

Ideas to spark curiosity and inspire change.

Please read and discuss with your colleagues.



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Important Dates

Jan 8 - Exec Meeting

Jan 14 - H&S SURT

Jan 15 - Pro-D Joint Committee meeting

Jan 22 - Staff Rep meeting @ SBO

Jan 31-Feb1 - Winter RA

Feb 5 - Exec Meeting

Feb 5 - General Meeting

Happy New Year!

Welcome back to a brand new year, filled with fresh possibilities and opportunities to grow and inspire! As we step into this next chapter together, I want to remind you how deeply valued you are and how important it is to take care of yourself.

Amidst the busy days and responsibilities, please make time to check in with yourself—listen to what you need, whether that’s a quiet moment, a breath of fresh air, or simply a pause to reset.

It’s easy to pour so much into others, but remember, your own well-being is just as essential. Prioritize rest, carve out time for things that light you up, and stay hydrated—simple acts that have a big impact on how we feel and show up.

This year, let’s continue to be mindful of checking in on one another, offering grace, compassion, and support. We’re all in this together, and by showing each other kindness, we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and cared for.

Wishing you a year of joy, balance, and inspiration. You've got this!

Warmly,
Shawn Holland and Jacqueline Symons



Using School District Technology

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

This is just a reminder regarding the use of various aspects of school district technology. These services and devices are property of the school district and that always needs to be considered with their use.

Any websites that are used while you are logged in as a school district employee can be tracked and monitored – not only for what sites you are visiting, but also for when you are visiting them. School district laptops can be examined to see what you have downloaded onto the device and what apps you are using on that device. Items saved into your district Microsoft One drive can be accessed by the district.

Finally, school district email can also be monitored. Be sure that any email you are sending via your school district email address is material that you are comfortable with your administrator or a member of upper management reading. This includes any information or questions that are being submitted to the CDTA office. I am not suggesting that every document/website visit/email is being examined, but it is important to keep in mind, so please be professional.



AGM Delegates/CDTA Executive Member Needed

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

We have our Winter General Meeting coming up at the beginning of February. Beyond connecting you with updates as to what is happening in the district and actions the union is taking on your behalf, it is also the meeting where we elect delegates to go to the BCTF AGM. We get to send 11 delegates. Five of those are pre-selected: our two Local Reps, and our three table officers (president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer).

The other six are chosen at the meeting. Please consider putting your name forward to get a glimpse into the larger democratic mechanisms of the BCTF. You will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Vancouver to hang out for 4 days downtown at the beginning of Spring Break to participate in debate/discussion/and elections of next year's BCTF table officers and executive.

Also at our general meeting will be the election of a Member-at-Large to fill in for one of our Executive members who had to step down.

If you are interested in putting your name forward for either election please contact the office to have your name added to the ballot. Members will also be able to run from the floor for those of you who like to make last minute decisions.



Requesting an Evaluation as a Temporary Teacher

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Article C.27 (Temporary Appointments) 10. b of the CA states that “teachers with temporary appointments may be evaluated at any time, but in any event an evaluation shall be completed before the conclusion of the teacher’s tenth (10th) month of service.” Although this is not being done in practice consistently, there are many benefits to requesting an evaluation, and it falls within your employment rights.

Benefits of receiving an evaluation:

Early Feedback for Professional Growth: Receiving an evaluation allows you to gain insight into your strengths and areas for improvement. This feedback helps you adjust your teaching strategies, classroom management, and content delivery. Your commitment to professional development will reflect positively when applying for positions.

Strengthened Resume and Portfolio: A positive evaluation becomes a valuable addition to your portfolio. A strong evaluation can be a compelling indicator of your teaching potential and can set you apart from other candidates who may not have received similar early feedback.

In addition, at any time after an evaluation is conducted, a temporary teacher may request a meeting with the Superintendent to discuss the prospects of being considered for any vacancies for continuing appointments (Article C27.10.c).

What can I do if I was an unsuccessful candidate to a position?

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

It can be exhausting and disheartening to apply for teaching jobs over and over, only to be left in the dark without any feedback. It's tough not knowing where you stand, especially when you've poured your time and energy into each application. The process can often feel like a rollercoaster of hope and disappointment, but please remember that this doesn't reflect your worth or potential as an educator.

So what can you do when you've applied to a position and were not the awarded candidate? Under Article E.21.4.e, teachers who apply for a position can request to be notified in writing if they are unsuccessful. Teachers may also request a meeting with the Superintendent or designate to discuss the matter. We always encourage members to have a representative of the Association to accompany them.

Breaking Barriers: Social Justice Corner

by: Kir Tancon (Social Justice Chair)

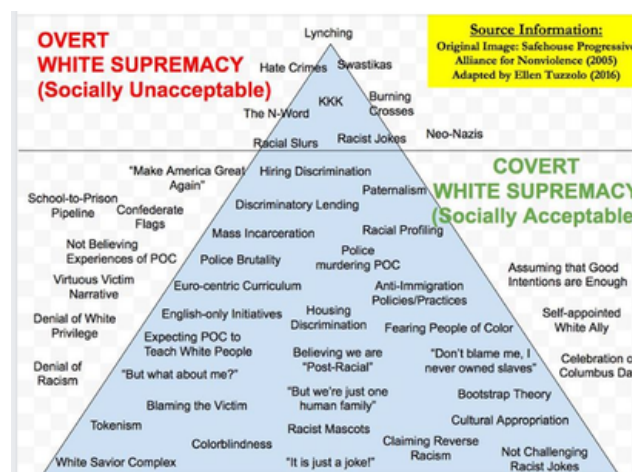
“The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference”

– Elie Wiesel, Romanian-American writer, professor, and Holocaust survivor

Happy January from your Social Justice chair and our newly-formed Social Justice Committee!

My hope for our members as we head into a return to school this week is that you were able to find moments to pause, experience joy, and maybe even forget what day it was while wearing soft pants (always the true sign of a holiday, let's be honest) 😊.

Looking at our Social Justice Calendar, as well as Black History Month coming up in February, there are strong reminders as to why anti-racism must be at the core of our work as educators – particularly in BC, where 95% of the land we call home is unceded, traditional First Nations territory that was never signed into treaty with the Crown. International Holocaust Day and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia collectively echo the post-WWII call of “Never Again”...never again for anyone, anywhere. The rise of antisemitism, islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism reinforce the need to view all forms of racism as connected systems of oppression under white supremacy.



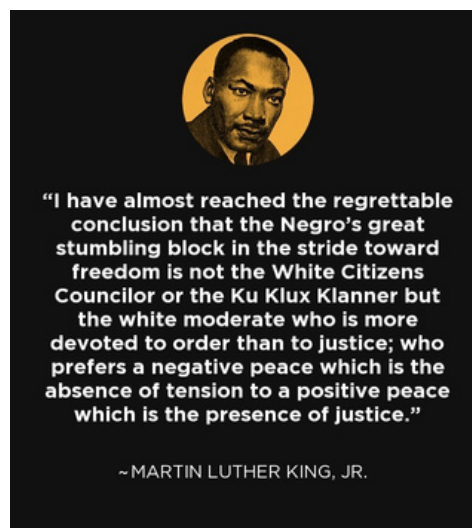
Often, the term “White Supremacy” is associated with acts of overt and extreme violence and hate; however, the deeper work of anti-racism is looking closer at lower-case “white supremacy” and how it is woven into the very fabric of our day-to-day lives. After reading Layla F. Saad’s iconic book “Me and White Supremacy”, I found myself reflecting constantly – even while developing anti-racist materials for my Social Justice class! - on all the ways in which systemic and institutionalized racism have trickled down into my own unconscious beliefs. Facets of white supremacy include tone policing, white silence, white fragility, white exceptionalism, etc., and Saad notes that, unfortunately, many of us are so pre-occupied by being “not racist”, that we are too afraid or uncomfortable to dig deeper.

“I think most people would say they don’t want to be racist or live in a racist society. But part of the issue is that people tend to have such an extreme understanding of what racism is, and they don’t see themselves in that way. They think they are doing fine because they are treating people nicely, but being nice does not mean someone is being anti-racist.

We have to learn to understand that white supremacy has a powerful pull, and it grants privilege to people who are white or look white. It is powerful because, to those who have this privilege, it means safety – it means not having to worry that, if something happens to you, it will be because of the color of your skin.”

- Layla F. Saad

Anti-Racism is deeply personal work and invites us – most especially in a profession that is still largely white and Euro-centric – to reflect and challenge ourselves into real action and growth. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. aptly observed:



Further Reading / Book Club Ideas:

“Me and White Supremacy” – Layla F. Saad

“Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies: An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education” – Jo Chrona

“How to be an Anti-Racist” – Ibram X. Kendi (also comes as a conversation card deck)

“Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present” – Robyn Maynard

Facing Fear: Confronting Racism with Courage and Action

by: Natasha Rainkie (Indigenous Education Chair)

Recently, there has been harmful information shared in the media about racism—harmful to every person in Canada, but especially to Indigenous peoples. In the struggle against racism, words hold power. They can either perpetuate harm or help us build bridges of understanding.

I wanted to share some wise words of Jo Chrona, a respected voice in anti-racism education, to remind us of the importance of engaging in this work with courage and compassion:

“It can be helpful to understand that resistance to learning about racism and becoming anti-racist is based in fear: fear of change and fear that our perspectives of the world around us might need to shift. Fear is a powerful motivator. Unfortunately, it usually brings out the worst in us. When I talk with people about racism, I try to remember the (acknowledged or unacknowledged) role that fear may play in their decisions and actions. It helps me engage in this work with compassion (or at least I try to remember to engage with compassion). This is difficult when I know that so many children and youth continue to be harmed by racist perspectives and actions—and I don’t always get it right. But I know that engaging out of anger (however entitled to that anger I may feel) does not help people learn. It does not help people create space in their minds and hearts to critically reflect on their role in either maintaining racist systems or changing them.”

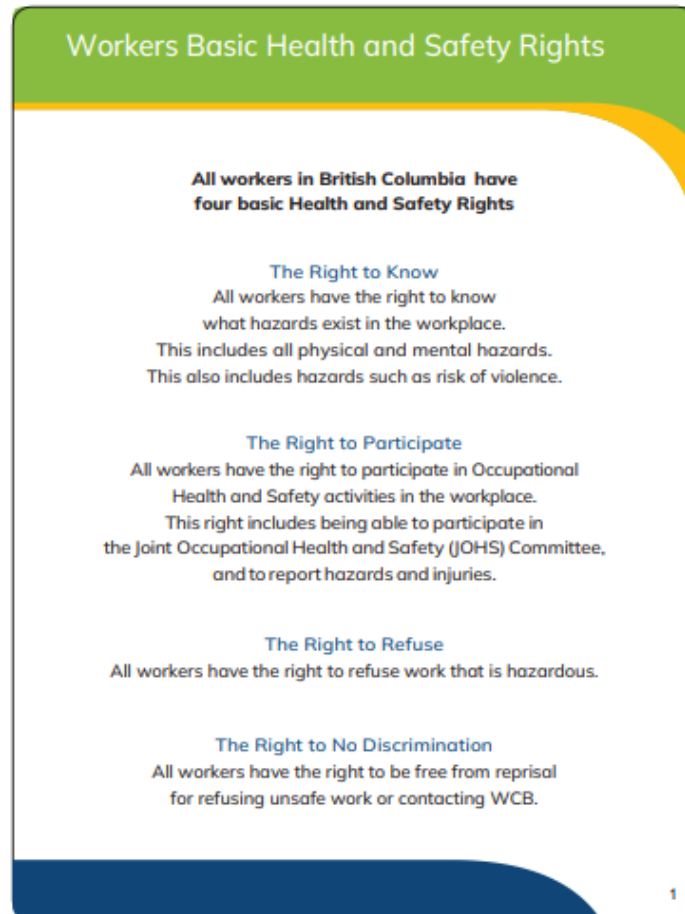
— Jo Chrona, WAYI WAH!, p. 61

These words challenge us to reflect on the role fear plays in resisting change and to approach conversations about racism with intentional compassion—even when it’s hard. For those of us in education, this work is critical. Our actions and words shape the environments in which children and youth learn and grow. Let us remain committed to fostering spaces where we can all critically reflect, learn, and grow—together.



Workers' Basic Health and Safety Rights

by: Thea Black (Health & Safety Chair)



Taken from the BCTF Health and Safety Handbook 2023.

Excellence in Education – Golden Star Awards

Classroom teachers have the opportunity to win monetary prize awards of either \$1,000 or \$2,000 when they organize programs which may qualify for an award from the BCRTA sponsored “Golden Star Award” program.

What qualifies your program? Classroom teachers must continue an existing program or create a new, ongoing program involving your students and seniors. It can be seniors coming to your classroom or your class visiting with seniors away from your school - on the beach, in a care facility etc.

All the information, application forms, criteria for evaluation and examples of previous winners can be found at <https://bcrt.ca/about-us/golden-star-awards/>.

The \$2,000 awards are for whole year projects and the \$1,000 awards are for partial year programs, initiated after the start of the school year. All ages from K-12 have an equal opportunity. If you qualify for and receive a partial year award you are encouraged to continue the program and apply the following year for a further award of \$2,000.

A further award is given by the Royal Canadian Legion for innovative projects involving veterans.

Thank you for your support and for encouraging teachers to participate

Labour Beat – a workers voice on community radio

Back on May Day , 2024 two retired postal workers broadcast their first show on CVOX radio, an new online community radio originating in the Comox Valley . We have now completed 13 episodes of one hour shows that mix op-ed pieces, interviews, music , and regular features like ‘Know Your Rights’ into an informed and interesting show from a worker’s perspective.

You can go to cvox.ca where a new show is broadcast every second Friday. They are also archived on mixcloud, a free app.

Here is a synopsis of the 12 completed episodes

#1 - Introduction of Labour Beat; Activism and the labour movement

#2- Why We Work; Interview with Danille Davies, a worker at the Comox Valley Transition Society

#3- Labour Councils ; Shop Stewards

#4- Miners Memorial; Interview with Gord Carter, Cumberland singer-songwriter

#5- Tales from an old activist; Gord Carter interview Pt. 2

#6 – Interview with Art Farquharson singer/activist; Interview with Kymme Patrick of TheatreWorks

#7 – Steve and Brian’s favourite political songs

#8 – Art and labour; Kymme Patrick interview Pt. 2

#9- Unions and Sexual Harassment ; Conversation between Anne Davis and Stasia Hasumi , union activists

#10 – Anne Davis and Stasia Hasumi conversation Pt 2 ; Women and Unions

#11 – Music and Unions, Interview with Aiden Pitt-Brooke , singer of work songs

#12 – Politics, democracy and Unions

Newsletter Quiz - All About Employment Rights

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Hello fabulous teachers! Complete the short quiz below to help you get to know your collective agreement and be entered for a chance to win 2 tickets to the 34th Annual World Community Film Festival on Friday & Saturday, Jan. 31 – Feb. 1, at the Sid Williams Theatre in Courtenay. The 34th World Community Film Festival opens Friday night at the Sid with Velcrow Ripper and Nova Ami's beautiful new film Incandescence. Five inspiring films will screen in the Sid from 11:30 am to 5pm on Saturday. Patrons may purchase separate tickets for Saturday evening dinner before heading to our closing night film, The Nine Lives of Barbara Dane.

January's Quiz

EMC
Money made simple.

NEW YEAR RATE SPECIAL

5 YEAR TERM: **4.39%*** (APR: 4.438%)

Must close by January 31, 2025

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*On approved credit and lender qualifications. Rate subject to change. ©EMC Mortgages January 2025