

Cranbrook Chronicles

Newsletter of the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association
June 2023



There is no tired like end of year teacher tired. – Kim Miller

Vice-President's Message – Larry Dureski

Hello Everyone,

If someone makes a comment about “winding down the school year”, they have not witnessed what goes on in schools in June. Is there such thing as a gradual wind-down, or do you find these last couple of weeks to be a full-on acceleration towards a cliff? Even though I have hit “send” on an email to HR and attended subsequent retirement parties, I still find myself in the last push to complete the tasks that need to be done before I close my teachers’ daybook for the last time. Although I have been feeling depleted by the end of a day with students, I worry when I hear my younger (and much younger) colleagues reporting the same experience. Dealing with more complex classes is also the story I hear wherever I have gone this year to participate in BCTF business, so this issue is not just at my school or in this district. What will need to be done to reverse this trend? How long will it take? What would a successful change look like? Not sure. What we do know is that teaching is not getting any easier, and we must somehow work with what we have while advocating for necessary support for the well-being of workers and meeting the present needs of students. An overriding theme from my compilation of Zone Meeting Health and Safety notes is the shortage of adults in buildings. Some locals in my assigned zone reported using an unmentionable number of uncertified teachers and EAs. This is why I would like to continue with my local and BCTF roles into my so-called retirement. There is much work to be done here. I am grateful for all the training opportunities and work experience both here and at the BCTF; and feel that continuing to work on your behalf is a form of payback.

This year, it has worked out that there has been something in these newsletters for members in all stages of their career. If I said I planned it that way, I would be lying. That is just how things worked out. The November issue featured voices of beginning teachers, where this one has something about retirement. At whatever stage, I do wish all of you a summer full of enjoyment, recharging, and relaxation.

President's Message – Shelley Balfour

Congratulations! You are done molding the minds of children for another year! Great news! It has been a very strange year! Lots of ups and down, changes in the President in Fernie and fighting the same fights! I am hoping that the Board Office staff and Principals settle into their new positions, wherever that may be, and we can get back to solving issues in a timely fashion. We currently have 5 grievances which have been accepted for arbitration at the provincial level. It is never dull around here! There is always something up!

We have had some great social events this year and hope to build on those next year. A motion was passed by your executive that will change the way we organize social events in September. Further, there will be shadow positions available for folks interested in being a part of the executive but don't know what it is about. I am looking forward to that. More information to come on those two motions.

I was supposed to be visiting school lunchrooms on Tuesday and Thursdays but for the most part, I just couldn't get there! I'll try hard next year... I promise. Check out the new [pay scale](#) effective July 1. That will be lovely to come back to! Enjoy every moment of your summer! Take a rest, read a book, going kayaking! I am around most of the summer and always check my email and have my phone with me (250-421-2565) so don't hesitate to reach out. I am usually in the office most Tuesday mornings throughout the summer as that is when the postings will be coming out each week. - Shelley

Report from the BCTF Health and Safety Advisory Committee Meeting - June 2-3

This nine-member group (HSAC) met for two days in Vancouver to discuss arising Health and Safety trends. Not surprisingly, workplace violence was the key topic. In a previous meeting, HSAC had passed a motion to the BCTF Executive Committee about developing a quick-reference resource to provide information to workers about reporting and navigating a workplace violence incident. The Executive Committee referred this back to HSAC, asking us to develop the resource. With the variety of local protocols from one district to another (equally effective and complying with Occupational Health and Safety regulation, but not the same), one quick-reference card would not be usable for everyone. An example of a local process is our SD5 three-tier violence protocol flow chart. It follows the Regulation and was developed by local parties to serve the needs in our district but is not used across the province. The quick-reference guide project is now in the hands of the BCTF Graphics Department to develop a template that allows for locals to customize it to their needs and processes.

Also returned from the Executive to HSAC was a motion about doing an analysis to compare the safeguards for workers (as related to violence in the workplace) in the education sector and the health care sector.

A BCTF local in another district had asked their members to participate in a local survey like ours. With an 80 percent participation rate, 49 percent of the respondents were considering leaving the profession in the next two years and young teachers are not feeling prepared for the realities of working in this profession.

Report from the District Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee –

June 9 at the Cranbrook Board Office

Air conditioning units in some schools have broken down. This situation is in part from running the motors harder during the pandemic to circulate more fresh air from outside during heating seasons. A suggestion was made to have parts on hand that are known to break down so repairs could be made in a timely manner.

Feedback has been received about the SD5 Threat/Violence flow chart. Feedback includes suggesting a structure for debriefing, clarifying where forms are sent, and providing roles and contact information at the bottom of the flowchart. A clarification was suggested on the District Threat/Violence form to ensure that there is space to indicate which school or worksite. The Threat/Violence form and the flow chart will be presented at the new worker orientation session at the end of August.

Next year, there is a plan to provide each worksite with new standardized Health and Safety bulletin board materials so that workers going to multiple sites (e.g., TTOCs) can easily access Health and Safety information. There will also be monthly *Safety Moments* sent out next year as easy one-pagers with a different theme each month to help provide essential health and safety information to all workers. A discussion of wildfire smoke included the scheduled changing of filters on existing HVAC units and the portable filtration units purchased during the pandemic to improve indoor air quality. For outdoor air concerns, guidance will be taken from Environment Canada regulations, recommendations, and air quality ratings when planning outdoor activities.

Other items for future consideration included motion-activated safety pins/necklaces for custodial staff and others working alone and review of WorkSafeBC protocols for people doing work on-site after hours or on weekends.

CDTA Retirement Celebration

A very well-attended event took place at the Royal Alexandria Hall on June 14th. A **HUGE shout-out** to Pearl and Jen for putting all this together! Click [here](#) for direct access to the photo album. Thanks to Fred Subra for capturing the moments and making them available to our membership.

Highlights from the June 7th

Executive Meeting

Staff Rep Concerns

- Indoor air temperature during the recent hot weather.
- Outdoor Education funding has dried up. Schools are looking for other opportunities including PACs covering the cost of bussing so students can continue outdoor learning activities.
- Catchment area boundaries – are causing over-enrolment in some schools and under-enrollment in others. However, changing the boundaries is at least a year-long process that involves public consultation so it cannot address present issues.
- Instability of funding for next year – Ministry funding levels cut teaching and support staff to the core for the next year, often closing classrooms. Schools have difficulty in planning for the next year, and fighting for resources has become an annual event each September to regain former



staffing levels. This instability in June and lack of confirmed staffing information also causes anxiety for students over the summer.

Indigenous Education – Jenn Doll – June is National Indigenous month with activities planned from June 17 to 21. Check out the [Teaching Resources Search \(bctf.ca\)](#) page for great resources. The Enhancement agreement will be signed this month. Plans for the September 22 Indigenous Day include questions on the Equity Check in the morning and fun activities in the afternoon. Stay tuned!

Political Action – Julie Bond – attended the Public Education conference on May 12-13 with a focus on responding to hate in communities. A Pride Week event was planned for Saturday, June 10th in Rotary Park.

Social Justice – Janice Marschner- Faces of Pride in Rotary Park on Saturday. Microsoft survey [Suitemoney.ca](#) still has funding opportunities, and it is not too late for your school to apply.

Health and Safety – Larry Dureski/Karen Bidder- Cooling/heating systems are turned off at 4:00 which causes a problem for evening custodial staff and those who come in on weekends.

French Education – Leann Shade – Advocating for literacy supports in the French Immersion program the same way they are provided in other schools.

Pro D – Cara London & Jenn Doll – A Staff Development meeting was held with Pro-D reps from both sides of the district and representation from District management. New RSA Committee roles will be in place for Carmen Bergen and Carol Johns next school year.

TTOC – Elizabeth Jakobsen – Carol Johns organized a TTOC Pro-D on June 2nd, and 30 people attended. Thanks to Carol for putting this together.

What to Expect from SD5 When You Retire

The year will come eventually. You will discover in one way or another what time is best for you to retire. By now, I hope all of you have registered with the [Teachers' Pension Plan](#) at whatever stage of your career. The feature you will probably use the most on that website between now and your "R" date is the pension estimator tool. Earlier-career teachers may find it to be a curiosity to go on and input different retirement dates to see what happens, but those near the top of the seniority list may be using those generated numbers for more through planning.



Here is the SD5 part: Not long after I emailed my notice to HR, I received an email from SD5 inviting me to the District Retirement Social. In that email, I was asked to submit a Retiree Profile that included why

I chose the teaching profession as well as career highlights. The form with the questions was attached. Photos were also welcomed. The next question was whether I wanted a speech to be given, and who I would want to do it. That was easy. This year, six different retirement gifts were offered from which to choose. I emailed back the requested information and waited for the day of the social.

Upon arrival at the Prestige, the chosen venue for this year, I was given my gift at the door. Colourful booklets adorned the tables containing congratulatory notes as well as all the retiree profiles that were submitted. The number of years' service in SD5 was written beside each retiree's name. The party began with a happy hour followed by a very well-prepared dinner. Speeches began after everyone had a chance to try the cheesecake and chocolate mousse desserts. Musical entertainment followed the speeches. I would guess that there will be format changes over the years, but a future retiree's experience will surely contain similar elements.

Wishing all of you a very restful summer break!

Your friends at the CDTA, Shelley, Pearl, Jen, and Larry

