

Teacher

BC Teachers' Federation

March 2022

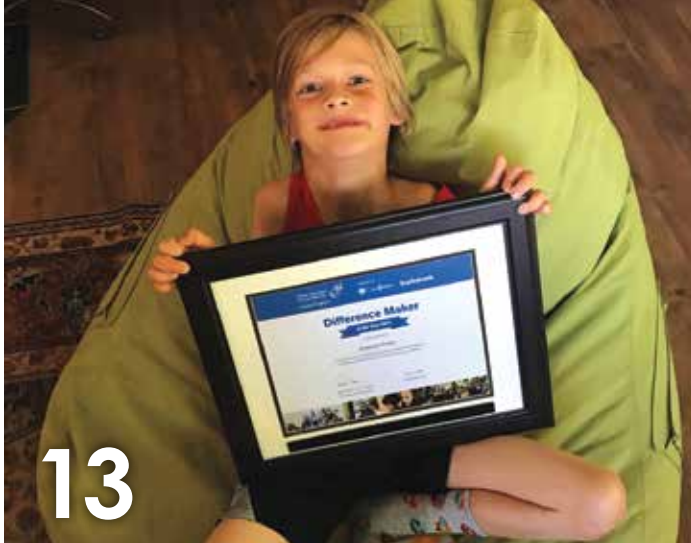


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THIS IS YOUR MAGAZINE



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Do you enjoy writing? Have a story to tell? Know of a project at your school or in your local you want to share with colleagues? Then consider writing for *Teacher*, the flagship publication of the BCTF! Submission guidelines are available at bctf.ca.

We also welcome letters to the editor. Send your letter to teachermag@bctf.ca.

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Copy deadlines

May/June issue

March 25, 2022

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Steadfast advocacy and allyship in trying times

The month of February brought school communities throughout BC together to learn about and celebrate some of the remarkable Black Canadians and their contributions across diverse fields as we commemorated Black History Month.

At the same time, February also showed us a very dark side of our country, with white supremacy and bigotry on display not only in Ottawa, but also in cities and towns across BC and the rest of Canada. We also learned of another 93 graves identified on a small plot of land near the former St. Joseph's Mission Residential School, and the Williams Lake First Nation's sombre expectation of more to come as they continue their search.

In addition to all of the complex challenges of living through a pandemic for two years, our students are also being exposed to all of this difficult and emotionally charged content. In our work as teachers, we help them process and make sense of these events unfolding in the world around them. We have a shared responsibility to our students and the broader society to make sure this generation of youth has the knowledge, understanding, and tools to continue the fight against racism and white supremacy.

Now, more than ever, is the time for us as educators to double down on our important work of antiracism, decolonization, and truth-telling that, ultimately, hopefully leads to healing. In addition to the many fantastic resources and teaching materials we have on bctf.ca to support your work in these areas, a reminder that most locals have a designated social justice contact and/or Aboriginal education contact who can also help point you in the right direction, or help you work through challenging questions that may arise for you on your personal journey of learning and unlearning.

In our schools, our locals, and our Federation as a whole, let's make a conscious commitment to creating space for marginalized voices and listening with open hearts—even when it's uncomfortable. Remember: when we know better, we do better.

In solidarity,


Teri Mooring
BCTF President

MESSAGE DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

Plaidoyer et alliance inébranlables dans les moments difficiles

Alors que nous commémorons le Mois de l'histoire des Noir(e)s, ce mois de février a rassemblé les communautés scolaires à travers la Colombie-Britannique afin d'en apprendre davantage sur certain(e)s Canadien(ne)s Noir(e)s remarquables et célébrer leurs contributions dans divers domaines.

Au même moment, le mois de février nous a également dévoilé un côté sombre de notre pays, avec la suprématie blanche et le fanatisme, non seulement démontrés à Ottawa, mais aussi dans les villes et villages de la Colombie-Britannique et du reste du Canada. Nous avons également appris que 93 autres tombes identifiées ont été repérées sur une petite parcelle de terrain près de l'ancien pensionnat de St-Joseph's Mission. La Première Nation de Williams Lake s'attend sombrement à ce qu'il y en ait d'autres au fur et à mesure qu'elle poursuit ses recherches.

En plus de tous les défis complexes reliés au fait de vivre une pandémie depuis deux ans, nos élèves sont également exposé(e)s à tout ce contenu difficile et chargé d'émotions. Dans notre travail en tant qu'enseignant(e)s, nous les aidons à traiter et à comprendre ces événements qui se déroulent dans le monde qui les entoure. Nous avons une responsabilité commune envers nos élèves et la société en général de veiller à ce que cette génération de jeunes possède les connaissances, la compréhension et les outils nécessaires pour poursuivre la lutte contre le racisme et la suprématie blanche.

Maintenant plus que jamais, il est temps pour nous, éducateurs(-trices), de redoubler les efforts dans notre important travail d'antiracisme, de décolonisation, de vérité et, finalement, de guérison. En plus des nombreuses ressources et matériel didactique que nous offrons sur bctf.ca afin d'appuyer votre travail dans ces domaines, un rappel que la plupart des sections locales ont une personne-ressource désignée en matière de justice sociale ou d'éducation autochtone qui peut aussi vous aider à vous orienter dans la bonne direction ou à répondre aux questions difficiles qui peuvent survenir dans votre parcours personnel d'apprentissage et de désapprentissage.

Dans nos écoles, nos sections locales et l'ensemble de notre Fédération, engageons-nous consciemment à créer un espace pour les voix marginalisées et à écouter avec ouverture, même lorsque c'est inconfortable. Rappelez-vous : quand nous connaissons mieux, nous faisons mieux.

Solidairement,



Teri Mooring
Présidente de la FECB

Resources to support antiracist classrooms

TeachBC includes several resources and lesson plans to help guide conversations about racism and learn about Canada's history through an antiracist lens. Use the search engine on TeachBC to find the resources featured below, as well as many more great resources for your classroom.

Racism in Canada: Elementary lesson plans

This resource presents a series of lessons to help Grades 4–7 students understand the difference between racism, discrimination, and bullying.

Show Racism the Red Card

This booklet includes lessons and resources to help K–12 teachers talk to their students about racism.

Project of Heart: Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC

This resource is a visual journey to support learners in understanding the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools.

Gladys we never knew: The life of a child in a BC Indian Residential School

This interactive ebook includes activities and resources for classes to learn about the history and legacy of residential schools.

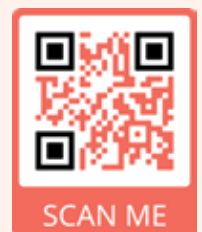
The Black Strathcona Project

This project offers Grades 7–10 students a window into the social history and geography of the Black community in Strathcona.

Teaching African Canadian History

This compilation of lesson plans, posters, teachers' guides, and more focuses on African Canadian history and the African diaspora.

To grow your knowledge on antiracism and Canadian history, check out the BCTF Teacher ebook Library. You can access the library from the Classroom Resources tab on bctf.ca. You can also find links to the ebook library, TeachBC, and the resources listed above by scanning the QR code.



Discrimination and racism:

A look at our collective agreements

By Daniel Shiu (he/him), BCTF staff, Professional and Social Issues Division

AS ONE OF ITS PRIORITIES, the BCTF states it will "...continue to address barriers in our structures through decolonization and antiracism work."¹ This work is courageously hard but, at the same time, audaciously hopeful. To address decolonization and antiracism, meaningful, effective, and enforceable policies are fundamental both at the provincial and local levels. Examining the local collective agreements for specific articles protecting members against racial discrimination and/or racism is a start.

The vast majority (over 90%) of the 60 school districts in BC include anti-discrimination articles in their collective agreements. Although implicitly understood, only a handful of districts explicitly recognize the right of their employees to work, learn, and conduct business free from discrimination and will not condone or tolerate any expression of discrimination, while nine districts simply state they subscribe to the provisions and principles of the BC Human Rights Code. In contrast to these generalized guarantees, two districts state they will consider reflecting their community's diversity when hiring new staff.

With some variances, most school boards prohibit discrimination on the following bases: race, colour, age, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, creed/religious or political affiliation, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, or family status. Of interest, four districts also include a clause prohibiting discrimination against members based on a summary or criminal conviction charge unrelated to their employment, and, uniquely, one district prohibits discrimination on the grounds of being HIV positive. Although the bases on which discrimination is prohibited are necessarily specific and comprehensive, the definition of discrimination itself needs further

clarification. From *Lexico* and *Merriam-Webster*, discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment of different categories of people. However, what constitutes discrimination and what particular acts and expressions are considered discriminatory? What and whose criteria, interpretations, and, ultimately, lenses are used?

In addition to the articles prohibiting discrimination in the workplace, 35 districts explicitly include policies regarding race, race relations, or racism. Three districts, however, do not have any written policies against discrimination based on race or make any reference to racism. For those that do, the common policy mirrors the one against discrimination: the district and union do not condone nor tolerate any written or verbal expressions of racism. To help reinforce this commitment, two districts support resources and/or curriculum that promote a multi-ethnic approach with a multicultural/antiracist focus. Only one district defines racism specifically as any action toward a member (e.g., name-calling, graffiti, physical violence) intended to depict a group negatively or that lowers the member's self-esteem because of their ethnic/racial background.

Contractually, the superintendent (or designate) would investigate any formal complaints or allegations of such racism and would notify the complainant of the investigative results. A few districts further outline possible disciplinary actions for members found to have committed such offences: verbal or written warning/reprimand, transfer, suspension, or dismissal. Mediation, education, and reconciliation, although not written in our collective agreements, may, and perhaps should, also be courses of action in these critical situations.

Despite these policies, some common ground on terminology is needed. From

"Although the purpose of the language in these agreements is to protect individuals from personal racist attacks and racial discrimination, it does not address the deep underlying power structures that perpetuate societal racism."

grassroots activists to educators and scholars in the field, both historic and contemporary, countless individuals have played a part in defining race and racism and in challenging the structures that have created, maintained, and even fueled them. Ijeoma Oluo defines racism as prejudice, supported by systems of power, against someone because of their race.² This definition echoes and reinforces the work of Robin DiAngelo, who states that racism is a "deeply embedded historical system" that is "backed by legal authority and institutional control."³ They are not the first, nor will they be the last, to define racism as a social construct that has systemically permeated into our societal (un)consciousness.



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Considering these definitions as a framework for antiracist policies, our collective agreements glaringly omit the existence of systemic racism. Although the purpose of the language in these agreements is to protect individuals from personal racist attacks and racial discrimination, it does not address the deep underlying power structures that perpetuate societal racism. Furthermore, according to Emma B. Lowman and Adam J. Barker, racism is “not a homogenous way of thinking, but rather the deployment of particular strategies

to justify particular treatments of different groups of peoples,” and, in turn, “[d]ifferent kinds of race-based judgments and systems are used to justify different kinds of colonialism.”⁴ Acknowledging our colonial past is a start, as it created, shaped, and influenced our current educational philosophies and practices.

Given our responsibility as educators to truth and reconciliation through decolonization, local collective agreements need specific antiracism

policies, particularly policies against anti-Indigenous racism, to provide greater safeguards and commitments to the work of the BCTF and its members.

A significant part of the work is to learn, relearn, and unlearn the colonial structures, systems, and policies we have inherited in order to begin addressing and challenging existing barriers to authentic equity, inclusion, and diversity free from any discrimination and racism. 9

1 *Members' Guide to the BCTF 2021–2022*, BCTF, Vancouver, 2021, p.1.

2 Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, Hachette Book Group, Inc., New York, 2019.

3 Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2018, p. 21–24.

4 Emma B. Lowman and Adam J. Barker, *Settler Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada*, Fernwood Publishing, Winnipeg, 2015, p. 42.



It's time to consider divesting our pensions from fossil fuels

By Riley Hill (he/him), teacher, Vancouver

FOR MANY of us in BC, 2021 was a wake-up call. The heatwave that ripped through our province shattered temperature records and killed 595 people. The town of Lytton burned to the ground, and approximately one billion sea animals baked in the heat. Another smoky summer followed—the third-worst fire season on record, behind only 2017 and 2018. Instead of relief, the fall brought floods that crippled highways and stranded communities.

After decades of inaction, 2021 marked the year when the effects of climate change became impossible to ignore. With this in mind, you might be surprised to learn that a chunk of your paycheck goes to organizations guaranteeing these problems will grow worse.

Extreme weather events are becoming more severe and frequent because of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, 73% of which come from burning fossil fuels for energy. To stop the world's rapid warming and avoid worsening disasters, we must replace the energy in our homes, vehicles, buildings and industries with carbon-free sources like solar, wind, nuclear, and geothermal energy as quickly as possible.

Because climate change requires us to wean ourselves off fossil fuels in the coming decades, the International Energy Agency recently warned that to maintain any chance of limiting warming to below two degrees, we need to

begin the transition to carbon-free energy and stop investing in fossil fuels immediately. However, our pension fund continues to send money to companies working to ensure we use fossil fuels for generations to come.

Every public school teacher in BC is an investor in fossil fuels. Our pensions finance companies responsible for extracting, processing, transporting, and selling oil and natural gas. The money we set aside for retirement goes to Suncor, the largest oil producer in the Athabasca Oil Sands; Vermillion Energy, an oil and gas company with global operations; pipeline companies like TC Energy and Enbridge; natural gas utilities such as Fortis, Enmax, and Epcor; and gasoline retailers like Parkland Corporation.

In addition to the money these companies spend on fossil fuel projects, some work to slow the adoption of carbon-free energy. For example, Enbridge and Fortis are part of the so-called Consortium to Combat Electrification, an industry group dedicated to dissuading consumers from heating their homes with electricity instead of natural gas. This means our money isn't only funding these companies' projects but their propaganda as well.

It works like this: the money deducted from your pay stub is pooled in the Teachers' Pension Plan, then a separate organization called the British Columbia

Investment Management Corporation (BCI) decides where to invest. They play this role for several other public pension funds in the province. BCI does invest in companies that produce clean energy, but some of our money also goes to fossil fuel companies because that's where BCI puts it.

BCI justifies investing in fossil fuels in two ways. First, they say that by giving money to these companies, they can push them to reduce their emissions. By having a seat at the table, they argue, they will influence fossil fuel companies to make better environmental decisions.

The second justification is that BCI has emission-reduction targets for their public equity funds. They have had some success, as the emission intensity of these funds, meaning the total emissions per million invested, have gone down.

However, BCI does not have reduction targets for its private equity funds, which have much higher emissions than their public equity funds, or for its real estate funds.

So BCI, which manages a handful of public pensions in the province, justifies investing in companies that produce the products driving climate change by claiming they can push them to make better environmental decisions and setting emission-reduction targets for part of their portfolio.



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“We’ve taught kids about the seriousness of climate change for a long time, while we invest in ensuring its worst effects come to pass.”

But there is another option. Each year, more organizations are deciding to divest from fossil fuels altogether. Divestment would mean cutting off money from our pension fund to companies involved in the fossil fuel business. BCI opposes this approach, but perhaps it’s time we consider it.

In Canada, the University of British Columbia has committed to divesting its endowment from fossil fuels by 2030. The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, Quebec’s equivalent of BCI, has committed to divesting by the end of 2022 and cutting the carbon footprint of their investments in half by 2030.

Disinvestment like this is happening all over the world. In 2018, New York City committed to divesting all municipal public pensions from fossil fuels. They followed through in January 2021 with an initial sell-off of \$4 billion worth of fossil fuel investments.

Municipal governments are taking similar measures in Belfast, Copenhagen, Melbourne, Minneapolis, Paris, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Stockholm, Sydney, Cape Town, and Denver, to name a few. A huge number of religious, professional, and financial institutions are also following suit.

When considering our pension fund’s impact on the planet, we need to ask ourselves two questions. First, should we be concerned about how the money we set aside for retirement contributes to climate change? And second, if the answer is yes, what makes more sense: investing in fossil fuel companies while trying to convince them to abandon their core business or divesting from them altogether?

As teachers, we can’t rest on what we do in the classroom. I first learned about climate change in elementary school in 1999. As countries like the United Kingdom and Germany have made considerable strides to reduce their emissions, Canada’s are right where they were in 1990. In fact, emissions from oil and gas have ballooned to constitute a quarter of our national emissions, negating progress we’ve made in other sectors.

Climate change has been understood since the day I was born and the problem has only grown worse. More than half of global emissions since the industrial revolution have occurred during my lifetime. We’ve taught kids about the seriousness of climate change for a long time, while we invest in ensuring its worst effects come to pass.

Climate change can be so overwhelming that it’s easy to fall into despair. But the truth is our world is made and remade each day by our decisions. The world we live in is the result of decisions made yesterday, and the world we will live in tomorrow depends on our choices today.

The billions of dollars pooled in our pension fund are building the world that we, our children, our grandchildren, and our students will soon live in. What kind of world do you want?

It’s time the BCTF had a serious conversation about following the lead of other organizations and taking immediate steps to divest our pensions from fossil fuels. 🗣️

EDITOR’S NOTE

Scan the QR code to learn more about the Teachers’ Pension Plan’s approach to responsible investing. Or visit qrco.de/bclWBf.



Wise practices for teaching and learning grounded in social justice values

By **Cecile Afable** (she/her); Public Legal Education Specialist,
Youth Programs; West Coast LEAF

HOW CAN WE facilitate learning while incorporating social justice values?

What does it look like to educate through a trauma-informed lens? How can we give people honest information, so that they can choose the path that makes the most sense for them if they are in a difficult situation?

These questions have been front of mind for staff at West Coast LEAF (Legal Education and Action Fund). We are a non-profit organization that uses legal tools to advance gender justice, including offering educational workshops on legal topics for over 20 years. For the past year and a half, we have worked on evaluating and re-envisioning our public legal education programming. While our lines of inquiry were guided by the fact that we are a legal non-profit, we recognize that classroom educators cover similar topics and terrain. Facilitating learning about the law includes encouraging learners to explore topics like power, oppression, and social and cultural norms. Even for educators who don't teach Law 12 or social studies, we know that conversations about law intersect with many of these other topics, from elementary all the way to secondary school.

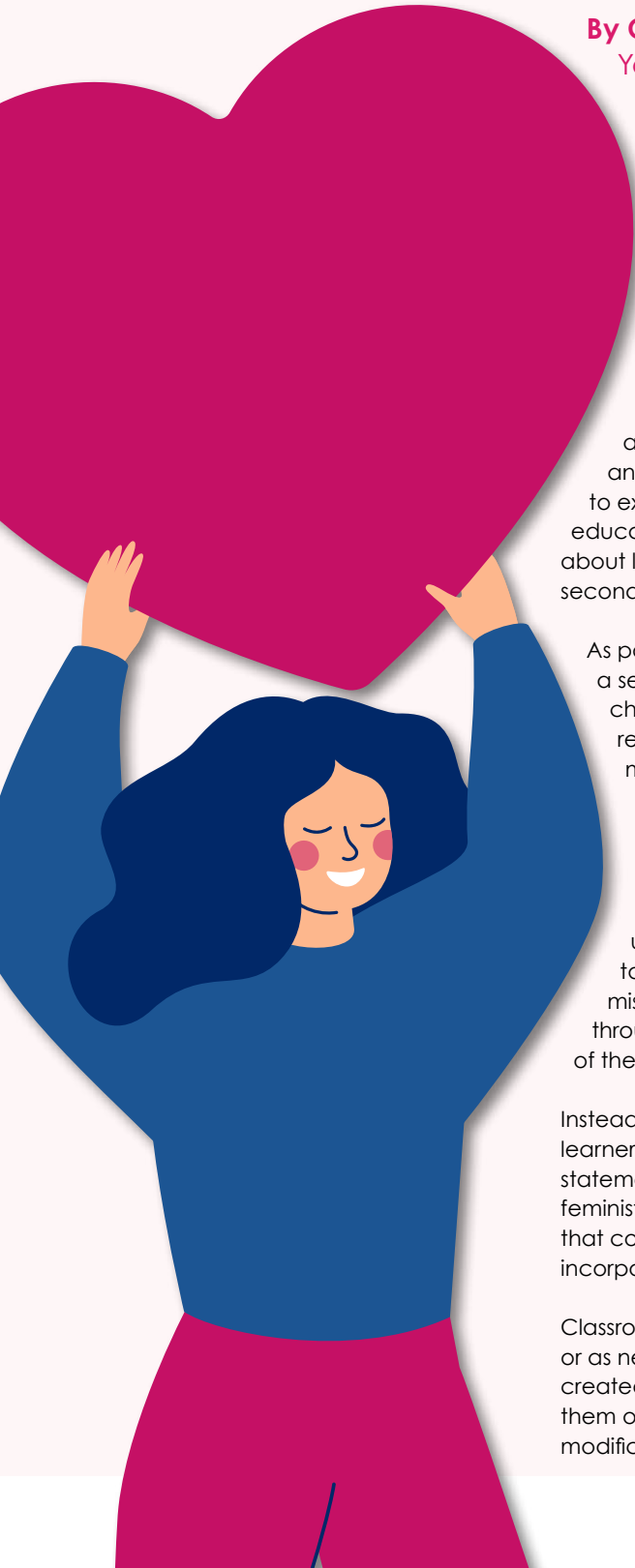
As part of this work evaluating our own education programs, we've identified a set of wise practices to guide us during conversations that may be heavy or challenging. We use the terminology *wise practices* instead of *best practices* in recognition that there are many ways to do something well, and that context matters—what works in one situation may not in another.

Create space for many kinds of communication, including conflict and challenge

Avoiding conflict and disagreement—or suppressing them once they come up—runs the risk of silencing the voices of marginalized learners who may wish to challenge the unfairness of the status quo. Stifling dissent may let harmful misconceptions go unchallenged, like the idea that anyone can get rich through hard work in Canada, or that legal systems produce just outcomes 100% of the time.

Instead of trying to enforce a conflict-free space, we can work collaboratively with learners to create community agreements, classroom guidelines, or group values statements that help to define norms for navigating disagreement. In their guide to feminist pedagogy, Lis Valle-Ruiz and her collaborators challenge the assumption that conflict-free spaces are possible or desirable. Their vision of feminist pedagogy incorporates listening, speaking, risk-taking, respect, and repair.

Classroom guidelines can be co-created at the beginning of the term or semester, or as needed if there is an upcoming discussion that may be challenging. Once created, classroom guidelines don't have to be set in stone: it may be useful to revisit them on a set schedule, say once a month, to see how they are working and if any modifications need to be made.



Here are some questions to help you get started creating group guidelines:

- How do you want to feel during and after class? What do you need from others in order to feel that way? (E.g., I want to feel engaged; for this I need different ways to participate.)
- What behaviours or words let you know that you're being treated with respect?
- What is the difference between feeling uncomfortable and being unsafe? Knowing that discomfort is sometimes part of learning, how can we support each other when discomfort comes up?
- When disagreement comes up, how can we address that?
- If someone says something that hurts another person's feelings, how can we address that?
- What does a good apology look and sound like?

Use trauma-informed practices

There are many ways to define trauma. We recognize both the usefulness and limitations of the Western bio-psychological definition of trauma as an experience that exceeds a person's ability to cope, with impacts that are personal, context-dependent, and often long-term. Thanks to research by Natalie Clark, Robert Nonomura, and others, we also know that this definition often erases the reality of structural violence, and the ways that systems of oppression such as colonialism, racism, poverty, sexism, and others can also be incredibly traumatizing.

As educators, we can be mindful of the prevalence of trauma. Research suggests that almost half of youth in the US have experienced serious trauma, and rates are likely high in Canada as well. Given that communities that face oppression deal with high levels of trauma and that oppression is itself profoundly traumatic, a lack of trauma-informed practice in education can compound injustice. The following are some ways to bring trauma-informed practices into your work:

Use trigger warnings or content warnings for content that may be graphic or upsetting, such as violence or human rights violations in novels or history class. When learners know what subject matter is coming up next, they can opt in or out of engaging with it—and if they do choose to engage with it, they can do so in a way that will work for them.

There may be some students who do not wish to engage with certain material. Working with them to come up with accommodations or alternative assignments affirms their agency and ability to make their own decisions. During our

workshops, we provide an outline of the subject matter at the beginning of each workshop as well as providing a heads-up immediately before discussing a topic, such as sexual harassment, and encourage participants to take care of themselves in whatever way works best for them.

Avoid information overload and fast pacing that may make it harder for learners to process information, reflect, and ask questions. Setting aside time to define a short list of learning goals (or even just one or two learning goals) can be helpful, as well as intentionally creating space in the schedule to allow for debriefing and/or reflection.

Challenge stigma and victim-blaming. As educators we have a responsibility to do our best to cultivate a safer learning environment. This can mean stating clearly that no one is ever to blame for experiencing harassment, discrimination, or violence. It can also mean interrupting and correcting hurtful comments or jokes, which can be as simple as saying, "That's not funny," or "That kind of language is disrespectful." It can be helpful to try to anticipate challenging comments that may come up in lessons, and script out some responses in case they do.

Offer an honest and critical perspective on the law by unpacking how legal systems actually work—not just in theory or in an ideal situation, but in reality—we can provide learners with a more nuanced and realistic understanding of the law. In our legal education programming, West Coast LEAF emphasizes that legal systems are imperfect institutions that can be transformed with time and collective effort. We acknowledge the following:

- Making something illegal doesn't prevent it from happening (for example, racial discrimination in the workplace is outlawed but is unfortunately still a very common experience for many workers).
- When someone has gone through a difficult experience, going through legal processes will not necessarily always result in just outcomes, closure, or healing. Legal processes can be very lengthy, expensive, and psychologically and emotionally taxing, even retraumatizing.
- The law is not a perfectly objective system—lawyers, judges, and other people with power within the legal system can and often do have their own biases, such as racism or sexism, that influence their decisions.

We're very grateful to the many people who illuminated the above wise practices to us over the course of working on our Re-envisioning Public Legal Education and Information project. To learn more about the project, and to read the rest of our wise practices, visit WestCoastLEAF.org. 9

“Our unions are not just service models”

An interview with **Raul Burbano** (he/him), Program Director, Common Frontiers Canada, by **Annie Ohana** (she/her), member of BCTF International Solidarity Advisory Committee

I WAS ABSOLUTELY HONOURED to have a conversation with Raul Burbano from Common Frontiers Canada. Below is the wisdom he shared with me during our truly enlightening and invigorating conversation.

What is Common Frontiers, and why does it matter for BCTF members?

Raul: Common Frontiers is a national, multisector working group that was born during struggles against the neoliberal agenda. We focus on research, education, and action across the Americas. Our guiding principles are international solidarity, democratic freedoms, respect for human rights, the promotion of labour rights, and strong public services with the goal of holding Canadian government and corporations accountable. We work with people in the global south who have been ravaged by Canadian corporate interests (including mining).

This matters for BCTF members because Canadian foreign policy plays a critical role in a lot of issues related to protecting our jobs. The Canadian government markets itself as pro-democracy and human rights, but, in reality, Canadian foreign policy is focused on economic interests, and benefits from the exploitation of the global south. These corporate interests push for privatization of public services, including education.

What are some key struggles in your opinion?

Raul: Some of the key struggles that we are experiencing include the COVID-19 pandemic, which has underscored the critical need for international solidarity, rather than the alternative of every country for itself. This results in vaccine apartheid, systemic racism, and creeping privatization through technology.

We have also seen a rise in antidemocratic governments in Latin America. For example, in Brazil the government is imposing harsh neoliberal policies that affect people disproportionately and have led to deaths.

At the same time, Canada and the USA are imposing unilateral sanctions on countries in Latin America (including Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua) for purely political reasons. These sanctions destroy the economies of those countries. Millions are fleeing because of economic destruction causing a ripple effect in displacement poverty across the Americas. We have also seen the Canadian embassy facilitate corporate interests over human rights. We must pay close attention to foreign policy and hold our government accountable.

Why is international solidarity important?

Raul: Global struggles need a global response. These struggles are against privatization, deregulation, environmental destruction, corporate influence on our democracy, precarious working conditions, and more. International solidarity helps us understand the interconnectivity of these issues and build a collective response. It solidifies reciprocal relationship-building where learning and teaching occur horizontally and concurrently.

What is the bottom line for all of us?

Raul: The old model of TINA, There Is No Alternative, needs to be done away with. International solidarity, through international connections, builds alternatives to the neoliberal model. International solidarity unmasks the façade that we are stuck in a race to the bottom.

Corporations have ingrained in us that we need to accept the lowest common denominator during bargaining battles. Through collective bargaining and power, we help ourselves and the global south. When we win rights, there is a positive effect on all workers. We don't want corporations setting the standard of racing to the bottom.

Our unions are not just service models. Unless we build international connections and links, we as a labour movement end up losing the battle against privatization eroding public education. 📢

One of the BCTF's oldest international solidarity partners: SUTEP, the Union of Peruvian Education Workers

SINCE THE START of the COVID-19 pandemic, SUTEP leaders have worked tirelessly to support teachers within a context of an underfunded public health system on the brink of collapse. Thousands of SUTEP members have tested positive, and many have passed away or lost family members because of the virus. While schools and businesses were originally closed, Peru's ministry of education called for the return to in-person classes in 2021, despite very low vaccination rates and a health system in crisis. SUTEP successfully challenged the government orders and demanded improvement of schools' infrastructure,

mass vaccination of teachers, and provision of bio-safety measures to protect the lives of the educational communities.

At the same time, SUTEP has responded to the needs of thousands of teachers who were new to technology and online teaching, continued to organize members, and campaigned for the recent presidential elections. Today, SUTEP continues defending the integration of a gender-sensitive approach in the national basic education curricula and demanding that newly elected President Castillo respect teachers' rights and recognize SUTEP as the official teachers' union in Peru.

Emerson with his
Difference Maker
award.

Calling all Difference Makers!

DO YOU KNOW a student or a colleague who helps make the world a better place by improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities? Nominate them for a 2022 RHFSP Difference Maker of the Year award. Nominations are open until 12:00 a.m. PST (midnight), April 24, 2022, by filling out the online nomination form. Winners will be announced during National AccessAbility Week from May 29 to June 4, 2022.

Rick Hansen Foundation photo

Paving the path to inclusion

By Rebecca Blissett (she/her), Rick Hansen Foundation

FOR EMERSON POTTER to join his outdoor gym class at Blewett Elementary School in Nelson, BC, he had to drive his power wheelchair off school grounds, travel up nearby Blewett Road, and then go through an access gate to get to the sports field.

Emerson just turned nine, is in Grade 4, and was born with cerebral palsy, affecting motor control. While Emerson can walk short distances independently, he primarily uses his wheelchair to get around.

The lack of accessibility is frustrating. Going the long way around to the field is just that—long. It is five times the distance for him to travel than the rest of his class who can bound up the outdoor stairs from the school building to the field.

Emerson decided to do something about this barrier for himself and other students and educators with mobility challenges. He wrote a letter to School District 8 and met with the director of operations. Together, the team hatched a plan to construct a path to the field and improve access to the ground's tennis courts.

Emerson was happy to see the finished path when school was back in session this September.

"It feels good. It feels good," Emerson said. "I really don't know how else to describe it."

Advocating has helped Emerson in more ways than one. His mom Lindsay noted that he is far more comfortable talking about his disability than before speaking up about the need for an accessible path to the sports field.

"As Emerson grows up and has more encounters, he's going to start to realize how many things need to be advocated for," said Lindsay. "So, as a parent, this was a good experience for him to be able to voice his needs to other people. And, talk about his disability, because that's not always an easy thing to do."

Taking the initiative to make a difference in improving accessibility and inclusion at his school is why Emerson is a recipient of a 2021 Rick Hansen Foundation School Program (RHFSP) Difference Maker of the Year Award. The awards are inspired by the RHFSP lessons of the same name that are part of an online resource library of easy-to-use lessons and activities offered for free to educators.

The library has a variety of engaging resources to help teach children and youth about accessibility, inclusion, and being difference makers in our schools and communities. An example of these lessons is Everyone Has Abilities, where students identify both their abilities and challenges and discuss how much we can tell (and can't tell) about a person just by looking at them.

Whether it's activities, lessons, tool-kits, videos, books, or the popular

Ambassador presentations where a person with a disability "Zooms" into a classroom to facilitate a conversation about inclusion, the RHFSP materials introduce the idea of ability to young Canadians who may not have met any of the one in five Canadians living with a disability. The presentations and other program resources aim to open minds and hearts, allowing children and youth to develop compassion, empathy, and kindness.

Educational tools that promote inclusivity and diversity have proven to help students feel welcomed and accepted, which creates a better learning environment. Promoting kindness also helps reduce incidents of all kinds of bullying. According to a 2019 Statscan study, 42% of youth with a disability have experienced bullying at school because of their condition. This increases to 62% among those with a more severe disability.¹


RHFSP's lessons and activities, developed with input from educators, can be adapted into any study, such as math, science, language, or arts. They're available in English and French at rickhansenfoundation.com under the Schools & Communities tab, where you'll find the resource library.

Everybody can accomplish extraordinary things by thinking and acting beyond their interests. It doesn't matter how small the action. Like Emerson, we can all make a difference. ♻️

¹ "Educational experiences of youth with disabilities," Statistics Canada, September 2019, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019049-eng.htm.

Understanding disability and accessibility at work and in unions

By Lee (they/them), teacher and settler on the unceded, ancestral, and stolen territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations



IN DECEMBER I attended a workshop as a member of the Disability Justice Action Group with the BCTF Committee for Action on Social Justice. At the workshop the phrases “accessibility confidence” and “disability confidence” were repeated as goals to strive for. These phrases are about assessing the degree to which an institution has embedded equity and inclusion into the fabric of their organization.

This raises several questions; most importantly, are BCTF structures disability confident? How does the nature of our work change when we consider disability and access as inherent to our organizing, rather than a one-off accommodation? Which aspects of our disability and inclusion work place the onus for accommodation on the individual with disabilities? Which hold ableist notions of deficiency? How are accessibility requirements siloed into individual needs or medical issues, and what does this say about the public and private nature of the movement for justice?

The workshop helped me challenge the way I have come to understand disability, accessibility, and inclusion, and, with this article, I hope to encourage readers to do the same.

Defining disability

Any one of us can be born or become disabled. A collective, proactive response to health and wellness should be our goal, as it represents a social and decolonial approach that recognizes the fluid and intersectional nature of disability. It's time to expand the scope of what we formally understand as barriers and look to a broader definition of disability.

According to the Accessible Canada Act, barriers are defined as anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal that limits the participation of impaired persons, including those with a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment or functional limitation.¹

These lists are important because they challenge notions that privilege disabilities that are easily seen, which are often physical disabilities. It is a reminder to examine the structures and contexts that not only fail to create inclusive spaces, but also enforce barriers and blame individuals for structural challenges.

Intersectionality of disability

Social determinants of health include racism, intimate partner violence, colonization, poverty, ableism, environmental trauma, trans and queerphobia, and other intersections of oppression that further exponentially affect health and wellness.² As our understanding of anti-oppression and intersectionality expand, why has disability justice persisted as an individual issue? And what are the implications for that analysis on how we seek to solve the problems of accessibility and inclusion?

When we see disability and accommodation as a matter of individual need, it can result in the deficit model of disability awareness and play into problematic notions of individual resilience, recovery, or narratives of overcoming adversity.

In our union, the work of equity and inclusion has most often fallen on workers who are the most marginalized. Organizations, including the BCTF, that are seeking out and prioritizing the voices of marginalized people for leadership often fall short of responding with institutional change that acknowledges and accepts responsibility for full equity and inclusion. For example, how does anti-Indigenous or anti-Black racism create systemic barriers that further amplify ableism and health inequities? How do militarized violence on Indigenous land protectors and climate crises (including flooding, wildfires, heat domes, and the poisoning of water and air) affect health, illness, and disability?

It's essential that employers recognize and accommodate the spectrum of disabilities in the workplace. It is equally important that our unions reflect an analysis of disability that does not seek to homogenize or individualize, but rather to create climates that are accessibility and disability confident—accommodating members' disabilities through the structures and paradigms we use to do our work. However, human value is not just about our work identity. Ensuring our union and workplace value collective health and well-being, and work to eradicate ableism, racism, white supremacy, cis-heteronormativity, poverty, and all oppressions is the way forward.

Impact of work on health outcomes

We have some work to do as a profession when it comes to the way that we imagine and implement accessibility, and some of it includes an analysis of how our working conditions are part and parcel of the same struggle. Valourizing the long hours and highlighting the sacrifices of teachers not only hides the impact of this work on our wellness, but also reinforces ideologies of selflessness and unwavering commitment as inherent to the work. This conflates disability or medical need with failure.

In the December workshop, I saw many overlaps between the experiences of front-line workers in health care and public education, including the idea that workplace contexts are not considered to be contributing factors to health and wellness. How does workplace stress, including pandemic-related stress, increase demands on workers? And how is this compounded by the defunding of public health and public education, and increased privatization and corporatization?

In this neoliberal framework, individuals are stigmatized for the stress, anxiety, and poor health outcomes that arise from workplace-caused stressors. We need only look to class size and composition, and supports for teachers and students, to see examples of workplace stressors that have adverse outcomes on health and well-being. How does neoliberalism in union and workplace structures advantage and disadvantage members based on social location?

Steps forward

Through this conference, I saw a model of inclusion, equity, and access that was inspiring and met the goal of accessibility and disability confidence. As a QTIBIPOC settler, I was impressed to see presenters identifying their social location through land acknowledgments, pronouns, and the universal provision of ASL and CART (closed captioning). It was inspiring to see how simple and effective inclusion and equity can be when woven into baseline structures that commit to decolonization, accessibility, and anti-oppression.

Without a universal and structural approach to inclusion, reactionary and patchwork accommodations, inadequate public strategy, and individualism isolates, impoverishes, and stigmatizes disability. The goal for unions and workplaces is to be accessibility confident, to create universal programming and policy that make our structures accessible by design, and to comply with the BC Human Rights Code in all aspects of work and in all experiences of disability.

An important component of moving toward disability confidence is an accessibility audit to evaluate the accessibility of union spaces. An accessibility audit includes examining lights, sounds, and stimulation that can be barriers to member participation, and considering the rationale for the status quo and the cost of not interrogating the accessibility of our organization. An accessibility audit is required in order to create confidence in our structure, dignify our process, and reduce barriers to participation.

As with any efforts toward inclusion, this too needs to be led by members with disabilities. However, as with all anti-oppression work, we need to move away from the deficit understanding of disability justice and toward true inclusion, recognizing that accessibility benefits all members.

We have tremendous opportunity to lead the way in accessibility, inclusion, equity, and justice. Democracy depends on full and equal opportunities for member participation, and unions are tasked with representing and protecting all members. Let's work together to eliminate attitudinal and systemic barriers that harm all workers. Let's commit to making BCTF structures foundationally just and disability confident. 🍎

1 Government of Canada, "Summary of the Accessible Care Act," tinyurl.com/43pu8h77.

2 Government of Canada, "Social determinants of health and health inequalities," tinyurl.com/y7urjgz2.



A counter map by the author's
Grades 1 and 2 class.



Learnings from this place

By Monique Richoux (she/her), teacher from the
shared lands of the Secwepemc and Syilx peoples

I feel connected to this land, this mountain, because it is the home of the plants and birds and other creatures that I cherish, but am I really connected? Is it a mirage? I have been struggling with this for almost 10 years now, since I really started understanding colonialism and globalization and what is happening right now in real time (cough, gasp, sweat), not just theoretically. Wendell Berry says people should stay put, should really get to know the land and then they will protect it. Then again, Wendell Berry is not likely to get arrested for doing so.

– Richoux, reflection journal, July 19, 2021

I WROTE this inquiry/lament/love-letter from this smoke-filled place on evacuation alert, sick with dread for the animals and plants that couldn't escape, distracted by my plans to get my domestic animals out should the order be given, and wondering if I should get out anyway because the smoke (from the White Rock Lake fire) had become unbearable. What do I do about the hummingbirds? Is it better or worse to leave the feeders full should we be forced to vacate? I seek to live in connection with this land, this hectare (2.5 acres) that my co-tenants and I are allowed by the government of BC to call "ours," knowing full well that it is not ours, but rather a product of colonial displacement that privileged settlers.

How do I heal my relationship with all those who have been displaced so that I can be here? With the coyotes who are excluded, with the Secwepemc and Syilx people who can no longer access or benefit from this space, with the deer who must now jump over the fence when the dogs aren't looking, with the stones who keep silent watch? This question is vital, not only because I am a settler, but because I am a teacher of many settler children, all of us on stolen land. Furthermore, BC teachers are charged with the Teachers' Council's professional standard nine to "...critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate change." Most importantly, however, we are running out of time to prevent catastrophic environmental and social breakdown.

Place-based education seems to offer a path toward a more reciprocal, holistic model of educating our young at a time when it is clear we desperately need it. This means different things to different people, but, in general, it suggests that getting kids outside and connected to the land will result in people who are more invested in protecting that land, either through civic action or career choice. However, scholars such as Delores Calderon and David Greenwood, to name two, suggest that learning about the land in a biological/geographical way without including the social/historical/political context, and specifically including the long-term traditional roles and relationships of the First Peoples, does "...not go far enough to promote decolonizing goals that should be included in any place-based education model interested in cultural and ecological sustainability."¹ For me, this means examining my sense of place not just through a physical/ecological lens as I have always done, but through the larger, socio-historical-political lens of colonization as well.

Simply put, using a "place-based methodology" in my teaching and living is probably not enough. Feeling haunted by the words "stolen land" is an indication that I am ready to move toward a more comprehensive and decolonizing framework, which includes teaching even young children about what colonization and land appropriation is, and that this is in fact why the residential school system was created in the first place.

Stories are a great starting point for these conversations. One of my personal favourites is Bill Peet's 1970 classic *The*

Wump World. There is a line in the book where the leader of the colonizers plants a flag on the Wump's planet and declares, "It's perfect. We'll take it!" Destruction ensues. Kids are mesmerized by this book, often asking to hear it again and again.

Peet's story opens the door to discussions about local legacies of colonization, but how do I learn to teach this in a way that does not privilege settler narratives? All I know about my "here" is the settler story written down in a 1990 textbook that serves (unintentionally) to uphold colonialism.

The Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park, over at the old Kamloops Residential School site, is a veritable trove of information, and yet I have struggled to relocate that information here in my community (about 45 minutes away from Kamloops, one of the few places in BC that organized a Canada Day celebration in 2021, rather than deferring out of respect for the grief re-exposed by the confirmation of unmarked graves at the Kamloops Residential School).

In my daily life, I see the deer people and the bear people, many of the plant people and bird people; I can easily imagine a land with no humans at all, the paradise that might be if settlers had not carved out this place, and I am able to transmit this to my students. But I am learning that we can't truly "see" a place without including the thousands of years of entanglement of the human people too, because as so many Indigenous (and settler) scholars have shown us, the people shaped the land as much as the land shaped the people. (For example, see *Knowing Home: Braiding Indigenous Science with Western Science*, Books One and Two, edited by Gloria Snively and Wanost'a7 Lorna Williams, available most generously for free download.)

Another pivotal resource for me in learning about decolonized approaches to learning with and from the land has been Loftin and Vaughan-Lee's film *Counter Mapping*.² The film features Jim Enote, an A:shiwiian historian, who says, "We live in a world with many ways of knowing; with many different systems of knowing." The film and accompanying essay by Steiner-Scudder describe how Jim and some of the A:shiwi Elders decided to "...create maps that bring an Indigenous

How we knew there were beavers.



voice and perspective back to the land, countering Western notions of place and geography and challenging the arbitrary borders imposed on the Zuni world."³ The Zuni maps, says Jim, contain something very important: a different way of looking and knowing.

My Grades 1 and 2 students and I made a sort of "counter-map" for our town last year (pictured on pages 16–17); one that highlighted the more-than-humans that live in the valley, and potentially shows the Salmon River as it once may have been: full of salmon and central to human life (in reality, you cannot see it from this vantage point and it has very few salmon—even fewer after the heat dome of late June). We started with taking some photographs as we looked south from our school, and after choosing our favourite image, we traced the outline of everything except the houses onto a large canvas. We then spent several weeks thinking about what kinds of plants and animals we know live in our community, adding them to the canvas and, finally, painting it with fabric paint and sharpie. We were engaged in a different kind of knowing and thinking about what a community is, focusing on the more-than-human lives that interact silently with our own, and developing awareness that what we do affects others. This was before I had discovered the term "counter-mapping," which is why it hadn't yet occurred to me that we might try this on a larger scale, one that includes and honours the many-storied histories of Secwepemc and Syilx peoples.

Now I wonder, what if there is a way to use counter-mapping to bring Indigenous Peoples and settlers together, to bridge some of the gaps that colonialism has brought into all our layered lives? How can I engage children fully in developing a deep, pervasive connection to "place" if they have no way to conceive of what it might mean to be in a reciprocal relationship with the land? If they have no sense of ecological identity? If they have never eaten a Saskatoon berry or a salmonberry or salmon? If they are not connected to the peoples whose lives have been entangled with this place for time immemorial? Such a project could provide the kind of methodology needed to shift place-based education forward.

I am still uncertain how to move forward with this project, as COVID-19 and climate instability wreak havoc in our daily lives, impeding our ability to connect with others, but I know that it is no longer enough to feed the hummingbirds, uproot knapweed, or even get children outside every day. I can never change the fact that I am a settler on stolen land. However, as I struggle to reconcile this discomfort, it behooves me to try to deconstruct my thinking about this place and find ways to create time and space for my students to do the same. 9

Dedication

Dedicated to Dr. Peter Cole, UBC, who inspired this investigation through his course Theories and Dimensions of Place-Based Education: Ecohumanist, Critical and Indigenous Lenses.

1 Delores Calderon, "Speaking back to Manifest Destinies: a land education-based approach to critical curriculum inquiry," *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 70, No.1, 2014, p. 24–36.

2 Adam Loftin and Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, *Counter Mapping*, Go Project Films, 2018.

3 Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder, "Counter Mapping," *Emergence Magazine*, February 2018, emergencemagazine.org/feature/counter-mapping.

The class explores the shores of the Salmon River.





Sunjam Jhal photo

Learning truth and reconciliation from students

By Anna Chudnovsky (she/her) BCTF staff, Communications and Campaigns Division

IN MY WORK as a teacher, I thought long and hard about how to be an ally to the First Nations on whose land I live and work. Sometimes it felt overwhelming, other times exciting. How could I teach and learn with integrity as the graves were confirmed last year? What could I say when I went to work with the 12- and 13-year-olds in my class, many of whom are Indigenous and reckoning in their own private ways with the pain of their pasts and hope for their futures? How could I (white, financially secure, with privilege in virtually every arena, especially the classroom) possibly teach them anything in the midst of that horror, blinded by the blur of collective tears, sick to our stomachs as the numbers rose, knowing that so many still suffer because of the legacies and ongoing terrors of colonialism.

I don't use the word terror lightly. I have seen children apprehended from their families, marginalized by systemic inequality, hungry, lonely, living vulnerably in far too many ways. To a child, this can be a life of anxiety, fear, and certainly terror—nothing less.

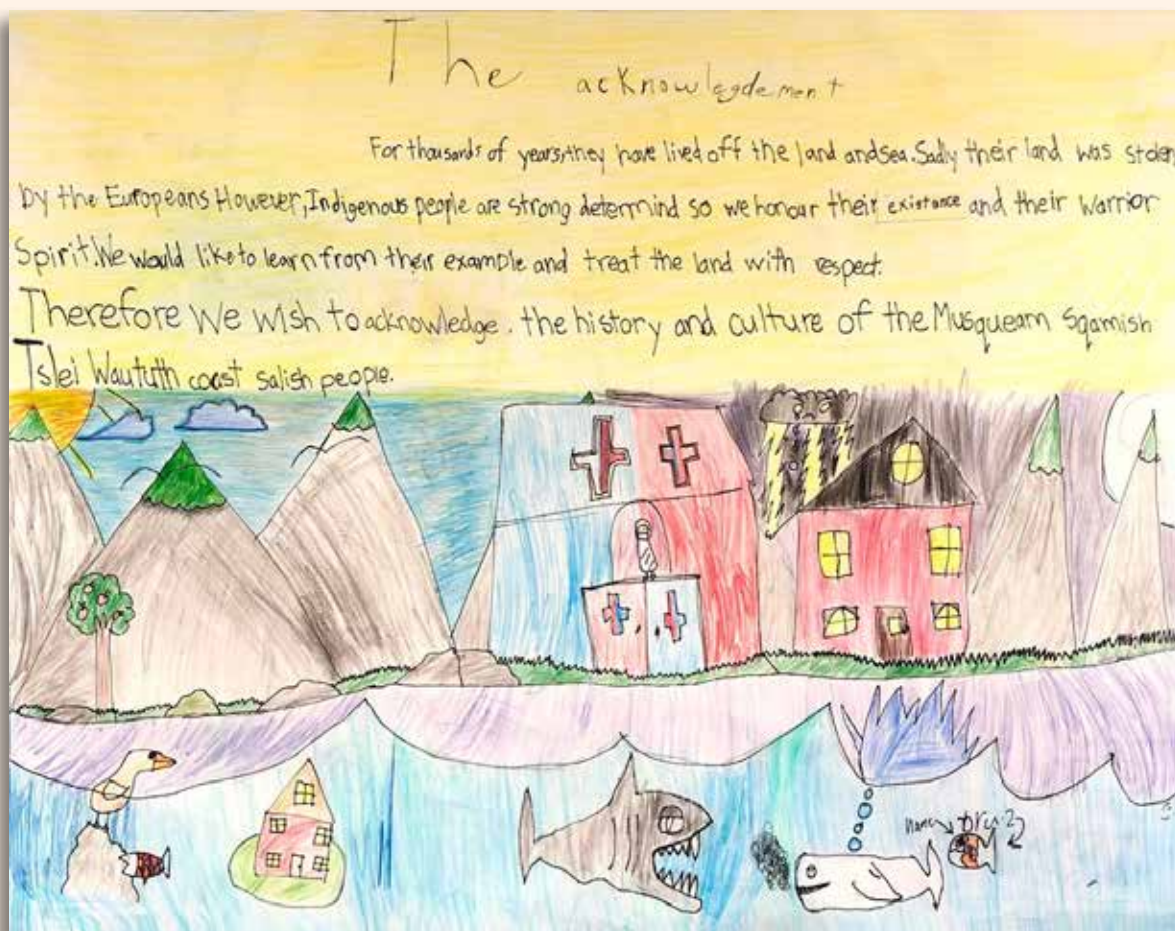
What about during Idle No More rallies? What was my role? Or as the ceremonial poles were being raised at our district offices? Or during our salmon BBQs as the sun set over our school courtyard? Or when an Indigenous immersion program was being debated at the school board? What should we teachers do or say? How do we teach? What is our work and how can we do it well, with compassion and sensitivity, but also from a place of strength and empowerment?

Before coming to work at the BCTF last fall, I taught for a decade at a large urban elementary school in Vancouver with one of the biggest populations of Indigenous learners in the city. I learned more about equity and justice from the students in that building than from any other experience before or since. These kids exemplify the strength, compassion, and brilliance of students in BC schools.

Each year, the Grades 6–7 students in my class spent a term learning about the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. The learning was far reaching and guided by the students.

We began by making a list: what do we want to know about the stolen lands we occupy? Which plants are important and symbolic? What is the history of local residential schools in our area? What can we learn about the languages spoken by people from this land, and what's been in the news about local Indigenous people lately? Our list of questions stayed on the board all term. We added to it, took things off the list, and changed the words when we found better ways to say things. It was a living list that evolved as our understanding grew.

Over the course of a month or more, in small groups and individually, we answered our questions and came up with more. We wrote, we drew, we told stories and shared our work in different ways. We made timelines, we learned about local governance structures, and developed understandings of the land on which we live and learn. We learned about local art forms and made our own rattles out of hide and sticks; we talked about their significance as children's toys and instruments used by women in ceremony. We made 2D art



LEFT: An acknowledgment by students Xeyrus A., James M., and Gavin S.

OPPOSITE: Students Tommy C., Zahara R., and Memorie P. (L to R) hold acknowledgments created in Anna's class.

BELOW: Memorie holds a rattle made in Anna's class while studying local art forms.

"Not many schools I've been to taught me about this kind of thing, but here I learned about my culture. It was special." – Zahara R., Grade 7

"It actually taught me a lot about my own culture. It was like learning about a part of me." – Memorie P., Grade 7

that reflects important local imagery, we investigated local community services for Indigenous people and explored policies undertaken by local nations and their implications. We did a project on what reconciliation means to us, and as a culminating activity we wrote our own Indigenous land acknowledgments, many of which you can see featured in this year's AGM Reports and Resolutions book.

I have rarely been more inspired than when I observed my students do this work. I was brought to tears as I watched one Indigenous student carve a poem into a piece of cedar bark about not wanting to end up like so many Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and

Girls. I was so proud as I helped another student prepare a speech on the role of government in supporting urban Indigenous families like his.

As I flip through the AGM booklet and see their thoughtful acknowledgments, illustrated so beautifully, I think maybe I've found the answer to my questions. Our work is to set the stage for curiosity, to encourage critical thinking in ways that make room for each voice. Each investigation by a student about the world around them is so valuable, each momentary dream they have about making the world a better place is a time for them to shine. The best thing we can do is get out of the way. The kids can take it from there. 🐾



Anna Chudnovsky photo



Here we grow again... the upward trend in online learning

By Nicole Hamilton (she/her) and
Danika Cottingham (she/her), online teachers, Courtenay

THE ONSET of the COVID-19 pandemic forced face-to-face/brick-and mortar teachers into what may be referred to as “emergency remote teaching,”¹ and while many educators now have a taste of the life of an online teacher, it is important to note that this is not the norm for online learning (OL) programs, nor the intended style or format of OL.

Aside from a massive increase in enrolment due to the pandemic, and added stress on already overworked teachers, it has been “business as usual” throughout the past three school years in OL. More telling is that even after other BC schools reopened, many families continued with OL and re-registered the following year. Why? Because OL teaching is quality programming that mandates individualized student learning plans (for K–9 students) and adherence to the BC curriculum. It became the best option for their children, not the last option.

Most secondary public OL teachers in our province work in continuously enrolling, asynchronous environments—meaning they have students starting and finishing courses throughout the year and working at vastly different speeds through the material. This means we usually communicate with, teach, and share learning experiences with around 670 students during the school year (September–June), but have approximately 220–275 students on our caseloads at any given point in the year. The asynchronous nature of learning increases pressure on teachers for timely feedback to students, which results in many OL teachers working through evenings, holidays, and weekends so we don't fall behind on marking.

Like all other teachers, our work is “heart work,” and we wear a plethora of hats at any given time: advisor, mentor, coach, collaborator, administrator, comedian; the list goes on and on. And just like all teachers, we work within the same expectations for building relationships, providing quality and timely feedback and assessment, and frequent reporting. Maintaining these expectations with 670 students on our caseloads each year can lead to overwhelming and unsustainable feelings for a lot of OL teachers.

Our OL colleagues work the typical contracted school year just like face-to-face teachers, but OL students may go beyond that time—meaning summer school contracts become available to ensure the learning can continue.

Unlike face-to-face teachers, the number of individual courses an OL teacher is responsible for can fluctuate drastically. For example, if a teacher has a high-demand course, like English Studies 12, they may focus solely on the one subject. On the other hand, a teacher may have 10–15 *different* courses with much lower enrolment in each. In either case, the OL teacher is responsible for many of the tasks that are completed by counsellors or administrative assistants in other brick-and-mortar secondary schools, and this is in addition to our regular workload.

Because there is no collective agreement language at all for OL teachers when it comes to workload or composition of classes, there is nothing limiting employers from continuously adding students to courses. The result? Staffing FTE remains steady in OL but may be reduced in face-to-face environments as a result of shifting student numbers. Language that protects class size and composition in OL protects all members. ♡

1 thejournal.com/articles/2020/07/08/its-not-online-ed-call-it-crisis-teaching.aspx

BOOK REVIEWS

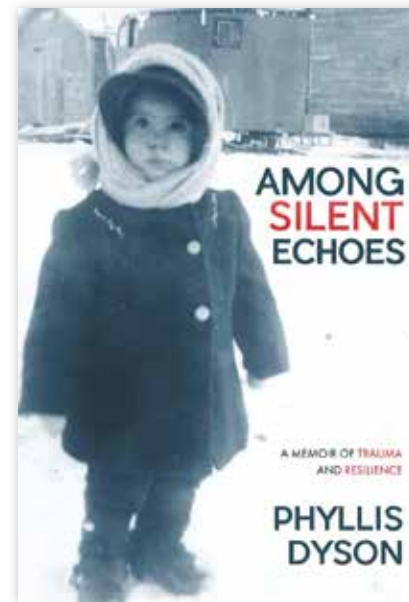
A compelling social justice story

By **Melissa Paolozza** (she/her), teacher, Sechelt

Among Silent Echoes, published by Caitlin Press, 2021

FOR TODAY'S trauma-informed and social justice educators, BC teacher Phyllis Dyson's new memoir, *Among Silent Echoes*, is a powerful read. Dyson bares her soul in this engaging story of mental illness, resilience, and survival. She offers a unique insight into a child's perspective of living with a parent suffering from a psychotic disorder. The story is both heartbreaking and joyful. Dyson captures her child-voice vividly as she recalls many happy memories, as well as devastating experiences that no child should have to endure. She recounts with distressing clarity her thoughts, fears, struggles and insecurities, while living both with her birth mother and in the BC foster care system. Her memories offer a window into how powerless and alone a child can feel. She captures the fears and challenges that so many of today's students are currently experiencing.

Among Silent Echoes highlights the power of connection that we have as educators. One trusted adult can provide stability and encourage a child's passions; in Dyson's case this passion was music. Dyson was fortunate to have friends and community members who provided the connections she needed to not only survive her ordeal, but to carry on and lead a fulfilling life in which she gives back to the community. This inspiring story of resilience emphasizes the importance that educators have in ensuring that *all* children have a place where they feel safe, valued, and important. It also provides a compassionate and empathetic view of parents who are struggling with mental illness. These parents need educators' understanding and support, rather than judgment.



Dyson's story is an important read that highlights mental health and family preservation issues that continue to need more attention and compassion in today's society. 9

Timely and timeless self-care for teachers

Review by **Shelley Balfour** (she/her), Local President, Cranbrook
Emotional Health for Educators, published by Upstage Innovations

I TOOK the opportunity to read the timely book *Emotional Health for Educators* by P. Joan Southworth on a flight from Cranbrook to Vancouver. It is a quick read and full of nuggets to ponder as we travel through the world of teaching during a two-year pandemic. The book was written just before the pandemic, but what Dr. Southworth shares is useful for any year of teaching, including the current situation.

Dr. Southworth has a great understanding of the classroom struggles of today and spends time acknowledging how the job has evolved. The book begins with the understanding that "the job of teaching is never done." Truer

words have never been spoken. (I once took a dishwashing job on the weekends to get a sense of job satisfaction for a job completed.)

Dr. Southland touches on topics near and dear to a teacher's heart, including conversations on data collection, the Fraser Institute, teacher mental health, student mental health, and advising us to "walk tall or don't walk at all." The use of the Serenity Prayer was very effective to remind the reader of the things we can change, those we can't, and the wisdom to know the difference. The examples given encourage us to use the wisdom we gain to put our energies into the things that are possible and will



istock.com/JohnnyGreig

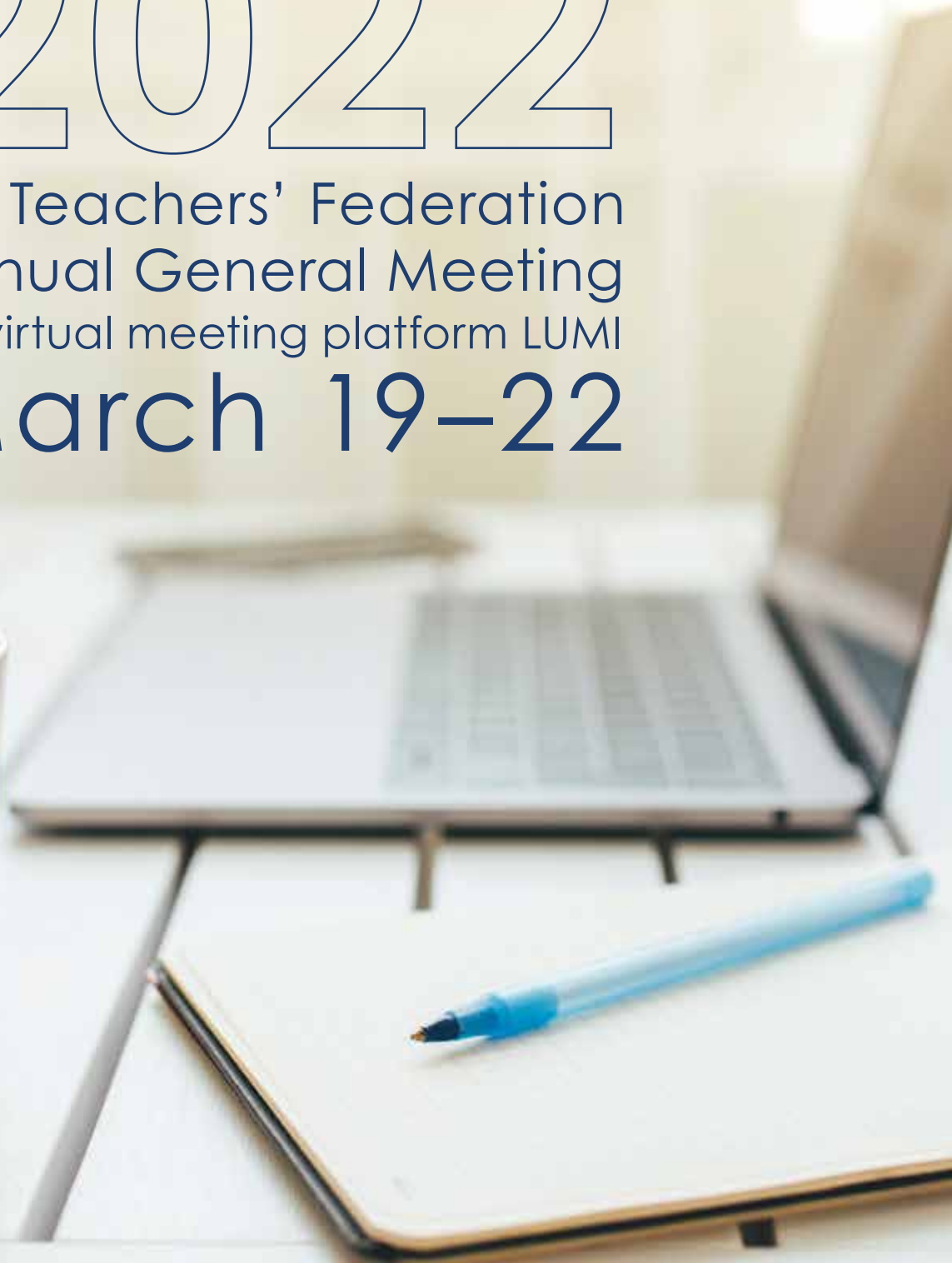
make the most difference in our daily lives. A summary of the ideas she shares is available on page 44 if you don't have time to read the full book.

Emotional Health for Educators is available at upstageinnovations.com. 9

AGM 2022

BC Teachers' Federation
Annual General Meeting
on virtual meeting platform LUMI

March 19–22



AGENDA

FIRST SESSION—Saturday morning March 19, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Call to order
Traditional welcome
Preliminaries
President's report
Leadership report
Bargaining
- 10:15–10:45 a.m.—Break
- 11:50 a.m. Announcements
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch

SECOND SESSION—Saturday afternoon March 19, 1:00–6:00 p.m.

- 1:00 p.m. Finance
Education Finance
Unfinished business
- 3:00 p.m. Wellness/social break
- 4:00 p.m. Ministry of Education
Teachers Teaching on Call
Political Action
Unfinished business
- 4:55 p.m. Call for nominations
- 5:00 p.m. Report of the Nominating Chair
- Statements from Full-Time Table Officer candidates
 - Q&A session for Full-Time Table Officer candidates
- Unfinished business
- 5:55 p.m. Announcements
- 6:00 p.m. Adjournment

THIRD SESSION—Sunday morning March 20, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Education Policy
Unfinished business
- 10:15–10:45 a.m.—Break
- 10:45 a.m. Keynote speaker
Aboriginal Education
Unfinished business

- 11:55 a.m. Greetings—Laird Cronk, President, BCFED
Announcements
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch

FOURTH SESSION—Sunday afternoon March 20, 1:00–6:00 p.m.

- 1:00 p.m. Constitution and By-laws
Unfinished business
- 3:00 p.m. Wellness/social break
- 4:00 p.m. Bob Rosen Social Justice Award
Connie Jervis Early Career Teaching Award
G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award
International Solidarity Award
Stewart Schon Health and Safety Award
Unfinished business
- 4:30 p.m. Call for nominations
Report of the Nominating Chair
- Statements from Member-at-Large candidates
 - Q&A session for Member-at-Large candidates
- 5:55 p.m. Announcements
- 6:00 p.m. Adjournment

FIFTH SESSION—Monday morning March 21, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Health, Welfare, and Safety of Teachers
- 10:15–10:45 a.m.—Break
Unfinished business
- 11:55 a.m. Greetings—Sam Hammond, President, CTF
Announcements
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch

SIXTH SESSION—Monday afternoon March 21, 1:00–6:00 p.m.

- 1:00 p.m. Honorary Membership Award
Honorary Life Membership Award
Annual General Meeting
Unfinished business
- 2:50 p.m. In memoriam
- 3:00 p.m. Wellness/social break
- 4:00 p.m. Organization of the BCTF
Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards
Unfinished business
- 5:45 p.m. Report of the Nominating Chair
Final call for nominations
- 5:55 p.m. Announcements
- 6:00 p.m. Adjournment

SEVENTH SESSION—Tuesday morning March 22, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Elections
Reporting order
presentation
Executive Director's report
- 10:15–10:45 a.m.—Break
Questions of advisory committee reports
Unfinished business
- 11:55 a.m. Greetings—Bea Bruske, President, CLC
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch

EIGHTH SESSION—Tuesday afternoon March 22, 1:00–6:00 p.m.

- 1:00 p.m. Pensions
Unfinished business
- 3:00 p.m. Wellness/social break
- 4:00 p.m. Unfinished business
New motions
- 5:55 p.m. Courtesy motion
- 6:00 p.m. Adjournment



SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Executive Committee recommendations

That By-law 5.1(a) be amended as follows:

There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of a President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Immediate Past-President (when applicable), and nine Members-at-Large, elected in such a manner as to ensure that at least three of the Member-at-Large vacancies are filled at each Annual General Meeting. One Member-at-Large position shall be designated to be held by a ~~racialized member~~ Member of Colour and one shall be designated to be held by an Aboriginal member. The designated positions shall have the same term and role as the non-designated positions. The Executive Committee positions are elected by the Annual General Meeting and shall take office on the following July 1. Each member of the Executive Committee shall be a member in good standing entitled to vote, in accordance with By-law 1.1.

That By-law 5.4(a) be amended as follows:

All nominations for positions on the Executive Committee shall be in writing and *shall indicate the position(s) for which the member is being nominated*. The nomination shall be by resolution of a general meeting of a local or shall bear the signatures of at least 10 active members of the Federation in good standing and shall include the acceptance of the nominee. A person who has been nominated for a position may withdraw from nomination for that position at any time *prior to the election by notice in writing*.

That By-law 8.3 be amended as follows:

Delegates or Local Representatives from a local may designate either a ~~delegate~~ Delegate from the same local or a Local Representative from the same local to hold and exercise the voting rights of the voting card or cards assigned to them provided that the Annual General Meeting may by resolution limit the number of voting cards that may be held and voted by a ~~delegate~~ Delegate or Local Representative, and provided further that locals may, by resolution of a general meeting, establish rules regulating such transfers of voting cards.

That By-law 21 be amended to reflect the correct numbering of each subsection as 21.1–21.4.

That By-law 5.1(f) be amended as follows:

The Member-at-Large position designated to be held by a ~~racialized member~~ a Member of Colour is open to the election of a member who identifies as ~~racialized a~~ Person of Colour ~~including those members who identify as being Aboriginal~~. For clarity, this is intended to include individuals who themselves or their ancestors are settlers and/or immigrants and/or refugees and/or were brought to Canada.

That By-law 5.1 be amended to add the following:

(g) To ensure a gender balance representative of the membership as a whole, at least five of the seven non-designated Member-at-Large positions be held by members who self-identify as women and/or non-binary, and/or transgender.

That a new By-law 5.21 be adopted as follows:

- (a) An Executive Committee member may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.
- (b) An Executive Committee member may be suspended from office by a unanimous vote of the other Executive Committee members.

That the last sentence of By-law 5.1(a) be amended as follows:

An Executive Committee member may be removed from office under the provisions of By-law 1.7, By-law 5.21, or By-law 7.

That a new By-law 5.23 be added as follows:

The Federation will not make donations to:

1. any federal, provincial, or municipal political party.
2. any individual candidate or group of candidates seeking office in any federal, provincial, or municipal election.
3. any individual seeking the nomination for any federal, provincial, or municipal party.

Concomitantly, the Federation may not directly affiliate to any political party. Locals of the Federation have the autonomy with regard to political donations but will not use Federation grants for this purpose.



That a new By-law 5.22 be adopted as follows:

5.22 *With respect to the performance of Executive Committee members' duties, the Federation shall ensure that reasonable accommodations required by Section 14 of the BC Human Rights Code are provided for Executive Committee members as needed.*

That By-law 7.2 be amended as follows:

The Judicial Council shall be composed of a chairperson, who shall be elected by the Representative Assembly, and an additional 18 members who shall be elected by the Representative Assembly. *Four positions will be designated to be held by members who self-identify as being Aboriginal, Black, or Persons of Colour.* All members of the Judicial Council shall be active members of the Federation entitled to vote and must receive a majority of the votes cast by the Representative Assembly. When a Judicial Council member resigns from or otherwise leaves the Judicial Council, the member's appointment to the Judicial Council may continue solely for the purpose of completing ongoing proceedings.

That By-law 20 be amended as follows:

Only the Annual or Special General Meeting can amend the Constitution, the by-laws, ~~the Salary Indemnity Plan Regulations~~, and the Code of Ethics and only if ~~a 75% majority of the delegates vote in favour of the amendment(s)~~ passed by at least two-thirds of the votes cast by delegates on behalf of the voting members. *Only the Annual General Meeting can amend the Salary Indemnity Plan Regulations and only if passed by at least three-quarters of the votes cast by delegates on behalf of the voting members.*

That Annual General Meeting Standing Rules of Order 6.B.1 be amended as follows:

Special resolutions shall be defined as recommendations or resolutions that seek to amend the constitution and by-laws of the Federation and other resolutions so defined in the Societies Act. Such special resolutions shall require a ~~three-quarters~~ two-thirds majority vote to pass, with the exception of changes to the Salary Indemnity Plan regulations which shall require a three-quarter majority vote to pass.

LOCAL RESOLUTION

Vancouver Elementary

That a new By-Law 3.10 be added as follows:

No member shall hold the role of Local President and/or any other locally released officer for more than 10 years consecutively. Concomitantly, no member is eligible to stand for election for the role of Local President and/or any other locally released officer for more than 10 years consecutively.

HEALTH, WELFARE, AND SAFETY OF TEACHERS

Executive Committee recommendations

That Regulation 13.C.02—3.4 be amended as follows:

3.4 A member applying for benefits, or in receipt of benefits, under the plan may be required to submit to an independent medical examination by a licensed physician selected by the plan administrator or their agent(s).

That Regulation 13.C.02—11.7 be amended as follows:

11.7 If while in receipt of benefits from this plan the claimant is entitled to claim benefits from Workers' Compensation for the same accident or illness, or Employment Insurance (~~maternity/parental~~) (special benefits, excluding sickness benefits), the benefits from this plan shall be reduced by the amount of benefits from the Workers' Compensation or Employment Insurance (~~maternity/parental~~) (special benefits, excluding sickness benefits) plan.

That Salary Indemnity Plan Regulation 13.C.02—23. be amended as follows:

23.1 For a claimant to remain eligible to receive benefits, any approved accommodation activities ~~remunerative~~ (volunteering, coursework, or accommodation employment) must be recommended by a licensed physician and approved by the Plan Administrator. ~~The Plan Administrator's decision is subject to review by the Income Security Committee. The claimant may appeal the Plan Administrator's decision to the Income Security Committee.~~



SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS

HEALTH, WELFARE, AND SAFETY OF TEACHERS Executive Committee recs. continued

- 23.2 Any of the following may be eligible for consideration as accommodation employment:
- a return to normal employment duties on a part-time basis;
 - any gainful occupation that is of a less demanding nature than the normal employment duties;
 - a formal vocational training program.
- 23.3 The claimant is responsible for reporting involvement in approved accommodation employment activities in the manner established by the Plan Administrator.
- 23.4 Any request by the claimant for an accommodation extension of benefits beyond that outlined in Regulation 21.1 must be presented to the Income Security Committee for decision. The Income Security Committee's decision shall be final and binding.

That Salary Indemnity Plan Regulation 22.1 be deleted with subsequent renumbering:

- ~~22.1—No benefits shall be payable for, or on account of;~~
- ~~a. intentionally self-inflicted injuries or illnesses, or b.~~
 - ~~illness or injury incurred while in the service of the armed forces of any country.~~

That Salary Indemnity Plan Regulation 13.C.02—24.3 be deleted and replaced with:

- 24.3 Any referral of a dispute to a medical review committee must be commenced not later than one year after the claimant has been advised of the decision which is the subject of the dispute:
- To commence the referral to a medical review committee, a claimant must:
 - advise the Plan Administrator in writing that they are referring the matter to a medical review committee.
 - provide the Plan Administrator with a written statement signed by a physician that they agree to act as the claimant's designated physician for the medical review committee.
 - The Salary Indemnity Plan shall apply for a doctor to represent the Plan within 15 days of the above notification and advise the claimant of

its designated physician as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.

- The Plan's designated physician will review such materials as they deem necessary and may require the claimant to submit to a medical examination, before providing the Plan Administrator with their medical opinion regarding the external agency's decision. A copy of the medical opinion will be provided to the claimant's designated physician.
- Upon receiving the above opinion, the Plan Administrator may:
 - place the claimant back on claim with payments retroactive to the date of denial/termination, with the claim continuing to be administered in the same manner as all other long-term disability claims.
 - confirm the external agency's decision.
- The Plan Administrator may confirm the external agency's decision, on the basis of the Plan's designated physician's medical opinion or if the claimant has not provided the requested medical information or submitted to an examination. In this case, the claimant may advise the Plan Administrator, within 30 days of their designated physician's receipt of the medical opinion, that they wish to continue with the medical review committee process.
- If the member advises they wish to continue with the medical review committee process, in accordance with Regulation 24.3 (e), the designated physicians will select a third physician to act as chairperson for the medical review committee.
- If the designated physicians cannot agree upon a chairperson within 30 calendar days after the date the claimant informs the Plan Administrator about their desire to continue with the medical review committee, the appointment shall be made by the Dean of Medicine at the University of British Columbia, or their delegate.
- The Plan Administrator may exercise their discretion to extend the time limits contained in this regulation in circumstances in which the claimant has made bone fide efforts to comply with the time limits.



CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

CANDIDATES FOR FULL-TIME TABLE OFFICER



FOR PRESIDENT
Clint Johnston
Chilliwack

THIS YEAR has cycled between two steps toward the end of the pandemic and one step back. Our temporary pivots became our norm while we advocated continually for members' safety. I've supported our work by attending provincial meetings when needed and more directly advocating with Ministry and government.

While focused on COVID, other significant work continues. We are working through advice from issue sessions, a member panel, and our advisory committees to move forward in making our union more accessible, representative, and less colonial. I appreciate my opportunities to be part of this progress, the learning that comes from it, and look forward to continuing.

Bargaining officially opens this March, but preparation began long ago. As a lead negotiator I look forward to taking members' needs and voices to the table to improve their working lives. This integral work has direct impact on members and requires strong solidarity to achieve the most we can. I am optimistic we will return to in-person meetings soon in order to communicate to and hear from elected representatives to strengthen that necessary solidarity.

I've been proud to be your vice-president, and I would be honoured to serve as your President for the coming year.

Facebook: facebook.com/clint.johnston.92

Twitter: @ClintJohnston7

EXPERIENCE

International: CTF Delegation Head, El World Congress; ISTP 2018; Bolivia 2016

National: CTF Vice-President 4x, multiple committees

Provincial: BCTF First Vice-President, Member-at-Large

Local: President & other

Teaching/ Education: 19 years; BEd Elementary & BHK (UBC)



FOR FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Carole Gordon
Central Okanagan

WHILE THE WORLD has been experiencing a pandemic, public education in BC is seeing initiatives that impact members and require significant effort to ensure members' issues are raised and understood.

As current bargaining preparations focus on improvements to working conditions, we are also experiencing a new reporting order, inclusion of childcare in schools, and indigenizing our classrooms. All the while, health and safety has remained a priority, and I have been proud to fight on your behalf at the provincial steering committee.

Mental health decline, violence, racism, and discrimination continue to be experienced in schools and union spaces. Members have been engaged through issue sessions, advisory panels, and

committees to ensure the important work of decolonization and antiracism is coordinated and effective.

The BCTF is valued as a voice for public education and will continue to amplify the stories of locals, schools, and members. While experiencing a teacher shortage, the profession is also deemed to be indispensable to society, and we are positioned well for bargaining.

It has been a privilege to be the Second Vice-President these past three years, and it would be an honour to continue to represent the BCTF as First Vice-President.

Facebook: facebook.com/carole.gordon.921

Twitter: twitter.com/CaroleGordonBC

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: Second VP 3yrs, Executive 7yrs, Pensions, CTF Trustee, AGM 19yrs

Local: Executive (Second VP, Health & Safety, Bargaining) Staff Rep, PD Rep

Community: Labour Council President, United Way

Teaching: Elementary prep, classroom (28 yrs)

CANDIDATES FOR FULL-TIME TABLE OFFICER



FOR SECOND
VICE-PRESIDENT
Rae Figursky
Burnaby

AS A FULL-TIME classroom teacher, I've been with you these difficult past two-plus years as we faced the uncertainty, increased workload, unpredictable time-tables, unreliable technology, shifting health mandates, and worry for our communities. Throughout, I've also been consistently pressing at the Executive for clarity, safety, and transparency for teachers.

I've lived in both rural and urban BC. My own identity as Métis and first-generation Canadian gives me insight and a broad perspective. I'm dedicated to ensuring that our organization reflects and honours members' voices across this province.

I will bring my values and principles of justice, union renewal, and member-driven organizing to this role. For a strong BCTF, our values need to be paired with member

input and transparent, participatory, and decentralized leadership.

Bargaining brings our members together in hope. In this difficult time, we are even more aware of the need to unite in advocacy and solidarity to address working conditions, sustainable funding, a strong public education system, and health and safety protections.

I bring a passion for teaching, respect for teachers, an ability to anticipate and solve problems, strong listening skills, and balance to the Executive. I look forward to continuing this work for you.

Facebook: Rae Figursky for BCTF 2nd Vice-President

Twitter: @RaeFigursky

Website: www.raecandoit.com

EXPERIENCE

Provincial:

Member-at-Large; Liaison—North Island, Okanagan, South Island, Aboriginal Educators, WLC/Bargaining, & TIOCAC; Grievance Appeals; LR; AGM delegate

Local: President; Bargaining Team; Executive & committees (Burnaby)

Teaching: Grade 8–12 students (math, English, learning support)



FOR SECOND
VICE-PRESIDENT
Robin Toszak
Greater
Victoria

IN 2016, I joined the Executive Committee ready to learn and excited to serve. Over three terms, I have developed the skills, knowledge, and experience to be your Second Vice-President.

Locally, I've been elected to a range of released positions, including Health & Safety Officer, Secretary-Treasurer, Grievance Officer, and (most recently) First Vice-President. I understand the diverse responsibilities and needs of local offices.

The pandemic has put additional pressures on teachers and locals. As an Executive Committee member, I have consistently advocated to empower members and support locals, as we work together for healthy and safe schools.

As a lead negotiator on the provincial bargaining team, I bring a capacity to

synthesize and communicate complex concepts and identify new strategies and opportunities. I know we are supported by professionalism, solidarity, and principled positions.

These values frame our commitment to reconciliation and antiracism, which requires a willingness to be unsettled, learn independently, hold brave conversations, and embrace change. I am committed to this ongoing work.

Across the Federation's responsibilities, I am an eager learner and confident leader. I am proud to represent teachers and I look forward to serving as your Second Vice-President.

Facebook: facebook.com/rbntzk

Twitter: twitter.com/rbntzk

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: Executive Committee (2016–present); Provincial Bargaining Team (2021–present); *Teacher* magazine & TIOC advisory committees, workshop facilitator (2013–2016)

Local: Executive (2012–present, currently First VP); Labour Council Executive (2013–present); contract (2014–present) and bargaining (2018–present) committees

Teaching: Elementary (2010–present)

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE,
ABORIGINAL
Jelana Bighorn
Vancouver
Secondary

GREETINGS, RELATIVES. I am Jelana Bighorn and my parents are Jacob and Deloria Bighorn. As a registered member of the Fort Peck Sioux Tribes in Montana, I am an uninvited guest on the territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. I honor the traditional stewards of the land that I have taught on for the past 15 years. For generations, education has been a valued aspect of my family life. My father was a founding member of the community college on his reservation, and he dedicated his life to education as a teacher and principal. I have taught BC First Peoples 12 and Social Justice 12 for many years. Delivering these courses has provided ample opportunities to develop my racial justice and equity skills. With the teachings of the Lakota medicine wheel as a foundation, I can successfully engage

in critical discussions with a variety of perspectives because I see each person as a relative. We have all answered the noble and sacred call of becoming an educator. As a hopeful member of the BCTF EC, I will work tirelessly to ensure that our working conditions allow teachers the space and support to be our best selves in the classroom.

Facebook: facebook.com/Jelana-Bighorn-for-BCTF-EC-100812712528262

EXPERIENCE

Provincial:

BCTF Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, Anti-Oppression Educator's Collective PSA Member-At-Large

Local: Social and Environmental Justice Rep, Staff Rep

Education: M.A. in Educational Studies UBC (in-progress)



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE,
ABORIGINAL
Rick Joe
Chilliwack

#TheFuturesNow

Indigenous protocols bids me to preface my statement "áma sq'it!" Good day!

My traditional name is Skelulalus and I am from the Lílwat Nation.

Nine years as a member of the Chilliwack Teachers' Association (CTA) Executive Committee and currently on our local bargaining team has allowed me to see the inner parts of the local and how we work as a team provincially.

Dr. Graham Smith, Māori/Indigenous scholar, asks us, "Where are your blisters? [show me your blisters.]" Dr Smith uses this

analogy to talk about the work needed to centre Indigenous ways in research, much like shoveling many hours, to ensure that space is used and being used in a good way. Everything that Dr. Smith talked about is what he has done. He has never asked anyone to do anything that he himself has not done. I offer my candidacy as a way members can ensure an Executive and Federation have blisters and do our hard work. I have the calluses to show the work that I have done and will continue to do.

Kukwstum' cká! ap

EXPERIENCE

National: CTF Indigenous Committee

Provincial: BCTF Ab. Advisory, BCTF-SURT facilitator, BCTF-IMS facilitator, AEA-PSA Exec

Local: LR, Bargaining Committee, Chair Aboriginal Committee; PD Committee, Board of Directors FVACFSS



CANDIDATES FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, RACIALIZED
Benula Bunjun Sooke

FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES I have had the honour of being an assertive voice for teachers in various capacities across the province. As a woman of color and a Francophone, I was elected to this position in 2020. After two years of work, I am seeking re-election to continue what you have tasked me with.

As part of my role on the EC, I brought recommendations from the Advisory Panel to Address Discriminatory Actions in BCTF spaces. This resulted in the creation of a new department in the BCTF: the antiracism and anti-oppression office. These recommendations were only passed in December and January. As such, continuing this work, as well as my role on the Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusion, which

will remove systemic barriers that hinder progress toward authentic inclusivity for all of our members, are two of the reasons I want to continue in my role.

Virtual communication has not slowed me down. I continue to be a direct and accessible voice that reflects the diversity of our membership, even in the face of a global pandemic.

I will continue to honor the trust you have placed in me to listen and engage in advocacy on your behalf.

EXPERIENCE

BCTF: 2020–present EC Member-at-Large, Racialized; 2012–2020 SURT facilitator; 2009–2014 French Advisory Committee; 2009–2013 parent group presenter

STA, Local 62: 2019–2020 LR

GVTA, Local 61: 2013–2016 President, 2011–2012 Acting President, Sept 2010–2013 First Vice-President, Sept 2007–2010 LR



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, RACIALIZED
Preet Lidder
Vancouver Secondary

RACIAL JUSTICE is not merely a declaration, it's a verb. I put antiracism into action, in my classroom, school community, and union! I am the right person for the Racialized Member-at-Large, as I am deeply committed to racial justice in our union.

As Vice-President of the Anti-Oppression Educators Collective, I have supported my colleagues across the province to create *just* classrooms and schools. I have participated in all three Issue Sessions on Racism to work collectively with BIPOC members to share our experiences of racism and provide recommendations for our union. As a facilitator, I have worked with BIPOC colleagues to upgrade antiracist workshops because professional development is integral to creating anti-oppressive school communities. As a member of the Working & Learning

Conditions/Bargaining Advisory Committee and Bargaining Task Force, I have developed an informed lens on bargaining, integral to this round of negotiations.

Achieving a M.Ed in Equity Studies has informed my racial literacy and deepened my love of community. I am ready to be on the BCTF EC. As a second-generation Punjabi immigrant and daughter of farmers, I know hard work and believe the greatest work we do, we do in the service of others.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100077963583223

Website: preetlidder.wixsite.com/candidate

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: WLC/BAC, Bargaining Task Force, AOEC Vice-President, BCFED Executive Council, 3 Issue Sessions on Racism, workshop facilitator, AGM delegate

Local: Staff Rep, Local Rep to BCTF, PD Committee, BIPOC Ad Hoc Committee

Teaching: Secondary math and science education



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE, RACIALIZED
Dereck Mejias
Vancouver Island North

I AM INTERESTED in becoming a Member-at-Large with the BCTF to do my part in ensuring that all members feel welcome, have a voice, and see themselves represented in leadership. In the process, I hope to help increase equity and inclusion within the Federation.

As a Member-at-Large, I also wish to help ensure that everyone's point of view on key and global matters are expressed and added to the collective in a manner that respects the democratic nature of the Federation.

I also wish to play a more active role, from a union standpoint, in ensuring a free, inclusive, and quality public education system in our communities, where the learning needs of all students are met.

EXPERIENCE

I hold a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science Degree. I have been a teacher for over 20 years, the last 4 with SD84 and SD85 Vancouver Island.

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Kevin Epp
Okanagan
Skaha

THE LAST TWO-PLUS YEARS have been the most challenging of my career, like so many of our members. It truly is in the difficult times when our collective voice and solidarity are needed most.

Throughout my involvement, I've been offered opportunities to learn from colleagues and to listen to their stories. Their voices, in any part of the province the work has taken me, are what I value. The ones that challenge our thinking, ask us to wonder if we have biases or question why we've always done it that way, are not only needed, but have always been a part of the BCTF. Those voices, if we listen, invite us to stretch.

Not so long ago, when debates raged at AGMs over divesting from tobacco and firearms in our pension plan, it was the persistence of those voices that caused that shift. We must continue to recognize and listen to all the voices within our membership. That is how we grow, change, and move forward...together.

I want to add my voice to the Executive Committee. I hope you believe that voice would be a positive addition to the team. I ask you to consider supporting me with your vote.

EXPERIENCE

Kevin has been active in the BCTF since 1994, including LR, IMS, Nominating Chair, and Local President, both from 2008 to 2012 and again from 2019 to present.



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Lisa LaBoucane
Vernon

IT HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY TOUGH in the classroom for the last two years. We have had to fight to be safe, and well, in our work. This is yet another chapter in our shared struggle. I was here through stripped and restored language, four rounds of local bargaining, and stood proudly with you on four picket lines. I've advocated passionately for the supports my students and I need throughout my teaching career. I have engaged members locally and provincially and invited them to join me in the pursuit of teacher activism.

Colleagues know that I am curious and invite different experiences and perspectives. I listen, ask questions, and learn. I believe in the following:

- Grassroots action.
- The importance of contract enforcement and supporting local offices.

- Our union's meetings, information, and Executive members need to be accessible.
- As a union, we are at our best when we engage and support our members across the province.

Through my involvement in the BCTF, I seek ways to have an impact in our union and on public education. I am ready to take the next step and offer my voice as a BCTF Executive Member-at-Large and I ask for your support.

EXPERIENCE

Local: President (4yrs), Grievance Officer, PD Chair, Local Table Lead Negotiator; CLC training, N. Okanagan Labour Council rep

BCTF: SURT/ Summer Conference facilitator, Women in Negotiations, FLI, AGM delegate, LR

Teaching: Secondary English, Grades 6-7, elementary special education



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Shinee Prasad
Burnaby

I AM A FIRST-GENERATION racialized woman, living on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations; I am committed to decolonization in all that I do. More than ever, COVID-19 has shown us that we need each other. As a responsive leader, I listen to members and use my strong communication skills to advocate that the employer does everything possible to protect our members and students.

Provincially, as a member of the WLC/ Bargaining Advisory and president of the Anti-Oppression Educators Collective PSA, I collaborate with colleagues province-wide to design resources for members, and advocate for greater structural supports. This is also my third term representing all

workers of colour at the BC Federation of Labour.

I co-lead our local bargaining team, I use these negotiating skills to resolve issues for teachers locally and provincially. Bargaining has also strengthened my passion for upholding our collective agreement. As a teacher and local table officer, my focus is ensuring that systems are in place that support and empower each individual member and student. Equity and inclusion are a framework for my advocacy. I want to engage our members and empower our union. I look forward to working for you!

Facebook: [facebook.com/groups/168123180759364](https://www.facebook.com/groups/168123180759364)

Website: shineeprasad.wordpress.com

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: BCTF: WLC/ BAC, Bargaining Task Force, AOEC President, Ad Hoc Committee for Inclusion, CASJ, Racism Issue Sessions; BCFED: WOC Representative, workshop facilitator

Local: First VP, Bargaining Co-lead, Local Rep, numerous committees

Educator: Secondary special education, social studies (Burnaby), instructional assistant (Vancouver adult education)

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Katherine

Trepanier

Prince George

THIS IS MY 28TH YEAR as a French immersion primary teacher. I am currently the Second Vice-President and Bargaining Chair of the PGDTA and have served three years as a Member-at-Large on the BCTF Executive Committee.

As a Member-at-Large I seek out and listen to members' concerns and ideas, and bring these forward at the provincial level, both through my liaison role with local presidents and with individual members. I have a strong voice and use it to represent members.

Over the last two years, BCTF members have shown incredible resilience and professionalism. This has come at a cost, however, and teachers' mental and

physical health have suffered. Now, more than ever, we need to support and engage members.

I am passionate about teaching and union work, but also believe in maintaining a good work/life balance when possible. I enjoy acting in community theatre productions, singing, travelling, and spending time with family and friends.

The best part of this work is the people I meet, and I look forward to meeting in person again soon. Despite the many challenges we continue to face, I remain excited for the future of the BCTF and the teaching profession.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: BCTF Member-at-Large (3 years), WLC/BAC, Local Representative, AGMs, Bargaining Conferences, FLI

Local (PGDTA): Second Vice-President, Bargaining Team Chief Negotiator, Staff Representative

Education: MEd in Educational Practice; BA, PDP (SFU)



FOR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Winona

Waldron

Greater

Victoria

THE LAST TWO YEARS have been eclipsed by COVID-19 and have been incredibly hard on teachers as we have attempted to retain some semblance of normality for our students. This already difficult job has been compounded by affordability issues, the housing crisis, and the climate emergency. The Federation's role is complex, as we must not only consider those issues, continue to improve working conditions for members, but also look internally to decolonize practices.

I have sought out training opportunities to enable me to better understand and navigate these complex issues. These have included attending CLC Winter School, BC Labour Law Reviews, Summer Conferences, FIT, and FLI. This training is augmented by

a Master of Arts (language and literacy), Bachelor of Education, and Bachelor of Arts (political science and philosophy). Twice, I have been the lead negotiator at the local table. I have extensive experience in local negotiations, difficult employers, and I have defended the collective agreement through the grievance and arbitration process numerous times.

I have worked hard as a local president to represent the interests of members. With your support, I am ready to bring my training, education, and experience to the provincial table to represent teachers across the province.

EXPERIENCE

CTF: AGM delegate, Bargaining Conference panelist, Women's Symposium presenter, Daughters of the Vote facilitator

BCTF: WIN facilitator, WLC/BAC, LR, VLC Exec

GVTA: President, Bargaining Chair, Contract Chair, Aboriginal Nations Education Council, Staff Rep



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THE BCTF CODE OF ETHICS states general rules for all members of the professional service and conduct toward students, colleagues, and the professional union. Members are advised to contact local union officers or appropriate BCTF staff for advice on how to proceed with issues related to the BCTF Code of Ethics.

1. The member speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity, and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.
2. The member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare. The member follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.
3. A privileged relationship exists between members and students. The member refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
4. The member is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/ guardians the practices employed in discharging the member's professional duties.
5. The member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance.* *It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues.*
6. The member acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in their professional union.
7. The member adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.
8. The member acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of their professional union.
9. The member, as an individual or as a member of a group of members, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals. (2019 AGM) *See 31.B.12 of the Members' Guide to the BCTF.

Let the Code of Ethics guide your practice within the context of the pandemic.

The Judicial Council continues to implement the Code of Ethics, support professional and ethical practice, and consider alleged breaches of the Code of Ethics. Ethics advisory discussions are facilitated remotely.

For information and advice on the Code of Ethics and the complaint process, contact Sherry Payne, Ethics Administrator at 604-871-1803 or spayne@bctf.ca, or Nadia Bove, Internal Relations Administrative Assistant at 604-871-1823 or nbove@bctf.ca.

You can also contact your local president to book the workshop BCTF Code of Ethics: Understanding the Professional Relationship (see Professional and Social Issue Workshops on bctf.ca) or see the Members' Guide to the BCTF, Section 31.B-D.



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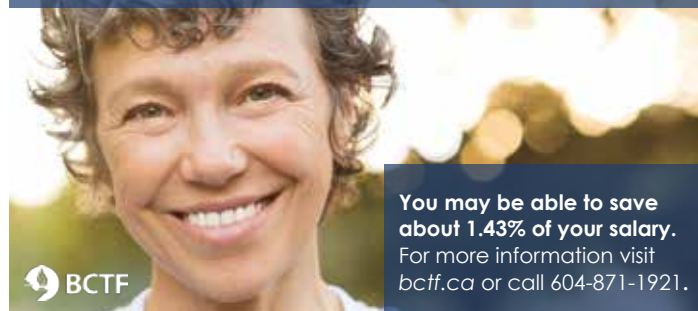
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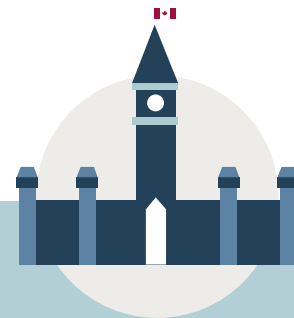
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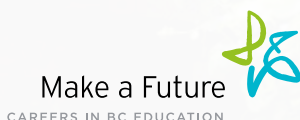
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BCTF Virtual New Teachers' Conference 2022

May 14, 2022

This year, the BCTF will once again be hosting a Virtual New Teachers' Conference. The conference is a professional development opportunity designed specifically for teachers and teachers teaching on call in their first five years of teaching, as well as teacher candidates. Keynote speakers will be Verna St. Denis, PhD Education Expert, special advisor to the President of the University of Saskatchewan on antiracism and anti-oppression, Cree Métis professor of Indian and Northern education, and author; and Nikki Sanchez, Indigenous media maker, TEDX speaker, and environmental educator and author.

For more information, email ntc@bctf.ca.