

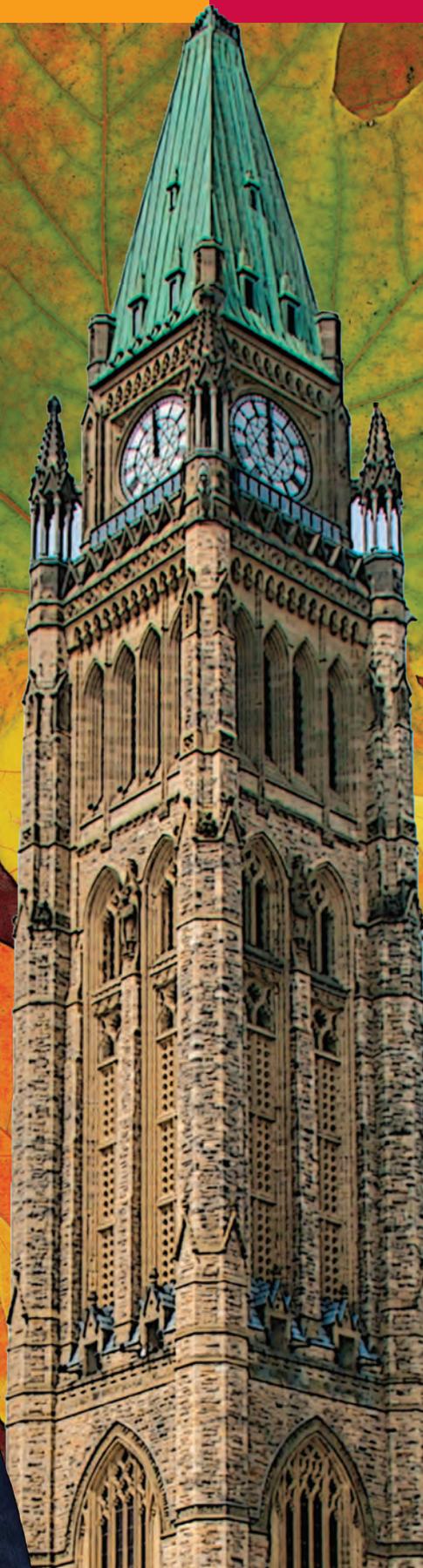
Teacher



Magazine of the
BC Teachers' Federation

Volume 28, Number 1
Sept/Oct 2015

Election 2015
Canada's
chance for
CHANGE





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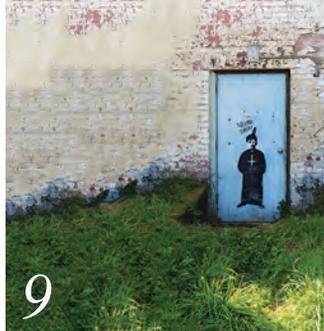


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This is your MAGAZINE

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 letters to the editor. If you have any thoughts about any of the articles you have read here and want to share your opinion with other teachers, send your letter to teachermag@bctf.ca.

For more information about magazine themes or to submit an article, contact Susan Croll, editor of *Teacher*, scroll@bctf.ca or 604-871-1877.

Teacher reserves the right to edit or condense any contribution considered for publication. We are unable to publish all letters we receive. Please keep your letter to a maximum of 250 words.

Deadlines for 2015–16 issues are:

- Nov/Dec issue** October 23, 2015
- Jan/Feb issue** December 11, 2015
- March issue** January 15, 2016
- May/June issue** April 15, 2016

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I CHUCKLED WHEN I READ THE ARTICLE, “Classrooms without walls” (*Teacher*, Volume 27, Number 5, p. 22). At one school, our entire staff completed an assessment to determine our personality types and triggers. The intent of the exercise was to increase our effectiveness as a team. We divided into our personality groups and were given the task of designing the perfect classroom. The group with the most teachers had matching bulletin boards and tissue boxes. My group of two (I always knew I didn’t fit the traditional teacher role) enthusiastically designed classrooms without walls. We were so excited; the other groups were horrified.

—*Jenny Cuthbertson*, retired teacher

Teacher

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Curricular change, a new book, and the federal election

COLLEAGUES, I hope everyone's had a good start to the 2015–16 school year and had the chance during the summer to rest up and spend quality time with friends and loved ones.

As a Federation, we are already dealing with three important issues this fall. June 2 became a truly historic day when Justice Murray Sinclair delivered the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and recommendations—the culmination of so much work and courage by survivors.

His report urges all of us to acknowledge the profound toll this cultural genocide has taken on First Nations people and to take its 94 calls to action to heart. As a union and as teachers, we play a critical role in reconciliation as the root of the injustices lie with the misuse of education. That is one of the reasons why the BCTF has created a new resource to help members teach their students.

Our new book, *Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC*, describes what happened to so many Aboriginal children, their stories of resistance and survival, and how thousands of children tragically died while at these schools.

The online edition, bctf.ca/HiddenHistory/, has links to a wealth of learning resources including videos, original historical documents, timelines, and classroom activities. The resource is also in line with our long-standing push to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives across all grade levels in the BC curriculum. That's one of the reasons I'm so proud of the work our members have already done with the curriculum redesign teams to ensure the Truth and Reconciliation's recommendations are properly reflected.

Curricular change: kudos and concerns

While the BCTF is pleased to see the government increasing Aboriginal content in the new curriculum, there is much more to talk about on the curriculum front. We generally support the changes proposed in

the new draft curricula. In fact, they contain several elements the BCTF has advocated for over the past number of years. We are pleased with the fewer prescribed learning outcomes, as teachers and students will not feel so pressured to speed through the curriculum. Now, more teachers will be able to initiate cross-disciplinary work. On behalf of all members, I extend a huge thanks to all teachers who participated in the committees that drafted curriculum.

On the other hand, we are concerned about how the curricula will fit in with other government priorities such as possible changes to graduation requirements.

The proposed budget for curriculum implementation is completely inadequate. We need to ensure funding for curriculum implementation does not come from teachers' professional development funds and is not mandated in a top-down manner by some Bill 11 mechanism. Furthermore, besides time and in-service, teachers need concrete resources, such as updated textbooks, guides, and other kinds of materials connected to the new curricula if teaching and learning are to be meaningful.

I assure you that we will continue to raise these points along with the ongoing underfunding of education, when we meet the new Minister of Education, Mike Bernier, for the first time.

Canada's chance

In less than a month Canadians go to the polls to elect a federal government. Your union does not usually get involved in federal elections and rarely do we take sides.

But this year, we are ready to push the envelope. After nine years of Stephen Harper's Conservative government, one that is mired in Senate scandals and cover ups, we believe it is time for change. Earlier this year, the BCTF Executive

Committee endorsed the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) "Time for Change" tour and BetterChoice.ca campaign.

We agree with the CLC. Canada needs affordable child care, quality healthcare, good jobs, and better retirement security for all Canadians. We need a government that cares about the environment and respects the scientists that work on our behalf. We need a government that values Canada's public services and is committed to reconciliation with First Nations.

Alberta showed us change is possible—it can be done. But change will only come when we act together. Please, get involved. Ask your colleagues, friends, and families to also get involved, volunteer, and vote. Together, we will make a difference.

Have a great year everyone. Find your own work/life balance and stay healthy.

Jim Iker



Susan Croll photo

HIGH HOPES for our country

by Kip Wood, Nanaimo secondary school teacher

WHAT DOES TEACHING have to do with this upcoming federal election? Everything. Both are about hope. As teachers, we always hold out high hopes for our students. We help them grow and become active, socially responsible citizens who care about humanity, community, and to value the beauty of democracy.

I'm holding out high hopes for Canada too. I see this federal election as an opportunity to reclaim our country and recommit to basic values like honesty in government, economic justice for all, and compassion instead of cutbacks.

For the past nine years, I've witnessed our federal government give huge tax cuts for those living within the highest income brackets. I've watched thousands of federal public sector workers lose their jobs and the programs and services they deliver

gutted. I've seen young women and men returning from Afghanistan told they would not be receiving any pension or get the help they need to deal with post-traumatic stress or other battle-related injuries. I've heard of scientists being muzzled when they've tried to stop the cuts to environmental programs and research on climate change. And I can't forget the deceit and blaming from the Prime Minister's Office during the Duffy scandal, or the number of Harper appointees investigated by the RCMP for fraud-related activities.

I remember in 2006 when Stephen Harper formed his first minority government, the often-heard remark at that time was, "at least he didn't get a majority." Then in 2008, the Conservatives inched closer to a majority, winning 143 seats. I recall people saying then, "What if he gets a majority next time?" Next time did happen and the Conservatives won a majority in 2011 with 166 seats.

The cuts kept on coming, more people lost their jobs, and democracy took a tumble. Voter turnout in 2011 was low, barely reaching 61%. Only a fraction of Canadians actually voted for the Conservatives, in fact, the majority of Canadians did not vote for them. It could be said that non-voters elected the Harper majority.

As a teacher, I know the upcoming federal election will have a direct impact on public education and every other service provided by our provincial government. Even though K-12 education falls under provincial



jurisdiction, federal funding plays an indirect role in its success.

Here's why: the most costly public program—and deservedly so—in this country is healthcare, the envy of the world over. The federal government subsidizes healthcare with the Canada Health Transfer, or CHT. Provincial and territorial governments then determine their healthcare budgets in part based on the federal funding. If the federal government fails to deliver, provinces are left to fill in gaps and cover downloaded costs.

“...voters also speak about a deep desire for change.

In 2004, prior to the election of the Conservatives, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments signed the Health Accord, a ten-year program that committed all parties to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. In 2012, the Harper Government announced it would not renegotiate the Accord. Instead, it decided, unilaterally, to reduce the CHT and eliminate its equalization function, meaning that provinces less able to generate tax revenue would bear greater healthcare costs. If, once all the ballots are counted the night of October 19 and the status quo prevails, \$36 billion will be cut in healthcare funding to provinces and territories over the next ten years.

For BC, Harper's plan for the CHT means five billion dollars less in the healthcare budget. This loss is unimaginable, especially when we know that BC has both a growing and ageing population and that costs will increase faster than inflation.

We have all taught students coping with chronic illness and we have scrambled for services and resources to help them. Cuts to health transfer payments will only further erode these services for our students. We also have to ask ourselves, how else will this loss of funding affect the province's abilities to pay for other public services, such as education?

The answer to that question lies with taxes. Much of what pays for healthcare, education, and other programs that make society decent and more equal is revenue from taxes. Despite the importance of taxes and the role taxes play in providing programs and services critical to any

democratic society, it's an issue that seldom gets talked about, unless it is to applaud tax cuts.

Toby Sanger, a senior economist with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, has researched the effect of recent corporate tax cuts on the economy. His data, published in 2014, show that if federal corporate tax revenues were at the same share of the economy, given corporate profits remaining at the same level, the federal government would have collected at least \$10 billion more in tax revenue from corporations in 2012–13. When Stephen Harper became Prime Minister, corporate tax rates were just over 21%. With corporate tax rates now at 14%, the share of tax revenue from corporations is significantly lower than in 2006, providing 12.7% of total federal revenues, down from a share of 16.6% in 2006–07. Imagine what could be done with billions of dollars returned to the government and public-sector programming.

As I've spent the last while canvassing door-to-door and talking to voters on the phone about the election, no one directly raises the issue of taxation. Yes, there is cynicism and fatigue about party politics, but voters also speak about a deep desire for change. They talk about retirement security and healthcare with a sense of national pride. They feel strongly that we have to maintain our publicly funded healthcare system and provide economic conditions conducive to a dignified retirement. They say they are not averse to paying taxes, but they expect taxation to be fair and want their tax dollars to translate into value.

As BC's teachers, we are immersed in provincial politics, trying to protect our collective agreement, and save public education. This federal election gives us another chance to stand up for ourselves and for our students. That is why I feel hopeful. This federal election is our chance to change Canada's direction and to become the kind of Canada we hope our students become: socially responsible, compassionate, and open-minded.

A quick HISTORY LESSON

Going back 50 years to the beginning of Medicare, the Fed's share of the healthcare bill has varied. In the 1960s, the Fed's paid close to 50%; in the 70s, about 35%; in the 80s, about 25%. In the mid-90s, the Chretien Government, with Paul Martin as finance minister, reduced the federal share of healthcare funding to a low of 10% as a political strategy to eliminate the budget deficit. Under the Accord, the federal share of total healthcare costs was restored to about 20%.

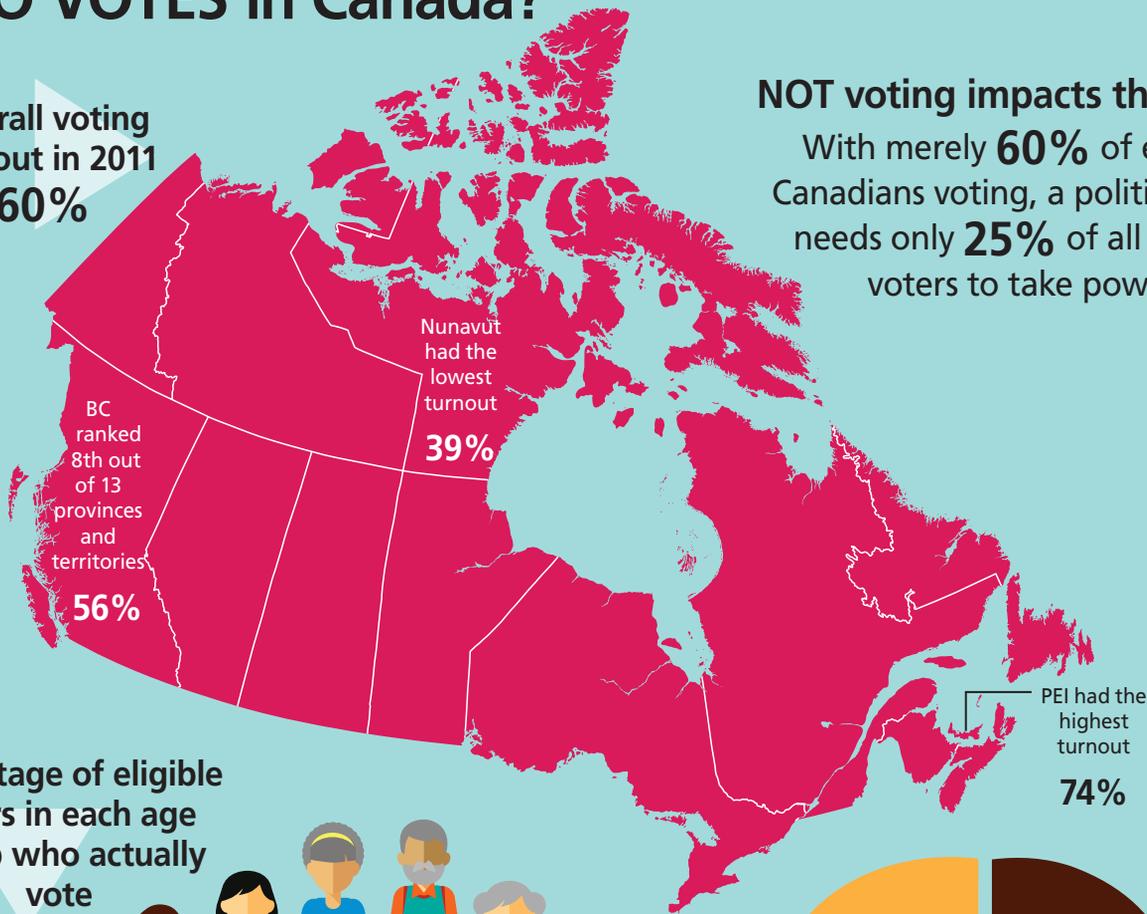
In July 2015, the Parliamentary Budget Office issued a warning stating provinces would not be able to cover the cost of healthcare with the new CHT regime. Understanding that they would need to raise provincial taxes or cut other services, or both, the premiers issued a statement saying that the federal government, going forward, should be paying 25% of healthcare costs.

All three opposition parties, NDP, Liberal, and Green, have committed to renegotiate the Accord. Harper has made no such commitment, only that the Conservatives would “work with the provinces” The NDP is the only party that has to date, committed to restoring the \$36 billion that would have been in place had the terms of the Accord been extended.

Please take the time to study the issues in this election. Take the time to vote. It's our country and our students' future.

WHO VOTES in Canada?

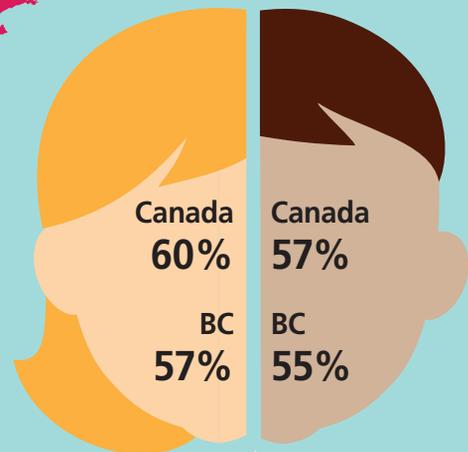
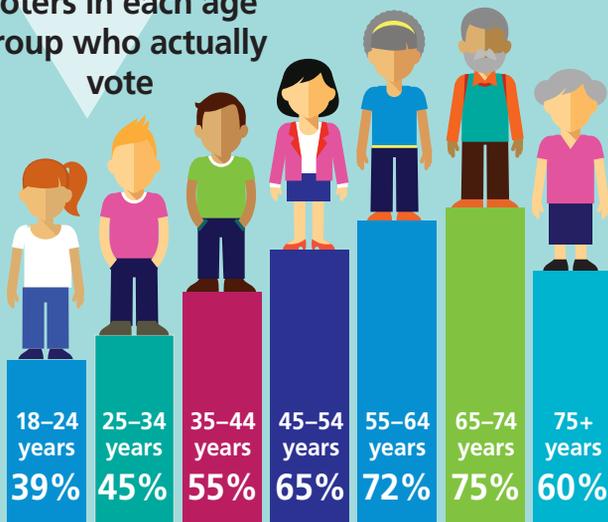
Overall voting turnout in 2011
60%



NOT voting impacts the results

With merely **60%** of eligible Canadians voting, a political party needs only **25%** of all eligible voters to take power.

Percentage of eligible voters in each age group who actually vote

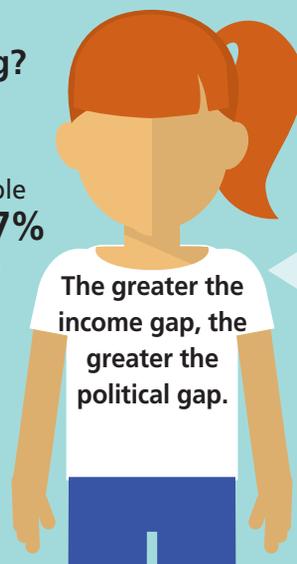


Percentage of eligible female and male voters who actually vote

What does income inequality have to do with voting?

In one generation, voter turnout in Canada has declined from **80%** to **60%**. Inequalities of wealth and income have increased over the same time.

The top **1%** of Canadians receive **12%** of all taxable income, up from **7%** in the early 1980s.



The greater the income gap, the greater the political gap.

Unemployment has never been higher for the 18-24 year old age group.

Sources: Elections Canada, Inspire Democracy, Duncan Cameron, PressProgress.

Numbers have been rounded up or down.



I teach I vote

HEAR my voice

To get issues important to teachers on the political agenda, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) conducted a national survey of 5,000 teachers last September. Teachers told the CTF that two issues concerning their students must be addressed immediately. These issues come as no surprise to BC teachers:

- more funding and support for mental health services, including resources to help make schools safe and caring places
- the need for a real and effective national antipoverty strategy.

Based on these findings, the CTF developed, "Hear My Voice" a national, non-partisan campaign to promote strong teacher voices federally and to encourage teachers to get involved locally. They asked federal party leaders to respond to a series of questions related to these issues.

Their replies are too extensive to print here but you can read them on the CTF website at vox.ctf-fce.ca. The Conservative Party of Canada was the only party that did not reply to the questions.

Here are some questions you may want to ask when federal election candidates and canvassers come knocking at your door.

Consider asking:

- How will my students benefit if I voted for you?
- What will you and your party do to eliminate child poverty in Canada?
- Can you tell me about your plans to support a national mental health strategy?
- What do you plan to do to help the 80% of children and youth who can't get access to the mental health help they need?

A number of other issues, not necessarily related to public education, but to the well-being of all Canadians, also need to be raised. Think about asking candidates and canvassers:

- Will you restore public services to a level that ensures the safety and health of all Canadians and to our environment?
- How will you deal with climate change?
- Will you repeal anti-union legislation such as Bill C-377 and restrictive collective bargaining legislation for public sector workers?
- How will you ensure that strong legislation is in place to protect workers' pension plans?
- When will you begin working with the provinces and territories to negotiate a new Health Accord?
- What are your plans to provide affordable childcare to families?
- How will you provide meaningful and decently paid jobs for underemployed and unemployed people living in Canada?
- What is your approach to closing the growing income gap in Canada?

Teachers have powerful, personal, and compelling stories to share. Join with other teachers, and volunteer on campaigns. Raise your voices in this federal election to make a difference.

Visit vox.ctf-fce.ca

Adapted from materials developed by



Canadian Teachers' Federation
Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants

Des changements dans le programme d'études, un nouveau livre et l'élection fédérale

CHERS COLLÈGUES, j'espère que la rentrée scolaire 2015/16 a été une réussite, et qu'au cours de l'été, vous avez eu la chance de vous reposer et de passer de bons moments avec vos amis et vos proches.

En tant que fédération, nous faisons déjà face à trois questions importantes cet automne. Le 2 juin dernier est devenu une date historique quand le juge Murray Sinclair a remis le rapport final et les recommandations de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada – fruit du travail acharné et du courage des survivants.

Ce rapport demande instamment à chacun de nous de reconnaître les énormes conséquences de ce génocide culturel sur les Premières Nations et de prendre à cœur les 94 appels à l'action. En tant que syndicat et en tant qu'enseignants, nous jouons un rôle primordial dans cette réconciliation car la racine de ces injustices se trouve justement dans l'utilisation abusive et détournée de l'éducation. Voilà une des raisons pour lesquelles la FECB a créé une nouvelle ressource (disponible en anglais seulement) pour aider les membres dans l'enseignement de ce génocide.

Notre nouveau livre, *Project of Heart : Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC*, met en relief certains personnages historiques impliqués dans les pensionnats, la résistance autochtone aux injustices et il offre des histoires de survivants ainsi que celle d'un enfant mort dans un pensionnat à Kamloops. Sa mort n'étant tragiquement qu'une parmi les milliers d'autres qui ont eu lieu dans tous les pensionnats partout au Canada.

L'édition en ligne, <http://goo.gl/tKHdZW>, contient des liens vers une multitude de ressources (en anglais seulement), y compris vidéos, documents historiques originaux, lignes du temps, activités pour la salle de classe et plus encore. Ces ressources

reflètent notre appel de longue date à intégrer contenu et perspectives autochtones à tous les niveaux du programme d'études de la Colombie-Britannique. Voilà l'une des raisons pour lesquelles je suis si fier du travail accompli par nos membres dans les équipes de révision du programme d'études afin d'assurer que les recommandations de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation soient correctement reflétées.

Changements au programme d'études: félicitations et préoccupations

La FECB est heureuse de voir que le gouvernement augmente le contenu autochtone dans le nouveau programme, mais il y a encore beaucoup de points à discuter. Nous appuyons les changements proposés dans le nouveau projet du programme d'études. En effet, il contient plusieurs éléments préconisés par la FECB depuis de nombreuses années. Nous sommes heureux de voir diminuer le nombre de résultats d'apprentissage prescrits. Les enseignants et les élèves ne se sentiront plus obligés de se ruer tête baissée dans le curriculum. Davantage d'enseignants seront désormais en mesure d'entreprendre des travaux transdisciplinaires. Au nom de tous les membres, j'aimerais exprimer un grand merci à tous les enseignants qui ont participé aux équipes de révision.

Pourtant nous sommes également préoccupés par la façon dont le programme sera compatible avec les autres priorités du gouvernement telles que « le changement en éducation », et par le manque de clarté autour des habiletés de base et des changements possibles aux exigences d'obtention du diplôme.

Le budget proposé pour la mise en œuvre du nouveau programme d'études est tout à fait insuffisant. Nous devons nous assurer que le financement de cette mise en œuvre ne vienne pas des fonds de perfectionnement professionnel des enseignants et ne soit pas mandaté d'une manière autoritaire via une clause dans la Loi 11. De plus, pour

qu'enseignement et apprentissage aient du sens, les enseignants ont besoin, en plus du temps, de ressources concrètes, comme des livres de cours, des guides et d'autres matériels en relation avec le nouveau programme d'études.

Je vous assure que nous allons continuer à soulever ces points, ainsi que celui du sous-financement chronique de l'éducation, lorsque nous rencontrerons le nouveau ministre de l'Éducation Mike Bernier pour la première fois.

L'heure est au changement: le 19 octobre, votez!

Dans moins d'un mois les Canadiens se rendront aux urnes pour élire un gouvernement fédéral. Votre syndicat ne s'implique habituellement pas dans les élections fédérales et prend rarement position.

Mais cette année, nous sommes prêts à repousser nos limites. Après neuf ans de gouvernement conservateur de Stephen Harper, d'un gouvernement embourbé dans les scandales du Sénat et des dissimulations, nous croyons qu'un changement s'impose.

Plus tôt cette année, le Comité exécutif de la FECB a approuvé la tournée « L'heure est au changement » du Congrès du travail du Canada et la campagne BetterChoice.ca.

Nous sommes d'accord avec le CTC. Le Canada a besoin de services de garde abordables, de soins de santé de qualité, de bons emplois et d'une retraite sécurisée pour tous les Canadiens. Nous avons besoin d'un gouvernement qui se soucie de l'environnement et respecte les scientifiques qui travaillent en notre nom. Nous avons besoin d'un gouvernement qui valorise les services publics du Canada et est activement engagé dans la réconciliation avec les Premières Nations.

L'Alberta nous a montré que le changement est possible – qu'il est à portée de main. Mais le changement n'est possible que lorsque nous agissons ensemble. S'il vous plaît, impliquez-vous. Demandez à vos collègues, amis et familles de s'impliquer, de devenir bénévoles et de voter. Ensemble, nous allons faire la différence.

Je vous souhaite à tous une bonne année scolaire. N'oubliez pas de respecter votre équilibre vie personnelle-vie professionnelle pour passer cette année en pleine forme.

Jim Iker

Pour du changement
VOTEZ
Le 19 octobre

Education for RECONCILIATION

BCTF launches new resource on residential school history in BC

It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation.

— Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

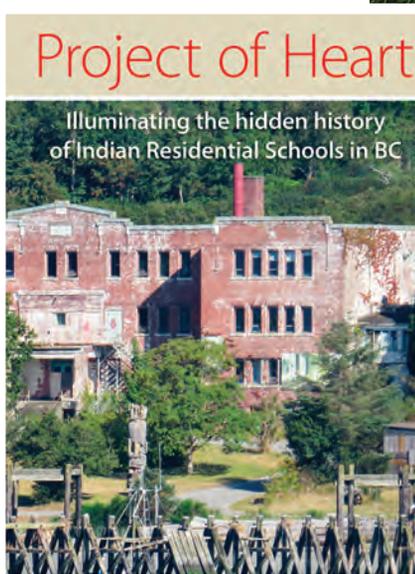
With the release this fall of a new learning resource on the history and legacy of residential schools in British Columbia, the BCTF is continuing its work toward justice and equity for Aboriginal students, teachers, and communities.

"It's so important that now, following on the landmark report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission last June, we provide teachers with tools and support to bring this tragic part of our shared history alive in classrooms across the province," said BCTF President Jim Iker.

Project of Heart: Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC is available as a 40-page publication and as an online ebook which contains links to a great range of teaching resources including videos, original historical documents, timelines, classroom activities, and more.

The resource contains moving testimonials from elders who endured the abuses of the residential school system and survived, as well as the story of one girl among the estimated 6,000 children who did not survive. It also profiles two key historical characters: the federal bureaucrat who promoted the Indian residential school system and the doctor who blew the whistle on this national crime. As well, it looks at the Harper government's apology to residential school survivors and the lack of follow up to this historic gesture. The courage and resilience of the children in the face of profound neglect and abuse, and the ongoing resistance of Aboriginal people to the government's assimilationist policies are also important themes.

The book is available online at bctf.ca/HiddenHistory and on the TeachBC website. For copies in print, please contact Gail Stromquist, BCTF Aboriginal education co-ordinator, at gstromquist@bctf.ca.



What are PROVINCIAL SPECIALIST ASSOCIATIONS?

PSAs ARE SOURCES of professional assistance within the BCTF. Through PSAs, members exchange ideas on research, teaching strategies, curriculum development and, and other shared interests.



PSAs give members:

- updates on curriculum
- information on new methods and pedagogy
- networks via local chapters
- specialty publications
- support for exemplary practice
- support for new teachers
- teacher awards
- teaching/learning materials.

PSAs host for members:

- annual conferences
- annual general meetings
- local or regional conferences.

PSAs provide a collective voice to:

- help develop BCTF directions
- influence curriculum and assessment policies
- provide advice to the BCTF Executive Committee in order to influence the Ministry of Education.

PSA websites

Many PSAs maintain web pages and email lists on the BCTF website: bctf.ca/psawebsites.aspx.

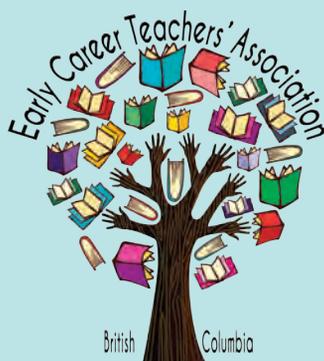
What are your professional development plans for October 23?

If you haven't finalized your plans yet, consider registering for a PSA conference. Annually, PSAs organize theme-based specialist conferences featuring well-known speakers and engaging workshops. This year is no exception.

As we go to press, 24 PSAs have published their conference schedules. Check them out on page 31 of this publication or go to the BCTF Pro-D Calendar: www.bctf.ca/PDCalendar/.

The BCTF supports the following 32 PSA specialist associations:

Aboriginal Education Association
Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in BC
Association of BC Drama Educators
Association provinciale des professeurs de l'immersion et du programme francophone
BC Alternate Education Association
BC Art Teachers' Association
BC Association of Mathematics Teachers
BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages
BC Business Education Association
BC Co-operative Learning Provincial Specialist Association
BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association
BC Dance Educators' Association
BC Early Career Teachers' Association
BC Educators for Distributed Learning Provincial Specialist Association
BC Music Educators' Association
BC Primary Teachers' Association
BC Rural and Small Schools Teachers' Association
BC School Counsellors' Association
BC Science Teachers' Association
BC Social Studies Teachers' Association
BC Teacher-Librarians' Association
BC Teachers for Peace and Global Education
BC Teachers of English Language Arts
BC Technology Education Association
Computer-Using Educators of BC
English as a Second Language Provincial Specialist Association
Environmental Educators' Provincial Specialist Association
Learning Assistance Teachers' Association
Physical Education—British Columbia
Provincial Intermediate and Middle Years Teachers Association (myPITA)
Special Education Association
Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association



NEW PSA

British Columbia Early Career Teachers' Association (BCECTA)

Contact us: psac77@bctf.ca

Social Media: www.twitter.com/BCECTA
www.facebook.com/BCECTA
<http://bcecta.wordpress.com/>

What's up with the new CURRICULUM?

By Teri Mooring, BCTF 2nd Vice-President

FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS the Liberal government has worked on a plan they have termed "Education Transformation." They propose a broad scope of changes that most teachers will seldom witness in their teaching careers. Changes include revisions to curricula, provincial assessments, provincial scholarships, and district accountability frameworks.

Changes to curriculum

- The number of learning outcomes for each grade have been reduced, simplified and broadened to allow for more in-depth teaching and learning.
- Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge are integrated into all curricular areas.
- Some topics have been shifted to different grade levels.
- Some curricular areas are reorganized and renamed, such as applied design skills and technology, physical and health education, arts, and career education.

While many changes are not extensive, the fact that all the curricular areas have been revised at the same time represents significant workload issues for teachers, especially in the context of increasingly larger classes, fewer supports from learning-specialist teachers, and an overall lack of resources.

In the midst of these changes, some significant unknowns are looming. The first is whether Grade 10 will still be considered

part of the graduation years. Ministry staff have stated that no decision had been made on this matter and at the time we went to press, have not yet given us a date when they will decide. BCTF table officers have consistently told Ministry of Education officials that Grade 10 should not be included in the graduation years because we do not want students pushed out of school.

What are the changes to special education?

A second unknown surrounds changes that the Ministry may be planning for special education. Rumours of impending change have been circulating for some time—the BCTF is aware that the Ministry held forums around the province to gather information about making changes to the special education manual. Criteria readjustments were made to some special education categories because of changes to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. We know of changes to SET BC as well that were made without consultation with the BCTF. The Federation has stated repeatedly that we need to be involved in any discussions around potential changes to special education funding or delivery.

What's required for real implementation?

If successful implementation of new curricula is to occur, then proper funding, including money for training and for resources must be guaranteed. Past experience has shown us that some districts, superintendents, and principals may want to fast-track implementation and in their unbridled enthusiasm tell teachers that they must get on board with the new curriculum this school year.

We have stressed to government that the 2015–16 school year simply be a time for teachers to become familiar with revised curricula if they choose. The government has agreed with us and 2015–16 is now a year of voluntary exploration.

The Ministry is looking at options for funding curriculum implementation. They acknowledge that the simultaneous change of curriculum areas has the potential to be challenging. We were assured by the Ministry of Education that in addition to district-controlled funds and BC Education Plan grants, new money would be forthcoming for in-service and for the purchase of resources. In late July, they indicated there would be \$1 million allocated to support teachers working in rural areas to attend regional forums about the new curriculum this school year.

While we are pleased for this support for rural teachers, \$1 million is not nearly enough for curriculum implementation to happen in any real way, regardless of where teachers work.

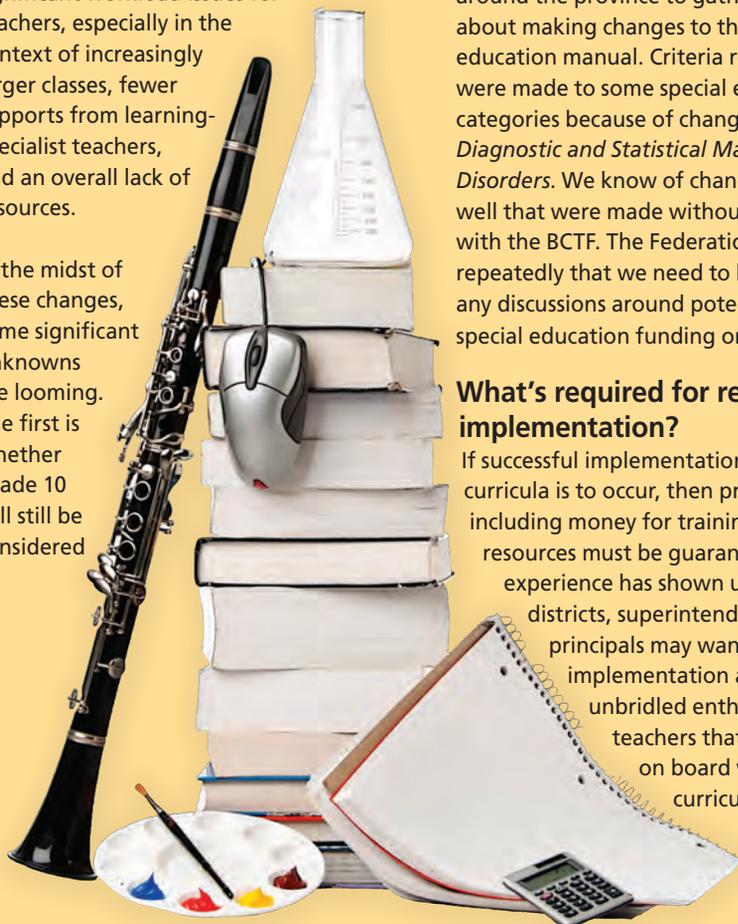
Interestingly, newly-appointed Education Minister Mike Bernier was tasked with "ensuring the new curriculum is implemented seamlessly across the province," in the annual mandate letter from Premier Clark. We must reiterate: successful and meaningful implementation is only possible if district administrators respect teacher professional autonomy and the province commits sufficient new dollars.

What's posted?

The following documents are now posted on the Ministry of Education website www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca:

- K–9, all revised curricula
- Français langue seconde-immersion, and Français langue première
- Grades 10–12 curriculum drafts
- First outlines of optional curricula such as Social Justice 12 and Law 12
- Core French
- Frameworks for career education, applied design, skills and technology
- Core competencies.

Please contact your local president if you need further information about the new curriculum or Janice Neden, jneden@bctf.ca, Assistant Director for Professional Services and Issues at the BCTF.





The BCTF Pension Consultation IS COMING TO YOUR LOCAL

BCTF PENSION STAFF AND TRUSTEES will tour the province this fall to speak and consult with members about a possible redesign of the Teachers' Pension Plan. BCTF members currently contribute to a defined benefit pension plan jointly governed by the BCTF and BC government.

The last time our plan was redesigned was when the government had sole control before joint trusteeship took place 15 years ago. With that in mind, along with the changing demographics of our membership, it is time to take another look at the plan.

Trustees want to ensure that our plan remains strong and viable for every member, as well as for those teachers already retired. Members' input is needed in order to modernize the plan and make it even stronger than it is right now.

Delegates at the March 2016 BCTF AGM will discuss, debate, and vote on any proposed changes to the plan. If any changes are adopted, they will not start until January 1, 2018. Any changes are "future service" based, meaning any earned pension is retained untouched. Furthermore, individual members' pensionable service will be kept and then proportionately mixed with future service in the new plan. For example, a teacher with 13 years pensionable service before January 1, 2018, who retires after an additional 13 years service would receive a pension based on 50% of the current plan and 50% of the new plan. Those retirees already collecting their pension are unaffected.

Regardless of your age and when you plan to retire, mark the date, and attend the pension consultation meeting in your local. A strong pension plan is key to quality retirement.

For more information about the pension consultation process, visit the BCTF website bctf.ca/PensionConsultations2015/ or contact your local teacher association or union office for the date and location of consultation meetings in your area.

Check out the TPP website to view your pension statement and to calculate your current pension earnings: www.pensionsbc.ca/



BCTF Salary Indemnity Fund

Are you 65 or have you reached Factor 90?

Withdraw from the long-term portion of the SIP

You can save the long-term fee (approximately 1.2%) from the date you reach age 64 or "Factor 88." Members are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan once they hit "Factor 90" (age plus contributory service) or age 65. It is up to you to apply to withdraw from LTD.

How and when to apply

A member who has attained age 64, or has reached "Factor 88," or is in receipt of a retirement pension under a registered pension plan, may voluntarily withdraw from the long-term portion of the SIP. Ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave, which, when combined with 120 days of benefit from SIP short-term, will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach "Factor 90" or the end of the month you attain age 65, whichever comes first.

To get an application, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/7qrrnxx> or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.



Check your collective agreement language on CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION and EDUCATION CHANGE

WHILE TEACHERS are free to explore the revised Grades K–9 curriculum and new reporting guidelines during the 2015–16 school year, implementation is not required until 2016–17. For the draft Grades 10–12 curriculum and reporting guidelines, implementation does not take place until 2017–18.

In most cases, rules for curriculum implementation and education change, including the establishment of curriculum implementation/education change committees, can be found in your collective agreement. These committees involve your local and school district.

Collective agreement provisions may specify necessary supports for implementation, or empower the curriculum implementation committee to make recommendations to the school board regarding the establishment of supports for implementation, including but not limited to adequate and appropriate:

- funding
- in-service training
- release time
- materials and resources
- space, facilities, and equipment
- timelines.

While joint employee/employer curriculum implementation committees will oversee the local process, funding for curriculum implementation is the responsibility of the school district and Ministry of Education. Teachers should not use their limited professional development funds or professional development days to implement the Ministry's agenda for curriculum change.

Changes implemented by the province need to be supported by the province. Teachers should raise any curriculum implementation concerns at local union meetings, school-based union meetings, and staff committee meetings.

Additionally, teachers should be aware when implementing the revised curriculum that you have professional autonomy rights. Your rights are guaranteed in the collective agreement, which generally allow you, within the bounds of the curriculum, to individually determine the methods of instruction and the planning and presentation of course materials.

Please refer to your collective agreement <https://goo.gl/N7fuu8> or contact your local union office <http://goo.gl/X8VP> for further information or advice.

Your questions answered

Is a “personalized learning” approach required by the new curriculum?

No particular approach is required. The concept of “personalized learning” is not new and teachers have long promoted the notion of student-centred learning. The changes in the curriculum do not require any particular teaching method, though. The Ministry sets the curriculum while individual teachers make pedagogical choices. Teaching methods are up to individual teachers and are covered by professional autonomy clauses in local collective agreements. Like before, teachers will make professional decisions based on the needs of their students, the supports available, and the working and learning conditions in their classrooms.

Some topics have moved grade levels. Should I buy new books and learning resources now?

No. Teachers should not be on the hook for changes made by their employer or by the province. School districts and the province are responsible to fund such changes, including the purchase of learning resources. Do not spend your own money to fund the province's curriculum change. Teachers, if they wish, can voluntarily explore revised curriculum but are not under any obligation to work with the new curriculum until subsequent school years.

Is sexual health education moving to a different subject area?

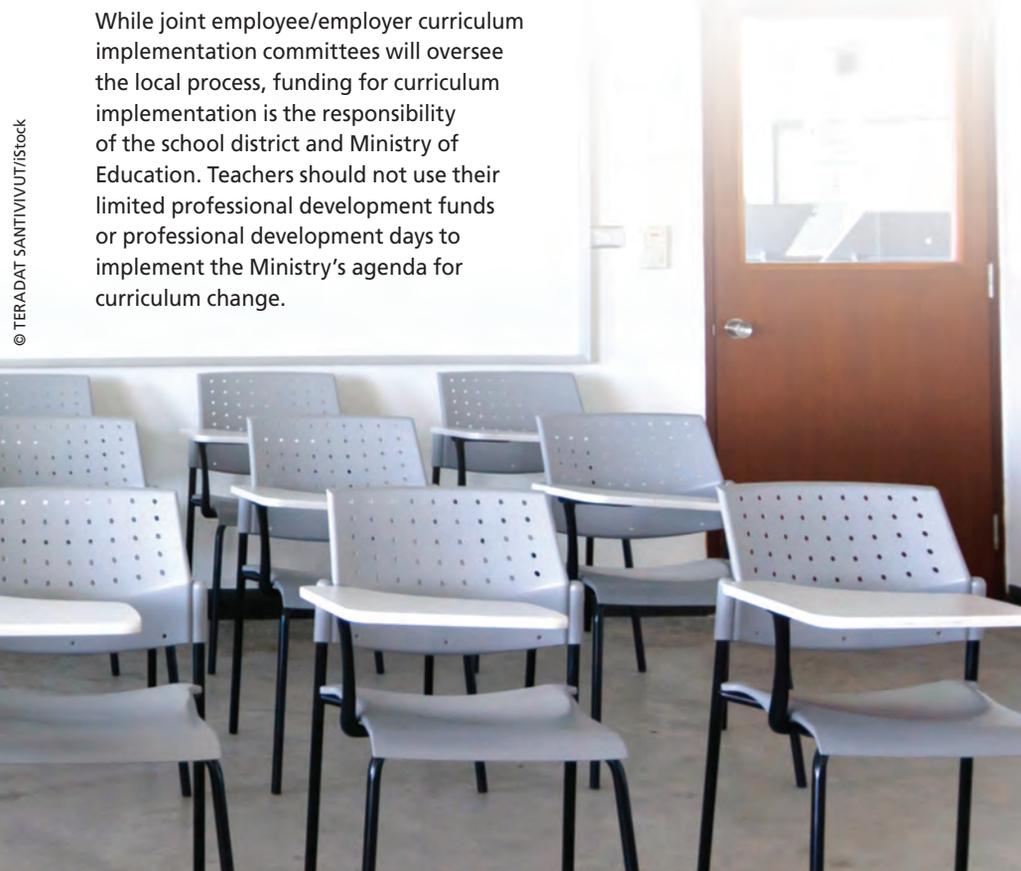
Sexual health education will now be found in what is called Physical & Health Education for both elementary and secondary. Puberty, human reproduction, and STIs remain at the grade levels they were previously —though the new curriculum includes a long-overdue reference in the intermediate grades to sexual identity. Teachers continue to be the ones teaching these topics, and this will be done in a variety of ways similar to now.

The BCTF continues to advocate for access to up-to-date, inclusive, and ability-appropriate learning resources in this area. All students, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity, deserve as much! Provincial inservice funding must also be available for teachers in all regions of the province so they can confidently and inclusively deliver this area of the curriculum.

Where can I get help with implementing the new Aboriginal content?

The BCTF has a variety of workshops on this topic that are available to members for free. Visit the BCTF website for more information. <https://goo.gl/eFVxz6>

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) also has many teaching materials and resources connected to the residential schools learning outcomes. Check out their website at <http://goo.gl/QV3wzN>.





Savour the moment

By Pamela Ana, member, Terrace and District Teachers' Union

© stockphoto4u/iStock

CRUNCH TIME...the late night before report cards are due and you are down to the proofing. **Munch time...**how about a treat to keep yourself awake or one for a reward? After all, you are soooooo close to being finished. You've been holding off, waiting for the delicious taste of perhaps dark chocolate, a latte, strawberries, or the piece of apple pie calling your name.

You take the first bite or sip—mmmmm, yummy! Second bite, still yummy, maybe a bit less than the first, but still good. You reconnect your attention to your computer screen and continue eating.

Wait! Where did the food go? It's gone! There may be remnants on your fingers or the lingering taste on your tongue—but it's disappeared while you weren't looking... or tasting, or smelling, or enjoying. Gone... missed it, better go get another. The next step is eating more. Being self-critical about your eating may be a reflection to an unhealthy relationship with food. This is mindless eating. Eating mindlessly deprives people from the pleasure of truly savouring food and is believed to be one of the most common underlying

reasons for unhealthy eating practices and weight gain.

We live in an abundant food environment—food is fast, convenient, often highly processed, and relatively inexpensive. As a result, like many other nations, being overweight or obese is becoming an epidemic in Canada.

Some hard numbers

According to the Childhood Obesity Foundation, in 2014, 1 in 5 Canadians 18 years of age or older—roughly 5.3 million people—reported height and weight that classified them as obese. The foundation also reports childhood overweight and obesity rates have been rising steadily in Canada in recent

“When you linger in the delicious art of eating, you benefit in many ways.”



© Rouzes/iStock

decades. Between 1978–79 and 2004, the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity among those aged 2–17 years increased from 15 percent to 26 percent. Increases were highest among youth aged 12–17 years, with overweight and obesity more than doubling for this age group, from 14 percent to 29 percent. They add that in 2013, 42 million infants and young children were overweight or obese worldwide, and 70 million young children will be overweight or obese by 2025 if current trends continue. Without intervention, overweight infants and young children will likely continue to be heavy during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Obesity in childhood is associated with a wide range of serious health complications and an increased risk of premature onset of illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease.

The problem connected to eating mindlessly lies in the lack of awareness of the messages coming from our body. Mindful eating helps us learn to listen to what our bodies tell us about enjoyment, hunger, and satisfaction. The key is to get out of the “autopilot” mode and into the mode of “purposeful awareness” when eating.

Mindful eating is the awareness of eating with all of your senses. It means being in the present moment while eating and giving it your full attention. When you are mindful of what you eat, you are aware of what you are eating, how much, how you have eaten, if you are truly hungry, how food smells, tastes, looks, and feels. When you linger in the delicious art of eating, you benefit in many ways. Mindful eating fosters consumption of appropriate amounts of food, increases the sheer pleasure of eating, and decreases the urge to overeat. It also lessens the chances of eating for stress, boredom, or other emotions. Mindful eating is relatively straight forward to learn and put into practice. So why not help yourself and your students become mindful when eating?

Lesson plan

<http://goo.gl/CBDyLH>

<http://goo.gl/pAukt7>

Information

<http://eatingmindfully.com/tools/>

Eating Quiz

<http://goo.gl/qr6SmR>

Books

Mindful Eating—A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food, by Jan Chozen Bays, MD

Mindless Eating—Why We Eat More Than We Think, by Brian Wansink, PhD

Canadian Research

<http://goo.gl/YFkVRJ>

Remembering our colleagues

We extend our deepest sympathies to the family, friends, and colleagues of members who lost their lives this past school year and over the summer.

MARSHALL (SKIP) BERGSMAN
Terrace and District Teachers' Union

MARK BRADSHAW
Mission Teachers' Union

COLIN CAMPBELL
Greater Victoria Teachers' Association

JUDY FRY
Burnaby Teachers' Association

SANDRA HUGGETT
Prince George and District Teachers' Association

JACOB LARSEN
Burnaby Teachers' Association

JOHN LEAHY
Kootenay Columbia Teachers' Union

COLIN MACKAY
New Westminster Teachers' Association

SHAWNA MARINA-WAKELY
Burnaby Teachers' Association

KATHLEEN O'HARA
Sunshine Coast Teachers' Association

ROSEMARY RADELET
Terrace and District Teachers' Union

PETER SORG
Peace River South Teachers' Association

JUNE WILSON
Sunshine Coast Teachers' Association



If we've missed anyone, please let us know so we can acknowledge them in a future edition.

—Editor, teachermag@bctf.ca

BCTF Summer Conference and Fall



Right (L-R):
Jim Iker,
Irene
Lanzinger,
Teri
Mooring,
Hassan
Yussuff, Glen
Hansman,
Rob Fleming.



Left: Charlie
Demers.

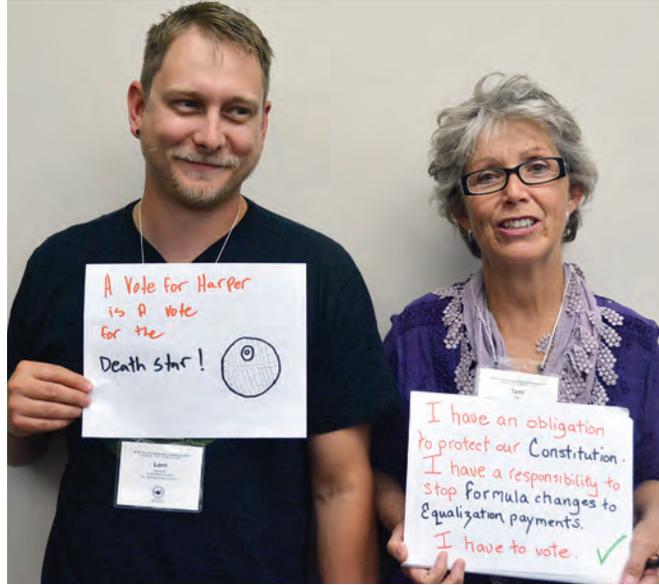


Five hundred teachers volunteered in Kamloops in late August to share ideas on a wide range of topics including curricular change, collaboration time, creating strong Pro-D cultures in schools, residential schools and reconciliation, the Teacher Regulation Branch, increasing member participation and engagement in locals and the BCTF, social media safety, TTOC rights, health and wellness programs, and much more. Leaders of the labour movement and lively, gut-splitting comedian Charlie Demers joined the conference to inform and inspire why we all need to take an interest in this October federal election.



Susan Croll photos

Facilitators' Institute Training 2015



TEST your knowledge

Multiple choice

- Bill C-9, an 880 page omnibus bill passed in 2010, included provisions to:**
 - eliminate environmental assessment for federally-funded infrastructure projects.
 - lead to the privatization of Canada Post
 - slash \$57 million from Employment Insurance.
 - selloff of Atomic Energy Canada.
 - all of the above.
- The current status of Canada's national libraries and archives is:**
 - the pride of Canada with a worldwide reputation for an extensive and comprehensive collection of literature and resources.
 - undermined by the closure of seven libraries at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, six at the National Research Council, and the consolidation of five Parks Canada libraries into one at Environment Canada.
 - a national embarrassment, especially for Canadian scientists, researchers, and librarians.
 - Who cares? Who needs libraries when you have Google?
- The eligibility for Old Age Security was changed in 2012 from age 65 to:**
 - age 70
 - age 60
 - age 67
 - age 55
- In June, the government changed the rules of the Senate including quashing a decision made by the Conservative speaker of the Senate in order to pass Bill C-377. Bill C-377 imposes extensive financial reporting rules for:**
 - non-profit and charitable organizations.
 - banks and credit unions.
 - trade unions.
 - small businesses.
 - corporations with profit margins greater than \$1 M.
- Which statement is true?**
 - \$45,000 is the average one-time award paid to disabled veterans under Harpers' New Veteran Charter.
 - \$47,000 was the cost of a photo op with former cabinet minister Peter MacKay and a plywood mock-up of an F-35 jet fighter.
 - \$28 million was spent on a memorial statue, a commemorative stamp, and television ads to honour veterans from the War of 1812.
 - Nine Veteran Affairs help centres across Canada have been closed and veterans are now directed to a 1-800 number.
 - As of late 2014, seventy-five boards of inquiry into the suicides of military personnel are still outstanding.

True or false

- Bill C-38, passed in 2012,** allows the federal cabinet to approve pipelines and other major energy projects regardless of regulatory board regulations.
- Bill C-38 permits the National Energy Board** to approve activities that kill or harm endangered species.
- The government reinstated the Statistics Canada** long-form census after massive public outcry.

Fill in the blanks

- The Harper government** became the only government of Canada ever to be found in contempt of _____ for refusing to release information related to the costs of crime legislation and the purchase of fighter jets.
- Commenting on Harper's** many omnibus bills, Sheila Fraser, _____, said, "Parliament has become so undermined that it is almost unable to do the job that people expect of it."
- In June 2015,** the prime minister made _____ patronage appointments, including the appointment of _____ to the Supreme Court of Canada. He is on record stating that a Supreme Court decision allowing for private health coverage when the government fails to deliver care in a timely manner left him "delighted" since the court was "striking at the heart of exclusive state-provided healthcare."
- In June,** Dean Del Mastro, parliamentary secretary for _____, was led away shackled after the court found him guilty of _____.
- Which scandals occurred under Stephen Harper's watch?**
 - Shoe Store Project
 - Robocall investigation and resulting charges
 - Afghan detainee issue
 - Senate expenses and fraud-related investigation and charges
 - E-coli outbreak related to cuts to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 - There are not enough letters in the alphabet to list them all.



Only 72 Syrian government-sponsored refugees have come to BC in the past two years.

(<http://goo.gl/rvKW00>)

Bonus questions! Who said what?

- "We also have no history of colonialism"** when addressing a G20 summit.
- "You have to remember** that west of Winnipeg the ridings the Liberals hold are dominated by people who are either recent Asian immigrants or recent migrants from eastern Canada; people who live in ghettos and are not integrated into Western Canadian society."
- "When a government** starts trying to cancel dissent or avoid dissent is frankly when it's rapidly losing its moral authority to govern."

1. (e) 2. (b, c) 3. (c) 4. (c) 5. All 6. True 7. True 8. False 9. Parliament
10. Former Auditor General of Canada 11. 98, Russell Brown 12. Stephen Harper, Election
Act offences 13. All (<http://goo.gl/ajBqUA>) 14. Stephen Harper, (<http://goo.gl/83ogQd>)
15. Stephen Harper, (<http://goo.gl/7Pb0tU>) 16. Stephen Harper (<http://goo.gl/20n1zj>)

ANSWERS

It was a rite of passage

"I was so excited"

By Susan Croll, Editor, *Teacher magazine*

That is the way Mary Rowles, retired teacher and committed voter, describes the first time she voted. "We were expected to vote. Voting age then was 21. The first time I voted I was 22 years old and it was in a provincial election."

It was 1960, and Premier W.A.C. Bennett was up for re-election. The Social Credit, the Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) were all fielding candidates. When asked if she remembered what the issues were in that campaign, Mary didn't hesitate. "I remember it quite well. The provincial government was successful in frightening people, telling us we had a responsibility in keeping the socialist hoards away from forming government. Of course they were referring to the CCF."

Mary grew up in a family that discussed politics and when she was young she attended political meetings with her father, who was a Tory supporter. Her mother tended to vote Liberal. "Regardless of who you voted for, we grew up thinking that politicians' responsibility and the role of government was to help people and to make life better for us."

When Mary and her husband Sid marked their ballots for the first time in 1960, they supported CCF candidate Rae Eddy, who was elected in their New Westminster riding. She laughs, saying that it is not often in her life a candidate she's voted for actually wins.

Thinking back to previous elections, Mary also remembers that Medicare was a hot issue that people discussed and debated passionately. "Sid and I were supportive of Medicare. Not everyone was though. We knew people who were afraid of Medicare. They thought that the quality of medicine would decline. Some doctors thought they would be paid less if Medicare got in."

Sid, who at the time was a theology student, adds, "We were young and did not have a lot of money. We did not want to be charity cases and when Medicare came in, we signed up the very next day. We didn't want to live under a paternalistic system. Medicare gave us dignity."

Mary laments the low-voter turnout in Canada. Her view on why people should vote is simple and straightforward: "We live in this country; we're part of it and we should have a say in it, how it's run, what we want it to be. Canada is still a developing country. Why wouldn't we want to be part of defining our own future? Not voting gives politicians free reign. Look at the last federal election. A low-voter turnout does nothing to keep politicians accountable."

As October 19 approaches, Mary is clear that she will be in line to cast her ballot. "I've never missed an election and I don't intend to miss this one." Top issues on her agenda include peacekeeping, the need for a national pharmacare program, and the environment. She's distressed about the emphasis on battle and war. "I want us to go back to being a peacekeeping nation. We're a small nation and that is how we can make a worthwhile contribution."

As for the environment, "We were once leaders when it came to protecting the environment. No wonder young people are concerned. It's their future."

For a concise history on how Medicare came to be in Canada, read this article published in *Canadian Dimension* in 2012:

<https://goo.gl/aFYkly>

For more information about the 1960 BC provincial election, visit:

<https://goo.gl/HAe1DR>

Better CHOICES. Better ECONOMY. Better FUTURE.

THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (CLC), has identified four areas where Canadians want to see positive change.



Good jobs

- Nearly 3/4 of the jobs created over the past six years are part-time, temporary, or in the self-employed sector.
- Nearly a million Canadians work multiple jobs just to make ends meet.
- Younger Canadians struggle, at double the national unemployment rate.

Investment in people and communities is a better choice for the Canadian economy.

- Start the transition to a low-carbon economy and create tens of thousands of quality jobs, boost the manufacturing sector, and help fight climate change.
- Invest in rapid transit for municipalities to create local jobs in manufacturing and construction, and increase ridership.
- Reinvest in infrastructure and public services.



Healthcare

- Before the 2011 election, Stephen Harper promised to renew the Federal Health Accord, and increase healthcare payments to the provinces by six percent a year.
- In 2013, the government broke that promise. Healthcare funding transfers will have shortfalls of about \$36 billion by 2024.

A better choice is to invest in Canada's healthcare system, which will benefit all Canadians by creating jobs and helping Canadians stay healthy and able to work.

- Invest to recruit and train needed healthcare professionals, creating skilled, high-value jobs and improving access to quality long-term care.
- Investing \$1 billion annually in universal drug coverage would save \$7.3 billion every year.



Childcare

- Regulated childcare spaces simply don't exist for four out of five children under six years of age.
- For many families, the cost of childcare is the second-highest expense after housing.

A national childcare system is a better choice for children, families, and the economy.

- Quebec's affordable \$7-a-day daycare program more than paid for itself.
- The number of women in the Quebec workforce grew by 3.8 percent, adding \$5.2 billion to the economy and boosting the province's GDP by 1.7 percent.



Retirement security

- After a lifetime of hard work, no one should have to retire in poverty.

Expanding the Canadian Pension Plan is a better choice so today's workers can retire with dignity tomorrow.

- The CPP benefits everyone because it covers all workers, including the 11 million Canadians without a workplace pension plan.
- The CPP is a defined benefit, so you know exactly what you'll get, and it's completely safe since it's entirely financed by workers and employers.

Canadians want programs that benefit the many instead of the few. This election provides an opportunity for each of us to make better choices to create positive change for all Canadians. Visit BetterChoice.ca

We need a concerted effort to get everyone to the polls to choose a government that is prepared to make better choices for all Canadians.



Congrès du travail du Canada
Canadian Labour Congress



British Columbia
Teachers' Federation

Make sure you are on the voters' list: <http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>

Education International 7th World Congress

Top issues for teachers worldwide

Nancy Knickerbocker/photofest



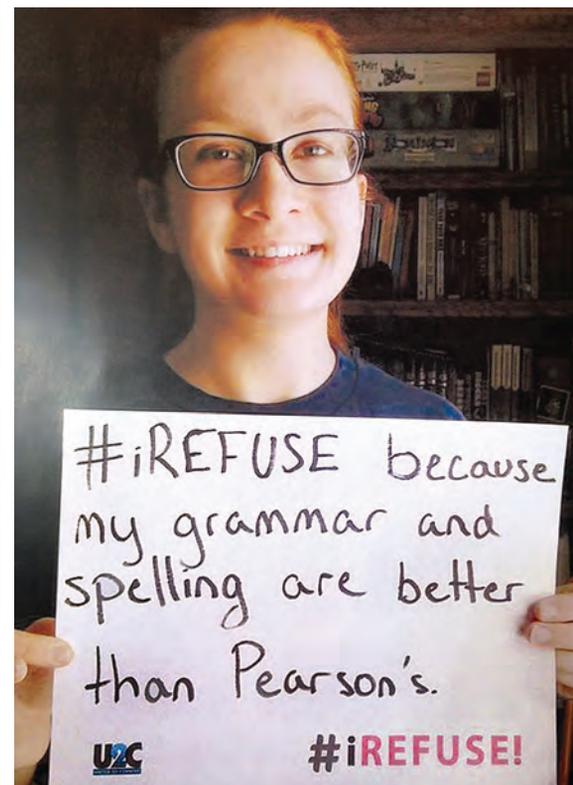
MORE THAN 1,700 LEADERS of the international teacher union movement in 190 countries came together in Ottawa from July 21–26, 2015, to participate in the 7th World Congress of Education International. As the global union federation representing 33 million educators working from early childhood to post-graduate levels, EI focuses on advocating for quality education for all and defending educators whose human and labour rights are violated.

That important role was highlighted as delegates joined Iranian-Canadians outside the Ottawa Conference Centre calling for the release of Esmail Abdi, General Secretary of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association, and other imprisoned teachers. Abdi was arrested in June after he tried to obtain a visa to travel to Canada for the EI Congress.

BCTF President Jim Iker and three senior staff members were observers at Congress, where they had the opportunity to renew and strengthen relationships with Canadian teacher unions and with unions in Africa and Latin America where the BCTF has international solidarity projects.

The debates highlighted striking similarities between the issues confronting BC teachers and those facing teachers on every continent. While there are differences in degree or intensity of the problems, the fundamental causes are the same: the rise of neo-liberal ideology and austerity regimes, dramatic cuts to funding for public education, attacks on the credibility of teacher unions and the prestige of the profession, imposition of punitive testing on children and evaluation schemes on teachers, etc.

Above all, privatization and commercialization emerged as the most significant threats to public education systems around the world. In particular, the growing incursions of the Pearson Corporation are of deep concern. Among the keynote speakers was International Trade Union Confederation President Sharan Burrow, a former teacher from Australia. She cautioned against so-called "free trade" agreements that give private corporations immense powers over the public good. "How long will it take until Pearson or others start suing governments that are defending public education?" she asked.



Teachers from Africa and Latin America expressed outrage at the growth of predatory education businesses promoting private schools with "pay as you learn" schemes, in which students must pay tuition daily or be excluded from class.

Not surprisingly, this trend comes with a corresponding rise in child labour. One teacher from Ghana spoke of a student who had to sell water on the street one day to pay for her schooling the next. In some schools children must wear a wrist band with a micro-chip embedded. If they cannot pass electronic screening at the school gates because of non-payment of the day's fees, teachers are required to turn them away or risk deductions from their already-scant salaries.

Delegates also passed resolutions dealing with the rights of stateless and refugee children, support for children with special needs, LGBTQ rights, and efforts to end child labour. They also passed an important policy paper on human and trade union rights.

In the past year, EI has mounted a highly successful international campaign, Unite for Quality Education, which has had an impact at the United Nations, the OECD, and other global institutions. For more information, please visit www.ei-ie.org.

ADULT EDUCATION opens doors

Why everyone should care
about the recent cuts

By Lynda Toews

THIS SPRING, the provincial government announced a change in the nature of adult education funding. They eliminated the "Education Guarantee," which provided funds for "Graduated Adult" (GA) students to attend high school classes for free, in order to upgrade their skills, or achieve the prerequisites for post-secondary programs.

There are many reasons why this change is a bad idea, but here are the top three:

1. First, the definition of a graduated adult includes people who graduated in any other jurisdiction in the world, including people who graduated with only Grade 8. Even those with post-graduate degrees attained in a non-English institution will not have their credentials recognized without evidence of competence in English. While the Ministry of Education may consider them to be sufficiently educated, employers, licensing agencies, and professional institutions disagree. This is why many highly skilled and overqualified people find themselves working in underpaid and precarious jobs. They need access to English language training in order to take the courses required to get their licences or credentials in their original field or profession. Recent changes to the GA program will mean even more people will not be able to access English language learning programs.
2. Second, the work world is rapidly changing and more competitive than ever. Making it tougher for adults to upgrade their skills makes no economic sense. Government officials often say that we need a better-trained workforce to tap into the "knowledge economy." There are many British Columbians who graduated from secondary school with bare passes in English 12, Communications 12, or Math courses. They need the opportunity to upgrade their marks to be eligible for many different post-graduate programs. Where is that supposed to happen, if not in adult education?
3. Third, this policy change will likely result in cancelled classes because of insufficient enrollment. In the Surrey school district, adult education courses are only offered when enrollment reaches a certain threshold. In the past, between 40–60% of registered students in adult ed courses at the Invergarry Adult Education are graduated adults. If they do not enrol because of high tuition fees, courses will be cancelled. Consequently, adult non-graduates will end up shut out

of courses too. Because there is no minimum level of service that must be offered, school boards have no obligation to provide classes for adult students whether they are graduated or not.

What is adult education?

Within the context of the K–12 system, adult education is the program that provides everything from basic literacy and numeracy up to secondary school completion courses for adult students. Students may graduate with a regular diploma, or with the Adult Dogwood, which allows students to graduate with reduced requirements.

Equivalent courses are also offered through the post-secondary system. Common credentials exist for both adult programs, and theoretically, students could move back and forth between the two programs, although this rarely happens.

Adult education includes the English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) program, which is a federally funded, provincially administered English language program for immigrant adults. Some districts compete for the contracts and offer these programs, but they are also offered by non-profit and for-profit organizations.

Adult education does not offer “interest courses,” like sailing or scrapbooking. These courses are mostly run through municipal parks and recreation departments.

Adult education is not “night school.” Our classes run in the evening and during the day, and many programs operate in the summer.

Who are adult learners?

Like all learners, there is no one size fits all, but there are some generalizations worth sharing.

Adult students are motivated and want to study. They want to attend classes, they choose what and when they will learn, they want to arrive on time, they want to work hard on their assignments, and they understand why they are learning. However, this does not mean that they

know how to learn (or how the public education system works in Canada), that they are good learners, that they are able to arrive on time or get their homework done, or that everyone in their life also wants them to learn.

Many of our students have had bad experiences at school or faced significant struggles at home. Some students have undiagnosed learning challenges. Unlike our partners in the K–12 system, and even though we are part of that system, adult educators have no means to assess students. Even if a student has a diagnosed condition, we have no resources to assist them. There is no special education in adult education. You cannot imagine how frustrating and disheartening that is.

Many of our students are working at least one full-time, physically demanding, and inflexible, low-wage job. Some of our students work two jobs—plus overtime. Their shifts can be changed at any time, and unbelievably, but true, their employer may not want them to gain skills in case they leave for a better job. It doesn't matter how eager they are if they cannot stay awake and focus during class. We also encounter family members with similar education challenges who are threatened by another family member's success at school. Sometimes, family members exert pressure on the student to take care of home or social responsibilities before completing homework or assignments.

Finally, there is the reality that a student who has previously dropped out will drop out again. A student who has built up anger, frustration, and resentment about school, or who has experienced bullying, may re-experience similar feelings and exhibit behaviours that do not make learning easy for them.

Su Su's success

At the age of eight, Su Su (not her real name) went door-to-door in the Thai refugee camp where she lived, selling rice her mother cooked in the early hours. By the time she was eight, she had acquired a small flock of chickens, which she fed with termites gathered from the jungle surrounding the camp. At fourteen, she went to secondary school for the first time and began trying to learn English and cover in five years all that her Canadian

classmates would have studied in twelve. She learned quickly in spite of her home, family, and work responsibilities, but she didn't graduate. She “timed-out.”

“Adult students are motivated and want to study.”

At 19, she entered my Communications 12 classroom at Invergarry Adult Education Centre in Surrey. Still struggling with English, she did manage to barely pass Communications 12. I remember her delight at learning the term “street vendor” to describe her previous work experience—she already knew “chicken farmer.” I don't know what her prospective employers thought about a 19-year-old with a resume describing 11 years of work experience, but by the end of that semester, she was also working the late shift at a fish cannery.

One summer, when she was struggling with English 11, we met weekly at the Surrey Centre Library for tutorial sessions. Su Su had to miss many of our sessions to attend medical appointments with her mother and aunt. She also accompanied her grandfather and her aunt to the emergency room to act as the family interpreter.

Su Su graduated two years later, with English 12, Biology 12, and Math 12 to add to her secondary school credits. Now, she works as a care aide. Receiving an education as an adult made a positive difference in Su Su's life. Adult education allowed her to gain valuable knowledge and skills and to secure a decent paying job. Su Su, and so many other adult education students, are proof that the BC government needs to freely open all doors to adult education, graduated or not.

In June, the BCTF released a survey that assesses the working and learning conditions of adult education in BC. *Teacher* will feature an article on this topic in an upcoming issue. Read the survey on the BCTF website (<http://www.ei-ie.org/>).

Lynda Toews has been teaching adult education in Surrey since 1988.

It's a WONDERFUL life

Seeing my students do well

By Gerry Chidiac, Prince George teacher

THE GREATEST GIFT to a teacher is seeing former students doing well in life. I have been teaching for so long now that I am watching the children of former students enter my classroom. I laughingly refer to myself as an "educational grandparent," but I cannot deny the joy of this experience.

The fact of the matter is that as teachers, we know that we are important people in the lives of our students. The trust placed in us by each parent and each child is sacred. The word educate is derived from the Latin word "educare," which means to draw out. The task of a teacher therefore, is not to stuff a person full of information, but to draw out the giftedness in each child. Every child whom I have ever taught is gifted.

I believe that my greatest strength as a teacher is my ability to see the giftedness in others. I am like the baseball scout who can spot potential a mile away. The only thing is that it's often really hard to tell what a person's particular gift is, so I just take the perspective that this person is going to do something really amazing and exciting in life and just try to draw it out.

Certain aspects of our educational system make this easier to do. We take the perspective with athletics that each child gets equal playing time up until a certain age. You never know who is going to blossom into an amazing player, or when they are going to blossom. That small child dribbling the basketball off of her foot could turn out to be the next superstar. That star scoring all of the points may decide that he wants to be a musician, and that too is wonderful. The key is to expose young people to many different areas and let them decide where they want to excel. That is drawing out, that is the key to education.

Today when I run into former students, I do not see the child or teen who sat at a desk in my classroom, I see an accomplished adult. I see a person with skills in particular areas that far exceed my own. This tells me that what I taught them was far less important than how I taught them. Yes, I gave them tools in certain areas to equip them to go on to the next level, but more importantly, I taught them to believe in themselves and to follow their passion in life.

Looking back over my career, I give thanks for the people whom I taught. I also give thanks for the wisdom I have been able to accumulate in my profession, and I give thanks that the idealism I felt when I became a teacher so many years ago was warranted. Looking forward, I give thanks for the students I am teaching, and for the fact that I not only believe, I actually know from experience that they are going to go on to do incredible and amazing things.

Yes, being a teacher is a lot of work and the job has its share of frustrations, but looking back and looking forward, I can say, "It's a wonderful life."



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William Watson Elementary School
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Carol Wilkins, teacher exchange co-ordinator from the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation, will present information regarding exchange opportunities. Joining her to share their experiences and answer questions will be teachers currently on exchange in BC from elsewhere, and teachers recently returned from exchange.

To register, please contact:

Kulwant Toor, President, BCETA

Toor_k@surreyschools.ca

Tel: 604-574-4141 or 778-847-4453

ANTIDOTES for apathy

by Lucinda Tooker, teacher-librarian, Maple Ridge

From every corner of the world, these inspiring tales of tremendous courage and persistence show the lengths children take—including risking their lives—to get an education.

The Way to School



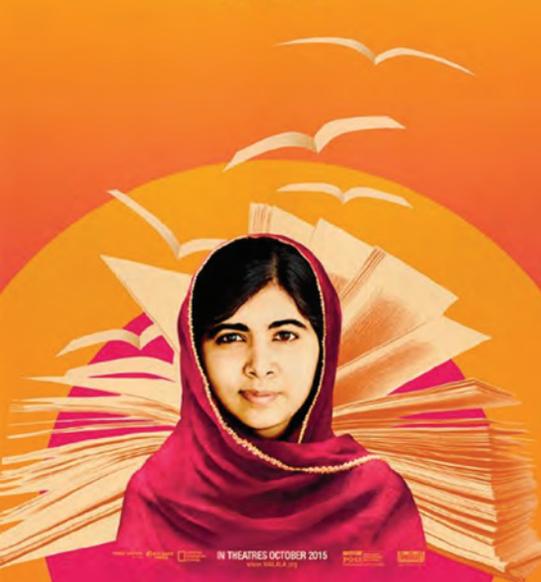
Rosemary McCarney with Plan International

Rosemary McCarney and Plan International have released a book for young students showing how children in isolated, often impoverished, and disaster-ravaged areas of the world travel to school. *The Way to School* (ISBN 9781927583784) uses stunning full-page photographs and minimal text to ask the question, "What would you do to get to school?" I can't wait to involve my students in this conversation, especially as the photographs show the clever but often dangerous ways children throughout the world travel to their schools. Some children walk along steep, harrowing mountaintop cliffs, while others hang on to frayed ropes and traverse unstable bridges to cross raging rivers. I want my students to wonder how and why the children must travel as they do, so we can explore each situation together. Proceeds from the sale of this book will support the *Because I Am a Girl Fund*, a discussion of which could add another layer to the classroom conversation.

From the Director of WAITING FOR SUPERMAN and Academy Award® Winner AN INCREDIBLE TRUTH

HE NAMED ME MALALA

ONE CHILD, ONE TEACHER, ONE BOOK AND ONE PEN CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.



The subject of girls' education is also raised in Jeanette Winter's *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* (ISBN 9781416994374). After her parents disappear during the Taliban era, Nasreen silences herself in grief. Then, her forward-thinking grandmother sends her to a secret school for girls. The book reveals the struggles of those who suffer under totalitarian rule while remaining optimistic, and even regaining control of their own lives. Aside from emphasizing the lengths some go to in order to attend school, this story could prompt class discussions about the [International Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), the [Canadian Constitution](#) and the [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and their practical applications.

Nasreen's Secret School

A TRUE STORY FROM AFGHANISTAN



BY JEANETTE WINTER

A MEMBER FROM THE
Children
BOOKS

With older students, teachers may want to accompany Winter's book with the story of Malala Yousafzai, and her 2014 Nobel Peace Prize-winning efforts to empower secondary-school aged girls around the world. Her official website contains a lot of information, including a preview of her upcoming documentary *He Named Me Malala* (www.malala.org/). There is also an excellent interview with Diane Sawyer on the ABC News website (<http://goo.gl/r8W66b>). The Sawyer interview frankly discusses the Taliban attack on Yousafzai, so some caution may need to be taken if using these resources in a classroom setting. It is rated PG13.



Smartphones

Learning tools or distractions?

by Leslie Davis

SMARTPHONE OWNERSHIP rises dramatically when students hit secondary-school age, and its ubiquitous presence has been noted and, more often than not, tolerated. After reading the March issue of *Teacher*, and with my experience teaching with technology in China, I feel there needs to be greater discussion on how smartphones could provide another mobile learning (m-learning) option for students. Yet, when students bring smartphones into the classroom, they also bring in habits that may not be conducive to the learning environment.

So, how can teachers help their students to be independent learners using the devices that entice them to be just the opposite?

Central to self-regulation is student engagement, and smartphones offer seamless opportunities for students to constantly push their own capabilities in and out of the formal classroom. M-learning is not just defined by the mobility of the devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets, or laptops) but also by the mobility of learners as well as the content/resources that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

M-learning encourages greater contact with teachers and other students, collaboration with classmates, critical and reflective thinking and writing, the giving and receiving of prompt and appropriate feedback, and more efficient task management and researching. Additionally, smartphones, and an ever-increasing choice

of applications, can help a variety of learners to meet challenging objectives or needs.

Research shows that students do not believe multitasking is unmanageable nor texting in the middle of a conversation rude.

By encouraging and supporting students' autonomy with authentic inquiry/project-based activities, teachers can then better monitor individual student performance and, as a result, foster improving self-control, reflection, goal setting, and digital competence (consisting of technological, cognitive, and ethical strategies). Online discussions, for instance, utilize all these metacognitive skills while reinforcing writing skills (and combating *textese*). Students may be good navigators, but they are much less adept at using smartphones for deeper thinking.

Also, students lacking in self-regulation will seek out stimulation when bored or unable

Leslie Davis has taught overseas and in Canada for over 25 years. For further information, go to Smartphones in Education (<http://goo.gl/yfo78q>).

to keep up with the cognitive demand. It is important, then, that students find meaning in what they are learning. Scaffolding is crucial in promoting metacognitive strategies, as well as the technology skills and content knowledge at the centre of the lesson. For instance, students can eventually help construct rubrics for an assessment/checklist, and smartphone classroom-polling applications (e.g., Socrative, eClicker) can check for comprehension or instigate deeper discussion.

However, many teachers see the smartphone more as a distraction, and believe that an outright ban can alleviate the problem. Studies show that this is a losing proposition. Net Generation students believe that they are adept at media multitasking, and they actually come to class planning to *cyber-slack* (i.e., use the internet at some point for non-class related purposes).

Some dual tasking may be less disruptive if the tasks are not competing for attention (e.g., when music just becomes background noise when doing schoolwork); on the other hand, task switching (e.g., doing anything and texting), diverts attention. Constantly checking the smartphone has become a disruptive habit, possibly redirecting students' attention to other applications or functions.

Nevertheless, research shows that students do not believe multitasking is unmanageable nor texting in the middle of a conversation rude. Recognizing this mindset—the need to stay hyperconnected and media multitask—can help shape pedagogical practice. It is important to make technology an essential learning tool, not just a supplemental add-on to previous teacher-centred lessons.

Most importantly, teachers and school administration need to formulate and clearly communicate consistent policies regarding usage. Once schools develop comprehensive technology policies, posters with explicit guidelines regarding the responsible and ethical use of smartphones can be put up around the hallways. Likewise, students in subject-specific classes could collaborate on an outline of their own specific goals and expectations.

Additionally, teachers must be supported in pursuing professional development. Time- and resource-poor teachers feel overwhelmed and underprepared to meet the challenges of integrating mobile technology into their present teaching practice. Teachers' competence and confidence cannot lag behind that of their students.



Teachers are not border police

By *Daniel Tseghay*

Daniel Tseghay is a writer and organizer living in Vancouver-Unceded Coast Salish Territories. He writes for RankandFile.ca and other publications

IN RECENT YEARS, the federal government has made a number of changes to immigration policy making it more difficult for migrants to gain permanent Canadian status. Refugee claims, and the number of accepted claims, have dropped dramatically. Countries like Mexico are deemed “safe countries” by Canada, making Mexican refugee applicants subject to fast-track deportations.

In April, 70,000 temporary foreign workers were made undocumented by the “four and four” law where they can only work in the country for four years at a time and cannot return on another work permit for at least another four years. Many of these workers have been deported, left voluntarily, or remain in the country underground.

Migrants throughout Canada are living without status. “It could be that they came on a temporary work visa, or they actually ran away or crossed the border because they feared violence if they stayed where they were,” says Natalie Wai, a Vancouver teacher and member of the BCTF Committee for Action on Social Justice.

“In one instance, a Mexican family was threatened with violence, so the mom took their son and daughter across the United States and came to Canada. She doesn’t have a work or student visa. They have nothing, but they came in order to escape violence. But she is not eligible to work here. She cannot access basic services like healthcare, food banks, libraries, and education because the fear of residing without status and getting caught is so prohibitive.”

Children who are born in Canada are automatically granted permanent resident status but if their parents are undocumented, many parents fear they will have to prove their own immigration status in order to enrol their children in school. “School staff, when registering new students may inadvertently ask questions about a family’s background and status,” says Wai.

“When we talk about these students and their families we tend to think that the most vulnerable are just those who are poor. The truly invisible are those who come to our cities and country and are not granted status. They’re scared that if they have children and enrol them in school their children may

be taken away by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). Then they would be deported.”

Wai along with others, met with the Vancouver Secondary Teachers’ Association in early May to draft a sanctuary schools policy they could propose to the Vancouver School Board.

“All children, regardless of their status, are entitled to an education. We want those students and families to know that they can come to school and be safe. A ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy would help the most vulnerable families feel better about enrolling their children in school.”

Because of their direct, and daily, relationship with some of the most vulnerable victims of federal immigration policy—the undocumented, or precariously residing—teachers and support staff have an opportunity to make workplaces sanctuary zones for others. It’s about showing solidarity between education workers and migrant workers, who typically work for little pay, in unstable situations, and are in constant fear of getting deported. “We’re in the business of education,” Wai underscores. “Schools need to be safe and caring places for all children.”

The BCTF Executive Committee passed this in February, 2014:
That the BCTF encourage locals to work with school boards to adopt a “sanctuary school” policy.



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 Register early www.mypita.ca

October 23 Surrey
 BCCLA & SELBC (formerly SRCLE)
 “2015 Encompass Conference”
<http://bccla.weebly.com/>

October 23 Burnaby
 Computer Using Educators of BC (CUEBC)
 Annual Conference
<http://cuebc.ca>

October 23–24 Powell River
 BCCASA (British Columbia Culinary Arts
 Specialist Association)
 Annual fall conference
 “A Chef’s Adventure on the Sunshine Coast”
www.surveymonkey.com/r/15F6RWB2
 Trevor Randle: trandle@sd42.bc.ca
www.bccasa.ca

October 23–24 North Vancouver
 BC Art Association annual conference
 “Back to the Studio”
www.backtothestudioartconference.com

October 23 Burnaby
 BC Dance Educators’ Association Presents:
 Spirit of Movement 2015
 Contact psac73@bctf.bc.ca or visit
<http://www.bcdea.ca>

October 23 Vancouver
 BC Social Studies Teachers Association
 Living in a World of Conflict Conference
<http://www.bcsstaconference.ca/>
 Contact bcssta@gmail.com

October 23–24 TBD
 ABCDE (Association of BC Drama Educators)
 “To The Moon and Back!”
 Gordon Hamilton: ghamilton@sd35.bc.ca
 or Lana O’Brien: lobrien@sd22.bc.ca

October 23 Vancouver
 BCPTA Primary Leadership Conference
 Empowering Learning
<http://www.bcpta.ca/wordpress/>
 Joy Silver: 604-941-2606

October 23 Vancouver
 PAGE BC Fall Conference
www.pagebc.ca/conference.php

October 23 Surrey
 BCTLA (BC Teacher-Librarians’ Association)
 Annual fall conference “Charting New
 Paths”
<http://bctla.ca> or contact Heather Daly at
daly_heather@hotmail.com

October 23 Vancouver
 LATA (Learning Assistance Teachers’
 Association) “Neuroscience Meets
 Education: Success for Struggling
 Students.”
 Gail Bailey: gailbailey@shaw.ca or Maureen
 Bencze: maureen.bencze@sd23.bc.ca

October 23–24 Richmond
 BCMEA Conference
www.bcmeaconference.com/register/index.html
 Matthew Martin: martinbcmea@gmail.com

PD Online Calendar

bctf.ca/PDcalendar

Changes/additions: msteele@bctf.ca



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