



RTA Newsletter November, 2017

A Message from the New Guy in the Office

Snow is inching down the mountains, the leaves are falling, the Canucks are losing and winter is definitely looming. As we are now fully immersed into the year I hope everyone is managing to maintain balance in their lives and aren't feeling overwhelmed with the demands of their jobs. I would like to thank all of you who have contacted me with questions – everyone has been understanding with me when my answer is “I don't know but I will find the answer for you as soon as I can.” Please don't hesitate to keep those questions coming, as each one is a learning opportunity for me in this new role. I will continue to make it a priority to drop into schools on a regular basis to check in and say hi (and bring tasty treats).

Okanagan Zone Conference

Teria Davies (Bargaining), Stacey Grimm (Pro-D), Jennifer Wolney (Ab. Ed.), Rory Luxmoore (Local Election Contact), Sarah Newton (Social Justice) and I attended the BCTF Okanagan Zone Conference in Kamloops on October 14 & 15. It was a great opportunity for all of us to get together with teachers from other districts in our zone and share ideas and experiences. We all came away having acquired a lot of new ideas that we are eager to share with our colleagues on the executive and with the membership as a whole.

New Curriculum and Reporting to Parents

As the traditional time for report cards is approaching many members have questions around reporting and what will be happening this year. The Communicating Student Learning Committee, which has several teachers on it as well as administrators and district staff, is exploring different options for reporting student learning with the objective being a district policy on reporting which would be in place for next year. The Education Advisory Committee will be gathering information from parents and students as to what they would like to see as well. This year reporting for grade 8 and 9 students will remain essentially the same, but for K – 7 teachers freedom is being given to schools to experiment with different

methods of reporting student progress. Teachers are encouraged to work with their colleagues and administrators in this regard, but also to remember that we do have professional autonomy and we as teachers know better than anyone what will be most effective and meaningful for our students.

Also, there have been questions regarding the Core Competencies and reporting – the reporting order from the government is clear that teachers will not report on these. The requirement is that in the summative report at the end of the year, students will do a self-evaluation on these competencies, with assistance from teachers. If you have any concerns with what you are being asked to do with regards to reporting please don't hesitate to contact your staff rep or me for assistance. Here is a helpful link to a document with further information around reporting.

https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/educator_update_student_progress_k-9.pdf

One ongoing area of concern for the RTA is that whatever process for reporting the district ends up adopting must not result in an increase in workload for teachers. Our goal is that the new process will be meaningful and helpful for parents and students, and manageable for teachers.

From Our Collective Agreement

Many of the questions I get from members are regarding leaves. There are many different types of leaves available to members in our contract, and it's a good idea to spend some time reading through them in **Section G: Leaves of Absence**. One in particular members should be aware of is **G.33 Short-Term Leave**. This provision provides members with three days of discretionary leave each year. This article states that "Leave requests involving civic, community, education or family matters may be granted with pay or at the cost of a TTOC. In all other cases the Board may grant leave without pay." If you are applying for a leave and have questions as to which leave would be best, please don't hesitate to contact me or your staff rep. Here's a link to our contract for your reading pleasure. <http://www.bcpsea.bc.ca/documents/19-pca-0611.pdf>

BCTF Services for Members

The BCTF provides a number of services and benefits to members, all of which can be found on the BCTF member portal. One service that has been of tremendous benefit to many members is the **Health and Wellness Program**. This program is available to all members who contribute to the Salary Indemnity Plan and assists teacher-members who are unable to maintain, or return to, their teaching positions due to a medical illness or disability (including mental health issues) by funding an early intervention rehabilitation program. The Health and Wellness Program contracts professional rehabilitation consultants located in communities throughout the province. In consultation with your health care provider, these consultants will coordinate services that help to improve the teacher's health and functional abilities. Check out the link here for more information: <https://www.bctf.ca/wellness/>