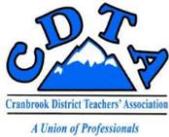


# Cranbrook District Teachers' Association

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President: Shelley Balfour  
Vice-President: Connie Merz



## President's News

Hello from the Representative Assembly meeting in Vancouver,

We are currently sitting in a crowd of 300+ teachers trying to decide what the best course of action is for the lack of progress at the bargaining table. It is hard enough getting a school staff to decide on a school event never mind 60+ locals from all corners of BC trying to decide on one course of action. Each local has such diverse needs that this seems like an impossible task but I believe in the process and when we leave today, we will have a plan that may not be perfect but all angles have been thought of and discussed for hours and hours and hours!

January has been quiet but busy at the same time! It does seem like January has been months long but then all of a sudden it is over. I have spent time with the Inclusion Working Group trying to figure out how to make the Student Services teachers' job manageable so that we can keep the amazing teachers we have in that position and attract new folks to the open positions. As well, I have met with the Middle School Administrators and senior management to start the process of analyzing the Middle School concept. Contractually, the Middle School concept doesn't really fit the language so we will ideally be working towards a Mid-Contract Modification. In my humble opinion, I don't see the true middle school concept in our two middle schools – I see pieces of it but I also see more of a junior high model and the mixture of the two causes grief!

Coming up soon is the School District Budget process where partner groups are able to make a presentation on how we want the District to spend their money. On my list so far are: adequate funding and resources for all our schools so teachers can do their jobs, develop a 5 year plan to upgrade shops and labs, increasing the ratio for our specialist teachers so we are above the minimum required, provide funds to allow teachers to be released to attend the required School Based Team meetings, include Student Services teachers under the umbrella of Positions of Special Responsibility, hire a second School Psychologist to reduce the one year wait time for assessments for our students, hire for continuing Teacher Teaching on Call positions, offer incentives for teachers to live and work in remote communities such as Elkford, pay Teachers Teaching on Call twice a month (asking this for the 33rd time), offer the Living with Balance course to our teachers again, ensure that extra Educational Assistants are hired for September for the Kindergarten classes, hire a position for an Early Learning to support early learning teachers, provide a true transitions program for the Middle Schools, reinstate the R&R program, continue to support the Social Emotional Learning Centre and provide true in-service instead of after-school drop in sessions for things we need to do the jobs.

Spring staffing is quickly approaching! If you are looking to transfer or take an extended leave for next year, the deadline to request it is March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

We will be holding a general meeting to discuss the action plan and ratify our local agreement soon. If you don't attend ... you can't complain 😊  
- Shelley

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### Upcoming Events

- ◆ Winter RA - Jan.31- Feb.1.
- ◆ Exec. Mtg. - Feb.5.
- ◆ Family Day Long Weekend Feb. 14-17.
- ◆ Pro-D Meeting - Feb. 11.
- ◆ SURT - Feb. 13.
- ◆ As of Feb. 1, Spring Break is in 27 days away!

## Vice President's News

I was unable to get a prescription from my doctor for "beach therapy", but the winter holiday did help me to relax and recharge. Elementary schools are nearing the 100 day mark and Secondary schools are facing semester change. Uuugh – Report Cards! It is never an easy time! Semester change often feels like the September start – up without the summer energy banked. None-the-less, we shall persevere.

I am very hopeful of the Inclusive Learning and Middle School Working Groups launched by Silke Yardley to uncover and improve some of the growing problems faced by all teachers. During an office day I was the sole teacher voice at a Special Education committee meeting, and I hope that more classroom teachers were asked to participate in both committees.

Thank you, Larry, for your article in the Teacher Magazine – it is good read and reminder for all of to

maintain our physical and mental health. Again, I hope all members take some time out of your day to give to yourself. My dogs Hershey and Hopper are great for getting me outside to take them, and myself, for some fresh-air therapy. The air, nature, and good friends make for a temporary relief from the day to day grind.

With the chill of winter temperatures, dump of new snow, and mid-year stretch, just remember that there are 27 working days left until Spring Break! Shawna Martin-Bodnaruk, Alison Dawson, Mitch Zuvella, Shelley and myself will be heading down to the BCTF AGM in Vancouver, March 14-18. As our contract negotiations have been stuck for a while, I am sure there will be heated conversation and debate about the negotiation process. Have patience my friends, we shall persevere.

## Student Services Audit

### Why are Student Services being audited?

Schools across the District are being audited in Student Services for students in categories A – H to ensure that appropriate funding is going to the appropriate students.

### What can the classroom teacher do?

As a classroom teacher, you are directly affected by the supports students receive in your classroom. To help SST please help by filling out paperwork, answering questions, responding to emails so the paperwork can be completed and you can get the services you need and deserve.

### What will the results of the audit?

The results of a successful audit of student services will clearly demonstrate to the District and Ministry of Education that the students who need supports in our classrooms will have the supports in our classrooms.



*Of the teaching positions lost between 2000 and 2016, over 1,900 were specialist teachers. Less than half (900) of these positions have been restored by 2017-18.*

*“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”*

*William Butler Yeats*

## Winter Weather Conditions

One day it's bloody cold, the next it's raining! Thank you Mother Nature!! This winter weather can cause havoc for the cold bugs going around schools and the maintenance of safe school grounds.

If you have the unfortunate circumstance to slip or fall because of snow, ice, water, etc., please inform the custodian or administration immediately. The maintenance of safe conditions during the crazy weather is the responsibility of the district, via CUPE, NOT the teacher. If a matter does not get resolved, please contact your Safety Committee Representative so they can bring it to your committee's attention.

## Provincial Bargaining Update

It has been a slow slog ahead with provincial bargaining. The mediator, David Schaub, was not available until late January so the BCTF will be meeting with him on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

The BCTF press release was leaked to the media and, of course, rumours began to fly regarding job action. As long as we are dealing with a mediator, there can be no job action. Shelley and Connie are going to the Representative Assembly January 31, February 1, to debate, discuss, and vote on a potential series of actions that apply pressure on the bargaining table.

Some classrooms have carpet floors for our little learners, and these too can be an issue with regular cleaning and maintenance. Have a friendly conversation with your custodian if there is an issue, but keep in mind that like you, our custodial staff is being asked to do more with less time.

Marie Kondo has said, “The objective of cleaning is not just to clean, but to feel happiness living within that environment.” Keep doing the amazing job you do, and know that many students are happy to be in your classroom.

Wear your #RedforBCED buttons, shirts, and keep informed. Please don't engage your students on why you are wearing red, but feel free to post on social media with the #RedforBCED hashtag.

For more updates, go on to the **BCTF portal** and click on **Bargaining Updates**.



## Most B.C. Parents Want Cellphones Banned in K-12 Classrooms

A new poll suggests British Columbians are in favour of banning mobile phones in elementary and high school classrooms.

The Research Co. survey found that 88 per cent of the B.C. adults polled think the province should restrict the use of mobile phones during instructional time in Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms.

The poll follows a recent law in Ontario, which restricts the use of phones in classrooms unless required for medical reasons or for use in lessons.

Other results from the survey show residents aged 55 and over are more likely to support a ban than those aged 35-to-54 and those aged 18-to-34.

More than 80 per cent support the idea in Vancouver Island, the Fraser Valley, and Metro Vancouver, however the poll shows support is lower in Northern B.C. (75 per cent) and Southern B.C. (62 per cent.)

The Research Co. poll of 800 adults was conducted from Nov. 6 to Nov. 8. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

*Tiffany Crawford – Vancouver Sun Nov.29. 2019.*

How do student cell phones affect you and your classroom?

In my classroom, I have a “phone farm” and have bought charging cables to encourage students to leave their phone at the door. Still, every-day presents a new battle to fight the distraction.

## Health & Safety - Behavior Plans vs. Safety Plans

Contrary to some, a student behavior plan is not a student safety plan. These are two separate documents; one for the purpose of student and teacher with respect to instruction and the other for the purpose of the teacher with respect to the teacher's personal safety and that of the students. WorkSafeBC states: it is the duty of the employer to ensure that workers are aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards. Larry and the DOSAC have a working document for a safety plan which is a simple one pager that outlines what to do if a student's behavior goes off the rails. This separate document is important to have on hand for TTOC's and your EA. Larry met with Brent on January 9<sup>th</sup> in hopes to sort this

issue out.

Behavior Plans are part of a student's IEP. It is a Student Services Teacher's role to create and communicate the behavior plan of students with IEPs to the classroom teacher. The IEP documents the resources, goals/objectives, and strategies that are needed to help the student meet her/his full potential. The IEP is usually jointly written by the school-based team (SBT). Be clear about the resources and the help you will need in order to provide a successful experience for the child, and review progress at regular intervals. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure that the IEP program is followed.



## Know Your Contract - Article D. 21 Staff Meetings

You are to be given 7 days' notice of the regular staff meetings, and preliminary agenda items to be considered shall be circulated in that time.

school is not in session.

### D.21.3. Attendance

Teachers shall not be required to attend staff meetings:

- which commence prior to one (1) hour before classes begin or which conclude later than (2) hours after dismissal of pupils;
- during recess or during the noon intermission unless mutually agreed upon by the staff and Principal;
- on weekends, holidays or other days when

### Important reminder for part-time and itinerant teachers:

6) Part-time and itinerant teachers shall attend staff meetings **whenever possible**.

*Does your school have a SOGI rep?*

*Sexual  
Orientation  
Gender  
Identity*

## B.C. RESP Grant - Money for Your Child's Education

Did you know that there is a provincial grant of \$1200 for every child between the ages of 6 to 9 years of age? This grant is to be put into an RESP for your child, and it does not require parents to match the grant monies.

Nearly 95,000 children of age missed out and did not take advantage of the grant which saved the BC government approximately \$114 million.



Please read more at:

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2020/01/23/BC-Families-Free-Money-Kids-Education/>

*Click on the following website for more ideas and information.*

<https://www.sogieducation.org/>

# New Students

In last month's newsletter **Know Your Contract** dealt with new students coming into your classroom.

As we are hitting the halfway point in the school year, please be aware that you have the professional right to discuss a new student's entry into your classroom prior to that student showing up at your front door. If that student has an IEP, you are to meet with your SBT and have time to collaborate with other parties of that student's educational needs.

In an elementary classroom, you may need to reorganize your classroom seating plan and get the learning resources for that student. In a secondary

classroom, you may need to meet with an EA or look at a transcript to understand what the student has or has not covered in your subject area

Remember: no student's education will be ruined if they have to stay at home or wait one more day to be welcomed into your classroom.



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## Blast from the Past! Superintendent's Bulletin, January 8, 1990

