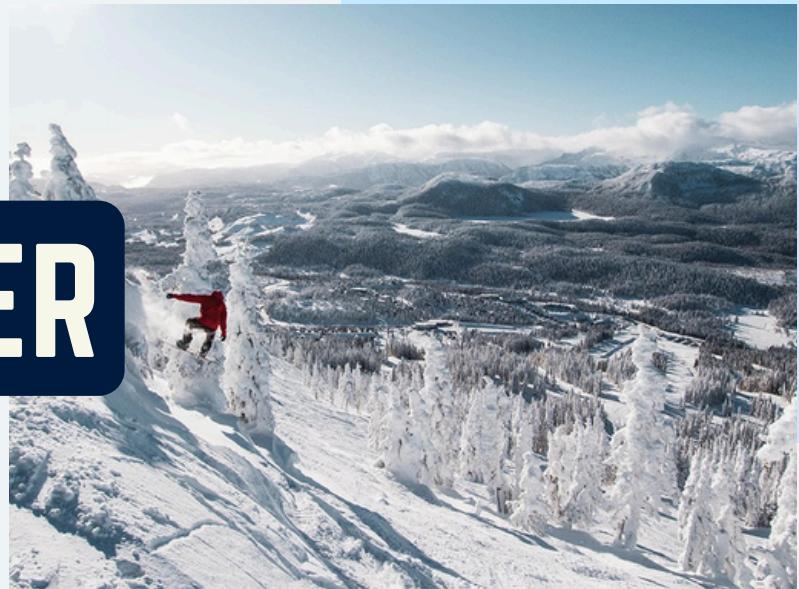


NEWSLETTER

January 2026

Ideas to spark curiosity and inspire change.

Please read and discuss with your colleagues.



Important Dates

Jan 14th - Joint Pro-D

Jan 21st - Staff Rep meeting

Jan 28th - General Meeting

Jan 30-31st - BCTF Rep Assembly

Feb 4th - Exec Meeting

In this ISSUE

P.2 Welcome back everyone and Happy New Year!

P.2 January in our Community

P.3 Bargaining Townhall

P.3 Professional Development and Qualifications

P.4 Health and Safety: Report and Participate!

P.4 Exciting Opportunities for BCTF Members

P.5 Student Loan Forgiveness

P.5 AGM Delegates

P.5 General Meeting with Bargaining Team Presentation

P.6 PD Day - Uniting in Purpose: Cultivating Community, Identity & Learning

P.6 Pro-D on The Go!



Welcome back everyone and Happy New Year!

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

Here we are in 2026. One year older, one year greyer, and one year more seasoned. The new year is a time for reflection, a time for looking at future possibilities and a time for resolutions. Whenever I look at the future of public education, I continue to be amazed at what we have been able to do despite the declining supports and how we are able to provide what we can for students. Could the system be better? Yes, of course. Are we doing amazing things anyway? Yes, of course. How can all of this be true at the same time? Because of our passion for our profession and the joy we gain from our connections with our students and colleagues. Does this make the job any easier? No, but what we have right now is the opportunity to reset, identify our priorities, and work together to find our way forward.

What I would encourage you to do is to reflect on how best to support yourself along with your students so you can continue to offer opportunities and open windows into vistas of the unknown for the young minds in your care. I know this is all highly aspirational, but isn't that what public education is? And what better time is there to be aspirational besides those moments as we sit on the threshold of the unknown – be it a new calendar year or a new school year.

As for resolutions, I resolve to try and do better, to try and not eat so much, and to try and be kinder and more patient. Feel free to borrow/use any of these for your own. (How's that for kindness, eh?)

I hope 2026 is a great year for all of us. As always reach out and connect at any time with the CDTA office if you need any help or support.

January in our Community

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President) & via the BCTF

January often arrives quietly on the heels of celebrations, but it carries a number of meaningful moments that invite reflection, learning, and connection.

It is Braille Literacy Month, a reminder that access to information is a cornerstone of equity and an opportunity to celebrate the contributions and rights of blind and partially sighted people. Learn more [HERE](#).

The month also includes Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which calls us to reflect not only on Dr. King's words, but on the courage, persistence, and collective responsibility required to turn justice into lived reality.

In Canada, January 27 marks International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a time to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to recommit to confronting antisemitism, hatred, and dehumanization wherever they remain.

January 29 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia, established in memory of the lives lost in the 2017 Quebec City mosque attack. It a day of remembrance and also a calling to challenge anti-Muslim racism within our communities.

January is also Tamil Heritage Month, a time to recognize the achievements and rich heritage of Tamil communities, one of the largest diasporas outside Asia, with strong roots across Canada. Find more info [HERE](#).

Bargaining Townhall

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President) & via the BCTF

The BCTF will be hosting a Zoom town hall on **Tuesday, January 13 at 7:00 p.m.** The town hall will proceed regardless of the outcome of discussions earlier that day, ensuring members receive the most current and accurate information available.

This is an important opportunity to hear the latest updates directly and to stay informed as events unfold. For those unable to attend live, a recording of the town hall will be posted online the following day.

Register for the Townhall [**HERE**](#).

Professional Development and Qualifications

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

Our local professional development day is only weeks away. Soon you will be receiving information regarding available workshops and about the keynote. This is a good opportunity to remind you that in local bargaining last year we made changes to the qualifications language in our contract.

In this Agreement, “qualification”, “qualifications”, or “qualified” shall take into account the following features:

- a. certification;
- b. recent experience in a similar assignment;
- c. actively demonstrates the maintenance and updating of professional practice in line with current standards.
- d. academic preparation, suitability of major and minor subject fields, program concentrations, and subsequent training;
- e. quality of service as reflected in reports prepared pursuant to Article E.23 (Evaluation of Teacher Performance).
- f. past performance, judged from contacts made with the referees named by the applicant, one of which should include the applicant's last supervisor.
- g. demonstrates local knowledge and a commitment to the district's Strategic Plan.

These are now the points that will be considered when applying to positions in the district. With these changes, specifically with the new (c.), professional development, and indicating what work you have done in professional development, will be more important. Applicants are going to need to show how they are continuing to enhance their professional practice. Please consider this as you plan your day, especially if you believe you will be part of the staffing process in the spring. You may also want to ensure that you are keeping a list of workshops and training sessions that you are attending that you can include on applications to highlight how you are meeting this qualification.

Health and Safety: Report and Participate!

by: Thea Black (H&S Chair), Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President), & SD71 H&S

Report to Support:

Please continue to report any and all health and safety incidents. Reporting health and safety incidents is crucial for prevention, as it uncovers hidden hazards, prevents future accidents (especially serious ones), and helps organizations learn from near-misses before harm occurs. It does this while also fulfilling legal obligations, creating a vital paper trail, and improving overall workplace safety culture. It enables proactive risk management, saves costs, and protects employees and employers from serious consequences like injuries, lawsuits, and fatalities.

Your participation in the Investigation Process is vital:

A member who was involved in an incident can and should be included in the investigation process. Their perspective is valuable for identifying root causes and developing effective corrective and preventive actions.

Here's how this can be approached:

- **Participation:** The individual should provide a firsthand account by completing the Prismatic Incident Report immediately after the incident and during the fact-finding stage of the investigation.
- **Actionable Steps:** While the JOHSC leads the process, the member's input should inform recommendations for corrective and preventive measures.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure discussions remain respectful and focused on hazards or processes, not on assigning blame.

This approach aligns with WorkSafeBC expectations and the district's Workplace Incident Reporting Process, supporting a collaborative safety culture.

Winter Safety:

Please read the email sent by Yinka Adewole, our District's Health and Safety Manager, on safety protocols and suggestions during the winter months. Stay safe while having fun.

Exciting Opportunities for BCTF Members

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President) via the BCTF

Focused Education Evaluators – 70 members needed to review English and French learning resources (print and digital) for K-12. Contracted positions with compensation; term 2026–2029. Apply by Jan 26, 2026.

Assistant Director, Field Service Division – Support locals in bargaining, communications, social justice, and more. Full-time term from April 2026–Aug 2030. Apply by Jan 30, 2026.
Teaching Together Program – Two members to co-deliver professional development workshops internationally in July. Apply by Jan 9, 2026.

BC Teachers' Council Vacancies – Two three-year positions starting April 2026. Influence professional standards in BC education. Apply by Jan 16, 2026.

Student Loan Forgiveness

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President) via the BCTF

Some good news for new teachers and a testament to the power of collective advocacy!

One of the biggest challenges new teachers face is juggling student debt while covering basic living expenses during a period of employment uncertainty. Thanks to unions and thousands of educators who raised their voices, sent messages, and signed petitions, the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness program has been extended to include teachers and early childhood educators in rural or remote areas. Currently, teachers may not be eligible to apply until June 2026 but the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) is actively seeking meetings to address this issue and recommends that members apply for loan forgiveness at their earliest convenience.

For now, applications must be submitted by mail using the official Application for Canada Student Loan Forgiveness but by mid-March 2026, online applications should be up and running. Questions about eligibility, the application process, or when forgiveness will appear on your loan balance? Reach out to the National Student Loans Service Centre. The CTF/FCE will also be putting together a FAQ document as more details become available.

AGM Delegates

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

The BCTF AGM is approaching (March 14 – 17) and the CDTA will be electing delegates at the upcoming General Meeting. We get to send nine members, which includes our two LRs and our three table officers (if they choose to attend) which leaves four spots open for other members. This is a great opportunity to see BCTF democracy at work which will include the election of the BCTF executive and discussing and voting for motions (six that have been brought forward by the CDTA).

If you are interested in attending, please contact the office so your name can be added to the ballot. This is an all-expenses covered opportunity with travel, hotel, and per-diem all paid by the BCTF. Please take note that this year the AGM does not match up with our Spring Break, so you will need to be released from your classroom for the Monday and Tuesday – but it will mean you will get to enjoy the full Spring Break.

General Meeting with Bargaining Team Presentation

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Our next CDTA General Meeting is on January 28th from 4-6pm at the Comox Valley Curling Club. There are two important items on the agenda that you won't want to miss.

Election of AGM Delegates – Help choose who will represent our membership at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

Bargaining Team Visit – Meet with a team member, hear updates, and ask your questions about the bargaining process.

PD Day - Uniting in Purpose: Cultivating Community, Identity & Learning

by: Nick Moore (Pro-D Chair)

Our yearly district PD day is fast approaching on Feb 17th. The Teacher Joint PD Committee is putting together a wonderful program of opportunities for teachers across the district that will not cost you anything. We expect the online brochure to become active on Friday January 16th. Teachers are encouraged to register early to ensure that they can get into the workshop that they want. We are hoping that everyone will register within a 2-week window to help us with our planning. You have to use the free ticketing system to register. We will send out information about how to do that when it goes live.

The day will start with everyone invited to join us in circle at GP Vanier in the gym from 8:45-10:00. We will be professionally producing and live broadcasting the session for anyone that can't be at the gym. The main speaker is Keisha Everson, a respected K'omoks knowledge keeper and teacher. She will help to ground us in the place we live and work and set us up to have a great day of learning.

There will be two 90 minute workshop times during the rest of the day, with some workshop spanning the entire day.

While we hope that everyone will find workshops that are interesting and useful to them that day, a reminder that teachers can always participate in self-directed Pro-D by themselves or with colleagues following the district protocols.

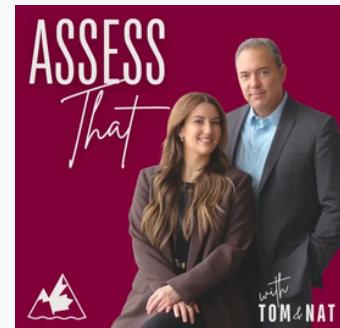
Campbell River also has a district PD day on the same day as us. I am working with them to try to ensure that teachers in both districts can access all the things that are happening in both places. Stay tuned for more about that!

Pro-D on The Go!

by: Nick Moore (Pro-D Chair)

Asses That with Tom and Nat

If you are looking for a professional Podcast to chew on in the new year, I suggest the "Assess That" podcast with Tom and Nat (Tom Schimmer and Natalie Vardabasso). Their pre-holiday episode was full of useful goodies. It explores twelve gentle, human-centred shifts, each connected to its day, that bring more clarity, confidence, and calm to both teachers and students. From the One Switch that changes everything to the Twelve Notes of Hope that strengthen partnerships with families, these micro-moves reflect the heart of modern assessment practice: simple actions that transform learning without overwhelming anyone. Find it wherever you get your podcasts or at [THIS LINK](#).



This is a new segment of the newsletter. If you have any Pro-D on-the-go suggestions, please forward them to vicepres@cdta71.org