

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

I am really, really ready to kick 2020 to the curb! The beginning started like any other January – I had no sense of foreboding out of sheer ignorance.

I have learned many things since the spring of 2020:

- I should listen more intently to the news – I was so focused on the behaviour of the lunatic down south that I missed the warnings;
- The world is a much smaller place due to our travel opportunities than it was during the last pandemic;
- Toilet paper and paper products became the gold rush of the 21<sup>st</sup> century! I found myself panicked about it for no reason;
- Schools have always been germ factories but finally others outside of the education system noticed – not quick enough but they did notice;
- Just how vulnerable people really are. Everyone recognized that in each other and helped;
- I like to work and was feeling lost on those first few weeks we were ordered to stay home. Returning to the office in April was reassuring although things were very different;
- I became obsessed with masks and have so many that it is ridiculous;
- I enjoyed redoing my yard over the past 8 months and learning to love gardening again;
- My knitting wool collection is similar to my mask collection in size!

However, none of that matters when I remember what I already knew before the Spring of 2020:

- My membership cares about each student, family and colleague with such intensity that the idea of possible harm coming to them was sometimes too much to handle;
- My membership recognizes the role they play in keeping themselves and others safe and have known that for a long time. It just took a pandemic for others around you to recognize that;
- That through this entire ordeal, you have kept your head up, shoulders back and tackled everything that was put in front of you despite your own fears and misgivings. That is something you can be so proud of – I know I am!

So, take a rest, stay away from the media for a while and just enjoy whomever is in your tiny bubble. We will all miss those who cannot travel home but we will have next year to reconnect. In an effort to kick 2020 to the curb, I have come across a video that sums it up for me (caution – there are lots of swears) [FU 2020](#)

Take care everyone! Shelley

## VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

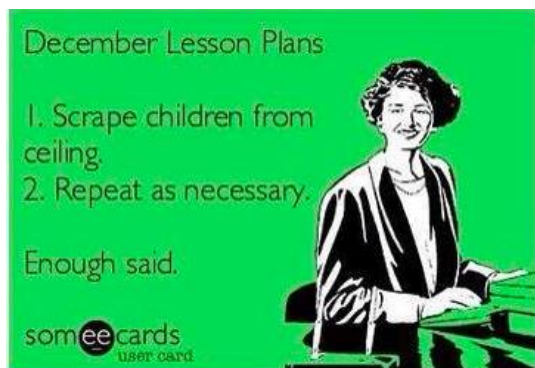
I have no idea where September, October and November went. I do remember a flurry of school start-up; people doing amazing things to ensure the health and safety of everyone they work with, kids happy to be back in the structure of school, and out whole community feeling some sense of normalcy. I would like to replace the term "resiliency" so often used in our schools with the term, "super-powers". Very few public institutions would be able to incur the scope and speed of change we have undergone this past year. Give yourself a high-five and credit for that!

I am really missing the comradery with my work family as we really haven't been able to sit and chat and laugh together face to face since March. Many are feeling more isolated than ever before and so try to take time to go for a walk outside during lunch, send an email to say hello... the connection is very important. We tell our students and we should remind ourselves – one never knows how far and how much a small act of kindness means to someone else.

With all the chaos around COVID, please remember that our district is one of two in the province that has a leave specifically if you have COVID symptoms. This leave does not take time from your sick bank. This is

a small but important consideration our district has given us and it may be the best thing if one were to catch "the Rona".

Despite the confusion and controversy with safety protocols in our schools, rest assured that the BCTF and the Ministry of Education guidelines regarding COVID-19 are stronger than regular safety/health guidelines. Working groups are still meeting and trying to get the best working conditions for teachers. We as teachers can be the best source of information for contact tracing as COVID comes to town. Being a part of the process would require a change from our government and Provincial Health Authority to create better communication for teacher, student, and school health. Teachers are the new front line workers – we are the first line of public health, mental and emotional health, and social organization. With so much responsibility in our schools and on our shoulders, remember that even though we do super-human work, we are only human. Take care of yourself, so you can take care of others.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Here is a link that takes you to the SD5 School Safety. Please review/refresh/remind yourself of how we are to work in this COVID world.

<https://www.sd5.bc.ca/COVID2020-2021/safetyss/Documents/COVID-19%20Protocols%20for%20School%20Operations%20%28September%2021%29.pdf>

If you have any concerns regarding the cleaning products or cleaning schedules in your school, please contact a member of your school Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee or your Staff Rep.

If you feel that you are not mentally or physically ready to be back in the classroom January 9, 2021, please give Shelley a call.

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! Stay safe, socially distance, do not “people” with others who are not your immediately household, and wear your mask in public places.

WEAR A MASK POSTERS: you have the right to put up the wear a mask posters – you cannot ask students to wear a mask, and your Principal cannot ask you to remove these signs from your classroom.



### MEETING WITH INTERIOR HEALTH – DECEMBER 16, 2020

Interior Health is meeting regularly with the school districts to discuss and talk about what is working and what to improve upon for the safety of our schools. IH confirms that our school safety plans are working to keep the transmission rates of COVID very very low. With a population of approximately 801,000 people, there has been only 260 cases involving students and almost all of the student cases were linked with community transmission. It may be difficult as teachers in the classroom to see the low rates from a global population point of view, but we have been doing very well to keep everyone safe.

## BCTF VIRTUAL REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY - NOVEMBER 6 & 7, 2020

On everyone's mind is... COVID 19.

Teri Mooring's opening remarks spoke to the gains we have made with our Labour Relations Board Application and acceptance and how that will allow teachers more leverage when dealing with safety issues in the work place during COVID. The BCTF has used one of the largest media campaigns regarding safety in schools, a campaign that rivaled the 2014 strike which created a lot of public awareness and support for student's learning conditions.

Local Resolutions passed included:

### **Employee Family Assistance Program Satisfaction Survey**

That the Federation investigate the accessibility, support, and member satisfaction of the Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) with a report back to the Winter Representative Assembly.

### **Virtual Federation Meetings**

That for the 2020-21 school year, Federation virtual meetings, excluding the Annual General Meeting, do not take place on weekends.

### **Air Supply Systems**

That the federation approach BCPSEA to work in partnership or to act alone if BCPSEA declines to advocate with the provincial government to retro-fit existing air supply systems in schools to be able to properly incorporate MERV-13 related filters or better and to have new air supply systems rated to this standard at a minimum.

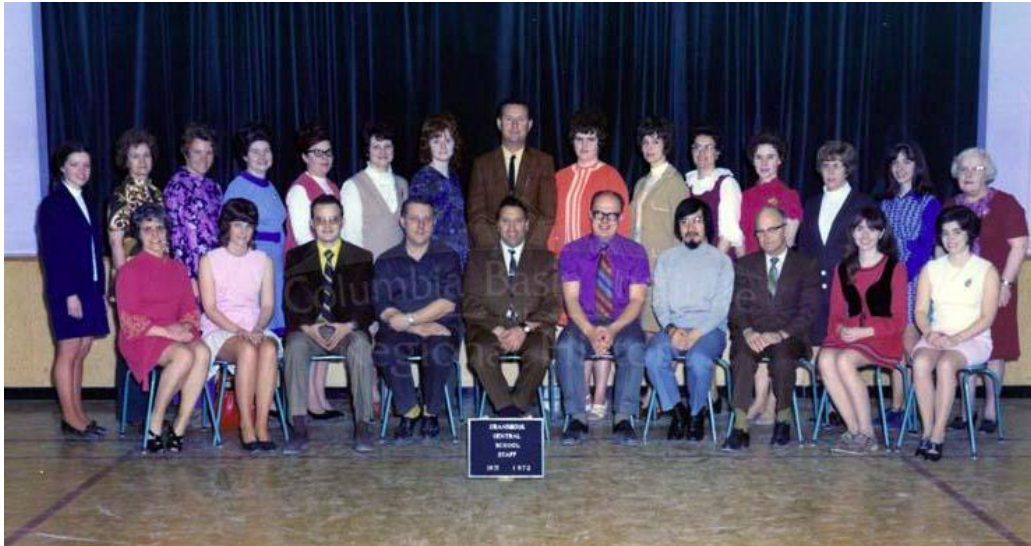
---

## MEETING WITH DR. HENRY AND STAFF FROM THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICE

As previously communicated, the Full-Time Table Officers of the BCTF met with Dr. Henry and members of her team on October 22, 2020. It was only an hour, but they were able to cover a lot of ground around BCTF concerns about inconsistent communication, problems with contact tracing, confusing changes to health standards, and the inability of teachers and students to physically distance themselves in classrooms. Dr. Henry and her team were receptive to hearing our concerns and open to more meetings. The BCTF will have a follow up meeting scheduled with doctors from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and will keep you updated on any more developments.

**A BLAST FROM THE PAST!**

**THANK YOU, JANET LEVANG**



The first photo is from Central School in 1971-1972. Notice what all the women are wearing.

For the first day of photos in 1972-1973, principal George Harris told the photographer that I (Janet Levang) was not dressed properly for the photo as I had a pant suit on and the photographer would have to come back the next day when all the female staff was dressed in dresses or skirts. You will notice that several of the females supported me and wore pants the next day (as I did) and George is missing from the photo. He would not join us for the photo. George and I did stay friends until his death.

To find these pictures with names attached go to [Legacy of Learning - Columbia Basin Institute](#)



Cranbrook District Teachers' Association      Office Phone: 250 489 3717  
#304, 105 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South      Shelley's Cell 250 421 2565  
Cranbrook, BC V1C 2M1      Email: [lp02@bctf.ca](mailto:lp02@bctf.ca)  
Twitter @SAbalfour      Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CranbrookTeachers/>  
Website: <https://www.cranbrookdistrictteachersassociation.com>

## KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Spring Staffing Starts Soon!! (I know, it's that time already!)

Things to think about: Where do you want to be? What do you want to teach? Do you want to take a leave? Do you want to transfer?

**Section C.5 Layoff/Recall/ Severance in your Collective Agreement** talks about qualifications, Security of Employment, Continuing Teachers' Rights to Recall, Sick Leave, Severance Pay, Application to Part-Time Continuing Teachers, Retraining, Temporary Teachers' Rights to Recall, Temporary Teachers' Recall List, Sick Leave, and Benefits.

**C.19** deals with **Part-Time Teachers' Employment Rights**.

**C.20** covers **Temporary Teachers' Employment Rights**.

**C.21** discusses **Teacher Teaching On Call Hiring Practices**.

If you have any questions about any of the above topics, have a quick read and discuss your options with Shelley sooner than later.

## THE BCTF AND THE LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD

The BCTF filed an application to the Labour Relations Board (LRB) under Section 88 with the hope of to get the government to address the many communication, process, and health and safety problems of their restart plan. The main idea was to enhance enforcement measures to ensure that schools follow the Ministry of Education's guidelines to keep students and teachers safe.

Overall, the recommendations from the Labour Relations Board closely reflect what the BCTF had been seeking. There are recommendations to:

- enhance the role of the Ministry of Education's COVID-19 Steering Committee.
- improve communication and consultation between the various stakeholders.
- require the Ministry of Education to explain the rationale for changes to guidelines or standards and seek input before implementing those changes.
- provide neutral parties from the Labour Relations Board to troubleshoot issues on an expedited basis about problems with the implementation of health and safety measures.
- track the nature of the disputes and the LRB may make recommendations to address recurring issues.



Anyone: what's it like working in education right now?

Everyone working in education right now:



This ornament is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/ExploreDesignsCranbrook/>