

BC Teachers' Federation Teacher



March 2019



Our kids and their teachers
Worth investing in

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This is your **MAGAZINE**

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Editor Susan Croll (on leave)

Acting editor Jennifer Kimbley

jkimbley@bctf.ca

Assistant editor/design Karen Steel

Copy editor Sarah Young

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Teacher Advisory Board

Shelley Balfour

Haymen Leong

Jennifer Fox

Catherine Quanstrom

June James

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New ad campaign coincides with the start of bargaining

By the time you're reading this edition of *Teacher*, two significant things will already be under way. First, talks with the employer about our next collective agreement will have already started. And second, our latest province-wide ad campaign will be on screens, on air, and on billboards all over BC.

THE CAMPAIGN SLOGAN is "Our kids and their teachers: worth investing in." And all the campaign elements are designed to showcase the value of teachers' work and the countless amazing things we do in our schools and communities.

The ad campaign will be on television, radio, websites, social media, transit shelters, and billboards province-wide. It was timed to launch before the government announced its new budget, as well as the start of official talks between the BCTF and the employer. The message is positive and uplifting. Please share the content on social media and help us secure a new collective agreement by June 30.

Four themes set the tone for bargaining

In the weeks leading up to the start of official talks with the employer, the BCTF bargaining team was hard at work preparing strategies and proposals that reflect the objectives and priorities set by the Bargaining Conference.

With talks now under way, the BCTF is working to make significant gains in four thematic areas:

Recruitment and retention: Improvements in working conditions and compensation that will help address the ongoing teacher shortage. This includes salary improvements beyond simply two percent increases. Take a look at the article on page (insert page number) for a closer look at how other unions have achieved increases beyond the 2%-2%-2% mandate.

Parity: Reducing inequities, especially around working conditions and benefits, among our own members. Read Renée Willock's column on page 5 to learn more about the experience in locals where teachers don't have class-composition or class-size language.

Equity: Identifying and reducing barriers that prevent all members from accessing all collective agreement rights.

Gaining ground: Making gains in priority areas with new provisions or improved provisions that will benefit the broader membership.



La nouvelle campagne publicitaire coïncide avec le début des négociations

Au moment où vous lirez cette édition du *Teacher*, deux événements importants seront déjà en cours. Premièrement, les discussions avec l'employeur concernant la prochaine convention collective auront débuté. Deuxièmement, notre dernière campagne publicitaire à l'échelle de la province sera diffusée à l'écran, en ondes et sur les panneaux d'affichage partout à travers la Colombie-Britannique.

LE SLOGAN DE LA CAMPAGNE est : « Our kids and their teachers : worth investing in » / « Nos enfants et leurs enseignant(e)s en valent la peine ». Tous les éléments de la campagne sont conçus pour démontrer la valeur du travail des enseignant(e)s et les nombreuses actions exceptionnelles que nous entreprenons dans nos écoles et dans nos communautés.

La campagne publicitaire sera diffusée à la télévision, à la radio, sur les sites internet, les médias sociaux, dans les stations de transports en commun et les panneaux d'affichage à travers toute la Colombie-Britannique. Il était prévu de lancer la campagne avant que le gouvernement annonce son nouveau budget et avant le début des discussions officielles entre la FECB et l'employeur. Le message est positif et inspirant. S'il vous plaît, partagez le contenu sur vos médias sociaux et aidez-nous à conclure une nouvelle convention collective d'ici le 30 juin.

Quatre thèmes donnent le ton aux négociations

Dans les semaines précédant le début des discussions officielles avec l'employeur, l'équipe de négociations de la FECB a travaillé ardemment à la préparation de stratégies et de propositions reflétant les objectifs et les priorités établis à la conférence de négociations.

Les pourparlers étant entamés, la FECB s'efforce d'obtenir des gains importants dans quatre domaines thématiques.

Recrutement et rétention : Des améliorations au niveau des conditions de travail et des compensations qui aideront à résoudre l'actuelle pénurie d'enseignant(e)s. Ceci inclut l'amélioration des salaires au-delà des simples deux pourcent d'augmentation. Jetez un coup d'œil à l'article à la page 6 pour en savoir plus sur comment les autres syndicats ont réussi à obtenir des augmentations au-delà du mandat 2%-2%-2%.

Parité : Réduire les inégalités, spécialement autour des conditions de travail et des avantages sociaux parmi nos membres. Lisez l'article de Renée Willock à la page 5 pour en apprendre davantage sur l'expérience à l'intérieur des syndicats locaux où les enseignant(e)s ne possèdent pas d'articles au sujet de la composition ou la taille des classes.

Équité : Identifier et réduire les barrières empêchant l'ensemble des membres d'accéder à tous les droits de la convention collective.

Gagner du terrain : Faire des gains dans les domaines prioritaires avec de nouvelles ou de meilleures dispositions qui profiteront à l'ensemble des membres.

Make the Day of Mourning a teachable moment

EACH YEAR, the National Day of Mourning, April 28, 2019, remembers workers killed and those who still suffer from a work-related injury or illness. For the last three years, the BC Teachers' Federation has partnered with the BC Labour Heritage Centre, advocating for young worker safety at secondary schools through the Day of Mourning (DOM) BC Schools Project.

Why it's important

On average **3-4 Canadian workers** are killed every day on the job



Every year young workers are **seriously injured or killed** on the job

Young males aged 15-24 are **twice as likely** to get injured on the job



Hospitality, construction, and retail are the top three industries for injuries to young workers

In 2018, over 140 secondary schools participated. Teachers and schools are provided with the resources to help raise health and safety awareness. The package is user friendly with scripts, posters, and a list of suggested activities. This project is also supported by BC Federation of Labour, WorkSafe BC, CUPE BC, BC School Trustees Association and the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association.

This year the Day of Mourning in Schools will be held on Friday, April 26, 2019. Participating schools (upon completion of a post-event feedback) will be entered in a draw for over 30 school prizes, including 10 Apple gift certificates valued at \$200 each.

To register and to download DOM materials, go to: www.domschools.ca.

—**Al Cornes**, BC Labour Heritage Centre DOM BC Schools Project Manager



The teacher's kid

I APPRECIATE the article, "The teacher's kid," (*Teacher*, Nov/Dec 2018, p.5), about activism and autism, and I would like to add something to the discussion that I feel is vital. As educators we need to start using person-first language when we discuss autism, such as "a child with autism" instead of "autistic child." It is a subtle difference and shift in mindset that reflects that we see the child first, and not the autism first.

—**Sheryl Hagen**, Langley teacher



Is disability a bad word?

I'M WRITING to you regarding the article "Let's talk about language" (*Teacher*, Jan/Feb 2019, p.16-17) as I feel strongly that "disability" is not the right term to use. I have a "disability" and so does my teenage daughter. If we were classified as "disabled" that would be devastating to our self-esteem, to how we view ourselves (as individuals with epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes) and just another obstacle placed in our way that we need to overcome.

—**Teresa Benedict**, Nechako Lakes

Teacher on Twitter

Glen Hansman @glenhansman

Follow

Is "Disability" a bad word? Discussion and feature article by Chilliwack teacher and @sfeducation doctoral candidate @leah_kelley : issuu.com/teachernewsmag ... I #bcd cc. @caalphonso



Teacher Magazine Jan/Feb 2019

In this issue: Is disability a bad word? -Bargaining explained -Primary teachers speak out

8:03 PM - 9 Jan 2019

17 Retweets 21 Likes

Cathy McMillan @DyslexiaBC • Jan 10
Replying to @glenhansman and 4 others
A reporter asked me recently if dyslexia was a bad word.

Leah Kelley @leah_kelley • Jan 13
I would respond, "Absolutely not!" <3

Ian Patton @pattoni • Jan 9
Replying to @glenhansman and 2 others
Heck no.

Cathy McMillan @DyslexiaBC • Jan 10
That's what I say too. ...You need to be able to communicate needs. Disability does not mean "not capable." It means "trouble" with ability.

Reid Clark @ReidClark • Jan 9
Replying to @glenhansman and 3 others

Well done @leah_kelley! Leah is part of the Chilliwack Teachers' Association Social Justice Committee and an outstanding teacher working with a wide array of students in the district. We've recently had a great conversation about this very issue. Excited to see where this goes!

Glen Hansman @glenhansman

Follow

Love, joy, and burnout in the #bcd Kindergarten classroom - @achales summarizes results of a @BCTF @BCPrimaryTeach survey

Sharon Hales @Halessharon • Jan 9
Replying to @glenhansman and 3 others

I answered that survey! Any chance the online version of the magazine can be shared using different software? I am an Apple user and whenever I try to read it online, I always run into glitches (then wait for the paper copy).

Editor's note: Glad you took part in the survey, Sharon! *Teacher* is available online in three different formats: as a digital magazine on the issuu platform, as a downloadable pdf, or in HTML (text only). To view these options, go to www.bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx.

Collective agreement parity: *It's a social justice issue*

By **Renée Willock**, teacher and President, West Vancouver Teachers' Association

In September, I attended my first school board meeting as Local President. I listened as our Associate Superintendent proudly announced that all but one class in the district were in compliance with class-size and composition language. Was this really a notable achievement? Except for the *School Act* cap of 30 students, there are no class-size limits for Grades 4–12 in West Vancouver. We also have no local language in our collective agreement regarding composition. I didn't celebrate the achievement. Instead, I spoke on behalf of teachers who were finding their class composition challenging and, in some cases, dangerous.

WHAT IS IT LIKE to teach in a district with no class-size and composition language? Imagine if the Supreme Court decision hadn't eliminated Grade 6/7 classes with 30 students and five IEPs in your district. Across the Capilano River in North Vancouver, an intermediate split class can have a maximum of 27 students with up to three designated students (and only one with extreme behavioural needs). Larger classes with more complexity make it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to give timely feedback and meet their students' diverse needs. Teachers who have multiple students with extreme behaviours are struggling to keep everyone safe.

Paid maternity leave benefits have existed in Canada since 1971, yet West Vancouver teachers still find themselves asking,

"Can I afford to take maternity leave?" Imagine the shock, disappointment, and panic of soon-to-be parents when they discover that for weeks 7–17 of their leaves, they will receive only 50% of their salary, compared with 95% across the Burrard Inlet in Vancouver. Maternity and parental leave is another area where our collective agreement falls short of neighbouring districts.

Now imagine being a Local President and trying to explain to your members why teachers in other districts have these things, and West Vancouver teachers do not. Class-size and composition, maternity and parental leave—these are not merely idiosyncrasies between collective agreements—these are social justice issues. ■



Top: A West Vancouver teacher tackles a stack of marking for her class of 30 students, including five IEPs.

Below: West Vancouver Teacher Association President Renée Willock.

Photos submitted by author

Getting past 2%, 2%, and 2%

Bargaining for salary increases beyond the government's mandate

By Glen Hansman, BCTF President

Based on the agreements signed by other public sector unions like the BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), the BC Nurses' Union (BCNU), and the Health Employees' Union (HEU) in the past six months, the BCTF has an opportunity to make meaningful gains in many areas.

HOWEVER, there is one key area of obvious concern: the government's "Sustainable Services Negotiating Mandate."

All of the public sector agreements reached to date have landed within this mandate, which unfortunately includes a "me too" salary clause. That means if any other union is able to get more than a general 2% per year increase, that additional increase is applied to all of the other agreements.

With BC teachers having some of the lowest salaries in Canada for teachers, we know 2% increases are not good enough. Add in the ongoing teacher shortage and serious recruitment and retention issues, and it's clear that the government needs to do better than a 6% increase over three years. But with that "me too" clause and the strict mandate, how do we get there?

We need to look closer at, and take advantage of, the openings and opportunities in the mandate.

What is the Sustainable Services Negotiating Mandate?

Here's how the government explains it: "Balancing the need for fair and reasonable wage increases with outcomes that are affordable and managed within the fiscal plan."

It includes:

- a three-year term
- general wage increases of 2% in each year
- the "ability to negotiate conditional and modest funding that can be used to drive tangible service improvements for British Columbians."

How does the "me too" clause work?

If any public sector employer, like the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA), enters into a collective agreement that includes a general wage increase of more than 6%, the rest of the public sector agreements will be increased accordingly.

Importantly, though, the "me too" clause does not apply to:

- wage comparability adjustments
- targeted lower-wage redress adjustments
- labour market adjustments
- service improvement allocations.

In plain language, that means there are opportunities for salary increases beyond 2%, 2%, and 2% where there are recruitment and retention challenges, wage disparities between similar workers, labour shortages, and affordability issues.

Have any other unions made salary gains beyond 2%, 2%, and 2%?

The short answer is yes, almost all of them. They've also made gains on leaves, service levels, and benefits. But here are just a few clear examples that show how the BCTF can achieve salary improvements beyond the basic 2%, 2%, and 2%.

- The HEU achieved the elimination of three lower-wage grids, which allows many workers to move up faster. They also achieved improvements to evening, night, weekend, and on-call "differentials" and the isolation allowance.
- The BCNU was able to add three new steps to the top end of the salary grid for Licensed Practical Nurses. They also achieved premiums for shifts that are taken on short notice as well as extra time paid at the end of shifts.
- The BCGEU achieved significant gains for several components, including grid increases for targeted groups like sheriffs, correctional officers, child protection workers, and food safety inspectors.

The BCTF Bargaining Team has been hard at work analyzing these deals and looking at all available strategies to ensure teachers get a good salary increase and make meaningful gains in other priority areas like class-size and composition. Stay tuned for more updates! ■



iStock.com/ghoststone

Funding model review

A recipe for inequity for students

By Michal Rozworski, BCTF staff

Parents and teachers of children with special needs will have to do even more advocating for their children if the provincial funding model for education is changed. Education Minister Rob Fleming is considering the Funding Model Review Panel's report, which advises the government to give lump sum payments to districts based on averages rather than the number of students in need, and this money will be spent by district staff at their discretion.

IF THE FUNDING is not adequate, management in school districts become powerful gatekeepers who allocate insufficient services, and the need for teachers and parents to advocate grows. The ability to do this advocacy is linked to available time and socio-economic status, and potentially will lead to greater inequality in BC classrooms.

School districts already spend more on special needs students than they receive from the government, and the shortfall is balanced when districts cut other services and programs. Twenty locals in BC have class-composition language relating to class size in their collective agreements, and the report says that these collective agreements are "a barrier to change" and that these districts have "restrictive class-composition language that is limiting school districts' ability to meet student needs."

Essentially, the authors of this report (senior school district staff and individuals outside of the education system, but no BCTF or CUPE members) believe that our restored language, resulting in the hiring of thousands of teachers because of our win at the Supreme Court of Canada, is "a source of frustration for many school districts." They like the extra money they are getting after the Supreme Court win, but they don't like that they don't get to direct where it goes.

While some school districts may not have been overjoyed with the restoration of collective agreement provisions that they need to follow, there is no evidence whatsoever to demonstrate

that any of the class-composition language limits the districts' "ability to meet student needs." That statement is simply false.

Astoundingly, they blame the collective agreement for the fact that some districts provide more supports than others, rather than acknowledge it is the collective agreement that drives resources (such as extra support to students with special needs) into the classroom. The report recommends "negotiated changes to collective agreement provisions" that would eliminate the requirement to provide services. The report is not advocating for equality; indeed, it is advocating leveling down.

And let's not forget what it was like for the 14 years when the collective agreement provisions were not in place. The 3,700 teaching jobs that have been restored to the public education system are there because of that language, and because of teachers' tenacity to get it back. All 3,700 teachers in these restored jobs provide direct services to students!

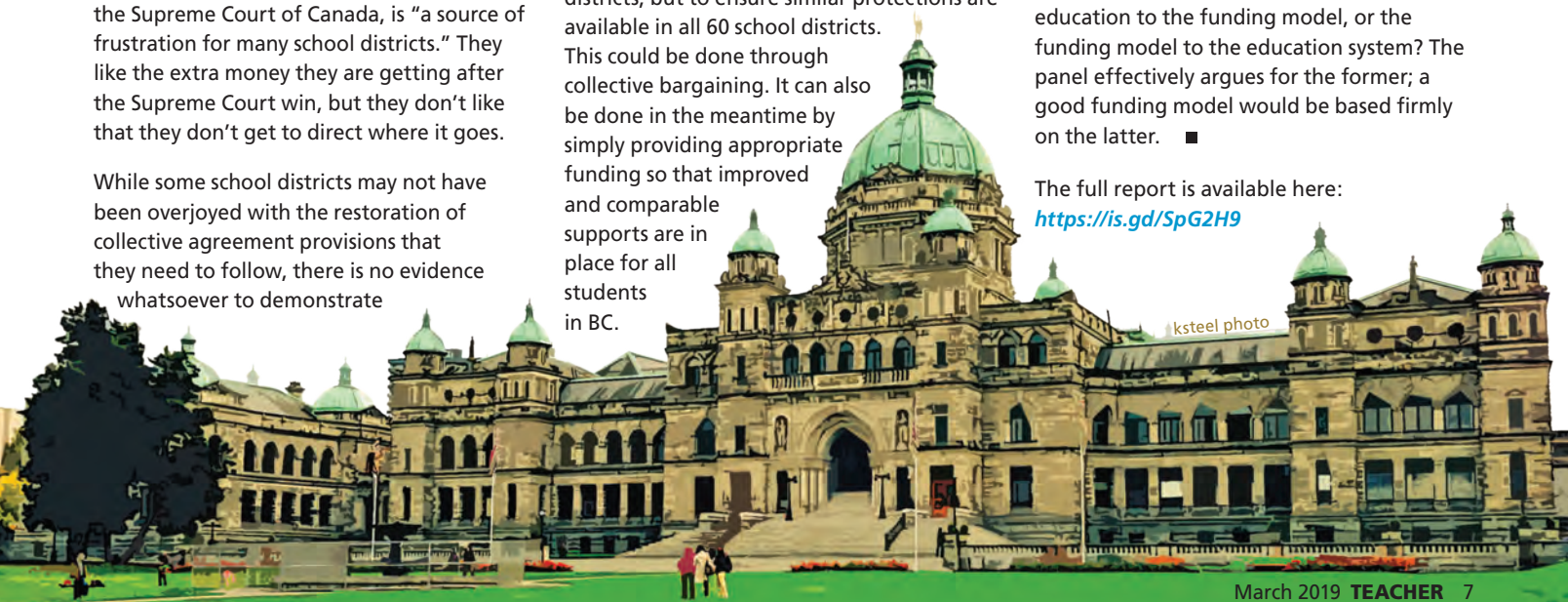
The government's approach should not be taking away what exists in some school districts, but to ensure similar protections are available in all 60 school districts. This could be done through collective bargaining. It can also be done in the meantime by simply providing appropriate funding so that improved and comparable supports are in place for all students in BC.

The panel proposes the government give lumps of money to each district to spend as they wish, while receiving minimal direction from government. With no ties between designations and funding, districts will decide what services they will not provide if total funding is inadequate, and the number of children going undiagnosed will increase. Past experience shows that eliminating funding for some high-incidence categories has led to a substantial decline in the number of students identified. Such changes may introduce more flexibility for districts, but they ultimately make it easier to underfund the system and create inequities between students, especially the most vulnerable.

Among the most troubling recommendations is number six, which proposes "a single Inclusive Education Supplement" that would replace allocations for everything from special needs to English language learners to school lunch programs. This recommendation pits special needs against other inclusion services in a battle for a sufficient portion of insufficient funding. School districts will receive funding based on statistics rather than specific needs, such as the number of students on the autism spectrum or the cost of the services required.

Ultimately, the Funding Model Review Panel has taken a technocratic approach with little interest in what it takes to educate and provide concrete services. Do we tailor education to the funding model, or the funding model to the education system? The panel effectively argues for the former; a good funding model would be based firmly on the latter. ■

The full report is available here:
<https://is.gd/SpG2H9>



School psychologists

"I really enjoy working collaboratively with school-based teams to promote inclusion of diverse learners. As a former preschool Montessori teacher, I am aware of the importance of making realistic and practical recommendations to classroom teachers, knowing first-hand that they are often managing ever-increasing demands."

—Larissa Jackson, school psychologist

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS are members of the BCTF in many locals and work collaboratively with school and district staff to help students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds who are struggling in school. Larissa Jackson is a school psychologist in Vancouver, and she has been in the role in various Lower Mainland districts for the last 13 years.

"Most of the students I work with are struggling academically, but sometimes it is for social-emotional reasons or more complex and multifaceted reasons. I also

provide consultation and psycho-educational assessments to help figure out how each student learns best. Sometimes as a result of a psycho-educational assessment, I diagnose a student with a specific learning disorder or an intellectual disability, and then I help the school plan and implement individual education plans," Larissa says.

"I am also a mother, so I can empathize with the vulnerability parents may feel when attending a meeting to discuss their child's academic progress or psycho-educational assessment results. I take pride in my ability not only to communicate complex and

difficult information to families and school staff, but also to modulate the message to each audience member so that everyone comes away from a meeting with a solid understanding of the results of the assessment and the next steps."

School psychologists in British Columbia must have a Master's or PhD in School Psychology. These programs include coursework on assessment (e.g., cognitive/IQ, academic, behavioural, social-emotional), statistics, child development, psychopathology and diagnosis, professional ethics, and consultation. Many school psychologists also have a teaching certificate.

School psychologists in BC also must become certified by either the BC Association of School Psychologists by submitting an application with their coursework, a supervised internship or practicum, an exam, and letters of



Speech language pathologists

Many teachers have had the opportunity to work with children who have communication difficulties, ranging from stutters to an inability to speak. Speech language pathologists (SLPs) offer vital support to students who have communication difficulties that affect their ability to succeed in school.

"MANY PEOPLE often think of us only for the students with speech sound difficulties," says Emily King, an SLP in Prince George, "but we are able to provide support for students with all kinds of communication difficulties. My support for these students can take many different forms and may include assessment, intervention, resource recommendations, IEP collaboration, team collaboration, and training for school staff."

Emily is currently responsible for four schools, and in School District 57 the

caseload is around 30 students. "My involvement varies depending on the student and the school priorities and needs, and so I may be heavily involved with a student's programming for a period of time, and then possibly less involved with that same student at other times of the year when my focus shifts to other students in the school," she says.

SLPs and other associated professionals, such as Aboriginal social workers, psychologists, and occupational therapists are new members of the Prince George

Prince George speech language pathologist Emily King.

Photo submitted.

reference, or they must join the College of Psychologists of BC, which has an even more rigorous process to join.

In Vancouver, there is no language in the collective agreement about caseload ratios for school psychologists. Larissa works at one secondary school and seven elementary schools, and in the past she has worked at as many as 10 schools. She is currently responsible for over 4,000 students.

"My colleagues and I, along with the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association (VESTA), are very keen on having ratios in our collective agreement for teacher psychologists and speech language pathologists. Other teachers, like resource teachers and area counsellors, have ratios about how many students they see, but we don't have that yet," Larissa says.

"I think I can speak for most school psychologists in saying that we feel that our services are spread very thinly across the multiple schools that we service, and as a result we must focus on completing as many psycho-educational assessments as we can, instead of being able to provide more consultation and intervention."

Chloë McKnight, President of VESTA, echoes this concern: "Attaining ratio language specific to teacher psychologists would support more manageable workloads for our members, as well as address the delays we currently see in getting students assessed. This would translate into more supports for students with special needs."

Vancouver school psychologist Larissa Jackson.
Jennifer Kimbley photo



Teachers' Association (PGTA) and the BCTF, says Local President Joanne Hapke. "It's their third year with PGTA. A previous president recognized that associated professionals are a part of the BCTF in other locals, but not the PGTA. There was a lot of work involved in bringing these 44 members into our local, and we needed to make sure their last union, the Professional Employees' Association, was okay with them leaving."

After joining the PGTA, the associated professionals were placed on the teachers' salary grid, resulting in salary improvements for many. One of the SLPs also has a seat on the local bargaining committee. While they are now covered by the collective agreement, they are not referenced in it, and this is something the local is looking forward to addressing during local bargaining this year.

SLPs must have a master's degree in speech language pathology from an accredited university program, and to work in British Columbia they must pass a national exam to be registered with the BC College of Speech and Hearing Professionals.

There are professional development opportunities through their provincial association, Speech and Hearing BC, which runs an annual provincial conference and their national association, Speech-Language Audiology Canada (SAC), runs a national conference every second year. "When I'm able to travel to these events they provide great SLP-specific Pro-D," says Emily. "SAC also has webinars on a variety of topics

throughout the year, which are available at minimal cost."

Although Emily has been an SLP for almost 15 years, she feels like she's only just started as she is constantly learning from the students, school staff, and colleagues she works with. "I love the variety in my job and the fact that I get to move from school to school and work with so many amazing teachers and educational assistants!" ■

Tolerating violence is not part of your job

By Toni Grewal, BCTF staff

Have you ever been struck, punched, or kicked by a student? Unfortunately, recent studies and surveys show that teachers are experiencing more violence in their classrooms. Violence in the workplace is not tolerable, must be reported, and needs to be prevented.

IN THE *WORKERS' Compensation Act*, Section 4.27, violence is defined as "the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury."

For teachers, often the person causing the injury is a student. The behaviour of a student can escalate, and this may present risks to teachers. Also, the violent incident can be a singular or repeating event. Violence is not part of our job and it should not be normalized.

According to our recent BCTF survey, 92% of teachers who experienced violence or bullying felt stress or anxiety, while nearly 80% reported fatigue, loss of sleep, and headaches. Experiencing violence or bullying at work can have short- and long-term effects on a person's physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being.

At a recent WorkSafe K-12 sector meeting, a proposal for a Provincial Workplace Violence Strategy for the education sector was introduced. This process will involve representatives of BCTF, CUPE, school districts, BCPSEA, and WorkSafe. For this type of program to be effective, the partner groups present agreed that consistent language, reporting, and follow up is essential.

In 2010, the healthcare sector developed the Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC) violence prevention program. Some insight can be gleaned from the healthcare sector experience, however, teaching in a school is not like working in a hospital, clinic, or healthcare site. Therefore, a workplace violence prevention program for public schools will need to reflect the occupational health and safety reality that teachers experience daily. The next phase of this process will be the creation of the formal proposal.

What is and what is not bullying and harassment?

Bullying and harassing behaviour can include:

- verbal aggression or yelling
- humiliating initiation practices or hazing
- spreading malicious rumours
- calling someone derogatory names.

Bullying and harassing behaviour does not include:

- expressing differences of opinion
- offering constructive feedback, guidance, or advice about work-related behaviour
- reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment (e.g., managing a worker's performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, assigning work). ■

Source: <https://is.gd/tU1QWq>

What should you do if you experience violence at work?

Follow this process:

Violent incident occurs

Report to administrator (6A Form),
health and safety rep,
first aid attendant

Report to WorkSafeBC through
Teleclaim: 1-888-WORKERS
(Remember, injuries are not only physical)

See your doctor

Source: <https://is.gd/fLjCS1>

*Wade Repta is the author of **The Well Teacher: Everything Teachers Need to Know to Be Well and Stay Well in the Classroom** (www.humanworkspress.com). He is an occupational therapist and vice-president of humanworks and has worked with teachers through the BCTF Health and Wellness Program for almost 20 years.*

Maintain your voice

By Wade Repta

In the Jan/Feb 2019 *Teacher* (Protect your voice, p. 26) we reviewed the mechanisms of speech, as well as some equipment and structural changes that can be made in the classroom to improve acoustics and decrease voice strain. Here we will consider tips to maintain voice health and possible accommodations that can assist teachers who are experiencing voice dysfunction.

AS A TEACHER, your voice may be your most important teaching tool. Without a healthy voice teaching becomes much more of a challenge, if not downright impossible. Tips to maintain a healthy voice in the classroom include:

Hydrate—Sip water throughout the day as this keeps your voice system lubricated and working efficiently.

Resist the urge to clear your throat or cough unless you need to.

Limit unnecessary background noise—Close your doors and windows. Ensure your door is sealed at the bottom to keep out noise from the hallways. Ask your school maintenance department to address loud ventilation systems.

Plan your day around your voice needs—Balance classes that are voice heavy with those that require less voice demands. For example, don't plan PE, art, and music all in the morning and quieter subjects in the afternoons. Similarly, build voice breaks into your lesson plans. Instead of talking for 40 minutes to start the class, break your voice time into two 20-minute sessions with a break.

Rest—This is especially important if you are already experiencing voice dysfunction, but really it is important for everyone. Find times to rest your voice during the day. If possible, schedule one to two hours of complete rest after your teaching time is done each day. Think about your after-school activities, and what they are doing to your voice (e.g., coaching).

Close the gap—Stand close to your class and students when speaking to them instead of raising your voice.

Face your students—Always face your students. Never face the whiteboard and raise your voice so that the students behind you can hear you. The way you set up the students' desks can assist with your ability to face students directly, and to be heard.

Go chalkless and avoid chemicals that can harm your voice.

Use voice amplification—As we discussed the Jan/Feb 2019 *Teacher*.

Warm up your voice and practise breathing—Singers warm up for performances, and so should you. Ask a voice coach or speech-language pathologist how to do this.

Talk to your doctor and get help—Your physician can point you in the right direction for supports and look at whether there are medical conditions affecting your voice. Voice therapy and voice lessons with trained professionals can give you the tools you need to manage your voice.

There are a few key accommodations to consider if you are experiencing voice dysfunction. The first is voice amplification. No teacher with voice challenges should be teaching without some form of voice amplification. Some teachers also require a change of classroom. If other factors such as external noise or ventilation cannot be changed, then this might be your only practical option. We have worked with some teachers who needed to change teaching assignments altogether. If you have done everything you can to stay in your current role, but your voice is not improving, you may need to consider the type of teaching role that will allow you to be well and successful in the long term. If this option doesn't work for you, perhaps you can stay in your current role, but part time. For all accommodations there needs to be medical support and rationale from your medical team, and discussions regarding accommodations should go through your local and district reps.

By putting all of this information together, with some planning and voice-care strategies, it is possible to maintain your teaching voice and successfully remain in the classroom. ■



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My dreams for Indigenous education in Canada

Jo-ann Archibald, new Order of Canada recipient, imagines the brightest future for her field

By Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem

Martin Dee photo

Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem has a PhD in Education. She has held teaching positions in North Vancouver and Chilliwack school districts and was the former director of the First Nations House of Learning, associate dean for Indigenous education and director of NITEP (UBC's Indigenous Teacher Education Program) at the University of British Columbia. She is a member of the Stó:lō First Nation and is one of 15 people appointed Officer of the Order of Canada for 2019.

I'D LIKE TO be able to look back in 20 years and say, "Gee, we've really made some big steps, instead of the small steps we've been making over the years." For example, ensuring Indigenous ways of knowing are more firmly embedded in all areas of education, moving from the margins to core parts of learning in early learning, Kindergarten to Grade 12, and post-secondary education.

Now we're at the stage where we have pockets where Indigenous ways of knowing have been introduced, and in some areas we actually have Indigenous programs. We have had success for those who are lucky enough to experience these programs. But those are few.

In 20 years, Indigenous ways of knowing should be more widespread and shared in ways that are meaningful, of good quality, and engaging. Teachers who take on this role should feel more confident in introducing the topics, the resources, and most importantly work with Indigenous families and community members to supplement what the teachers are doing. Research should be connected to these approaches so that we can learn what's working, what needs to be improved, and share that widely.

Having hope, and the highest expectations

Some teachers will say, "I can't do anything about the Indigenous kids; they come from poor homes," and feel hopeless. I would hope this feeling shifts to excitement and

confidence in working with Indigenous students and parents, rather than feeling it's a dismal situation. That point came out in a 2015 auditor general's report in British Columbia; it is called the racism of low expectations. I hope we wouldn't have that anymore in 20 years time.

And we need to question our biases and keep examining our own perspectives: "What's my attitude to Indigenous peoples or the history? What has shaped my attitudes and how I approach these areas in my own practice?" Those questions are so important, and even somebody who feels they are not biased, when they look at their assumptions might think, "Oh, maybe I need to get more informed, get some help from others to deal with some of these questions that I have." I think it's really important to question, but you need to act on those questions.

More Indigenous teachers!

We seem to have more Indigenous teachers who act as resource teachers in the public school system, which is important, but at the same time we need to have the

Indigenous teachers as classroom teachers, too. That leads up to post-secondary education, where many more Indigenous faculty members are needed for teaching and doing research.

I do see more Indigenous people entering post-secondary education now, and these could be the future teachers and educational leaders at all levels of education. The teachers to me are so central to Indigenous students' success, which is why I have dedicated much of my educational career to teacher and graduate education.

Including more Indigenous ways of knowing in curriculum

We've been working on many areas of Indigenous curriculum, preparation of teachers and educational leaders, and increasing the educational involvement of community members. But we really need to ensure that the funding for these approaches continues. That's a difficult area, because if educational systems and universities start to have a financial issue the Indigenous programs are often the ones that suffer the most.

Currently, there is a requirement from the BC Ministry of Education to include Indigenous topics and resources at every grade level and subject area. Some innovative approaches ensure that students have opportunities to be out in nature to learn about the rivers, the land, and the affinity and kinship one can acquire by being on and with the land. They have stories to help them, Elders or knowledge holders doing activities with them out on the land, and the teachers help relate this Indigenous knowledge to science, math, reading, physical activity, and more. It can be holistic and integrated, starting with the use of Indigenous traditional stories.

In contrast, it's not doing a little bit and feeling, "Okay, that's my Indigenous activity for the year," which may give students the impression that this learning is not that important. It's important that teachers, whether they are K-12 or at university,

try something, and that could be their first time. But it should not be their last time.

Non-Indigenous students benefiting, too

Non-Indigenous students may develop an awareness that Indigenous people were living on this land going back thousands of years. They managed to survive, to live on and with the land, learned or developed technologies to help them and had their own values and laws.

The other part that students have to know is the history of colonization and to think about the results. If they then hear on the news that Indigenous people are protesting some of the pipelines, logging, or the missing and murdered Indigenous women, they will have an understanding about why our society is in this predicament today. Whereas when they don't learn the history, all they see are the images on the news, and they're not given an understanding about what are the issues, how they've come about, what people want to happen, and the racism and how that plays out.

More emphasis on education as a life-long journey

I'd like to see more Indigenous families and community members feeling positive about their engagement with the school, that school is not for them a scary place or a place they don't belong, which is often a prevalent feeling.

We need to also put the same attention on this lifelong or long-term commitment. It is important for these different systems to work co-operatively: the early childhood education to K-12, then K-12 into post-secondary, then post-secondary to career/business/industry. Right now, it's not a seamless kind of journey for the learners.

Indigenous learners have often been channelled into some areas that are limited, where they may not take the math or English courses that would get them into a university, for example. That can be problematic when it's done through bias; we want to make sure if learners decide they want to go into a trades program, they do it knowingly and they feel good about it. At the same time, they should have the option to go to college and university.

Twenty years from now we would have much more flexible educational systems where Indigenous learners feel included,

that they belong, that they feel good about who they are as Indigenous people, and that there is this caring and meaningful trajectory for them.

Stronger connections between education systems, community

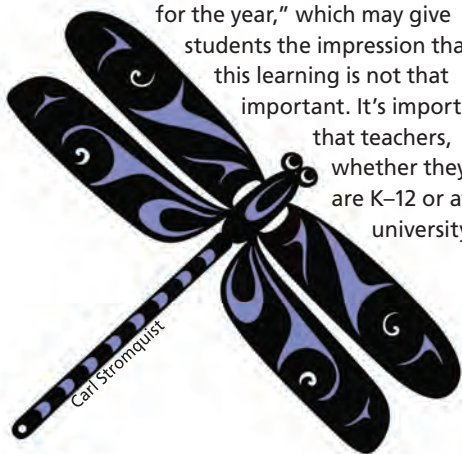
Where I see a lot of exciting things happening right now is in the Indigenous early childhood programs. Across the country they have been working on ensuring the programs are Indigenous — learning an Indigenous language, Indigenous stories — while they're also doing child development, learning and communication activities that all children should get at that level.

At the same time, post-secondary Indigenous education in Canada is expanding to include more Indigenous courses, programs, and support units for students and faculty. What is needed are ways to connect these various public and Indigenous educational systems so that those students who experience Indigenous learning transition successfully to their next level of learning, where that system is also responsive to Indigenous learners and to Indigenous ways of knowing.

If Indigenous students do need any particular supports, there are ways to find the supports, or draw on the strength that child has, or strength from the family and community. That's where the educational systems could then work with the community.

Or later, for career or job areas, there are partnerships where students can have internships and co-op placements. So that child knows, "Hey, somebody cares about me," and they are prepared and they are given options. In 20 years, that continuum should be a standard way of thinking about Indigenous students.

That kind of approach is starting to happen. I have been involved with a non-profit society, Dogwood 25, that's trying to look at this Indigenous learning continuum going from the early years right through into career and work. We are trying to get school districts, post-secondary, business, and industry working in partnership so we can develop this kind of continuum planning and program approach. ■



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END SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE



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Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

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Canadian unions unite against sexual harassment and domestic violence

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has launched a campaign called **#DoneWaiting**, which highlights how women across the country are done waiting for social and economic justice. The three-pronged campaign calls for an end to wage discrimination, a solution to the daycare crisis, and an end to sexual harassment and violence. The BCTF strongly supports this campaign.

DESPITE PROGRESS made in recent years by women's organizations and the #MeToo movement, sexual harassment and violence remain very serious barriers to women's equality, especially in the workplace. It can range from verbal and psychological abuse to unwanted touching, physical and sexual assault, criminal harassment, stalking, and even murder. Approximately every six days a woman somewhere in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. Every night almost 4,000 women—many with children—turn to shelters because they aren't safe at home.

Domestic violence, also called intimate partner violence, can exist in both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships between people who are married, living common law, separated, divorced, or dating. Not all women experience harassment and violence in the same way. Young women, Indigenous women, and women with disabilities experience higher rates of harassment and violence. For racialized and immigrant women, lesbian and bisexual women, and trans and non-binary people, sexual harassment and violence can be exacerbated by other forms of discrimination.

“It's past time to address this significant social injustice, and collective bargaining is one important tool.”

But Canada's unions are making workplaces safer for women by negotiating antidiscrimination and antiharassment policies, better protection and intervention for women experiencing domestic violence, health and safety protections, and improved employee assistance and support programs.

Thanks to union advocacy, workers in Manitoba, Ontario, and federally regulated workplaces now have five paid days of domestic violence leave so women can seek the support and services they need. Those who need it can also access an additional 10 unpaid days and up to 17 weeks of continuous unpaid leave. The CLC will continue to push for similar legislation in other provinces and territories.

In this round of bargaining the BCTF will be tabling a proposal for an intimate partner violence leave for members. BCTF President Glen Hansman said it's past time to address this significant social injustice, and collective bargaining is one important tool.

“Sadly, we haven't been able to eradicate violence against women, but we can eliminate barriers that prevent people from leaving abusive relationships,” Hansman said. “It's an important first step.”

He pointed out that most women living in violent relationships experience some form of financial control and monitoring by their partners. If taking domestic violence leave results in the reduction or loss of a paycheck, the unintended result might be the escalation of violence and risk.

“If women are trying to leave, they need financial security,” Hansman said. “They often need to sort out new living arrangements, and have legal, counselling,

or other costs. Paid leave means they can have some time to deal with the impact of violence and do what's necessary to keep themselves and their children safe.”

The CLC campaign aims to make workplaces safe for women, to make sure survivors are believed, and perpetrators are held accountable. They are calling on the federal government to:

- **Strengthen public awareness:** Launch a national public education campaign on sexual harassment and violence so that everyone understands what it is, why it is never acceptable, and what they can do to prevent it.
- **Fund women's organizations:** Provide sufficient and long-term core operational funding to women's organizations that support all women, so they have the stability they need to continue to support survivors and carry out vital advocacy and research.
- **Make workplaces safe:** Strengthen federal labour legislation so that it clearly defines sexual harassment and violence, reinforces employers' obligations to ensure workplace safety, and ensures effective and impartial mechanisms are in place to investigate complaints, provide support and protection for survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable.

To learn more visit donewaiting.ca. ■

Peace of mind Mood walks give students relief from anxiety

By Susan Croll, Teacher editor

All photos p.16–17 Susan Croll

The Focus Program at Langley Secondary School provides an alternate educational setting to help students who are dealing with anxiety, depression, and other trauma-related issues. The students spend two blocks of individualized instruction per day with their teachers and support staff from the Focus Program. The students attend regular classes for elective subjects.

In addition to funding from the school district, the Mood Walk Pilot Program receives funding and in-kind support from individuals and businesses in the community.

“The beauty of the place is a real break. I don’t feel pressured. I’m not thinking about everything.”

On this perfect fall day, the air is crisp and clear, the sky the bluest of blues, and the sun glints off frost covering the ground, bushes, and trees. Fifteen Grade 10–12 students enrolled in the Focus Program at Langley Secondary School (LSS) are at the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary in Delta for a mood walk—a walk designed to help students dealing with anxiety and depression.

THE VISIT TO the sanctuary is their fourth mood walk in a program endorsed by the Canadian Mental Health Association (BC and Ontario). Focus Program teachers Laurence Greeff and Gwen Thornburn are piloting the school-based program this school year and hope their students will not only learn to love the outdoors, but see walking and being in nature as a positive way to affect moods and feelings.

Most students have never visited the sanctuary before. In fact, nature isn’t a big part of most of their lives. As one student comments, “I don’t come to these kinds of places. It’s not something me and my family do.”

Each month Laurence and Gwen accompany their students on a nature walk. So far, they’ve visited Kanaka Creek in Maple Ridge, Minnekhada in Coquitlam, and Tynehead in Surrey. Sometimes a park interpreter comes with them and points out flora and fauna. One student tells me,

“I wouldn’t know of any of these places if it wasn’t for my class coming.”

The trip journey is not all that long, but we continually stop to admire the stunning display of the ducks’ green and turquoise feathers or to feed a swan or two. We share a chuckle as we watch the ducks slide on the ice formed on one of the ponds. Someone nicknames them the “Jesus ducks.” Considering we’re kilometres away from roads, cars, and the buzz of the city, the honking ducks provide a different kind of musical landscape that lends a joyous note to the atmosphere. The students are laughing and taking photos of one another. Clearly, they are enjoying themselves.



Looking for an easy meal, gleaming blackbirds land on both students and teachers' hands and shoulders. The sanctuary offers specially selected bird seeds for sale—a deal these birds won't miss out on. Although all the students are excited to be at the sanctuary, some fear the hungry ducks that grab at their outstretched hands. "I want to feed them but I'm afraid I'll get bitten," comments another student, as ducks rush to get in on the feast as fast as their waddling bodies will allow.

One student tells me that this walk is her favourite so far. "Usually, we don't get to feed or pet birds. I like this walk for that. It's interactive."

Another student declares that this walk reminds him of the Beautiful BC ads that run on television. "I can't believe I get to experience a great place like this. I get to relax. It's so peaceful. And look at all of this beautiful scenery."

Nearly every one of the students I talk with echoes his comments. Three words come up repeatedly: relax, calm, and peaceful.

Many of the students are dealing with anxiety, depression, and trauma and are open about their challenges. They say the mood walks give them a break from their thoughts and feelings. As one student tells me, "Being out in nature gives me a chance to be distracted. The beauty of the place is a real break. I don't feel pressured. I'm not thinking about everything."

Mike Palichuk, a vice-principal at LSS joins the walk today. He explains that the mood walk is a natural fit for their urbanized/suburbanized students. "Nature is a good alternative to getting consumed by all of the technologies in the world," he says. He applauds Laurence and Gwen for initiating the walks and hopes that the students will develop a lifelong love for the outdoors.

Gwen has taught in the Focus Program for the last two years. She says that anxiety and similar mental illnesses cause students to

isolate themselves. "Due to the nature of what they're dealing with, and even though the students are in the same program, they tend to stay in their own heads and thoughts. They self-isolate. The mood walks give them a chance to walk and talk with each other."

All three educators hope that the mood walks provide a useful coping mechanism for their students. "We want them to make the connection that they felt good, calm, and relaxed when they were on a mood walk," Gwen says. "So if they're feeling anxious or sad they realize that going for a walk can help them deal with their feelings and moods instead of turning to other maladaptive coping strategies."

In accordance with the Canadian Mental Health Association program, students track their moods before and after the walks. They also reflect about the walk the next day in school. Recognizing the positive impact of the walks on their moods helps the students understand the effect walking and nature can have on their lives.

Laurence, along with teacher Anita McCarthy, founded the Focus Program 13 years ago. Too many students were falling through the cracks and the district proposed a new program. The Focus Program isn't Laurence's first assignment working with students dealing with mental health problems. His experience is wide-ranging, as he's worked with kids addicted to inhalants and other drugs. Laurence says that working with kids who have mental health, substance abuse, or addiction problems is a lifestyle—one that he thrives on and loves. "I had to become more facilitative and eliminate barriers to learning in my classroom," he says. He has learned and developed as a teacher as a result.

Students are typically referred to the Focus Program from other schools and must demonstrate that they are committed



Above, top: Focus Program teachers Laurence Greeff and Gwen Thornburn with some friendly blackbirds.

Below: A student offers up a seedy feast. **Background:** Ducks navigate the frozen pond water.

to learning. Laurence relates that they know students are changing and learning because they produce more work. "That kind of change is pretty self-evident." He and Gwen help students set goals for themselves. "Finding goals and then working on these goals often means that the students become less focused on their anxiety. Then they begin to feel good about themselves. When they feel good about themselves, then they begin to change."

We spot eagles and herons and are treated to expansive vistas of water and mountains. Our walk is nearly over, but it's not time to head home just yet. At the end of every mood walk the students eat lunch together. "Eating lunch with one another provides another connection, another sense of belonging with each other," Gwen says. "It's part of building well-being and community, and that is good for everyone's mental health." ■

BC Teachers' Federation

Annual General Meeting

March 16–19, 2019
Victoria, BC

*BCTF members are welcome
to visit the AGM during
any of the sessions.*



Agenda

FIRST SESSION

Saturday evening—March 16

7:00 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

- Call to order
 - Traditional Welcome
 - Preliminaries
 - Report of the President
 - Leadership Report
- 8:30 p.m. Report of the Nominating Chairperson
 - Election statements from candidates for table-officer positions
 - Questions and answers session for candidates for table-officer positions
- 9:25 p.m. Announcements
- 9:30 p.m. Adjournment

SECOND SESSION

Sunday morning—March 17

9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Finance
- 11:00 a.m. Guest speaker—Seth Klein
- 11:30 a.m. Social Justice
- 12:25 p.m. Announcements
- 12:30 p.m. Adjournment

THIRD SESSION

Sunday afternoon—March 17

2:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

- 2:00 p.m. Guest speaker—Laird Cronk, President, BCFED
 - Constitution and By-laws
 - Standing Rules of Order
- 4:30 p.m. Guest speaker—Paul Faoro, President, CUPE-BC
- 4:45 p.m. Report of the Nominating Chairperson
 - Election statements from candidates for member-at-large positions
 - Questions and answers session for candidates for member-at-large positions
- 6:25 p.m. Announcements
- 6:30 p.m. Adjournment

FOURTH SESSION

Monday morning—March 18

9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Guest speaker—Lucia Morales, CENTE, Mexico
 - Health, Safety, and Welfare of Teachers
 - Privatization
 - PSAs
 - Public Affairs
 - Unfinished business
- 12:00 p.m. Awards—Honorary Life Membership, Honorary Membership
- 12:25 p.m. Announcements
- 12:30 p.m. Adjournment

FIFTH SESSION

Monday afternoon, March 18

2:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

- 2:00 p.m. Guest speaker—Andrea Sinclair, President, BCCPAC
 - Education Finance
 - TTOCs
 - Teacher Education
 - Simplified Rules of Order
 - Unfinished business
- 5:00 p.m. Awards—Bob Rosen and Stuart Schon
- 5:25 p.m. Announcements
- 5:30 p.m. Adjournment

SIXTH SESSION

Monday evening—March 18

7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

- 7:30 p.m. Political Action
 - Media campaign
 - Resolutions
 - Education Policy
 - Professional Ethics, Rights, and Standards
 - Unfinished business
- 9:15 p.m. In Memoriam
- 9:25 p.m. Announcements
- 9:30 p.m. Adjournment

SEVENTH SESSION

Tuesday morning, March 19

9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

- 9:00 a.m. Elections
 - Aboriginal Education
 - School Buildings, Grounds, and Facilities
 - Health and Safety of Students
- 11:30 a.m. Guest speaker—CTF Canadian Teachers' Federation
 - Bargaining
 - Unfinished business
- 12:10 p.m. Award—G.A. Fergusson
- 12:25 p.m. Announcements
- 12:30 p.m. Adjournment

EIGHTH SESSION

Tuesday afternoon—March 19

2:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

- 2:00 p.m. Guest speaker—Gerry Tiede, President, BCRTA
 - Pensions
 - Organization of the BCTF
 - Unfinished business
- 5:25 p.m. Announcements
- 5:30 p.m. Adjournment

NINTH SESSION

Tuesday evening—March 19

7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

- 7:30 p.m. BC Federation of Labour/Canadian Labour Congress
 - Certification and Teachers' Council
 - Professional Development
 - Unfinished business
 - New motions
 - Courtesy motion
- 9:30 p.m. Adjournment

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Executive Committee recommendations

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

- (g) *At least two of the three table-officer positions must be held by members who self-identify as being from an equity-seeking group, which includes members who self-identify as women.*

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

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

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

- 5.1(a) There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of a President, ~~First Vice-President, Second Vice-President,~~ two Vice-Presidents, an Immediate Past President (when applicable), and nine Members-at-Large, elected in such a manner as to ensure that at least three Member-at-Large vacancies are filled at each AGM. One Member-at-Large position shall be designated to be held by a racialized member and one shall be designated to be held by an Aboriginal member. The designated positions shall have the same term and role as the non-designated positions. The Executive Committee positions are elected by the Annual General Meeting and shall take office on the following July 1. Each member of the Executive Committee shall be a member in good standing entitled to vote, in accordance with By-law 1.1. An Executive Committee member may be removed from office under the provisions of By-law 1.7 or By-law 7.

And that:

All by-laws, policies, procedures, and standing rules of order in which the positions of the First Vice-President and Second Vice-President are named will be amended to reflect this change.

That By-law 5.5 be amended by adding the following paragraph:

In the event that the position of President is vacated before the end of their term, including after the Annual General Meeting has adjourned, the Executive Committee will appoint one of the two Vice-Presidents as Acting President until such time that the Representative Assembly appoints a President to complete the term.

That By-law 3 be amended to add the following:

- 3.9 *If an active member on a full-time unpaid leave of absence is subsequently employed by a different school district on a part-time or full-time basis, their membership will be transferred to the local corresponding to the district in which they have paid employment.*

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Local resolutions

Surrey

That By-law 5 be amended to add the following:

5.21. The Federation shall make all reasonable accommodations for the needs of individual members of the BCTF Executive Committee in the performance of their duties.

Prince Rupert

That By-Law 5.1.d be amended as follows: All members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election, ~~subject to the equity criteria established in By-Law 5.1(a);~~ except for a Member-at-Large running for Member-at-Large who has served in such capacity for six years and would be running for a seventh consecutive year.

CODE OF ETHICS

That the Executive Committee recommend to the Annual General Meeting that Procedure 31.B.02-9 of the Code of Ethics be deleted and renumbered accordingly.

**A hearty thank you
to all delegates spending
part of their spring break
conducting the business
of the BCTF.**

Marilou Strait photo



2019 BCTF AGM candidates' statements



FOR PRESIDENT
Teri Mooring
Quesnel

Leadership, unity, equity

In my travels across the province I've been inspired by teachers, who work tirelessly to support students and enable them to realize their potential. Teachers and local leaders care deeply and play a vital role in our shared vision of an inclusive public education system. It's equally important for us to continue looking inward, at our own union processes to ensure we are welcoming, encompassing, and relevant.

Bargaining provides us with the opportunity to finally make gains in compensation and working conditions. To achieve our objectives, we need to be strategic, optimistic, and realistic; communication and member engagement are integral to the process.

There are numerous issues that require us to stay united and assert our strong voice. Our advocacy has resulted in a delayed implementation of the funding formula review recommendations. We know systemic underfunding is the issue; we cannot have our collective agreement rights undermined. Recruitment and retention challenges impact every region of the province; government needs to ensure classroom and specialist teachers are available to support all students.

Having served as your First and Second Vice-President, I'm committed to working with you to build upon our solidarity and advocate for our profession and public education.

EXPERIENCE

International:

Education International; Trinidad, (2018), South Africa (2017).

National: CTF Director.

Provincial: First

Vice-President;

Second Vice-President;

Member-at-Large.

Local: President;

Vice-President; LR;

Bargaining Chair.

Teaching: 22 years intermediate; resource teacher.

Education: Med (UNBC); Curriculum/Counselling; BA (SFU).



FOR FIRST
VICE-PRESIDENT
Clint Johnston
Chilliwack

Members, inclusion, momentum

As a table officer, meeting teachers across BC in their local working conditions always grows my admiration for and deepens my understanding of the 43,000 diverse individuals who are the BCTF. Your dedication to issues affecting students—beyond just curriculum—shows how much we all value truly inclusive public education; where each individual is valued, honoured, and given full opportunity. And our union needs to continue our work internally removing barriers and promoting inclusion for all members—leadership that reflects the diverse membership is stronger.

The current bargaining round reflects this. Maintaining our reinstated language while

gaining improvements for every member and increasing equity in our profession requires us to have diverse perspectives throughout the process. We have a new government to work with, but the job of achieving collective improvements is the same.

The funding review recommendations have clear intersects with our contract. Our collective advocacy helped delay its effect for at least a year, but we need to continue pushing hard on government to avoid having our collective rights impacted by the recommendations it contains.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve as your Second Vice-President and would be honoured to be your First Vice-President.

EXPERIENCE

International:

Education

International: ISTP 2018; FUNDE: Bolivia (2016).

National: CTF Vice-President;

Chair—CTF Indigenous Education AC.

Provincial: BCTF

Second Vice-President;

Member-at-Large.

Local: President;

Bargaining Chair; etc.

Teaching/Education:

16 years elementary;

BEd (UBC); BHK (UBC).

Marilou Strait photo





Marilou Strait photo



FOR SECOND
VICE-PRESIDENT
Rae Figursky
Burnaby

Since 2016, it has been my privilege to be one of your voices on the Executive. I'm committed to member-driven decisions, which I believe make us a strong, professional, social justice union. I've worked to increase grant supports to locals and to create member discussions on issues that affect us all, including violence, equity, inclusion, and member engagement.

From a small northern town, a teacher in a large urban local, both Métis and first-generation Canadian—I have many perspectives. In our diverse union, when we listen to each other, we find common ground.

The challenges ahead are to improve our working conditions and better meet students' needs. I will continue to

support both our provincial and local bargaining teams.

At this AGM, we will consider by-law changes intended to make our structures even more inclusive and reflective of our membership. I'm proud to be part of crafting these proposals.

I bring a passion for teaching, respect and support for teachers, an ability to anticipate and solve problems, strong listening skills, and balance to the Executive. I hope you elect me as a table officer to continue working for you.

Facebook: Rae Figursky for BCTF 2nd Vice-President

Website: www.raecandoit.com/

Twitter: @RaeFigursky

EXPERIENCE

Provincial:

Member-at-Large; Liaison—Okanagan, South Island, WLC/ Bargaining, and TTOCAC; Grievance Appeal Committee; Local Representative; AGM delegate.

Local: President (2014–16 and 1994–96); bargaining team; Executive and committees (Burnaby).

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



FOR SECOND
VICE-PRESIDENT
Carole Gordon
Central Okanagan

Listening to members and locals is the most important aspect of being on the Executive. While members are implementing curriculum, reflecting on their practice, and creating inclusive places of learning, they are also struggling to address the significant and varied needs of students. Health and safety concerns for workers and students, minimal supports for all learners, and a lack of current resources should not become the norm as we experience a shortage in human and monetary resources. In addition to strengthening our restored language, we need to successfully bargain improvements for both teachers and students and pressure government to invest in public

education so that the goal shifts from minimum supports to better services for everyone.

After five years as a Member-at-Large and 27 years of experience in our schools, union, labour movement, and politics, I've built relationships across the province and developed a perspective, skillset and, strength to take on the challenge of advocating for teachers and students at the highest level. I am prepared to become part of the BCTF team of table officers in order to support the work of the Executive, the Bargaining Team, and BC teachers in strengthening public education and improving conditions for all.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: Executive 5yrs, Pension Committee, CTF Trustee, AGM 16yrs.

Local: Second VP, Health and Safety Chair, Bargaining Chair, Staff Rep.

Community: NDP candidate, Labour Council President, United Way.

Teaching: elementary prep, classroom, TTOC (27yrs).



FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
RACIALIZED
Susan Trabant
Prince George

This is our year!! We have a government that promotes public education, bargaining has begun, and we watch with hopeful eyes for the first time in decades. As a union, you have told us what you need, and we are going after it!

Being a Racialized Member-at-Large has ignited a stronger passion to listen, learn, and represent. As a Métis person, I face racism daily by people who query if I'm Indigenous enough. People have questioned my representation. Member faith has generated a new voice in me! I am asking for your support in this election. As I reflect on the previous months, I feel appreciation and joy in experiencing our solidarity become strengthened with every step we

take toward creating a more equitable union. The empowerment of all our members moves us forward.

Our work will continue. We have challenges to face in recruitment and retention, which can only happen with bargaining a fair wage, class size and composition, while maintaining superior language in districts that have it. We will continue to voice concerns over the funding model, provincial assessments, and holding our government accountable.

With your support we can continue to advance. We are the BCTF!

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: EC Member-at-Large, HSAC member, BCTF Facilitator, Representative Assemblies, AGM, Northern SOGI Representative.
Local: School Union Representative, PGDTA Executive Member-at-Large and Treasurer, District SOGI Representative.
Teaching: 14 years.
Education: B.A., M.A.



FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Violette Baillargeon
Surrey

A teacher first convinced me I had purpose in the world; another prompted my engagement. Since then, it is your guidance that has challenged me to do better and think bigger. For this, I am grateful and indebted.

Current world conditions call on us to resist political agendas intent on privatizing education, intensifying teachers' work, and decimating professional autonomy. This is a critical time, and to this struggle I bring two decades of experience.

Years of union activism have taught me we are better when we engage authentically, so I aim to foster a dynamic exchange of ideas without judgment and informed by an open mind.

Local and international work with teachers has shown me that we are stronger when intentionally inclusive, so I stand firm in my belief that our policies serve us best when they decentralize power and engage all.

Experiences with families have convinced me that teachers hold a privileged position in public discourse, inspiring me to use our structures to advance environmental solutions that give students hope and communities pride.

My purpose is to advocate for well-funded and accessible education so that all students benefit from the optimism and guidance of teachers like those who guided me.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: Peer Support (2017–present) Mediation (2017–present) Tri-National: Chicago (2014), Mexico (2018) AGM (2005–2018) Peru Project (2013) Facilitator (2012–present).
Local: EC—LR (2014–present) Bargaining (2016–present) International Solidarity (2013–present).
Teaching: 18 years
French/Spanish, IB, FRIM, AdEd.

Marian Dodds photo





Marilou Strait photo



FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Karen Edwards
Tumbler Ridge

My beliefs are what guide my intentions and drive my actions. Given this, if I am going to ask you for your vote, I think it important that these things about me are known.

I believe that people have to know they matter. I believe all voices need to be heard.

My provincial experience has led to a broader understanding of what teachers outside my own boundaries experience. In addition, the breadth of committees on which I have served, including my current term as Member-at-Large, has increased my capacities in a variety of areas. Through attendance at the Canadian Teachers' Federation AGM the last two years, my

knowledge of issues at the national level has grown.

I have a deep commitment to our union and would like to continue the work that I began in November. I am looking forward to our conversations.

Academic background: Doctor of Education, Master of Education, Bachelor of Education, Post Baccalaureate Diploma.

EXPERIENCE

Sub-Local: President, Vice-President, Local Representative.

Local: Executive member.

Provincial: BCTF Executive Committee—Member-at-Large, Judicial Council, Women in Negotiation, Provincial Mentorship Resource Team, Program for Quality Teaching and Teacher Inquiry, delegate to Canadian Teachers' Federation.



FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Shawn Gough
Vancouver Island
North

It is incredibly true that a small number of like-minded individuals can truly make a difference in our world. My two years on the EC, and as the liaison to the Finance Committee, have proven this to me.

It has been an honour to take up the fight to implement the restored language from our Supreme Court win, and to push for improved working conditions. Some actions I'm proud to have been part of include advocating for an equity scan between school districts, and working to correct the Minister's thoughts on the Funding Formula Review.

Globally we have made an impact engaging with the United Teachers of Los

Angeles in their struggles, strengthening our work with the Tri-National Coalition in Defense of Public Education, and improving our social justice initiatives in Latin America and Africa.

We have a huge opportunity ahead of us with the negotiation of a new collective agreement. Working with our bargaining team, and the EC, I know that addressing salary issues and making improvements in class-size and composition language are achievable. Moving items to the local table to make contract improvements for small and large locals remains a priority for me.

Small Local, Big Heart!

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: EC (2 years); EC Liaison to Finance Committee (2 years); HSAC and trainer (6 years).

Local: LP (5 years); LR 2008–2014; various roles 2002–2008.

Teaching: SD 68, 69; 85.

Education: B.Ed (UVic) 1994.



FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Carolyn Pena
North Vancouver

Now is the time to gain ground for teachers and students as we bargain in a climate that has greater respect and appreciation for teachers. For the first time in more than a decade, we have an opportunity to move forward with our bargaining objectives and make gains rather than simply fighting off concessions.

As an Executive Committee member, I was and will continue to be committed to working for members across BC. Our strong financial position allows the Federation to provide the wide array of supports that members depend on, the resources necessary to respond to emerging issues, and our important social justice work within BC and beyond.

I have seven years of experience in my local office and have worked on every step of the grievance process through to arbitration, with both successful and unsuccessful conclusions. This has taught me important lessons about the words that we negotiate in our collective agreements. I am a decisive, detail-oriented person who also understands the big picture and the far-reaching impact seemingly small decisions can have.

I will work tirelessly to make the most of our opportunity to lay the foundation for brighter days for all our members.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: Member-at-Large (1 year); LR; AGM delegate.

Local: President, VP, PD Chairperson, Bargaining Chairperson, Member-at-Large; Staff Representative.

Teaching: Secondary science and biology; alternative program.

Education: B.Sc.; B. Ed.; M. Ed.



FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Jody Polukoshko
Vancouver
Elementary

Our strength comes from building both our unity and diversity.

I believe we can increase opportunities for teachers from across regions, teaching areas, and identities to meaningfully participate in our organizational structures. This will assist us to build a more inclusive Federation built upon our unique voices and experiences. I support our social justice and international solidarity program and our relationship with the broader labour movement because our internal work for justice and equity is intertwined with that of others in our communities and abroad.

But the expression of teacher voices and experiences is not enough; our voices need the capacity to inform and shape the work of the Federation. I believe in

vibrant, active, democratic structures so that our diversity helps us determine the strongest, best path forward. This means well supported, autonomous locals and sublocals, and a responsive, communicative, transparent Federation.

And I believe in bargaining, our most foundational structure. As a member of the BCTF Bargaining Team, I commit to the ongoing work of building local capacity and achieving a negotiated settlement that brings equity, parity, and significant improvements to members throughout the province.

I'm proud to run for re-election and I ask for your support.

www.jodypolukoshko.com.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: EC Member-at-Large, Bargaining Team, WLC/BAC, CASJ, WIN EC liaison: North Central/Peace, North Island Zones, Adult Ed AC.

Local: VESTA Vice-President, Grievance Officer, Bargaining (K-12, Adult Ed), LR.

Teaching: primary, intermediate, resource, mentor.

Marilou Strait photo





Marilou Strait photo

FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

**Jacqueline
Shelemey**
Sunshine Coast

BC teachers have had an incredible few years! Events and processes have shaped our perspectives and experiences in the classroom. Like many teachers across the province, I am looking forward to the opportunities provided by a new collective agreement and feeling cautiously optimistic. We are on a trajectory to gain significant ground this year, with the opportunity to address long-standing inequities in our working and learning conditions.

I am a very proud, active member of the BCTF and I believe we must ensure that the Federation continues to invite and make space for all members to be heard, to embrace dialogue, debate and

collaboration, and to continue lending our support and experience to teachers around the world.

I have been a teacher and an activist for 25 years. For me, they have always gone hand in hand. My activism has enriched my teaching, my parenting, and my community life. I am putting my name forward for Member-at-Large because I feel that my commitment, integrity, and problem-solving focus can play a role in maintaining and strengthening our Federation. I look forward to learning about your issues and passions and working alongside you in solidarity.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial:
Local Representative
Income Security
Committee

Local:
President
Vice-President
Bargaining Team
Grievance Committee
Secretary
Health and Safety

Teaching:
25 Years
Elementary K-7
Vancouver and
Sunshine Coast

Education:
SFU B.Ed
Post Baccalaureate—
Social Responsibility

FOR
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

**Katherine
Trepanier**
Prince George

I'm a third-generation teacher and proud 25-year member of the BCTF. I have taught French Immersion K-7 (mostly K-3) in the Lower Mainland and for the last 20 years in Prince George. I have been very involved in our local for the past 15 years and now feel ready to serve provincially.

I'm excited for the future of the BCTF. Due to our Supreme Court win and restored language, we have hundreds of new, energetic members across the province that we need to engage. We have many challenges (salary, class composition, proposed funding formula, teacher shortages, etc.), but I'm hopeful that by focusing on these key issues, we'll be able to gain ground this bargaining round.

I believe it's vital to have diversity on our Executive. I bring a unique, Northern, female, primary French immersion perspective. I have excellent listening skills and a strong voice when needed. I'm hard-working but also have a great work/life balance. I enjoy acting, singing, travelling, and spending time with family and friends.

I hope to connect with many of you during the AGM. I enjoy making new connections, and I look forward to hearing your ideas and what's important to you and your local.

EXPERIENCE

Provincial: WLC/BAC
(Working and Learning
Conditions/Bargaining
Advisory Committee),
Local Representative,
Parent Presentation
Facilitator, AGMs and
summer conferences.

Local: Second
Vice-President,
Bargaining Committee
(Currently Co-Assistant
Negotiator), Member-
at-Large, Staff
Representative.

Education: MEd
Educational Practice,
BA, PDP (SFU).

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VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

MARCH 2019**Teaching for Joy and Justice
—Cross Border Conference 2019****March 2** Surrey

The Surrey Teachers' Association International Solidarity Committee is hosting the second Cross Border Social Justice Conference. After Reclaiming Common Ground last year, this conference is focused on Teaching for Joy and Justice in our schools. Please join us as we re-energize ourselves for the necessary work for justice in our world. For more information contact lwou@sd43.bc.ca.

**Play Therapy—Tools for Helping
Children and Youth in Vancouver****March 6–7** Vancouver

This interactive workshop focuses on how to use play therapy strategies to help children and youth positively cope and work through stressful life experiences. For more information, email info@ctrinstitute.com.

**SFU Inquiry-based Learning and the
Reggio-Inspired Classroom****March 6** Burnaby**March 11** Vancouver

(GDE) Information Session—This Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education program (GDE) has been developed in partnership with School Districts 41 (Burnaby) and 39 (Vancouver) for teachers who seek to deepen their understanding of inquiry-based learning and foster learners. More about this program: <https://lis.gd/vejRzu>.

**SFU Teachers as Collaborative
Mentors, Innovative Educators and
Transformative Leaders****March 7** Burnaby

(GDE) Webinar Information Session—This Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education program (GDE) has been developed in partnership with School District 41 (Burnaby) for teachers who are interested in mentoring, leading through educational innovation and transformation, and developing their pedagogical practice while engaging in sustained reflective inquiry. More about this program: <https://lis.gd/ss3p57>.

**Trauma-Strategies for Resolving the
Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress in
Vancouver****March 11–12** Vancouver**March 12–13** Victoria

This workshop reviews key principles and strategies for working with trauma that apply to a diverse range of experiences

and that can be applied to all ages. For more information, please visit our website: <https://lis.gd/NfAz6f>.

**Dr Stuart Shanker's "Stress
Management vs Breaking a Stress Cycle"****March 27** Kelowna

Dr Shanker's session include explorations and practical applications of: 1) The impact of an excessive stress load on a child's energy, mood, behaviour, and learning 2) The Triune Brain: Limbic versus learning states and the limbic brake 3) The five domains of Self-Reg: biological, emotion, cognitive, social, and pro-social 4) The difference between self-regulations, and self-control, and the difference between


stress behaviour and misbehaviour. Online registration: 4children.ca.

APRIL 2019**2019 Digital Learning Symposium****April 7–9** Burnaby

Join us for the annual Digital Learning Symposium brought to you by the BC Partners in Online Learning, BlendEd BC, EDL, and the Canadian eLearning Network. The focus of the symposium is innovative learning models reflecting new curriculum in online learning environments. Pre-registration for groups/members available. Reserve at last year's \$325 before July 15: <http://canelearn.net/symposium19>.

PD Online Calendar | bctf.ca/PDcalendar | Changes/additions: msteele@bctf.ca

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