



RTA Newsletter

December, 2017

A Message from the Old Guy in the Office

As we near the Christmas Holidays, I would first like to thank all of you for the support and advice you have given me over the first few months of in the position of president. I've learned a great deal, and I appreciate your support and patience. I am always impressed and inspired by the hard work and passion that all of you bring to your schools and classrooms every day, and I can't imagine a district anywhere that has a group of teachers with more commitment to working as hard as you do to find ways they can to help their students to be successful. I wish you all the best for the holiday season and hope you enjoy time with friends and family and are able to relax and recharge.

Save-On-Foods Gift Cards

As in past years the RTA will be providing a \$25 gift card to all members. I will be putting cards into staff mailboxes this week, and will give cards to TTOCs that I see in my visits. TTOCs can also either arrange to pick their cards up from the RTA office anytime next week or to have them mailed.

The Role of Your Staff Reps

Each of our schools has a teacher who has generously stepped forward to be a staff rep. This is an important position within each school – our staff reps are in place to ensure that our collective agreement is being followed, and to be effective problem solvers, advocates, and sources of information at the school level. If teachers have concerns or problems at the workplace, they are encouraged to speak with their staff reps. Staff reps can bring concerns to administrators on behalf of teachers, and can also help to resolve issues that may develop between staff members. Staff reps also serve as a conduit to the RTA executive and the BCTF, so if they are not able to answer a question or resolve an issue themselves, they will make sure to find someone in the union structure who can. Often we feel that we should be able to address concerns or problems ourselves and are hesitant to go to others for help. I encourage you to involve your staff rep when necessary as it is so often beneficial to deal with problems directly and in a timely manner when they do arise. Often, a short discussion between a staff rep and a principal can bring a problem to the principal's

attention that they may not have even been aware of, and more often than not these discussions can be the beginning of a resolution.

From the Collective Agreement

With the implementation of new curriculum and reporting order, this is a good time to review the language in our collective agreement which addresses teachers' professional autonomy. Our language states;

ARTICLE F.6: PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

1. The Board recognizes that teachers are professionals and that the performance of their duties involves the exercise of professional judgment.

2. Within the bounds of effective educational practice, school instructional goals that have been collegially determined, prescribed curricula and district program requirements, teachers shall have individual professional autonomy in determining methodology of instruction and the planning and presentation of course materials for the classes of students to which they are assigned.

Teachers know better than anyone else the strengths and abilities of their students, and are continually adjusting the content and delivery of material to suit the learning styles and needs of their students. Administrators may offer suggestions regarding pedagogy and methodology, but it is the classroom teacher who has control over these areas within their classrooms. If you are ever concerned that you are being directed towards a particular approach and not being given the professional autonomy you are due as a professional, please speak to your staff rep.

Supreme Court Decision and Stripped Contract Language

As I'm sure you are aware, the Supreme Court upheld the BCTF's appeal regarding the BC government's stripping of our class size and composition language, and directed that the language was to be reinstated. The details of how and when this will happen are still unknown. The BCTF and BCPSEA have been meeting regularly over the last two weeks, and the BCTF is pushing hard to have the language implemented as soon as is feasible, particularly with regards to staffing ratios for non-enrolling teachers. We have been fortunate for the most part in that our district has worked to stay relatively close to the numbers and ratios set out in our stripped language, so there will not be dramatic changes here as there may be in some other districts. This will be a gradual process, and I will make sure that I communicate any developments to you as soon as possible. To read our newly restored concerning class size and composition you can go to this link

<http://www.revelstoketeachers.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SD19-Stripped-Language.pdf>