



British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association  
#100 – 550 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue · Vancouver BC · V5Z 4P2

Feb 28, 2018

Retired Teachers of Ontario  
Attn: President Martha Foster  
Executive Director Jim Grieve

Dear Martha and Jim

We hope this message finds you well. We are writing on behalf of the board of the BCRTA to seek clarity and resolution on several pressing issues related to RTO messaging and activity.

The Fall, 2017 RTO Executive Director's Update stated:

***"We want to be the recognized voice and leading benefits provider for the educational retiree community in Canada."***

We recognize that you used similar language as far back as 2016 in your strategic planning process. This statement reaches beyond the borders of RTO's mandate to serve Ontarians, with implications for all Canadian Retired Teacher Associations and our ability to serve our members and sustain our organizations.

Several concerns are raised by these words, namely

- "We want to be the recognized voice" – Do you aspire to be the representative of all retired educators across our nation? Use of the definite article "the" means primacy to the exclusion of others, not equality or partnership. Use of "the" implies that RTO must have a unique position - others will not be recognized in the same way or to the same level. This strikes us as false, for two reasons: 1) each RTA is a provincial or territorial body with equal legitimacy, and 2) we already have a national association for retired teachers: ACER-CART. Please remember that retired educators across Canada have their own organizations and have not given you the right to supplant their RTAs or ACER-CART.
- While you do not presume to attain 100% market share, there is clear intent in the statement above to conduct targeted commercial activity as the "leading benefits provider for the educational retiree community in Canada." In these words and recent

actions it appears that the market you pursue does not stop at the Ontario border – it ranges from coast to coast. Your experience in Canada’s most populous province shows the power that revenue can bring but have you come to believe that RTO is entitled to take for itself the revenue available from other provinces’ retirees? Your vision to dominate the benefit programs across Canada puts at risk every other RTA’s ability to sustain and grow our own operations.

Our understanding has always been that in that Canadian spirit of self-determination, provincial RTAs have the right to sustain their own activities and through ACER-CART we have made a compact to work together for our mutual benefit and interests. Other RTAs across Canada have not had a competitive footing towards RTO. Similarly, when Patricia spoke with Martha about a disturbing pattern of member poaching here in British Columbia, Martha as President of the RTO confirmed that this was bad practice and gave clear instruction that it should stop.

But since then, we understand that you have been actively signing agreements with other retired educator groups in BC (whose members qualify for membership in BCRTA) to provide health benefits packages.

These mixed messages need to be resolved for the health of our relationship as partner organizations and for our mutual security. We seek clarity of your good faith and best intentions so we can foster a climate of respect and trust. In that spirit, we have asked ACER-CART to place a time for discussion on the agenda of the upcoming AGM, so we can affirm our relationship as provincial bodies to the national body and to one another.

To prepare the ground for a positive resolution of these questions, can you please clarify the following for the benefit of all the other Canadian RTAs:

1. Has the RTO adopted an Ontario First policy, whereby the RTO will supplant the position and mandate of ACER-CART?
2. If the statement above reflects the strategic goals of the RTO, and other RTAs are now your competitors in a Canadian market, do you affirm the right of other RTAs to competitively offer benefit plans to your members and to Ontarians?
3. Sometimes our words overreach. If the statement is simply an unfortunate choice of words, will RTO confirm to ACER-CART and fellow RTAs that they do not seek to undermine their mandate to serve the retired educators in their respective provinces through benefit programs and as recognized public advocates?
4. In accordance with Martha Foster’s previously declared “no poaching” policy, does RTO commit to not advertise, campaign or organize for members in other provinces? We accept that each province may serve members who have chosen to live out of the province where they actively practice.


We want you to know that every RTA in Canada recognizes the accomplishments of RTO and we affirm the service you render every day for RTO members. RTO has clearly played a positive role

in our common cause. For our part, BCRTA has benefited from a cooperative footing with RTO in the past. We are grateful and that spirit of mutuality is what we want to preserve.

We want to work with you in such a way that Canadian retired educators have the possibility of being served by the provincial and territorial associations that understand them best as peers and neighbors. Our hope is that each provincial and territorial RTA will reach its potential by means of our mutual cooperation and support.

We look forward to your organization working with us to find the most positive way forward.

Sincerely,



Patricia Clough, BCRTA President



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Steve Bailey, BCRTA ACER-CART Representative

cc: ACER-CART Executive  
ACER-CART Directors  
Provincial RTA Presidents