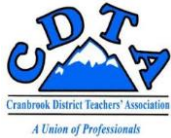


Cranbrook District Teachers' Association

September/October 2020
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President: Shelley Balfour
Vice-President: Connie Merz



President's News

Happy Snow Day and Day before E Day!

I have been trying to write this little piece since I don't know when! Each time I go to open the document, the phone rings, the email bings or a text arrives. It has been a busy opening for sure as you are very well aware of. That is why I am writing this on the snowy afternoon of PSA day when things have been relatively quiet.

As you know, I am heavily involved in the Provincial Election and have been working hard to get Wayne Stetski elected. I am certainly aggravated at the NDP but not enough to welcome the liberals back in! If you haven't voted already, you can go down to the Election office until 8:00 pm tonight with ID and vote or you can show up tomorrow and vote at your designated polling station.

I have avoided coming to the schools since the start only because I am an outsider and not encouraged to be in the schools at lunch, but I will start coming starting November 3rd, 2020 with permission. I will let each school know when I am coming and if people need to see me, you will know to stick around. I know that folks aren't hanging out in the staff rooms (or at least shouldn't be with any more than the space allows for social distancing...) so I'll figure something else out.

We are working with a committee to spend the money that the federal government has allotted to our district. All the suggestions you put forward have been added to the pile. It looks like schools will be given money to spend on things they need and the rest will go to the big ideas such as more human resources for the schools (Custodial, secretarial, EA, YCW).

We have also been working with the district on health & safety protocol updates. We have had a few issues of schools not being cleaned – never mind high touch surfaces which need to be cleaned more frequently. There is a shortage of custodians to take the extra work and a shortage of noon-hour supervisors so if you know of anyone who needs work, there is work available. Noon hour supervisors is an hour a day and are needed more this year because of the staggered lunch hours.

Just a reminder – we are entering the second wave of the pandemic so please try to ensure you are following all the protocols the way you were in September! Kelowna has 160 people out of one of their schools right now for the next two weeks! The SD5 protocol is sitting on the opening page of their website. Make sure you keep yourself updated and safe! - Shelley

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ October 7: Executive Meeting
- ◆ October 9-12: Thanksgiving
- ◆ October 13 - Pro-D Executive Meeting
- ◆ October 16-17: Zone Meetings
- ◆ October 23: Pro- D Day
- ◆ October is Mental Health Awareness Month

Vice President's News

Welcome to start-up number 3 or 4 of 2020!

I hope you all have some left over patience, strength, and humour from your summer break. There were a lot of "what ifs" before and during the holiday and we still seem to have a steady supply coming at us!

Teaching during Covid has not been a wonderful change for many – with new timetables, cohorts, handwashing, supervision, new teaching assignments, even after a month, many of us are left haggard and exhausted just trying to keep up. Thank you for your continued attention and professionalism to education, that exhaustion is you doing a job that most of the world has no understanding of.

Looking forward to this school year, I must make self-care a priority. From all the screen time on Teams, Zoom, or whatever platform, I really need

to update my prescription for new glasses. Fresh air and separation of work and play have to be a bigger priority – how to do that while feeling like a first year teacher all over again will be more difficult because a lot of that energy of youth has faded away. It is more important than ever that personal health and wellness be a priority because come the winter snotty nose season, our roles as educators are going to become a lot more difficult. Except for the lack of money, I often joke that I would rather be on strike than deal with the changing landscape of teaching during Covid. Neither are good situations, especially as this is a whole new experience for everyone!

Please take care of yourself – stay as healthy as you can and if that means taking time – remember, your employer will never thank you for leaving days in your sick bank. And if you don't have days in your sick bank – one can't put a price on personal health.

Take care – Connie ©

BCTF Special Representative Assembly - August 28, 2020

Because of Covid-19, the May Rep Assembly was postponed and a Special RA was held on August 28.

BCTF President Teri Mooring's opening comments highlighted the provincial government's rush to open the schools before the working groups and other bodies could buy in. There was no delay to re-think plans with the Federal government's \$242 million injection into provincial education, no opportunity to create smaller classes, less density, or more teachers.

The email campaign to MLAs was very effective with almost 30,000 BCTF members contacting their MLAs and demanding change.

We are very lucky that the SD5 school trustees are supportive of our teachers – yet we need to continue to remind them that there is more than can be done to help our teachers, our students, our classrooms, and our schools.

The Rep Assembly voted to use the Federal monies to hire more ttocs and itinerant teachers to reduce in-person contacts.

School reopening consultations - That the BCTF urge the ministry to ensure that local health regions are included in consultations with district plans for school reopening.

Melding drafts - That locals be provided individual draft melds as soon as possible for review and adjustment prior to being shared by the BCTF with BCPSEA.



Application pursuant Section 88 to the Labour Relations Code re BC's Covid-19 Response in the Public K-12 Education Sector

School districts from around the province handed in their Health & Safety Guidelines on September 11, 2020 to deal with teaching during Covid-19. Districts were told to align their plans with the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC). The Ministry has created a document that outlines the Health and Safety protocols for schools and in many cases, the Ministry document has better clauses than that of the BCCDC (ie/ masks). The Deputy Minister of Education told Teri Mooring that the BCCDC guidelines are the foundations of the K-12 Guidelines and that in any discrepancy, the Ministry of Education Guidelines will prevail. It is up to the school districts to enforce these Ministry guidelines.

On September 14, 2020, the BCTF wrote to the Minister of Education:

However, anxiety, fear, and stress now significantly outweigh the excitement because of needless uncertainties and inconsistencies created by your Ministry's lack of clear direction on fundamental health and safety issues and on equity of learning opportunities. Because your Ministry failed to issue clear directives, crucial decisions have been left to the discretion of school districts. As a result, we see vastly different policies and practices across the province, resulting in significant inequities for students and staff. This is causing confusion, stress, and a downward slide in working and learning conditions. Today the BCTF is demanding that you immediately rectify these disparities by enforcing consistent measures across the province as follows:

- direct all school districts to provide every BCTF member a face shield.*
- direct all school districts to offer a remote learning option that is available to all students.*
- direct all school districts to provide dedicated staffing for remote option learning programs, rather than adding this work to the existing workload of classroom teachers.*

A part of the introduction of the Section 88 Application:

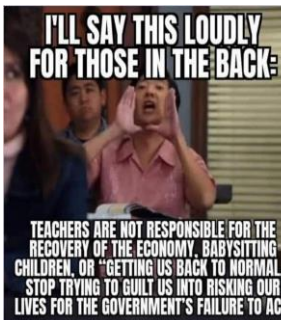
Despite the BCTF urging the Ministry of Education to take the time necessary to develop and implement proper measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure, schools reopened after Labour Day without the full understanding and knowledge of how these measures would operate.

Consequently, there is an extremely high level of confusion among the school Districts about basic safety measures that should have already been put in place. Standards differ between Districts and sometimes conflict with advice previously given or from other agencies.

The BCTF has filed this

Please click here to find a copy of the BCTF Section 88 Application:

<https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/NewsAndEvents/NewsReleases/2020/BCTF%20application%20to%20the%20Labour%20Relations%20Board.pdf>



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When the government first announced their K-12 restart plan on July 29, the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) expressed significant concerns that the plan needed more work. Despite extensive work by the Federation's leadership and 25 classroom teachers on the government's steering committee and working groups, some of teacher's biggest concerns have yet to be addressed.

Across the province, teachers and students are now back in the classroom. To understand their experiences, and to continue to advocate for the health and safety measures necessary to keep our communities safe, the BCTF conducted a quick poll of members between September 17 to 21, 2020. The BCTF received 8,952 responses from across the province.

This local snapshot summarizes responses from Southeast Kootenay. The poll was completed by 57 teachers from the district, including classroom teachers (68%), specialist teachers (23%), teachers teaching on call (5%) and other teaching positions.

Health and safety measures in schools are inadequate

95% of respondents have returned to in-person instruction since September 8, 2020. Of these, only 7% report that health and safety measures at their work site are completely adequate. Adequacy of health and safety measures

	Percentage	Count
Completely inadequate	19%	10
Somewhat inadequate	33%	18
Unsure	9%	5
Somewhat adequate	31%	17
Completely adequate	7%	4
Total	100%	54

More than a Digital Mental Health Solution

Starling Minds™ is a mental health movement that lives inside your organization so you can be the advocate your employees deserve. Our workforce mental health platform eliminates barriers to mental health treatment via digital cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) programs.

Starling Minds is a free program offered by the BCTF which helps one to navigate personal stress, anxiety, and confusion of our teaching world. You may find it a useful tool in your summer recharge!

https://youtu.be/-oN_o2Ykz3o

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

Please click on the Youtube and BCTF Wellness link above to watch a video overview and see if Starling Minds is a good fit for you.

What is Living with Balance?

Living with Balance is a group wellness initiative exclusively for members. Developed and piloted in 2009, the program consists of a series of workshops to provide strategies and skills for living a healthier lifestyle and managing the stressors that exist at home and in the workplace, including:
improving personal well-being understanding our problems and learning to restructure our thinking defining work-life balance and boundaries attaining goals toward wellness understanding the importance of social connections.

When/why would I register for Living with Balance?

The workshop is designed to assist teachers at all stages of their personal and professional lives, including those who are new to the profession or nearing retirement. If you are looking to acquire skills and strategies to make positive, sustainable change in your life, this course is for you. We have a session starting in early November so to find more information online, including the current schedule, and register, go to:

bctf.ca/LivingWithBalance.aspx

Employee and Family Assistance Program

It is estimated that 10 - 15% of all employees experience deeply personal issues in any given year. Some form of emotional distress affects more Canadians than all other health problems combined. This type of distress often affects both employees and their families. Services provided include:
Counselling, Financial & Legal Services - EFAP provides assessment, short-term counselling, referral, case management, and follow-up services....

Wellness Services - EFAP provides a wealth of wellness services designed to complement and enhance our in-person and virtual counselling services...

Individual Consultation, Management Consultation & Group Services - EFAP is available to provide guidance and consultation, and to help develop specific strategies to address workplace situations...

Critical Incident Stress Management Services - A critical incident is an event taking place that causes a powerful emotional reaction...

www.fseap.bc.ca

Created by Connie Merz - if you have any questions or suggestions, please send them to llp02@bctf.ca