

The NOSTA Rattler

September 2009
Volume 2, Issue 1

Local 83 of the British Columbia Teachers Federation



Upcoming NOSTA Events

- ◆ Oct. 19th General Meeting 4:15pm @the DEC. & New Teacher Induction 5:30 @ the DEC.
- ◆ Oct 21st Pro-D committee meeting
- ◆ Oct 23 Professional Development Day
- ◆ Oct 28 Pension Plan meeting 4:15pm at the DEC.
- ◆ Oct 30 deadline for Rattler submissions
- ◆ Nov 2 NOSTA Executive Meeting

Recommended Resources & Pro-D

- www.BCTF.ca
- <http://bctf.ca/local83/>
- <http://www.greenteacher.com/>
- <http://www.learningchannel.org/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/children/>
- www.sd83.bc.ca

The President's Message

Welcome to our first edition of the NOSTA Rattler for the 2009-10 school year. I hope you enjoyed a relaxing and rejuvenating summer and that you have settled comfortably into school routines. We are very fortunate to have Amanda Bowlby return as our Communications Chair as we look for new and creative ways to inform and engage our members.

Our first General Meeting is on Monday, October 19 from 4:15 - 5:15. General Meetings are open to all teachers and we encourage you to attend. The meeting will be brief and afterwards NOSTA will host the New Teacher Induction into the BCTF. Your NOSTA Executive will be there, as well as representatives from the Board of Trustees, Central Staff and Principals and Vice Principals. Jackie and the Other Company will cater the event with many tasty appetizers. We look forward to seeing you and having the opportunity to socialize with you.

NOSTA and the Board of Education, SD#83 are pleased to announce that our 2006-11 contract is finally finished and in print. Glenn Borthistle and I had hoped to have the process completed almost a year ago. It has been quite a learning experience for both of us. School visits in the next few weeks are in the planning stages as I would like to personally deliver contracts to members and have the opportunity for informal chats with school staffs.

From the feedback received at the NOSTA office, school start up and the consultation process have gone quite well this year. While teachers are aware of budget constraints, many have reported creative solutions to classroom composition issues and most teachers seem to feel that administration has more fully participated in the process this year. If you had a meeting, please

ensure that you indicate on your form that you "agree" or "disagree" with the composition and that your administrator records your views on their form. Just a reminder, the consultation process carries on over the school year and if a current student is categorized during the year or new students arrive, this could trigger the need for further consultation meetings.

We are also very pleased to announce that with funding from our School District, NOSTA is hosting a 6 week occupational wellness/vitality program called "Living with Balance." This program was developed in conjunction with the BCTF Rehabilitation Program. Information has been sent to each school site and has been emailed to your Staff Rep with details on how to register.

On Oct. 7, many NOSTA school based Health and Safety Reps attended the Basic Occupational Health and Safety course, where information was presented on the school based Joint Health and Safety Committees, Safety Inspections, Incident Investigations and Reports, and Refusal of Unsafe Work. The feedback indicated participants appreciated the course and many would like to get together every 6 - 8 weeks to gain further understanding of their roles and responsibilities and discuss common concerns.

Regarding the H1N1 flu, there is some information on the SD website and Dave Witt is close to finishing the District's planned response to the flu and possible pandemic. Please call the NOSTA office if you have any concerns as to health risks at your work site.

BC Teacher's Vitality Project

Presents:

Living with balance

A six-week group program for teachers

We are excited to announce our new *Living with balance* group program for BC teachers. This program has been initiated by the BCTF Rehabilitation Program and developed by the Occupational Rehabilitation Group of Canada, a long-established service provider to the BC Teachers' Federation. There are a select number of BC communities where this program will be offered this year. *Living with balance* is a six-week program, which runs for two hours once per week. It focuses on developing tools and skills related to improving one's vitality and resiliency. Our holistic approach to wellness will equip teachers to make simple lifestyle changes that will positively affect their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

This six-week group program will provide opportunities for:

- education, self-evaluation, and examining the importance of maintaining life-style balance
- discussing the importance of nutrition; exercise; sleep
- managing symptoms of low mood, anxiety, and stress; boundaries and managing conflict
- learning strategies that increase awareness of factors that contribute to fluctuations in mood as well as methods to manage them
- reviewing proven techniques used to improve self-esteem and self-confidence, and

- manage stress and low mood
- defining what work-life balance means to each of us and what happens when our roles collide, having good boundaries is often attributed to having clear values
- setting goals and achieving them
- discussing how to be intentional, creative and assertive when you need to be.
- learning the importance of social connections and community in building long-term wellness, understanding that social isolation is a significant health risk factor.

We will review the necessary interpersonal skills needed to build and sustain long-term relationships that will enhance your vitality and resiliency.

Living with balance is a program that we hope will raise teachers' awareness and understanding regarding key concepts that affect one's physical and emotional health, while providing support and encouragement in recognizing that they are not alone. The primary goal is to improve one's health and well-being. Many BC school districts, the Federation, and teachers have recognized the need for a program like this that promotes healthy lifestyle choices and emotional well-being.

To register please access a referral form from the BCTF website or contact your local president.

Note: Here are a few comments from teachers who attended the program.

- *"If not for this course, I might very well have wallowed in an unhealthy state until I slipped out of teaching. I now look forward to charging forth until I hit retirement running.*
- *It forces you to sit back and analyze yourself in all areas and*

to make changes while getting the support of your "mentor" and colleagues. It is very beneficial to know that you are not alone in all of this.

- *It is encouraging to have help so readily available. I have been exposed to numerous and varied alternatives to my situation. I will endeavour to implement these changes in the coming days. Thank-you!*

For further information, please contact Lynn Hiscoe at 1-866-766-5911 or by e-mail at lhiscoe@orgoc.ca

Lynn Hiscoe is a rehab consultant with the Occupational Rehabilitation Group of Canada (ORGOC). ORGOC is one of several service providers who provide supports to teachers across the province. Lynn is a clinical social worker who specializes in workplace mental health.

Note: The purpose of this program is not to treat, but to promote, healthy lifestyles and improve emotional well-being. Consult your physician for specific guidance on health concerns.

Our district has the funding for an initial session. It will run for 6 weeks from Oct 29 to Dec 3, 4:15 - 6:15 at the NOSTA office. It's open to a maximum of 15 teachers. Please contact your staff rep or the NOSTA office for information.

"A Great First TTOC Meeting"

TTOCs had their first meeting of the year on October 1st at the NOSTA Office. Although we had a fairly small turnout there was some great discussion and ideas sharing between TTOCs. I'm looking forward to the next meeting which is being held on December 3rd, location still to be determined.

Seniority call-out was one of the items discussed at this first meeting. We had Christina McDermott, who is part of the Provincial TTOC Task Force looking at this issue, come in and give us a brief update. Thanks Christina! What seniority means has not yet been defined but the TTOC Provincial Advisory Committee is working towards a definition. Also discussed in the meeting was the use of the TOC Conference on First Class. TTOCs please check the TOC Conference regularly as items are being posted there by myself, Tracey Ward and other TTOCs. And make sure you check out the online Pro-D Events on First Class and register for any you are interested in. Future TTOC meetings will also be posted on the events calendar.

TTOCs, if you have any ideas on what you would like to see in future meetings I'd love to hear from you! Please post your ideas on the TOC Conference. It's also a great place to share any great TTOCing tips you might have with your fellow colleagues. I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

Caroline Krieger

The NOSTA Executive 2009-10

President: Lynda Bennett
1st Vice: Brenda O'Dell
2nd Vice: Graham Gomme
Secretary: Heather McDonald (appointed)
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:
Communications: Amanda Bowlby (appointed)
Social Justice: Meredith Rusk
Health and Safety:
 Christine Peel
TTOC: Caroline Krieger

BCTF Handbook for TTOC and New Teachers:
www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public?NewTeachers/handbook.pdf

Know Your Contract

Preparation Time Article D.4 page 47

In our District, fulltime elementary teachers receive 90 minutes of prep in a 5 day week. Unfortunately, the "5 day week" phrase means that in a 4 day week, if your prep was on the day that school wasn't in session, you miss your prep for that week. Part time elementary teachers receive pro-rated prep. So if you teach .6, you are entitled to .6 times 90 minutes or 54 minutes of prep per week. This can be a bit of a scheduling problem for admin, but they have to give you a minimum of the prep to which you

are entitled - if they give you more, that's fine as long as your partner teacher gets their contractual share of prep.

Full time Middle school teachers get 100 minutes of prep and part timers get a pro-rated amount. Full time Secondary teachers get one block out of 8 for prep or 12.5%. Part time Secondary teachers need to be .5 or more FTE to get prep.

BCTF Public Education Conference - November 13 & 14

This BCTF Conference will be held at the Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel on the evening of Nov 13 and all day Nov. 14. The BCTF sponsors one parent and one teacher from each local to attend this conference with all expenses paid. This year's

conference is titled Public Education: Protecting Children's Futures. Workshops and keynote speakers will discuss authentic assessment, student engagement, what parents want for their children, budgets and funding, the testing regime and Aboriginal students and much more. If you are interested or know a parent rep who may want to attend, please forward the name(s) to Madi at mdunleavy@sunwave.net. The Teacher rep will need to be elected at our General Meeting on Oct. 19 at DEC.

YOUR PENSION - IN TROUBLE?

Your pension plan consists of two parts:

The Basic Plan

This is a guaranteed defined benefit plan, providing you with fixed pension income based on your contributions over your length of service. You currently contribute 9.16% of your salary while the employer contributes an additional 10.66%. The contribution rate is set by the plan trustees, who act independently of both the union and the employer. Periodically an actuarial evaluation of the plan is conducted and the plan trustees vary the contribution rate accordingly. **This fund is healthy.**

The Inflation Adjustment Account (IAA)

This fund is designed to provide

additional pension income to compensate for cost of living increases and to cover group health benefits. You currently contribute 2.00% of your salary while the employer contributes 1.13%. Since 1982 full indexing has been provided by this fund. **This plan is NOT guaranteed and depends on the fund value, which is not sufficient to provide full indexing at present contribution rates. This fund is not healthy.** Fund viability has suffered from increases in health benefit premiums and the declining ratio of contributing members to retirees (less than 2 to 1!). At the present indexing rate this fund will become depleted before 2027.

Meetings are being held around the province to provide information regarding the IAA and to collect member suggestions and preferences for the future of the IAA. These suggestions will be compiled and recommendations will be made to the TPP trustees before December 2009. All members of the plan including active and retired teachers and administrators are invited. **Local Meeting is October 28, 4:15 at DEC - your attendance is essential.**

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. mdunleavey@sunwave.net NEXT DEADLINE: October 30th

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

BCTF ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

Why Register for the BCTF Advantage Program?

BCTF Advantage saves you time and money by focusing on the things you need and want; from security of great insurance coverage to the best way to make your dream vacation a reality. Participation in the BCTF Advantage program gives you access to a world of valuable benefits, including savings on special deals on: BCAA Membership; Travel and customized tours; BCTF member discount of home insurance; An exclusive Teacher Toolbox home insurance endorsement; and much more.

[BCTF Advantage Program](http://www.bctfadvantage.ca)
www.bctfadvantage.ca



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We're on the Web!
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