

# Teacher

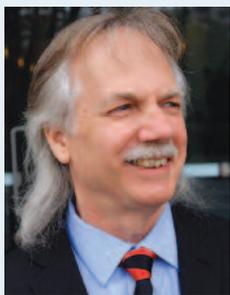
Newsmagazine  
BC Teachers' Federation  
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## The fine arts matter

Programs delight, inspire, and change students' lives



Tiger Lilies by Marc Hedges



## Bargaining: Government must change course

**Jim Iker**

Job action is never easy. Every teacher cares deeply about their students. We work hard to keep the impact of collective bargaining away from the classroom, but sometimes we must take a stronger stand. We must act to make our students' learning conditions, our working conditions, better. We must also act to defend our rights as professionals, union members, and citizens of British Columbia and Canada.

It's time for government to change course. For too long, they have tried to provoke us, bargain in bad faith, and use students as a wedge for political gain. Despite reasonable proposals and movement from the BCTF bargaining team, BCPSEA and government have stubbornly held on to unreasonable demands like a 10-year term, the restripping of class size, class composition, and staffing level provisions and other concessions. They haven't moved on preparation time or salary in any significant way. If they want a deal, if they want labour peace, it's time they showed good faith and backed off purely ideological demands.

The government is going to have to bring resources and funding to the table. In this most recent budget, the government set aside hundreds of millions of dollars in future contingencies. They cannot cry



[aFairDeal.ca](http://aFairDeal.ca)

poor. It's time they chose to put that money into classrooms. If they can find \$750 million to pay California Power and \$600 million on a retractable roof that rarely retracts, they can improve class sizes and class composition.

That was also the message I took to the BC School Trustees Association Annual General Meeting in April. I called on the 300 school trustees in the room to act—to speak out and advocate for our students. The cuts proposed in school districts, because of government underfunding, have gone too far. Christy Clark and Peter Fassbender must feel the heat or they will not change course. That's why teachers, parents, and trustees need to work together to increase the pressure on this government.

Colleagues, come September, it is important that we have smaller class sizes, class composition guarantees, minimum levels for specialist teachers, and a fair salary increase.

Thank you for all your work that you do every day in our classrooms and our local offices, for your dedication to our students and public education.

In unity, we need and we will get a fair deal for teachers that includes better support for our students.

*en française, page 20*

## Readers write

### I love my school library

I've taught in elementary schools for more than 28 years and without a doubt, schools with strong library programs enhance literacy for students.

Sadly, it is schools with adequate, qualified, competent teacher-librarian staffing that can make a huge difference. I say 'sadly' because I know that with funding stresses, it has not been possible to provide this. Some schools do not have adequate teacher-librarian time. As I worked through the early 2000s, cuts were made yearly. Unfortunately, in our small school, the very competent teacher-librarian was unable to provide daily time for team-teaching, classroom support, or educational, motivational book exchanges, since he was not in the school daily.

As a full-time classroom teacher, I truly appreciate the enriched teaching opportunities at a larger school with a full-time teacher-librarian. She and I are able to plan and team-teach research skills, utilizing all of the resources (hard copy and virtual) available in our school. In addition to this, her willingness to share technology skills in the areas of research and representation of knowledge, helps me to grow professionally. Our library collection is expertly maintained, updated, and kept in circulation through her daily management.

We need to maintain (optimally increase) the supports within our schools for teaching and learning. Our students deserve no less.

**Jennie Boulanger**  
Burnaby

# Teacher



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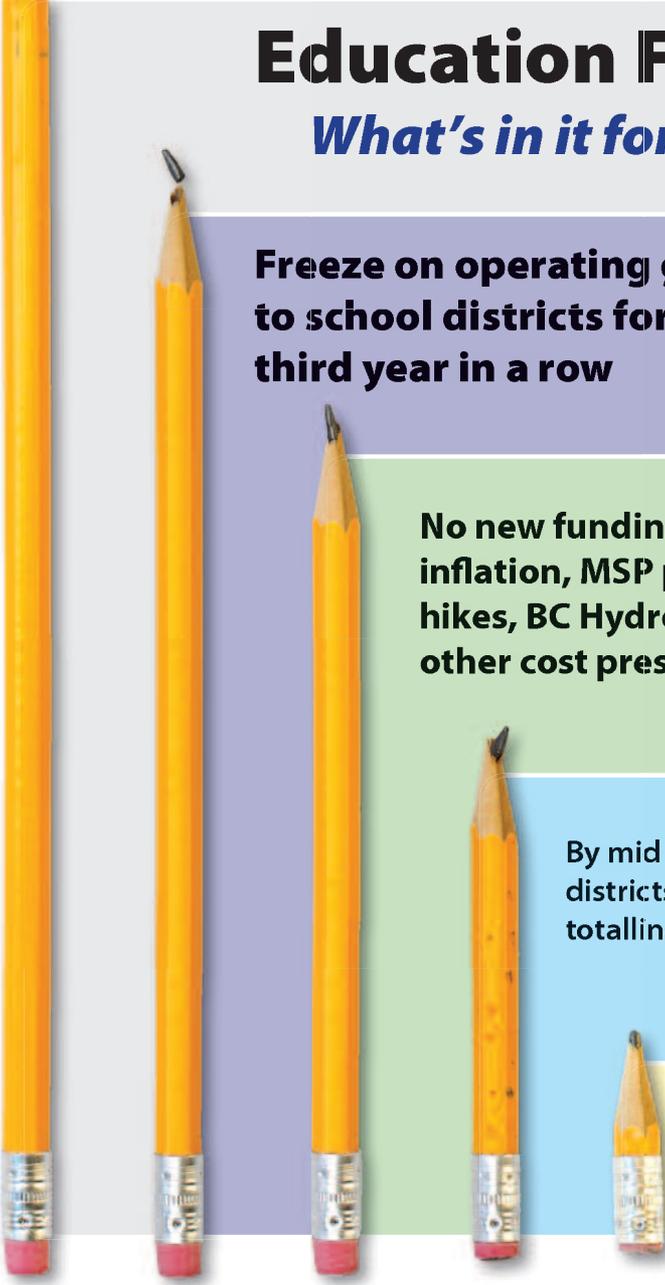


**CALM** Canadian Association of Labour Media  
**CEPA** Canadian Educational Press Association



# Education Funding 2014

## *What's in it for public schools?*



**Freeze on operating grants to school districts for the third year in a row**

**No new funding to cover inflation, MSP premium hikes, BC Hydro rates and other cost pressures**

**By mid April, 20 of 60 school districts reported shortfalls totalling about \$73 million**

**Cuts to K-12 and Adult Ed programs and services mean fewer classroom and specialist teachers**

If operating expenditures for BC public schools had increased at the same rate as the national average from 2006-2011, there would be an additional \$583.5 million to support BC students.

The only improvement to BC schools for 2014-15 is the additional \$15 million for the Learning Improvement Fund. LIF does not address wide-ranging cuts to education services arising from budget shortfalls.

Source: BCTF Research Report. *Budget 2014. What's in it for public schools? More budget shortfalls and ongoing cuts to educational services.* <http://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Publications/ResearchReports/RR2014-04.pdf>

## Government delivers empty promises

Budget 2014 was tabled in February by Minister of Finance, Mike de Jong. Many education-related promises were made about trades, transformation, and the support for teachers and students, but the budget contained nothing to back those promises.

According to Statistics Canada, British Columbia currently funds public education \$1,000 less per student than the national average. Only PEI is worse

than BC, and this gap in funding continues to have serious implications for students.

In a surprise announcement at the end of March, the government announced it is reneging to fully fund seismic upgrades. These costs are now downloaded to school districts.

Christy Clark's government continues to claim that there is no way to reduce class

sizes, hire the needed specialist teachers, and improve class composition. However, there is a surplus and a sizable contingency fund in Budget 2014. The government has chosen not to put the funds into schools and education.

After losing two rounds in BC Supreme Court, it's time for government to respect teachers, the work we do, and properly fund BC's education system.

– Glen Hansman

# The future of school libraries

## Vibrant spaces or dead coral reefs?

**By Susan Croll**

Heather Daly and 38 of her colleagues are some of the latest casualties of the provincial government's ongoing inadequate funding to school districts. With the click of a keystroke, Coquitlam (SD43) trustees eliminated teacher-librarians as a line item from their district budget in April. On a spreadsheet, the removal of a line item is almost unnoticeable; in reality this means elementary and secondary teacher-librarians will disappear in Port Moody, Port Coquitlam, and Coquitlam schools come September.

Clearly, cuts are never acceptable, regardless of the subject area or the kind of work a teacher does, but what makes these cuts so surprising is the wholesale chopping of all its teacher-librarians. It begs the question: Was the elimination of teacher-librarians done solely for financial reasons or are other agendas at play too?

Daly is also the president of the BC Teacher-Librarians' Association, an active organization that has kept current in the quickly

changing library arena. She says that the role of teacher-librarians is actually expanding because of technology. More information, not less, is the norm in the digital world. And the digital world is illusory because much of it is invisible.

***With these cuts, we are being told we no longer have value.***

Daly explains, "When you are dealing with the invisible how do you know what is there and what isn't? Compare the digital shelf with the print shelf. Take away the print shelf and you know what is lost. Take away the digital shelf; do you notice what is gone?"

The BCTLA was pivotal in providing its members with the comprehensive research about the value of the Learning Commons, the latest version of the modern library. Part of the Learning Commons concept is that libraries are spaces of active inquiry, where students and their teachers come together to ask questions, to wonder, to seek, to create. Information literacy, another critical piece of the Learning Commons, is knowing what kinds of information and resources have value, how to find resources, and how to use them.

Daly elaborates on the significance of the hyphen in teacher-librarian. "The word teacher-librarian is hyphenated for a reason. We are teachers and we are librarians. Librarians know how to find, evaluate, and share resources. Resources are no good if they are not in kids' hands. That is what we are trained to do—to match students with the right resources and to teach them how to find

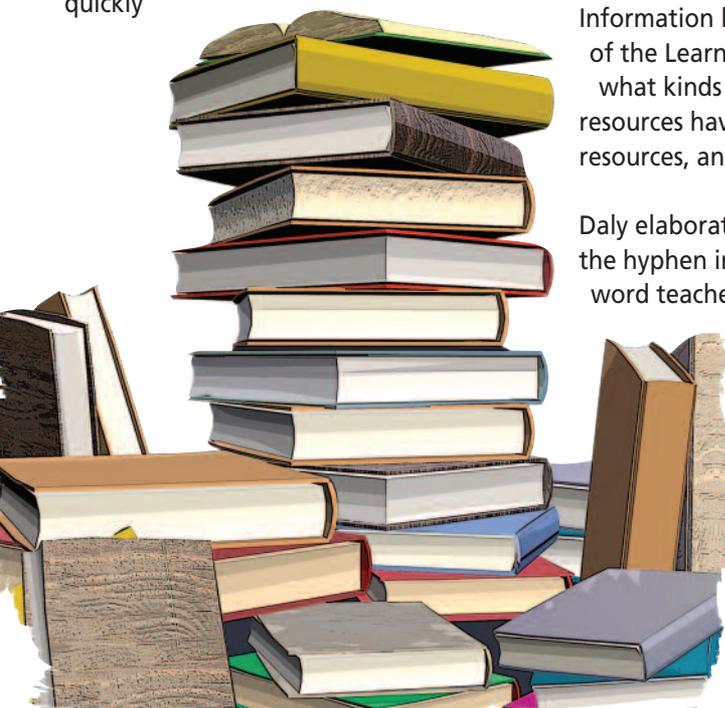
and use resources. We have been proven right that information literacy is the new thing. However, with these cuts, we are being told that we no longer have value."

Thirty percent of teacher-librarians have vanished from BC schools since the stripping of teacher-librarian ratios from the collective agreement in 2002. Daly comments that when she began teaching in 2000, she knew there were ratios for specialist teachers but she did not pay great attention to the numbers. She loved her work as a teacher-librarian and even when the contract was stripped, she remained committed to her work and returned to school to get not one, but two Masters of Education degrees, the first in Library and Information Studies,

***Sharing resources and forming community partnership, at first glance sounds fine, but without any funding, is also code for downloading what used to be the responsibility of a school district onto a municipality.***

the second in Archival Science. She always had teacher-librarian work in her district and even held the position of district library and information co-ordinator. The district also seemed committed to the work she and her colleagues performed. So what happened?

SD 43 has a funding shortfall of \$13.5 million this year. The provincial government has frozen operating budgets for the last three years. They are downloading more and more costs onto districts with no compensation. Without



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# MyEducation BC replaces BCeSIS

**By Larry Kuehn**

Some may have mixed feelings about the end of BCeSIS scheduled to take place over the next two school years. BCeSIS was a pain for many, but its end also means learning a new system.

Ministry folks and some district tech people are enthusiastic about the new student information system called *MyEducation BC*, which uses Aspen software. They say it is much more flexible and will support the complexity of the curriculum, assessment, and other changes the ministry calls the “BC Education Plan.”

***In these days of enhanced electronic surveillance, issues of privacy and personal autonomy take on a new intensity.***

However, here are other factors to consider.

Teachers will need training to use the new system. Will adequate training time and support be provided? Or will it fall on one school staff member to be the expert?

What else could have been done with the funds in a system constantly facing fewer and fewer resources?

How much information should be included in MyEducation BC? The plans suggest that teachers include their lesson plans and resources as well as grades. Students will upload their assignments and parents will have access to check up on what teachers and students are doing.

Security and authentication will be major issues with more than a million people having access to the system: 60,000 plus teachers, administrators, and support staff; 600,000 students and their parents and guardians.

staffing levels, school districts have no obligation to fund school library programs or employ teacher-librarians.

And then there is the BC Education Plan and the Ministry of Education’s goal to transform education through sharing resources and forming community partnerships. Sharing resources and forming community partnership, at first glance sounds fine, but without any funding, is also code for downloading what used to be the responsibility of a school district onto a municipality. Perhaps that is part of the agenda to “disappear” teacher-librarians—have the students get their books, digital resources, and love of reading, from their public library.

Daly fears for what will happen to empty, unstaffed school libraries. She is afraid a couple of couches will be pushed into existing school libraries and they will be dubbed learning commons when really they will be no more than glorified social spaces. She says, “They will be like dead coral reefs. They will look like something but they will be grey and lifeless.”

She is however, cheered by the resolve shown by her colleagues at the recent spring council of the BC Teacher-Librarians’ Association. “Yes, we are angry; we are sad. Coquitlam isn’t the only district we know that’s cutting T/Ls this year. Nanaimo is planning to cut the secondary T/Ls. But as an organization we are going to navigate this. We will stay the course and carry on. We’re not wrong that we are needed.”

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*Susan Croll, Editor, Teacher  
Newsmagazine*

The ministry expects that eventually all those groups will have access and authentication using the new BC Service Card.

If you haven’t heard of the service card, it is the card the province says you will be required to get for purposes of healthcare, replacing the CareCard. The Service Card is projected to be the source of your access to all government services—driver’s licence, social services, as well as health and any other connection you have to government. A competing student information system, OpenStudent, was axed because of the expense for the system to be linked to the Service Card.

In these days of enhanced electronic surveillance, issues of privacy and personal autonomy take on a new intensity. It was in this regard that the BCTF Annual General Meeting advised members to reject using the Service Card to link to student information services. It is not yet required, and some districts have already said they will use alternatives, such as the current BCeSIS identification system.

Teachers should also have concerns about the amount of information the ministry wants them to enter into the student information system. The scope of what is included is supposed to be left to school districts to decide. Teacher locals should do their best to limit how much information is to be included. Once the system is up and running, changing it to reflect a narrower scope of information will be very difficult.

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*Larry Kuehn, Director, BCTF Research  
and Technology*



Salmon Woman, Carl Stromquist

# Reclaiming indigenous education in the Americas

By Nancy Knickerbocker

*Over the centuries, Indigenous people throughout the Americas have lived a history of colonization of, and through, education.*

That was the frame that Charlene Bearhead, co-ordinator of the Project of Heart, used to introduce “Decolonizing Education,” an evening panel discussion held at the BCTF. About 60 AGM delegates gathered for a supper of cedar-planked salmon, bannock, and salad, and for the opportunity to hear from Indigenous Canadian, Mexican, and Colombian activists about efforts to decolonize education in our respective countries.

The event opened and closed with Canadian speakers, both of whom presented powerful films about the Aboriginal experience of education in this country. The opening documentary, *Hidden Legacies*, by Anishnabe director Lisa Jackson, illustrates how the

residential school system aimed to break Indigenous students by breaking the sacred connection to their lands and languages.

Rupert Richardson is a central character in the film. He shared profound, and sometimes raw, stories about honouring the hurt of his ancestors on his own journey of healing. En route, he confronted “what it means to decolonize, to indigenize yourself.” Richardson urged the teachers and parents present to show the kind of caring and love he missed as a child. He said he always tells kids, “You are a supernatural blessing.”

Maria de la Luz Arriaga is an economics professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a co-founder of the Tri-National Coalition in Defense of Public Education. She described the deep commitment and “heroic efforts” of the teachers who work with Indigenous populations in Mexico. “The teachers become totally integrated within their communities,” she said.

Although they confront “an official culture and policy to assimilate Indigenous children into the dominant Mestizo culture,” Arriaga said, the teachers assert “a humanist and transformative education for liberation. Not assimilation, but emancipation.”

Conscious of the central role language plays in preserving Indigenous culture and world views, the Mexican teachers have developed “language nests” as a model for immersion in, and preservation of Indigenous languages.

Luis Alberto Grubert is president of National Federation of Colombian Educators (FECODE), which has about three million members. Himself a descendent of Africans traded into slavery in the New World, Grubert explained that Indigenous and Afro-Colombians have a shared history of struggle not only to retain their languages and cultures, but also just to survive.

Research reports that of 102 distinct Indigenous groups in Colombia, 18 are on the way to extinction. At least 70,000 Indigenous people have been forced from their homes and now are internal refugees, uprooted from their traditional territories.

“When you remove Indigenous people from their land they become orphaned because the land is their mother,” Grubert said. “They [government and multinational corporations] want to displace them and appropriate their lands to exploit natural resources.”

Despite the enormous challenges, Indigenous people in Colombia also have significant rights enshrined in the Constitution: their own education system, a unique curriculum, bilingual teachers, intercultural education, and discrete funding.

“Through FECODE we are demanding equal rights for Indigenous teachers,” Grubert said, even though the union understands that Indigenous people have

## AGM elects 2014–15 Executive Committee



L-R: Paul Steer, Member-at-Large (Delta); Jim Iker, President (Burns Lake); Carole Gordon, Member-at-Large (Okanagan Skaha); James Sanyshyn, Member-at-Large (Burnaby); Teresa Grandinetti, Member-at-Large (Coquitlam); Teri Mooring, Second Vice-President (Quesnel); Karen Langenmaier, Member-at-Large (Comox); David Komljenovic, Member-at-Large (Kamloops Thompson); Glen Hansman, First Vice-President (Vancouver Elementary); Norm Sabourin, Member-at-Large (Boundary). Missing from photo, due to a death in the family: Gail Chaddock Costello, Member-at-Large (Langley).



SUSAN CROLL PHOTO

***“Listening to the proceedings of your Annual General Meeting, I can tell you that Colombian teachers face many of the same things you face, only you don’t have paramilitaries.”***

***“Teachers in Colombia are not killed for being on the left or being on the right. They are being killed because they are cultivators of democracy.” – Luis Alberto Grubert***

their own ways of recognizing the teachers, shamans, and elders within their communities regardless of whether they have university degrees. They are the “sabedores ancestrales,” ancestral wise ones who helped their peoples resist the generals and dictators who have been disappearing and assassinating them for so long. At the same time, “they have helped to create zones of peace... through the strength of their will,” Grubert said.

Finally, Jennifer King, an Ojibway and Anishnabe child and education advocate with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, spoke about the new film *Hi Ho Mistahey*, which uses the 2008 apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper as a counterpoint to her searing exposé of the terrible conditions in First Nations schools, where funding ranges between \$2,000 and \$3,000 less per student than in mainstream schools. Further deepening the inequities, band schools receive no funding for libraries, computers, extracurricular activities or other essentials. Of 116 band schools surveyed, 10% were found to be in “poor condition” or worse.

“What kind of message does this send the kids?” King asked. “It says that society doesn’t see you as having a future. You’re not good enough.”

The film, by internationally-acclaimed film maker Alanis Obomsawin, also highlights the struggles of youth like Shannen Koostachin from the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, who had a dream of safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for all Indigenous children. Before her tragic death in a car accident at the age of 15, Shannen’s dream inspired many, and the campaign that bears her name continues.

King’s message to Aboriginal students?  
“Your dreams matter too!”

*Nancy Knickerbocker, Director, BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division*

# Concerned about the future, new teachers ask good questions

By Susan Croll



*Teachers had a multitude of questions for BCTF President Jim Iker and Prince George Local President Tina Cousins but to no one's surprise, one of the first questions asked was, Where will I find a teaching position?*

There is no single path to the union door, but it almost always begins with a question.

How can I access professional development funds? How come I am not getting paid on scale? Why am I paid differently in two different districts and why doesn't my TTOC seniority count the same in both districts?

Because new teachers need answers to these and other pertinent questions, the BCTF's annual two-day New Teachers' Conference featured a special question-and-answer session with BCTF President Jim Iker and Prince George District Teachers' Association President Tina Cousins. Overall, more than 400 new teachers registered for the February conference and participated in 50 workshops.

Teachers had a multitude of questions for Iker and Cousins but to no one's surprise, one of the first questions asked was, Where will I find a teaching position? Understandably new teachers are anxious about their future employment and wonder if they will ever obtain a continuing contract. Iker said that the hiring of new teachers is essentially a funding question.

"Less funding means fewer teachers. It's that simple. If the government, instead of choosing to appeal the BC Supreme Court decision, had sat down with us and began to work out how to restore our stripped collective agreement language for class size, class composition, and staffing levels for specialist teachers, your job prospects would be brighter. Add on BC Hydro increases, and other inflationary pressures, and you end up with districts having greater costs. Kids pay for those costs in the form of fewer teachers." He and Cousins told teachers not to lose

hope. "The BCTF and our local teacher unions are not giving up. We've fought on teachers' behalf for many, many years and we're not about to stop."

Some new teachers asked if retired teachers who go back on the TTOC lists prevent new teachers from getting work. Iker answered that most retired teachers do not go on the TTOC list and that the majority of those who do are facing their own financial pressures; their pension earnings are low because they taught part time as they raised their families. Cousins told the audience that only 6 of 132 teachers on the TTOC list in Prince George are retired.

Iker and Cousins agree that seniority-based or rotational call-out systems are fairer than preferential call-out systems. "The preferential system is arbitrary and prone to the rumour mill," Iker explained. "Seniority-based callout prevents favouritism."

Some new teachers also wondered how to talk to parents about the current bargaining situation and the deterioration of learning conditions. "The best way to get parent support is to talk to them. It doesn't matter if you are a new teacher or a TTOC, tell your story. Talk to parents, tell them what is happening in your school, in your classroom. As TTOCs, you have many stories; you get to see a wide view of what's going on in schools. On the whole, most parents trust the people who teach their children," Iker answered.

This question-and-answer session resulted in such fruitful dialogue that Marie-Claude Tremblay, BCTF Assistant Director and conference organizer said the same format will be featured at next year's conference.

## Hope trumps fear

Zach Abbott, Marina Brewer, Laura Ingham, Amanda Long, Kelly MacLean, and Lena Watt are all new teachers working in different parts of the province. They are dedicated teachers who are outspoken and while they love what they do, share a certain frustration with the lack of secure employment and cuts to education programs. Teacher newsmagazine interviewed them the first day of the conference.

All six became teachers because they want to make a difference in kids' lives. They want to bring the love of learning to their students, to help kids develop their passions. "Teaching isn't so much about curriculum, but about the person," Zach said.

Lena added, "Teaching is about preparing students; you focus on the whole child and help kids realize that they have power and agency to shape their own lives."

Because of the difficulty in getting teaching positions in BC, Zach and Laura taught in England and in France respectively. They agree that the good thing about teaching is that it is a portable skill.

Besides not being able to obtain secure teaching work, these teachers say that the most difficult part of their work is witnessing the lack of support for kids. "The range of student need is huge and diverse. The resources and support just aren't there for so many of my students," Laura says.

New teachers want and expect support from their local union, the BCTF, and from their district. As new teachers they are not always aware of their rights or collective agreement language and some districts sometimes take advantage of them. The evaluation process, they explain, should not be negative and degrading. It should be based on feedback that is constructive and



SUSAN CROLL PHOTO

*L-R (back): Amanda Long, Teri Mooring (2nd Vice-President) Marina Brewer, Zach Abbott, Jim Iker (President), Laura Ingham, (front): Kelly MacLean and Lena Watt*

supportive. And teachers should be told they have a right to union representation during an evaluation.

"Getting evaluated when you are a brand-new teacher and teaching in a subject area outside of your teachable major can undermine your confidence," one new teacher commented. "You need your union there to support you."

Laura, Kelly, and Marina all spoke highly of adequately funded mentorship programs that allow new teachers to connect with more experienced teachers. "These kinds of mentorship programs work because we have time to meet, time to talk, and time to learn."

Kelly also commented on specialist associations. "They provide helpful resources for teachers. They help you to keep growing. I think every teacher can benefit from joining a specialist association."

The New Teachers' Conference took place close to the time the BCTF announced the strike vote. As new teachers, with high student debt loads, they said it was scary to know that a strike could mean very

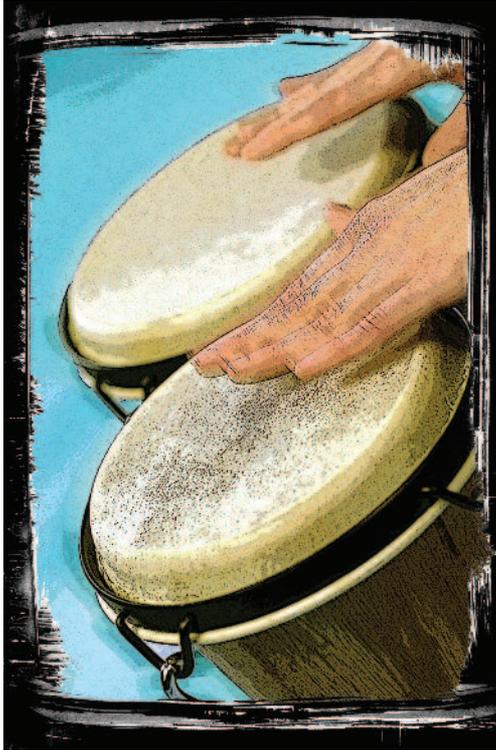
little money coming in. But they were not deterred. One teacher said:

"We are not here for the money. It's for the kids and for the future. It breaks my heart that the Kindergarten students that I teach do not have their learning needs met. It breaks my heart even more when I realize that they are in the first year of 12 years of their education and that if things don't change, their needs will never be met. But I can't and I won't give up. I didn't get into teaching to get involved in the politics but after a couple of years of teaching, I know we can't ignore this lack of funding and disrespect for kids and teachers. Bargaining has to be a right in a society that calls itself democratic. We have to stand up for our students and for our future as teachers. How can we not?"

\* New teacher is a term used to describe teachers new to teaching, including teachers new to teaching on call, or teachers recently hired on temporary contracts and less frequently, due to the lack of positions, permanent contracts. About 1/3 of the BCTF membership consists of new teachers.

**Please visit**  
**[bctf.ca/NewTeachers.aspx](http://bctf.ca/NewTeachers.aspx)**  
**for new teacher information**  
**and resources.**

# World music program proves to be a lifesaver



Medioimages/Photodisc/Thinkstock

**By Susan Croll**

"Nothing bad ever comes out of these programs. Why would anyone want to cut any arts programs in schools?" said Theo Vincent, drummer, and member of *The Boom Booms*, an ever-growing popular percussion group in Vancouver. Theo knows about the positive impact arts education can have on a young person. He joined the World Music program started by Valerie Dare, a teacher-librarian, at Britannia Secondary School in East Vancouver when he was just 12 years old.

"Valerie Dare and the World Music Program changed my life. It affected me 100% and gave me focus and direction." Theo explained that he has loved drumming ever since he can remember. The World Music Program and Theo proved to be a perfect match. He attended the after-school program once or twice a week, and because of the great drummers who were guest teachers, learned from some of the best.

Theo believes Dare's ongoing encouragement meant that he stayed in the program throughout his high school years. He even began tutoring younger kids when he was in Grade 10 and continued to do so until a couple of years ago. "I benefited from the program in more than one way. I learned how to teach music to kids and having a job as a high school student was important. We didn't have a ton of money, so having a job was pretty good, especially considering it was something that I love to do."

Britannia Secondary is a unique school as it is one of the few true community schools that exist in BC. The Britannia site includes an elementary and secondary school, a shared school and public library, a community centre, a recreation centre, a seniors' centre, and other critical programs that serve its diverse community.

Part of the reason why the World Music program is so successful is due to community partnerships. During the summer of 2000, the Vancouver Music Folk Festival and the Roundhouse Community Centre partnered to organize a two-week summer camp for World Music participants. Theo was part of that camp and the experience for him and the other participants was pivotal. *Jabulani*, a marimba and African percussion group formed after the summer camp and they even travelled to Cuba. Theo was 16 years old when he went on that trip and he remembers it fondly. "Learning from these musicians was amazing. I was so lucky to be part of it."

Theo graduated from Templeton Secondary School and continued to tutor and to participate in the World Music program. He says that if it wasn't for the World Music Program he may not have finished school. "Honestly, I found much of school boring. Music is what kept me

going. I don't know what would have happened without music."

Six years ago, Theo heard that a new group in Vancouver needed a percussionist so he auditioned and the rest is history. *The Boom Booms*, while based in East Vancouver, travel far and wide. They played privately for Queen Elizabeth at Balmoral Castle in Scotland. They embarked on a self-funded busking tour of Europe, have played in Cuba, in Hawaii, and throughout the US. They even played during intermission at the Canada-US men's gold hockey game at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver in 2010. They've headlined for both the Vancouver Folk Music Festival and the Vancouver Jazz Festival.

***"Music is life. That is why our hearts have beats."* – unknown**

Theo's most memorable trips are to countries where drumming is the heartbeat of the nation. He says that their trip to Brazil was beyond words. They even made an online music and travel documentary of their trip. Theo describes walking into walls of drummers. "There were 50 drummers in a group; the sound and the energy was incredible."

*The Boom Booms* are a musical group with a social conscience. "Part of what we try to do is become aware of what's going on while on our trips. We went to Bel Monte in Brazil, where the government is trying to build a dam. The indigenous people who live where the proposed dam is to be built are very unhappy. They believe the dam will destroy the river and the surrounding land. The dam doesn't make sense. I think it is a money grab."

*The Boom Booms* travelled to Haiti after the earthquake. "I did not think I would ever see such deep poverty as I saw in the *favelas* in Brazil. Haiti was even worse. You cannot imagine it until you see it. Tens of thousands of people living in less than shacks."

The group also give back to their own community. For the past few years, they have organized their famous block parties in East Vancouver and have donated thousands of dollars to local organizations like the Environmental Youth Alliance, CLICK (Contributing to Lives of Inner City Youth), and The Music Tree. Because of its great success, this year's block party will be held at Strathcona Park in East Van instead of the usual street venue.

"I don't know what I'd be doing if it wasn't for my teacher, Valerie Dare and the World Music Program. I might be doing construction, but I know I wouldn't be as happy as I am. Doesn't this government know that arts programs save kids lives? We're worth it, you know."

Check out the *The Boom Booms'* website at <http://theboombooms.com>

*Susan Croll, Editor, Teacher newsmagazine*



*Theo Vincent, percussionist*

Visit the BC Music Educators' Association website: <http://bctf.ca/bcmea>

# Music has always been part of my life

*By James Sanyshyn*



My mom was a singer. My Dad is an amateur fiddler and mandolin player. My little brother is an old-time fiddler of national renown. I was first a boy soprano, then baritone, a church and community chorister, a saxophonist, oboist, bassoonist, and a military musician. I completed my Bachelor of Music and Music Education degrees at UBC and my Master of Arts in music education at McGill. I am not sharing this to brag with you. I tell you my story so you can understand the importance of visual and performing arts in our public education system and how it keeps our students safe, engaged, motivated and grounded, and how cuts to these programs will harm student success.

I was not a particularly happy or motivated child. My successes came as a result of finding my passion—music. Being able to self-motivate through music helped me build self-esteem and self-worth. My grades went from C's and B's to B's and mostly A's. I had a safe and successful venue for self-expression. This is what arts education gives our students—an experience of success.

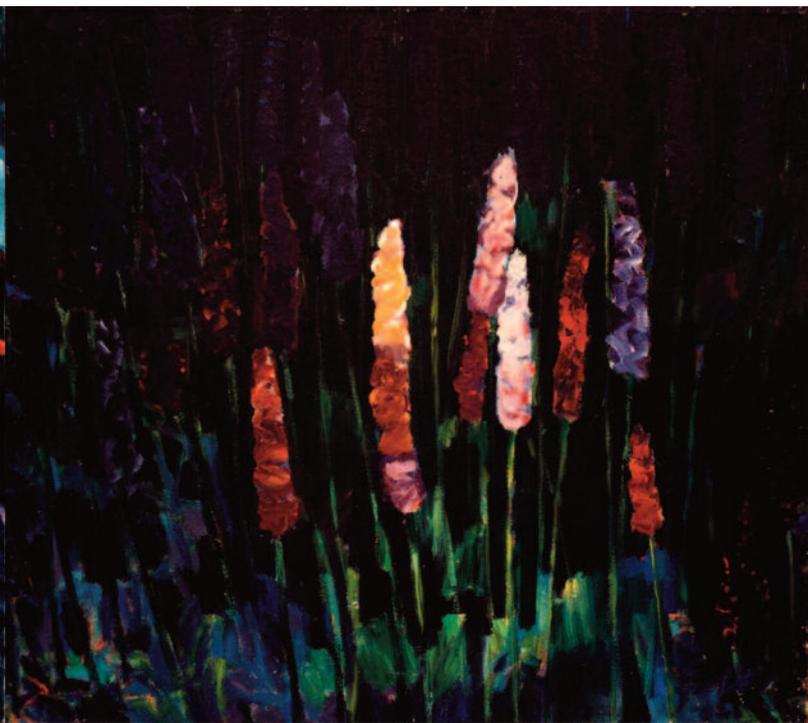
At the time of writing, Vancouver School Board was considering dropping its elementary band and strings programs. The Burnaby Board of Education was considering cutting bus support and reducing visual and performing arts performances to bi-annual events and reducing elementary music teacher positions. Trustees do support the arts but out of a need to balance their budgets because of provincial government underfunding, they are challenged to find targeted savings. This is the same government that spends \$1,000 less per child on public education than the national average.

By making such cuts, we will remove the ability to meet prescribed learning outcomes from our visual performing arts curriculum and magical field trips for our students. I would not have become a music teacher without attending such events in my elementary and secondary years. The positive impact on student retention and graduation rates linked to participation in the arts far exceeds the relative cost savings government hopes to realize. I and other music teachers in these two districts will be speaking out loudly against these proposed cuts. I hope parents, students, and other staff join in the chorus of opposition.

*James Sanyshyn, President, Burnaby Teachers' Association and newly elected BCTF Executive Member-at-Large*

***When asked to cut arts funding in favour of the war effort, Sir Winston Churchill simply replied, "Then what are we fighting for?"***

# Art is my language



*Night Salmon*



*By Marc Hedges*

Art, for me, is a journey of discovery and a practice of necessity. My personal art practices and interests include: painting/drawing, photography/video, and ceramics.

Creating art fascinates me and often I feel that each artwork reveals and teaches me something. It is this internal dialogue between the artwork and myself that I find worth while and stimulating. The act of making artworks helps me generate ideas for future projects. Art is a major focus that has remained constant in my life.

As a child I spent many hours at home drawing and sculpting with plasticine. My Grade 9 art teacher saw my keen interest and aptitude for art and that I had little motivation for other subjects. She encouraged me to apply to the University of Manitoba Diploma Program. However, I was not interested in school, dropped out and started working. I soon realized I did want to pursue studying art.

I enjoyed the time I spent at the University of Manitoba, the University of Victoria, and the Banff School of Fine Arts.

Over the years my classroom practice has reinforced my belief that everyone has the capacity to be creative. Art is a language, like music, that requires self discipline and the motivation to learn the basic skills. My philosophy to teaching art is this: allow students to follow their own perspective, give self-directed projects with equal emphasis in critical thinking, problem solving, and technical practice.

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*Marc Hedges is an artist and teacher whose painting, "Tiger Lilies," is on the front cover of this edition of Teacher Newsmagazine. Marc teaches and creates art in Bella Coola.*

Marc's portfolio can be viewed at:  
<https://www.behance.net/nusatsumstudio>

**Visit the BC Art Teachers' Association website: <http://bcata.ca>**

# Art programs...the heart and soul of curriculum

By Regan Rasmussen

**The cultivation of the imagination is one of the most precious human resources. It ought to be at the centre of our educational aims.**

– E. Eisner, Stanford University

Research indicates that experiencing and learning through art is powerful and life affirming, not only in school but also throughout life. Students also develop a multitude of higher thinking skills when involved in the arts. They learn to:

- think critically and analytically.
- communicate using different media.
- realize that learning takes place in many different ways.
- understand that problems have multiple solutions.

## New draft curricula and the arts

Teams of BC educators are working to revise curriculum to better address learning needs. The increased emphasis on the process of learning across K–12 disciplines coincides with the way that the arts have always been taught. The three draft core competencies that address thinking, communication, personal and social development are also a natural fit with the arts.

Critical, creative, and reflective thinking are part of the artist/educator vocabulary. Words like flexible, persistent, and inquisitive describe the creative mind and the creative process. Landon MacKenzie, in her BC Art Teachers' conference presentation last fall addressed these competencies. She spoke of play, open-ended questions, and time as essential elements in learning.

The communication competency draft states "...communication competency encompasses the set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange

information, experiences and ideas, to explore the world around them, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media." Regardless of culture, ethnicity or language, the arts foster the development of these kinds of skills and understandings.

Through creating and sharing art, students learn to co-operate and collaborate with one another to express their thoughts and embrace the ideas of others. Connecting art in the community to art in the schools through gallery programs and arts organizations demonstrates a willingness to encompass new ideas and diversity.

Despite a shift in focus of new curriculum documents, there are still many challenges associated with delivering quality art programs due to budget cuts and changing school demographics. More than ever, there is a need for everyone involved in education to work together.

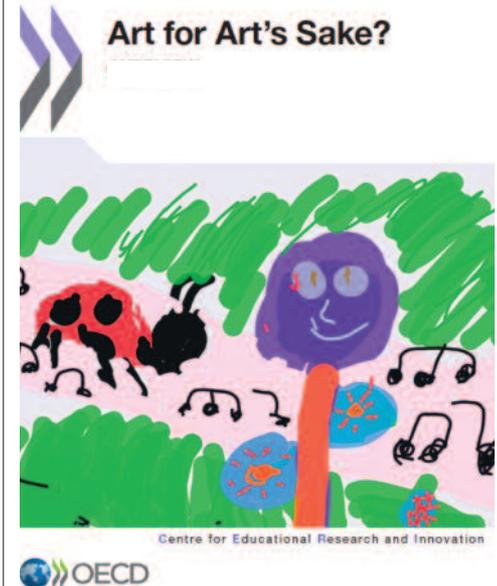
The BC Art Teachers' Association encourages you to:

- join the BCATA for news about workshops, conferences, curriculum updates and lessons: <http://bcata.ca>
- inquire about a local art PSA.
- get involved with art galleries.
- read the draft Arts Education curriculum (K–8) available online: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca> and give your feedback at <http://tinyurl.com/ArtReviewProcess>

Professor Emeritus Bill Zuk (University of Victoria) has stated, "the greatness of a civilization is measured by the attention it devotes to the arts." By ensuring that art programs remain the heart and soul of curriculum, the future holds great promise for students and the world they will inherit.

Regan Rasmussen, Co-President, BC Art Teachers' Association; Artist/Educator, District #62 and University of Victoria

The Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development has published this report.



*We argue that the main justification for arts education is clearly the acquisition of artistic skills – the current priority objective of arts education in the curricula of OECD countries. By artistic skills, we mean not only the technical skills developed in different arts forms (playing an instrument, composing a piece, dancing, choreographing, painting and drawing, acting, etc.) but also the habits of mind and behaviour that are developed in the arts. Arts education matters because people trained in the arts play a significant role in the innovation process in OECD countries: the arts should undoubtedly be one dimension of a country's innovation strategy. Ultimately, however, the arts are an essential part of human heritage and of what makes us human, and it is difficult to imagine an education for better lives without arts education. Our report helps to clarify why arts education should remain an integral part of every child's education.*

For the full report go to:  
<http://tinyurl.com/OECD-overview>

# The case against egg-carton caterpillars

By *Linda Picciotto*

We all know the importance of the fine arts in the education of our students. For the most part, we teach our own visual arts, dance, drama, and music. If we are lucky, specialists in our school teach some of these subjects, but these programs are always in danger of being cut from school budgets.

The teaching of fine arts is linked to almost everything we want for our children: development of self-esteem, aesthetic awareness, creativity, emotional expression, empathy, and appreciation of diversity. Arts learning can improve motivation, concentration, confidence, decision making, and teamwork. Critical thinking and creativity are nourished, and problem-solving skills are developed that will serve children well in their futures in any field of endeavour. For many children, participating in the fine arts is the most joyful and totally absorbing part of their school program.

But where do the egg-carton caterpillars fit in? For me, they are the symbol of adult-directed art activities that are common in many classrooms. Students complete adult-designed projects, cutting and pasting or filling in adult-drawn pictures on worksheets. On the bulletin boards in the classrooms and the hallways we might find 24 nearly identical images of penguins, snowmen, or leprechauns. The teacher may have spent the evening before the lesson cutting out pieces of paper that students will glue together and colour in a specific way.

There's nothing wrong with occasionally organizing a lesson asking students to follow directions to create a special-purpose object or to learn a specific skill. But, in general, the teacher's role should be to motivate and inspire the students, give them a variety of materials, teach



some techniques, and then to give them space and time to create their own art. Work that is generated by the children themselves is authentic. Given the great variety of personalities and life experiences present in every classroom, the creativity expressed can be astounding!

Here are some of the activities in the visual arts my colleagues and I have developed over the years at our school:

Field trips to the pond in the park, our own playground, and the local museum yielded expressive line drawings. Class sets of clipboards and thin black felt pens are essential for these outings and are also very useful in the classroom.

Sometimes students respond to outings when back at school, so they can use paint or any number of different materials. Once I gave them brown paper, black paint, and wide brushes to respond to an exciting performance of Taiko drumming.

When we invited musicians to come into our classroom to play for us, students drew them and their instruments.

Another time they sketched drawings of an older student who brought in his bike to show its different parts.

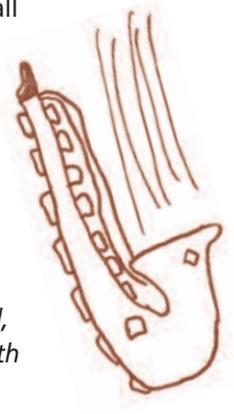
Remembering experiences like a Thanksgiving dinner or imagining scenes from a story or a read-aloud also provided inspiration for very personal drawings.

Classroom studies often call for illustrations. A visual illustration of a science experiment, "The Titanic," and a drawing related to an Inuit study are examples.

During a writing workshop, students in the early grades draw pictures and then write about them using invented spelling that gradually becomes more standard as they gain experience. Students in the higher grades often participate in daily draw exercises, where the subject matter is sometimes chosen by the teacher and sometimes by the student.

Students do not produce highly individualistic work when asked only to complete or copy adult-designed art work. Children use art as a language to express themselves when given the opportunity and encouragement, as they are in so many of our elementary school classrooms. Let's give all students that opportunity, and let us continue to insist upon a strong fine arts curriculum, with skilled specialists in all of our schools.

*Linda Picciotto, retired, taught primary at South Park School, Victoria.*



For informative articles and books about children's drawings by Bob Steele, Professor Emeritus, UBC, go to [drawnet.duetsoftware.net](http://drawnet.duetsoftware.net)

# Dance: The discipline that deserves credit

By Kim Wolski

A group of dance students was asked the question, Why do you dance? as part of a project to recognize International Dance Day, which takes place April 29.

Here are some of their thoughtful responses: *I dance to keep fit. I dance to escape the realities of my world. I dance because it is a place where I strive for perfection. I dance because it is a place where I can convert my thoughts into movements. I dance because when I am performing, for a few moments my body and mind exist in the same time and place. I dance because movement allows me to express myself more clearly than words. I dance because I feed off the energy of the group. I dance because I can. I dance because it feels good. I dance because it helps me learn about myself.*

Their answers highlight the physical, emotional, social, and mental benefits they experience from studying this art form.

Support for dance in BC schools varies and dance programs look different in every school. What is common are the two to five dance performances a year in addition to assemblies, flash mobs, competitions, collaborations with other arts

disciplines, and district dance festivals. Performances may shift from student-created dances to teacher or guest choreography, to building school community and school culture, or raising awareness about social issues.

There is also the ongoing class work that is invisible in performances. Students learn about specific techniques and the historical background of different dance genres. Students learn to identify muscles and bones and explore the endless movement potential of the human body. They watch professional choreography and discuss compositional elements while learning the vocabulary and grammar of the language of dance.

Dance was the last fine art to be included as a subject within the BC curriculum. This happened because of the persistent hard work of dance educators who tirelessly advocated for dance as an art form. The BC Ministry of Education's draft, "Transforming Curriculum and Assessment," combines the K-8 Dance, Visual Art, Drama, and Music curriculum under the umbrella of Arts Education.

Dance educators are concerned about the status of dance in schools. We are working hard to make dance visible and valued in our school communities and are fighting to have Dance programs recognized equally with Music, Visual Art, and Drama. It appears that the draft dance curriculum may be marginalized. If learning outcomes can be met through only one of the four arts, school districts may not offer multiple arts opportunities.

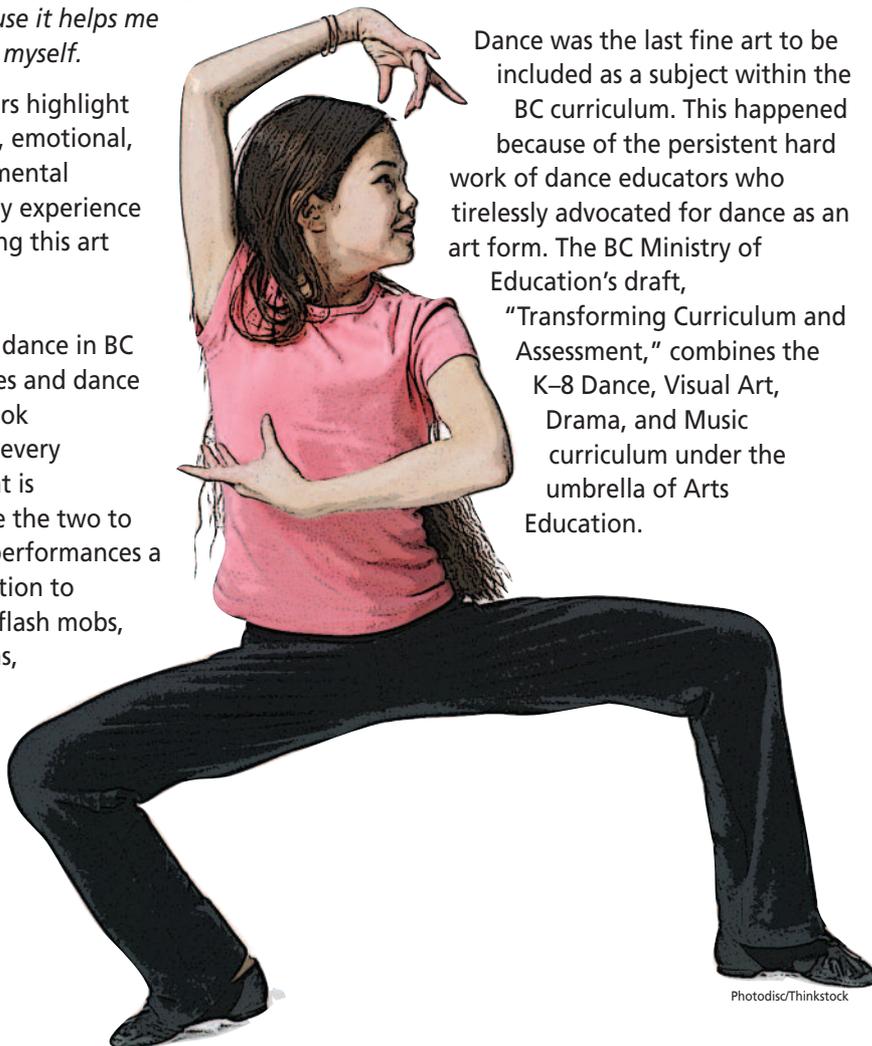
Certain questions are on our minds: What will happen to dance specialist teachers and the important role that dance plays not only in the development of an individual but also in the creation of community?

And another question needs to be asked: Why isn't dance offered in every elementary and secondary school across British Columbia?

In July 2013, The National Dance Organization published "Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting," which has many interesting findings. From this paper, neuroscientist Antonio D'Amasio, proposes that emotions and behaviours are at the center of how we learn and think, and these need to be accounted for in our schools. Therefore the notion that all cognition is embodied, and that the brain lives in and with a complex thinking and feeling organism that sweats, feels, moves, and learns should lead all educators to understand the value of dance education."

*Kim Wolski, President, BC Dance Educators' Association (BCDEA)*

**Visit the BC Dance Teachers' Association website:**  
<http://bctf.ca/bcdea>



Photodisc/Thinkstock



Jupiterimages/Stockbyte/Thinkstock

## Drama: Act for change

By Heather Lytle

***As drama educators we have long known the importance of what we do, and now it seems, so does everyone else! Every well-known and respected child psychologist, therapist, education consultant, administrator, and teacher is relishing in the recent buzz of the benefits of arts education.***

As Einstein said almost a century ago, “The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.” Yet we continue to test students’ intelligence with high pressure exams, we assign what are often meaningless and destructive letter grades, and we desperately hang on to an industrial model of educating our kids.

We need to cultivate environments that are conducive to enhancing student creativity and imagination. We need to foster classroom environments that teach compassion, empathy, critical thinking,

higher-order reasoning, innovation, and emotional well-being. These are the 21st century learning skills. And as we drama teachers know, these are also the core components of our classrooms.

We know that when arts and creativity become central to the learning environment, schools become places of discovery. The very school culture is changed—learning conditions are improved, teachers are renewed, discipline is minimal, and even the physical appearance of schools improves.

We see that the students with sustained involvement in arts programs, such as drama and music, are the same students who outperform their peers in all subject areas. They are the ones we see shining at graduation ceremonies as the confident and intelligent young people we want to send out into the world. We know this is because arts education nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies.

Formative assessment...self-regulation... collaborative learning styles...MindUp! None of this is new to drama teachers.

These ideas resonate deeply with drama teachers...this is the kind of teaching and learning we offer kids in drama programs on a daily basis.

If you think that arts education is a frill, consider the following findings. In Canada in 2006, 70,000 people earned their living in cultural occupations with a direct and indirect impact of 20 billion dollars on the economy. Between 1990 and 1997 the culture section grew by 14%, outpacing automotive and agriculture sectors. The culture sector is highly educated, 77% have post-secondary education, 41% hold degrees as compared to 17% holding degrees across other industries. BC was the third largest producer of culture output in Canada, accounting for 5.2 billion dollars.

Sir Ken Robinson’s TEDTalk on creativity is the most viewed TEDTalk of all time. Hundreds of thousands of us have seen this talk and most would agree with Robinson that our current system kills creativity and safe risk-taking in young people. He has been a champion for arts education, advocating that it should have the same status in education as numeracy and literacy.

Despite all of the evidence, we continue to see cuts to arts programs across BC. Drama teachers report on ridiculous class sizes of 60+ students and no considerations or compensations for the classrooms whose compositions are untenable.

This travesty isn’t going to change. We must continue to fight for arts programs near and dear to our hearts. We need to be a strong voice advocating for the importance of drama education in BC and across Canada, and be the change we want to see.

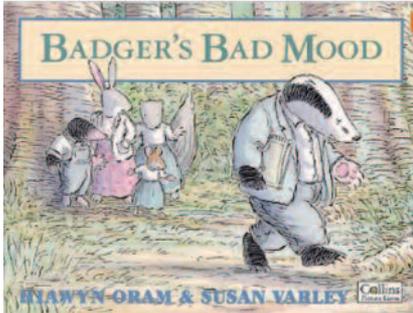
*Heather Lytle teaches drama and theatre at Smithers Secondary School, Smithers*

***Visit the Association of BC Drama Teachers’ website:  
[www.bcdramateachers.com](http://www.bcdramateachers.com)***

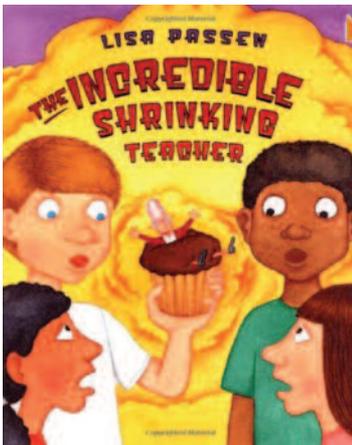
# The end of the school year

## A time to look back and forward

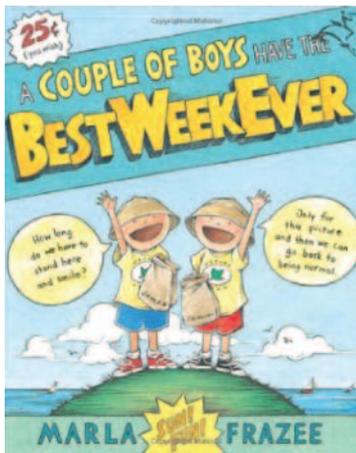
By Lucinda Tooker, teacher-librarian, Maple Ridge



The end of the school year provides an opportunity to recognize and express appreciation for what others have done for you and the school community throughout the year. I introduce this theme by reading *Badger's Bad Mood* by Hiawyn Oram. Poor Badger is feeling unappreciated, so his caring friend Mole organizes an awards ceremony for all the forest animals. Who do you think wins the most awards? Badger, of course! After reading the story, I provide the children with blank awards forms so they can let someone in the school know how much they are appreciated.



Everyone remembers their "meanest teacher ever," but Miss Irma Birnbaum out means them all in *The Incredible Shrinking Teacher* by Lisa Passen. Miss Birnbaum gets her come uppance when she ingests some of the prune pudding she is preparing for the end-of-the-year party. Suddenly she is the size of a toy, and her new perspective helps Miss Birnbaum to change her attitude. This funny story could start a conversation about how to celebrate another successful year at school.



How do you plan to spend your summer vacation? Perhaps you and a friend have an adventure planned, such as going to a nature daycamp. That's what is in store for best friends James and Eamon in *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever* by Marla Frazee. Grandparents Bill and Pam suggest several activities in addition to nature daycamp, but James and Eamon have other ideas about how to spend their spare time. The voice bubbles and illustrations in this book add to the humour and make it as appealing to adults as it is to children.

## BCTF wins two CALM awards

Teacher newsmagazine won two Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) awards in May.

### The Ed Finn Award

This award recognizes excellence in writing for print and we want to congratulate Nancy Knickerbocker for her newsmagazine article about the BCTF's ongoing work with Central American teachers on creating non-sexist schools.

### The Breaking Barriers Award

This award recognizes a union's efforts in overturning oppression. The BCTF won this award for our work in raising awareness about the negative legacy of residential schools and our involvement in Project of Heart and truth and reconciliation events.

Much thanks goes to Gail Stromquist for initiating this important work and ensuring that it continues.

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Here's the thing...



## WCB claims denied? Call the BCTF

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) or WorkSafeBC is responsible for paying compensation to workers who are injured or suffer an occupational disease arising from their employment. Sometimes WCB personnel make decisions regarding your claim that you may not agree with—e.g., decisions regarding claim acceptance or the extent of your entitlement to wage loss benefits or your right to a permanent disability award.

When you receive a negative decision letter from the WCB you do not have to dispute it on your own. The BCTF's WCB advocate is available to assist you.

Recent WCB decisions that we have helped members overturn include:

- A teacher was diagnosed with a vocal disorder by a throat specialist after she had reported her voice hoarseness to her family physician and related it to her work activities as a teacher. WCB denied the worker's claim on the basis that there was insufficient evidence to support a conclusion that the worker's workplace use of her voice caused or significantly contributed to the diagnosis. WCB related the cause to a non-compensable acid reflux condition.

We appealed the decision all the way to the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) and provided a detailed medical legal opinion from the worker's family physician. The WCAT panel preferred the medical opinion of the worker's family doctor over the opposing opinion of the WCB medical advisor because the family doctor had the

advantage of examining the worker personally and he undertook multiple re-examinations of the worker over the duration of her claim.

- A teacher experienced an onset of knee pain when she stood up from a low chair and turned to the left to write on a board. The worker had repeatedly been standing, turning to write, and sitting again. After undergoing an MRI, the worker was diagnosed with a right knee medial meniscus tear.

WCB denied the claim based on the opinion of their doctor who said that the worker's injury was caused by the osteoarthritis in the worker's knee and she would have experienced symptom onset in her knee regardless of the activity. During the appeal at WCAT, we received an opinion from the worker's family doctor who has treated the worker for over 10 years. His medical opinion identified that the medical evidence did not show significant osteoarthritis of the worker's medial compartment of her knee.

The WCAT panel was persuaded by the worker's family doctor's opinion that the motion of the worker's standing and pivoting created a rotational force while the worker's knee was partially flexed; thus, it was significant in the development of the medial meniscus tear.

- A teacher who suffered a head injury at work and was hit on the head again while on a gradual return to work program received a letter from WCB which denied her claim for headaches and terminated her temporary wage loss benefits even though she continued to suffer from headaches while participating

in another gradual return to work program. Upon appeal at the Review Division we provided medical evidence from a neuropsychologist which directly contradicted the WCB Medical Advisor's opinion and demonstrated that the Medical Advisor's opinion was based on inaccurate information. As a result, the WCB accepted her claim for headaches and reinstated her temporary wage loss benefits.

These claims prove that members should regularly visit their doctor when seeking compensation for illness/injury. Medical evidence is almost always necessary to overturn a WCB decision. Obtaining that evidence and fighting the WCB decision can be daunting and stressful for some members. If you find yourself in this situation, feel free to give me a call.

Our resources are such that we are not able to provide representation in all claims and appeals. There is only one WCB advocate to assist all teachers in the province. There must be a significant financial implication to the member or the BCTF in order for the WCB advocate to provide representation. If you wish to pursue an appeal on your own, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the appeal process. I can also direct you to the appropriate forms on the WCB or WCAT websites.

For further information, contact the BCTF WCB Advocate, Sarb Lalli at 1-800-663-9163, local 1892, or [slalli@bctf.ca](mailto:slalli@bctf.ca).

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# Solidarity spotlight

**“You shouldn’t have a fight if you can get a deal.”**



These were the words of Premier Christy Clark on March 27, as she announced the settlement of the four-week strike by union and non-union truckers at the Port of Vancouver. With back-to-work legislation looming, the truckers appreciated receiving “Negotiate,

Don’t Legislate” buttons from BCTF members who made solidarity visits to their picket lines.

As a result of the last-minute deal, government withdrew the back-to-work legislation it introduced earlier in the week. “My view is very much you shouldn’t have a fight if you can get a deal,” Clark told journalists. “We got a deal instead.”

Perhaps the Premier should apply the same reasoning to the teachers’ bargaining table. Check out <http://aFairDeal.ca>.

Tell Christy Clark and Peter Fassbender to reinvest in public education. Share the website with parents and the public too.

## One year later, still locked out

IKEA’s flagship store in Richmond, BC has been behind picket lines since Monday, May 13, 2013 after the company served lockout notice on its employees.

The company served the lock-out notice to the local Teamsters union after workers twice rejected offers by the company that called for a variety of concessions and a proposed return to a tiered-wage system.

Anita Dawson, a former IKEA employee and representative for Teamsters, local 213, said the company has consistently tabled offers that included concessions in hours of work, allowances, benefits and classifications, as well as a tiered-wage system that was a major issue at the bargaining table six years ago when the workers went on strike to back their demands.



“The company has showed little interest in dealing with our issues at the bargaining table,” she said. “They seem intent on following their agenda, which involves cutbacks. Our members are not interested in going backward,” she said.

The Richmond store is one of two unionized IKEA locations in Canada. The other is in Montreal.

Please don’t shop at IKEA until this dispute is settled fairly.

# Curriculum change continues

Drafts for Math, Fine Arts, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies for primary, intermediate, and early secondary grades are posted at <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum>. In the weeks to come, drafts for French, French as a First Language, and the newly-combined Health & Physical Education will also be posted on the same website, and translations into French for most of the drafts will also be available. So far, collaboration between the BCTF and the Ministry on this project has been positive.

Implementation timelines continue to be pushed back, and revisions will occur to the drafts before they are finalized for use in BC classrooms. Please continue to send your feedback to the Ministry and the BCTF for consideration during the revision process: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>.

Initial discussions are now also under way on the Grades 10, 11, 12 drafts, as well as the Applied Skills subject areas.

The review of graduation requirements also continues and has become a multi-year process. The provincial committee reviewing submissions and information has reconvened, with BCTF participation.

The BCTF will continue to push for sufficient funds to support implementation and for access to in-service for teachers throughout the province.

– Glen Hansman

For more information, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/Issues-in-education>  
Wiki: <http://tinyurl.com/bctf-curriculum-reps>



## Négociations: le gouvernement doit changer de cap

Jim Iker

Les moyens de pression au travail ne sont jamais chose facile. Chaque enseignant se soucie profondément de ses élèves. Nous travaillons dur pour que la négociation collective ne se répercute pas dans la salle de classe, mais parfois nous devons prendre une position plus ferme. Nous devons agir pour améliorer les conditions d'apprentissage de nos élèves et nos conditions de travail. Nous devons aussi agir pour défendre nos droits en tant que professionnels, membres d'un syndicat, citoyens de la Colombie-Britannique et du Canada.

Il est temps que le gouvernement change de cap. Depuis trop longtemps, il a essayé de nous provoquer, de négocier de mauvaise foi et d'utiliser les élèves, comme des pions, à des fins politiques. Malgré des propositions raisonnables et des gestes de l'équipe des négociations de la FECB, la BCPSEA et le gouvernement se sont obstinément crispés sur des exigences déraisonnables, comme un contrat d'une durée de 10 ans, comme, de nouveau, l'élimination des clauses sur la taille et la composition des classes, les dispositions au niveau de la dotation en personnel, ainsi que d'autres concessions. Ils n'ont pas bougé, de manière significative, sur le temps de préparation, ni le salaire. S'ils veulent un accord, s'ils veulent la paix sociale, il est temps qu'ils montrent de la bonne foi et qu'ils cessent leurs revendications purement idéologiques.

Le gouvernement va devoir apporter des ressources et du financement à la table. Dans son dernier budget, le gouvernement a mis de côté des centaines de millions de dollars pour les cas d'événements imprévus. Ils ne peuvent pas crier famine. Il est temps qu'ils choisissent de mettre cet argent dans les salles de classe. S'ils peuvent trouver 750 millions de dollars pour payer la California Power et 600 millions de dollars pour un toit rétractable qui, d'ailleurs, se rétracte rarement, ils peuvent améliorer la taille et la composition des classes.

C'est aussi le message que j'ai transmis à l'Assemblée générale annuelle de la BC School Association en avril. J'ai lancé un appel à agir – en s'exprimant et en défendant nos élèves, aux 300 commissaires scolaires réunis dans la salle. Les réductions proposées dans les conseils scolaires, en raison du sous-financement du gouvernement, ont dépassé la mesure. Christy Clark et Peter Fassbender doivent sentir le roussi ou ils ne changeront pas de cap. C'est pourquoi les enseignants, les

parents et les commissaires doivent travailler ensemble pour faire monter la pression sur le gouvernement.

Chers collègues, en septembre, il sera important que nous ayons de plus petites classes, des garanties sur la composition de ces classes, des niveaux minimaux d'enseignants spécialisés et une augmentation salariale équitable.

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Kathy Clarke, Teacher and  
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[www.ultimateparis.com](http://www.ultimateparis.com)

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**FRANCE** Alsace and Vosges Mountains, 3 bdrm. heritage house on wine route, furnished, modern kitchen, 45 min. from Germany, 35 min. from Switzerland. C\$550/wk., [mano936@gmail.com](mailto:mano936@gmail.com)

**ENGLAND** The Cotswolds, cottage suitable for two people. Gorgeous, country walks and history at your doorstep. Minimum 2 weeks. Email: [lynette@coulter.plus.com](mailto:lynette@coulter.plus.com)

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**GABRIOLA ISLAND, BC** 2 bdrm. cottage [gabriolacottage.netfirms.com](http://gabriolacottage.netfirms.com) or e-mail [boysen@shaw.ca](mailto:boysen@shaw.ca) 250-247-9883

**BAJA** San Jose Del Cabo Mexico: Privately owned, fully furnished 1 bdrm. condo on the Punta Sur Golf Course (6th tee) Ocean view. Wkly/mtly. 604-626-8523, [leanoraelton@gmail.com](mailto:leanoraelton@gmail.com) or VRBO #461431 for pics.

**PUERTO VALLARTA** 2 bdrm. condo rental, [bfoog13@hotmail.com](mailto:bfoog13@hotmail.com)

**WATERFRONT CONDO** Birch Bay, WA. 2 bdrm., 2 bath, for week or weekend rentals. Complex has indoor pool, hot tub, games room. \$150/night or \$900/wk (plus \$50 cln. fee) [birchbayrentals.com](http://birchbayrentals.com) or call Teresa 604-831-4080.

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**QUADRA ISLAND** Waterfront Beach Cabin or Studio-suite. [gfalck@twinncomm.ca](mailto:gfalck@twinncomm.ca) <http://eagle-viewvacationaccommodations.vpweb.ca>, 250-285-3682

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**CHRISTINA LAKE** cottage vacation rental. Check online: <http://augustwhim.com>

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**QUADRA ISLAND HOUSE,** waterfront. Ideal for summer vacation. Large private treed acreage (100 acres, 2000 ft. of waterfront) with pristine sandy beach. Pictures, more info at Vancouver Craigslist, click vacation rental and in search box write: Kolker's estate vacation rental, or phone 778-288-1703 Ben.

**LAKE WHATCOM,** Washington. View 3 bdrm. house on golf course. \$150/\$1000, 604-536-6915, [shunterjivung@gmail.com](mailto:shunterjivung@gmail.com)

**HAWAII.** Large 2 bdrm., 2 bath condo in Kailua/Kona area. Beautiful complex, pools, tennis courts, snorkelling, golf and kayaking nearby. Rent is \$90/night. Contact Elizabeth Fleming, 604-261-6474.

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**BRENTWOOD BAY.** Furnished 3 bdrm. house available July 1 to Aug. 9 – Brentwood Bay near Victoria. \$2000. [seabecker@gmail.com](mailto:seabecker@gmail.com)

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**VANCOUVER.** Beautiful 1 bdrm. and office apartment, large patio, close to Granville Island, 20 min. to UBC, all appliances, high speed internet, wifi, available for July & August 2014. References needed. [er3048@gmail.com](mailto:er3048@gmail.com)

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**TEACHERS' TUTORING SERVICE** is looking for qualified teachers for one-to-one in-home tutoring throughout Metro Vancouver. Teachers must be BC Ministry of Education certified. For more information and to apply online, visit our "Join Our Service" page at [www.tutor.bc.ca](http://www.tutor.bc.ca) The online application form will be activated to accept applications June 24, 2014. TTS is a non-profit society.

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or [www.couples911.org](http://www.couples911.org), or referrals can be made directly by calling 604-341-3741 (Dr. Williamson) or 604-831-7792 (Dr. Wilson). Qualified, province-wide services available on Skype or Facetime, contact above for information.

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**DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL INCOME?** Are you a qualified teacher, or do you have a university degree? Could you provide a single room, 3 meals per day and teach English to a foreign student in your own home in the Vancouver/Lower Mainland region? Rates from US\$582.50-US\$845.00 per student per week. [www.hli.co.uk](http://www.hli.co.uk) Please reply to Vancouver Local Organiser, Paul Tagney at [hlicanada@yahoo.ca](mailto:hlicanada@yahoo.ca)

**EDUTALKS SEMINARS** announces their 2014 Summer Series: Aug 21—6:30–8:30 p.m. Stephenie Gold—Supporting Anxious Children in the School Setting (for parents and professionals) and Aug 22—9 a.m.–1 p.m. Marc Landry—Hey My Brain Doesn't Work That Way—Supporting Brain Differences and Sensory Processing. More info, online payment and registration available at: [www.edutalksseminars.com](http://www.edutalksseminars.com) Inquiries: [edutalksseminars@gmail.com](mailto:edutalksseminars@gmail.com)

## **PD Calendar**

For a listing of upcoming conferences and workshops, check the online PD Calendar:

<http://bctf.ca/PDcalendar>  
Changes/additions:  
[mshukin@bctf.ca](mailto:mshukin@bctf.ca)

Future October PSA days:  
2014–2015: October. 24, 2014  
2015–2016: October. 23, 2015



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# My daughter graduates: a K–12 journey

By Colleen Mudry

Today I drove my little girl to her public school for the last time. Now it's true that she is 17, is as tall as me and resembles an adult woman, but as my youngest, she will always remain my little girl.

I remember watching her stride confidently into Kindergarten on her first day, swinging her Barbie lunch kit and leaving our family's world for her own. For the first three mornings I cried as the enormity of the rapid passage of time overcame me. Then the giddy excitement of two-and-a-half whole hours free of the constant responsibility of raising two young children on my own revealed itself.

Over her school career there have been many firsts and lasts, and I have marked each one in a special place in my heart. How can it be the end of Christmas concerts, hot-dog days, PAC meetings, homework, sports days,

intricate projects, field trips, report cards, summer vacation, Halloween parties, awards ceremonies, plays and musicals? Will there be no more notices for two-dozen cupcakes required, fished forgotten from backpacks the night before? What about strolling elementary hallways and inhaling the heady scent of poster paint, stale lunch kits, paper, and excitement? Or the desperate attempt to behave maturely, mixed with general rambunctiousness, displayed in the middle school? Or the startling mix of young teens and youth resembling adult men and woman, benefiting from a banquet of electives in the high school and paving the pathways to their futures?

My daughter has attended five schools over her 13-year school history, two in our chosen community of Powell River, and has experienced many teachers and principals. Most have been excellent and some have been exemplary; teachers who shared their passion for their subjects and built strong relationships with their students. Teachers who were able to encourage a shy little girl to pursue her academic goals and interests. Teachers who inspired students to reach deep within and reveal the brilliant potential waiting there.

I always looked forward to parent/teacher nights and found it fascinating to hear how my daughter was perceived by her teachers, and how she was reflected in the outside world's lens. Through her anxiety and frustration in making sense of numbers, to her joy in discovering the power of the written and acted word, my daughter has transversed the often confusing maze of the school system. We will say goodbye to new school supplies, monkey bars, homemade mother's day gifts, spelling tests, school sick rooms, and friends to greet and share the day with.

I admire the individual that my daughter is and would be proud to

have her as a friend, if I met her outside of my family. I have observed the traits that she possesses in many of the youth of Powell River; empathy, caring, dedication to their sports, hobbies and interests, a genuine social conscience, and a passionate environmental awareness. They are a lot of fun to be around.

I have been driving my daughter to school pretty consistently for the past 13 years, before heading onto work, and found it a great time to discuss the day's events, evening plans, and to explore the tangled path of a teen's emotional development. Today I pull up to the school, give a routine suggestion to have a good day and wait. She smiles and holds my eye contact for a second longer than usual, then shuts the door and strides confidently into the school, swinging her backpack. My throat constricts and suddenly I am blinking back the same tears that have been waiting for 13 years. This time however, I welcome these tears that spring into my eyes and I wonder, as I pull out and drive toward my soon-to-be-child-absent new life, how a journey can be so long and yet so heartbreakingly short, all at the same time.

Colleen Mudry, a Sunshine Coast parent

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