

Cranbrook Chronicles

Newsletter of the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association
June 2022



An arch consists of two weaknesses, which leaning on each other, becomes a strength. – Leonardo da Vinci

Vice-President's Message – Larry Dureski

Hello Colleagues,

It is now Friday of the last full week of school, and I am feeling an extra level of exhaustion after my last Music assembly. I even made mistakes later that day in sending out emails to parents with incorrect student names on them. I feel like I am plowing through inefficiency in an effort to get year-end tasks done on time. If you too are feeling absolutely done, you are not alone. In conversations with local colleagues and those from other places who serve on BCTF committees that are now meeting in-person, similar feelings are expressed. Although school year-end events such as Grad are returning to an in-person format, this is still a year where we spent the majority of it teaching through masks and trying to ensure that our students were learning through them. This year began with a certain number of restrictions. We witnessed an increase in October, a reduction in November, another increase in December, a retooling of instruction in January, and finally something closer to normal after Spring break. This summer, taking time for your own well-being is so important! Reflect on the extra commitments you had taken on this year. Which ones helped feed your interests and are worth keeping, and which ones can you let go to free up some time next year? You have an extra week to run this through because of our early finish now and a late start in September.

Many thanks for allowing me to serve as your Vice-President this year, for this work on your behalf is something that helped me through this year. I hope that what I have done in the office or on Health and



Safety may have directly or indirectly helped make your life easier. Go forth and enjoy a well-deserved Summer Break! (Photo: BCTF committee meetings are back on-site. Reports are in this newsletter.)

President's Message – Shelley Balfour

As we wind down another year, I would like to thank you all for hanging in there throughout the past two years! There were many days when it seemed unbearable, but the sun rose the next day and we continued. I want you all to take a break, enjoy the beautiful area in which we live and try not to think about school until at least August 15th! For those elementary teachers who spend hours and hours and hours of their summer preparing their classrooms, so they look beautiful for the kids, why not start with a blank canvas and let the children's art and work adorn the walls? So much less work for you which also allows for more time to relax and rejuvenate! Just a thought! I have seen some of your classrooms!

Summer Conference will be at UBC this year near the end of August. Because we have a few folks on Provincial Committees, their spots at the conference can be covered by alternates so there will be available positions for folks to attend. If you are interested in attending the BCTF Summer Conference, contact me and I'll let you know the positions available.

Congratulations to all our retirees! It was a great celebration, and we wish you the very best in your next adventure: Colette Grasdal (MBSS), Karen Kettenacker (MBSS), Grant Duchscherer (MBSS), Sandra Wales (SES), Carla Erichsen (SES), Sophie Lapierre (TMRES), Carolyn Hunter (TMRES), Sylvie de Grandpré (PMS), Lori Graham (AWES), Alison Donaldson (AWES) and Joanna Popoff (GTES).

NO MORE BELLS!

Report from the BCTF Spring Representative Assembly – May 27 and 28



This was the first large in-person BCTF event since the Winter representative Assembly of 2020. The photo on the left shows the meeting space getting prepared by the tech crew the evening before. The



photo on the right shows the modified seating arrangement to facilitate social distancing. Several delegates observed less table chatter during the meetings with this classroom-style arrangement.

Report of the President – Teri Mooring

This Representative Assembly is the first in-person version since January 2020. The bargaining team is working hard with direction from the Bargaining Conference. Although the climate at the bargaining sessions is respectful, progress is still slow. There is still not enough funding to support our needs. The Government has presented similar packages to other Public Service unions. BCGEU has declared an impasse and has taken a strike vote. We are working on publicity projects with other unions including

radio, transit shelter ads, and billboards. “Ittakesateacher.ca” is where people can record clips supporting teachers for this media project.

The BCTF is budgeting for the return to in-person events, making renovations to the BCTF building, and establishing the new Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression office.

Recent results from ongoing advocacy have included the Indigenous Graduation Requirement and a delay in the implementation of the New Reporting Order. Do not forget municipal elections, seek out and elect progressive trustees. Ask trustee candidates if they have their children in Public schools.

I am leaving with mixed emotions. To serve you has been an honour.

Report on Finance – As meetings return to in-person, health and safety remains a top priority. Along with anticipated increases in travel and accommodation costs, larger meeting spaces will be rented in hotels for larger BCTF committee meetings rather than using the rooms at the BCTF. We will remain vigilant and ready to pivot from original plans if circumstances change. Other funded supports include:

- COVID Transition grant.
- Mental Health supports
- Zoom licenses for Provincial Specialist Associations and locals.
- In-person observers at BCTF governance meetings.
- Union Mentorship Grant
- Political Action Contact training.
- Aboriginal Education Conference.
- Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Office and program. Office space will be renovated to accommodate this new division and three new staff will be hired.
- Advertising to promote BCTF priorities.

This year, short online events have been hosted for new teachers on various topics. Eighty percent of participants report these as their first BCTF events (I was involved in facilitating the one on Health and Safety). Hybrid meeting options and the technology requirements are also being explored.

Upcoming reviews include those of the Judicial Council, the Internal Mediation service, and the environmental impact of BCTF operations and structures. Seventeen BCTF members will be involved in this process.

A **big thank-you** goes out to the **Hyatt Hotel** in Vancouver for waiving \$1.5M (\$500,000/year) in hotel cancellation fees during the pandemic.

Pensions Report – Al Cornes

Let us begin with some numbers: 101,406 names on the list including active members, those who left the profession, and those collecting a pension; \$1.3B paid out in pension in 2021; \$771M paid into the plan by active members in the same year; \$37.8B is the forecast 2021 value of the pension fund; average new pension paid out is \$36,900 annually; and the active member/retiree ratio holds steady at 1.2/1. In addition to information on the TPP website, 30-minute telephone consultation meetings with a trained pension representative are available to those within a year of retirement. These appointments can be booked online.

Local Resolutions Passed at the RA

- A call for the Ministry for a province-wide implementation of the Letter of Understanding for Employment Equity for Aboriginal Teachers to redress the under-representation of Aboriginal teachers in BC public schools. This was the resolution crafted by Alison Dawson.
- That the Federation adopt the week leading up to September 30th as Truth and Reconciliation week. As the 30th is a statutory holiday, school-based events could occur in the week leading up to that day.
- That the Federation develop a campaign to include climate issues in instruction, promote available climate justice instructional resources, and advocate for the inclusion of climate justice in the curriculum at all grade levels.
- That the Federation Executive Committee lobby the government to direct a portion of revenue from the carbon tax to fund green and carbon-emissions reducing technology in schools and school districts. Examples included electric district vehicles, more efficient HVAC systems, solar power, electric car charging stations for staff, and community-school gardens.
- That the Federation advocate with the Ministry of Education to appoint an Ethics Commissioner to review the conduct of BC school district trustees with the power to make recommendations to the Minister.

Report from the BCTF Health and Safety Advisory Committee – June 3 and 4

Carole Gordon, BCTF Second Vice-President, visited our meeting to report that COVID management is being shifted to a communicable disease plan. The documents about managing illness, workplace guidelines, and the recovery plan are to be merged into one guidelines document.

HSAC members presented their notes from zone meetings to which they were assigned. Common themes included communication and the return of workplace violence as schools return to near-normal operation. There was also concern over the efficacy of site-based Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees, for not every school site had a committee that met regularly or functioned as a collaborative problem-solving body to address health and safety issues.

The need for ramp accessibility to portables was discussed at the previous HSAC meeting and since with Social Justice Committee. It is a WorksafeBC requirement for employees to have access to their worksites. The employer has duty to accommodate.

The need for basic Health and Safety information for new teachers was also discussed. Teachers currently receive little or no Health and Safety training before they enter the profession. Attempts have been made to address this issue by offering such workshops at the BCTF New Teachers' Conference, but these sessions were either cancelled due to lack of registrations or run with very few delegates signing up. A motion was passed at this meeting regarding a lobby for Health and Safety orientation, including the function of site-based Health and Safety programs and worker rights and responsibilities, to be included in teacher education programs.

Workplace violence has returned to the top of the list of safety concerns, where it was before the pandemic. HSAC recommended that districts be surveyed in the Fall about the efficacy of their Violence Prevention programs. The results of this proposed survey would guide further actions of the BCTF.

Report from Judicial Council – June 11 and 12 – Larry Dureski

A review of the BCTF Internal Mediation Service and the Judicial Council is in the early stages. Teacher representation on this review committee has been selected, and one meeting has already taken place. Four more meetings of this review panel are scheduled for the Fall.

As the Judicial Council handles member complaints regarding alleged breaches of the BCTF Code of Ethics, most if the case load involves alleged breaches of Clause 5.

The member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance.
**It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues.*

There was much discussion at the meeting around “teaching performance and related work” from this clause. Where does the line get drawn through a list of a teacher’s duties and responsibilities, some of which a teacher accepts on a voluntary basis, to separate does from does not? Does “related work” include the work of a released union officer, and if so, how much? BCTF Legal Department has promised training on this topic during the next Judicial Council meeting in the Fall, so I should be able to provide you with a report at that time. In the meantime, I would advise against any comments about a colleague posted online or discussed with others that would have even the most remote chance of being viewed as critical of that colleague. If you do have a concern, approach that colleague first and follow the procedure in Clause 5.

Report from the TTOC Advisory Committee – Julie Bond

During the TTOCAC meetings, we prepared for the BCTF Summer Conference. If you are interested in coming to the BCTF Summer Conference as an alternate from Monday August 22 to Friday August 26, please let the CDTA know. This year the summer conference is held at UBC in Vancouver. Travel, accommodation, and meals will be covered for your participation. You are also welcome to bring your partner and children with you, but you will have to cover their travel and meal costs, or drive, and then the BCTF will reimburse mileage, instead of flight. They can enjoy the sights of Vancouver while you connect and learn from colleagues at beautiful UBC campus. Ask Larry or Shelley or Julie for details about BCTF Summer Conference and how to register. This is a fun travel, social and learning event.

Report from the Political Action Committee (PAC) – Julie Bond

During the PAC meetings, we talked about the upcoming municipal election, which affects all teachers as new School Trustees are elected this October 2022. The BCTF encourages local teachers to be involved in the municipal elections, to organize and hold an All Candidates Debate for School Trustees, to write questions related to education issues to ask potential School Trustees during this debate, and to get out the vote. The voter turnout for municipal elections is low, so if all teachers vote and bring 3 friends or family members to vote with them, they can decide the election results. This election votes in your new employer, the School Trustees on the Board of Education, and affects your working conditions.

More Home-Based Professional Development

The final instalment of our local “Dinner and a Movie” online workshop series featured *Reframing Challenging Behaviours* on June 7. Throughout the series, about 40 members have taken advantage of these sessions created and facilitated by members of the BCTF. We will be doing this again next

Highlights from the June 1 Executive Meeting (Year-End meeting held at The Heidout)

Staffing Changes causing upset in buildings caused by teachers having to be forced out and how the VPs were hired.

Staffing Shortages in TTOCs, EAs and custodial.

Process to Hire TTOCs and replacement EAs does not seem to be moving fast enough to address current needs.

Dial 4 Assessment causing stress for parents, as their first encounter with the Education System involves their child having to take a test. Tests are also very costly per child.

Diverse Needs among Grade 7s coming into middle school. Support and resources are required to cover that spectrum of need.

On the Lighter Side . . .

A **huge Thank-You** to all who participated in the **CDTA Retirement Social** on Wednesday, June 15. Please check out the [photo album](#) for Fred Subra’s wonderful coverage of this event. There was very positive feedback about the format of this year’s event as well as the venue. If you missed this one, the Retirement Social for 2023 is already booked for June 14 at the Royal Alexandra!





A **TTOC Appreciation Dinner** was held on Thursday, June 16, at East Side Mario's. Good food and great company!

Wishing all of you a restful and fulfilling 2022 Summer Break.

Your friends at the CD7A Office.

Shelley, Pearl, and Larry