

# Cranbrook District Teachers' Association

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Shelley Balfour, President  
Connie Merz, Vice-President



Shelley and Trustee Chris Johns modeling a Bargaining t-shirt- available at the CDTA office!

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## Upcoming Events

- ◆ Oct. 11,12,13,14 Thanksgiving!
- ◆ Oct. 2 - CDTA Executive Meeting
- ◆ Oct. 18-19 EK Zone Meetings
- ◆ Oct. 25 PSA Day

## President's Message

I cannot believe it is the end of September. The last thing I remember with clarity is the Labour Day picnic! It is a bit frightening how fast time is moving! The year has started out very chaotic! It seems that SD5 tried something new this year and didn't place CUPE members until after the school year started which caused a lot of angst for them and us! It has been our suggestion that they don't try that strategy again! It isn't what is best for kids - never mind the adults involved.

As you know, we are in week three without a contract which is just the beginning of a bargaining year in actual fact. In 2014 we were 9 months without a contract before things really heated up! As Robin Tosczak, our BCTF Member-at-Large stated at the CDTA General Meeting last Thursday - it is up to the membership to put the pressure on our elected officials to get the table moving. This could look like - letters to the editor, participating in the BCTF email campaign to connect with your MLA or phoning Mr. Fleming. Because our MLA is from the Liberal party, the emails from us through the BCTF campaign are sent straight to the Premier himself so please take every opportunity to participate in those email campaigns when the BCTF sends them out.

As you may also know, the current Collective Agreement stands until a new one is signed off. This is true for everything except the 192 student contact agreement. We don't have an agreement at this point and I'm not really in the mood to sign anything at this moment as I have many members (all grade 7 elective wheel teachers for instance) who are well over the language in the Collective Agreement. As a matter of fact, we have schools that are actually increasing the student contact count through timetabling rather than staying within the limit. **In my humble opinion - that is not cool!** The district has until September 30<sup>th</sup> to bring some of the counts down from 300 to 192. Further, those teachers who are part-time in those elective wheels should have their student count pro-rated - please make sure yours is.

The dreaded FSA is still with us. Grade 4 & 7 teachers will hand out the letters from the Union on Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. Please support your colleagues through this as they are often the brunt of the controversy. Send disgruntled parents straight to Mr. Rob Fleming at:

[rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca)

## Vice President's



*Hershey at Stanley Glacier,  
Kootenay National Park.*

*“Education is not  
the learning of  
facts, but the  
training of the  
mind to think.”  
Albert Einstein*

Welcome back from what was a fantastic summer holiday! Because of good weather and lack of smoke, many of us were able to get a lot of “fresh-air therapy” and enjoy the outdoors. I, for one, was able to be active and I spent a lot of time in the great outdoors. I haven't felt this good physically and emotionally for about five years. Here's hoping that energy lasts longer than September.

Shelley, Alison Dawson, Leanne Shade, Larry Dureski, Carol Johns, Colette Grasdal, and myself, enjoyed the Summer Conference in Kamloops, August 20 - 25. The focus of the conference was Wellness, Safety, and Balance - three very important ideas as we head into a school year with a good amount of uncertainty. With this in mind, I do hope that everyone keeps their physical and emotional wellness as a top priority. Each school should have a Safety Committee, and if in doubt, Larry (Gordon Terrace) and Victoria (Parkland) are our contacts to answer any questions about your work site physical and personal safety.

Our District EFAP program offers many options to improve one's emotional and physical health. EFAP is a confidential and free - it works to help you work. In your staff room, “The Well Teacher” is a great resource that gives you tidbits to think about to help you stay well. Author Wade Repta offers many simple reminders of self-care to dealing with fatigue. Take a moment to take care of yourself.

With the uncertainty of contract negotiations still in the air, please remember that you have professional autonomy in your classroom and that is a pretty special place! Please, stay healthy, safe, and find that work/life balance to keep you as the awesome teacher you are!

We do amazing work with amazing students under amazing conditions. Pay attention to your personal wellness, safety, and work/life balance so we can continue to educate the leaders of tomorrow, today!

## Health and Safety

Every school must have a Health and Safety committee. This is to make sure that we all work in a safe and healthy environment.

This includes ergonomics! I am shocked at how many teachers use plastic chairs at their desk, have poor lighting, sound, or crazy temperatures in their classrooms. You are entitled to a safe and healthy work environment.

Any concerns should be brought to your Health and Safety staff representative.

To obtain an ergonomic assessment or any other services through Health & Wellness, one can self-refer to the BCTF Health & Wellness at

<https://bctf.ca/wellness/>

Or email Shelley at [lp02@bctf.ca](mailto:lp02@bctf.ca)



## Your Collective Agreement

Our classes are our working conditions.

With this in mind, do remember even though we are in contract negotiations, our Collective Agreement still holds.

Class size language is as follows:

K: 20

K-1: 20

1-3: 22

3-4 split: 24

4-7: 29

4-7 split: 26

Spec. Ed: 14

Senior I.E.\*: 20

Electronics: 22

Junior I.E.\*: 24

Sec. Lang: 27

Foods\*: 24

Science\*: 26

Sec. Eng.: 27

Art\*: 24-28

Drama: 28

Class names used reflect outdated language however, the above numbers are to be followed based on our restored contract.

\*Class size may vary depending on the size of the facility - a facility may not be designed for the number of students outlined above.

**Student Contact Total = 192/year**

**Know your C.A.**

[ps://www.cranbrookdistrictteachersassociation.com/collective-agreement.html](https://www.cranbrookdistrictteachersassociation.com/collective-agreement.html)

## Email Campaign to Government

Across the province parents and teachers have been sending the provincial government and NDP MLAs postcard and emails to express their dissatisfaction with the contract negotiations between BCPSEA and the BCTF.

Use the following link to send a letter to Premier John Horgan. Let him know that public pressure is on him and the NDP government to bargain a contract with BC teachers, one that does not strip away our class size and composition language.

Click on the following link to send a message :

<https://www.bctf.ca/form.aspx?id=54677>

## BCTF AGM Delegation - March 14-17, 2020

At our September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, we elected the following delegates to attend the BCTF AGM in Vancouver.

Shawna Martin-Bodnaruk

Alison Dawson

Mitch Zuvella

Connie Merz

Shelley Balfour

If you have never been to a BCTF AGM, it is a learning experience! It is wonderful to meet and mingle with 800+ teachers from around the province.

It is also enlightening to understand how big a machine the BCTF is and how much work goes on behind the scenes. If you ever wanted to see real democracy in action, this is the place!

If you are in Vancouver at the time, visitors are always welcome!

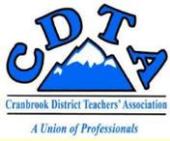


**PLEASE CHECK YOUR BCTF PORTAL FOR UP TO DATE BARGAINING INFORMATION**

You will find all the Employer and BCTF proposals from this site.

If you don't know your BCTF number, please phone Shelley and she will get give it to you so you can log on.





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**We're on the Web!**

<https://www.cranbrookdistrictteachersassociation.com/>

**A Union of  
Professionals**

## Did You Know? There is a lot going on behind the scenes...

Did you know... around the province, school districts are self-auditing their categories for funded students and de-categorizing as they go? This is a way to get around the reinstated Class Size and Composition language brought back in the 2016 Supreme Court Ruling for our working conditions. Our District isn't doing this...yet.

Did you know... around the province, the TTOC extended health benefit plan was terminated and they have been forced into a higher premium plan? A) this is a pretty poor way to treat one's employees, and B) this undermines some already vulnerable workers. The fact that the employer would change anything without consultation is yet again, an erosion of teacher's rights.

Did you know ... around the province we will lose classroom teachers currently employed because of the delays at the Teacher Regulation Branch (a government controlled body). Many teachers were hired based on their submitted paperwork to the TRB. The usual process time is 3 to 6 months but since the Supreme Court win, processing has been as long as 9 months. Rob Fleming believes that the TRB issues have been resolved and he is not going to amend the School Act to extend the deadline to help teachers obtain their certification. All those teachers awaiting certification will lose their jobs as of Oct. 2, 2019.

## E.C. Member Robin Toszczak - Words of Wisdom

On September 19, Executive Committee Member Robin Toszczak came to three schools and our general meeting to give us an update as to what is happening between the BCTF and BCPSEA.

Robin broke things down into four categories:

- 1) Proposals - if you go on to your BCTF portal you can read all the proposals from the union and the employer. Read from the bottom to the top.
- 2) Priorities - the mediator asked both sides to change/review their priorities. BCTF still holds the salary and class size and composition as their priorities.
- 3) Process -We can still keep working with or without a mediator, request arbitration, and there is a lengthy process before the next steps are taken.
- 4) Political Pressure - emails and postcards may seem trivial, but with 40,000 teachers from across the province voicing their unhappiness with the government's handling of our contract, it is effective! Many individuals are also using their Facebook, Twitter, or other social media as outlets to educate the public of what is or is not going on at provincial bargaining, and it is working. Talk to our school trustees - they have influence at our district level.

Don't give up... there is a rigorous process of negotiation and many steps prior to any action.