



Advocate

In consensus atque unitate stat potentia

"There is strength in unity"

A Monthly Newsletter

October 2019

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Our office hours are Monday to Friday,
 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Any inquiries can be directed to the
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 604-854-1946

President's Message

October has arrived and apparently so has the fall weather. We begin the month with World Teacher Week and that means daily trivia, prizes, cake and an ATU social on Friday afternoon. If you haven't yet indicated that you are attending Friday's event, please RSVP through our website.

I would like to remind teachers that it is important to stay healthy and not take on too much. I encourage all teachers to be cautious how much we 'sign up' for at this time of year. Teaching is not the easiest job and although we always want to do the best for our students and we are passionate about our profession, we need to make sure that we are making time for ourselves and maintaining a healthy work life balance. Balance doesn't just happen; it is something we have to work on and make lifestyle choices to achieve.

Class Size and Composition

According to MOU #17, the District had the month of September to do their very best to create classes that follow the restored class size and composition language. As of October 1st, any teacher that has a class in violation of either the class size or the composition will be owed remedy by the District. The ATU will be reaching out to the District this week seeking class size and composition numbers for all classes K-12 and we will begin the conversation about option #4. Without any agreement to option #4, which the last two years has been an option for professional development money, the existing 3 options will be available to teachers. These options include (a) additional prep time for the affected teacher, (b) additional non-enrolling teacher to be assigned to the affected teachers' class, and (c) additional teacher to co-teach in the affected classroom. Further updates will be sent out as things develop.

School Visits

Doug, Liane and I are making our rounds to school sites during lunchtime and meeting with teachers. We are finding that many school sites have changed their lunch bell schedule. If this is a reality at your site, please contact the ATU office and make sure we have the correct lunch bell times.

Growth Plan

Many teachers over the past year and a half opted for the growth plan to satisfy the teacher evaluation language in the collective agreement. That was a pilot project/ agreement between the ATU and the District and it ended in June 2019. At this point there should be no more meetings regarding growth plans as per the agreed to language. As a professional you may choose to continue with your growth plan goals but there are no further required meetings with administration.

In Solidarity,

Jennifer Brooks, ATU President

Labour Relations Rant of the Month

As any teacher of English would argue, conflict is a literary element that involves a struggle between two opposing forces, usually a protagonist and an antagonist. In respect to our working lives it then seems reasonable to say that if teachers are to be considered the protagonist then the identity of the antagonist is equally obvious.

No place makes this friction of opposing positions and opinions clearer than in heart of bargaining. During this round we have presented nineteen reasonable answers to issues of conflict, of which our antagonist has dismissed all nineteen.

One of these issues deals with staff meetings. Loved or loathed, the staff meeting is a hallmark of our profession and at one point may have served a purpose. In recent years, both in Abbotsford and in other districts, it has morphed into more of a mandated in-service session where educational dogma is hawked to a trapped audience of those who have already worked a full day and likely have hours more work ahead of them.

The ATU placed on the bargaining table that staff meetings be limited to one meeting each month and have a maximum duration of sixty minutes. This we argued should be applied at all levels within the K to 12 system in order to curb the disparities currently in place with the frequency of meetings. We also put forth that should an emergency arise there would be opportunity for a principal to add an additional meeting. The district disagreed with all of the changes we put forth and decreed that the current language is in their opinion sufficient.

If sufficient, then why does it not meet the needs of teachers in the district; why can the material needed to facilitate the administration and enhance the operation of the school not be discussed within 60 minutes; why can we not use technology present now that wasn't in the 1980s when the CA language was written, to transfer this information and shorten the meeting length; why must in-service be mandated during these meetings when it fails to be applicable to all the teachers in the meeting; why can we not be offered the crucial educational opportunities brought to these meetings as an option and be given the respect to make a professional decision as to if the material will bolster our pedagogy; why won't the district hear our displeasure with the antiquated staff meeting system and make adjustments?

Perhaps these questions could be placed on your next staff meeting agenda.

Cheers,

Doug Smuland, Labour Relations Officer



News From the Executive & Call for Committees

Aboriginal Education

Teresa Hootz is your elected Aboriginal Education Representative on the ATU Executive for the 2019-2020 school year. If you have any questions or issues around BCTF Aboriginal Education programs or resources, please contact her at teresa.hootz@abbyschools.ca.



Health & Safety

Your elected ATU Health and Safety Representative for the 2019-2020 school year is Leslie Kemp. Leslie sits on the District Occupational Safety and Health Committee along with ATU Vice President, Liane Loeppky. Please contact Leslie with questions or concerns about Health and Safety issues at leslie.kemp@abbyschools.ca or Liane at vicepresident@abbotsfordteachers.ca

Pro-D

Greetings all Members!
I am your Professional Development Chair this year and I need your help!!

If you would like to help make better choices for Pro-D activities and have the ability to make changes and improvements in Pro-D opportunities come join me on the Pro-D Committee.

We will meet the second Tuesday of every month at 3:30 p.m. at the ATU Hall at 2570 Cyril St.

Come join us!!!

dyanne.schreiner@abbyschools.ca

Social Justice

Social Justice Committee meeting- October 24, 2019 @3:45-4:30 at the ATU Hall

Come out and be a part of a great team doing great work! Bring your social justice ideas and areas of social justice passion to set up a social justice focus for Abbotsford. Where do you think we should go next? Looking forward to meeting you!

joanne.samuel@abbyschools.ca



TTOC Representative

Pat Smith is the TTOC Representative for the ATU Executive. She will be holding her first TTOC meeting at the ATU hall on October 17, 2019 at 4:00. If you are a TTOC and need to discuss any issues or concerns, please contact Pat at pat.smith@abbyschools.ca



Elementary School Representative

The Elementary Committee will be meeting once a month on the last Tuesday of every month. We will have our first meeting at the ATU Hall on October 22, 2019 at 4:00. We will be coming up with professional development opportunities for Elementary school teachers.

Hope to see you there Tina Kirkham.

tina.kirkham@abbyschools.ca

District Staff Committee [applications forms](#) can be found on our website at www.abbotsfordteachers.ca

LGBTQ History Month

LGBTQ History month, celebrated every October, is a month-long observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer history. It is meant to help build community, highlight the civil rights which LGBTQ members have achieved in many parts of the world, and to focus on issues members of the community are still fighting for today. It is celebrated in Canada and the United States in October to coincide with National Coming Out Day on October 11.

LGBTQ History month began in 1994 when Rodney Wilson, a high school teacher in Missouri, had the idea that a month should be dedicated to celebrating and educating people about gay and lesbian history. He gathered other teachers and members of the community to choose a month for this celebration, with the group selecting October to coincide with the historical activist marches on Washington and National Coming Out Day.

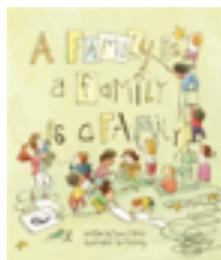
LGBTQ History Month provides an opportunity for us, as educators, to reflect on what we are doing in our schools and classrooms to provide an inclusive, safe space for all. The BCTF provides workshops, resources, and even book lists to help us acknowledge and legitimize LGBTQ people.



LGBTQ Themed Books for K-5

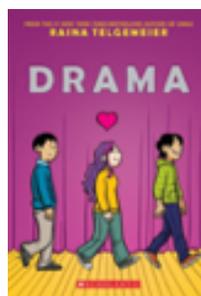


10,000 Dresses, Ewert, Marcus, Triangle Square 2008 (K-2)
Bailey dreams every night of beautiful dresses but her parents are not supportive. People tell Bailey that she shouldn't dream of dresses because Bailey was designated male at birth. But Bailey keeps on dreaming.



A Family is a Family is a Family, O'Leary, Sara, Groundwood Books Ltd., 2016 (K-2)
When a teacher asks the children in her class to think about what makes their families special, the answers are all different in many ways - but the same in the one way that matters most of all.

LGBTQ Themed Books 6-8

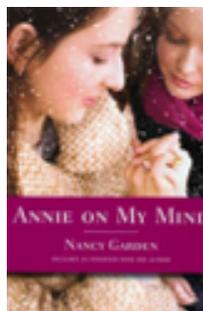


Drama, Telgemeier, Raina, 2012, 240p, Scholastic Graphix (Grades 6-8)
Callie is a passionate theater geek who plunges into her middle school's production of "Moon Over Mississippi" with enthusiasm. When twins Justin and Jesse join the cast, Callie quickly develops a crush on one, a friendship with the other, who is gay.



It's Our Prom (So Deal With It), Peters, Julie Ann, 2012, 342p., Hachette Book Group (Grades 6 and up)
Azure has gone public with her objections to her school's senior prom: too expensive, too exclusive, too heterosexual. When the principal challenges Azure and her friends to take charge of the planning committee, they jump into the task of planning an inclusive prom.

LGBTQ Themed Books 9-12



Annie on My Mind, Garden, Nancy, Square Fish, 2007 (Grades 9-12)
Liza and Annie are two 17-year-old New Yorkers who meet, become friends, and slowly realize that their feelings encompass more than friendship. They are confused, curious, tentative, and intense with each other.

A complete list of LGBTQ books and resources for K-5 are available on the [BCTF website](#)

HAPPY WORLD TEACHERS' DAY!

Abbotsford Teachers' Union proudly invites you to a special Teacher Appreciation social event in honour of World Teachers' Day.

Join us:

Friday, October 4th
2:30pm - 5:00pm

This special event is being held at
Boston Pizza
32530 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford
(By Goodlife and Staples)

RSVP ONLINE

Head to www.abbotsfordteachers.ca

& click on

'World Teachers' Day Celebration' to let us know you will be joining the celebration!



Coming soon to a staff room near you...

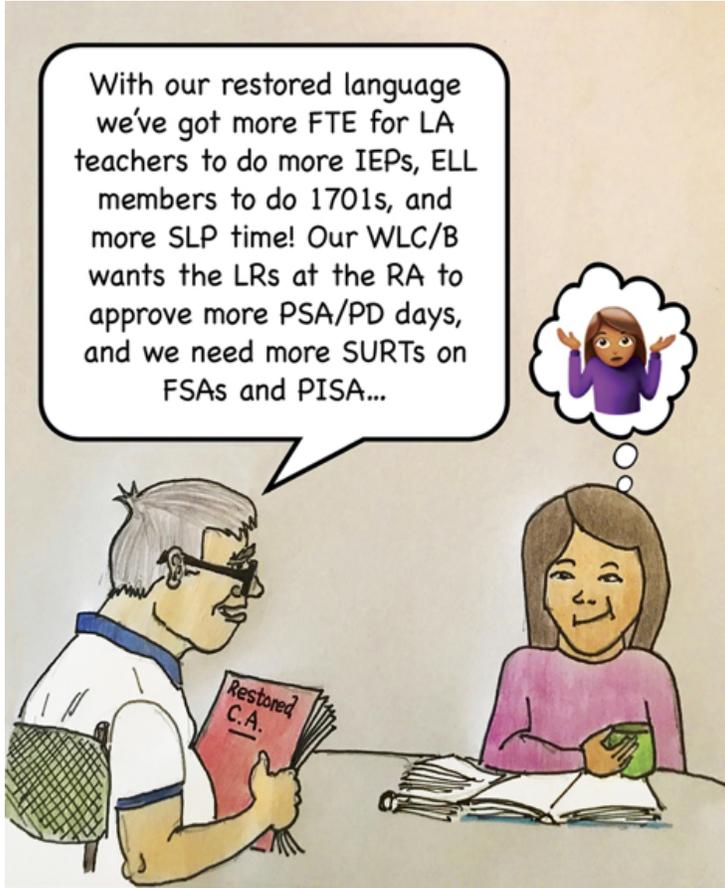
Early Career Teachers:

Did you know there is a Provincial Specialist Association just for Early Career Teachers? The BC Early Career Teachers is an association supporting Teachers Teaching on Call as well as teachers in their first years in the profession. Their website is <https://bcecta.wordpress.com> and they are working to provide conferences and resources for teachers of all ages starting in this joyful, but often stressful, career. Membership in this PSA is \$30 for BCTF members, and includes access to online resources, newsletters throughout the year, and email reminders of workshops and conferences put on by the BCECTA.



On Tuesday, September 24 the ATU was honoured to have BCTF Executive and Bargaining Team member Jody Polukoshko speak at our Special General Meeting on Bargaining.

Blast from the past:



With our restored language we've got more FTE for LA teachers to do more IEPs, ELL members to do 1701s, and more SLP time! Our WLC/B wants the LRs at the RA to approve more PSA/PD days, and we need more SURTs on FSAs and PISA...

"A cartoon for new teachers making light of the BCTF acronyms and introducing less tech savvy teachers to the language of emojis." -Peter McCue artwork. Jack MacDermot concept.

Source: <https://bctf.ca/history/collections/CartoonCollection.aspx?coll=2010s&image=1>



The 2019 Canadian federal election is scheduled to take place on October 21, 2019.

Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB)

To teach in the province of British Columbia you must be certified through the Teacher Regulation Branch. It is the responsibility of the School District, according to Article B. 34 in our Collective Agreement, to remit the full cost of the annual TRB fees for all continuing and part-time teachers each year when the fees are due. It is the responsibility of the teacher to update the TRB with your current contact information including your mailing address.

The TRB requires regular criminal record checks to maintain your certification. If the TRB mails you a letter informing you that you need to update your criminal record check and the letter gets mailed to an old address you run the risk of becoming uncertified by the TRB.

If you become uncertified you will have to do the entire application process again and it could be months before you become re-certified. In the meantime, the School District will remove you from your teaching role and place you on unpaid leave until your certification is restored.



UPCOMING EVENTS

\$99
includes PSA membership

Aboriginal Education Association
Provincial Specialists Association (AEA)

Moving Forward Together

October 24 (evening) and October 25, 2019

Langley Fine Arts School
9096 Trattle St., Langley, BC

Keynote Speakers:
Carey Newman
creator of the Witness Blanket
and
Charlene Bearhead
Education and Program Lead, Indian Residential School History
and Dialogue Centre, UBC

Register Online at: aea.ourconference.ca/

Maternity/Parental Leave Workshop

A Maternity/Parental Leave Workshop has been scheduled for Tuesday, November 5, 2019 at 4:00pm. Please join Jennifer Brooks and Liane Loepky at the ATU Hall for an information session on the ins and outs of Maternity/Parental Leaves.

Register online at:

<http://www.abbotsfordteachers.ca/mat-leave-workshop.html>

General Meeting October 16, 2019

The ATU General Meeting is coming up on October 16th at 4:00 pm. Nicole Longpre and Becky Pagulayan have put their names forward for the two vacant Member At Large positions on the Executive Committee and a Middle School Representative spot is still open. If you are interested in putting your name forward for one of these positions, please contact one of the ATU Release Officers by email or attend the meeting and put your name forward from the floor. We will be discussing issues related to Bargaining and Contract Resolution, in addition to the election. See you Wednesday, October 16!

CALENDAR / UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Executive Meeting	Wednesday, October 2
World Teacher Day Celebration	Friday, October 4
Pro-D Committee Meeting	Tuesday, October 8
Public School Board Meeting (SBO)	Tuesday, October 8
Social Justice Committee Meeting	Tuesday, October 15
General Meeting	Wednesday, October 16
TTOC Meeting	Thursday, October 17
Executive Meeting	Monday, October 21
Elementary School Committee Meeting	Tuesday, October 22
Professional Development Day	Friday, October 25
Maternity Leave Workshop	Tuesday, November 5

A Little Bit of Fun

