

Cranbrook Chronicles

Newsletter of the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association
February 2023



Apprenticeship is not so much acquiring a set of skills as it is a process of moving from the edges to the centre of a community of practice. – Lave and Wenger

Vice-President's Message – Larry Dureski

Hello Everyone,

Riddle: How far can a dog go into the woods? *Answer:* Halfway, because after that it is coming out. Welcome to the halfway point. We are now closer to the end of the school year than the beginning. Best wishes to our Secondary colleagues as they begin their second semester while their elementary counterparts plan upcoming “100 Day” activities. I hope you are reviewing this newsletter in a relaxed state and are using this document as the subject of a leisurely scroll. I worked on some of this at home and other parts of it in airports during a recent succession of trips to Vancouver spanning three weekends. The reports from the BCTF Health and Safety Advisory Committee and the Winter Representative Assembly were completed during the trips home while the material was still fresh. I want to keep you in the loop of what is going on without excessive reading, for I understand how busy we all get. This newsletter also features contrasting “viewpoints”, which you will find at the end.

As we venture into our second half, please be vigilant of how you feel overall and do not hesitate to reach out for support (see third bullet in Health and Safety). Yes, this profession is more challenging than ever. Take care of yourself.

President's Message – Shelley Balfour

As Larry stated above, we are just past the half-way point of the year. Some days it seems the year has been a decade long and other days I can't believe we are already in February. We have lots going on in the office – some of the same battles I have been fighting for the past 11 years still return year after year, grievance after grievance which is starting to wear on my nerves ... and some new challenges. One of the new challenges is that Pearl Singer, our Office Manager for the past 17 years has decided to

downsize to just one job now so will be leaving our office for her full-time gig as a Youth Care Worker for the district. She is very sad to leave but I know that she will enjoy only working one job. She has mentioned on occasion how much she loves coming to the office for the peace and quiet after a long day! She has kept us all organized and running smoothly since she arrived. She holds a lot of union history which is very valuable. She will be missed! Pearl has promised to come back to help us with the retirement party this year! Phew! We have a committee which will be working on the job description, advertising, and interviewing for the new person. If you know of anyone who is looking for 15 flexible hours a week, who isn't a teacher and is union minded, let us know.



Secondly, on a purely personal note, these two cuties (and their parents) are moving back to Cranbrook on March 1st. There is lots to be done before that since we found out yesterday. If you know of a house to rent for 4 humans (two very noisy ones) and two felines please let me know. Of course I would love for them to live at my house for the rest of their lives but I am pretty sure my son-in-law would beg to differ! 😊

Information Requested of TTOCs

The following information was requested as newsletter items in a recent TTOC survey. The first inquiry was of District policy around TTOCs. Here is [Administrative Procedure 460](#) which outlines hiring and basic expectations of TTOCs. The other inquiry was about applying for a Provincial Specialist Association membership, as our local Pro-D covers the cost for one membership for each CDTA member.

Administrative Procedure 460 - TEACHERS TEACHING ON CALL (TTOC)

Background

In order to provide a continuous, well-directed education program for students, the District shall employ the best available substitute teachers or instructors in the absence of the regular classroom teacher.

Procedures

1. The District will maintain a list of all TTOC approved for service to the District. Files on all TTOC will be maintained by the District Office. TTOC are expected to file copies of credentials and document any previous teaching experience in the same manner permanent staff must, for salary purposes.
2. Principals becoming aware of teachers teaching-on-call available for work in District schools are asked to convey this information to District Office so necessary approval can be granted by the Director of Instruction/Human Resources.
3. The deployment of teachers teaching-on-call within a particular school is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department as assigned.
4. Cancellation of a booked TTOC is required by 4:00 pm the day prior.

5. TTOC are expected to fit into the organization of the school when they arrive and, in consultation with the Principal, to continue the work and activities that have been planned by the teacher they are replacing.
6. Teachers employed as TTOC must conform as closely as possible to the established routine and discipline procedures of the school. When the Principal expects a TTOC to perform non-instructional duties, the TTOC shall be informed of this at the time of engagement.
7. TTOC are expected to adhere to the same standards of professional conduct as regular teachers including conforming to the Code of Ethics of the B.C. Teachers' Federation.
8. Uncertified TTOC's may be employed if a B.C. certificated teacher is not available for service.
9. When a Principal is aware that a TTOC will be required for a period of twenty (20) or more consecutive days in the same teaching assignment, the Principal shall consult with the Director of Instruction/Human Resources and develop a staffing request for the teaching opportunity.

Reference: Sections 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 65, 85 School Act
Employment Standards Act
Approved: August 15, 2021

Getting Your Locally-Provided Provincial Specialist Association (PSA) Membership

Our current practice is to apply online to the BCTF and get reimbursed by local Pro-D. The registration fee will not be deducted from your personal Pro-D allowance. Go to the BCTF website to review the [list of PSAs](#). When you click on one of the PSA logos, you will be asked to pick a title. Select *Student /TTOC/ Retiree* from this box. The fee amount and "add to cart" will appear. Be sure to print your receipt when you purchase a membership. You will be reimbursed through e-transfer, so write your email address on the receipt. Give a copy of this receipt to Carol Johns or a school site Pro-D rep. If you already have a PSA membership that was provided as part of a conference registration this year, you can apply for another one using this local option. A PSA membership that was paid through conference fees will not be refunded, as that would have already been covered through the regular Pro-D support of chosen activities.

Report from the BCTF Health and Safety Advisory Committee - by Larry Dureski

This nine-member provincial committee (HSAC) met at the BCTF building in Vancouver on January 20 and 21. Much of the discussion included feedback that was received from the Fall Zone meetings. When Health and Safety discrete session notes were compared from the eight Zone meetings that took place around the province in mid-October, the following concerns were the most prevalent:



- *Not enough adults in buildings* – Not only teachers, but EAs, custodial, counselling, psychologists, etc. General staffing shortages have been identified as contributing factors to Health and Safety issues at worksites.
- *Workplace Violence*, including acts of aggressive parents – This was top of the list before the pandemic, fell to the bottom during the school shut-down in 2020 due to nobody in the buildings to commit acts of violence, and is now more prevalent than ever.

- *Teacher stress and burnout* – Teachers are burning out more than ever, having to do too much with too little. Not only is this a contributing factor for health concerns, but also the root of investigations from teachers making questionable decisions while working under stress.
- *Cleanliness* – The custodial hours added during the pandemic have been cut back. Custodians are not being replaced when they are away.
- Lack of violence incident reporting - There is fear of reporting, especially for teachers on temporary contracts. Feeling that reporting makes teachers appear to be ineffective or that nothing happens when a report is filed were reasons given for not reporting workplace violence.
- Lack of Communication in District – This includes the lack of willingness to communicate as well as faulty communication equipment such as internet phones.
- Lack of physical space – Overcrowded workspaces contribute to the spread of illness and disease, and increases the risk of workplace violence.
- Lack of training – There was a noted lack of Health and Safety training opportunities for members of site-based committees as well as for workers in the Education sector.

Michael Kimmis, **BCTF Health and Wellness** coordinator, visited our group to report on member supports available. The Starling Minds program has been revamped to function more as a treatment-based program that is based on participant survey responses. Quarterly webinars have been added to the delivery. Michael recommended this program to all members, well or not. This is a good opportunity to track your scores and improve your lifestyle. About 6000 teachers have signed up. The Living With Balance program has been revamped as the Well Teacher Group. Wade Repta, author of *The Well Teacher*, (copies of this were distributed by the CDTA to each school) has designed workshop sessions for the Well Teacher Group program.

Lockdown vs. Lockout – These terms may have been used interchangeably, but have distinct definitions to a First Responder receiving an emergency call. Lockout is the securing of a building to prevent a perpetrator from entering. A lockdown is initiated when a perpetrator is already in the building and areas need to be secured to prevent access to the spaces within. Ensure that workers are clear about the distinction between these two terms. *** **An idea** from the Peace River North zone addressed having to go into the hallway during a lockdown to fumble with a key to lock the classroom door. The door handle would remain locked, but a latch bolt restrainer consisting of a piece of stiff fabric with two loops would be placed across the spring-loaded bolt and looped over the door handles. This would allow students to come and go during regular classroom activities without getting locked out, but allowed the door to be locked quickly by removing the loops and pulling the door shut from inside the classroom.

HSAC recommendations to the BCTF Executive Committee (EC) have included lobbying the Ministry of Education and Childcare and the BC Teachers Council for basic health and safety training in BC Teacher Education programs. Motions out of this meeting included asking for an analysis of the safeguards for workers (as related to violence in the workplace) in the Education sector and the Health Care sector and developing a pocket-sized quick reference guide for members of procedures that would follow an incident of workplace violence. These motions will become business at a subsequent meeting of the EC.

Report from the Winter Representative Assembly January 27 and 28.



(Photo: The conference room being prepared the evening before)
This meeting took place at the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Richmond. As per Representative Assembly format, this meeting consisted of several short reports as well as a list of business items for discussion and voting. Here are the highlights.

Acknowledgement of First Nations Territory included historical accounts of how the Indigenous settlements in the lower Fraser Valley and Delta areas had to be moved because of how the river would naturally change course due to the buildup of sediment.

Being able to share stories based on events that unfolded in geological time is a reminder of how long these lands have been stewarded by Indigenous peoples.

President Report – Clint Johnson

The teacher shortage is resulting in increasing numbers of uncertified people working as teachers with Letters of Permission (LOPs). No one knows for sure how many LOPs are out there in the province, and the BCTF is grappling with how to support these people who become BCTF members. The number of LOPs and those working as teachers prior to receiving a LOP is also a concern for the BC Teachers' Council.

The new Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Office (ARAOO) is now open at the BCTF.

Pensions Report – COLA for pension payments for 2022 was 4.4 percent, and projected at 6.9 percent for 2023. Since 2003, COLA has increased pension payments by 52 percent to allow those receiving pension to maintain their spending power. The Inflation Adjustment fund is healthy and the outlook for continuing COLA is solid. [Welcome to the Plan](#) is a new feature on the TPP website that allows people to set up their user accounts and use the pension estimator. When using the estimator tool, you can select your age or year of retirement. As the estimator defaults to your current salary, you are able to set the salary prior to running the estimator so that you can factor anticipated salary increases into your calculations.

Pensionable service can also be purchased to fill gaps in your service. You have up to five years from the end of a leave to purchase time or 30 days after resignation. Teachers within one year of retirement can contact the TPP for a personalized appointment.

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Report – The CLC is calling for steps to prevent the misuse of data such as FSA results by the RBC and Fraser Institute. They are also recommending to the Federal government that the voting age be lowered to 16.

Decisions Made

- That the Federation review its FSA campaign strategy by creating a new campaign that engages all members and will be ready for implementation for the 2023-24 school year.
- That the following be investigated with reports and recommendations back to subsequent Representative Assembly meetings:

- The efficacy of developing a comprehensive teacher job demands analyses to be utilized in assisting with the development of better-informed gradual return-to-work plans and WorkSafeBC-modified work plans.
- Addressing teacher workload associated with the Provincial Reporting Order.
- The continued challenges with providing remedy to teachers whose classes do not comply with class-size and composition language.
- That the Federation begin to use the terms “students with disabilities” and/or “people with disabilities” rather than previously-used terms.
- That the federation demand that the Provincial government meaningfully address, in a timely manner, the long waitlists for Autism Spectrum Disorder assessments/diagnosis, Complex Developmental Behaviour Condition, as well as other neurodevelopmental conditions.
- Recommend an unchanged BCTF fee structure to the upcoming AGM for the 2023-24 school year.

Highlights from the January 11th CDTA Executive Meeting

Indigenous Education – Jenn Doll – Teachers are encouraged to review the great [teaching resources](#) available on the BCTF website.

Mentorship – Deleen Adams – A teacher requesting mentorship does not have to be new to the profession. Teachers who are in a new role or wanting to enhance their practice are welcome to apply. Go to the CDTA website for the [application form](#).

Pro-D – Jenn Doll – There will be a **lottery for two new teachers to attend the New Teachers’ Conference** in Nelson, including up to \$600.00 in expenses per person for registration, accommodation, travel, and food. The entry deadline is Feb. 13 with the draw on Feb. 14. New teachers, check your emails for a notice dated January 19th from Shelley for entry instructions.

French Education – Leann Shade – There is Federal Pro-D Funding for Core French teachers to collaborate with other Core French colleagues. This is a one-time grant. Tablets and technology are also available to Core French programs on a first-come, first-served basis.

TTOCs – Liz Jakobsen – Encourages TTOCs to apply for their PSA memberships. This membership fee does not get deducted from a TTOC’s personal Pro-D funding allowance.

CDTA Gets Tech Savvy (Continued) – Although a motion was passed to purchase an “Owl” device (a video camera that automatically turns to the person in the room who is speaking) to facilitate hybrid meetings, no funds have been spent yet on this project. We have been using the recently-installed technology in the United Steelworker’s meeting room, including a camera that tracks who is speaking and a large video display, for our latest Executive meetings to try this equipment. However, there are still difficulties for online participants because of background noise in the room and in seeing in-person participants who are seated farther away. We are hoping to borrow similar equipment to try in our own meeting space before any final decision is made.

Staff Rep Concerns in General

- Lack of existing funding to support high-needs students who transfer in after the Sept. 30. Schools are being forced to reallocate their own EA resources to support these mid-year enrollments or when a non-funded student now needs support.
- SRB information box for TTOCs. Presently, a TTOC chooses to listen to the audio read-out of TTOC notes written in this box. Is there a way of making this a default setting in the SRB program?
- Combination of online and in-person Kindergarten registration is causing confusion, especially in schools where registrations exceed the spots available. When online applications are being received while other parents are coming into the school office, how is it determined as to who gets a place for their child and who does not? Trustees responded with the need to look into this. Kindergarten registration is a parent's first contact with the school system, so this needs to be a positive and welcoming experience.
- There is need for greater collaboration between schools and outside agencies to support students with complex needs. The school system cannot provide all supports in these situations.
- Lack of technology resources for students, too many classes having to share one computer cart.
- Condition of shop spaces putting them in danger of being shut down.
- Student access to artificial intelligence to generate reports, assignments, diagrams, etc. The amount of grammatical and spelling errors can also be pre-selected to give the document an "authentic" look.

Highlights from the February 1st Executive Meeting

The **Coldest Night of the Year** event will take place on Saturday, February 25. Organizers are looking for volunteers and walkers to make this event a success. If you want to walk as a member of a team, consider signing up for the "[The Progressives](#)", a collaboration of the EK Labour Council and the local NDP, or the "[Cranbrook District Teachers and Retired Teachers](#)".

Pro-D - RSA Day organizers have finalized keynote speaker arrangements and the session program will be available to members at the beginning of March.

TTOCs – Reminder to contract teachers to leave information about classroom rules, routines, and expectations. Specific information such as who is exempt from FSAs or if there is an outdoor activity planned is helpful. Also, give a heads-up about students with issues such as behavioural challenges, triggers, personal space concerns, etc., diagnosed or not. A formal Prevention/Staff Response Plan to protect workers from an identified risk of workplace violence must also be available to a TTOC just like how it must be available to any worker in contact with the potentially violent person. If you have not already done so, **record your name on the SRB system**. When a TTOC is contacted by the automated system for a teacher who has not recorded their name, all they hear is "teacher number ____" with no further information about the assignment.

Health and Safety – Training activities have begun for site-based health and safety committees about workplace violence prevention and the protocol for dealing with such situations in SD5. Your Health and Safety Committees will be passing this information on to you during a meeting at your school.

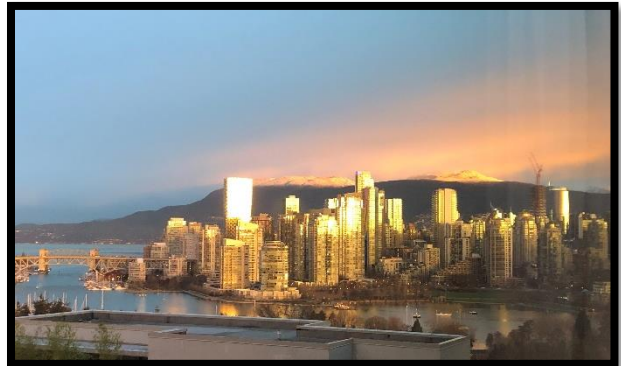
Sub-Committees Struck – To work on a job description for the CDTA Office Manager position and to make updates/amendments to our constitution.

Staff Rep Concerns in General

- Student Services and other supports feeling stretched. Caseloads continue to grow. Services are being removed in one area to deal with arising needs in another. Per-pupil funding does not address all learning needs.
- Disparity of Kindergarten enrollment from one elementary school to another shows the need to adjust catchment area boundaries.
- Closing of shop classes, and students having to change their course selections.
- Ergonomic issues related to teachers using old or broken classroom furniture. See Shelley’s February 6th email about this.

Last Page Feature – Not Every Room Comes with a View

This was the view of Vancouver at sunrise from a fourteenth-floor hotel room on January 21st, including fresh snow on the mountains in the background and this array of colour on the city core. In just a couple of minutes, the buildings lost this golden glow and returned to their daytime colours. This scene did leave me scrambling for my phone to take this photo.



Fast-forward one week to the Winter RA, and I was assigned a room that broke every rule in the safe-travel handbook. This was a ground-level room at the end of a long corridor with an in-room phone that did not work. Note the white shipping container, excavator, and adjacent paved alley. I did not have to rush for my phone in the same manner to capture this less-than-spectacular scene.

View number three: This photo should have not been taken because I should have been home. A delayed flight and a missed connection left me in Calgary overnight when the temperature dipped to minus way-too-much. Made for an interesting sunrise and a chilly trip back to the airport.

