

# The Advocate

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

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER (MAYBE)

ISSUE NO. 7 - JANUARY 2016

## President's Message

### Welcome Back - A Proposed New School Calendar

As semester one draws to a close in our high schools it shouldn't be too long until Spring Break is upon us; and that brings us to the annual deliberation and Board decision on the school calendar for the coming year. As you may have already seen, in a slight twist to the usual the District is proposing two options for each of the next two school years. For the 2016-2017 school year, the two options have very different schedules in terms of days set aside for parent/teacher interviews and early dismissal days. The CA outlines 4 x 1-hour early dismissals and 2 x ½ days for parent teacher interviews, and that is what is reflected in one of the options. The other option combines two of the 1-hour early dismissals along with one of the ½ day parent teacher days to form a full day for parent teacher interviews. This would be repeated again in the spring, thus creating 2 full workdays in the calendar set aside for parent teacher interviews. This would not eliminate evening parent teacher interviews being added on to each of these days as the District believes evening sessions are valuable; it is unclear, however, if a 12-hour work day is also seen as valuable. Teachers should also note that the ADTA continues to interpret the 1-hour early dismissals as teacher directed time to facilitate future meetings with parents and not necessarily as time for the interview with parents themselves. I would encourage you to consider the pros and cons of both these two options and let me know what your preference might be.

Cheers, Doug Smuland

### BCTF looking forward to opportunity to have case heard by Supreme Court of Canada

The Supreme Court of Canada's decision to hear the BCTF's appeal of the 2015 BC Court of Appeal ruling is a very important step in the ongoing legal process and we are pleased to have the opportunity to present our arguments to the nation's highest court, BC Teachers' Federation President Jim Iker says.

"It's been 14 years since the original unconstitutional legislation that stripped our collective agreements, but BC teachers are still very committed to our efforts to win back those important working conditions for teachers, which are also our students' learning conditions," said Iker.

This ongoing case dates back to 2002 when the government stripped teachers' collective agreements by legislation. In 2011, the BCTF won at BC Supreme Court when that legislation was declared unconstitutional. That decision was never appealed. However, the government enacted another piece of legislation that was substantially similar in 2012, which we again challenged in Court. In 2014, there was a new decision at the BC Supreme Court that ordered restoration of the stripped language. In 2015, the BC Court of Appeal overturned the 2014 decision, but that ruling did not affect teacher's bargaining rights won back in 2011.

"BC teachers have the right to bargain class size, class composition, and staffing levels like ratios for specialist teachers. We won that right back

following our first BC Supreme Court victory in 2011, a ruling that the government never appealed. Going forward, the BC Teachers' Federation will continue to use the collective bargaining process to achieve better working conditions for teachers and better learning conditions for our students."

Iker emphasized that government should not wait until the court processes are finished and act now to properly fund public education and address teachers' longstanding concerns. "A month from now, the BC Liberal government will deliver its 2016 budget. Enrolment is starting to increase after years of decline and we know there are more students with special needs, refugee students, and others with unique needs entering the system. This is the year for government to make a real shift. It's time to invest in BC's kids again."

## **Curriculum Change**

The District Curriculum Committee met at the ADTA Hall last Friday to work on the structure of the curriculum day for February 5<sup>th</sup>. The following outlines some answers to questions you might have about these two non-instructional days.

### **Background**

Curriculum change has been a collaborative process involving teachers and Ministry of Education staff. Teams of teachers appointed by the BCTF, the Federation of Independent Schools, and the First Nations Schools Association have worked collaboratively, with Ministry staff facilitating, to update the K-9 curriculum. Work on the first drafts of the new Grades 10-12 curriculum is expected by the end of August. This curriculum change is an initiative of the Ministry and involves revision in every subject area across all grade levels.

### **Why do we need new curriculum?**

In general, the revisions are intended to make the curriculum more manageable for teachers, and to provide more opportunities for teachers and students to focus on particular topics of interest in their schools and communities. The learning outcomes in several subject areas have been reduced, thus providing more time and flexibility to explore topics in depth. Currently, there are 11 curriculum areas and new core

competencies posted on the Ministry's Transforming Curriculum and Assessment website.

### **What is the purpose of the additional NIDs?**

The purpose of the two additional NIDs is to provide teachers with the time and space to go through the new curriculum and begin preparing with their colleagues for adjustments that need to be made.

### **Who makes the decisions about the content and structure of two NIDs?**

The teachers who plan the two NIDs have been working to collaboratively decide on the design, structure, and content of the days. The agreement with the Ministry is that the planning be teacher-led collaboration, which in Abbotsford it has very much been so.

The options for teachers on the first NID will be based on a grade division for K to 7 (with 6 & 7 combined), and a subject division for grades 8 to 12.

### **Is this a ProD Day?**

No, this day is not a professional development day, and as such all teachers are required to attend a session on February 5<sup>th</sup> if it is their normal workday.

Members will choose which presentation to attend, and will register through the District's EventBrite system. Further information and the opening of registration will follow this memo.

### **What will these sessions look like?**

All sessions will have a shared component at the beginning on Why there is a need for the change and What that change will look like that will be common for all sites, followed by an organizational structure arranged by the group's facilitators on How teachers can best use the revised curriculum within their subject/grade level.

### **I teach multiple subjects/grades, what session should I sign-up for?**

Members will decide what subject/grade session they are most interested in attending.

**Where will these events be held?**

They will be held at a number of school sites around the District. The specific locations will be determined after the number of participants in each level is confirmed.

**What if I don't normally work on Fridays?**

Teachers who do not normally work on Friday's as well as TTOCs are welcome to attend, but the District will not be providing pay should you make that decision.

**What time does the day start and end?**

The day will begin at 8:30 and end at 2:30 with a lunch hour within this schedule. Lunch will be the member's own responsibility.

**What is happening on the next curriculum day on Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>?**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> curriculum day will be planned after the conclusion of the 1<sup>st</sup> and after there has been opportunity for the collection of teachers' responses and suggestions for what would be most valuable.

Your questions and concerns can be directed to the ADTA

**Paid Education Leave?**

Remember, these applications have a January 30<sup>th</sup> due date if you are interested in applying.

**BCTF AGM 2016**

At our general meeting last Wednesday there needed to be a vote held to elect delegates to the upcoming BCTF AGM in March during spring break.

Please take the time to discuss with any of our delegates your thoughts on the resolutions that are to be discussed, including the impending changes to the teachers' pension plan. The following members have let their names stand and will be attending on your behalf.

- Ken Ambrose
- Meagan Ambrose
- Jef Baerg
- Jennifer Brooks
- Harjinder Dhaliwal
- Joanne Duran
- Harry Hautakoski

- Teresa Hootz
- Teena Hubler
- Sharon Kehoe
- Liane Loeppky
- Angeline Mushumanski
- Jane O'Keeffe
- Robin Price
- Sylvia Rempel
- Jennifer Simpson
- Doug Smuland
- Rene St. Martin
- Charlotte Tommy

There is a need to elect one additional delegate. If interested, please contact Jennifer Brooks at the ADTA office. Should it be needed, a vote will occur at the February 3rd General Meeting.

**FSAs**

If you are teaching grades 4 or 7 you are aware that the FSAs have been put upon us once again. In regard to teachers' roles in administrating and marking the FSAs, the following BCTF advice may be helpful.

**1. Administering FSAs**

Since the Federation voted to comply with an LRB order in 2009, teachers are expected to administer the FSA tests. However, practice varies considerably from school to school around the province, which includes cases of administrators overseeing the administration of the tests in instances where there are split (3/4 or 4/5) or multi-grade classes and those students not writing the FSA who require teacher supervision. It is the responsibility of school-based administrators to organize the tests, not teachers. However, in the case where a proposed schedule does not work for a particular teacher, it should not be viewed as organizing or supporting the FSAs if a teacher works with an administrator to secure a schedule that works for the teacher.

In addition, teachers should not feel pressured to prepare students with FSA practice tests. Rather, teachers should reassure students that the test marks will not affect their report cards, and they should not worry if there is something they don't know or can't answer.

**2. Marking FSAs**

Although there is no current specific BCTF policy in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF* regarding marking FSA tests, both the Federation and many locals have strongly discouraged teachers from taking part in the marking process.

Many feel that marking FSA tests legitimizes them and this is seen by some members as a matter “prejudicial to ...collective strategies ... of the union.” (Code of Ethics #8.) Some members view FSA marking by colleagues as undermining union solidarity.

Given that teacher markers tend to be TTOCs, who are often underemployed, the Federation is not prepared to make a blanket condemnation of marking FSAs, especially since it runs up against the principle of teacher autonomy.

In conclusion, teachers administer the FSA tests, but are not required to schedule them or deal with the logistics of split or multi-grade classes.

**The ADTA has been informed that teachers in Abbotsford will be expected to mark FSAs and that the District will be providing a TTOC in order for this to be completed.**

You may also want to distribute information to parents about the limited value of these tests for students and how parents can withdraw their children from participation. If so, please contact the ADTA as there are rules that govern the distribution of material to parents in relation to the FSAs.

### **Committee Opportunities District Committee**

The District is planning to reinstate the *Special Education Advisory Committee* this year with a name change to the *Advisory for Inclusive Education*. We need to have 4 reps from the ADTA on this committee. Please see the attached description for the committee, and if interested submit an ADTA committee membership application by Friday, January 22, 2016. The committee is scheduled to meet three times each year.

Applications can be found on the ADTA website at [www.adta.bc.ca](http://www.adta.bc.ca)

### **Curriculum Committee**

The ADTA Executive endorsed 34 members to sit on the Curriculum Committee. This committee will plan and facilitate the two district wide curriculum implementation days on February 5<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Many thanks to the many members that put application in for this committee we had far greater applications than available positions.

The ADTA Executive endorsed the following members:

Jennifer Cox	Andrew Matty
Deirdre DeGagne	Brandy McIntyre
Jeff Dunton	Michelle Middleton
Jennifer Dyck	Angela Montgomery
Kyle Featherstone	John Munro
Ravinder Gill	Michelle Myers
Bruce Glum	Ian Newton
Kelly Grant	Jill Omichinski
Duncan Hazelwood	Katja Rossi
Peggy Janicki	Dyanne Shriener
Brenda Kawasaki	Christine Seymour
Matthew Kosloski	Sandra Van Hove
Nadia Lee	Deb Varnes
Maralee Lincoln	Janet Wade
Liane Loeppky	Kathleen Weinkam
Monica Little	Karl Wodtke
Shannon Manky	Becky Wyse

### **District Technology - IT Road Map Committee**

The District Technology Planning Committee will be focused on how technology can be used in classrooms for education and administrative tasks. The ADTA Executive endorsed the following members for the IT Road Map Committee:

Kristi Anderton	Sharon D'Souza
Megan Bocker	Matthew Kosloski
Florence Colquhoun	Kristina Recktenwald
Janelle Dick	Douglas Williams

### **BCTF Committee**

The BC Teachers' Federation is facilitating a one-day Graduation Requirements Summit in order to inform and shape our brief to the Minister of Education on graduation requirements. As well as representatives from specific BCTF advisory committees, the BCTF is including space for 10 additional secondary teachers. Please consider applying if you are a secondary teacher and want to participate in the Summit.

Date: February 18, 2016  
Location: BCTF Building  
100-550 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC

### **Criteria:**

- experience teaching Grades 8-12
- knowledge of current graduation requirements
- representation from cross-section of curricula areas

- secondary school support specialists/teachers are encouraged to apply
- balance of diversity-gender, regional representation, etc. will be sought.

The BCTF will cover costs, including travel and accommodation expenses and the cost of TTOCs.

***The application deadline is 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2016.***

Complete the [Graduation Requirement Review CV Form](#) and fax to 604-871-2286, or email your application to [mhope@bctf.ca](mailto:mhope@bctf.ca) Jinny Sims with direct enquiries: [jsims@bctf.ca](mailto:jsims@bctf.ca) 604.871.1849, or 1.800.663.9163, local 1849.

### **ADTA PD Opportunities**

The ADTA's PD event on the February 2016 PD day focusing on staying well at teaching is now full. Further information for those who registered will follow shortly.

### **Abbotsford Virtual School Certification Course**

AVS is now accepting registrations for its Virtual School Certification program.

Registration deadline: Friday, April 1st @ 4 pm

Please contact 604.859.9803 or email [brad\\_hutchinson@sd34.bc.ca](mailto:brad_hutchinson@sd34.bc.ca) for more information.

### **BCTF Pension**

The School Board should have by now received and likely have sent to all members a communication from the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees (TPBT) directed to active members of the plan. It is expected that School Boards will send this communication to all members of the plan.

In summary, for the first time since the TPP became a defined benefit pension plan in 1941, we are in the enviable position of the current valuation showing a surplus of \$449 Million. As previously planned in the Joint Trust Agreement established in 2001, a series of steps occur when we are in a surplus position. For active member and retirees, there is an immediate strengthening

of the Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) funding.

Happy Retirement Planning!

### **News from your ADTA Executive Chairs**

#### **TTOC Rep**

Sylvia Rempel

Hello TTOCs! If you were working for the district in April, \$80 was removed automatically from your pay for Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) fees on the pay stub from April 10, 2015. Keep a record of the TOC days that you have worked since the start of the school year (days of contract work don't count) – once you have worked 40 TOC days for the district, counting from the start of the 2015/2016 school year in September, you may request that this fee be refunded to you. To do so, submit/email the written request and your pay stubs showing the 40 days worked to Ben Harrison ([Ben.Harrison@sd34.bc.ca](mailto:Ben.Harrison@sd34.bc.ca)) in Payroll.

If you were not working for the district in April, you have probably paid the TRB fees yourself since they were not automatically deducted. In this case, include a copy of your payment receipt with the request.

#### **Health and Safety Rep**

Pat Smith

More and more questions of what violence or threats for violence looks like in the school and classroom setting is arising. There is a responsibility for teachers to report incidents in writing using the appropriate forms not only to protect themselves but to ensure a safe environment for others as well. Safety trumps privacy is another message that teachers need to be aware of when put in a position that involves working with students or parents that may have safety related issues.

For further information, please click on <http://www.worksafebc.com> – publications – posters – education sector – rights and responsibilities

## **BCTF Conference for New Teachers, New TTOCs, and Student Teachers**

Registration for the BCTF New Teachers, New TTOCs, and Student Teachers' Conference to be held at the Radisson Hotel in Richmond on **February 26 and 27** is open.

To register please click on [Registration Form](#)

## **ADTA Hours**

The ADTA office is open Monday to Friday  
8:30 to 4:30

Address: 2570 Cyril Street  
Phone: 604.854.1946

## **Important Dates**

### **January**

29/30 BCTF Rep Assembly (Vancouver)

### **February**

- 1 ADTA Executive Mtg @ 3:30
- 3 ADTA General Mtg @ 4:00 (ADTA Hall)
- 8 Family Day (Office Closed)
- 17 Job Share/Job Exchange Information Mtg @ 4:00 (ADTA Hall)
- 17 Fraser Valley Labour Council Mtg @ 7:00
- 19 Non Instructional Day # 4
- 23 Retired Teachers Executive Mtg