

# The Advocate

*In consensus atque unitate stat potential - "There is strength in unity"*

## President's Message

Take solace in the fact that you have made it through the long dark months following Christmas break, and that spring is close at hand. With the implementation of new curriculum, and the introduction of new District reporting procedures, the spring may present its own challenges though.

The addition of curriculum focused days this year will hopefully help in providing some time to wrap your head around what is being asked of you; the next day (May 5<sup>th</sup>) will be organized based on the feedback you provided following the event in February. The committee hopes to meet again shortly after spring break and begin its work on incorporating your ideas and structuring another successful day. I promise that you won't need to sit through another video of my stilted performance to start the day.

In respect to reporting procedures, the District has created some models that have been distributed and are likely being discussed in schools. I would remind teachers that there remains CA language on reporting that has not changed, and that there is a scheduled arbitration in May answering the question of the number and the format of reports that are required. Before the proposed model is put in place, there will need to be further discussion with teachers about the concerns that are already being expressed to the ADTA.

Please take the time to enjoy the break that will be upon us shortly, and reenergize yourself for the coming challenges that we know are around the corner.

Cheers, Doug Smuland

## Professional Development

I trust that teachers were able to make use of our most recent PD day in a manner that contributed to their individual needs. It is the hope of the ADTA that teachers understand their rights over control of this time and are able to make independent organizational decisions in planning these days. Given there are two further days remaining this school year, teachers should take a moment to think how they will best use this time, and to make plans sooner rather than later.

The responsibility of teachers to inform their principal about the "what and where" of their PD choice was a concern brought forward once again by the District, who has indicated that some principals are being excluded from being informed of teachers' use of these days. While we are obligated to inform administrators when asked, the ADTA believes that this information is best collected by the school's PD representative.

Teachers are advised to provide school PD representatives this information far in advance of the actual day itself, and the rep will then provide this information to the principal when it is solicited. It is hoped that this engagement over the organization of PD will remind all that as professionals, teachers make the best decisions about our personal PD needs.

## Staying Well at Teaching

The ADTA hosted a professional development opportunity during the February PD day which received rave reviews from all those in attendance. The BCTF presenter passed along some websites that were referenced in the presentation which may be useful for teachers to explore:

### General Health and charting your health

SFU Website

<http://www.sfu.ca/students/health/resources/wellness/wheel.html>

### Mental Health Support

Starling Minds – Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for BCTF members

<https://starlingminds.com/-start>

Bounce Back; computer program with some telephonic support; a series of modules. Made in BC, and available with a referral from a physician (although you might have to tell the physician about it).

<http://www.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/adults/bounceback>

Here to help: A wealth of information about a variety of mental health topics. Check out the Wellness Modules <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca>

CMHA – Information about Mental Health

<https://www.cmha.ca>

## Ministry of Education reports student achievement and demographics

If you'd like to see where Abbotsford rates in respect to the rest of the province in terms of class size, student FSA results, teacher and administrator salaries, graduation rates, and a plethora of other information, have a look at the Ministry's website:

<https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php?mode=District&report-school-district=Abbotsford+SD%23034&district-index=1>

## Pension Information

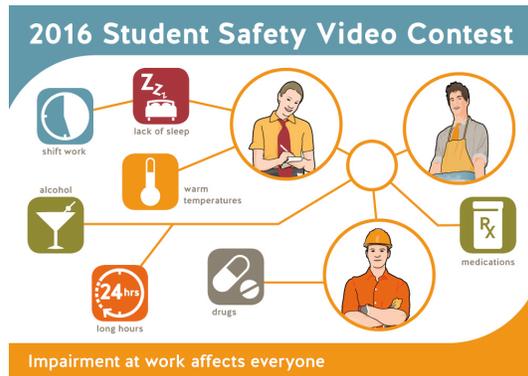
The BCTF has updated the pension webpage to include the Executive Committee (EC) recommendation support materials. You will find the EC pension recommendation document, the presentation of the consultation to the Winter Representative Assembly, the EC recommendation data tables, and a video tutorial explaining how to use the data tables, at: <http://www.bctf.ca/PensionConsultations2015/>

The recommendation from the BCTF Executive Committee to the 2016 AGM is:

That the teachers' Pension Plan design change of the pension formula include:

1. De-linking from the Canada Pension Plan's Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE);
2. A single accrual rate of 1.85% be applied to pensionable service;
3. An Early Retirement Reduction Factor of 4.5% at age 61;
4. A removal of the 35 year Pensionable Service cap;
5. And an unreduced pension for those with 35 years of Contributory Service.

## 2016 Student Safety Video Contest - WorkSafeBC



Have you ever pulled an all-nighter and dragged yourself to work anyway? Or maybe you've worked with a colleague whom you suspect had been drinking before his shift. Fatigue, alcohol, and drugs are all forms of impairment that can affect your ability to work safely, which can put you and those around you at risk of injury.

Using the theme, Impairment at work affects everyone, the safety video contest challenges students to create a video (maximum 2 minutes) that explores the topic of impairment in the workplace, and what employers and workers can do to address it.

### [2016 WorkSafeBC Student Safety Video Contest](#)

For more details, see the [contest rules](#) and the [entry form](#)

## Abbotsford Virtual School Certification Course

AVS is now accepting registrations for its Virtual School Certification program.

Registration deadline: Friday, April 1st @ 4 pm

Please contact 604.859.9803 or email [brad\\_hutchinson@sd34.bc.ca](mailto:brad_hutchinson@sd34.bc.ca) for more information.

## News from your ADTA Executive Chairs

### TTOC Rep

Sylvia Rempel

Hello TTOC's! Is there an upcoming professional development (Pro-D) event you would like to attend? The ADTA has Pro-D funds available to you! All TTOCs have up to \$150 available to them per year for any event or materials intended to improve or inform your teaching. When you sign up for an event, keep your receipt! Bring it in to the ADTA office to fill out the Pro-D form and you will be reimbursed.

TTOCs cannot accumulate Pro-D funds in an account. The yearly limit does not increase if you don't use it this year. So attend a Pro-D event and use it! Also, the ADTA has limited funds allocated each year. If you attend an event in June, or buy books (blackline master books do not qualify) over the summer, and the funds are depleted, simply keep your receipt until next September and submit it then.

### Elementary School Rep

Charlotte Tommy

#### WOULD YOU LIKE A FREE BOOK?

The BCPTA would like to reimburse you for any Teacher's Resource book or Children's Literature book in return for a written book review and/or lesson ideas and photos of something you tried that was inspired by the book you ordered.

Book purchases are limited to \$40. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please email Margaret Cavin at [mcavin@sd52.bc.ca](mailto:mcavin@sd52.bc.ca) with:

- \* the book you would like to review
- \* a brief description of your intent
- \* the grade(s) you teach and your school
- \* your name, address and email

## **Update from BCTF Representative Assembly**

The following are Key decisions of the Winter RA which was held on Jan 29-30, 2016

### **Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation- Donation - La Loche tragedy**

That the Winter RA of the BCTF provide a donation of \$5,000 to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to assist in providing support to teachers and other school staff, students, and families affected by the tragedy in La Loche, and that this be a charge to the Contingency Fund.

### **BC Health Coalition MSP premiums**

That the Federation lobby the government to discontinue the practice of collecting "MSP Premiums" and re-establish a progressive income tax regime.

### **CPP/OAS**

That the Federation call upon the new Federal Government to immediately move ahead with its campaign commitments to:

1. expand the Canada Pension Plan.
2. restore eligibility for Old Age Security to Age 65.

### **Education Policy and Curriculum Change**

The following motion will be referred to the Executive Committee for report back to the Spring RA:

That the BCTF urge the Ministry to include a balance of academic and elective courses as part of the graduation requirement that reflects the goals of the new curriculum and restores a comprehensive education for the students of BC.

#### **Proposed Graduation Program**

that the BCTF demand written communication outlining in detail any significant changes to assessment, reporting structures, and the proposed graduation programs before they are implemented in secondary schools.

### **Syrian Refugee Crisis**

That the BCTF contribute \$10,000 to the Syrian Refugee Crisis through the Immigrant Services Society of BC.

### **California Teachers' Association**

That the BCTF express its solidarity with the California Teachers' Association in support of their Supreme Court case *Friedrichs vs California Teachers' Association* (fair share).

## **The Golden Tree Farmworkers Monument Vigil**

### [Farmworkers Candlelight Vigil](#)

Date: Sunday, March 13, 2016 @ 1:30 pm



## **Sharing Social Justice Resources on TeachBC**

The TeachBC website contains lesson plans for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Lessons addressing all areas of the curriculum can be found on this site and downloaded for free.

Example: Paige's Story—a lesson about a BC teen in the downtown eastside, submitted by Janet Mary Nicol.

The BC advocate for children and youth released a biography of "Paige," an Aboriginal teen in foster care who died of an overdose in Vancouver's impoverished downtown eastside. In this lesson, groups of students read a portion of the biography and then share with the class. A worksheet is provided to facilitate the lesson. Students discuss the challenges and solutions to teen issues of poverty, addiction, foster care, and government policies.

We invite you to take a few minutes to explore this and other antipoverty lesson plans on the TeachBC site, and to post some of the social justice lessons you are using in your classroom.

## Upcoming Events in Social Justice

Following the successful presentation of the Leap Manifesto at the recent climate action movement events in Paris, activists from around the world adopted **February 29, 2016**, as **International Leap Day**. On this day, citizens are encouraged to put pressure on their governments to transform our political and economic system by adopting the strategies outlined in the Leap Manifesto. Read the full Leap Manifesto [HERE](#) and consider signing on to receive updates on activities taking place in your community.

## Increasing Member Engagement in Social Justice

What initiatives are you carrying out in your classroom to respond to issues of poverty? Please send descriptions of successful activities you have carried out with your students to [bryeburn@bctf.ca](mailto:bryeburn@bctf.ca)



## ADTA Hours

The ADTA office is open Monday to Friday  
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Address: 2570 Cyril Street  
Phone: 604.854.1946

## Important Dates

The ADTA office will be closed for Spring Break from March 14-24th inclusive.

### March

- 7 ADTA Executive Meeting @ 3:30PM
- 9 ADTA Staff Rep Meeting @ 4:00PM
- 12-15 Sat-Tues BCTF AGM
- 13 Farmworkers Candlelight Vigil @ 1:30PM
- 15 Leave Deadline
  - Long Term Service
  - Paid-Ed Leave
- 14-18 Monday-Friday Spring Break
- 21-24 Days in Lieu
- 25 Good Friday (office closed)
- 28 Easter Monday (office closed)
- 29 School re-opens

### April

- 4 ADTA Executive Meeting @ 3:30PM
- 6 ADTA Staff Rep Meeting @ 4:00PM
- 28 Day of Mourning
- 29 Non Instructional Day #5