

# Teacher



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BC Teachers' Federation

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Photo of students by Joshua Berson  
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Kids imagine schools of the future  
New and more diverse members refresh BC unions  
Fostering positive parent-teacher relationships  
Where is technology taking us?  
Roads to reconciliation



## This is your **MAGAZINE**

Do you enjoy writing? Have a story to tell? An event, topic, or issue you want your colleagues to know about?

If so, consider writing for *Teacher*.

We also welcome brief letters to the editor. If you have any thoughts about an article you have read and want to share your opinion with other teachers, send your letter to [teachermag@bctf.ca](mailto:teachermag@bctf.ca).

The 2018 theme will focus on the future: what's new, what's next. Submission guidelines can be downloaded from [bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx](http://bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx).

*Teacher* reserves the right to edit or condense any contribution considered for publication. We are unable to publish all letters we receive.

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## Bargaining 2019: Preparation starts NOW with input from members

### Happy new year!

WITH THE ARRIVAL of 2018, the BCTF and our locals are already looking ahead to the expiry of our current collective agreement on June 30, 2019. The BCTF's goal, as set in the fall by the Executive Committee, is to begin negotiations early and to successfully negotiate a new collective agreement before the current one expires.

That means locals will be consulting with members this school year, putting a bargaining team in place, and holding a bargaining conference in the fall of 2018. If there is agreement with our employer (BCPSEA), we want to open negotiations before the end of 2018.

Now that the bulk of our pre-2002 working conditions language has been restored, as per the agreement ratified by the membership and the employer in March 2017, the Federation will be bargaining from language that exists, rather than from language in limbo pending a court decision. This is our first opportunity to negotiate those issues in almost two decades.

It is also our first opportunity to negotiate with a new government. We're looking forward to continuing conversations with government and our employer about the conditions needed to ensure a much more productive round of negotiations than we have experienced in recent years.

Which bargaining objectives are chosen and what decisions about how to proceed in this regard will come via member input, then through decisions at the upcoming bargaining conference, and then through the Executive Committee, once bargaining commences.

It is important that all members (including newer members, mid-career members, and those close to retirement) actively participate in sharing their ideas in their locals over the next several months. We want your input about potential bargaining objectives and strategies to attain those objectives. I hope you will participate.

**There's a lot to do in 2018 to ensure a successful round of bargaining ahead of 2019. Working together, from the local to the provincial level, I believe we will be in a strong position to succeed!**



## Négociations 2019: La préparation commence dès MAINTENANT avec la contribution de nos membres

### Bonne année !

AVEC L'ARRIVÉE de 2018, la FECB et les syndicats locaux anticipent déjà l'expiration de notre convention collective actuelle le 30 juin 2019. L'objectif de la FECB, tel qu'établi à l'automne par le comité exécutif, est d'amorcer les négociations de bonne heure et de négocier avec succès une nouvelle convention collective avant l'expiration de la convention collective actuelle.

Cela signifie que les syndicats locaux vont consulter les membres cette année, vont mettre en place une équipe de négociation et organiser une conférence de négociation à l'automne 2018. S'il y a entente avec notre employeur (BCPSEA), nous voulons ouvrir des négociations avant la fin de 2018.

Maintenant que la majeure partie de nos conditions de travail d'avant 2002 ont été rétablies, conformément à l'entente ratifiée par les membres et l'employeur en mars 2017, la Fédération négociera à partir d'un langage qui existe plutôt que d'un langage en suspens dans l'attente d'une décision. C'est notre première occasion de négocier ces questions depuis près de deux décennies.

C'est aussi notre première opportunité de négocier avec un nouveau gouvernement. Nous sommes impatients de poursuivre les discussions avec le gouvernement et notre employeur au sujet des conditions nécessaires pour assurer un cycle de négociations beaucoup plus productif que ceux que nous avons connus au cours des dernières années.

Les objectifs de négociation qui sont choisis et les décisions sur la façon de procéder à cet égard viendront des commentaires des membres, puis des décisions prises lors de la prochaine conférence de négociation, puis du comité de direction, une fois la négociation commencée.

Il est important que tous les membres (y compris les nouveaux membres, les membres en milieu de carrière et les membres proches de la retraite) participent activement au partage de leurs idées dans leurs syndicats locaux au cours des prochains mois. Nous voulons votre avis sur les objectifs et les stratégies de négociation potentielles pour atteindre ces objectifs. J'espère que vous répondrez présents.

**Il y a beaucoup à faire en 2018 pour assurer une ronde de négociation réussie avant 2019. En travaillant ensemble, du niveau local au niveau provincial, je crois que nous serons en position de force pour réussir !**



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### NEW 2018 climate change science tool for teachers

I'D LIKE TO bring teachers' attention to the fifth edition of *Climate Change Science: An Updated Resource with Canadian and Global Impacts, Mitigation & Adaptation*, available free and online on TeachBC at [teachbc.bctf.ca](http://teachbc.bctf.ca).

You'll find global solutions for a healthier planet and Canadian content on natural and anthropogenic influences from the Arctic to southern Canada, with an emphasis on BC. Canada may not meet its 2030 goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Learn ways to track progress in implementation of the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. The Alberta oil sands and pipeline projects to transport bitumen are covered. Extreme weather conditions that increase droughts, forest fires, storms, and even severe regional winters are likely linked to climate change. Natural conditions such as El Niño, the polar vortex, changing jet stream, and the warming Arctic and Antarctic exacerbate climate change.

An article in *Science* journal found that "only about half of U.S. adults believe that human activity is the predominant cause of climate change... many teachers in the U.S. repeat scientifically unsupported claims in class. Greater attention to teachers' knowledge, but also values, is critical." A section on deniers of climate change addresses how some industry spokespeople and paid lobbyists mislead people.

Our children need to be empowered to make wise decisions about their future.

—**Harold Gopaul**, retired Coquitlam biology and earth science teacher

“A section on deniers of climate change addresses how some industry spokespeople and paid lobbyists mislead people.”

### A teacher's letter to Dr. Plecas, Speaker of the House

THANK YOU for beginning the conversation and transition towards more productive dialogue in the BC Legislature.

I have been aware of the strange antics allowed within our parliamentary process for decades and have not been able to fathom how decorum and protocol have not really changed with the times. As a public school teacher, I have the privilege of introducing and hopefully inspiring many elementary students towards becoming literate and involved citizens in our wonderful country. As we study and practice the elements of effective student governance within our own classroom(s) the focus is always on respect, true listening and collaboration to improve all of our situations. Students consistently favour the circle as an effective, inclusive structure, rather than one side facing the other, which is the physical structure that most federal, provincial and territorial governance takes. In addition, students are taken aback when they see that name calling and other sarcastic or derisive actions are allowed within legislative/parliamentary procedures.

I often think about how lucky we are to be Canadians. Our collective ability to consider where we are now and where we want to be next often takes wrongs from the past as the starting point for making our world a better place. Thank you for taking a simple but powerful step towards improving the workings of our Provincial Legislature. "...the unofficial and, at times mocking or derogatory titles when directing a question...reflects poorly on this institution." Well said. Improving the tone and therefore the quality of dialogue within our leadership at the highest levels is good modelling for every citizen of every age.

—**Jennie Boulanger**, Burnaby teacher

### Sunshine Coast loves Teacher feature!

WHEN THE November/December *Teacher* was published, we sent a mass email to all local 46 teacher contacts, senior management and trustees. We attached the pdf copy and sent the online link. We put it on the front page of our website too! ([www.scta46.org](http://www.scta46.org)). We are receiving great feedback about the Sunshine Coast feature in *Teacher*. Thanks again for your creativity and hard work! You rock!

—**Louise Herle**, President, Sunshine Coast Teachers' Association local#46

### Could you be missing out on salary?

#### The Teacher Qualification Service (TQS) has changed these policies:

##### Type of capstone

TQS WILL no longer scrutinize the type of capstone acceptable in a graduate degree; all capstones will be acceptable. A capstone is a culminating activity in a degree such as a thesis, major paper, major project, or comprehensive examination. This change in policy could affect any applicants currently in category five plus (5+), who completed a graduate degree that contained a capstone but did not contain an initial teacher education program.

##### Credit count

This policy applies to the number of credits that a thesis represents in a Master's degree.

##### Additional Qualification (AQ) courses

Ontario AQ courses taken from an accredited university will now be considered if they fit into the requirements of an Integrated Program.

#### The TQS advises teachers deciding to work toward an upgrade of category in order to gain a salary increase, to follow these steps:

- Choose a university program relevant to the BC public K–12 education system.
- Send the details of the program to the TQS to make sure it qualifies you for a category upgrade. Use the Program and Course Approval link on the TQS website.
- Complete the program.
- Apply for an upgrade through the TQS website ([www.tqs.bc.ca](http://www.tqs.bc.ca)).
- Provide your new TQS category card to your school district to affect your upgrade.
- Enjoy your salary increase!

Learn more at [www.tqs.bc.ca](http://www.tqs.bc.ca).



### Correction

OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES to Jen McGowan—her named was misspelled in the byline to her piece titled "If walls could talk" in the November/December *Teacher*.



# School MUSIC reverberates across communities



By **Michael Wen**, President, Terrace District Teachers' Union

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**On that rainy Terrace evening, Cassie Hall Elementary School was flooded with music. Andrew's trumpet fanfare blended with the warmth of Miranda's French horn. Down the hall came the martial steps of Daryl's drum. It was Head Start Night, an annual event to support elementary band programs. Having been a band teacher in Terrace for 25 years, I was happy to support this event, one that highlighted the reciprocal relationship between music in schools and the community.**

“It's really all about how music makes a difference in people's lives and creates lifelong connections.”

I CAUGHT SIGHT of a former student, now a parent. She approached me to ask, “Mr. Wen, do you remember me?” I nodded and we yarned about the old days and how her kids were doing. It struck me then why I taught music in Terrace—it's really all about how music makes a difference in people's lives and creates lifelong connections.

a parent who thanked him because her daughter credited music with helping her study math at university.

importance and value it has in our schools and in our society... I knew that I wanted to continue to make music a part of my life while inspiring a new generation of students to discover the joy and excitement that I had found growing up in Terrace.”

That night I surveyed some of my teacher colleagues, former students, and some volunteers about how music in the schools had changed their lives. Daryl McDicken, an elementary band teacher, spoke about the interaction between his students and other musicians, saying that one of his best experiences was when his elementary school jazz band performed with a rhythm and blues band in a concert for parents. The effect? Daryl recalled a conversation with

I was particularly intrigued by the reflections of Susan Brouwer, who teaches band at Skeena Middle School. She said that she became a music educator to give teenagers a safe, positive place to belong in school where they can thrive, be themselves, and value each other. Susan's work has had a heartfelt effect on us all. We're all touched by her band parent who said, “My child wouldn't still be with us if it wasn't for the band program—it literally saved her life.”

Another former student, Stacey Zorn, teaches elementary music in Surrey. I asked her about the importance of the connections that she made as a student with programs outside of our region. She said, “We did an exchange program through The Society for Educational Visits and Experiences in Canada (SEVEC) that had us paired with a school in Perth, Ontario. That experience was life-changing, as many of us made friends that we still talk to. We got to see different parts of the country that we'd never seen before and experience a culture different than ours.”

“My child wouldn't still be with us if it wasn't for the band program—it literally saved her life.”

After that inspiring evening, I contacted former students who had become band teachers themselves. Among them was Fort Nelson band teacher David Johnstone. He said he became a music educator because he “was extremely privileged to grow up in a community that supported and fostered a love for the arts... I could perform in countless school ensembles, the Terrace Symphony Orchestra, the Terrace Community Band, and in the pit for full musical productions.” He added, “These ensembles were led by educators who were passionate about music and instilled the

Terrace citizens continue to support the music education programs in our schools because music is so much a part of this community's life. Looking back on my years of teaching music, I appreciate that we live in a community that acknowledges the profound and positive difference music can make in our lives. ■

# Hungry to learn: Hope for BC students living in poverty



By Nancy Knickerbocker, Director,  
BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division



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**It's become an annual autumn ritual. Daylight savings is done, the rains have come, and on a grey November day the good people from First Call hold a packed news conference at the BCTF building to release the annual Child Poverty Report Card. This year's is the 21st report card.**

EVERY YEAR Adrienne Montani, co-ordinator of the Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, speaks from the heart about the discouraging persistence of a single statistic: one in five. Once again in 2017, as it has done for more than two decades, the data still shows that one in five BC children are growing up in poverty. That's more than 153,000 of our kids.

Every year the media show up en masse, dutifully noting the stats from experts who patiently explain the policy solutions to this terrible problem that simply should not exist in our wealthy province. Then the cameras zoom in for the human interest profile of a poor person who has volunteered to tell their story in the hope of inspiring the necessary empathy and indignation among British Columbians so that government might finally be compelled to act.

Every year the stories are heart-rending: stoic grandmothers on welfare struggling to raise grandchildren with special needs; youth trying their best to finish high school, but it's hard because they're homeless since they aged out of foster care; tearful single mothers warning other women that they, too, could be only a divorce away from the food bank lineup.

“One in five BC children are growing up in poverty—more than 153,000 kids.”

Every year I leave that news conference full of conflicting emotions: anger that economic inequality and social injustice seem to keep growing; guilt that I do so little to change the situation; respect for the courageous folks who step up to the microphone and share their pain; and gratitude for Adrienne and all the others who continue to do the research, raise their voices, and never give up on their vision of a better BC for poor kids and families.

## **This year, for the first time, there are some glimmers of hope**

After years of refusals by Stephen Harper's Conservatives and Christy Clark's Liberals, both the federal and provincial governments have finally promised to adopt poverty reduction strategies. The feds have implemented a more generous Canada Child Benefit. The province has appointed Vancouver East MLA Shane Simpson, son of a single mom who grew up in the Raymur project, as Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. They've raised welfare rates by \$100 per month, reversed the clawback on bus passes for people on disability assistance, restored tuition-free access to adult basic education and English language classes, and waived post-secondary tuition for youth from foster care.

## **These are all good first steps**

A 2015 study by BCTF Research found that over 80% of the 778 teachers who responded had at least some students who arrive at school hungry, without any food for lunch or snacks. Over half of the respondents said that up to 20% of their students need food support.

“Canada is one of the only industrialized countries without a national school food program.”

The study revealed a big gap between the number of hungry kids and the ability of schools to feed them. Only 43% of schools represented in the sample had lunch programs, and only 29% of schools provided snacks. Over 40% of teachers said they bring food to school for hungry kids, spending an average of \$29 per month. “Based on this figure, BC teachers are contributing a total of \$3.85 million per year to meet the needs of hungry students in BC public schools,” the study concluded.

Across our wealthy province, poor children are forced to rely on a sketchy patchwork of programs funded largely by charities, churches, labour unions, and parent groups, and delivered through the efforts of teachers and community volunteers.

Elaine Fitzpatrick, President of the Peace River South Teachers' Association, describes a typical program: “The ‘lunch lady’ who has run the program at our school for 24 years is still running it,” Elaine says. “It is supported by many in our community—individuals, companies, local businesses, and community organizations help out with cash, food, and extra hands when needed. The program allows for parents to pay when they can, and receive when they can't.”

Unfortunately, BC's ad-hoc approach to dealing with the nutritional needs of the next generation is typical across Canada. I was shocked to learn that Canada is one of the only industrialized countries without a national school food program.



Nancy Knickerbocker photo

L-R: Indigenous grandmother Georgia Brown struggles to raise her two grandsons on welfare and volunteers as a legal advocate in the Downtown Eastside, Scott Graham is Associate Executive Director of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, and Adrienne Montani serves as Provincial Coordinator of First Call: BC Child and Youth and Advocacy Coalition.

A report published by UNICEF in June 2017 ranked Canada 37th out of 41 rich countries in providing access to healthy food for children. *Building the Future: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in Rich Countries* asserts that: “Long-term, inclusive and sustainable social goals are best met through attention to the needs of children.”

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 1 is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Sustainable Development Goal 2 is to end hunger, achieve food security, and improved nutrition. “Given the ample food resources available, no level of food insecurity among children is acceptable; and yet in high-income countries, one child in eight is food insecure,” the UNICEF report states. “Obesity is also a form of malnutrition, and rates are increasing in all but a handful of countries.” With 25% of 11–15-year-olds obese or overweight, Canada ranks second highest, after Malta.

Note that BC’s rate of one child in five growing up in poverty is significantly worse than the situation in most industrialized western nations. In countries across Europe and Asia, governments fund national school food programs and extensive curricular resources. In Finland, for example, youngsters sit down to a healthy balanced school lunch while adults engage them in conversation about good nutrition, healthy

“Across our wealthy province, poor children are forced to rely on a sketchy patchwork of programs.”

cooking, food gardening, and even table manners. In other countries, kids’ lunches look nothing like the pizzas, burgers, and fries served up in school cafeterias across North America.

“BC teachers are contributing \$3.85 million per year to meet the needs of hungry students.”

But a lack of good quality food is not the only issue. Many BC students don’t have a proper place nor the necessary time to eat a full nutritious lunch. Kids eat in hallways, classrooms, gymnasiums. It’s little wonder so many parents express frustration over their kids’ lunches coming home barely eaten.

The Coalition for Healthy School Food is trying to change all that. Noting that hunger affects both mental and physical health, the Coalition says there are many good reasons to implement a universal healthy school food program for Canadian kids.

BCTF President Glen Hansman heartily agrees. “We all know that the links between student learning and nutrition are undisputable, yet Canada’s approach to healthy school food is abysmal—no matter which province or territory you’re talking about. Given the BC government’s commitment to address child poverty, now is the time to implement a quality school food program across the province. It should be an integral part of BC’s poverty reduction plan, with universal access built in as a right of all students.” ■



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## Benefits of a universal healthy school food program

- supports student health and wellness
- fosters school and community connectedness
- increases consumption of fruit and vegetables
- enhances student learning and school success
- reduces risk of diet-related chronic disease
- creates jobs and ups demand for fresh local food.

Source: The Coalition for Healthy School Food, <https://is.gd/PqzRM>

### Learn more:



2017 BC Child Poverty Report Card: [still1in5.ca](http://still1in5.ca)

# Kids visualize the future of schooling

By Ieke Giese, North Vancouver teacher-librarian

It started with a phone call. Could I...? Would I ....? Of course. Teachers sharing with teachers. We were to use art to illustrate what our Grade 6 and 7 students think about the future of schools and education for *Teacher* magazine. Inspired by a project from my quilting guild, I created an art activity to illustrate what they imagined.

EACH STUDENT was given an enlarged black and white photo of the front of our school, glued to a piece of white tagboard, and asked to highlight the straight lines with a coloured pen. Next, as a class, we talked about school today and how school has changed since their teacher, Arleene Ewing, and I had gone to school. We explained what we had then and what we didn't have—computers, cell phones, smart boards, etc. We talked about learning expectations, curriculum and evaluation, then and now. Students, in their groups of four, were asked to imagine what our school might be like in 20 years. How would the building change? How might the area around it change? What would people be doing? On tracing paper stapled to the top of the tagboard, they set to work with enthusiasm to illustrate their imagined school 20 years in the future.

Next, after a brief discussion, they added a second layer of tracing paper and designed the school or environment of learning they imagined would exist 100 years in the future. In the end, there were schools in the air, under the water, and schools that did not exist but where students were instead connected at home and learning was transmitted and shared. While many kids created dystopian futures resulting from war, earthquakes, volcanoes, and pollution, learning and community remained important.

At the end of class, the kids assigned me homework! They were curious to hear my predictions for school in the future too. I know our discussions will continue.... ■

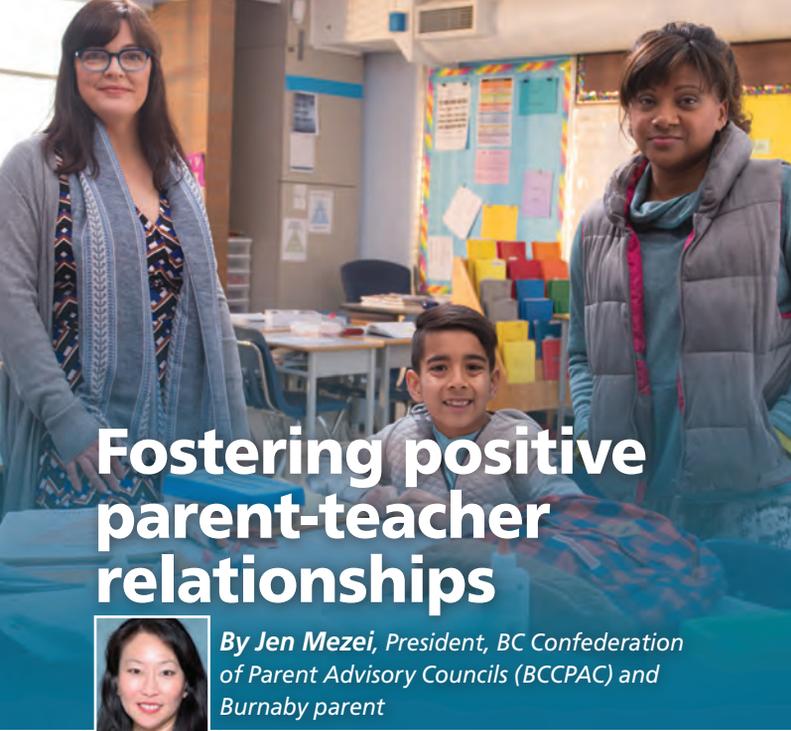


Marian Dodds photo



Teacher-librarian Ieke Giese top right, Grade 6/7 teacher Arleene Ewing middle right.

Joshua Berson photos except where noted



# Teachers talk to Teacher about parents

Members attending the November Representative Assembly were invited to share their tips on how they build rapport with parents

## Elementary

- ▶ OUR SCHOOL has a fun and informal family picnic lunch on the first Friday of the school year.—*Wes Lazaroff (Nanaimo)*
- ▶ HAVING A FAMILY math night to let them experience the math activities that their children are doing.
- ▶ HOLDING PARENT conference nights in the community rather than in the school.—*Coleen Fraser (Central Coast)*
- ▶ FRIDAY JOURNALS—students write to their parents every Friday about three things they learned, two things they enjoyed, and one goal for next week.—*Luanne Marchand (Saanich)*
- ▶ AT THE BEGINNING of the year I ask parents to write me a letter about their child.—*Jessica Stewart (Nisga'a)*
- ▶ WE INVITED FAMILY members to join their child to read for the start of each morning. The community felt welcome, and the students were excited to invite people to come.—*Chris Rolls (Lake Cowichan)*

## Secondary

- ▶ CONTACT HOME with positive stories about students, especially those who don't usually get this type of feedback. In small communities, connecting in public helps too.—*Jennifer Fox (Peace River South)*
- ▶ TWO DISTRICT PAC members attended the BCTF Public Education Conference last spring and now we are working together on our common issues.
- ▶ STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS with parents by working on committees together. Our local is part of Human Dignity Coalition for Langley.—*Wendy Cook (Langley)*
- ▶ I REALLY ENJOY meet-the-teacher nights that include the student. Parents seeing the child interacting with their teacher (and vice versa) is invaluable.—*Amanda Jensen (Kamloops Thompson)*
- ▶ MY STUDENTS present a retrospective of their learning using poetry, photography, drama, film, and art. Parents are invited and love it.—*Catherine Quanstrom (Bulkley Valley)*

## What NOT to do

- Remind them of what they were like as former students in your class.
- Send the wrong report card home in their child's envelope.
- Over share about your personal life.
- Say that teachers work harder than other workers.
- Tell parents that you lost their child on a field trip, but it's all good because he found his own way back! ■

# Fostering positive parent-teacher relationships



By Jen Mezei, President, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) and Burnaby parent

**My journey to BCCPAC began in my son's Grade 1 classroom. My conversations after school with his teacher taught me how our family could implement parallel home routines to reinforce expectations at school.**

Years later, I realized the importance of a positive parent-teacher relationship to the advocacy journey as a parent of a student with learning differences. I felt part of a team supporting my son on his bumpy journey toward graduation. Unfortunately, sometimes parents and teachers find themselves in more adversarial situations.

In my experience, key components that foster effective parent-teacher relationships include the following:

**Being positive and focussing on goals**—For parents of children with learning differences, it's heartbreaking to hear negative comments. One trigger is when we hear that our child "can't," "won't," or "didn't." Every parent needs to feel that school staff see their whole child, not just their challenges, and that their input is welcomed. Positive language focuses on a child's strengths and potential, instead of stressing what's wrong.

**Explaining realistic expectations**—Many parents are frustrated at the level of support their children receive. Unfamiliar with the school system, they may have unrealistic expectations of what a classroom teacher can do, given decision-making processes and responsibilities within a district. Having teachers explain who makes what decisions can help make parent advocacy more effective, since questions are then directed to the decision-makers.

**Timely communication**—Communication in parent friendly, plain language helps develop positive relationships. When teachers share their preferred contact method and time, parents have more realistic expectations. Timely communication helps parents communicate legitimate concerns about their child's learning or factors that may affect their behaviour in the classroom.

I believe that parents and teachers want the same thing for our students—an education system where every student gets the support and services they need to thrive. My sincere thanks to everyone working toward this goal. ■

# Are teachers prepared to implement the new PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION curriculum?



By *Andrée Gacoin*, BCTF Senior Researcher

The redesigned BC curriculum has combined physical education and health into one curricular area. Health related content previously in Health and Career Education K–8, Health and Career Education 8–9, and Planning 10 were merged into what was called physical education. As a result, hundreds of teachers are now expected to teach topics unfamiliar to them, including sexual health.

THE 2017 BCTF CURRICULUM Change and Implementation Survey asked teachers who currently teach physical education and/or careers how ready and prepared they feel for this curricular area and about their access to instructional materials and in-service opportunities.

## Physical health and/or career teachers told us:

**70%** feel ready and prepared to teach health-related topics.

**25%** do not feel ready or prepared to teach health-related topics.

“I have taught Planning 10 in the past and so feel comfortable with the topics but MANY teachers are feeling completely unnerved and unprepared to teach the new health-related topics.”

**49%** said they do not have sufficient access to materials on health-related topics.

“Access to instructional materials is due to personal research/ accessing online resources, not resources available to implement the new curriculum by government.”

**62%** said they have not had sufficient access to in-service opportunities on health-related topics.

“Teachers have not been provided in a timely manner the materials needed, the time to explore them, and the time to collaborate with colleagues in this regard. With schedules overflowing, it is challenging to take on so much change so quickly.”

“No materials or resources in French for French immersion.”

## What needs to happen next?

All students have the right to receive accurate and up-to-date health-related information, including sexual health, as part of their K–12 experience. The internet should not be their primary source of information. In-service training builds teachers' confidence to use language that is current, and imparts information that is accurate. It enables them to consider what students access online and through apps so that all students learn what they need to make safe, wise choices. This includes creating the spaces to have meaningful conversations about key issues such as consent, technology, and gender identity and expression. ■

## SOGI resources support all teachers, promote inclusion

By *Steve Mulligan*, Vancouver teacher and UBC co-ordinator for Education for All

TEN YEARS AGO, when professional development on homophobia and heterosexism involved after school workshops, it quickly became apparent that we were “singing to the choir.” We needed to reach more teachers with the basics of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) education. SOGI 123 was created by ARC Foundation, in partnership with the BCTF and the Ministry of Education, to share proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in three key areas: policies and procedures, creating inclusive environments, and developmentally appropriate curriculum resources for educators to use at all grade levels.

Here's what you'll find online at [www.SOGIeducation.org/pro-d](http://www.SOGIeducation.org/pro-d).

1. The SOGI 123 **Professional Development** page features a series of new tools designed to ignite curiosity and start conversations.
2. **Learning Burst videos** are short 5-minute videos to introduce SOGI education in a captivating and convincing way. Each video features educators, students, parents, and/or community members exploring a specific aspect of SOGI-inclusive education.
3. For deeper learning, 40-minute **Learning Modules** are designed to take educators through what they need to know to ensure a truly inclusive and welcoming environment. Each module includes three downloadable resources: a video, an editable PowerPoint presentation, and a Facilitator's Guide, complete with speaker's notes, discussion questions, activities, and worksheets. The Learning Modules are ideal for lunch-n-learns over several weeks or as a series during a half-day professional development. ■



# Drawing the line: Technology-based reporting and teacher workload



By **Clint Johnston**,  
BCTF Second Vice-President

Right now, the only constant for BC teachers is change. This paradox results from a confluence of three events. A decision by the previous Ministry of Education to undertake a wholesale revision of the curriculum from K–12 created change for everyone. Assessment and reporting are changing too—though these changes were less controlled and not timed to assist with the curriculum change. Add in the massive influx of new teachers stemming from the Supreme Court ruling that class size and composition language be restored, and you have a time of unprecedented change facing BCTF members.

TEACHERS ARE dealing with changes to the philosophy, form, and tools used to inform both assessment and reporting. While the purpose of assessment has not changed significantly, it is now being driven by the tools available through technology. When tools are available to “report” to parents almost daily via digital platforms, teachers are pressured to constantly share information on children’s progress. Teachers who spend their time taking and posting pictures or content to satisfy this demand have less time to teach and perform meaningful assessment to inform their work.

The push to be always available to our students and their parents can come externally from the employer and/or internally from our own commitment to our students. But it must be kept in check if we are to continue to provide the high level of education and support to students that is characteristic of BC public education. It is not possible to care for the well-being of our students if we don’t take care of our own well-being. The challenge going forward is to balance the appropriate use of technology to inform students and parents of progress, with the demands on teacher workload that come with continuously learning and using new

platforms. The role of teachers (and their union) over the next few years, as advocates for reasonable workloads associated with technology-based reporting, will be key to avoiding teacher burnout. With reporting

platforms that provide greater and easier access to teachers for students and parents, drawing a line between professional time and personal time will become paramount for the well-being of teachers.

The bottom line is that the professional autonomy of teachers must be protected by each individual teacher as well as their union. The onslaught of technological “solutions” being pushed by those who would profit from the digitalization of public education must be carefully vetted by those who know the needs of students best: teachers. ■

## 2017 BCTF Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey

**26%** of teachers feel they have NO ability to exercise their professional autonomy in relation to choosing reporting tools

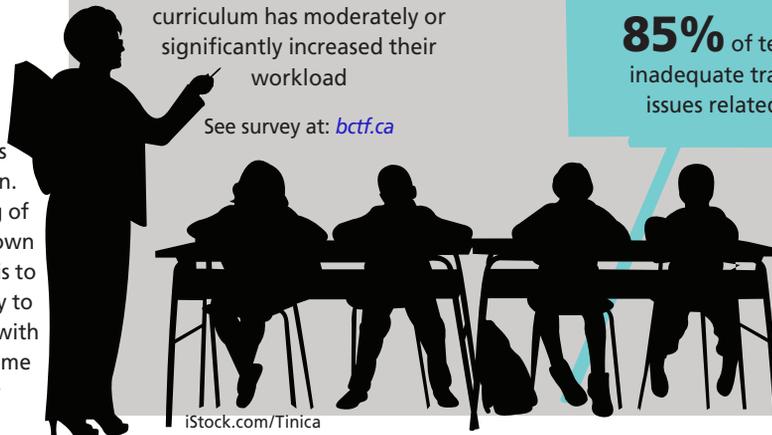
**65%** of teachers feel time spent on reporting in relation to BC’s redesigned curriculum has moderately or significantly increased their workload

See survey at: [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca)

## 2017 BCTF Digital Reporting Tools Survey

Only **1/2** of teachers have had in-service training on the digital reporting tools that they are asked to use

**85%** of teachers had no or inadequate training on privacy issues related to these tools



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# Newer, younger, and more diverse members are refreshing BC's unions

Teacher editor *Marian Dodds* interviews *Irene Lanzinger* about the future of unions

BCFED photo

**In 2014 Irene Lanzinger made history. That year, the long time teacher and labour activist became the first woman elected President of the BC Federation of Labour (BCFED)—a federation of unions that represents more than 500,000 workers in every sector of the BC economy.**

LANZINGER HAS deep roots in the BC Teachers' Federation, a union she describes as principled and democratic, with a history of strong member engagement and activism. She began her working life as a secondary science and math teacher in Abbotsford and Vancouver, eventually became President of the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association and served as President of the BCTF from 2007–10. An advocate for labour affiliation during her teaching years, she believes that when the BCTF fully affiliated with the BCFED in 2006 it strengthened both the teachers' union and the labour movement in BC.

## Positive benefits from an influx of new teachers

Lanzinger sees the influx of more than three thousand new teachers as hugely positive

“They need to understand the reason these jobs have opened up is because the union won at the Supreme Court of Canada in 2016.”

for the education system, with the potential to re-energize and refresh the union. “Our job now is to train the new generation of teachers to be the leaders,” she says. “This large group will be moving through the system together.”

She adds that union leaders need to avoid stereotyping the new generation, and must make sure younger members know their union history. “They need to understand the reason these jobs have opened up is because the union won at the Supreme Court of Canada in 2016.” Now that the 2002 collective agreements have been restored, there is no other teacher union in Canada that has better provisions in their collective agreement, she argues, and she's proud that the BCTF never gives up. “We have a 100-year history of fighting for teachers' rights and public education.”

Looking to the future, Lanzinger thinks Canadian teacher unions will continue to struggle for resources and must bargain hard for adequate funding. Privatization and attacks on public education will persist, especially under right-wing governments determined to erode teachers' rights. She worries about how young people in schools today will cope with the increase

in part-time, precarious, and low-wage jobs, as well as the impacts of automation and new technologies.

## Engaging young workers

A while back, her predecessor Jim Sinclair asked at a BCFED meeting for a show of hands: “How many of you are under 30?” Very few, it turned out, so they started a Young Workers' Standing Committee and Youth Council, bringing members together at Camp Jubilee to learn about unions, develop leadership skills, and connect with one another. Lanzinger was impressed by the engagement of these young workers in the union movement, and their strong commitment to fairness and justice. Privatization, contracting out, low pay, and companies that view workers as “disposable” were their key concerns.

“That's not even a good business plan,” she notes wryly. She believes there is no replacement for listening to what young workers say and acting on their suggestions and advice. “Young workers pull us in the right direction.”

One initiative of the Young Workers' Committee is the annual Grant's Law Sit-In to call for improved health and safety protections for late-night workers. After the tragic death of Grant De Patie in 2005 at a Maple Ridge gas station, Grant's Law was put in place, but parts of the law were



rarely enforced and eventually removed by the Christy Clark government, bowing to pressure from corporations.

### Gender equality in the labour movement

With a decline in resource-based jobs, union density is down in BC despite population growth. The province's four biggest unions, the BCTF, BC Government Employees' Union (BCGEU), Health Employees' Union (HEU), and Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) are all female dominated. Fewer men are union members these days since teachers, social workers, clerical, hospital, and government workers are mostly women. Yet, of the 14 largest unions in the BCFED, only two (BCGEU and Health Sciences Association) have female presidents. Lanzinger is concerned that there is not enough diversity in the union movement, saying both private and public sector unions have done a terrible job when it comes to diversity. "Men just don't seem able to let go," she says.

### What are unions doing to support women in leadership?

The BCFED hosts a Summer Institute for Union Women from the western U.S. and Canada, where Lanzinger has taught women in leadership. "It was energizing to watch these women become more confident and find their voices," she says.

"Women in leadership must play a role in lifting other women up." They say women must be asked eight times before they take the job, and men only once. Developing the confidence of women and members of other equity-seeking groups "will have a huge positive societal impact." As an

“Teachers on the front lines know the cost of inequity is poor health and education outcomes.”



BCFED photo

encouraging example, a BCFED Women in Trades Initiative is bringing together members of the building trades to change the male-dominated culture of the trades and improve women's apprenticeships.

### Women and negotiating

A pioneer for women in negotiations herself, Lanzinger speculates that involving more women in collective bargaining might mean less confrontation and more focus on issues related to family and childcare. She's not convinced that interest-based bargaining is the answer. Her experience is that it favours employers who talk about mutual interests but bargain less and want all the concessions. Ultimately bargaining is about justice. "Workers need to fight for rights," she says, even if that means confrontation. She wishes that more employers would recognize that happy, well-paid workers increase productivity. "Nobody succeeds without people on the ground able to afford a decent life."

### Social justice

Lanzinger views a neo-liberal agenda based on industrialization, wealth, and power as counter to a democratic and safe society. She believes unions offer a way forward for a just and equitable world by addressing rights, salaries, and benefits.

She admires the BCTF's leadership in social justice and recognizes it as part of a broader movement for social change and a world free of poverty. "Teachers on the front lines know the cost of inequity is poor health and education outcomes." The BCTF is at an advantage because teachers are a more homogeneous group than most union workforces—everyone has a university degree, the same job, and the same employer—a naturally cohesive group.

### Hope on the horizon

Lanzinger is "really happy" with the new NDP Minister of Labour, Harry Bains. "He is the best Minister of Labour I've ever met." While the government's timeline is ambitious, she is hopeful that BC will have a \$15-an-hour wage by January 2019, a goal that the BCFED promoted strongly during the 2017 election.

Refreshed by a new, younger, and more diverse union membership and with more women stepping up to take on leadership roles, Lanzinger predicts a brighter future for working people in the province. ■

# Unions opening space for EQUITY and INCLUSION



By **Shanee Prasad**, Burnaby teacher and member of the BCFED Human Rights Committee

While completing my professional year of teacher education at SFU, I was given an incredible opportunity to meet hundreds of youth activists from all over the world, all advocating for the rights of mother earth, access to state and local resources, and basic human rights. It was 2013 and I was at the 18th annual Festival of Youth and Students in Ecuador, as a member of the BCFED Young Workers Committee.

ANY WORKER who has experienced a strike, recognizes both the struggle and solidarity it takes to walk the line. In 2014, I was in my first year of teaching when we went on strike; it was on that picket line that I realized we were fighting for equity and inclusion. We wanted justice for our kids, to secure their right to accessible, universal education—an education that leaves no one behind. This is the power that binds us together, and the foundation for why we work to make our union space more equitable and inclusive.

Now I am one of four equity reps on the BCFED Human Rights committee, representing workers of colour. The other three caucuses are LGBTQ+, Indigenous workers, and workers with disabilities. Together we bring the attention of the union movement to all voices that are marginalized and far too often left out.

Inclusivity premised on equity makes space for a diversity of voices. Such inclusion offers more strategies for negotiations, more creative solutions to the many issues we face, and more engaged and passionate members. ■

**Young workers are diverse:**  
**1 in 3** Generation Y members have non-white ancestry.

**80%** of Canada's immigrants come from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

By 2031 immigrants and their children will represent **46%** of the working population.

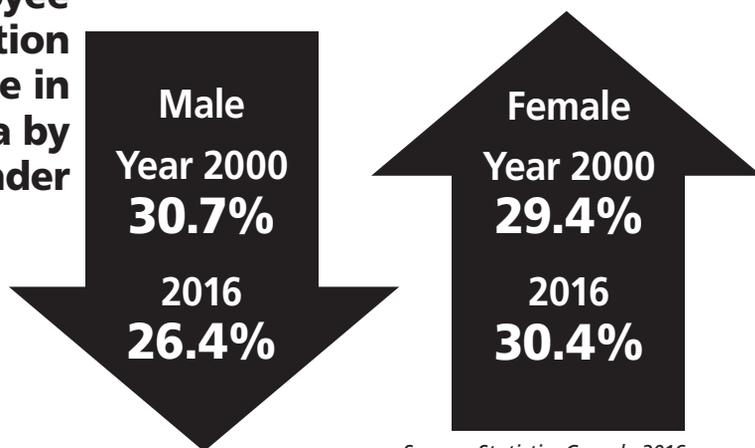
By 2031 there will be **2.1 million** Aboriginal people in Canada, double the 2001 population.

Source: BCGEU 2014 Equity Audit

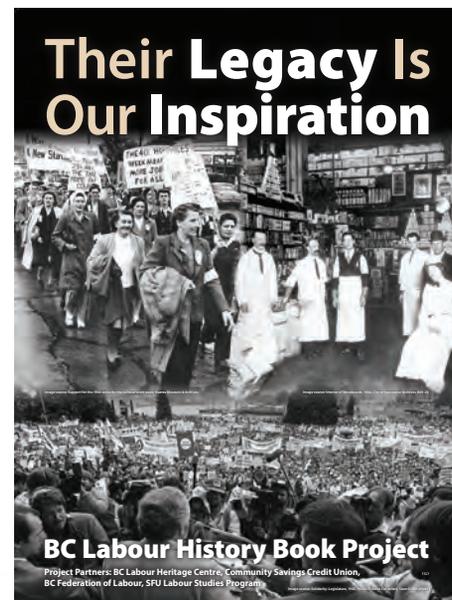
**R** Labour history lesson plans available from [teachbc.bctf.ca](http://teachbc.bctf.ca).

**BC Labour Heritage Centre Society**  
[www.labourheritagecentre.ca](http://www.labourheritagecentre.ca).

**Employee unionization rate in Canada by gender**

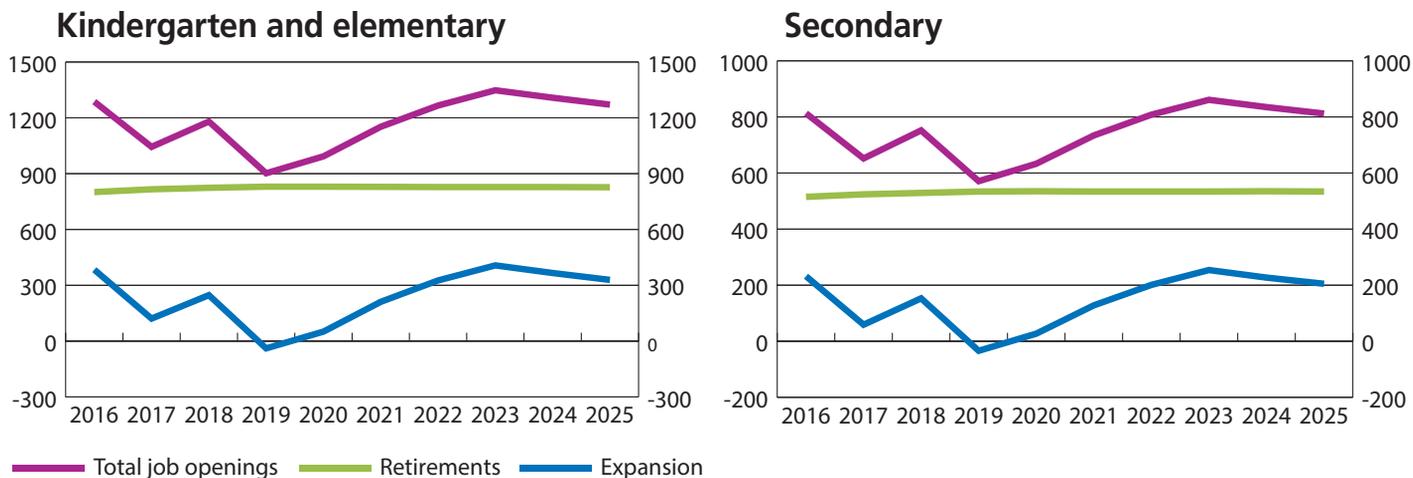


Source: Statistics Canada 2016



# BC teachers and students in 2025

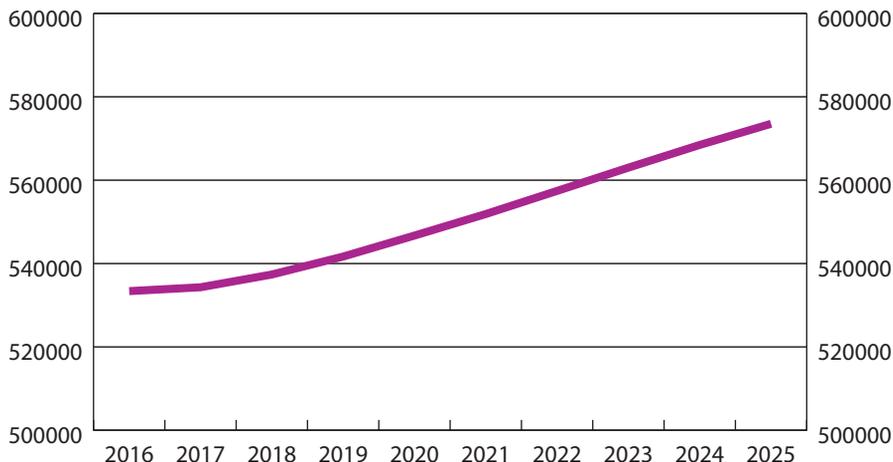
## Yearly employment prospects for teachers



Source: Labour Market Information, BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (2017).

## School-aged population projection

\*Population ages 5 to 17 on July 1 of each year.



Source: BC Stats (2017). British Columbia-level Population Projections (May 2017).

## Top ten languages spoken at home by BC students in 2016-17



Source: Analysis and Reporting Unit, BC Ministry of Education (2017).

# Surrey Teachers' Association

By Marian Dodds, 2017 Editor, Teacher

## Life in local #36

GREEN TIMBERS ELEMENTARY teachers settled into the Learning Commons for a lunchtime meeting, enjoying the warm samosas brought by Surrey Teachers' Association (STA) officers. First Vice-President Matt Westphal and Professional Development Officer June James were there to listen to teachers' concerns and answer questions. Teachers in the BCTF's largest local are coping with 1200 new students and the system is stretched beyond reason. Their district cut 66 learning support teachers (LST) and failed to post another 100+ positions. A TTOC shortage created a ripple effect with specialist teachers and classroom teachers on prep time called to cover classes. Students are not getting services, teachers are coping with a constant influx of new students, and teaching time is squeezed. One teacher summed it up—"It is heartbreaking to have to do triage." After filing a grievance and lobbying MLAs, the STA succeeded in negotiating 67 FTE non-enrolling teacher positions in December to mitigate LST cuts. Their grievance about the failure to restore all learning support language remains active.

President Gioia Breda believes, "It is very important to hear from members, especially as we head into bargaining." The STA executive set a goal this year to "show up and listen" at lunch hour meetings at all 125 schools. Breda says the union's role is about balance. Ideally, she says, a local grows like a tree branching out, and the union nurtures strong roots. However, if there's a fire beside the tree, that must be put out first. This fall's hot issues are the LST crisis, shortages of TTOCs and too few portables to accommodate a rapidly growing population.

## Surrey at a glance

**Land:** Surrey schools sit on Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, and Qayqayt First Nations traditional territories. Surrey School District serves the cities of Surrey, White Rock, and Barnston Island.

**Education system:** This fast-growing district has over 6,000 teachers, over 70,000 K-12 students, and 795 adult education students. Schools: 101 elementary, 19 secondary, 5 student learning centers, 3 adult education centres, and a distributed online learning program. Surrey School District is the area's largest employer. Kwantlen Polytechnic and Simon Fraser Universities have Surrey campuses.

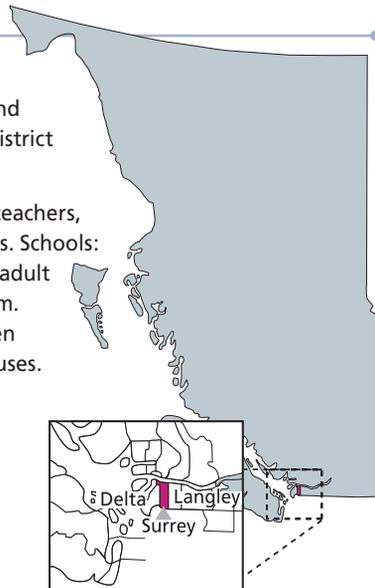
**Languages:** Half the students come from homes where a language other than English is spoken; 163 languages are represented in Surrey schools. Languages most spoken at home (after English) are Punjabi, Tagalog (Filipino), Mandarin, and Korean.

First Vice-President Westphal notes how their size can be an advantage in terms of resources (they own their building) and a budget that allows a team of eight released officers to share the workload, all done without raising local dues. They provide a multitude of services to members, including mentoring and peer support. Their mediators are trained at the Justice Institute. Several grievance officers work diligently to enforce their collective agreement.

Prioritizing open communication, the STA team emails a Monday Memo to teachers and encourages staff reps to reach out to new teachers. This year's cohort-based mentorship program involves 360 teachers. They've slowed down their staff representative assemblies, to enable executive members to explain resolutions to smaller groups, and take time to demystify Robert's Rules. Different points of view are respected—rather than just defeat an unpopular motion and let it simmer, they establish committees to process issues.

The Surrey AGM delegation, at 68 members, is the largest in the province. They train delegates to engage in the democratic process and encourage diverse perspectives.

Surrey's crown jewel is their annual convention, held on a PD day negotiated into their local collective agreement. This massive undertaking, planned and funded by the union, includes over 250 teacher-led workshops and 2-3 keynotes, and gives all teachers the opportunity to connect over professional development.



## President profile

GIOIA BREDA recalls spending day one of her practicum at a rally in Cloverdale supporting the 2002 BCTF provincial walkout. Her mom, a Surrey teacher, advised her: "Hold the sign over your face: you don't have a contract yet."

Intending to teach secondary French and drama, Breda started as a Surrey TTOC, but soon landed a contract to teach Grade 6/7 French immersion. Both her parents are Surrey teachers, and she has childhood memories of dark shadows cast across the dinner table during the Vander Zalm years. Her whole career has been "rooted in the stripping of the collective agreement, and she says, "It broke my heart, what we'd lost in 2001." The 2005 BCTF illegal strike solidified her commitment to the union.

Initially befuddled by teacher politics, she found that her first AGM "felt like I was coming home." Energized by the debates, she gained a province-wide perspective. Breda became STA Second Vice-President in 2012 and is now completing her second and final year as President, since the STA has a six-year limit for released officers.

The sudden death of STA President Jennifer Wadge in 2015 sent shockwaves through the local. Their executive pulled together to regroup. They restructured their work and established a system to maintain their institutional memory. The STA office displays a large photo of Jennifer to honour her immense contributions.

As an out queer woman, Breda is particularly proud of the BCTF and STA leadership in social justice, citing the recent Pride Prom and the STA's success in compelling the Surrey School District to refuse to rent to the homophobic Culture Guard group, as signs of progress.



Photos provided by Karen Kilbride, Gioia Breda, Annie Ohana, and Julia MacRae.

# Renowned for social justice activism

By Annie Ohana

SURREY TEACHERS have been social justice leaders for decades—leading a 1974 teachers’ strike over class size, moving the 1975 AGM motion that led to the BCTF Antiracism Program, and battling in the courts to allow teachers to use books promoting positive messages about same-sex relationships in 1997. In 2012 the Bob Rosen Social Justice Award for BCTF members was established, named for the late Surrey teacher and social justice activist.

Surrey teachers celebrate our culturally diverse students and create initiatives to support new

immigrant and refugee students. We work in solidarity with Latin American teacher organizations. In 2016, the STA established the Jennifer Wadge Memorial Social Justice Scholarship Award for members’ dependents and Surrey students. Our Aboriginal Education Committee organizes immersive cultural experiences for teachers. LGBTQ students are honoured at the annual Pride Parade and Pride Prom. Our annual Grade 7 Girls’ Conference has been a model for other locals.

Our Status of Women, LGBTQ, Aboriginal, Antipoverty, International Solidarity, Labour Affairs, and Public Advocacy committees work tirelessly to push back against poverty, racism, sexism and every other type of discrimination. We’ve organized large-scale conferences, created resources, lobbied MLAs for teacher rights, and arranged international solidarity exchanges. Our work is rooted in the belief that a better world is possible—but only if we are willing to work for it.

## Teachers of Surrey



Social justice and social science teacher **Annie Ohana** won the Prime Minister’s award for excellence in teaching in 2017. Now in her seventh year of teaching, the STA has loomed large in her life. “My union set me up for success.”



Second Vice-President **Julia MacRae** has a passion for international solidarity. A fluent Spanish speaker, Julia has a long history of involvement with BCTF and CoDevelopment Canada international solidarity projects in Latin America.



Professional Development Officer **June James** has a big job ahead organizing the STA Convention this May. Working with her PD committee, she plans to offer facilitator training to newer teachers to encourage them to step up and present some workshops.



Professional Support Services Officer **Anne McNamee** got her start as a mediator and now co-ordinates the STA mediation, peer support, and mentorship programs. She’s seen how STA advocacy has succeeded in maintaining teachers’ professional autonomy. “Teachers need to claim and maintain their roles as leaders in professional development and mentorship.”



First Vice-President **Matt Westphal** practised law until he switched careers to teach social studies and law in 2008. He’s seen how some teachers who were “reluctant unionists” transform when they discover how their union supports them through personal or professional challenges.



One of the STA’s Local Representatives, English and social studies teacher **Lizanne Foster** describes her local as passionate, empathic, and ethical. She is proud of how the STA stands up for social justice and human rights. ■



# WAYFINDING on the teacher education pathway



By Anne Hales, BCTF Senior Researcher

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As we navigate the headwinds of curricular change, and address our students’ diverse and ever-present needs, how do we discern a way forward? The new year invites us to reflect on who we aspire to be as teachers. There is a reason university teacher education is labelled “initial,” not “terminal.” At any stage of our careers we may ask “What do my current students and school need from me right now? What do I want to learn next in my continuing professional journey? Do I feel ready and supported to take up my work every day?”

HOW CANADIAN TEACHER education programs will prepare future teachers to take up challenging professional, civic, and pedagogical demands throughout their careers was a central theme of a national symposium, *Reconceptualizing Teacher Education Worldwide: A Canadian Contribution to a Global Challenge*, hosted by the UBC Faculty of Education last October.

Symposium participants explored three wayfinding markers on the professional learning pathway, noting that these evolve with time, experience, and critical reflection on past roads we’ve taken.

## Wayfinding markers

**1. Erudition** asserts the craft of teaching as something that merits deep and sustained focus over many years. It positions teaching “as a learned profession with responsibility for the intellectual growth of the young and continuing study by teachers.” Contrary to pervasive stereotypes of teaching as a straightforward job, our work compels us to continually cultivate knowledge, curiosity, and critical perspectives about

education. From deep subject content knowledge to informed understandings of who our students are and how they learn, our professional learning morphs from year to year, as we encounter new teaching situations, and discover our strengths and areas for further inquiry.

**2. Civic particularity** involves recognizing that where, who, and why we teach varies from place to place and changes over time. For example, we routinely adjust the way we translate provincially designed curriculum elements within our particular classroom setting. Teachers consider the “particularities” of demographics, geography, economic uncertainty, community history, and cultural complexity as they plan and carry out their teaching, and engage with families and communities.

**3. Our enduring role as “teacher”** With global economic and technological trends altering the ways systems “deliver” education, are there fundamental qualities of the teacher-student relationship that can’t be replaced by, say, a computer interface? As teachers,

we take up a unique ethical commitment to educate children and youth, to nurture their identities, passions, and well-being. Sometimes this means protecting a kid’s freedom of thought and expression, sometimes it means advocating for learning resources and services, and sometimes we step in to safeguard their physical or psychological safety. Acting ethically as a teacher involves acting in the best interests of the students in our charge within the boundaries of our awareness, judgment, resources, technologies, and ability in the moment.

Not every adult can do that. These are judgments teachers wrestle with as part of our unique role as professionals who connect with students through educational experiences. ■

## BC Teacher Education Program Graduates in 2016–2017

Simon Fraser University	422
Trinity Western University	27
Thompson Rivers University	28
University of the Fraser Valley	64
University of British Columbia	526
University of Northern British Columbia	38
University of Victoria	194
University of British Columbia Okanagan	88
Vancouver Island University	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>1517</b>

Source: Association of BC Deans of Education (ABCDE)

# ENVIRONMENTAL educators explore preferable futures



By Barbara Ryeburn, BCTF Assistant Director, Social Justice

Recent floods, fires, and hurricanes have dramatically brought us home to the reality of climate change. In supporting our students to explore possible alternatives to create the future we prefer rather than the one that's probable if we don't change our ways, teachers face many questions. What role should we play in educating about climate change and other threats to the environment? How can we support students to develop a connection with their environment? What knowledge do students need to understand, yet not be overwhelmed, by environmental threats? What skills will empower them to act?

IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, educators from around the globe convened in Vancouver at the 9th World Environmental Education Congress to reflect on these questions and learn from environmental education scholars. Pender Island teacher Julie Johnston was selected to present a poster on *The Most Important Curriculum: Learning to Grow Food in a Changing Climate*, discussing its implications with educators from India, Iran, and Sooke, among others. Woven into the conference were the voices of Aboriginal experts who shared knowledge developed through generations of living sustainably with the environment.

The BCTF funded several BC teachers to attend the opening weekend of the congress.

## Here are some of their highlights...

“...I came away with a strong shift in how I view the environment, and the multitude of cultures that thrive within it. We have such a strong ethnocentric view of the world in Canada, we talk about developed countries and less developed countries, yet our track record with our own Indigenous people and our environment is far from honourable.”  
—Paul Boyd, Vernon

“I attended sessions on intentionally advancing environmental education curriculum, experiential learning assessment strategies, environmental refugees, and respectfully incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing. I spoke with a few of the witnesses for the event, and really appreciated seeing that protocol in action. I also enjoyed meeting some new teachers from different zones around the province who are interested in environmental education.”  
—Selena Metcalfe, Surrey, Environmental Education Provincial Specialist Association President

“Interactions were meaningful and empowering, since [everyone] was concerned about future generations preserving our planet and they wanted to share ways that students are being educated in environmental awareness in their home countries.”  
—Andrea Skinner, Victoria

“Dr. Jeannette Armstrong discussed how sustainability is somewhat human-centric. Viewing environmental justice through the lens of “we are all one” or “everything is interconnected” adapted from Indigenous perspectives is the view that is going to be more transformative. That is why adopting the First Peoples Principles of Learning is so important for educators in BC.”  
—Shelby Calman, Vancouver Secondary

“I appreciated the most creative poster presentation I've ever seen, where sticks—each with an open question about education—could be broken off the poster, and passed through the room, facilitating conversations with new colleagues with each passing of the stick”  
—Alexa Bennett Fox, North Vancouver

“There is something very powerful about sitting around a table with people from all around the world. Hearing different languages, speaking through translators or with simple hand gestures, yet all with a vested interest in environmental education. Despite these communication challenges, the variety of climates we came from and the rural or urban environments where we live, there were many similarities both in the barriers and celebrations of environmental education.”  
—Erika Momeyer, Arrow Lakes

“It was inspiring to see what a small group of people can do to make a big difference, and encouraging to remember that every action that we take is contributing. I partnered with a local NGO to kick start a one day/week place-based education day. We are taking our learning outside where our focus is on our community forests. We have played games, done some plant identification, made rose hip and spruce needle tea, made high bush cranberry sauce, created art with objects in nature. The students are engaged in their learning and are bringing that excitement into the class during our concrete writing activity times. It is very amazing.”

—Amanda Forstbauer, Bulkley Valley

Connecting with the environment, with a focus on place-based learning, is a foundational step in environmental education. The next step is moving students from deeply caring about their environment to attaining the knowledge and skills necessary to act for a better future. This was the focus of a community outreach session, *Ethics Lead Learning*, hosted by the BCTF Environmental Justice Action Group. Action group members highlighted a variety of BCTF environmental justice resources and workshops. They then invited participants to share the work of their organizations. A member of the BCTF Antiracism Action Group reminded everyone of the valuable insights and solutions that Indigenous and racialized peoples and those experiencing poverty can provide, since they are often most affected by environmental issues.

## Resources

**BCTF Environmental justice resources, lesson plans and workshops** can be found at [bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=22000](http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=22000)

**Environmental Educators Provincial Specialist Association:** [eepsa.org](http://eepsa.org)

**Ministry of Education:** Environmental Learning and Experience: An interdisciplinary guide for teachers: <https://lis.gdlytGXSP> ■

# Reciprocity is the core of INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

By Lorna Wou, with input from Julia MacRae, Paula Naylor, and Jennifer McDonald, members of the BCTF International Solidarity Committee

Reciprocal relationships are at the core of our work on the BCTF International Solidarity Committee. For example: BC teachers realize we need an Indigenous lens on our curriculum and know that Indigenous languages and cultures are threatened everywhere. Since Latin American teacher unions have had strong Indigenous leaders for many years and are experienced advocates for programs that support reconciliation, international solidarity in this area can help us in BC with our work.

SOLIDARITY MEANS we work for systemic change to mitigate social injustice. It acknowledges the expertise of communities to identify their own needs and decide how and by whom they should be addressed.

Our BCTF work is not charity from north to south. In the international development field there is a story told about people frantically rescuing a never-ending stream of babies that have been tossed in a river, never thinking to go to the source to find

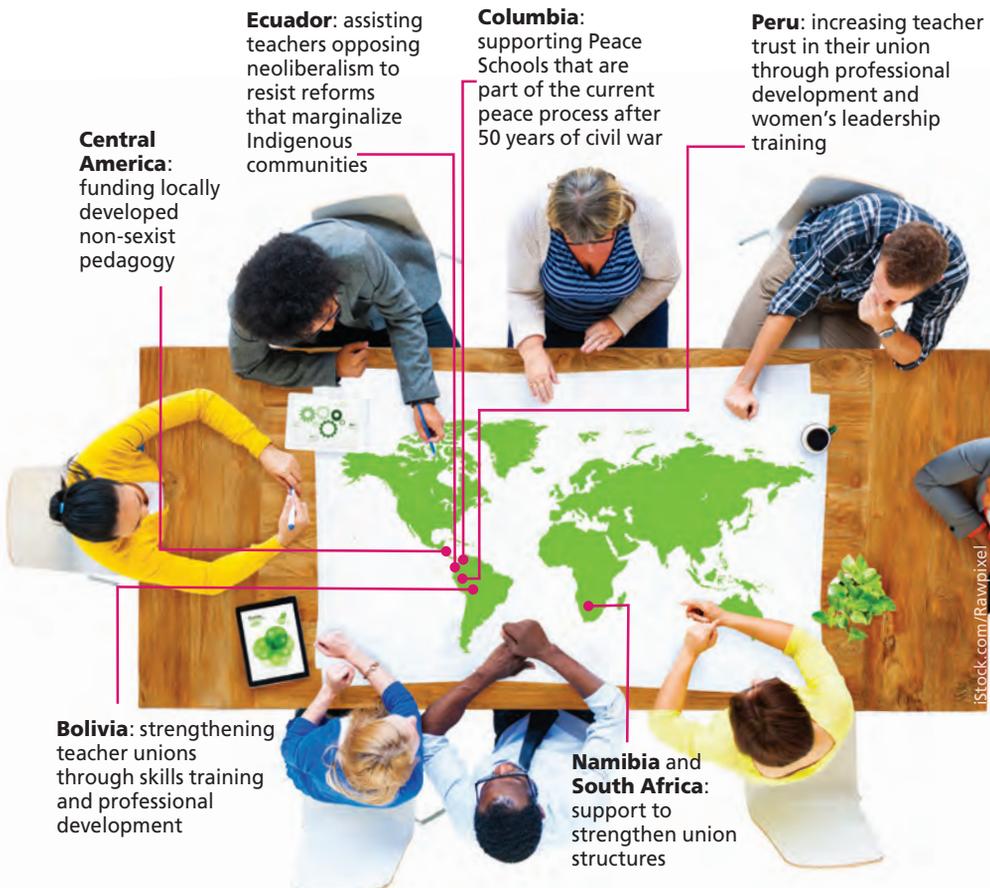
out the cause of the problem. By focusing only on down-river symptoms, they fail to seek up-river solutions that would address the root cause of the problem. To be true partners in creating a better world, we must support our partner communities at the source, asking them to determine what work they believe is most beneficial. As a social justice union, this is the lens through which our International Solidarity Committee views our mandate.

“International solidarity is not an act of charity. It is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the same objectives. The foremost of these objectives is to aid the development of humanity to the highest level possible.”

—Samora Moises Machel (1933–1986), First President of an independent Mozambique

As teachers who care about international solidarity, our aim is the development of humanity to the highest level possible. When reaching out to like-minded individuals across the globe through our work, we are inspired by their commitment to improving humanity. ■

## We are currently supporting these projects and programs:



## Cross Border Social Justice Conference

([crossborderconference.weebly.com](http://crossborderconference.weebly.com))

Teachers from BC, Washington state, and Oregon are invited to this conference on April 7–8, 2018 in Surrey. Keynotes by author and activist Naomi Klein, and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC Director Seth Klein. Daysi Marquez from Honduras will share success stories of their non-sexist pedagogy project. In societies rampant with sexism or violence against women, it is natural to reflect on how children are brought up to find these mindsets normal. Considering how prominent women’s rights have been recently in our North American media, this will be a fitting opportunity to share solutions in solidarity with our sisters from the south.

Learn more about BCTF international solidarity at <https://is.gd/EeIUE>.

The BCTF often partners with CoDevelopment Canada ([www.codev.org](http://www.codev.org)). Members and locals are encouraged to join.

# My question to the Minister

By Carol Arnold, Salt Spring Island teacher, SD 64 LR, BCTF Aboriginal education workshops facilitator, and member of the BCTF Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

## Is the government prepared to “go deep enough” in committing to education for reconciliation in BC schools?

This is the question I put to Rob Fleming, BC’s new Minister of Education, after he addressed the BCTF Representative Assembly on November 3, 2017.

MY QUESTION was based on the challenge Dr. Gabor Maté had given to teachers in his keynote address at our October Provincial Specialist Association Super Conference. While Dr. Maté acknowledged that it is a step forward for BC schools to be mandated to incorporate Aboriginal content in their classes and schools, he expressed worry that it might not “go deep enough.” In a letter to *The Globe and Mail* in April 2016, entitled “How do we heal trauma suffered by native communities?” Maté said, “Institutions and individuals interacting with native people must become deeply trauma-informed. Judges, teachers, law-enforcement personnel, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, public employees, policy-makers; all must understand what trauma is, its multiple impacts on human mentality and behaviour, and how to address it.”



Carol Arnold questions Minister of Education Rob Fleming

I heard this as a challenge and shared it with the Minister. I emphasized to the Minister that we in the education system need many more supports, including in-servicing, resources and ongoing public encouragement to make this worthy goal “go deep” and not just be a passing fad. It is deadly serious when 13% more Aboriginal youth are dying of drug overdoses and the suicide rate for First Nations youth is 5–7 times the national average.

The BCTF has worked tirelessly to help our members understand the history of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples and to share best practices in infusing Aboriginal ways of knowing and being into curricula. I pointed out that our Aboriginal education workshops have been the most subscribed ever in the history of the BCTF, with over 270 being delivered in the past year. But we cannot do this alone.

Minister Fleming listened politely to me and indicated this work was important to his government. Now I hope that we will see some actions from our new government, backed up by an adequate budget, to advance our shared commitment to reconciliation. ■

## BC’s redesigned curriculum has prioritized integrating Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum

**81%** of teachers know whose traditional lands they are on.



However, **79%** either do not know or are uncertain about local protocols regarding accessing Aboriginal knowledge.

**85%** are uncertain about using or interpreting Aboriginal knowledge.

“I feel that this area should be handled with sensitivity and respect. We need to ensure our resources are well-vetted and we need time to establish First Nations liaisons in our community. One day workshops will not cut it in this area. If we are serious about reconciliation then we have to be serious in our approach to implementation.”



**76%** say that they do not have sufficient access to the necessary instructional material needed to integrate Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom.

“This is a hugely important area and most teachers I know are scared to not do it justice.”

Source: 2017 BCTF Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey



# Canoe voyage nurtures the LEARNING SPIRIT



By Sheila MacPherson and Melissa Bell, Sunshine Coast teachers

Stuart Maclean photo

As the canoes drift together, a cultural ambassador from the shishálh Nation speaks of the history of the land and water surrounding us. In this moment, a loud puff of air echoes around the bay and all eyes are drawn to where an orca whale has come up for air just behind our canoes. We pause to watch the Stalashen (orca) travel through Porpoise Bay. One student who had previously expressed fear about being on the water, now seems calm and curious as he scans the area where the whale dove back under the water.



Sheila MacPherson photo



Stuart Maclean photo



Kerry Mahlman photo



Stuart Maclean photo

NURTURING THE LEARNING SPIRIT is an annual two-day voyage spent with elementary and secondary Indigenous students out on Tsulich, Sechelt's inner waters, paddling canoes owned by the Sunshine Coast school district and the community. Two or three students from each school are invited to take part in this opportunity to build and strengthen relationships, while paddling with the Aboriginal Programs and Services team, and members of the shishálh Nation.

On the day we witnessed the orca, we had begun with a circle to meet our new canoe family. While we moved around our circle, two eagles from a nearby nest circled overhead. One of the eagles continued to follow us throughout the day as we travelled across the waters of the shishálh Nation. Once we were out on the water, we formally acknowledged where we were and sang the shishálh eagle song toward some homes belonging to members of the shishálh Nation. As we sang, people came out of their homes and joined us in song. We spent the morning paddling toward Porpoise Bay Provincial Park, stopping to hear shishálh stories.

That afternoon, underneath a grove of cedar trees, their scent permeating the air around us, students shared their experiences

learning and being a part of their school community. Students voiced what a special experience it was to spend a day with other Indigenous students and hear what was happening at other schools. Our discussion highlighted barriers to cultural learning and support that Indigenous learners faced. Students said they would like to have more experiential learning on the land and more opportunities to explore their cultural identities.

When all participants were invited to call out their Indigenous heritage in our sharing circle, many students were hesitant at first, but as they listened, they became empowered and found their voices. We saw there was representation from all over Turtle Island. One student who is usually quiet and rarely shares his heritage, called out, "Algonquin!" The pride on his face was obvious as he expressed his cultural identity. At the end of the voyage, each student was gifted with a paddle necklace, inscribed with the words, "In This We Journey Together," a message that guides our work with Indigenous youth and their families. The next day at school, this same Algonquin student was heard telling his whole class about his experience with his canoe family and showing his peers his paddle necklace. ■



# Footsteps along Canada's road to RECONCILIATION

By Kip Wood, Nanaimo teacher and BCTF Executive Committee Member-at-Large

In June 2015, I clipped an article from *The Globe and Mail* newspaper to share with my students. The news was a landmark in the history of Canada. After six years of research and the statements of 6,750 Indian Residential School (IRS) survivors, the summary of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada Final Report* was issued. Chair of the Commission, Senator Murray Sinclair, stated in the article that of the 94 "calls to action," the most important is number 45: a new royal proclamation between the government of Canada and Aboriginal peoples, which would include implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework for reconciliation.

IN *THE COMEBACK*, John Ralston Saul describes how, a century ago, non-Aboriginal people felt guilt and sympathy toward Aboriginal peoples but were generally dismissive of their society. Saul claims that now there is more guilt and sympathy, but non-Aboriginal people are less dismissive. Guilt, sympathy, dismissal are all negative. They distract us from our obligations as citizens. Like Murray Sinclair, Saul places the responsibility on citizens to press government to end our paternalistic relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

Paulette Regan's book *Unsettling the Settler Within* is a call to action for those of us who are settlers to take part in the journey of reconciliation. It is also a warning to not replicate the colonial relations of the past. Regan says that the TRC merely opened the door and provided a space for us to begin the process of reconciliation, a process that must begin with ourselves. Reconciliation cannot simply be about assuaging settler guilt, making apologies, and compensation. The "unsettling" part for Regan is that non-Indigenous Canadians must learn about their own violent colonial history and abandon the myth of Canadians as peacemakers in our relations with Indigenous people. Regan describes this as a "misguided mythical quest" of "benevolent paternalism" that merely repeats the mission of the IRS program; that is, to solve the Indian problem. The transformation of our mindset, and our actions, is instead about solving the settler problem.

Call to Action 45 and *UNDRIP* are about the equalization of power between Aboriginal

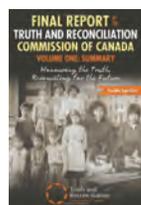
“Guilt, sympathy, dismissal are all negative. They distract us from our obligations as citizens.”

and non-Aboriginal peoples and about sovereignty over land. Reconciliation is not charity. Reconciliation is not "destructive sympathy" as described by Saul nor is it "benevolent paternalism" as described by Regan.

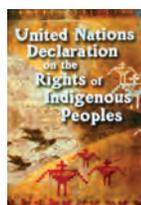
During a speech in Vancouver last October, Murray Sinclair repeated his imperative for reconciliation: "There's a clear disparity between the Indigenous side and the non-Indigenous side about reconciliation and where we need to go with it.... where one side [Indigenous] sees reconciliation as a question of rights and the other side [non-Indigenous] sees it as an act of benevolence, reconciliation will not be achieved. We have to overcome that."

As a non-Indigenous public school teacher, my responsibility is clear: the calls to action are directed at me and all Canadians. To be sure, governments at all levels have a significant role; but everyone must be willing to shift their mindset for us to progress forward on our collective path to reconciliation. ■

## Required reading



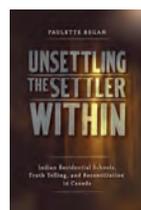
**Truth and Reconciliation Report**  
<https://is.gd/kiLnkj>



**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
<https://is.gd/wPzNA6>



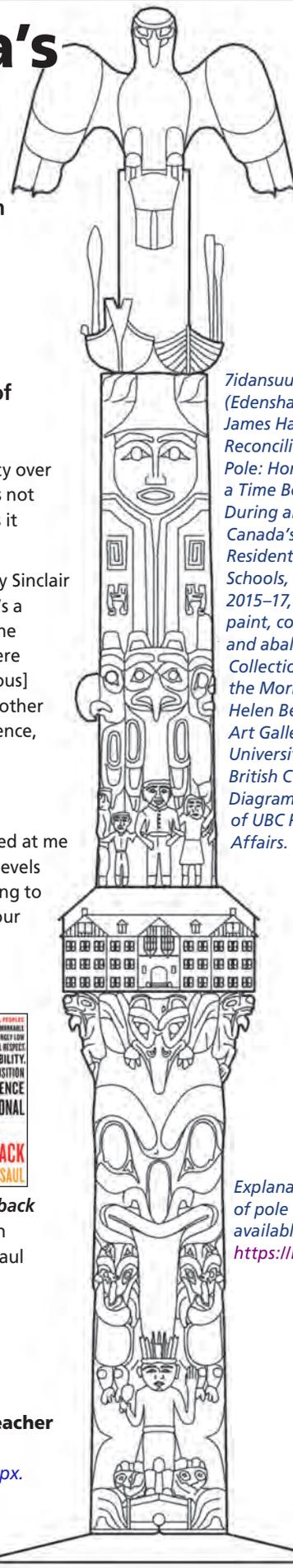
**The Comeback** by John Ralston Saul



**Unsettling the Settler Within**, by Paulette Regan



**Classroom resources and teacher workshops** can be found at [bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx](http://bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx).



*Tidansuu (Edenshaw) James Hart, Reconciliation Pole: Honouring a Time Before, During and After Canada's Indian Residential Schools, 2015-17, cedar, paint, copper and abalone. Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, The University of British Columbia. Diagram courtesy of UBC Public Affairs.*

*Explanation of pole design available from <https://is.gd/3MSzP>.*

# Coming out the other side of ABUSE and ADDICTION

*BCTF Health and Wellness Co-ordinator Allan Lee interviews two teachers about their wellness journeys*

iStock.com/clintspencer

“I didn’t see any way out...but then these people appeared.”

MARY\* SUFFERED a traumatic brain injury so severe it affected her ability to move her limbs, to speak, and to think. To make matters even worse, after her discharge from the hospital, she discovered her building was under renovation and that she no longer had a home. Overwhelmed and feeling hopeless, she became deeply depressed and turned to alcohol. “In my darkest moment, alcohol became my best friend.” She sought help at detox facilities but each time fell into fits of rage. “It wasn’t just anger, it was rage... I raged, raged, raged.” Alone and fearful, Mary realized she needed greater help and was determined to find it. “Even in my deepest darkest moment, I never gave up... I had to get out of there.”

Mary connected with the BCTF Health and Wellness Program and was assigned a vocational health and wellness consultant who helped her navigate the healthcare system, working with her doctor and other health professionals to get the resources she needed. “For the first time, I felt supported, heard, and understood.” She continued her physical rehabilitation and saw a compassionate psychiatrist who helped her rebuild her confidence. “He made a

difference in my life... gave me confidence to continue when my self-esteem was down the drain.”

Today, Mary teaches part-time and is grateful for the support she received. Her school staff had an immense impact on a successful return to work and showed her the importance of community. “I never felt judged.... they made me feel safe.” Mary’s advice: “Be persistent... and accept the support that will come your way.”

“I’ve been through hell... and was hopeless, helpless, and baseless.”

Pia’s\* colleagues were worried—she was showing up late and was no longer the dynamic teacher that students loved. She denied anything was wrong, yet she rarely laughed, was insecure, and isolated herself. She describes her world as “grey and very lonely.”

At home, she was in crisis from ongoing verbal abuse. Leaving her children behind, she moved to a safe place. Still feeling isolated she spiraled into depression. Talking about her mental illness was difficult. “There was a lot of guilt... because we’re expected to live up to so many things as a teacher... I wasn’t what a teacher looks like.” Cultural and family expectations added to her sense of shame. She began drinking excessively.

Pia’s colleagues intervened, telling her, “This isn’t you.” She found out about the BCTF Health and Wellness Program and subsequently received support for her depression and addiction. Her health and wellness consultant found her residential treatment and addictions counselling, which she did not have to pay for. Her consultant collaborated with her psychiatrist, addiction treatment counsellors, and aftercare program co-ordinators. When she was ready to return to work, the consultant co-ordinated with district and union representatives to develop and organize a work plan that accommodated her medical needs. The consultant’s “kindness, sensitivity, and loyalty” made her feel safe, valued, and respected. “If it wasn’t for the Health and Wellness Program, I would have lost myself. They supported me 100%.”

After a five-year journey dealing with trauma, depression, and addiction Pia is back at work full-time, feeling like her dynamic self once again, and sees her life as secure and hopeful. She serves at the temple in her community, “helping myself, while helping others.” She advises others to be raw and authentic and to seek help when needed: “Don’t let these experiences define you.” ■

*\*Names changed to maintain confidentiality.*

For information on the Health and Wellness Program visit [bctf.calwellness](http://bctf.calwellness).

# What happens when a teacher's SICK LEAVE runs out?



By Sarb Lalli, Salary Indemnity Plan Administrator, BCTF Income Security Division

The BCTF operates a Salary Indemnity Plan (SIP) to provide both short-term and long-term benefits to teachers who are ill or have been injured and have exhausted their sick leave. These benefits are non-taxable and provided without deductions. However, SIP does not provide coverage for MSP, extended health or dental. Teachers should check the provisions of their local collective agreements. They should not let their coverage lapse.

ALL ACTIVE BCTF MEMBERS with regular full-time or part-time assignments are eligible for SIP, but teachers teaching on call (TTOCs) are not. This year, members pay 1.67% of their annual salary into the fund. Claims are adjudicated and managed by case managers at the BCTF.

Short-term SIP provides up to 120 days of benefits, equal to 50% of the member's gross annual salary, and it pays their required pension contribution directly to their plan. If a teacher exhausts their 120 days and there is continued medical substantiation of the claim, long-term SIP benefits come into effect. This benefit equals 65% of the first \$40,000 gross annual salary, 50% of the next \$40,000 of gross salary, and 40% of the balance, plus an amount paid directly to the member's pension plan equal to their required contribution.

Contrary to popular opinion, SIP is not an extension of sick leave. Detailed medical information is required to substantiate a claim: this includes a diagnosis, treatment information and recommendations, accommodations that may be necessary in the workplace to return the member to their assignment, etc. A member in receipt of benefits beyond three months will usually be required to provide supporting medical evidence of ongoing care and treatment by a licensed specialist physician or a registered psychologist. SIP case managers may require members to undergo an independent medical examination to either substantiate the claim, clarify a diagnosis, and/or provide recommendations for appropriate treatment and workplace accommodations.

If a member is unable to maintain, or return to, their teaching position because of a medical illness or disability, the SIP funds an early intervention rehabilitation program—the BCTF Health and Wellness Program. It operates throughout the province by contracting local rehabilitation consultants, in consultation with the member's health care provider, to co-ordinate services that improve their health and functional abilities.

SIP also funds Starling Minds ([www.starlingminds.com](http://www.starlingminds.com)), a confidential online mental health and wellness tool, based on cognitive behaviour therapy, designed specifically for teachers. Available to teachers and their family members to use anywhere and anytime, free of charge, Starling Minds helps teachers learn about stress, mental fitness exercises, and how to break unhealthy patterns that may lead to anxiety and depression.

For more information and answers to frequently asked questions, go to [bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=4782](http://bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=4782) or contact Sarb Lalli, Salary Indemnity Plan Administrator, BCTF Income Security Division: toll free 1-800-663-9163 (Local 1935), or 604-871-1935, or [slalli@bctf.ca](mailto:slalli@bctf.ca). ■

# What I learned from laryngitis



By Jo Atkinson-Cornthwaite, Nanaimo teacher

If you have ever met me, you will know I love to talk! I can be verbose. I enjoy a great conversation. So, when I recently got laryngitis and lost my voice, I faced a big challenge.

I IMAGINE that laryngitis is common in our profession. Teachers' work centres on using our voices, giving directions, and sharing ideas with students. I am no exception—I teach an active classroom of talkative grade ones, providing countless verbal cues each day. The week I was home on sick leave with laryngitis, I learned an important lesson.

Day one I whispered apologies, and used sign language and hand gestures, as I attempted to get my messages across to my family. Day two involved hand gestures, mouthed words, and facial expressions. By day three, I'd stopped trying to communicate and simply whispered, "sorry, laryngitis" to anyone who tried to talk to me as I navigated my way to the doctor's office. Within three days, I'd given up trying to communicate verbally—and this gave me great pause.

I have a Masters degree in special education and have taught students who are non-verbal for years. I have supported these students, but I never really understood what it meant to not be able to use my voice to communicate.

It made me think about what it would be like to go without my voice for three months, three years, or a lifetime. My experience showed me how incredibly frustrating it must be to want to communicate with a teacher and peers without being able to speak. Students who speak American Sign Language (ASL) rely on an intervener in their classroom, and those not fluent in ASL may use technology to communicate in a text or speech format. Those lacking the dexterity or access to use communication technology, may rely on gestures, which are usually only understood by family, caregivers, and people directly supporting them. It is not easy.

My return to the speaking world came with a new appreciation for my students who are trying to communicate without a voice in a speaking world. ■

**VOICE DYSFUNCTION** is an occupational injury common to teachers. Damage to vocal cords can cause loss or weakness of voice functions. Drama, band, music, technical education, and physical education teachers are particularly at risk.

## To prevent voice dysfunction

- ▶ Warm up your voice prior to the teaching day.
- ▶ Do not use excessive volume.
- ▶ Vary your teaching style so that you do not lecture for prolonged periods.
- ▶ Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. ■

# Disruptive innovation or creative destruction —where is TECHNOLOGY taking education?



By Larry Kuehn, BCTF Director of Research

Technology entrepreneurs' favourite phrases are "disruptive innovation" and "creative destruction." Uber replaces taxis; Spotify puts an end to owning music collections; and Amazon creatively destroys personally shopping for groceries, as it has for most commodities.

FOR EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY entrepreneurs, the Holy Grail is to become the Uber of education, the platform that disrupts traditional face-to-face education and replaces it with technology-dominated learning. Carried out in capitalist economies, profit is the motive. Certainly, the motive is not to eliminate inequalities exacerbated by the domination of monopolies in our day-to-day, technology-driven lives.

BC education has three businesses competing to be the education platform: Google, Microsoft, and FreshGrade. They all offer challenges to MyEducation BC, the Ministry-supported platform.

Google Suite for Education has expanded rapidly. Most of Google's non-education services appear to be free, presumably paid for by the advertising directed at the user. Google claims that for K-12 education, it "does not use any personal information to target ads."

Google's package of education services, G Suite for Education, includes Gmail, Calendar, Classroom (a learning management and communication tool), Drive, Docs, Forms, Slides and many more. When Blogger and YouTube are part of the package, Google does maintain the right to use personal data. Alongside its free resources, Google uses Chromebooks as an incentive. With their software and data storage in the "cloud," rather than the computer, they are less expensive than laptops.

Google's expansion results from teachers becoming "evangelists" for G Suite. Search "workshops for G Suite education" and you will find "Google Certified Educators, Google Innovators, Google Certified Trainers and many local rockstars [enthusiastic teachers]." In its Shake Up Learning program, teachers are invited to be part of the Google Teacher Tribe.

Microsoft is attempting to catch up in the race to be the education platform. Last summer it offered Microsoft Education 101 for exploring education uses of Microsoft tools and programs. The teacher takes a test at the end to certify as a Microsoft Innovative Educator and join "the most prestigious educator network in the world." Teachers who purchase a Windows 10 device for their school get Minecraft: Education Edition.

Microsoft is promoted as "affordable" rather than free. Software and data storage are in the Microsoft cloud, on servers located in Canada and are based on using Windows 10 devices. Google depends on teachers sharing resources, while Microsoft offers more already prepared.

The third commercial competitor for platform domination in BC is FreshGrade. Its services include managing classroom information and serving as an e-portfolio for communication with parents. Several districts are promoting its use. While some teachers enjoy using FreshGrade, others feel pressured to use it.

All three platforms have a commercial strategy. Google wants to be the dominant global platform for all online activity, with its profits coming from selling advertising and monetizing data. Microsoft wants to sell its Windows 10 systems, suggesting it is best for preparing students for a world of business dominated by Microsoft Office. FreshGrade hopes to build enough of a user base to entice a larger player to buy it, as its developer did in selling Club Penguin to Disney for more than \$300 million.

“All are forms of privatization of education working from within. Every tool shapes the task and all these tools have commercial ends.

A fourth platform exists as an option—MyEducation BC. Its specifications are for a system that not only maintains attendance and reports to parents, but is projected to have many of the functions that are offered by the commercial platforms. However, while its competitors are either rich in capital for development, or using venture capital, as with FreshGrade, the development and operation of MyEducation BC is financed from school district and Ministry funds.

We need to take the time to understand what is being offered, who really benefits, and to consider the consequences of our decisions.

## Critical questions

- Why are we using this tool?
- What are its advantages, but also what may be the unintended consequences?
- How is the tool shaping the task?
- Have the implications for privacy been considered and have teachers had adequate training to address them? ■

# Should all kids learn to code?

By Jon Hamlin, Former President, Computer Using Educators of BC



iStock.com/Brailey Hebdon

When then-Premier Christy Clarke unexpectedly proclaimed in 2016 that all students would be taught coding, it was a cart before the horse situation as there were no concrete plans on how this would be implemented. Fear, misunderstanding, and confusion rippled across the province.

“CODERS” HAVE BECOME the rock stars and media darlings for the digital generation. “Coding” is a buzzword that has been popularized through extensive media coverage, pop-culture references, and public exposure to success stories of computer programmers and/or software engineers. At the same time, coding culture evokes stereotypes of isolated, socially awkward misfits challenging global institutions from behind their keyboards.

In fact, a coder is simply a computer programmer who writes instructions that are interpreted by computers. Coding, like any skill, must be honed and refined through extensive repetition and practice.

Computational thinking is a foundational principle of computer science; it involves concepts such as problem decomposition, patterns and generalizations, abstraction, and algorithmic thinking; skills many teachers are already teaching in a variety of diverse and exciting ways. When writing the Grades 5–7 applied design, skills, and technologies (ADST) coding curriculum, our intention was to highlight aspects of computational thinking that already exist within classrooms. By highlighting these concepts, a foundation is built for more in-depth coding courses in middle and secondary schools.

But do all students need to learn how to code? Truth be told, they don't. However, like other basic skills that students can learn within the ADST curriculum (e.g., baking

a cake, changing a tire, etc.), basic coding and computational thinking skills are increasingly valuable in our technologically mediated society.

BC has over 100,000 people working within the technology sector. On average, they earn more than 75% of the workforce. But should all students be able to program their own software? Not necessarily. However, everyone could benefit from a better understanding of the workings of technology tools they interact with daily.

Coding engages learners in critical thinking and problem-solving skills in creative and personalized ways. Students take more ownership over their learning when they can create and develop games, tools, and resources they and others can interact with.

**R** Computer Using Educators of BC, a BCTF provincial specialist association, developed *CodeBC.ca*, a coding and computational thinking resource webpage to assist teachers. It has been vetted by BC teachers who carefully selected good quality, grade and skill level appropriate coding resources connected to BC's revised curriculum. It includes *Introduction to Computational Thinking*, an online course that is free for anyone to explore. Among several options, teachers can filter coding resources by core and curricular competencies. It's a must-see starting point for any BC teacher looking to begin exploring coding in their classroom. ■

## Stepping up for digital literacy



By Braden Blackmon,  
Sunshine Coast teacher

TO PREPARE STUDENTS for the future, educators are challenged to become familiar with the experiences, knowledge, and tools that make up digital literacy. Skills in the effective use of software and an understanding of how software training is tied to relevant jobs in the tech industry can expand opportunities for our students. Students benefit from the same breadth of experience with digital tools as they do with the tools and techniques of language arts.

### Steps toward digital literacy

#### ► Expand beyond familiar computer software

The two most common pieces of software used in schools are web browsers and word processors. Other software applications students could be exposed to are audio software (Audacity and Garage Band), code editors for coding websites (Adobe Brackets), image manipulation and 3D Software (Gimp, Blender, Google SketchUp), and content management system software (WordPress). Most of this software is open source and therefore free to download and use. The only tools required to learn software are computers (not tablets) and basic computing tools such as mice and digital drawing tablets.

#### ► Teach students to use software

Beyond classroom instruction, teaching can be enriched with software training from curated tutorials, online courses, and Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs.) Schools could also prepare their own online course materials that align with BC curriculum objectives.

#### ► Expose students to tech industry careers

Students can be inspired by the variety of careers in the tech industry. Such careers include programmers, photographers, concept artists, 3D modellers, animators, web designers, graphic designers, and database specialists. ■

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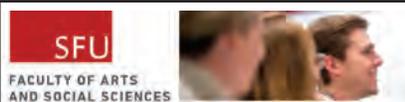
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### TRAVEL/VACATION

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Cut this out—put it on the fridge and dream! Have you ever dreamt of living/having 2–20+ weeks holiday in a French village, walking in the vineyards, getting the family/friends together, visiting markets, buying antiques or using it as a base to explore Europe. Here is your chance to make it happen. C\$782/C\$1173/week couple or family/children under 18. Email: [mjcapper@hotmail.com](mailto:mjcapper@hotmail.com)  
Visit: [www.ourhouseinfrance.com.au](http://www.ourhouseinfrance.com.au)

### GULF ISLAND GETAWAY

Pender Island, B.C. Website: [ainsliepointcottage.com](http://ainsliepointcottage.com)  
Contact Alma at 250-629-3008

**MAUI** Great S Kihei location, 1 bdrm with ocean view, across from great beaches. For more information 209-599-5248 or [www.maui342.com](http://www.maui342.com).

### MISCELLANEOUS

**PENSION QUESTIONS?** When do I retire? Which option to choose? How much will I get? CPP and OAS? Net income? Arnie provides personal, one-to-one consultation. Detailed report, and reasonable rates. Call 604-354-5624, or email [arnielambert@shaw.ca](mailto:arnielambert@shaw.ca).

## ALUMNI TEACHER AWARD

*nominate greatness*

The UBC Faculty of Education Alumni Teacher Award celebrates outstanding achievement by UBC Education graduates teaching in a school or community organization.

### Nominate a Great Teacher!

Deadline: March 2, 2018 Details:

[www.educ.ubc.ca/alumni](http://www.educ.ubc.ca/alumni)



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Faculty of Education

### Support the Day of Mourning Project in your school

On February 1, register your school for the Day of Mourning BC Schools Project at <https://is.gd/kmJGHK>

## Salary Indemnity Fund



Are you 65 or eligible for an unreduced pension?

You may be able to save approximately 1.2% of your salary.

**Why?** Because you are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan (SIP) when you attain any of the following milestones:

- 35 years of contributory service, with a minimum age of 55
- age 61, if you reach "Factor 90" before age 61
- "Factor 90" if you are between 61 and 65 years old
- age 65.



**It is up to you to apply to withdraw from long-term disability.**

Ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave, which, when combined with 120 days of benefits from SIP short-term will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach one of the milestones mentioned above.



To obtain an application, go to <https://is.gd/eaemQ6> or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.



Take advantage of new Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity resources for educators, because all students deserve to feel safe, included and empowered:

**SOGI 1:** Policies and Procedures

**SOGI 2:** Inclusive Environments

**SOGI 3:** Curriculum Resources

Find proven inclusive tools, resources and lesson plans at [SOGIeducation.org](http://SOGIeducation.org)

SOGI 1 2 3 is a collaboration of the BC Ministry of Education, BC Teachers' Federation, UBC Faculty of Education, Out in Schools, ARC Foundation, nine school districts across BC, and local, national and international LGBTQ community organizations.

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Dream

Discover



[www.campbarnard.ca](http://www.campbarnard.ca)

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in your teaching to develop engaging and outstanding learning opportunities.

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### WORKING WITH AGGRESSIVE & VIOLENT CHILDREN & YOUTH

Vancouver | February 21 & 22, 2018

### BULLIES: THEIR MAKING & UNMAKING

Vancouver | February 23, 2018

**GORDON NEUFELD, PH.D.**



### AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER Effective Strategies and Interventions with Children & Adolescents

Victoria | April 19, 2018

Vancouver | April 20, 2018

**CARA DAILY, PH.D.**



### WORKING WITH OPPOSITIONAL, DEFIANT & ANGER ISSUES in Children & Adolescents

Kelowna | May 15, 2018

**JAY BERK, PH.D.**



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1.800.266.5667

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**FEBRUARY 2018****SFU Master of Education Information Session, MEd (Multiple Programs)**

February 6 SFU Vancouver

February 8 SFU Vancouver

A Joint Information Session for Educational Leadership in Complex and Urban Schools MEd/Educational Leadership K–12, Restarting Relationships: Educational Leadership in Challenging Times MEd.  
<https://lis.gd/VonM51>

**Crisis Response Planning**

February 15 Vancouver

This training will focus on how to organize effectively and quickly after a critical incident so that groups are better prepared to respond to the emotional needs of those affected by a tragedy.  
<https://lca.ctrinstitute.com/>

**Mt Seymour Teacher Days**

February 16 North Vancouver

February 19 North Vancouver

Take a two-hour snowshoe program or let us guide you around the mountain on ski/snowboard, then enjoy time on your own or take a slide in the tube park or down the toboggan hill. <https://lis.gd/wp6Utr>

**Journey of the Gray Whale Expedition**

February 20–24 La Paz, Mexico

Panterra Eco Expeditions PD Opportunity. Provides a professional development experience that ties together observations, experiences, and the opportunity to connect with a natural environment/ecosystem. Includes resources that can later be used as a teaching resource in the classroom.  
[www.panterra.com](http://www.panterra.com)

**Working with Aggressive and Violent Children and Youth**

February 21–22 Vancouver

One of the foremost interpreters of the developmental approach tackles one of the oldest and most perplexing of human problems, exposing its deep developmental roots, and revealing why conventional approaches to the problem are so ineffective.  
[info@jackhirose.com](mailto:info@jackhirose.com).

**Crosscurrents 2018**

February 22–23 Vancouver

Crosscurrents 2018 is the annual conference of the Teachers of Inclusive Education PSA. Kim Barthel will be the keynote this year on Trauma Sensitive Education. There are many other presenters on topics such as anxiety, self-regulation, brain function, and teaching strategies to support diverse learners.  
[msdebra.swain@gmail.com](mailto:msdebra.swain@gmail.com)

**Alternate Education Association (BCAEA) Annual “Challenge and Change” Conference**

February 22–23 Vancouver

Over 35 sessions will be offered, covering a myriad of topics helping those who work with at-risk youth in alternate education learning environments. <https://lis.gd/tk7tsQ>

**Bullies: Their Making and Unmaking**

February 23 Vancouver

Dr. Neufeld dissects the bully syndrome to reveal its deep instinctive roots in the dynamics of attachment and vulnerability.  
[info@jackhirose.com](mailto:info@jackhirose.com)

**Okanagan Zonal Professional Development Conference**

February 23 Kelowna

Theme: Making Connections 12. Keynote Speakers: Will Richardson and Dr. Deborah MacNamara. This conference is put on by teachers for teachers. <https://lis.gd/JRcNCw>

**VanDusen Botanical Garden School Garden Ecology Workshop**

February 23 Vancouver

This workshop is designed for teachers who are enthusiastic about gardening, ecology, and cultivating a healthy garden ecosystem. Register at: <https://lis.gd/48E1Uf>

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Tools for Thinking Differently**

February 26 Kelowna

February 26 Victoria

This workshop provides a strong foundational knowledge of the principles and strategies involved in using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). For more information, please visit our website:  
<https://lis.gd/dh4zM5>

**Save Your Sanity**

February 26 Victoria

February 27 Vancouver

February 28 North Vancouver

Proactive Strategies for Children with Challenging Behaviour. CRD Consulting.  
[www.saveyoursanity.ca](http://www.saveyoursanity.ca)

**MARCH 2018****Resilience in Children—Creative Strategies for Helping**

March 8 Vancouver

March 14 Victoria

Participants of this workshop will develop competency to engage and communicate with children (ages 3-12) and their natural support systems. <https://lis.gd/fB3xUM>

**Trauma Strategies for Resolving the Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress**

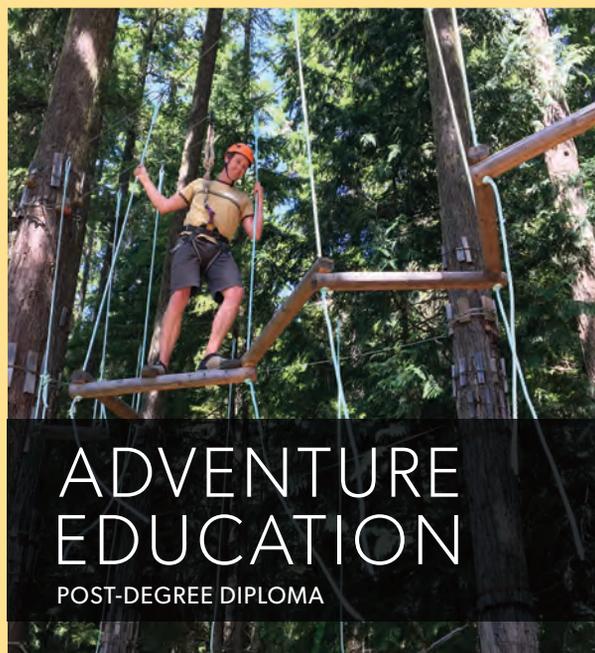
March 12 Vancouver

This CTRI workshop provides a framework which describes different stages in resolving the impact of trauma, and includes key principles and strategies for working with individuals. <https://lis.gd/5LZwgm>

**Save Your Sanity**

March 26 Kamloops

Proactive Strategies for Children with Challenging Behaviour. CRD Consulting.  
[www.saveyoursanity.ca](http://www.saveyoursanity.ca)

**PD Online Calendar**[bctf.ca/PDcalendar](http://bctf.ca/PDcalendar)Changes/additions: [msteele@bctf.ca](mailto:msteele@bctf.ca)

**ADVENTURE  
EDUCATION**  
POST-DEGREE DIPLOMA

Develop knowledge and understanding of educational possibilities using outdoor, experiential and adventure-based learning.

- 13-month program: online and face-to-face learning
- Work and study at the same time
- Next intake: **July 2018**

**Acceptable Integrated Program for BC TQS category upgrading.**  
PRE-APPROVAL RECOMMENDED.



[camosun.ca/adventure](http://camosun.ca/adventure)



“Students, in their groups of four, were asked to imagine what school might be like in 20 years.”

—Full story on [page 8](#)

Joshua Berson photo