ADR Inc.) · Monday, September 22nd, 2014

The high profile mediation story in Canada in recent weeks has been the efforts of west coast mediator [Vince Ready](#) to get a deal between the striking B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and the government of British Columbia. The strike had already cost students 4 weeks of school and with the parties deeply dug in there was no settlement in sight. Indeed, mediator Ready had conducted a round of exploratory discussions in late August and announced that there was nothing he could do. For a mediator it's eerie to watch the [video of Ready announcing he's walking away from the fight](#) – something that mediators do not do lightly.

Then, in mid-September, mediated talks were suddenly back on and on September 16th it was announced that a [mediated resolution had been signed at 4 am](#). That 6-year deal was subsequently ratified by the BCTF this past Thursday.

A [fascinating story](#) appeared in the press yesterday that shed some light on what it took to get the parties talking to one another. The story tells of a secret meeting between the premier of British Columbia and the head of BCTF that took place a week ago – not to negotiate settlement terms but to try and establish some simple measure of trust between the warring parties. It seems that meeting was made possible through the conciliation efforts of [Hassan Yussuff](#), the new president of the Canadian Labour Congress, proving once again that an intermediary need not be “neutral”, just “acceptable” to both parties.

All in all, a salutary reminder of the efficacy of mediation as well as the power of simple human dialogue.

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