

ACTING-PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

APRIL 30TH, 2021

Thank you for making it this far in the “Year of Teaching During a Pandemic”! Holy smokes! I am so very frustrated that teachers across our province have not been given any priority during the vaccine roll out. There is no other profession who deals with up to 30 other people in a confined space while in a work site that has a minimum of 100 people. Just writing that seems ridiculous in this day and age of COVID-19. Your professionalism and patience are second to none – thank you! In our meeting with Interior Health this week, we were told that with a replenished supply of vaccines, there will be vaccines for educators. I do hope that none of you have hung your heart and hopes on that to get your shot and that you have registered through the website!

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register>

Registration gives you a number and puts you in the queue when there are vaccines available. When the vaccines are available, Interior Health will work with our Superintendent to roll them out for teachers as essential workers. I hope for the mental and physical health for everyone that is sooner than later!

The poisonous vapour trail of rumours and social media about COVID exposures or infection is very difficult to deal with – let alone try and rationalize with. My advice to everyone is that unless you hear it directly from IH or an affected person, deal with it as a half-truth. We do not have the excess time and energy to worry and resolve all the “what if” and “someone said”. I know life very difficult when we live with an overdose of cortisol running through our bodies over the last year, but we have to try.

The Health and Safety committee has been working tirelessly to ensure that our teachers are in a safe working environment. As safe as we can make it for ourselves, the variables of exposures in the schools to COVID is a very real and growing concern in our community. We need to continue to dig deep to stay safe and limit our social contacts, which does not get easier as the weather gets warmer. I miss taking the time to chat with my friends and work family, but I want them to stay healthy and happy. If to stay healthy and happy means we need to take a few days to rest and recover for our physical and mental well-being, please do that – no one is going to thank you for not taking any time for yourself this year.

In May we are holding our CDTA Annual General Meeting – May 19<sup>th</sup>, 4PM. Like all meetings, this will be held virtually and I encourage everyone to take the time to take part. All positions are eligible for re-election and many do not require a lot of personal commitment or time. It would be wonderful to have all positions filled this coming year and keep our union strong.

With only 38 more working days left in the school year, I want to thank you 38 more times for all that you have done for your students, your schools, and your community during this crazy year. Hopefully warmer weather and sunshine’s Vitamin D will bring cooler heads and happier people so that we can walk away unscathed from this very trying year.

Take care of yourselves – fresh air therapy is cheap and free!

Connie



## CDTA AGM MAY 19, 2021

Almost all (Local Representative is a 2 year term – elected last year) CDTA positions are up for Re-election/ Election.

### Table Officers

- i) President/Alternate Local Rep,
- ii) Vice- President
- iii) Secretary
- iv) Treasurer

### Committee Chairpersons

- i) Bargaining/Working & Learning Conditions
- ii) Professional Development – Secondary
- iii) Social Justice
- iv) French Education Local Chair
- v) Political Action Contact
- vi) Aboriginal Education
- vii) Social Committee
- viii) Health & Safety - Elementary/Secondary
- ix) Mentorship for Beginning/New Teachers
- x) Teachers Teaching on Call

Thank you to everyone who has helped out to make our local so strong and progressive!

## BCTF AGM MARCH 27-30, 2021

This is the second year the BCTF AGM was held virtually.

Thank you to Mitch Zuvela who took time out of his Spring Break to take part in what was a very hot topic and hard-hitting AGM.

This year marks the 105th Annual General Meeting of the BC Teachers' Federation. Throughout the long history of the Federation, generations of teachers have come together every year to discuss and debate the policies and actions that have guided the organization through many challenges.

**BCTF AGM MARCH 27-30, 2021**

**HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD**

This year Carol Johns was awarded **Honorary Life Membership Award** by BCTF President Teri Mooring.



Carol has been teaching for over 50 years and was instrumental in gaining many of the rights we enjoy as teachers today. Carol was, and continues to be, a strong advocate for students and teachers. Congratulations and thank you Carol for all your work on our behalf!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO SHELLEY BALFOUR - ELECTED AS INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS COUNCIL**

The BC Teachers' Council (BCTC) is composed of 16 elected and appointed members, 15 of whom are voting members. Of the 15 voting members of the BCTC, five are elected from among the teachers of the province, three are appointed directly by the Minister of Education from the nominations submitted by the BCTF, and the remaining seven are appointed by the Minister from various education partner groups. One non-voting member is appointed by the Minister with responsibilities to report on the activities of the council to ensure a direct link between the work of the council and the Minister.

BCTC 2020–21 goals - The council has set the following goals:

1. Communication, amplification and promotion of Professional Standards with particular attention to Standard 9 and concerns of racism in society.
2. Review and revisions of the Certification Standards.
3. Review and revision of the Teacher Education Program Approval Standards.
4. Development of a New Teacher Survey with a focus on teacher professional identity.
5. Explore Blended Learning programs to deepen understanding of modes and purposes.

**Thank you, Shelley for your tireless effort and work for teachers!**

## The AGM Culture

Attending the BCTF Annual General Meeting is a highly engaging and rewarding experience. Delegates join in spirited debate, campaign vigorously for the candidates and issues of their choice, and ultimately set the direction for the BCTF for the coming year. The lively exchange of views carries on throughout the meeting at the microphones and at the tables, and after meeting hours.

To teachers, words are important, so it's not at all unusual to have delegates moving and debating amendments until each word in a motion is just right. At the same time, teachers know that concepts are also important, and delegates work at developing consensus on a wide range of important topics.

The chairpersons, Resolutions Committee members, and other delegates welcome members new to the process and are always willing to help them understand the meeting rules and protocols. First-time speakers at the microphone are most often acknowledged with a round of applause and encouraged in their involvement.

Outside of the business sessions, the social events and meetings organized around specific concerns—such as the lunch meeting for Aboriginal contacts, the teachers teaching on call breakfast, and the social justice contacts' meeting—provide delegates with a change of pace.

There's no doubt that delegates to the AGM go home with a new understanding of democracy in action in their union and a deeper appreciation for issues faced by their colleagues around BC. They'll also head back to their locals with many good memories and new friends from the time they devoted to serving their union of professionals at the Annual General Meeting.

## Members

The voting members of the meeting are:

- Local **delegates** who are active members of the BCTF and are elected at local general meetings.
- **Local Representatives** who represent their locals at three Representative Assembly meetings a year and at the AGM.
- The members of the elected, 12-person **BCTF Executive Committee** for the current year.

There are four **chairpersons** who take on the job of running the meeting according to the Annual General Meeting Standing Rules of Order (pages 176-180 *Members' Guide*). The chairpersons are active or honorary associate (retired) members.

The **Resolutions Committee** is made up of five members, who provide advice to delegates wishing to move amendments, propose alternate wording, referral motions, etc. This committee helps to facilitate the business of the meeting. The members of this committee take turns sitting at a table near the front of the meeting room where delegates needing assistance can easily find them.

The **nominating chairperson** is a member elected by the Representative Assembly to handle the nominations for the Executive Committee positions in the lead up to the AGM, and supervise the conduct of the elections for the Executive Committee positions.

Any BCTF member is welcome to attend to observe the meeting and, if formally recognized by the chairperson, may speak to motions at the microphone.

Retired teachers who are **honorary associate members** participate in the one session of the AGM in which recommendations and resolutions on pensions are determined. These honorary associate members are elected at a general meeting of the Retired Teachers' Association and represent the RTA in the special committee of the whole on pension matters only.

**KNOW YOUR CONTRACT**

**E.12 – FILLING VACANT POSITION**

**ARTICLE E.12: FILLING VACANT POSITIONS**

1. The Board shall fill teaching vacancies in the following priority, provided that the teacher has the necessary qualifications to perform the duties of the vacant position:

a. Teachers on the Continuing Teachers' Recall List as per Article C.5 where the position is in the zone from where the teacher was laid off.

b. Teachers on continuing appointment who are subject to or seeking transfer; who are returning from leaves of absence, including but not limited to leaves for exchange teaching, positions with the Department of National Defense, general leave, secondment;

c. teachers on full-time or part-time continuing appointment;

d. teachers from the Temporary Teachers' Recall List as per Article C.5 (Layoff/Recall/Severance);

e. Teachers teaching on call who apply for the position and outside applicants.

2. If a vacancy requires filling during the school year and the successful applicant is currently employed in another full-time assignment or in a part-time assignment, that may conflict, with the scheduled assignment of the position to be filled, the position will be filled at the earliest reasonable date.

Spring staffing will begin in early May!



## ANOTHER CHANGE - MASK RULES IN THE CLASSROOM

### **BC teachers welcome strengthened mask mandate while continuing to advocate for ventilation improvements and reduced classroom density**

#### **Classroom teachers can enforce mask requirements – when something is required, it is indispensable.**

Teachers throughout BC are relieved to learn that the province has strengthened their position on mask-wearing in schools, with students in Grades 4 to 12 now required to wear their masks full-time while at school, and mask-wearing strongly encouraged among younger students in kindergarten to Grade 3.

"Despite some vague wording, we have been assured by the Ministry of Education that today's announcement equates to a province-wide expansion of the orders that were introduced in Surrey over the weekend," said BCTF President Teri Mooring. "Our sincere thanks go out to the many teachers and parents who have advocated tirelessly to get this safety measure in place as an added layer of protection for teachers and students."

Though teachers welcome this enhanced mask mandate, there is still much more that needs to be done to reduce the risk of in-school transmission. In particular, we know there are schools with inadequate ventilation systems, in these cases classrooms need portable ventilation systems provided by districts. Additionally, hybrid learning options need to be available to school districts to allow for adequate physical distancing, especially where there are high levels of community transmission of the virus.

"Our unwavering advocacy has delivered some of the results we have been seeking, and now it's time to shift our focus to the remaining health and safety concerns in schools throughout the province," Mooring added.

The BC Teachers' Federation encourages teachers and parents to engage their respective MLAs and voice outstanding concerns over inadequate ventilation and an inability to physically distance with current class sizes. When we work together MLA's/Trustees/Public - there is a common narrative and things change.

The BCTF wants clarification around exposure notifications and is asking for concrete numbers of students testing positive, numbers of teachers testing positive, numbers of classes self-isolating, and number of in-school transmissions. So far, this information has not been made available to the BCTF.



## BLAST FROM THE PAST!

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE AND SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME – WE ARE STILL FIGHTING FOR IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS AND FAIR SALARIES – WHY WE NEED TO KEEP UP THE STRENGTH OF OUR UNION!

### 2005 10-day Illegal Strike

In the fall of 2005, and in response to the government's imposition of another contract, the BCTF engaged in a two-week strike, deemed illegal by the courts. The BCTF was found to be in contempt of court for defying the Labour Relations Board in order to return to work, and the Federation's strike fund was frozen. Teachers did not receive strike pay.

Teachers were united behind the three key objectives of a negotiated agreement: improved learning conditions, restored bargaining rights and a fair salary increase. The resulting settlement, brokered by mediator Vince Ready, broke the zero mandate of government, provided substantial benefits for teachers, and set the stage for the upcoming round of public sector bargaining in 2006.

"No one who took part in the 2005 BC teachers' strike will ever forget it. It changed people's lives, moved them to do things they did not know they were capable of, made them new friends for life, and engaged the public in a way few strikes ever do." The BCTF commissioned journalist, columnist, political commentator, editor, broadcaster, author and former BCTF staffer Murray Dobbin to write a history of the 2005 BCTF 10-day illegal strike.



*Cranbrook teachers and supporters; their cafe menu, above right.*

## HEALTH AND SAFETY – LEAVE FOR COVID VACCINATIONS

### Proposed Amendments to Employment Standards Act Introduced: COVID-19 Leave — Paid Leaves for Vaccination

On April 19, 2021, the provincial government introduced Bill 3 – 2021 to amend the Employment Standards Act (ESA) to provide employees with a new paid leave of absence to be vaccinated against COVID-19. What These Proposed Amendments Mean for School Districts Although this Bill is not currently enacted (expected in the coming days), it is important to note that this tabled amendment to legislation contemplates:

- ♣ an effective date of April 19, 2021 (“the date it receives First Reading in the Legislative Assembly”)
- ♣ no retroactive right to paid leave for time taken off work to be vaccinated before April 19, 2021. As a result, it is recommended that school districts keep records of employees who have taken leave for receiving a COVID-19 vaccines starting April 19, 2021. Once this new section 52.13 of the ESA is passed, it will provide employees with up to three (3) hours of paid leave to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The leave is available each time an employee needs time off to be vaccinated. The paid leave is in addition to the unpaid COVID related leaves provided under section 52.12 of the ESA. Questions and Answers

**1. To whom does this leave apply?** This leave applies to any employee for the purpose of receiving their COVID-19 vaccine(s). This leave does not apply to the employee assisting family members to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

**2. Prior to April 19, 2021, if an employee had been granted and deducted sick leave under their collective agreement or employment contract, should that sick leave be reinstated?** No, there is no retroactive application for this leave prior to April 19, 2021.

**3. Do all employees require leave from work to obtain their vaccination?** No, they may have already received one or more doses, or may have an appointment scheduled outside of working hours.

**4. Do employees automatically get three hours of paid leave to obtain a vaccination?** No, the proposed legislation provides for up to three hours. If less than three hours is required, that is the amount of leave that should be taken.

Continued, page 9.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY – LEAVE FOR COVID VACCINATIONS, CONTINUED

**5. Can the employer request documentation to support an employee's request for leave?** Yes, if necessary, employers can request confirmation that the vaccination was received by the employee

and/or information about the location and time of their appointment, such as an appointment confirmation email. Please note that, as with other COVID-19 leaves under the ESA, an employer cannot request a medical note (from a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse) to confirm entitlement to the leave.

#### **6. What if there are other provisions in the collective agreement or employment contract?**

The ESA provides the minimum leaves of absence to which employees are entitled. School districts should provide employees with the greater of their entitlements under their collective agreement or employment contract and the ESA, depending on the employee's individual circumstances.

www.bcpsea.bc.ca - April 20, 2021

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

May 5, 2021	Executive Meeting
May 11, 2021	Pro-D Meeting
May 19, 2021	CDTA AGM
May 21, 2021	Non-Instruction Day
May 24, 2021	Victoria Day – No School
May 28 – 29, 2021	BCTF Representative Assembly (Virtual)

Be sure to check out the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association webpage for easy access to your contract and up to date information.

[www.cranbrookdistrictteachersassociation.com](http://www.cranbrookdistrictteachersassociation.com)

