

Teacher

Magazine of the
BC Teachers' Federation
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In this issue

Fake news

Teachers' mental health

Sunshine Coast local profile

Pizza and paycheques

Sex talk on the carpet



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.

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.

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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Marking the one-year anniversary of our historic Supreme Court victory

It's been a busy, challenging, and exciting journey since we won our landmark victory at the Supreme Court of Canada last November.

RESTORED LANGUAGE has created positive changes. This fall, locals across BC have been conducting induction ceremonies to welcome over 3,000 new BCTF members, with more to come. We have seen specialist positions like counselling restored, and school libraries

re-opened. Teachers have been able to switch districts to be closer to home. Some members who had sought work in private schools or overseas during the era of cutbacks have returned. And hundreds of millions of dollars in new implementation funding is making a positive difference to students and teachers.

As with any major change of this scale, there have also been challenges, and the BCTF and our locals are working hard to overcome them. Some school boards are playing shell games with specialist ratios, or removing front-line supports that may not be specifically mentioned by the collective agreement but are still important for children, youth, and adult learners. There still aren't enough teachers to fill all positions and TTOC shortages remain, especially in rural and remote communities and Francophone schools. The BCTF continues to meet with the employer, BCPSEA, to resolve these issues and is supporting our locals to file grievances and get arbitrations moving when necessary. We also continue to meet with the Minister of Education and other government representatives to ensure that there is a broad understanding of our concerns and to help resolve them sooner rather than later.

With the next provincial budget coming in February, the Federation continues to advocate for increased education funding for implementation. We will also be asking the government to increase funding for the revised curriculum, in-service opportunities in all regions of the province, new teaching resources for classrooms, more supports for inclusion, and a robust recruitment and retention strategy.




For the first time, the provincial government invited the BCTF to help plan a celebration of BC teachers at the Legislature on October 5, World Teachers' Day. Sixty students from the South Park Elementary School choir participated, along with Premier John Horgan and Education Minister Rob Fleming. Premier Horgan presented an official proclamation of World Teachers' Day to BCTF President Glen Hansman.

Marquer le premier anniversaire de notre victoire historique à la Cour suprême

Quel voyage chargé, stimulant et passionnant depuis que nous avons remporté notre victoire historique à la Cour suprême du Canada en novembre dernier.

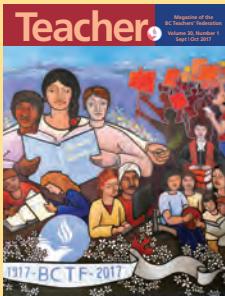
Le langage restauré a créé des changements positifs. Cet automne, les syndicats locaux de la Colombie-Britannique ont organisé des cérémonies d'intronisation pour accueillir plus de 3 000 nouveaux

membres de la FECB, et d'autres sont

encore à venir. Nous avons restauré des postes de spécialistes, comme les conseillers, et nous avons rouvert les bibliothèques scolaires. Les enseignants ont pu changer de conseils scolaires pour être plus près de chez eux. Certains membres qui pendant l'époque des compressions avaient cherché du travail dans des écoles privées ou à l'étranger sont revenus. De plus, des centaines de millions de dollars de nouveaux fonds pour la mise en œuvre font une différence positive pour les élèves et les enseignants.

Comme tout changement majeur de cette ampleur, il y a également des défis, et la FECB avec ses syndicats locaux travaillent d'arrache-pied pour les surmonter. Certains conseils scolaires jouent à des tours de passe-passe avec les ratios de spécialistes, ou suppriment des appuis de première ligne qui ne sont peut-être pas expressément mentionnés dans la convention collective, mais qui demeurent importants pour les enfants, les jeunes et les apprenants adultes. Il n'y a toujours pas assez d'enseignants pour pourvoir tous les postes et des pénuries de suppléants subsistent, en particulier dans les communautés rurales et éloignées et dans les écoles francophones. La FECB continue de se réunir avec l'employeur, la BCPSEA, pour résoudre ces problèmes et aide ses syndicats à déposer des griefs et à faire avancer si besoin les arbitrages. Nous continuons également à rencontrer le ministre de l'Éducation et d'autres représentants du gouvernement pour nous assurer que nos préoccupations sont bien comprises et que nous les résoudrons le plus tôt possible.

Avec le budget provincial à venir en février, la Fédération continue de plaider en faveur d'un financement accru de l'éducation pour la mise en œuvre (du langage restauré). Nous allons également demander au gouvernement d'augmenter le financement pour le programme d'études révisé, les possibilités de formation continue dans toutes les régions de la province, de nouvelles ressources pédagogiques pour les classes, plus de soutien pour l'inclusion et une solide stratégie de recrutement et de rétention.



September Teacher feedback

JUST WANTED to shout out and thank you for a great volume. I especially like the highlighting of blogs on page 4 and hope these continue in each volume. Another suggestion would be to highlight other online forums such as Twitter, like #bcfed or #edchat. As a teacher currently supporting pre-service teachers, the mentorship model was also a good read. It would be good to know where a new teacher can actually access this project. Much gratitude.

—Julia Clark, SFU Faculty Associate, Professional Linking Program

100 years history

AS YOU CONTINUE to highlight the contributions of so many people throughout the celebration of the 100 years history of the BCTF, please do not forget to mention two people who played a significant role in the 1960s and 1970s—Jim Killeen and Norm Ornes. Thank you.

—Randy Clark, Vancouver

Editor's note: The BCTF online museum has added a teachers' stories room. Members may now submit their stories using the submission form at <https://is.gd/MW3gHd>.

Free student resource

I AM A SENIOR Engineering Physics student at UBC. I've been working with two classmates on a project called Equationary that is meant to be a dictionary for equations, but more importantly, it's a completely free resource for students. We make looking up, organizing, and defining equations very convenient. We have been working on this project for a little over a year, and recently won the Bycast Award, a \$10,000 award given to promote entrepreneurship by the Department of Engineering Physics at UBC.

Currently, we have most, if not all, of the relevant equations for BC Math and Physics 11/12 on our web page: www.equationary.com.

—Kevin K. Multani, B.A.Sc. 2018, Engineering Physics, UBC

New teacher speaks up!

THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, no matter how old we are, the people who raised us always have an influence on our actions; for me, these people were my mom and dad. My dad loved to place my brother and I into situations that were outside of our comfort zone. He would encourage, but really force us, to speak to other people as much as possible, even if it was just a quick hello.

Sometimes, with confusion, I would ask, "Dad, how did you know that person?"

He would respond with a smirk, "I didn't."

Just as my father encouraged me to find my voice as a child, I do the same for my students. But somewhere in the middle of all that, as a new teacher, my voice quieted—all so that I did not rock the boat or acquire unwanted attention.

Recently, I went to my first zone meeting as the TTOC representative for my district. All members were in the same conference room for a social justice presentation. After some discussion we were encouraged to share out from our tables. Immediately retreating in preparation to quiet my voice, I tried to pass our table's notes to the more experienced member on my left. Right then I was confronted with some of my father's tough love teachings, although they came from our past-president.

Looking me directly in the eyes she insisted, "By passing that off you are then saying that your voice does not have equal standing to another member."

She encouraged me to claim my voice, just like my dad had done for me so many times before, and share for the group. It was at that moment that I truly realized the beauty in our union; that I felt like there was space in the room for my voice. I gained a deeper understanding of a lot that weekend; about my role as a TTOC rep, what our union does for us, and how the union is organized; but the most powerful take away was the recognition of equity within our union.

—Becky Weiss, new teacher, District 69, Mount Arrowsmith

ANOTHER GREAT ISSUE of the magazine. So good to see the involvement of young activists in the writing.

—Ken Novakowski, Past-President, BCTF



Instagram us



Students find SAFE HAVEN in Black Lives Matter

By Morgan Dodd, 2017 Editor, Teacher

Race
...you're not a Black Abera
Family, get your own compact of veins
in full voice is my voice
and by one piece of my face
they create:
My strength,
My resilience,
My tenacity,
My dreams,
My challenges,
My intelligence,
My compassion,
My character,
My family
The future of my maturity,
My resilience,
My dreams,
My challenges,
My intelligence,
My compassion,
My character,
ME

Eighteen-year-old Eden and her two friends begged the Skytrain, excited about the concert they were about to attend. Several young men started taunting them: "You fucking Black people. Why are you here? You guys built our country and now you're done, so you can go back to Africa." They were at a Black Lives Matter rally at school. Eden has noticed an increase in racism amongst her Grade 12 classmates, with fellow students challenging her, "if rappers can't sing the music, then they're White people."

EDWARD DIAZ-ELIAS BERNARD agrees that most racism in schools, media, on public transit, and online has gotten louder since the election of Donald J. Trump. "It's as if people are more afraid to say what they think and what they have always been thinking. But wouldn't that be nice?"

Over the past year, both Edna and Younal Abera have been active in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) community in Vancouver. They have organized events to bring them together, a place to perform, share, and appreciate Black culture, and are continuing to spread the word. "We are here to show that Black people are here to stay," says Abera.

The principal of the school, Mr. G. Michael, was asked to step down after he was caught on video telling a Black student to leave the school because he was bringing his dog to school.

Edna and Younal Abera are here to show that Black people are here to stay.

—Morgan Dodd, 2017 Editor, Teacher

—Younal Abera

Seeing our faces on this magazine spread has left me speechless. I'm so proud of us! We were honest, vulnerable and transparent. We raised OUR voice. We were HEARD. Mom and Dad, this one is for you. The magazine talked about what Black Lives Matter means to us, our experiences as black youth in Vancouver, racism we've experienced, and how the POWER of education can help to eradicate harmful/hateful ideologies stemming from ignorance and racism. THANK YOU TO THE BC TEACHERS FEDERATION for having us!

📍 BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF)

🕒 4 weeks ago

👁 19

❤ 788



Jessica Stewart

Woohoo look at us in the BCTF Teacher magazine 😊😊

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Student PODCASTERS create messages for politicians

By Michael Bodnar, Vancouver teacher



Though they can't yet vote, senior students at Ideal Mini School in Vancouver sent their own messages to the future premier in the wake of last spring's provincial election. Initially, they'd been asked to write a letter voicing their concerns and their hopes for the province. It soon became clear to me that the old fashioned letter to a politician was too narrow in focus and failed to capture the creative energy of the young people in my class.

Instead, using their own phones and free software programs, students recorded their messages, mixed those vocals with music and sound effects, then created short podcasts that featured their concerns and their hopes for their province. Some recorded straightforward messages about poverty and student debt, others parodied songs with messages about Kinder Morgan and school funding, and some, using a news program format, took on housing and transit in Vancouver.

The results were impressive. The audio platform demanded that students formulate

and articulate a critical position on an issue facing the province. Their podcasts provided a window into how they see and experience the world. Even more revealing was the creative and, at times, humorous way they took on issues of great importance to themselves and British Columbians.

The podcasts were emailed to the Premier and to local MLAs. An exciting opportunity to showcase the work arose through a partnership with Vancouver Co-op Radio CFRO 100.5 FM, where several students presented their podcasts in a live, hour-long afternoon broadcast. This caught the attention of the producers of Redeye—one of CFRO's most popular shows—and two students were later interviewed about the project and about their political concerns.

This project demanded that students critically engage with their chosen issues, and it provided an opportunity to develop new competencies. The technical component appealed to student Sharan Sahota, who said, "I didn't have to worry about doing a proper write-up, instead getting the chance to put my own voice into

“It featured a new kind of voice, as student Lily Baker said of the project: “It brought up a lot of good issues, yet wasn’t angrily aggressive about them.”

the writing. I was, and still am, very proud of the outcome because I am very interested in sound design and this project allowed me to explore another side of it.”

Ultimately, this podcast project showcased a new kind of political voice. By expanding beyond the traditional letter to a politician, students connected with their provincial government in a tangible and meaningful way and from a larger platform than print media. It featured a new kind of voice, as student Lily Baker said of the project: “It brought up a lot of good issues, yet wasn’t angrily aggressive about them.” As their teacher, I was impressed by how this group of young people articulated what they expect of their politicians, while reminding us that the messages and means of conveying those messages can be refreshingly playful.

A selection of the audio clips and radio segments sent to the Premier can be heard at soundcloud.com/user-212293684. ■

“By expanding beyond the traditional letter to a politician, students connected with their provincial government in a tangible and meaningful way and from a larger platform than print media.”

Sold-out SUPERCONFERENCE wows thousands of teachers

For the first time ever, representatives from 25 provincial specialist associations (PSAs) came together to plan a gigantic professional development conference bringing more than 6,000 teachers together in one venue—the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre.

TURNOUT FOR PSA Day 2017 was so overwhelming that the line-ups were long and the registration desks were swamped on the first morning. But once teachers got settled in, they took full advantage of the amazing array of topics and conversations on offer at the sold-out conference. There were two full days of learning, highlighted by more than thirty remarkable keynote presentations on big ideas in every subject area, brain research, digital literacy, inclusion, and much more.

Choosing from such an array of topics was difficult, but the handy conference app made it easy for teachers to keep track of their sessions. And at some points during the two days, discussion on social media was so lively that the hashtag #PSAday was trending across Canada.

Certainly the scope and scale of the superconference provided ample testimony to BC teachers' commitment to self-directed professional learning and collaboration. Hundreds of volunteers committed untold hours to planning and co-ordinating this extraordinary event. Warm congratulations to the organizing committee and all the many teachers who contributed to its success.

Resources: PSA Superconference presenters  have been invited to submit their materials to the TeachBC site. They will be tagged with the keyword of Superconference to assist with the search function. ■



Above, L to R: Aboriginal education activists Denise Hendry, Janet Stromquist, and Cheryl Carlson; French books display; part of a student capstone project; BCTF staffer Henry Lee; Conference organizers debrief. Left: Cindy Blackstock keynote; the convention centre foyer.

Photos submitted by Nancy Knickerbocker, Janice Neden, and Celia Brogan.

Tips for teachers fighting



emoticon: iStock.com/Pingebat scrabble: iStock.com/jax10289

By Nancy Knickerbocker, BCTF Communications and Campaigns Director

 Every year, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) reflects the changing nature of the English language by declaring a “Word of the Year.” In 2013, it was “selfie.” In 2015, for the first time ever, it was not a word but a pictograph—the much-shared “Face with Tears of Joy” emoji. In 2016, the word of the year was “post-truth.”

THE OED’S CHOICE reflected the disturbing new reality in which “fake news” trumps truth, junk science obscures real research, anonymous trolls spew hatred online, networks of bots manipulate political discourse, 16-year-old Macedonians spin alt-right blog postings for a living, audio and video manipulation can make virtually anybody appear to say anything, and ultimately nobody knows what to believe anymore.

So, what does it mean to search for truth in the post-truth era?

That’s the profound question Ron Darvin asked to kick off his keynote presentation at the PSA Superconference. Darvin, from UBC’s Department of Language and Literacy Education, defined fake news as intentionally false or sensational stories meant to mislead the public. “And,” he added, “we know what fake news is not. It is not real news that you don’t agree with.”

Darvin cautioned that there’s an important distinction between fake news and satire, one that students may not always be aware of. He mentioned *The Beaverton* in Canada, along with *The Onion*, and the famous (and often hilarious) Borowitz Report in *The New Yorker* magazine. Although Andy Borowitz’s columns are clearly labelled as satire, they have often been republished by major media as real news.

Why do people create fake news? There are many reasons: to spread political propaganda, for a joke, to make money,

to have an impact. And sometimes the impact can be significant—such as who gets elected to lead the most powerful country in the world.

Darvin cautioned that Canada is not immune from cyberwarriors. He pointed to propaganda targeting Canadian soldiers in Latvia earlier this year. The Russian-backed smear campaign used photos of a disgraced former commander, now a convicted murderer, posing in women’s underwear to suggest that the Canadian military is full of homosexuals who can’t be relied upon to help the Latvian people.

While this example might be easy to detect as misinformation, it’s increasingly difficult to distinguish between real news and fake because purveyors of propaganda have become so sophisticated. For example, Darvin showed two websites—the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Pediatricians—and challenged teachers to say which one is the credible organization. Both look serious and professional, but the former was founded in 1930 and has 66,000 members while the latter is a fringe group that broke with the AAP over its stance in support of adoption by same-sex couples.

Darvin encouraged teachers to raise awareness of fake news with students, who live so much of their lives online. “After all,” he concluded, “we all play a role in protecting the truth.” He suggested that the best lesson would be to “let kids create their own fake news. Then they quickly learn how easy it is!” ■



How can we fight fake news?

Advice from Ron Darvin from UBC’s Department of Language and Literacy Education

Probe the source

Authenticate the details

Use fact-checking tools

Substantiate the claims

Evaluate the style

Google the reliability of sources. Search images to see whether they are duplicated from other stories. (Darvin illustrated this with multiple uses of the same shot of a beached giant squid.)

Use fact-checking sites such as snopes.com or politifact.com, with its fun Truth-O-Meter that gives rankings from “True” to “Pants on Fire!”

Evaluate punctuation and spelling. If a post is ungrammatical you can be quite sure it is not from a legitimate news outlet.

Cross-examine claims. Darvin showed his students photos of daisies said to have mutated because of nuclear fallout from the Fukushima disaster. Every single student believed it to be authentic news. <https://is.gd/U5ZZHy>.

Study satire. Even Xinhua, the biggest and most influential media organization in China, has published some of Borowitz’s satirical columns as real news. <https://is.gd/ZJfJ6B>.

“Post-truth” defined

An adjective relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. ■



Tips to create a nourishing classroom/school environment

Biophilic theory teaches that interior spaces should connect us with nature in a profound way. The interplay of visual, auditory, and haptic connectors can cement our relationship to interior spaces and support positive learning outcomes.

iStock.com/byryo

A diversity of plant life and textures (biodiversity) addresses students' needs for visual complexity, keeping them engaged with the environment by reminding them of nature. Bring in plants and artistic replications of natural landscapes. Vertical gardens are a space-saving way to produce edibles, or just beautiful foliage.

Open windows to allow fresh air flow when possible. Studies link fresh air to improved cognition. Deep mindful breathing is also helpful!

Consider carefully the mood you want to achieve in your classroom. An art room meant to excite creative processes may have a vibrant palette. A natural palette can be calming. Overstimulating children and youth with bold colour and other stimuli could overwhelm some students, especially those with certain special needs.

Recent research has shown that exposure to daylight can improve academic scores and attendance in a significant number of students.

Inexpensive water features can be strong or whimsical additions to classrooms. Water features that can be seen, heard, and felt provide a haptic component as well as auditory and visual elements.

Biophilic elements have the potential to improve:

- mental agility
- cognition
- memory
- mood
- thinking
- concentration/focus
- learning
- alertness.
- adaptability

And can counter the effects of:

- fatigue
- anxiety
- anger.

Learn more at <https://is.gd/1ULaUL>. ■

Classrooms that HEAL



DESIGNING SCHOOL SPACES to support mental health

By Diana Mogensen, former Vancouver teacher

Students were noticeably less anxious and spent more time in the learning center after I applied biophilic design principles to the space. Some, who previously avoided the learning center, gravitated toward it. They seemed less depressed, more productive, animated and refreshed, instead of drained while studying. After stressful therapy sessions with their respective treatment teams, their down time seemed to lessen. Their self-regulation skills and transition back to the learning environment seemed easier.

I SPENT the last 10 years of my career teaching as part of the therapeutic team in the inpatient unit of the Provincial Specialized Eating Disorders Program at BC Children's Hospital, working with vulnerable children and youth and school teams from across BC, aligning my pedagogy with the team's trauma-informed practices. My biophilic design studies made me acutely aware of how classroom environments affect the health, well-being, and academic performance of students. Classroom lighting, colour, plants, materials, air flow, and temperature all affect physical/mental health and can be used to create comforting, nurturing spaces that restore, heal, and inspire.

Hospital staff began to enjoy lunch or quiet breaks in the learning center. One nurse said, "I love coming in here just to sit and think. I feel energized and ready to

go back to work after half an hour." The yoga teacher who taught a class in the center noted how the room de-stressed students/patients.

Biophilic design relates to the environmental and conversation movements of the last three centuries and was popularized by Harvard biologist and naturalist E.O. Wilson. Defined as "love of life or living systems," the term was originally coined by social psychologist and humanist Eric Fromm. Biophilic theorists and interior design experts subsequently identified 14 elements to consider when designing interior spaces that would encourage our mind/body systems to respond in healthful ways.

I have witnessed real benefits from applying this theory to my classroom practice. Teachers can also apply biophilic design at home for self-care and to de-stress. ■

If walls could talk

by Jen McGowan, Vancouver teacher



Classroom colour strips by Jen McGowan/image adapted from iStock.com/iconicbestiary

Drafting table legs	Drafting table top	Cabinets	Table details, computers	Floors, walls, acoustic panels	Large table top	Large table legs
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I'm staring at the metal trim around my classroom door. I have passed through the door hundreds of times, but today I notice the colour. It is a caramel brown, but I don't automatically associate it with food. A thick coat of oatmeal paint covers the cinder block walls, creating a palimpsest referencing the past. I notice the pipes, the wire casings, and the bulletin board are exactly the same shade. It spills over the entire linoleum floor.

THIS IS THE first time it has occurred to me that the design of this classroom space has been purposefully considered. A committee of people likely debated for weeks to come up with the pea-soup mustard-yellow/green on all the cabinets. When I mention my amazement about this to my colleague, she suggests that these were trendy colours in the 1950s. She may be right. I do remember my late 1970s childhood hued in brown and orange. But those colours were on friendlier surfaces like tapestries, pillows, and shag rugs—these surfaces are distinctly institutional.

I often wander through this large 1950s high school feeling the effects of its design. Sometimes, because the building was designed in the same era of my own high school, I will find myself transported

to being a student in the 1990s. Between classes, I will enter a tiled bathroom with short wood stalls, step in, lock the metal latch, and feel like a 15-year-old again. This kind of time travel wouldn't happen without the spatial triggers, so I feel nostalgic about the space. But it also brings up those feelings of being lost within a large and inhospitable system. At times I feel swallowed by the institution entirely.

At the end of last year, our Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association rep visited the staff to interpret the local language around the court ruling. Aside from the helpful information she gave about the particulars, something she said really stood out. "We need to get away from the austerity mindset." She encouraged us, when presenting classroom needs to our administration, to pursue what would be best for our students and classes. Why did this feel like such a radical suggestion? I have only been teaching since Christy Clark became Minister of Education. My identity as a teacher has been formed in this culture of lack, a culture of under appreciation, and

“We need to get away from the austerity mindset.”

That teachers and students and public education itself might be valued for the first time in my professional life is very appealing.”

loss of rights. How do I even begin to shed this idea? It has become my idea of what a teacher is. Our rep's suggestion brought the injustice of that mindset into relief.

That teachers and students and public education itself might be valued for the first time in my professional life is very appealing. But the trauma of the Clark years will take some time to heal. Not only that, public education has had a long history of being undervalued. I suggest those egregious paint colours are evidence of a similar mentality.

And that way of thinking has a way of seeping into our own identities. After all, the day I recorded these colours, I looked down at my cardigan and was astonished to find it matched the mustard-yellow of my classroom cabinets exactly. Sometimes we don't even realize how much we are affected until we are confronted by a sea change. ■



FIRESTORMS in the Cariboo

Flames may be gone but impact continues to be felt

By Murray Helmer, President, Cariboo-Chilcotin Teachers' Association

Like many teachers, Carolyn Cushing of 100 Mile House had big summer plans. The last day of June, she packed up Bruno, the class gecko, and headed home to prepare for Cuba, where her parents and family would celebrate her daughter's wedding. July 3rd was the last time they would see their house standing. Four days later, the Gustafsen Lake forest fire ripped through their neighbourhood, destroying the Cushing residence, and her parents' home as well. On the wedding day, Carolyn learned they had lost everything, but kept the news private to ensure her daughter had her dream wedding, waiting until the families were back in Canada to share the news.

ON JULY 6TH, wildfires erupted in 100 Mile House and Williams Lake. Unprecedented dry conditions throughout the Cariboo and Chilcotin regions exploded into wildfire, triggered by lightning and human activity, and fanned by winds. Over two summer months, 271 forest fires consumed over 900,000 hectares of forest. At the end of August, a fire south of Ashcroft swept 120 kilometers north to threaten the 100 Mile House region yet again.



Murray Helmer photos



Nature's fury spared few. Every one of the thirty schools in the Cariboo-Chilcotin was under either evacuation alert or order. By late July, 37,000 people had been evacuated from their homes, while countless others left voluntarily as food and gasoline supplies dwindled because of road closures and the evacuations of 100 Mile House and Williams Lake. Evacuation orders came suddenly, leaving people scrambling to salvage what they could. Livestock that couldn't be transported were left behind. All vital access highways in and out of the Cariboo were closed sporadically, dictating evacuation destinations. Some evacuations were through corridors of flames and many others involved circuitous journeys, double the usual times.

Air quality deteriorated and backcountry closures confined people indoors. Lakes were closed to boaters to guarantee unfettered access for water bombers. Schools became barracks for first responders, and school buses transported fire fighters and armed forces personnel to the front lines. Despite the lifting of evacuation orders, residents remained anxious, knowing that a wind gust or lightning strike could trigger new fires. Local economies suffered, and with the inability to buy fire insurance, home sales

stopped, stranding teachers hoping to leave, and preventing others from coming. In the region, 60 homes and 167 other structures were lost to the fires; thankfully, there was no loss of life.

Long-term impacts remain, including post-traumatic stress disorder after evacuations, and asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease symptoms from the smoke. In the Chilcotin, poor communication with Indigenous chiefs around evacuation, meant communities felt they were losing control of their territory and some defied the evacuation order. For everyone, there was a huge sense of loss: losing your home, possessions, or surroundings can have major psychological effects. Counselling and employee assistance programs have been accessed steadily.

The start-up of school and promise of a familiar routine came as a relief to some, while others went into the year feeling drained, robbed of the rest and relaxation summer normally brings. Against all odds, Bruno the gecko made his way back into the classroom. The Cushings had left him with a neighbour, who in turn was ordered out with only a moment's notice, and Bruno was left behind. Two weeks later, news of the lizard's fate made it to an unevacuated teacher who ventured on back roads behind the roadblocks to retrieve Bruno, only to be arrested as a potential looter by an RCMP security team. The police transferred the lizard to a shelter for displaced animals where he eventually reunited with Carolyn. Bruno was back in the classroom for the first day of school, with his own story to tell. ■

“Schools became barracks for first responders, and school buses transported fire fighters and armed forces personnel to the front lines.”

In the longer term...

MY HEART goes out to those affected by the destructive forces of this year's wildfires. In the short term fire destroys homes, landscapes become blackened, and people and animals are displaced and traumatized.

While fire is a powerful and destructive force, in the longer term it will result in regeneration of the forests of British Columbia. From the ashes of the fires this summer, forests will burst forth that will quickly replace what was lost. This is nature's way of renewing itself. Over time, fire regenerates and renews our forests. The nutrients released through fire spawn a new generation of forests that are healthy, vibrant, grow very quickly, and create new habitat for plants and animals. First Nations practised burning to promote animal habitat and to open land up for food gathering. Scientists see these fires as normal, healthy, and an important part of the cycle of forest development.

Visit [TeachBC](#) for resources related to wildfires and their links to curriculum. ■



Ryan Dvorak teaches Project Based Learning, Sustainable Resources 11, and Forestry 12 in Port Alberni.



Women energized by WIN

By Marian Dodds, 2017 Teacher editor, based on a group interview with Norberta Heinrichs, Cindy Hewitt, and Jody Polukoshko, with background provided by Debbie Morran, Assistant Director, BCTF Field Services

Photo submitted by Debbie Morran from first WIN facilitator training in 2016.

"They were on fire!" Norberta Heinrichs enthused, describing the energy in the room at her first Women in Negotiations (WIN) workshop. "We created space to allow women to ask questions, acknowledged women's strengths, and we did an exercise to enable each woman to be respected as a powerful contributor." By all accounts, they had fun too, especially role-playing negotiations.

IN 2016 THE AGM made it a BCTF leadership priority to "continue to build the leadership capacity of the union, both provincially and locally, to be prepared for bargaining in 2019 through the provision of training, particularly with a focus to increase the participation of female members." Twenty-five women teachers of diverse ages, career stages, and backgrounds from across BC were selected and trained to lead WIN workshops on collective agreements, grievances, and bargaining. Collectively they possess "an amazing breadth and depth of experience,"

“ Current bargaining structures create barriers for women to get into leadership. It is the process itself and the mystique that one must be an expert that deter women's involvement."

according to Jody Polukoshko, a former facilitator, now a Member-at-Large on the BCTF Executive Committee.

Heinrichs's goal is "to personally empower women in my workshops." Mentorship matters. Heinrichs says "I had a rock star suggest I apply to be a WIN facilitator," referring to Richard Hoover, now retired BCTF Director of Field Service. She feels fortunate to have allies, male and female, show faith in her abilities and capacity, but doesn't "assume other women have had a similar path." Fellow WIN facilitator Cindy Hewitt is also determined to help give women a leg up. "It is so exciting to be part of this," she says, "to have a voice and to enable others to have their voices."

Would women's ways of negotiating be different?

All three believe that "it's the structure, not the people, that is the problem." Imagining

“ They suggest teachers pay attention at staff and union meetings and ask: "Who speaks? Who decides? Who leads? and Who do people turn to as the voice of authority?"

bargaining designed by women, one suggested upending the present structures, flipping our concept of bargaining upside down, basing it on our interests. Another added, "including the voices of those not represented, making it gender neutral, expanding beyond a narrow band of men comfortable in their roles as bargaining experts." Their conclusion—"Our bargaining teams need to be more inclusive."

What do women teachers want?

"Why not convene a group of women teachers and ask?" Quite likely job sharing, ways to address violence against women, women's health and safety, affordable and high-quality childcare, more flexible time, and family care leave to care for sick kids will come up. Hewitt feels "the best time in a workshop is when everyone is sharing their strong personal visions." Start the conversation in your staff room and hear what comes up. Better salaries for sure!

Barriers women face

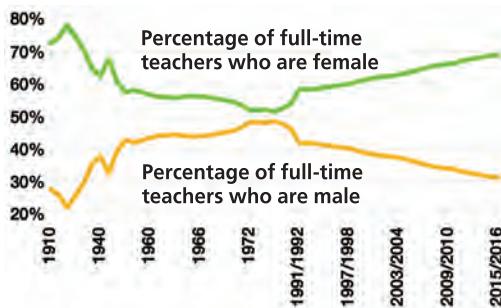
Why have women traditionally chosen social justice and professional development over leadership and bargaining within our union? Heinrichs suggests, "Current bargaining structures create barriers for women to get into leadership. It is the process itself and the mystique that one must be an expert that deter women's involvement." The model of "proposal-counter-proposal, stay all day and night until it gets settled" is unappealing to women with young families. She's noticed new teachers who are fearful of taking risks; "for a young woman teacher this is a dangerous cocktail—don't rock the boat, be perfect, wait for a man to set the stage before you speak."

Participants' feedback from one workshop shed light on how women perceive bargaining: "Women are not barred from bargaining but ... the perceptions of a combative, competitive, and aggressive process steers them away." Even in 2017 women seem pressured to fit into a world defined by men. They suggest teachers pay attention at staff and union meetings and ask:

"Who speaks? Who decides? Who leads? and Who do people turn to as the voice of authority?"

Past successes provide a solid foundation

Over the BCTF's 100 years, there was only a brief period, between the 1970s and 1990s, when the number of male and female teachers approached parity. Like an hourglass tipped on its side, the graph shows the widest gaps when our union was born in 1917 and now in 2017.



Interestingly, the period when we came closest to a balance of males and females in our system is when the most collective agreement wins came on issues advanced by the Status of Women Program between 1973 and 1998—maternity, paternity, parenthood, adoption, and compassionate leaves, non-sexist environment, sexual harassment, betterments for TTOCs and part-time teachers, and seniority provisions for teachers who interrupted service to raise their children. In the current context of restored collective agreements and a supportive government promising adequate funding, will teaching again become more attractive to men, or become totally feminized?

What do women teachers want from bargaining in 2019?

With a new round of bargaining on the horizon, people are asking, as voiced by one participant at a fall zone meeting, "What is this WIN? You know, I might be interested in that, how can I get involved?" Inviting a WIN workshop into a local has the potential to ignite new and diverse member engagement, and spark support for what we want next at the bargaining table. "Whenever you meet a woman who has found her voice, she automatically becomes a leader," says Hewitt. "Once their voices are validated, there's no stopping them."

To book a WIN workshop, see
<https://is.gd/ONO5Ra>. ■



Pizza and paycheques
Langley teacher Laurence Greeff explains how Langley Secondary staff representatives found a creative way to explain the collective agreement to new teachers!

Langley Secondary staff representatives Laurence Greeff, Nicole DeCambra, and Sean McGovern brought the pizza, and 11 new teachers brought their laptops to a classroom after school in October. The goal was to connect the collective agreement to the dollar signs on teachers' paycheques.

WHILE ENJOYING PIZZA, the new teachers cross-checked a sample online paycheque, learning in the process how their collective agreement clauses directly linked to their earnings. One staff representative explained the pension deduction and how it was affected by changes that were voted on at the 2017 AGM. Now there is a call to learn more about pensions. Another colleague reviewed the increment change, always of interest to people starting at the bottom of the grid. Zeroing in on sick leave, they

were alerted to the importance of checking for accuracy in sick leave—something very important to stressed teachers. The range of benefits negotiated by the BCTF and the LTA over the years impressed them!

Time flashed by quickly and everyone had fun. The questions kept coming, even as the pizza ran out. We resolved to keep asking questions and looking for answers. Now everyone is keen to check their paycheques at the end of the month! Up next—tacos and T4s. ■



Taylor Fauteux, Chantelle Martin, Chan Oh, Stephanie Cunningham, and Ji Lee figure out how collective agreement clauses link to their paycheques.



Stephen Nicol, Navdeep Gill, and Elisa McNeill at Langley Secondary School.

Teachers remain resilient despite critical conditions

Safeguarding teachers' mental health and well-being

By Anne Hales, BCTF Senior Researcher

In times of human crisis, as witnessed in the aftermath of recent hurricanes, wildfires, and earthquakes, teachers often act as "first responders" and post-crisis caregivers for children and youth. Professional roles and pedagogical relationships compel teachers to attend to their students' immediate and long-term physical, emotional, and educational needs. But often this comes at their own expense.

LESS DRAMATICALLY, but as significantly, deteriorating working and learning conditions, have taken their toll on teachers. Beyond crumbling physical infrastructure, the legacy of fiscal austerity includes chronic teacher burnout and psychological weariness. The Canadian Teachers' Federation 2014 work-life balance study linked teacher stress with workload increases and diminished sense of practitioner effectiveness, resulting from student and administrative services cuts.

In spring 2017, the BCTF conducted a province-wide mental health and well-being survey of members. The BCTF's baseline survey provides a timely opportunity to consider what, if any, relationship exists between past education policies and teachers' current states of mental health and well-being.

The survey found a significant number of BC teachers are burned out and questioning their future in the profession, with 40% indicating they had seriously considered moving from their current position or leaving teaching entirely in the past year. Such teacher movement and attrition have serious consequences on system stability, curriculum coherence, instructional quality, and efficient use of resources. A prudent human resources retention strategy within the context of teacher shortages in BC would be to address teacher mental health concerns.

A preliminary analysis indicates that approximately two-thirds of BC teachers report feeling:

Images adapted from iStock.com/ilyalirev

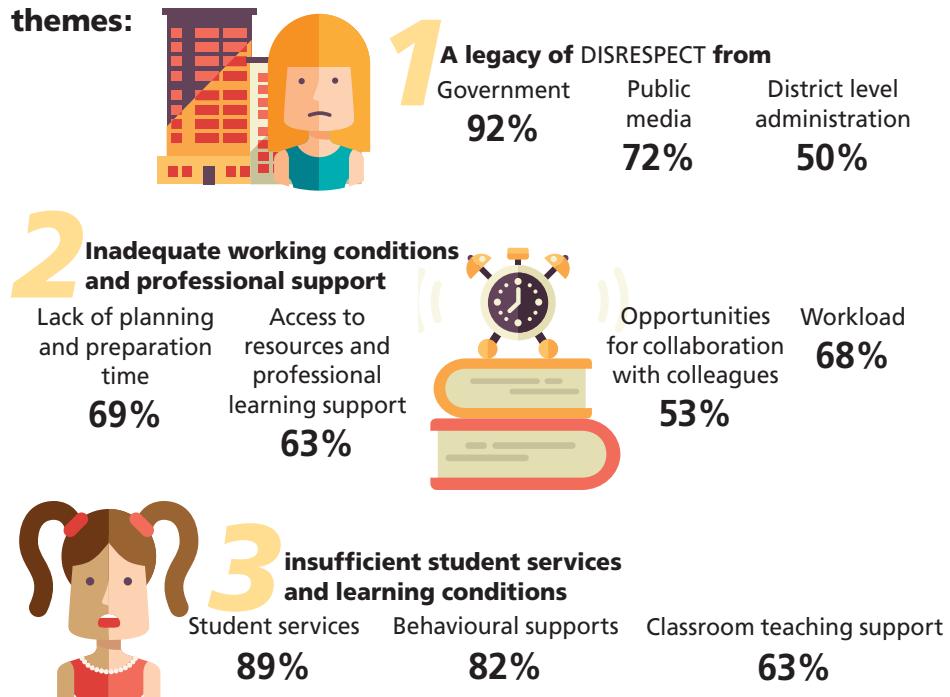
Stressed all or most of the time
65%



Emotionally exhausted all or most of the time
68%

STRESS, ANXIETY, and DEPRESSION were identified as major mental health concerns of teachers

Factors influencing teacher mental health coalesced around three themes:



Teachers thrive when they feel empowered and able to carry out work they deeply value: building strong pedagogical relationships and communication with their students. **Most BC teachers surveyed still find teaching an engaging and rewarding endeavor, reporting engagement and satisfaction in their daily classroom work (90%) and from collegial connections (88%). A significant majority indicated feeling respected by their union (86%) and their students' families (85%).**

In an unmanageable environment, such vital wellsprings of resiliency are essential. However, in the long term, teachers' well-being requires a restorative combination

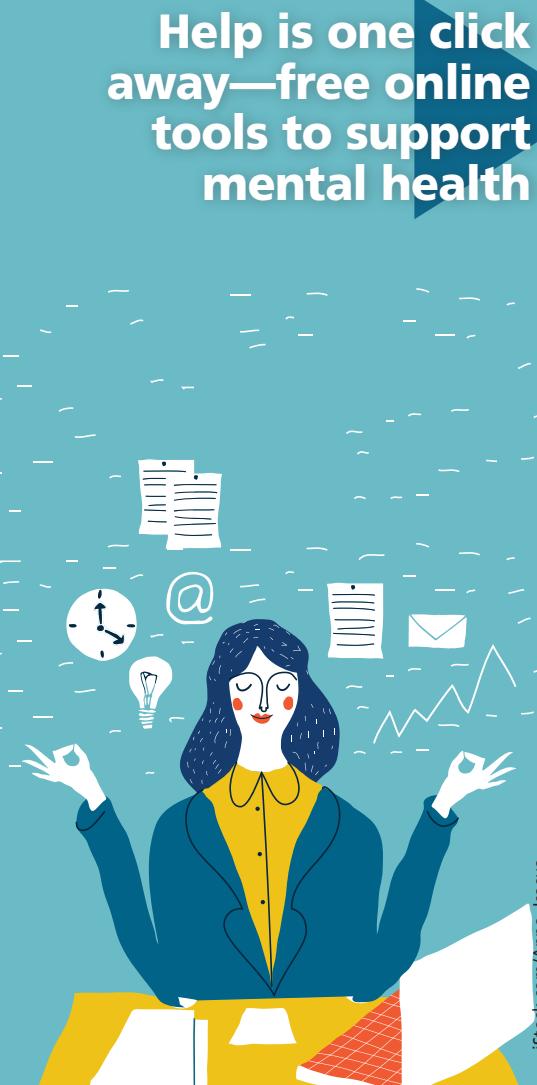
of progressive public education policies, adequately funded schools and student services, and improved professional working and learning conditions that recognize teachers as professionals and safeguard public education as a democratic institution. Ultimately, governments' first response to addressing teachers' mental health and well-being should be maintaining properly funded and serviced public school systems, not relying on teachers to exhaust their emotional reserves.

Note: a longer version of this piece, including references is available in Intercambio, the IDEA Education Research Network journal, at <https://is.gd/6iOanX>. ■

Monitoring your own MENTAL HEALTH

By Allan Lee, BCTF Health And Wellness Co-ordinator

Help is one click away—free online tools to support mental health



Monitoring your own mental health is a critical component of your overall health and well-being. When you are feeling overwhelmed, you might notice some of the following:

Changes in your appetite and sleep—When individuals are stressed, the first signs might be physical ones. These include large, unexpected changes in one's appetite and sleep patterns.

Fatigue or low energy—Signs of overwhelming stress include a significant decrease in energy levels. If you are physically or emotionally exhausted by the end of the day, this might be the first sign of burnout.

Reduced concentration—Decreased ability to concentrate is a sign that you might be taking on more than you can manage. If you feel pulled in many different directions and can't seem to focus, it's time to evaluate your own stress levels.

Unexpected mood changes—Our mood changes throughout the day and is a normal part of our body's emotional regulation system. If you experience very high or very low moods that are unexpected or out of the ordinary, it's time to look at accessing additional supports.

Less social engagement—When we are overwhelmed or stressed, we may lose interest in activities we previously enjoyed, avoiding social activities that could enhance our emotional and spiritual well-being.

Starling mental fitness challenges—Many of us get so caught up in the fast pace of life that our day-to-day level of stress can feel overwhelming. Sign up for the Starling Program at starlingminds.com and learn more about the online mental fitness challenges available to teachers. The focus is on making small changes that will lead to big differences in your level of stress.

Canadian mental health meter—This online questionnaire helps you reflect on your individual strengths and identify areas that need attention. It is a quick way to self-reflect on your current status and identify the parts of your life that may need additional exploration. <https://cmha.ca/mental-health-meter>

Kelty Mental Health resources—The Kelty Pinwheel Education Series includes free, monthly mental health education events open to anyone in BC. Past education events can be accessed through online recordings. www.KeltyMentalHealth.ca/pinwheel

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids—Telephone-based family-focused coaching to help with mild to moderate behavioural problems. Promotes healthy child development in children ages 3–12. www.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/children-families/confident-parents

MindShift app—MindShift is an app that helps individuals cope with anxiety. This portable coach can help you work through challenging situations in any part of your life. www.anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app

Living through loss—Advice on self-care, strategies to manage grief and loss, and links to articles and books. livingthroughloss.ca/resources/

From grief to action—A coping kit to address questions, issues, and practical problems faced by parents or guardians affected by substance use. www.fromgrieftoaction.com/. ■

Sunshine Coast Teachers' Association

By Marian Dodds, 2017 Editor, Teacher

Life in local #46

TEACHERS ON THE Sunshine Coast affectionately call the 150 km stretch of highway ribboning through stunning forest and ocean vistas from Langdale to Egmont "our hallway." Known for its tourism and talented artists, the Sunshine Coast is also strong on unions, with its unionized mill, ferry, school district, government, and hospital workers. Community solidarity was evident at teacher rallies and picket lines during the 2014 strike. Teachers describe their communities as supportive, creative, and safe. One teacher shared that "every time I have a field trip, one parent sends in double the fee, so a student who wouldn't be able to afford it can also go."

Shishalhl (Sechelt Nation) language and culture is embedded in the curriculum and teachers infuse Aboriginal perspectives through ethnobotany work, cedar harvesting, adopt-a-tree programs, even making "wood cologne." The district's traditional canoe supports floating field trips on coastal waters.

With over 30% of teachers new to the district over the past five years, mentorship is a priority. Their mentee-driven model is supported with release time for in-service, staff development, and curriculum implementation.

Professional development is collaborative and ongoing, supporting autonomous choices made by teachers. The union office hums with so much activity it feels like a bee hive at times. School PD representatives use the BCTF PD Lens to guide decisions. A Joint Education Implementation Committee of teachers, district staff, and the superintendent meets regularly to address complex issues.

In this tourist paradise, rising real estate prices and rental housing shortages due to a proliferation of short-term rentals create accommodation challenges for newer teachers. Yet they keep coming, and they want to stay!

Women lead in this local, providing strong role models. The Sunshine Coast Teachers' Association (SCTA) has focused on succession planning by creating space for the ideas and energies of younger, newer teachers. As one teacher noted, "as a new woman teacher, I felt myself echoed and included," adding "it feels empowering, to think of my union." Clearly, camaraderie is a draw for these new teachers who describe their union as a place "to make friends, have fun together. It's a safe place to fail. If someone knocks you down, your union will pick you up."



President profile

Union life began early for Louise Herle. She recalls her parents, with four children under age 10 plus the dog squeezed into the car, driving from Saskatchewan to Fredericton so her father Wendelin, president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, could attend the Canadian Teachers' Federation AGM. He became CTF president.

Louise's teaching experience spans Kindergarten to adult education, focusing on music, French, and English language learners. Louise has served in many roles: social justice, global education, health and safety, professional development and most recently on the BCTF Judicial Council. She is a role model and strong mentor; as one teacher said, "About 10 years ago I felt like leaving the profession. Louise urged me to get involved. Having a voice in the SCTA kept me in teaching."

Louise highly values all professional relationships. While, as president she must remain alert on behalf of teachers to support the collective agreement, the motto, *soft on people, hard on issues*, serves her well. To maintain morale during the lengthy 2014 strike, teachers and Sunshine Coast Labour Council formed a band, Local Voices, that still performs at union events.

Louise says a highlight of her presidency has been the BCTF victory at the Supreme Court. She notes however, that teacher unions must remain vigilant, since "the struggle for decent wages and working conditions for teachers and quality public education continues."

Midway though her busy seventh year as president, Louise is also studying Spanish and making travel plans for her upcoming deferred salary leave.

Sunshine Coast at a glance

Land: Traditional territory of the shíshálh (Sechelt) Nation and the Skwxwu7mesh uxwumixw (Squamish Nation)

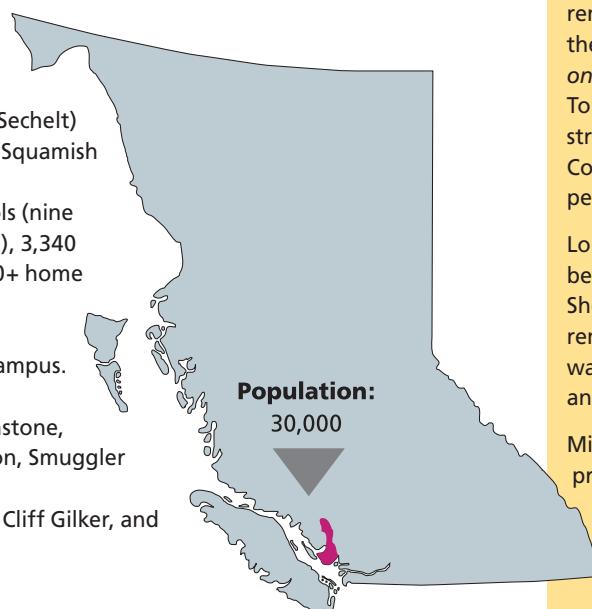
Education system: 250 teachers, 13 schools (nine elementary, three secondary, one alternate), 3,340 students, including 144 ELL learners with 20+ home languages, including Arabic, Tagalog, Farsi, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Czech. Capilano University/College has a Sechelt campus.

Visitor interest:

Provincial parks: Sargent Bay, Mount Elphinstone, Mount Richardson, Francis Point, Tetrahedon, Smuggler Cove, Roberts Creek, and Spipyus.

Hiking: Sunshine Coast Trail, Dakota Ridge, Cliff Gilker, and many more.

Iris Griffith Center nature programs.





Photos by Melissa Bell, Marian Dodds, Paddy McCallum, Sheila MacPherson

The power of teacher-controlled professional development *by Paddy McCallum*

A decade ago, we were plagued by the same issues faced by many teachers across BC: a casual attitude toward professional development (PD) by our members, administrative push back on the days, and our own lack of clarity on how we defined them. Our PD days had become district directed and the funds allocated in our contract were underutilized.

While our local collective agreement clearly placed teachers in control of PD days, and a generous formula in the contract tied PD funds to a percentage of teacher salaries, the goal of authentic, autonomous, self-directed professional development remained

aspirational. Our union decided to take control. Some principals (and teachers), comfortable with past-practice, were not happy.

With help from UBC expert Anne Phelan, we delved into "professional autonomy" and began thinking and speaking differently about PD, highlighting responsibility, authenticity, and professionalism. BCTF researcher Charlie Naylor mentored us to explore teacher inquiry as one path to collaborative, professional learning. Program for Quality Teaching grants enabled us to explore topics based on our professional needs and interests.

Attuned to our changing demographic, we funded an Early Career Teachers Local Specialist Association. Specialist associations have blossomed in the local from four to nineteen. Our mentoring program is thriving and now includes TTOCs. Individual PD funds of approximately \$460 per year enable teachers to attend workshops and conferences, make school visits, take online courses, or purchase books or electronics that meet personal PD goals. Teachers can opt to bank \$1,500 to attend major conferences.

These days, Sunshine Coast teachers speak openly, collaboratively, and with enthusiasm about their teacher-led professional development.

Teachers of the sunshine coast



Brett Jasch

The son of Australian union activists, Brett was taught that his duty was to be a responsible citizen. He's served as both TTOC and Health and Safety Representative on the Local Executive, and is currently the LR. A science and math teacher, Brett describes the Sunshine Coast as "teacher nirvana."



Melissa Bell

Melissa is the PD Chair and district counsellor. She recently used her PD funds to attend a Narrative Therapy conference, returning with new techniques to address domestic violence, LGBTQ issues, and bereavement. She gained new perspectives liaising with therapists from outside the school system.



Paddy McCallum

Paddy is past PD Chair and a BCTF SURT facilitator. He is a published poet, Reader's Theatre fan, and assisted in the video production of *Sexted Up Kids for the Doc Zone* on CBC. He remains concerned that Bill 11, the Liberal government's attempt to reduce professional rights and link PD with teacher evaluation, is still on the books.



Sheila MacPherson

As Aboriginal Education Chair, Sheila sits on the union executive. She values storytelling with students, taking back what was taken away, and has led field trips in the district's traditional canoe, witnessing the transformative powers of the experience. Watch for her canoe story in an upcoming *Teacher!*



Emily Ross

As co-chair of the Social Justice Committee, Emily has supported a mentoring for violence prevention program to address student safety and teach gender sensitivity. This year's plans include a zonal LGBTQ conference and advocacy for rainbow crosswalks in front of secondary schools.



Jacquie Shelemy

Jacquie was inspired by a BCTF bargaining conference to pursue local bargaining and grievance work. She served as LR for several years, impressed by how the Representative Assembly debates deepened her understanding of the rationale for decisions. Now the SCTA Vice-President, Jacquie feels "the BCTF is the most democratic union I've ever encountered." ■

When teachers reach their BREAKING POINT, the BCTF can help

By Michelle Davies, Assistant Director, Professional and Social Issues Division and Ethics Administrator

Internal Mediation Services assist members to resolve conflicts

While hope is on the horizon with an infusion of new teachers this fall, the reality in the classroom remains stressful, and the BCTF Internal Mediation Service (IMS) is busy organizing mediations across the province. Mediations are facilitated conversations between BCTF members and anyone at the workplace who is interfering with them doing their best work. Colleagues overwhelmed by their workload, and scrambling to meet the distinct needs of the students in their classes, while simultaneously trying to be effective and imaginative with the revised curriculum, are not always at their finest in dealing with each other. Typically, the person who bears the brunt of a teacher's frustrations may not be the one who is causing the issue, but is the one either closest to them in proximity or in relationship.

Who are the mediators?

THE IMS TEAM consists of 22 BCTF member-volunteers with extensive backgrounds in counselling and in building and repairing interpersonal relationships. They receive in-depth training in communication skills for facilitating difficult conversations, equity and inclusion sensitivity, and mental health first aid. Their mandate is to listen objectively to all sides in a situation and facilitate a fulsome discussion between members experiencing conflict in their professional relationships, with a "do no harm" focus, in an atmosphere of safety and confidentiality.

Mediation is a voluntary process open and free of charge to all BCTF members. The BCTF covers all costs for the mediators who travel to the local to do the mediation. The local union or school district is requested to cover cost of leaves for the participants.

To access Internal Mediation, Peer Support, or Judicial Council services contact Michelle Davies at 1-800-663-9163 local 1803 or email mdavies@bctf.ca.

How to get mediation —who can refer?

A member can request mediation through the BCTF Executive Director, the BCTF President, or through Michelle Davies at the BCTF.

“ I just wanted to pass on to you that [name withheld] and I have had more positive interactions with each other in the last three days than in our whole history. And I believe this will only get better. I have so much respect for what you (two) did for us. Thank you, again.”

—Feedback from a member

Peer Support Services (PSS) help teachers improve their teaching

THE PSS PROVIDES trained BCTF volunteer-member consultants to assist members in their classrooms. Our 25 consultants provide one-on-one support to a teacher struggling with classroom management, planning and organization, curriculum, teaching students with special needs, planning for a new assignment, or an official plan of assistance resulting from a less than satisfactory Teacher Performance Evaluation. Members returning from a leave may request support for their re-entry into the workplace. PSS consultants are teachers trained to assist with planning, assessment, classroom management, all areas of the curriculum and implementation, digital literacy, multigrade classrooms, French immersion, infusing Aboriginal culture, and re-adjusting to a new classroom or grade level, to name just a few.

There has been a steady increase in PSS requests over the past few years and with the influx of thousands of new teachers into the system, we expect to support teachers



new to their positions. We have also noticed a recent trend for districts to use the evaluation process more often to deal with discipline issues. Through short bursts of intensive coaching in the workplace, we support teachers to be ready to put their best foot forward.

How to get Peer Support —who can refer?

- self-referral
- Local Presidents
- health and wellness consultants may refer members returning from medical leave.

To access Peer Support

There are three forms that need to be completed: one by the Local President requesting permission for us to work in the building, one by the member, and one for the school district. The process is kept

“ I am thankful for the support that I have received from BCTF’s Peer Support Program. I had been away from work on a lengthy medical leave and had lost confidence in my ability to teach. The consultant’s warm smile, genuine, caring nature, and her creative ideas helped to calm my spirit and get me settled into my classroom again. She helped me to find new routines to make my time management more efficient, taught me new ways to find and keep track of student information to help me feel on top of things, and generated new ideas for organizing my room to create a more relaxed and focused atmosphere. I can also count on (my Peer Support teacher) to be confidential and give advice when situations come up at work that I am unsure how to tackle. She has definitely been instrumental in my successful return to work.”

—Feedback from a member

strictly confidential. We work with the Local President so they can advise on local issues and be aware of any necessary follow up. Cases can take anywhere from a month to over a year. BCTF staff may speak with school district personnel to explain the PSS process. No report is written or given to anyone under any circumstances. The BCTF pays all expenses for the PSS consultant. The local union is asked to provide the leave of absence cost should the member need to be out of their classroom for debrief sessions or to visit another class for observation purposes. The employer often funds official plans of assistance.

Judicial Council (JC) enforces the BCTF Code of Ethics

THE MANDATE of the JC is to address alleged breaches of the *BCTF Code of Ethics* in a manner that focuses on educating teachers on their rights and responsibilities as BCTF members, through the enforcement of the *Code of Ethics*.

The process

- Any member is entitled to file a complaint with the Judicial Council if they feel that a colleague has breached the *Code of Ethics*.
- Complaint forms are sent out through the Ethics Administrator after a discussion with the complainant. When a complaint first comes to the BCTF, a mediation is offered as the preferred method of dealing with the dispute. Many alleged breaches of the *Code of Ethics* have been

successfully resolved through the voluntary mediation process.

- If the complaint is not resolved by mediation or if mediation is refused, a complainant may return to the JC process. No information regarding the mediation is sent on to any of the JC panels.
- The complaint is then sent on to a screening panel consisting of three council members to deal with the case.
- The screening panel will either dismiss the charge; facilitate an ethics advisory discussion, wherein two members of the screening panel will travel to the local and have a discussion with the member(s) on the ethics involved to resolve the issue; or refer the case on to a hearing panel for deliberation and judgment.
- At any point in the process the complainant may choose to invite the other party to enter mediation or withdraw the charge.

“ I felt fully supported by my union from the beginning to the end of a stressful professional situation. I am also more certain now than ever that we, as teaching professionals in BC, can handle our own complex collegial matters internally. Thanks to you all, I am a believer in the Judicial Council process.”

—Feedback from a member ■

Members helping members

	Peer Support Services	Internal Mediation Services	Judicial Council
2016–17	36	36	9
2015–16	30	25	18
2014–15	23	15	7
2013–14	10	14	20





The REALITY is...

By Trevana Spilchen, Delta teacher, and District SOGI Co-ordinator

The other day a recently graduated student who is transgender came by the music room to meet the new trans teacher at the school. In our conversation, the student mentioned that it was great to know that they could get a job as a trans person. I had to burst their bubble by letting them know I got the job long before I was "out." The reality is, I wouldn't have been hired as a trans teacher at the time I was starting my career, and it's still an obstacle to being hired today. While schools have come far in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) inclusion, there is still much room to grow. The reality is that we live in a culture that sees gender as binary and biologically determined, and reinforces this belief in subtle and overt ways every day.

HOW DO WE change this? For me, it is simply being myself—something that isn't always as easy as it sounds and that took me a long time to feel safe doing. As an openly transgender female teacher, I am challenging peoples' perceptions and assumptions of what gender is and looks like every day. After a year and a half of being out, I can say that the response has been overwhelmingly positive. I use a gender-neutral Mx. honorific and they, them, their as my pronouns—reminding everyone that my identity is not part of any binary gender framework. In my classroom, I try to break down the framework by asking students to tell me what pronoun they prefer to use at this point in time. This reminds everyone that their name or how they look and sound does not define their identity. It's simple, yet for some may seem revolutionary or controversial because of how we have been socialized to accept gender binaries.

What can teachers do? For me, all I ask is that people

“[Students] want to feel accepted and validated for being who they are and to know that they aren't alone in being who they are.”

aren't alone in being who they are. This is why curricular inclusion of SOGI identities is so important. The curriculum needs to be a mirror, so students can see themselves reflected back, and a window, so everyone can see diverse identities represented. I grew up thinking I was the only person in the world who felt like I did. My hope is that no one feels like that now. My hope is that future students won't bother to come see the new trans teacher or think that being transgender might limit career options. My hope is one day my gender won't be interesting enough to write an article about. ■



Love Intersections.com

Love Intersections is a blog and video project dedicated to exploring intersectionality through the lens and language of love. The collection of short YouTube videos share personal stories that would be good for class discussions.



SEX TALK on the carpet

By Valdine Ciwko, Vancouver teacher and member of the BCTF Teacher Advisory Board

My Grade 5 students are gathered on the carpet. I am dressed as a giant purple bell with a tinsel wig and sparkly *Wizard of Oz* shoes. It's Halloween, and we are exploring the metacognitive power of asking questions while you read.

I READ ALOUD from Christopher Phillips's *The Philosophers' Club*, and we generate questions. These pubescent preteens are fantastic at wondering about the world they are just entering. I read: "Is it possible to be happy and sad at the same time?" and a voice asks, "Can you change from a boy to a girl?" Maybe it's the tinsel hair, the other worldliness of the day, but there aren't gales of laughter.

Suddenly my morning is a whole lot more interesting.

Opening a discussion about transgender people

And so begins our discussion about transgender people. We talk about how we hope that there would be people around who could accept you for whoever you really are. I have a good friend who first entered my life as a woman but who is now a man and very active in transgender politics. I mention that, if my friend was to come visit, the students would have no idea he had not always been a he. We talk about

“If we, as educators, are not yet willing to have open and frank discussions about puberty and body changes and sex, how can kids ever begin to talk about sexuality?”

how long the process can take. It wasn't until he was in his late twenties that he finally made the transition.

Suddenly a small pirate in the group pipes up that she, too, knows someone who used to be a girl but is a boy now—a family friend back in her home country of El Salvador. In still-hesitant English she explains that the biggest problem he had was his boobies, and that he had to bind them. What is most astonishing at this moment is that not one of my nine- and ten-year-olds giggle at the term "booby," which under usual circumstances, could have had them rolling on the floor. Instead they ask:

"What did he have to do?"
 "Did it hurt?"
 "Did his friends still stay his friends?"
 "Can you tell?"
 "Does he have a penis?"
 And what started as a language lesson became a life lesson.

Getting comfortable teaching about sexuality and gender

Could a discussion occur like this out of the blue in any classroom? Certainly, the question could, but the discussion might not.

There are many barriers: fear that a parent will make a complaint, fear that we are crossing some boundary of religious beliefs, fear that we don't know all the answers, fear of straying from the day plan, fear of straying from the curriculum.

I felt comfortable leading this discussion because, a year earlier, Vancouver teachers had developed a teaching resource called *Growing Up: Teaching Sexual Health*, to address new learning outcomes around puberty. When a flyer advertised a professional development training for Grade 5 teachers, I signed up.

It was an interesting year. I invited two volunteers from Options for Health (a non-profit partner in the curriculum planning process) to work with me and my students. During small group time, a student asked how the penis and vagina meet. One of the Opt-Ed volunteers addressed the question matter-of-factly and succinctly, and the group work continued.

The next day my principal approached me. A parent had called with concerns about what the "nurse" had told the kids the day before. I reported what had happened



Artist's statement In the dead of winter and dark of night, with only her lantern light to guide her, Belvedeer snuck out of her house alone to play in the garden. After unlocking the gate, she ventured deeper into the garden, skipping as she went. In all of her merrymaking, she lost her way down the winding path and was unable to return. Panic overtook her as she began to retrace her steps. She soon found herself face-to-face with a massive creature: a deer! To punish her for her stealing away from her home and intruding on his lair, the deer began to transform Belvedeer into a deer. Before the transformation could take hold however, she escaped. Belvedeer now remains lost in the woods, half human and half deer, as a reminder to stay out of the woods at night.

—Robyn Beyleveldt, Art 10, art teacher Lorna Menzies, Seycove Secondary

Luis Isidoro photo

and reminisced about what I learned when I was in Grade 5, growing up in Winnipeg. Or more to the point, what I didn't learn. I am sure I was not the only little prairie girl confused about pregnancy and wondering if it happened from kissing, or a man touching you while you had your period, or what. My principal had similar memories. After we had a good chuckle about the ignorance of it all in our day, she agreed to respond to the mom. I was lucky to have a supportive principal. More importantly, what was being taught was within the curriculum, so there was no ambiguity about whether these kinds of discussions should occur.

For me, what was significant was that this student had gone home and talked about what he had learned that day, something that his mom lamented rarely happened. Yet the stigma surrounding talking about sex meant that this parent could not cross the boundary to talk with me directly.

Moving past "the nurse's puberty talk"

Because I incorporated sexual health education into my weekly planning instead of inviting the nurse to come one fine spring day and have "the talk"



with the girls while the boys had "the talk" with some brave male teacher, my students developed confidence in asking questions about things they wanted to know or were fearful about. They also developed a healthy attitude toward talking about sexual issues in a whole-class setting. For example, a terms and definitions word-sort of male and female body parts turned into a rigorous class activity. The students were divided into groups and given some time to match words with definitions. They could not use the dictionary, so they had to discuss and settle on their best guesses. I admit that I slipped over to close my classroom door, realizing that shouts of "clitoris . . . clitoris . . . clitoris . . . yes!" might be misinterpreted by an uninformed passerby.

What I learned from that year of piloting the curriculum was how much kids want to know and need to know. And how afraid both teachers and parents still are about talking about sex. Sadly, many teachers still leave the "puberty talk" to the nurses. And if we, as educators, are not yet willing to have open and frank discussions about puberty and body changes and sex, how can kids ever begin to talk about sexuality?

If the puberty talks only focus on procreation within heterosexual activity, what happens to our students who are already beginning to realize they might not fit that mold? If

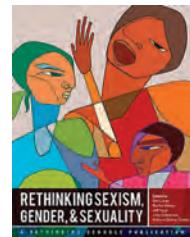
"family life" and sexuality are only presented within the confines of heterosexuality, and students never hear the words, gay, lesbian, transgender, questioning, from us when we are talking about sexual development, what message do we send?

I was surprised we were amid such an open conversation so early in the year, but I was prepared, too. The questions our students have are not compartmentalized into strictly math or social studies, science, or health. Their questions come when they come. And my experiences from the previous year had left me confident and ready for this conversation.

My Grade 5 and 6 students were hungry to learn. We had honest and heartfelt conversations. For many, these were things they weren't likely to be talking about at home. I'm glad I was prepared. Issues of gender and sexuality can arise at unexpected moments, like that Halloween morning, sitting on the carpet, in an ordinary language arts lesson.

Adapted with permission from the original —*Rethinking Schools*, Vol. 28, No. 2.

<https://is.gd/LbzhYs>.



Recommended book:

Rethinking Sexism, Gender, and Sexuality (edited by Kim Cosier, Jody Sokolower, Rachel Harper, Jeff Sapp, Melissa Bollow Tempel)

<https://is.gd/tlhBD2>

SOGI teacher workshops

www.sogieducation.org/pro-dl. ■

October 2017 joint statement from Minister of Education Rob Fleming, BC Teachers' Federation, BC School Superintendents Association, BC School Trustees' Association, BC Principals and Vice-Principals' Association, BC Association of School Business Officials, Federation of Independent School Associations, and BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils.

“We believe that all schools in our province, public and independent, must be spaces that are safe, acceptable, respectful, and welcoming for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion or background. There is no room for discrimination in B.C. schools.

“As provincial education partners, we are unified in this commitment. It is important that we all stand up and together to support inclusive-learning environments. Our goal as teachers, administrators, support staff, trustees and parents is to create learning environments where all students can thrive and live authentic lives.” ■

Artist's statement The new half-human Queen Bee, often called "Toxic Bling" steps forward as she conquers yet another bee kingdom. Because she is half-human, her qualities are much stronger than normal bees. She is known to wear a lot of gold jewelry and is very powerful. Although she is calm when in a good mood, when she is angry, she is very deadly, especially toward humans. With so much fierceness in a small body, she is feared wherever she goes.

—Naomi Wolf, Art 10, art teacher Lorna Menzies, Seycove Secondary



ONLINE MENUS for every taste at TeachBC

By Henry Lee, BCTF Assistant Director, Professional and Social Issues Division

Are you looking for new teaching ideas? Feeling like your lessons could use a refresh? Need teacher-ready resources to match the new curriculum? At your fingertips, TeachBC is online 24/7 to help you discover resources that are useful right away. Get published by uploading your own original resources. Or you can even build, modify, and reorganize this shared knowledge and then consider re-uploading it onto TeachBC. It is a quick and collaborative way to engage in professional development online.

iStock.com/ALLVISIONN

CREATED TO HELP TEACHERS find teaching materials and research relevant to the BC K-12 curriculum, TeachBC is the BCTF's resource-sharing website and online teaching database. Search the menus by subject, grade, or type of resource, and download free of charge.



Sample what's on the TeachBC smorgasbord!

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Secret of the Dance—Unit for smartboard use Grades 1–4
Math First Peoples Hunting (First Nations Education Steering Committee) Grade 9
Bannock—Unit plan for Grades 5–7
Secret Path—(Gord Downie) resource and literacy centers
The Learning Circle—Guide for teachers of children ages 12–14
Aboriginal Education Activities K–7 Claire et son grand-père (bilingue)
À travers le regard de Mala

APPLIED SKILLS, DESIGN, AND TECHNOLOGIES

Web Coding Unit Grades 9–12
Applied Skills Integrated with Other Curricular Areas Using First Nations Content
Mystery Skype/Skype Mystère

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The Danger of a Single Story—Grades 7–12
Writing Response to Documentary Films—Grade 8–11
All about Me—(First Nations Education Steering Committee) Kindergarten

To Kill a Mockingbird

medium.com; explore online writing and publish student writing online

Social Justice Vocabulary

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Instructional Samples for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Physical and Health Education—(ARC Foundation) K–Grade 9
The Hunger Games

Introducing the Gender Rainbow (Gender Diversity) with "A Princess of Great Daring!" by Tobi Hill-Meyer

Learning About Our Bodies

FINE ARTS

Gender Self-Portrait
Dance Conditioning lesson plan
Métis Sash Weaving
Association of BC Drama Teachers: Lesson Plans—Grades 5–12

MATHEMATICS

Cat Math—(BCSPCA) Grades 4–6
Factors and Multiples Puzzle—Grades 7–9
Graphing linear equations-painting between the lines—Grade 10
Design Thinking in Math & ADST: Froebel's Gifts
Budget & Health: Fast Food vs Homemade Meals
Geometry terms bingo

SCIENCE

Climate Change Science: An Updated Resource-With Canadian and Global Impacts, Mitigation & Adaptation
Grades 7–12

Master of Disaster

(PreparedBC) Grade 6 Survey: Sustainable Community Lesson Plan

Sky, Water, Earth

Grade 2 Earth and Space Kit Teacher Guide
Grade 7 Physics Kit Teacher Guide
Kindergarten Chemistry Teacher Guide

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Great Depression Grades 11–12

Historical Thinking

Forced to Leave, Learning about Refugees (Medecin sans frontières)

Grades 6–10

Multi-media resources about humanitarian topics (Medecin sans frontiers) Grade 6–Adult

Indigenous and Settler VLog Assignment

Japanese Internment - Hastings Park History Lesson plans (Grades 10–12)

The Stormbringers WW1 Duty, Valour, Sacrifice WW2

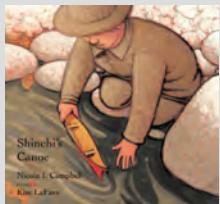
Personnalités autochtones engagées

LANGUAGES

Pop Music Inquiry Project for Modern Languages for French, Spanish, Immersion, etc. (BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages) Grade 6–Adult
Le conditionnel/Le futur simple
Jeu des sept familles sur les pays francophones
L'île tropicale/Tropical Island Unit
Les bas du pensionnat—Questions de compréhension

Search by title at <https://teachbc.bctf.ca/>

Infusing Aboriginal content



Shin-chi's Canoe

by Nicola I. Campbell

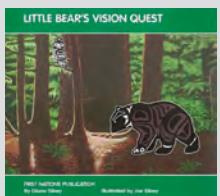
On their way to residential school, Shin-chi's sister tells him they must remember all they can about home. At the school, six-year-old Shin-chi misses fishing with his father, pulling the nets, and wind drying salmon. He hides a small canoe and visits it—the scent of cedar reminds him of being home for the sockeye run. They steal food to curb their hunger. Their spirit and memories keep the siblings focused on returning home.



A Man Called Raven

by Richard Van Camp

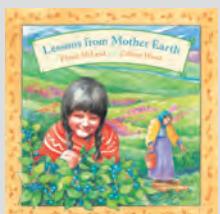
Two boys are caught trying to harm Raven. A mysterious man brings them home and teaches them about the importance of animals in their culture and the values of respecting animals and being kind to the earth. When the man leaves, he transforms into a Raven.



Little Bear's Vision Quest

by Diane Silvey

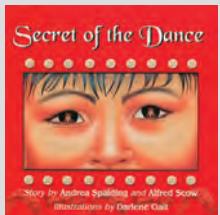
Little Bear has become disconnected from traditional teachings of humility and respect. He has become arrogant and disrespectful of others. He is sent away alone on a journey to reflect on his behaviour. After some time alone he returns to his community with a more balanced way of being and practises respectful behaviour.



Lesson from Mother Earth

by Elaine McLeod

Five-year-old Tess is taught about Mother Earth and taking care of plants while spending time with her Grandma in her garden. And as they walk behind their house, Tess learns cultural and spiritual rules about harvesting food from the land, about only taking what is needed to maintain balance, and about patience and love for the land.



Secret of the Dance

by Andrea Spalding and Alfred Scow

A family holds a secret potlatch ceremony at a sacred inlet. Nine-year-old Watl'kina, attracted by the sounds of drumming, sneaks out at night. He sees the masked dancers and hears the stories. He learns about the rich traditions of the potlatch and the history of government laws forbidding Aboriginal people from holding ritual ceremonies.

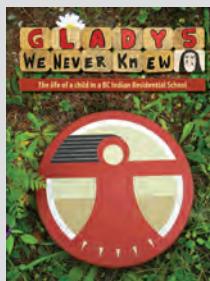


Workshop

Infusing Aboriginal Content

bctf.ca/PD/WorkshopDetail.aspx?id=38696

While teachers express interest in incorporating more Aboriginal content in their classrooms, they are sometimes unsure of where to start and how to find authentic materials. This workshop is designed to create awareness around integrating Aboriginal perspectives and quality Aboriginal resources in the classroom through hands-on activities.



Gladys We Never Knew

bctf.ca/GladysWeNeverKnew/

This new resource focuses on the life of Gladys Chapman, who died at age 12 in Kamloops Residential School. Lesson plans explore her family life, their traditional food and fishing practices, conditions in residential school, and much more. ■

Learning is connected to land, culture, and spirit.
We—the two-legged, four-legged, finned and feathered, plants and rocks—are all related.
We must always practice reciprocity through acts of giving and receiving.

Learning honours our Ancestors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Descendants.
It respects and embraces ceremony, protocol, and teachings that are connected to the sacred medicines including tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweetgrass.
Important teachings emerge through stories.

Learning involves developing relationships, respecting distinct cultures, and honouring the perspective of others in our communities.
The deepest learning takes place through lived experience. It requires exploring our identities, learning from our mistakes, and having gratitude for our gifts.

Learning is a journey that takes courage, patience and humility.
It is about striving to become a better human being and living with balance in body, mind, heart and spirit.

BCTF
Designed and printed by
the BC Teachers' Federation

*All books available at www.strongnations.com/.



An invitation to FEAST

By Carole Gordon, Kelowna teacher and BCTF EC Member-at-Large

The invitation to a welcoming feast at Hazelton's Majagaleehl Gali Aks, an elementary school where 95% of the students are First Nations, took me on a professional and personal journey through culture, technology, new resources, and reconciliation. After 26 years of teaching I learned a lot; I sometimes still feel like a beginning teacher... and beginnings hold so much promise.

AS A BCTF EXECUTIVE Committee member, I'd been invited by Joslyn Bagg, president of the Upper Skeena Teachers' sublocal and Grade 6/7 teacher, to witness the annual feast where new students and staff at her school would be receiving their Gitxsan names. Who better to teach me the protocols than her students? When I told my students that I was going to a feast in Hazelton, they were keen to learn along with me. Less than 10% of students in my school identify as Aboriginal, and only one in Grade 6 had been to a feast.

Before the big day, Joslyn and I connected our classes via video chat and the Hazelton students shared some Gitxsan vocabulary, the names of the four clans, and feast protocol. My Kelowna students were eager to practise the Gitxsan words, and Joslyn's students were excited to meet my Kelowna students online. Joslyn shared with us that "the students of Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary are proud Gitxsan, and love to share their knowledge and teachings from their families and Elders." My students asked questions about the school and Hazelton and were curious about the food I would be offered and the expectation not to refuse anything.

When I arrived at Majagaleehl Gali Aks, it felt like Joslyn's students already knew me. When they gathered in their clans for the feast, I was invited to sit with the Fireweed clan. The feast system has been practised for time immemorial, even when outlawed by the government. It is used for naming ceremonies, rites of passage, and to tell stories connected to the land.

The welcoming feast began with the new students being given their names, with drumming as they joined their clans. Staff were given names that reflected their personalities and contributions to the school; they also received money from the community that they then handed back whenever someone pronounced their name

correctly. As the oldest students began presenting the food, Gitanmaax Hereditary Chief Mr. Gray welcomed us to Gitxsan territory. Over the next two hours each participating clan offered me food. Elders spoke to close the feast.

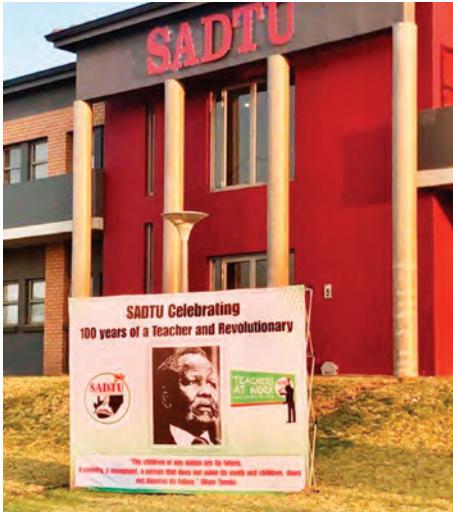
Back in Kelowna, I shared my videos, photos, facts, and feelings from the feast with my students. We connected the feast in Hazelton with their learning from the Blanket Exercise we had done from *Gladys We Never Knew*, a BCTF resource about the legacy of residential schools. Connecting my students to Joslyn's class helped them gain a better understanding of the ceremonies banned by the *Indian Act* and how communities were affected by residential schools. During reflection, one student asked, "For something that has been happening for hundreds and hundreds of years, why have we only been trying to fix it for the last ten?" I am proud to be a BC teacher during this time of reconciliation. Hamiaya (thank you) Majagaleht Gali Aks and the BCTF!

“The feast system has been practised for time immemorial, even when outlawed by the government. It is used for naming ceremonies, rites of passage, and to tell stories connected to the land.”

istock.com/ChuckSchugPhotography

Learn about BC's food history, including Indigenous foods at www.bcteach.org/category/first-nations-2/

Below, L to R: South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)'s new Johannesburg office; Domenic Bellissimo, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) Director, Political Action and Communication, Harvey Bischof, OSSTF President, Magope Maphila, SADTU President, Teri Mooring, BCTF First Vice-President.



Finding COMMON PURPOSE half a world away

By Teri Mooring, BCTF First Vice-President

As we drove through the bustling streets of Johannesburg, I asked about the crowds of people I saw congregated everywhere. Richard Gundane, the President of the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association was sitting beside me. He explained that people flock to the cities when unemployment is high, making them busy and dangerous.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN government estimates the unemployment rate at 27%, but the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) estimates unemployment is closer to 40% or 9.3 million. Half the people with jobs are considered the working poor. Within this challenging environment, SADTU teacher-leaders work to be "agents of change and champions of people's education."

SADTU is the first national non-racial and non-sexist union in South Africa, and the BCTF has been working in solidarity with SADTU since its inception. I attended their National General Council meeting on World Teachers' Day this October as they celebrated their union's 27th birthday. SADTU has emerged as an important political force within South Africa, and is especially influential within the ruling party, the African National Congress. A testament to their influence was the attendance of Deputy President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, at the opening of SADTU's new offices.

While South African teachers are grappling with issues like ours, the magnitude of their challenges is beyond what most of us can

“ There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul, than the way in which it treats its children.”—Nelson Mandela

imagine. At the forefront is the issue of violence in classrooms. Other challenges are teacher workload, racism, sexism, inequity of resources from school to school, privatization, standardized testing, education budget restraints, and much more. SADTU is engaged in HIV intervention programs, and initiatives to combat gender-based violence and to address the impact of widespread poverty.

Despite big challenges, teacher-leaders are determined to make a difference and have found their most effective path is political action. People expressed dissatisfaction with President Jacob Zuma, who stands accused of corruption and has failed to deliver on important reforms that would begin to address widespread social issues. SADTU has endorsed the Deputy President as his replacement this December and has high hopes and great expectations for his leadership.

The movement SADTU has built, in extremely challenging circumstances, has politically mobilized their members to push for social change on the national stage. They appreciate the support they have received from the BCTF International Solidarity Program, saying it has improved teachers' lives. Thinking back to the teacher solidarity that resulted in our Supreme Court win one year ago, I was struck by how much our unions have in common. ■

SOLIDARITY LETTERS made a difference for Mexican teachers

By Larry Kuehn, Director, BCTF Research Division

Last year a small project with Indigenous teachers in Veracruz, Mexico, began with the support of the BCTF and CoDevelopment Canada. The Mexican group is part of the national democratic teachers' movement—the CNTE—who in May last year launched a national protest against constitutional reforms aimed at privatizing education and penalizing teachers. They were met by violent state repression that left 12 dead, and dozens of others injured or imprisoned.

AT THE REQUEST of our Mexican partners an online letter-writing campaign was launched to raise the issue when Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto came to Ottawa last June for the "Three Amigos" Summit. The campaign urged Prime Minister Trudeau—a former teacher and BCTF member—to condemn the violence against Mexican educators. Hundreds of you responded to the online action, and, at the June 28th press conference with President Peña Nieto, Prime Minister Trudeau did express concern about the violent attack on teachers.

While Trudeau's appeal for dialogue with the teachers was largely ignored in Canada, it was picked up widely by the Mexican media. Our Mexican partners credit this campaign as the final straw that pushed President Peña Nieto to sit down and negotiate with the teachers, and reminds us that taking action can and does make a difference, far from home. ■



iStock.com/vgajic

The joys of international TEACHING EXCHANGES for BC teachers



New South Wales, Queensland, and even hopped over to New Zealand. The highlight of our year was the special family time that we had with just the five of us. When we are home we are really busy with social and recreational commitments, but there it was as if time froze for us and we could just enjoy each other and our adventures.

My professional highlight was teaching in a rural school with kids who were very eager to learn and a staff that was incredibly supportive and appreciative of all that I had to offer. I got to travel to different schools to learn about various numeracy and literacy teaching methods. I directed the school play, and I started a choir called The Forever Young Choir that combined Grade 3s and 4s and local senior citizens. My thirst for greater knowledge about best practice became unquenchable. This exchange taught me so much that, when I came home, I decided to start my master's degree.

**Compiled by Catherine Gagnon,
President, BC Exchange Teachers' Association**

**Sherry Dittrick, Comox teacher,
currently on exchange at
Coffs Harbour Public School,
NSW, Australia**

OUR PROFESSION is built on collaboration and mutual respect no matter where you find yourself. When you leave BC and all that is familiar, your colleagues soon become amazing friends. That has been the best part of this exchange—the connections I've made with other professionals.

Every ten weeks there is a two-week school holiday. Our family has had the opportunity to see some of the greatest sites the world has to offer: the Great Ocean Road, Uluru, and the Great Barrier Reef.

**Diane Moreau, Mission teacher,
2016–2017 exchange teacher in
Southern France**

I WAS TEACHING a CE2 class, equivalent to Grade 2 for BC. One of my highlights of



Moreau photo

this experience was a one-week ski trip with my students. Everything went very well for our two Grade 2 and one Grade 1 classes. If I were to do this here with my class everyone would think that I was out of my mind!

My husband and my daughter (14 years old) accompanied me on this year of adventure. We enjoyed the small villages in the surroundings, including Gordes, Les Baux-de-Provence, and Roussillon. We also enjoyed visits to Corsica, Spain, and Portugal.

**Phebe May, Comox Valley teacher,
2016 exchange teacher in Echuca,
Victoria, Australia**

MY THREE DAUGHTERS, my husband and I spent 2016 living in Australia. We had opportunities to travel throughout Victoria,



May photo

**Surrey teacher Martin Wheeler,
2015 exchange teacher in Perth,
Western Australia**



WHEELER PHOTO
MY PROFESSIONAL highlight was accompanying, as supervising teacher, a group of Year 10 students on an 10-day outdoor education expedition to Exmouth, Northwest Cape of Australia. The expedition included traversing the Cape Range on a three-day hike, rowing a dory out to, and camping on, Class A nature reserve islands, and sea kayaking along the Ningaloo Reef.

Our family highlight was a 3,000 km return road trip up to Karijini National Park, where we camped and hiked the narrow iron ore gorges and swam in sculptured pools at the base of waterfalls.

For information on international teaching exchanges, visit www.ceef.ca.
Applications for Northern Hemisphere destinations should be received by December 31, 2017, and those for the Southern Hemisphere destinations by January 31, 2018. ■

TRAVEL/VACATION

MAUI Great S Kihei location, one bdrm with ocean view, across from great beaches. For more information 209-599-5248 or www.maui342.com.

PALM DESERT March 22-29. Beautiful townhouse-style villa on world class golf course, 18 tennis courts, fabulous European health spa, six pools, barbecues, full kitchen, much more... full access to facilities at adjoining gorgeous JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort. Sleeps four. Teacher owned. Huge discount. Smaller unit available March 18-25. Call 604-338-9823.

WHISTLER townhouse, sleeps six, fully equipped. 604-925-7669 or Gary 604-669-7212.

FOR RENT

1 BEDROOM Clean, bright ground-level suite in White Rock, perfect for single teacher, \$900, available immediately. (604)536-5700.

Teacher Advisory Board members Jennifer Kimbley and Valdine Ciwko show off their BCTF membership cards



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HEART-MIND 2018

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February 23-24 | Langley, BC

- > EXPLORE how adult wellbeing nurtures child development: science and practice
- > LEARN AND CONNECT with leading experts: Dan Siegel, Rick Hanson, Tish Jennings, Linda Lantieri, Kimberly Schonert-Reich, Chastity Davis



For event information and to register:
www.dalailamacenter.org



What is TeachBC?

- Online resource of teaching materials, lessons, and research relevant to K-12 BC curriculum.
- Allows users to download, upload, and share resources.
- Search by subject, grade, resource type, title, description, language, and more.

Who can use it?

- Everyone! The website is public.
- Teachers, provincial specialist associations, and other organizations.

How can teachers contribute?

- Upload your favourite lesson plans, unit plans, activities, resources, or research and make TeachBC the go-to site for K-12 BC resources.
- Tell your colleagues about TeachBC and help us build the site.

In the spirit of teachers helping teachers, thank you!

Visit teachbc.bctf.ca



Notice—AQ courses Teacher Qualification Service

The Teacher Qualification Service will consider Ontario AQ courses taken from an accredited university provided that they fit into the requirements of an Integrated Program (see Regulation 4.05). AQ courses will be generally allotted six semester credits. If you believe that this could affect your category placement please apply to the TQS via the website (www.tqs.bc.ca) for either an upgrade or Director's review of your file.





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.



Centre for Sport & Exercise Education

camosun.ca/adventure

SFU
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



MASTER of ARTS for Teachers of English (MATE)

(with a focus on Aboriginal Literature)

ATTEND OUR INFO SESSION:

Monday, Jan 29, 2018
6:00 - 7:30 PM, Room 2245
SFU Vancouver Campus (Harbour Centre)

INQUIRIES & REGISTRATION:

778.782.9384
matesry@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/mate

The 2018 cohort will be at the SFU Vancouver campus.



BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

www.blindmasterscanada.ca

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 tinyurl.com/7qrrnxz or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.

NEW RETURN-IT SCHOOL PROGRAM 2017/2018!

- Offered FREE** to all schools in BC by Encorp Pacific, the not-for-profit product stewardship corporation in British Columbia
- Official Return-It 101 Certificate** - Display pride in your school's recycling program with our official Certificate of participation!
- Free Recycling Bins** - Get up to three free Return-It bins and arrange free pick-up service (where available) from your local Return-It Depot!
- NEW \$5,000 Grand Prize Contest** - Share your school's interesting, creative and impactful recycling story with us and you could win big!
- Tools & Tips** - Get support for your school's recycling program, including fundraising tips for a successful bottle drive!
- NEW Return-It Man Presentation** - Get an entertaining and educational visit to your Elementary School from recycling superhero Return-It Man and his sidekick!

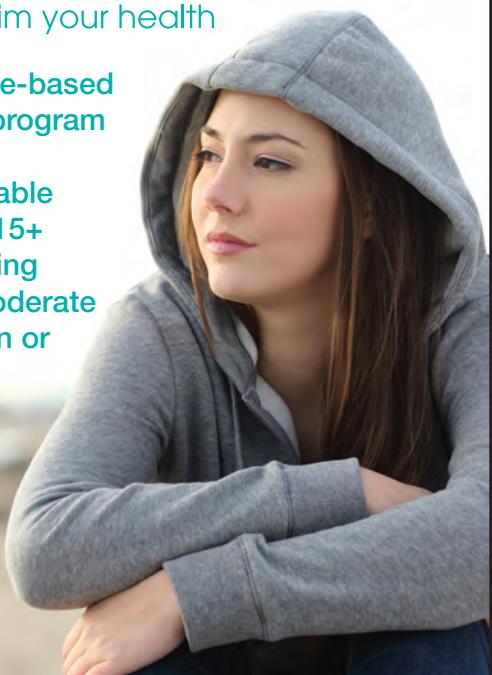
Join today at ReturnItSchool.ca

BounceBack®

reclaim your health

Free phone-based self-help program

Now available for youth 15+ experiencing mild to moderate depression or anxiety



Learn more at www.bouncebackbc.ca



Canadian Mental Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all



Provincial Health Services Authority
Province-wide solutions.
Better health.

beyondimages

a self-esteem and body-image curriculum

GRADES
4-8

LESSONS
25+

\$0

at www.beyondimages.ca

NEWLY REVISED CURRICULUM

MORE than half of children report being involved in appearance based bullying. *Be part of the solution.*

A positive body-image can lead to better self-esteem, emotional stability, happiness and confidence in children.

TEACHER ADVANTAGES: a comprehensive media literacy curriculum written by teachers that includes:

- Lesson objectives
- Lesson plans and contemporary mixed media examples
- Student worksheets
- Evaluation rubrics
- Curriculum outcomes matched for all provinces
- Free!

Beyond Images helps students understand how and why media messages are constructed – and then learn to make their own. *Beyond Images* explores current concepts of what it means to 'fit in'.

Join us on this journey of self-discovery and build understanding and resilience towards negative messaging in students and in the schoolyard. *Beyond Images* meets students where they're at and takes them further.

Developed by the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (www.nedic.ca)



Beyond Images is generously supported by the Dove Self-Esteem Project

UBC MASTER of Educational Technology



DEVELOP YOUR EXPERTISE

with the online UBC Master of Educational Technology (MET) degree program.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

in your teaching to develop engaging and outstanding learning opportunities.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Faculty of Education

Are you looking to develop community-minded students?



MAKE-A-WISH®

British Columbia & Yukon Canada

www.makeawishbc.ca



Your school can team up with Make-A-Wish® to help make wishes come true!

The Kids for Wish Kids® program helps develop important lessons in teamwork, leadership, organization, compassion and empathy.

To find out more: jocelyn.huber@makeawish.ca
1.866.277.9474 | www.makeawishbc.ca/kfwk

DECEMBER 2017–JANUARY 2018**Teachers Learning Code: Learn How to Introduce Coding In Your Classroom**

December 1 Vancouver

Teachers Learning Code is for educators who want to inspire kids to be builders, not just consumers, of technology through coding activities and challenges.

vancouver@ladieslearningcode.com.

SFU Teaching English as an Additional Language Fieldwork Stream (TESL/TEFL) [TEAL-F] M.Ed. Information Session

December 7 Burnaby

Develop and increase your understanding of educational issues and practices specific to TEFL/TESL while studying in a multicultural environment. Program starts fall 2018. Apply by January 31, 2018. <https://is.gd/ID3ZAe>.

Borderline Personality Disorder Understanding and Supporting

December 11 Victoria

December 11 Kelowna

December 12 Vancouver

This workshop's purpose is to increase the understanding of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) from the perspective of all those affected, including caregivers, family members, and those diagnosed.

[www.ctrinstitute.com](http://ctrinstitute.com).

SFU Curriculum and Instruction: Equity Studies in Education MA, M.Ed. Information Session

December 11 SFU Vancouver or online webinar

January 16 SFU Vancouver or online webinar

Designed for students who wish to study and develop expertise in an equity framework for education. <https://is.gd/xbkvqs>.

MEd in Modern Languages Education**FRENCH**

December 14 online

January 12 online

Ce programme de maîtrise de 30 crédits offre l'occasion d'explorer comment les recherches s'appliquent à la salle de classe, en se concentrant sur une question choisie par l'étudiant: innovation curriculaire, pédagogie multilingue/plurilingue, cultures et perspectives autochtones, technologie et multimédias, développement interculturel, stratégies ludiques, etc. Cours de 3 semaines à Montréal en juillet. Puis cours par conférence web entre septembre et juin.

FEBRUARY 2018**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.

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.

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.

<http://bcaea.com/conference.html>.

Mount Seymour Teacher Workshop

February 23 North Vancouver

We will explore themes such as experiential learning, bringing nature into the classroom, and the power of getting kids outdoors.

www.mountseymour.com/schools.

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.

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://is.gd/48E1Uf>.

Save Your Sanity

February 26 Victoria

February 28 North Vancouver

Proactive Strategies for Children with Challenging Behaviour. CRD Consulting.

www.saveyoursanity.ca.

PD Online Calendar

bctf.ca/PDcalendar

Changes/additions: msteele@bctf.ca

UNLEASH YOUR CAREER POTENTIAL

Diploma, Master's and Doctoral Programs

TQS upgrade

Range of program themes

Information sessions



APPLY NOW-START 2018

www.sfu.ca/education/grad-studies

SFU

FACULTY OF
EDUCATION | GRADUATE STUDIES

BCTF Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics states general rules for all members of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) for maintaining high standards of professional service and conduct toward students, colleagues, and the professional union. Members are advised to contact local union officers or appropriate BCTF staff for advice on how to proceed with issues related to the BCTF Code of Ethics.

1. The member speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity, and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.
2. The member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare. *The member follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.*
3. A privileged relationship exists between members and students. The member refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
4. The member is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/guardians the practices employed in discharging the member's professional duties.
5. The member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance. **It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues.*
6. The member acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in her or his professional union.
7. The member adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.
8. The member acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of her or his professional union.
9. The member neither applies for nor accepts a position which is included in a Federation in-dispute declaration.
10. The member, as an individual or as a member of a group of members, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals.



*See 31.B.12 of the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*
(*Members' Guide Procedure 31.B.02*)

BC Teachers' Federation • 100–550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC • V5Z 4P2 • bctf.ca