

The Advocate

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

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER (MAYBE)

ISSUE NO. 5 - OCTOBER 2015

REMEMBER TO VOTE
ON OCTOBER 19TH

President's Message

Curriculum Change in Abbotsford

As you have no doubt heard, there has been a recent announcement outlining the creation of two additional in-service days this school year, and two days over each of the next two years to support curriculum implementation. While this agreement likely will not meet all of the needs of teachers, it is two days forward from where we were at last week. To be clear, these in-service days are in addition to the existing 5 professional development days and 1 non-instructional day.

This announcement is an important first step in successfully rolling out the new curriculum, as teachers will get the time they need to meet, collaborate, and incorporate the changes into their professional practice without having to do so entirely on their own time or packed into successive staff meetings.

The plan allows for release time for teachers to plan how the in-service days will be used in their local. The ADTA Executive will choose who these teachers will be in Abbotsford, and we will be putting out a call for those who might be interested in the coming days. I will also meet with our superintendent this week to decide together on the timing of these days.

In whatever schedule should emerge, teachers are reminded that as we move through the adoption of new curriculum that they have professional autonomy rights that allow them to determine the methods of instruction and the planning and presentation of course materials as is outlined in *Article F.22* of the collective agreement.

How a teacher delivers the curriculum is up to the teacher. The curriculum sets out the Big Ideas and the Learning Standards (content and competencies) that students are to develop/learn: how the teacher arrives at that end point and the methods employed (personalized learning, inquiry, project-based learning, or other) is up to the teacher. It is correct to state that the draft curriculum is written in such a way as to facilitate inquiry-based learning, but it is not a requirement.

On the following pages there is a recent article from the BCTF Pro-D News, adapted from a message that went to members in August, which explains the curriculum changes in greater detail. Hopefully, this information will be somewhat helpful for you as we move forward.

Cheers,
Doug Smuland

Pension Redesign

The BCTF currently has a unique opportunity to modernize our pension plan to reflect the changing demographics in our membership. From September to December, 2015, BCTF staff, Pension Plan trustees,

and Executive Committee members will visit locals to seek input on possible pension plan design changes. Whether you are new to teaching, mid-career, or close to retirement, we urge every member to participate in their Abbotsford's consultation. The ADTA will be hosting a meeting on **December 2, 2015** that is open to all plan members working in Abbotsford. Please talk with your staff representative if you plan on attending so that the ADTA can accommodate all those who are interested.

The Next Step in Our Court Case?

The BCTF has filed its [leave application](#) to the Supreme Court of Canada requesting that the Court accept its appeal of the Bills 28/22 decision from the BC Court of Appeal. BCTF legal counsel argued that the case raises significant questions of public and national importance about s. 2(d) of the *Charter*, the freedom of association guarantee. The proposed appeal specifically raises the issue of whether pre-legislative consultation can be a replacement for collective bargaining and the right to strike under s. 2(d) of the *Charter*. It also raises the issue of whether a government has broader latitude to interfere with collective bargaining if the parties are bargaining over issues that have a public policy dimension. And, assuming that pre-legislative consultations are relevant, it raises the issue of how a court determines if a government conducts consultations in good faith. We will let members know the status of our application as soon as the SCC decides whether leave to appeal is granted or not.

News from your ADTA Executive Chairs:

Prod for the Middle

[Middle School Rep](#)
[Craig Hemmerich](#)

Abbotsford Middle School teachers joined a number of elementary school teachers last Friday for our Administrative Professional Development Day. The Aboriginally themed event was hosted by Chief Dan George Middle School. Ray Solberg started the morning with a personal account of his experience in a Residential School.

Ray's heartfelt introduction was followed by a thought provoking and humorous keynote address from Wab Kinew. Wab took us on a journey of enlightenment as he contradicted common stereotypes and unveiled a path we as educators could use as we continue implementation of Aboriginal content to our 20th Century Curriculum.

After enjoying insightful breakout groups ranging from Project Based Learning to a technology based "Little Bits" session, we were treated with an

extraordinary lunch. Many of us went back for second helpings of the BBQ salmon. Delicious!

The afternoon was equally as inspiring as the second keynote speaker disarmed us with a quip in her introduction about her safety-pinned pants. Dr. Wenona Victor brought us from laughter to a unique understanding of the challenges that lay ahead for educators. Her presentation was a seamless integration of 'Where we are now,' to 'Where we plan to be,' as BC tackles our history through education.

The efforts of all involved in the coordination and delivery of this unique event are greatly appreciated.

Your Provincial Representation

[Local Association Rep](#)
[Jef Baerg](#)

The key role of the Local Rep (LR) is to ensure that the opinions of Abbotsford teachers are represented at the BCTF Rep Assemblies held in Richmond. These are two-day sessions, Friday (day and evening) and Saturday, held three times each year in November, January, and May, where locals meet with the BCTF executive to debate and make decisions about policy, direction, finances of the BCTF, etc. Districts our size typically sends four people: the local president as an observer and the first VP, second VP, and LR as voting members. Recently we've pushed on your behalf to defeat various motions that would have seen our BCTF dues rise, worked to prevent an effort by some locals with much higher local dues to financially punish(!) locals like us for having the lowest local dues in the province, and voted to lobby the provincial government in an effort to protect teacher autonomy in the area of Pro D.

You can track the work of the Rep Assembly by logging into the BCTF member portal and clicking on "Representative Assembly minutes" near the bottom of the left sidebar. The next RA will be Nov. 6 and 7. Feel free to email me if you have any questions or comments.

Strike Fund Levy

[Secretary-Treasurer](#)
[Casey Lindquist](#)

This is a reminder for ADTA members of the strike fund levy that was passed at last Spring's AGM. In order to maintain our local strike fund in the event of future job action down the road, there will be \$10 levy made each month per active teacher until our strike fund has reached our targeted sum as set in our constitution, at which point the levy would cease to be collected. As our strike fund is doled out equitably to all members, the levy is being applied equitably to all members. This is the first month of this new \$10 deduction. If payroll made errors on your September statement, they will be corrected next month.

Professional Development

Professional Development Chair
Ken Ambrose

Greetings from your Pro-D Chair for this year. I just wanted you to know I am here and am happy to field pro-d related questions and assist where possible. One thing we have found over the years is that with teachers being so creative, the pro-d requests can often be just as creative. As mentioned by Doug at the pro-d rep training Friday the 24th, the ADTA is not the pro-d police. Any requests for documentation, receipts, etc. are to keep our books in order for the auditor. As for pro-d ideas, please share with me and your teacher friends, there are always opportunities out there that we don't hear about. Please spread the word when you hear of a good one. Our committee will be meeting monthly, as needed, as we attempt to keep current with proposals and questions from members. If we can help you with anything, do e-mail myself or Doug and Jennifer at the office. One last thing, be sure you have a great day on the upcoming provincial day October 23rd. If you need ideas, check the BCTF site. Stay in the know! Have a great year.

UBC Massive Open On-line Course — Reconciliation through Indigenous Education

Regardless of where you live, you can enrol in this six-week course: Reconciliation through Indigenous Education, which runs from Sept. 29-November 6, 2015. Learn more <http://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/MOOC/> It is not too late to register. As well, UBC is offering a host of other [Master of Education programs](#), many of which are all online.

TTOC News

TTOC Rep:
Sylvia Rempel

Hello and Welcome to the 2015/2016 school year! Your TTOC representative this year is Sylvia Rempel. She is happy to answer any questions you may have about TTOC working conditions/callout issues/collective agreement/etc..Please do not hesitate to contact her, either on district email - sylvia_rempel@sd34.bc.ca, or on gmail - tocrep34@gmail.com

TTOC Issue of the Month:

When you arrived to your assignment, did you receive keys?? If not, or if you were asked to leave personal items in exchange for keys, this could be a Health and Safety issue. Please contact me using one of the email addresses listed above.

Curriculum Changes:

What PD Chairs need to know (from BCTF)

Curriculum change will be a hot topic in PD circles all across BC in the coming year, as the new curriculum documents are circulated and teachers begin to examine them. It is important to note that there are positive aspects to the changes, but we also have a number of concerns. School districts will take many different approaches to the new curriculum and its implementation, some of which may impact professional development programs in locals. This document will help PD chairs navigate through the “must do,” the “maybe,” and the “no, not yet” aspects of implementation plans.

Background

Curriculum change has been a collaborative process involving teachers and Ministry of Education staff. Teams of teachers appointed by the BCTF, the Federation of Independent Schools, and the First Nations Schools Association have worked collaboratively, with Ministry staff facilitating, to update the K–9 curriculum. Work on the first drafts of the new Grades 10–12 curriculum is expected by the end of August.

Why do we need new curriculum?

In general, the revisions are intended to make the curriculum more manageable for teachers, and to provide more opportunities for teachers and students to focus on particular topics of interest in their schools and communities. The learning outcomes in several subject areas have been reduced, thus providing more time and flexibility to explore topics in depth.

Currently, there are 11 curriculum areas and new core competencies posted on the Ministry's [Transforming Curriculum and Assessment website](#).

What is expected of teachers this year?

This is an exploratory year, so the use of new curriculum is voluntary. If they wish, teachers are free to explore the new curriculum, but no one is required to use it this school year and *no one should feel pressured to do so*. The Ministry will be communicating this message to superintendents as well, so there should be no confusion about this issue. During this exploration year, teachers can use either the old or the new curriculum, or a combination of both. However, there is still the expectation that teachers follow Ministry curriculum documents. Teachers are encouraged to use school-based union meetings and staff committee meetings to discuss the related issues that arise in their districts.

Interwoven Aboriginal content

The BCTF strongly supports inclusion of Aboriginal content and understandings across the curriculum. This long-overdue development builds upon work the Federation has already done in supporting

Curriculum Changes con't:

employment equity, enhancement agreements, and changes to teacher training programs. Following on the landmark Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, now is an important time to focus on education for reconciliation.

(The sixth non-instructional day being designated for Aboriginal education is addressed below under the heading “Designation of purpose for non-instructional days.”)

Teachers need support

The BCTF continues to advocate for sufficient implementation funding to support the draft curriculum. Any funding committed to date falls far short of what we know is required to make implementation successful. The Federation will use every opportunity to push for increased implementation funding, including in our next meeting with the new Minister of Education, Mike Bernier. PD Chairs should emphasize the important distinction between implementation funding and teachers’ autonomous use of professional development funding, based on teacher choice.

Ongoing concerns

Some changes are positive, but many ongoing concerns and unanswered questions remain:

Special Education

Many teachers have heard that the current special education categories, and the funding that flows from them, will be eliminated. A decategorized model for special education raises disturbing issues about how the needs of these students will be met.

Clarity about the big picture

There is a lack of clarity about the scope of changes contemplated for students in the senior secondary grades. Without the crucial details on graduation

requirements and 10–12 curriculum, it is difficult to see the big picture of “transformative education.” To learn more about the Ministry’s proposed directions, see [Graduation Years Curriculum: Proposed Directions](#).

Privatization of education

In BC, as in countries around the globe, teachers and their unions are deeply concerned about the increasing pressures toward privatization and commercialization of public education. Members are encouraged to be aware of these ongoing intrusions into the public good in education and to recognize when these trends are appearing in their districts. Teachers need to continue to promote the importance and values of public education as outlined in the [Charter for Public Education](#).

Distinguishing between curriculum and pedagogy

The changes in the curriculum do not necessitate any particular teaching method. The Ministry sets the curriculum, while individual teachers make pedagogical choices. *Collective agreement autonomy clauses ensure that decisions pertaining to teaching methods are up to individual teachers.* Teachers will make decisions based on the needs of their students, the supports available, and the working conditions in their classrooms.

Dealing with questions from parents

If parents come to you with questions about curriculum change, it’s a good idea to direct them to district administrators or the Ministry itself for information. Teachers should feel free to be straightforward with parents in expressing their concerns. As well, you may want to explain that for curriculum change to be successful, resources and supports are required—including supports for students with special needs.

EHB and Dental Benefit Improvements

Questions and Answers Updated June 15, 2015

When were the improvements in EHB reimbursements in effect?

The first EHB improvements were in effect retroactively as of August 1, 2014.

Are the increased EHB reimbursement limits in effect for all members?

No. Only members in locals that have joined the provincial standardized EHB plan will be subject to the increased limits. There are currently five locals whose members are not covered by the provincial plan: Vancouver Elementary, Vancouver Secondary, Vancouver Adult Educators, Coquitlam, and Vancouver Island West.

When will the improvements in dental plan coverage be in effect?

The first dental plan improvements will be in effect as of July 1, 2015.

Will the improvements in dental plan coverage be in effect for all members?

Yes. While some local dental plans may already provide the newly negotiated coverage limits, plans whose limits fall short will have their limits raised.

When will Pacific Blue Cross (PBC) be reimbursing claims based on the new EHB reimbursement rates?

The PBC system is now updated and operational to reflect the negotiated improvements to services and limits, retroactive to August 1, 2014. All the information and forms required to submit claims are now on the updated PBC microsite for teachers at www.pac.bluecross.ca/teachers/. The deadline for retroactive claims reaching PBC was April 30, 2015.

Can you explain the improvement in reimbursements for eye exams?

Previously the cost of an eye exam was included in the \$200 limit for vision care. Now the cost of an eye exam is reimbursed in addition to the \$400 limit for vision care.

What is the reimbursement limit for an eye exam?

PBC will reimburse the full cost of an eye exam up to their current “reasonable and customary” limit of about \$110.

What is the benefit year? Is it a school year or a calendar year?

The benefit year is the calendar year, from January 1 to December 31. The exceptions are vision care and eye exams every two years, and hearing aids every four years. The entitlement for these items is calculated from the service date of first eligible claim.

Are superior provisions in the current dental plan affected by the improvements? For orthodontics we have 50% reimbursement but it is unlimited. Will we lose the unlimited?

No, superior provisions will not be affected. For orthodontics effective July 1, 2015, you will have 75% reimbursement and retain the unlimited.

Is dual coverage allowed for the provincial EHB plan?

Yes. That hasn't changed. Dual coverage is still available for BCTF members covered by the provincial EHB plan. My daughter is scheduled for orthodontia treatments which begin in May of 2015.

Do the improvements to the dental plan include dual coverage?

Yes. Effective July 1, 2015, dual coverage will be allowed for spouses/partners who are both BCTF members—whether or not they are working in the same district.

Currently my plan has a lifetime per person limit of \$2,500, which will increase to \$5,000 on July 1, 2015. Should I hold off on the treatments until July?

Not necessarily. As long as you don't spend over the \$2,500 limit before July 1, you will be fine. If you spend over the \$2,500 before July, the lifetime limit will increase in July, but you will not be able to recoup any amounts already spent over the previous \$2,500 limit. Services provided before July 1, 2015, will be reimbursed at current limits, while services provided on or after July 1, 2015, will be reimbursed up to the new lifetime limit of \$5,000.

I am getting braces. I am starting a series of appointments in June 2015. My current plan reimburses only 50% for orthodontics. Can I hold on to my receipts for the work done now and submit them after July 1, 2015, when the improvements take effect and have them reimbursed at 75%?

No. Claims are paid under the plan in effect at the time the service was provided. If you hold on to your receipts and submit them after July 1 they will be reimbursed at the previous rate of 50%. Orthodontic services provided after July 1 will be reimbursed at the new rate of 75%.

Will there be more improvements to benefits during the term of the 2013–19 Collective Agreement?

Yes. In 2016 the \$3 per day in lieu of benefits for TTOCs will be increased to \$11 per day. In 2017 there will be increases to coverage under the provincial standardized EHB plan for hearing aids, orthotics, vision care, massage, physiotherapy, and acupuncture. In 2018 there will be additional increases to coverage under local dental plans and the provincial standardized EHB plan. For details see *Improvements in Benefits* at the BCTF members' portal.

Provincial Standardized EHB Plan Improvements Schedule

	2013–14	August 1, 2014	July 1, 2017	July 1, 2018
Fertility Drugs	N/A	\$20,000 LTM	\$20,000 LTM	\$20,000 LTM
Hearing Aids	\$1,000 (5 yrs)	\$2,000 (4 yrs)	\$2,700 (4 yrs)	\$3,500 (4 yrs)
Ortho Shoes	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$500
Orthotics	\$200	\$400	\$500	\$500
Vision	\$200 (2 yrs)	\$400 (2 yrs)	\$500 (2 yrs)	\$550 (2 yrs)
Eye Exam	Included in Max (2 yrs)	Separate (2 yrs)	Separate (2 yrs)	Separate (2 yrs)
Naturopath	\$500	\$800	\$800	\$900
Chiropractor	\$500	\$800	\$800	\$900
Massage	\$500	\$800	\$900	\$900
Physiotherapy	\$500	\$800	\$850	\$900
Psychologist	\$500	\$700	\$700	\$900
Acupuncture	\$500	\$700	\$800	\$900
Podiatry/ Chiropody	\$500	\$700	\$700	\$800
Speech Therapy	\$500	\$700	\$700	\$800

Local Dental Plans Improvements Schedule

	July 1, 2015	July 1, 2018
Basic (Plan A)	See local plan for current percentage	Plan pays 85%
Major (Plan B)	See local plan for current percentage	Plan pays 60%
Orthodontics (Plan C)	Plan pays 75%—LTM \$5,000 per person	

Note: Effective July 1, 2015, dual coverage will be allowed for partners who are both BCTF members.

The BCTF Needs You!

Are you interested in working and learning conditions and their connection to bargaining? Health and Safety? Peace and global education? If so, please consider applying for one of these BCTF [advisory committees](#). The application deadline is Thursday, October 8, 201

DPAC News:



Start With Strengths: Change the Lens, Change the Story

What happens when we shift away from focusing on our kids' challenges towards exploring and honouring their strengths? How can curiosity and storytelling strengthen relationships between our children, youth, families and community?

Learn how to move away from focusing on all the things we "can't" do and find out how celebrating the things we "can" do makes a huge difference for our children, families and school communities.

Thursday October 15, 2015
7pm - 9pm
Abbotsford Arts Centre
 2329 Crescent Way

Who Should Attend?
 Youth, Parents,
 Educators,
 Community Members

FREE EVENT

Presented by: Chris Wejr, Principal, James Hill Elementary School (Langley)
 Karen Copeland, Parent, Champions for Community Mental Wellness

Register Via Eventbrite: <http://bit.ly/eventbritestartwithstrengths>
Register Via Email: dpac.sd34@gmail.com

By popular demand, due to the success of the parent portion of last years Shared Learning conference, DPAC is excited to be presenting the upcoming free event 'Start with Strengths: Change the Lens, Change the Story.' This free evening is for parents, guardians, teachers, school staff and anyone with interest in the success of our young people.

We are proud to be funding this event with support from SD34.

Sincerely,
 The Abbotsford District Parent Advisory Council

DPAC is sponsoring this collaborative event with Chris Weir and Karen Copeland, parent and founder of Champions for Community Mental Wellness.

Important ADTA Dates

October 05 th	World Teacher Day
October 12 th	Thanksgiving Day
(No	School)
October 23 th	PD Day (#2)
October 26 th	Staff Rep Training
Nov 2 nd	H & S Rep Training
Nov 4 th	Staff Rep Meeting
Nov 6th-7 th	BCTF Rep Assembly
Nov 11 th	Remembrance Day
	ADTA office closed
Nov 26 th	Parent/Teacher
	Conferences
Nov 27th	PD Day (#3)
Dec 02	BCTF Pension
	Meeting/Consultation

ADTA Hours

The ADTA is open 8:30 to 4:30 Monday to Friday
 Address: 2570 Cyril Street
 Phone: 604-854-1946