

The Advocate

In consensus atque unitate stat potential - "There is strength in unity"

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER (MAYBE)

ISSUE NO. 2 - APRIL 2015

President's Message:

THE NEXT ATTACK ON TEACHERS? FASSBENDER'S BILL 11 & WHAT IT MAY MEAN FOR ALL OF US.

According to Minister Fassbender the amendments in Bill 11:

- Enable the development and implementation of an improved accountability system.
- Support the implementation of shared service initiatives.
- Modernize the requirements related to the use of students' personal information.
- Establish a continuing professional development framework for all certified teachers.

Among all of these items, each with their own problems and shortcomings, Bill 11 creates a framework for introducing an entirely new requirement for annual professional development for teachers as a condition of certification. The new regime involves the Minister unilaterally setting standards for continuing education. The Minister has exclusive authority to set the minimum number of hours of professional development and determine the categories of activities which must be included in professional development. The Minister also has exclusive authority to determine classes of certificate holders with differing professional development requirements.

Some problems with the proposed regime:

- Unprecedented (for any profession) direct control by the Minister and Minister appointees of ongoing professional development.
- The amendments contain no checks or balances against unreasonable exercises of Ministerial power.
- The ability to create different requirements for different "classes" of certificate holders enables the

Minister to impose more onerous or more prescriptive requirements on those teaching in a particular teaching area or a particular geographical region.

- Ignores the collaborative structures already in place for continuing professional development for teachers.

- Does not provide for any role for teachers or university education faculties in determining what professional development is needed or how it is delivered.

- It will likely require an elaborate resource intensive bureaucracy to monitor teacher professional development activities.

- There has been no suggestion of additional funding for professional development. This will pressure teachers to use their existing professional development days in a manner directed by the Minister.

My hope is that we see this attack on PD for what it may be; a red herring designed to have teachers rail publicly against any change to the current practice. There is already great public misunderstanding about what PD days are used for, where they originated, and why they occur every school year. Instead of trying to defend what we know to be important, we might be better served to continue to advocate for the betterment of student learning and public education, and point out that the government is deliberately underfunding and degrading the system for ideological reasons. Professional development will always remain crucial because it helps teachers teach better, and in turn students learn as much as they possibly can. This truism won't change even with Fassbender's meddling. For further information visit bctf.ca



The AGM

The recent BCTF AGM was attended by 20 fabulous delegates from Abbotsford, all of whom gave up a portion of their spring break to help conduct the business of the BCTF.

The majority of the AGM voted in favour of the Executive Committee and Representative Assembly's recommendation to keep the BCTF membership fee at 1.79% for members working on contract. It was argued that keeping the fee status quo will allow the Federation to rebuild its funds, restore some of the member engagement activities such as zone meetings, and begin saving for the next round of bargaining in 2019. The AGM also voted in favour of increasing the fee for TTOCs. TTOCs will continue to pay a reduced fee, though it will now be set at 1.0%-a mid-point between the previous TTOC fee and what members on contract contribute.

Other recommendations and resolutions debated include:

- *Teacher Regulation Branch and discipline*
- *the need for funded in-service and resources to support curriculum implementation-in particular the implementation of the enhanced Aboriginal content*
- *support for childcare and other public services in the context of the upcoming federal election*
- *furthering our work on child poverty*
- *Code of Ethics changes*
- *the purchase of union-made goods*
- *the province's proposed tax credit for coaches*
- *two-year membership pilot for PSAs.*

Once AGM minutes are finalized, they will be posted in the BCTF portal for all members to view. Please have a look to see the full range of issues debated and brought forward by members from around the province.

Pro-D Opportunities Around the Province

For a variety of upcoming PD opportunities please visit <http://www.bctf.ca/PDcalendar/>

ADTA Bursaries

If you have a son or daughter currently in grade 12 and graduating this spring, you will want to have them apply for the ADTA bursary. Each year the ADTA provides up to 6 bursaries of \$1000 each. Please contact the ADTA for an application package and remember that the deadline for submission at the ADTA office is April 15, 2015.

TeachBC



What is TeachBC?

- An online resource of teaching materials, lessons, and research relevant to the K-12 BC curriculum.
- Allows teachers to download, upload, and share resources

Who Can Use It?

- The website is public and open to anyone through the generosity of BC public school teachers.
- Anyone can browse and download the resources for classroom or professional use.
- Teachers and organizations can share their teaching resources or educational research by registering and uploading their material or providing links. Browsing is easy. Users can search by subject, grade, resource type, title, description, language, and more.

FSA's

Thank you to all grade 4 & 7 teachers who lived through another year of the FSA conflagration.

Contact

Please contact Doug Smuland or Jennifer Brooks if you have any comments, questions or concerns; or if you'd like, invite us to visit your school. You can reach us at the ADTA at 604-854-1946.

Important Dates

April 1 st	District Finances Discussed with SD#34 Secretary Treasurer Ray Velestuk. 4PM at the ADTA
April 14 th	Deadline for nominations for Pres/Vice-President
April 15 th	Staff Rep Meeting 4PM at the ADTA
April 30 th	Deadline for ADTA Constitutional changes
May 4 th	Executive Meeting
May 8 th	Non-Instructional Day #5
May 20 th	ADTA AGM
June 1 st	Non-Instructional Day #6
June 8 th	Executive Meeting
June 10 th	Staff Rep Meeting
June 26 th	ADTA Retirement Gala (and last day of school)