

Cranbrook Chronicles

Newsletter of the Cranbrook District Teachers' Association
October 2021



Happiness is not the absence of problems, it's the ability to deal with them. – Steve Maraboli

Vice-President's Message – Larry Dureski

Hello Colleagues,

Welcome back to our third pandemic-altered school year. I am sure that we are all looking forward to a return to “normal” whenever that will be, and for our new colleagues, experiencing what a normal school year should be. I would like to report one day of “normal” this past summer, which occurred on August 20th. Our band played a summer concert series performance in Armstrong that evening (photo at right), in the narrow window between the rescinding of the wildfire evacuation alert for that area and the reinstatement of COVID restrictions. When I drove back to Cranbrook the next day, I passed Rotary Park to see it completely empty. The Cranbrook concert series event was cancelled due to the new restrictions that took effect just two hours after our band finished in Armstrong. As we work our way into this school year, we continue to navigate guidelines that are always changing to adapt to current situations. At whatever level of experience, this pandemic has posed challenges for all of us along the way. (Do you feel the same way I do about Zoom meetings?)



This newsletter is focused on Health and Safety because that is what I have been doing the last while on our District committee and the Health and Safety Committee of the BCTF. Those committees have been kept very busy as we navigate through these challenging circumstances. There has been no shortage of Health and Safety workshop requests from around the province, and I have had the opportunity to provide some of those (via Zoom, of course).



This Project Learning Tree workshop was one of the local Pro-D opportunities offered on Oct. 22 (Kate Ruoss Photo).

President's Message – Shelley Balfour

My apologies to Larry! He had this newsletter completed a while ago and kept gently reminding me to add my bit but I kept finding myself doing other things. So, here is the October newsletter in November!

I think I have reached my level of frustration this week as evidenced by my letter to the anonymous member today and my Facebook post to the “bust in the door” parents! I was told through anonymous emails (one who took the time to build a new email-concernedparent@gmail) and other posts that I should know better, that I am a poor example to students and that I should be ashamed of my behaviour. I am none of that. I also heard from parents that they had talked to their teacher friends who were also appalled at my behaviour and that I didn't speak for them. True – I wasn't speaking for them! I was speaking out for the teachers who are being harassed, bullied and threatened by parents who believe their children do not have to participate in the COVID19 prevention mandate. I was speaking directly to the bullies! It is more difficult for you as teachers to speak out as there is always the threat of an investigation. I did go into the post the next day, after a fitful sleep and did some edits but still left the message clear - perhaps made it a bit more “professional” as the parents suggested I should 😊. Oh well – I never promised to be well behaved – besides, well behaved women seldom make history as Laurel Thacker Ulrich said!

Our local bargaining team met with the FDTA yesterday and gathered all the language we are looking to bargain to made positive differences in your working lives. We meet again on Monday, November 8th to solidify the plan and then start bargaining with management on Wednesday, November 10th. Mitch Zuvela, our Bargaining Chair will be communicating with you as we progress. We are hoping to be done by mid-February of 2022. March 4th is the deadline to be done local bargaining so that the provincial parties can start their process. This is a different way of doing things so I am hoping it is more efficient.

If you get any grief from parents, administrators or the general public please send them my way – my dukes are up!
- Shelley

Health and Safety Incident Tracking: What we can learn from it

This school year marks the fifth complete year of collecting incident information in our district and charting it to reveal developing trends. The type of incident, nature of and location of injury, and

School Year	Number of all reported Health and Safety incidents
2017/2018	84
2018/2019	35
2019/2020	55
2020/2021	67

worker type have been tracked and charted in this manner since November 2016 when the District Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee (DOHSAC) first convened in its present form. The numbers in this table include both sides of the district and all worker groups. Incidents involving slips (any loss of footing) and being struck by an object (mostly by balls during PE class) have taken the largest slices of the pie chart over these years. In the 2020/2021 school year, slips

and being struck by an object accounted for more than 40 percent of all work-related incidents in SD5. What do these trends mean to us in the workplace? Health and Safety is all about prevention, so we

take corrective actions to eliminate the hazard or minimize it so that the same thing does not happen to others or send you in for Round Two.

With ice and snow season just around the corner, we must be aware of slipping hazards out there. Are we wearing appropriate footwear for such conditions? You will also notice the plowing and sanding efforts at that time to minimize that hazard. Elimination of this hazard would be preferable, but I think that could only be done with a one-way ticket to Scottsdale, AZ.

Other slip/trip hazards involve wet floors, objects on floors like curled carpet corners and extension cords, and from workers engaging in physical activities with students. I am not saying to never play basketball with your students again, but be mindful of the slip, trip, sprain, twist types of injuries that have been reported from situations like this. Be careful out there.

Of all recognized sectors in BC, the Education sector experiences the highest per capita cases on being struck by an object. Of these, most occur in the gym. We cannot eliminate this hazard if we want students to master their backspin for shooting hoops or that overhand serve, but consider positioning yourself to the side of the action or have your back near a wall so you can monitor what quickly comes your way. Outside of the gym, workers have been stuck by items on the top shelf while attempting to get them down. While many classrooms in our district have overhead shelving to provide extra storage, consider putting the lighter objects up there, leaving the heavier supplies in spaces with easier access.

A variety of incidents have been reported over these years, but the two discussed here represent the two trends identified by these data so far. In the workplace, give yourself the time to breathe and consider hazards that could go along with your planned activities for the day. If we all get home with no incidents to report at the end of each day and contribute no numbers to the charts, that would be a great day here in SD5.

Working to Prevent Workplace Violence in SD5

"violence" means the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury. – Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, section 4.27

Over the last year and a half, a Workplace Violence Prevention district working committee has been developing resources and clarifying the protocol for dealing with workplace violence. Some of this work was shared with site based OH&S committee members during the Health and Safety training sessions last winter.

While our working group was discussing protocol and developing flow charts, a multi-stakeholder group (BCTF, BCPSEA, CUPE, BCSTA, WorkSafeBC to name a few) was working toward the same purpose. Their end result was a [Workplace Violence Prevention Toolkit](#), available on the BCTF, BCPSEA, and WorkSafeBC websites. This resource will be most helpful to the district working group as they finish up their work. In the meantime, continue using the District Violence/Threat Report Form on the SD5 portal. Select the Health and Safety icon in your portal, go to Forms, select Violence Threat Report.

Highlights from the CDTA Executive Meeting – October 6, 2021

- First meeting of the local **bargaining team** was on Oct. 15. Local bargaining will be from November to March. Mitch Zuvella will be attending the Provincial Bargaining Conference at the end of October.
- A letter will be going out to staff about **mentorship** opportunities. There are two funding sources available, so members are encouraged to take advantage of this.
- **Pro-D** was working hard to make **online fillable forms** available. This will eliminate the need for the eight hard copies required in the past.
- The **Elementary Pro-D** chair position is currently open. We are looking for members who are interested in taking this on.
- Collective Agreement – the draft (the one ratified from our last round of bargaining) is available on the CDTA website. The final melding is taking place in the third week of October.
- The BCTF offers **free workshops** on various topics, including dealing with difficult school climate or communication. Workshops can be booked [here](#) on the BCTF website.

Dates to Remember

November 10th – Local Bargaining begins

December 3rd – Staying Well at Teaching workshop for teachers – email sent to all members with an invite

Free Classroom Resource – By Larry Dureski



Discussing environmental topics? Feel free to use this two-minute classroom video that shows the effect of wildfire smoke in your introduction or as part of your discussion. I had taken scenery photos in the last few years during travel to attend BCTF Summer Conference in Kamloops (before the pandemic) and to play public performances with the rock band. While travelling the same route during times of heavy smoke, I thought about taking another photo from the same location for comparison. Added an audio track, and here it is.

Access it with this link: [The Impact of Wildfire Smoke](#)