

Ideas to spark curiosity and inspire change.

Please read and discuss with your colleagues.



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Important Dates

March 6 & 10 - Bargaining Information Sessions
March 7 - CDTA Bowling Social
March 11-12 - Ratification Vote
March 12 - Staff Rep meeting @ SBO about Teacher Burnout
March 15-18 - BCTF AGM
April 2 - Exec Meeting
April 11-12 - BCTF Zones

Embracing Spring: A Time for Renewal, Reflection, and Rest

by: Natasha Rainkie (Indigenous Education Chair)

Hello Teachers,

As the days grow longer and the land begins to wake, we are reminded that spring is a time of renewal, transformation, and new beginnings. One of my favorite sounds that signifies this shift is the annual spring song the frogs sing, reminding us that warmer and brighter days are ahead. For many Indigenous cultures, this season marks the true new year, as many of our ways of knowing are tied to the natural rhythms of the seasons. And while many of us are feeling tired, run down, and in need of a well-deserved break, the land reminds us that renewal is possible. Just as the frogs sing as messengers of change, we too can step forward with fresh energy, embracing the opportunities for growth that this season brings. The work we do is not always easy, but like the roots beneath the soil, our efforts run deep. Every lesson taught, every moment of encouragement, and every connection we foster is a part of something much larger, nurturing the next generation. May this new year bring you fresh energy, inspiration, and a reminder of the impact you have each day.



GENESIS by Susan Point

As we approach a well-deserved break, our hope is that you take time to rest, recharge, and reflect. The resilience and commitment demonstrated by each of you are nothing short of inspiring, and it is important to take a moment to recognize and honor the work you do. May this spring bring you moments of peace and restoration, and may you return with renewed energy to continue the vital work that you do.



Warmest wishes for a restorative break,
Shawn Holland and Jacqueline Symons



Local Bargaining Information Sessions and Ratification Vote

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

An email was sent out this week outlining the details of the upcoming local bargaining information sessions and ratification vote. Please check your spam folder if you haven't received the email or check in with Michelle at the office.

The bargaining information sessions will take place over Zoom on **Thursday, March 6th @4pm** and **Monday, March 10th @4pm**. The link to the meetings can be found in the email.

Information outlining how to participate in the **online ratification vote**, which will take place from **7am Tuesday, March 11th till 7pm Wednesday, March 12th**, will be sent out via email on the evening of Monday, March 10th. Please keep your eyes open for that email.

We will be using the BCTF Simply Voting system. Please ensure your email is up to date with the BCTF (if you receive their emails, you are good to go).

International Women's Day: Accelerating Action in Education

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

On this International Women's Day (March 7th), we celebrate the theme "Accelerate Action", which calls for a renewed commitment to advancing gender equality and empowering women across all sectors. In Canada, women in education have been catalysts for change, breaking barriers, and ensuring that education remains a powerful tool for social transformation. The women showcased below are some of many women who have shaped educational policy, practices, and reforms, and have become highly regarded for their contributions.



Dr. Verna St. Denis

A member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Dr. St. Denis has been an influential scholar in the field of Indigenous education. She has worked extensively to challenge racism, promote Indigenous perspectives in education, and advance anti-racist policies. Her research has had a profound impact on education practices, especially within BC's public school system.

Dr. Gina H. J. L. Campbell

Dr. Campbell is a scholar and advocate for educational equity, particularly for students with diverse abilities. Her research focuses on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities, and she has contributed to the development of inclusive practices in BC schools.

Lorna Williams

A renowned Indigenous educator from the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation, Lorna Williams has been a trailblazer in developing Indigenous language and cultural programs. She has worked to revitalize Indigenous languages through education and has advocated for greater recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems in BC's educational institutions.

Dr. Susan Crichton

Dr. Crichton is an educator, researcher, and advocate for technology and innovation in education. Her work focuses on integrating technology in classrooms and ensuring that digital tools are used to enhance learning. As a leader in the field of educational technology, she has contributed to both policy development and practical applications in BC's educational system.

Dr. Julia O'Rourke

Dr. O'Rourke is a passionate advocate for empowering young girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). She has been involved in various initiatives to encourage girls' participation in STEM, including organizing workshops, mentoring programs, and outreach efforts aimed at closing the gender gap in these fields.

Their contributions reflect a commitment not only to equity but to a more inclusive, diverse, and transformative educational system for all. Let's remember that the work of these incredible women is ongoing. Their tireless efforts have paved the way for

countless others to continue to break down barriers. By accelerating action in education, these trailblazers ensure that we create an environment where future generations of women and girls can thrive.

Today, let's honour the women educators who inspire us all to commit to advancing the work and continuing to accelerate the action needed to achieve gender equality in education and beyond.

Here are some local International Women's Day events taking place in North Island:

[International Women's Day Event - Comox Valley Transition Society in collaboration with the Comox Valley Meditation Collective](#)

[Thriving at Work: Prioritizing Women's Mental Wellness - Free Online Event through the Canadian Women's Foundation](#)

[EmpowerHer - A special event celebrating International Women's Day in Cambell River](#)



TTOC Corner

by: Mallory McLeod (TTOC Chair)

Happy Almost Spring Break TTOCs!

You make it possible for enrolling teachers across the district to be absent from their classrooms confidence and peace of mind. I encourage all TTOCs to look into EI eligibility over the break. It could potentially alleviate some of the financial burden of two weeks without TTOC pay. [This link may clarify some questions around eligibility.](#)

I also want to bring Article A.23 in our local Collective Agreement to your attention: Staff Representatives and Right to Representation. Even though TTOCs are not in contract with the district at a specific school site, we still have a right to representation by staff representatives and our local President and Vice President. A TTOC, like any employee, “is entitled to have a representative of the Association attend a meeting between the employee and a principal/vice principal or Board representative if the meeting is discipline-related or pertains to criticisms of the performance of job-related duties other than evaluations under Article E.23 (Evaluation of Teacher Performance).”

Basically, TTOCS are not alone even though they are not tied to one specific school site or staff. Continue to reach out to our local Executive (like me) and get to know the staff reps at school sites. We are all here for you!

With Gratitude,
Mallory McLeod

Ramadan Mubarak رمضان مبارك!

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Happy Ramadan to our members who are celebrating this holy month of fasting in the Islamic calendar. As educators, we have the privilege of working in diverse environments where cultural and religious observances, like Ramadan, offer valuable opportunities for learning and connection. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, a time when Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, focusing on self-discipline, prayer, and charity. It's a month of reflection, and for many, it's also a time to strengthen community bonds.

How Can We Support Our Colleagues and Students During Ramadan?

Learn and Share about Ramadan

Understanding what Ramadan represents helps us create a respectful environment. It's more than just fasting—it's a spiritual journey. Taking the time to learn about it and share lessons shows respect and fosters inclusion.

Be Mindful of Scheduling

Consider the energy levels of fasting colleagues and students, especially in the afternoon. If possible, limit strenuous activities or meetings during these times.

Create an Inclusive Space

Offer a quiet space for prayer or moments of reflection. Respect those who may need a break for prayer during the day.

Celebrate Eid

Eid al-Fitr, the "Feast of Fast-Breaking," marks the end of Ramadan. It is a major religious holiday marked by family gatherings, special meals, and prayers. It's a time for celebration, gift-giving, and visiting the graves of loved ones. Recognizing this celebration, whether through a note, a small event, or simply acknowledging it, shows support for the religious and cultural observances in our school communities.

Wishing a peaceful Ramadan to those observing!

The Fruit Machine Screening

via: Bruce Curtis

On Friday, March 14th, join for the screening of the documentary "The Fruit Machine", the story of Canada's hateful and shameful attempt to remove queer folk from the military, the RCMP and the federal public service. This campaign ran from the early 1950's to the 1990's when the government was found guilty of discrimination and settled out of court for \$145M.

The evening will include home-made pie and tea or coffee, discussion, and the screening of the documentary. All of this will be free and everyone is welcome – this is not just for queers. Come and learn why we all need to be allies and supporters of non-discriminatory, welcoming, inclusive, and diversity affirming workplaces and community spaces.

COMOX UNITED CHURCH
The Fruit Machine
PRESENTED BY THE AFFIRMING MINISTRY COMMITTEE

THIS DOCUMENTARY FILM SHEDS LIGHT ON A DARK PERIOD IN CANADIAN HISTORY.
FRIDAY, MARCH 14TH (PIE DAY) 7-9 PM

Sarah Fodey's powerful documentary about the homosexual witch-hunt of public servants, RCMP officers, and military personnel in Canada from the 1950s through the early 1990s and its effects on the people whose lives and careers were disrupted or destroyed by it. The Fruit Machine illustrates how a democratic state could legally wage a discriminatory campaign against its own citizens whose only crime was being (or suspected to be) homosexual. This film is a must see.

Free Tickets through www.eventbrite.ca
Complimentary homemade pie, coffee and tea
Will be served to all attending.

Teacher Evaluations – Can there be a new way?

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

Evaluations – considered to be a dirty topic and four-letter word by many teachers. When the possibility of an evaluation is mentioned, it can fill teachers with dread, anxiety and even fear. This is certainly ironic considering most teachers are experts in this area and conduct their own evaluations daily. Many would argue “Yeah, but that’s different; we are just trying to help the students grow and improve.” So, what if teacher evaluations were different as well? What if we were able to find a different way forward making it a growth exercise rather than a punitive one.

The CDTA and the district are currently in discussions to re-examine our evaluation process and make it less cumbersome and more responsive to current educational needs. There are many teachers who are frustrated in their application process when they are looking to switch schools or get rehired because they do not have a current evaluation, despite there being contract language that says “evaluations shall be completed prior to the conclusion of the teacher’s tenth (10th) month of service on temporary appointments” and “not less than once every five (5) years”. The hope of the CDTA and the district is that evaluations could be a piece of teacher improvement and development and lead to conversations around growth rather than the current fear of punishment and reprisal.

In this process, the CDTA is looking for a couple of evaluation experts to step forward to be part of a committee committed to examining the evaluation process to find a better way. Please reach out to the CDTA office or to the CDTA president Shawn Holland (lp71@bctf.ca) if you are interested in doing this work.

Disability Justice Summit

via: The BCTF

The BC Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) has committed to working towards an equitable and inclusive union. The BCTF is furthering this commitment during the 2024–25 school year by engaging and connecting members toward recovery, strength, and solidarity.

The BCTF is seeking members to participate as part of the Disability Justice Summit session for members who identify as being a person with a disability and/or identify as being neurodiverse. The Disability Justice Summit session is taking place on **April 25–26, 2025**.

This Disability Justice Summit session will consist of 10 individuals from the membership who identify as persons with a disability, including those who identify as being neurodiverse, plus two members of the Committee for Action on Social Justice Disability Action Group. Look [HERE](#) or more information about the event, it’s goals, and the selection criteria.

To apply: Complete the online application found on the page linked above. Direct completed applications and any inquiries to:

Heather Kelley, Assistant Director – Social Justice hkelley@bctf.ca

Karen Chong, Assistant Director – Social Justice kchong@bctf.ca

Deadline for application: **Monday, March 10, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.** (late applications will not be accepted)

The Professional Standards and You

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

The Professional Standards have been established by the BC Teachers' Council, the body empowered by the Teachers' Act, as a set of goals that are not just aspirational but also identifies expectations for teachers. Some of the standards are obvious – Educators value the success of all students – and some are lesser known – Educators contribute to the profession. However, as educators, it is our responsibility not only to know all of the standards, but to follow them to the best of our ability.

This brings us to Standard 9, the newest of the standards. Added in 2019, it signified a commitment from the government and us as educators to reconciliation. It came from the Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action stating that “Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.”

This is more than a goal, it is literally a standard that teacher need to address and meet in their classrooms. While the responsibility of meeting this requirement can feel quite daunting, there are resources out there to help you. You can find materials in the SD71 portal under Indigenous Education Learning Resources – Indigenous Education, there are materials on the BCTF website <https://www.bctf.ca/classroom-resources/>, and there are colleagues and Indigenous support workers who are willing to provide assistance to you, no matter where you are on your journey with engaging with Indigenous materials. This is learning that should be happening beyond Orange Shirt Day and beyond recognition of residential schools. Embracing this standard will make your classroom richer and more diverse.



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Newsletter Quiz - All About Safe Working Environments

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 \$20 to the Old Farm Market.

This month's quiz is all about keeping our workplaces safe.

Congratulations to Karina Thygesen for winning last month's newsletter quiz draw!

March's Quiz

Upcoming Pension Information Session

via BCTF

We have a virtual BCTF Pension Seminar coming up on Thursday, March 20, 2025, from 4:00–5:15 p.m. Pacific Time via Zoom.

This seminar is intended to help members learn about how their pension plan works, factors to consider when planning for retirement, and their pension options.

The seminar will cover topics such as:

- how pension is calculated
- eligibility for unreduced pension
- pension options
- the retirement application process
- post-retirement considerations.

If you are planning to attend, please register [HERE](#)

After registering, you will receive an automatic confirmation email with the Zoom link and details. If you have any additional questions, please contact jmawhinney@bctf.ca.