

The NOSTA Rattler

November 2009
Volume 2, Issue 2

Local 83 of the British Columbia Teachers Federation



Upcoming NOSTA Events

- Nov 27 - Pro-D day
- Dec 3 - TTOC social at Setter's 4:30pm
- Dec 7 - Exec Meeting
- Dec 14 - LRA meeting at DEC
- Dec 16 - Pro-D committee meeting
- Dec 17 - Winter Celebration @ the Art Gallery
- Dec 18 - last day before winter break
- Jan 4 - first day back in 2010
- Jan 15 - Rattler Deadline

Recommended Resources & Pro-D

- www.BCTF.ca
- www.sd83.bc.ca
- www.assessmentinst.com
- <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/edu/index-eng.htm>

The President's Message

Our newly printed collective agreement for 2006 -2011 has been delivered to all school sites. Your school staff rep should have a copy for you. If you are a TTOC, there are extra copies at each school site, at the NOSTA office and at the School Board office. If you are a new teacher, the district is required by the terms of the collective agreement to supply you a copy. When you have an extra moment or two, take the time to familiarize yourself with your collective agreement. Ensure that you know your rights. If you have questions, ask your staff rep or call us at the NOSTA office. Staff Reps and Administrators attended a joint meeting on Thursday, Nov. 19 to review the collective agreement.

At this meeting on Thursday, staff reps and administrators also had the opportunity to review a new document in draft form titled "A Framework for Teaching: Criteria for Formative Growth and Summative Evaluation of Teachers. This document is the result of two years of work by a committee of teachers, school administrators and Central Staff. The goal was to establish commonly accepted criteria for good teaching in order to provide greater clarity to discussions about both the growth and evaluation of teachers. While this document may be used in formal teacher evaluation to inform that process, the main purpose of the document is to assist teachers in reflecting on their practice using the criteria within the document. After you have had the opportunity

to review the document, NOSTA would appreciate your feedback.

On October 22, a group of teachers, CUPE members, trustees, administrators and Central staff met to begin the discussions on the "District We Want to Be". The meeting was facilitated by Judy Anderson and Teresa Rosen. We listened to Judy explain about the Life Cycle of Organizations, and to Doug Pearson who explained the process involved in identifying our district's current core values and beliefs. We talked about our own roles and how we felt others viewed our roles and began the discussion as to what we would like to see in our relationships with other members of our school community. The planning group for this session met afterwards to review feedback and heard that participants felt that the discussions needed to be expanded to the greater school community and also include parents and students. They saw the need to share our issues with each other and find common understandings and beliefs and find effective and respectful ways to address our conflicts with each other. No doubt this is a massive undertaking, however, most of the feedback indicated the desire and interest to move forward.

Lynda Bennett
President

All Day Kindergarten

The BC Ministry of Education has decided that All Day Kindergarten (ADK) will be offered to half of the kindergarten students in the province in September 2010 and to all in September 2011. All school districts were asked to put forward proposals indicating which schools in their district had demonstrable need and also adequate space to provide all day kindergarten for Sept. 2010. Our district is one of the needier in the province according to various measures including the Early Developmental Index (EDI) and the School Board is hoping that the Ministry will allow all schools in our district to offer the ADK this September. We are currently awaiting the Ministry's decision.

Dalton McGinty, the Premier of Ontario, is also pushing for ADK. As it is very expensive, the suggestion was to have certified teachers teach morning kindergarten and ECE (Early Childhood Education) specialists take the class in the afternoon. This option did not sit well with many, so the government agreed to employ teachers for the ADK. However, this was going to cost quite a bit more, so in order to fund the ADK, class size for kindergarten is to be increased to 26. One wonders how much this increase in class size will impact the potential benefits of the All Day Kindergarten.

Living With Balance

Please note that this program has been postponed until January 2010 - if you have registered or are interested in attending, the information is in the first edition of the NOSTA Rattler. You can also phone the NOSTA office.

Consequences of the focus on Standardized Tests

The following is from the October issue of Harper's magazine (P.25) Please note that these are from papers by grade 4 students - whose teachers may have been feeling the pressure of standardized testing and perhaps "helped" their students by supplying plots or phrases to memorize:

One quintessential,
supersonic day...

In the blink of an eye, Sally
and I were perambulating
home...

I ran as fast as wildfire.
Then neon colors encircle me...

A kaleidoscope of colors
encircled me ...

As nervous as a marshmallow
in a bonfire...

Consultation Process - Bill 33

Following a meeting between BCTF and BCPSEA (BC Public School Employers Association) on October 28, 2009, BCPSEA sent out info to Bards to clarify the yearlong consultation process:

1. any increases in class size/composition over the legislated limits AT ANY TIME during the year requires further consultation/consent,
2. compliance with district class size average limits

- must be maintained throughout the year,
3. K-3 class size limits must be maintained throughout the school year,

In addition, BCPSEA advises Boards that they should provide locals the September 30 class size and composition data submitted to the ministry.

Note: If your class does not exceed legislated limits but you have concerns, talk with your administrator. The consultation process does not preclude the meetings that should take place whenever a teacher has concerns about her/his class.

Minimum Wage

November 1 was the 8 year mark - the last time the minimum wage was raised in BC. Not only was the wage frozen at \$8.00/hour at that point, a training wage of \$6.00/hour was introduced. BC's minimum wage has gone from the highest in Canada to the lowest. More than 60,000 British Columbians earn the minimum wage and 293,00 earn \$10 or less. BC is the only province that has not raised its minimum wage in the last year. Less than one third of all minimum wage earners are teenagers.

For more info, call Jessie Uppal at the BC Federation of Labour at 604-430-1421 Also note that the BC Government has set aside \$30 million for bonuses for VANOC (Olympics)

New Teacher Induction

On the evening of....., after the AGM, the New Teacher Induction was held at the DEC. It was a lovely event, with music by Gordon Water's SAS Jazz Combo and a wonderful food by The Other People. However, the highlight was welcoming a large number of new teachers to School District 83 and NOSTA, many of whom are alumni of the district. If you see any of these teachers, please welcome them.

Curtis Bellows, Rachel Bird, Giles Borland, David Brosseau, Jessica Clarck, Bryce de Dood, Laurel Eckhoff-McPherson, Carole Fleetham, Mara Ganten, Sierra Haw, Holy Kallies, Caroline Krieger, Tracy Larson, Sian Lawson, Carey Lelond, Jesse McMillan, Ashley Mazur, Corrin Meither, Oakley Muchow, Safeta Mujkic, Brenda O'Dell, Bronwyn Pedersen, Katie Taber, Rory Taber, Chelsey Tarnow, Nicole Tompkins, Sandra Treat, Charles Vallejo, Ingrid van Varseveld, Sarad Ward, Maria Waring, Amanda Warn.

Employment Equity for Aboriginal Teachers

by Deb Hooper

The BCTF is committed to work toward employment equity for Aboriginal Education in British Columbia. Five school districts in the province have employment equity programs in place. NOSTA is researching information at this point and will soon begin discussions.

Health and Safety Reps

If you were unable to attend the training on October 7, a repeat session is being held on November 26 at DEC. This is a full day workshop - please contact the NOSTA office to register.

The NOSTA Executive 2009-10

President: Lynda Bennett

1st Vice: Brenda O'Dell

2nd Vice: Graham Gomme

Secretary: Heather McDonald

Treasurer:

Local Assembly Reps:

Sandra Arthurson, Gwen Beach, Doug Brown

Bargaining: Salle Manning, Betty Ross

Aboriginal Education:

Debbie Hooper

Pro-D: Christina McDermott

Member Involvement:

Maxine Davis

Communications: Amanda Bowlby

Social Justice: Meredith Rusk

Health and Safety:

Christine Peel

TTOC: Caroline Krieger

Know your Contract

Hopefully, you have read the article on prep time from our last issue of the Rattler. If you are part time, make sure you are receiving the minimum prep due to you by contract. More is fine, but the minimum as stated in our contract is what the employer is obligated to give you.

As the contract is silent on how ProD days and staff meetings affect part time teachers, and what supervision looks like for

different teachers at different work sites, we are beginning discussions on your behalf, with Central Staff to come to common understandings. If you have questions, concerns or information which you think may be useful, please call the NOSTA office.

Section G Leaves of Absence

Article G.25 Leaves - Other (page 76)

Note the types of leaves listed in this article - examination, convocation of immediate family member, competitions,

citizenship, marriage, and educational activities. While these are leaves with pay, some are at the cost of a TTOC. The maximum number of days per school year for leaves under this article is 5. This is the section where "Personal Leave" is located. You are entitled to 2 days personal leave each school year - no questions asked.



YOUR PENSION

Your Pension - the Indexing Dilemma

Rob Taylor, who works in Pensions at the BCTF, came to town with his Pension Presentation. He did an amazing job with a very dry subject. The presentation is online and would be a worthwhile exercise for all members who contribute to the Pension Plan - this includes you. Rob explained that our Basic Pension is secure but the IAA, the part that funds indexing our pension - which means increasing the amount of our pension based on increases to the cost of living - is not guaranteed. Without indexing, the pension you receive at retirement will stay the same - so as the cost of living increases, the money you have available will buy less and less, so your standard of living will decrease.

The presentation can be accessed by going to www.bctf.ca, then click on the Teachers bar at the left side of the screen, then Salary and Benefits, then, under Benefits, click on pensions, and in the top box, click on pensions consultation page, and go to Your pension: The future is worth thinking about. Rob feels the best option is the 4% increase for members which would be matched with a 4% increase by the employer. More information can be found in the latest edition of Teacher magazine.



Reminder: Review your Pay Category and Experience Increment on your pay slip. Errors do occur and it is your responsibility to check. Note: you can gain experience credit for work in private schools and experience outside teaching - Contract Article B22.4.d and e, page30

Submissions

Do you have a funny story? Have you come across an excellent resource? Know of an upcoming event at your school or in our communities? Are you interested in sharing your ideas or experiences with colleagues? Know of pro-d opportunities in the near future? If so, please send your ideas and submissions for the NOSTA RATTLER to Madi at the NOSTA office.

mdunleavy@sunwave.net

NEXT DEADLINE:
January 15



TTOC's, our next meeting is on December 3, 2009. It's going to be a very informal social gathering at Setter's Pub (top of the hill) at 4:30 pm. Come out and share some appetizers with us. I'll update you on what's been going on in the district that I think is important for TTOCs and you'll get a chance to meet some of your colleagues. It's always fun to share some stories!
I hope to see you there,
Caroline Krieger



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We're on the Web!
<http://bctf.ca/local83/index.html>

About You

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PPC Worldwide Canada Employee & Family Assistance Program

Holiday 2009 – how to enjoy happy, healthy holidays...



You Can Reduce Holiday Stress!

Plan ahead to keep holiday stress down and enjoyment up this year.

Stop the automatic YES

One of the problems with the holiday hoopla starting earlier is that before you know it, you have a mountain of obligations. So, try to not say 'yes' automatically. Instead, practice changing your automatic response to requests from "sure" to "let me check my calendar and get back to you". Just because you can immediately put something on your blackberry, doesn't mean you should. Take time to think before you schedule.

Remember the time you need for your children, spouse/partner, possible increased expectations at work, in-laws, etc... If you have weekly family or friend traditions such as game night or pizza/movie night, put those on your schedule. Schedule time for decorating your home, food shopping, and those other expectations that rarely make it on the schedule. **The key to keeping your schedule from being completely overwhelming is to keep it current and check it before saying yes.**

Use Short Cuts

The internet can be your best friend during the holidays. Most sites offer free shipping over a certain dollar amount, and offer the ability to comparison shop without running all over town. On the hook for baked goods? If you have the time and inclination, baking them yourself is great. But, the bakery at your local grocery or discount store is probably pretty good, too! Comparison shop local grocery stores and take out restaurants to find deals on deli trays and side dishes for pot lucks as well. Sometimes it can actually be cheaper to buy it already made.

Plan Self Time

Put time for yourself on the schedule, too! It can be all too easy to let workouts and rest slip during the holiday season. But resist the temptation. Schedule at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Weather permitting, include an outdoor walk while the sun is out at least a few times each week - even if it's just for 10 or 15 minutes. Fresh air and exercise help improve sleep and mood. This also keeps those holiday pounds from creeping up. Try to keep a regular sleep/wake schedule that allows at least 7 hours for sleep on most nights.

Lighten Up

Winter blues are a major source of stress during the holidays and can be made worse by lack of exercise and sleep. Many people are affected, at least moderately, by what doctors call Seasonal Affective Disorder, which is essentially when we feel down or somewhat depressed due to lack of sunlight. You can avoid those feelings by scheduling time outside, or at least by a sunny window, each day. If you live in an area with no sunlight for weeks, install bright, full spectrum light bulbs in your office or family room. If you have some more serious symptoms of sadness that occur each winter, speak with your healthcare provider about a light box - a prescription device that mimics the effect of the sun on your brain, helping to alleviate feelings of winter depression.

Reconsider your Togetherness Expectations

For some people, the problem at holiday time is too much extended family and friends, and too much togetherness. For others, the problem can be loneliness. This year, plan ahead for balance. If you find that you just have too many family and friend gatherings to go to, prioritize and discuss with family which gatherings really are the most important and which have just become obligations. Go to those that mean something or that you enjoy. If the problem is not enough family and friends and feelings of loneliness, look for ways to be involved in your community during the holidays. Consider signing up to serve food at local homeless shelters or churches. Help community organizations with toy and canned food drive collections and distributions. Many organizations such as animal shelters have difficulty finding enough volunteers during the holiday season. Call and email friends and relatives that are far away to re-connect.



Happy Healthy Holidays!

Whether you are celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's Eve, or other holidays of the Winter Season, the many family gatherings and parties can make it hard to stick to a healthy diet. However, there are ways to enjoy the fun without putting on that holiday 10 pounds. Try out these healthy eating tips:

- Hors d'oeuvres like cheese and crackers, spinach dip, and fried foods are nutritional disasters. Instead, choose raw veggies (avoid the creamy dressing), steamed shrimp, or other grilled meats or sea food.
- Choose either sweet potatoes or mashed white potatoes or stuffing, but not all of them (2 at most!).
- White meat turkey is about as healthy as it gets (unless it's fried). Just go easy on the gravy.
- Pumpkin is actually pretty healthy since it has fiber and beta carotene. However, a pumpkin pie's crust tends to have a lot of fat and calories. Eat the pumpkin part and leave the crust on your plate. Obviously skip the whipped cream.
- Exercise! Mall walking counts, as does walking up the stairs to your office instead of taking the elevator. Exercise helps reduce stress, keeps your mood up and helps to keep those extra holiday pounds off.

While you're at the mall, it is possible to make healthy fast-food choices.

- Choose grilled chicken or other lean meats such as white meat turkey, and salads with low fat or olive oil and vinegar based dressings are usually safe choices.
- Avoid anything fried (including French fries) or sautéed in oils or butter. Remember that 'crispy' is code for 'fried'. Look for the words 'steamed' or 'grilled' on menus for healthier choices.
- Choose spicy or regular mustard over mayonnaise, since mayonnaise is mostly made up of artery clogging saturated fat.
- When given a choice of small, medium or large, choose small. Portion control allows you to eat a greater variety of foods you enjoy.
- Don't let yourself get so hungry you automatically go for the biggie sized combo meal. **Plan a meal time when you won't be ravenous.**
- **Plan what you are going to eat.** If you are really hungry and choose whichever line is shortest, you are probably going to overeat and be unhappy with your choices. Think in advance about what you want to eat and make a healthy choice. Use restaurant websites to look up the best choices.
- Plan to splurge! If you know you are going to want a cookie for dessert or a treat while shopping, compensate by planning on a healthier dinner or more exercise.



Local 83
Get the Facts

December 1st is designated as World AIDS Day to help raise awareness and get the facts out about HIV and AIDS. **Did you know that 5 people die of AIDS every minute?**

The surest way to avoid transmission of sexually transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual intercourse, or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and whom you know is uninfected.

For persons whose sexual behaviors place them at risk for STDs, correct and consistent use of the male latex condom can reduce the risk of STD transmission.

PPC Canada Online Health and Wellness Tools

Go to www.interlockeap.com



Go to the Online Health and Wellness Icon

Enter your Organization's Key Code



How to reach us:

(604) 431-8200
1-800-663-9099

www.interlockeap.com



There are ways to spend less money **and** get more enjoyment out of this Holiday Season!

- Talk with friends and relatives about slowing down and going back to a more traditional way of celebrating the Winter Holidays – enjoy spending time together without gifts.
- Instead of rushing about, spend some quiet time thinking about how to give back to your community for the holidays and in the coming year. Join in a food or toy drive.
- Rent movies and have stay at home game nights with family & friends.