



NEWSLETTER

March 2026

Ideas to spark curiosity and inspire change.

Please read and discuss with your colleagues.

Important Dates

March 11th – Joint Pro-D

March 14-17 – BCTF AGM

March 18 – Staff Rep Meeting
@ SBO 1-3:30pm

Mar 23-Apr 6 - Spring Break &
Easter weekend

April 8 - Exec Meeting

April 17-18 - BCTF Spring Zones

April 29th - CDTA AGM
CV Curling Club

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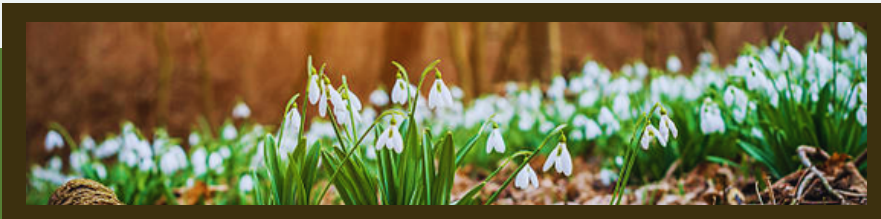
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Wellness, Connection, and Indigenous Perspectives on Healing

by: Natasha Rainkie (Indigenous Education Chair)

At a recent Indigenous Teachers Committee session facilitated by Avis O'Brien, we were invited to think about wellness through an Indigenous lens. We discussed the connections between suicidality, colonial genocide, and the importance of culture and language in Indigenous youth wellness. Avis shared a powerful insight: the spirit of suicide often thrives in isolation, especially when our nervous system is dysregulated. She explained that culture, belonging, and connection are antidotes to the systemic separation imposed by colonial laws that disrupt Indigenous ways of life.

One teaching that stayed with me is that before we can connect with our students, we must first be connected to ourselves. When our own nervous systems are rushed, overwhelmed, or disconnected, relationships with others becomes difficult. For educators, this reminds us that our work is not only academic. Slowing down, building relationships, and creating spaces where students feel seen and safe are crucial. Connection to self supports connection to students, and connection to students supports learning and well-being for everyone. So, I leave you with this question: What practices help you feel most connected to yourself and your students?

To learn more about Avis O'Brien and her work, please visit <https://www.nalagaconsulting.com/>

Calendar update

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

I know the calendar update you would really like me to share is that the district is shifting to a four-day work week. Sorry that I cannot oblige, but we are looking at some changes to next year, provided they pass through the feedback process and are accepted by the board.

The changes that are proposed for next year.

- Moving the summer professional development days back into the calendar. These would be school base pro-d days, one in mid September and one in late April, to try and allow teacher to have time to focus on skills that will more directly help their students, perhaps with collaborative processes with your staffs.
- Adding 10 minutes to the elementary school day beyond the current contract language. We have been adding 5 minutes per day for the last 8 years to allow for the two-week spring break. The additional 5 minutes will be needed to maintain the two-week spring break and allow for the shift of the pro-d days.
- Maintaining the Indigenous Day of Learning in May.
- Having the Tuesday after Labour Day be the first day of school.
- Moving the "district" pro-d day away from Family Day to a Friday at the end of February/beginning of March to avoid the extremely short week, conflicts with gym bookings, and set-up issues.

If you have any questions about these, feel free to reach out to myself (Shawn Holland) or either of the other two CDTA reps on the Calendar Committee (Nick Moore, Deb Benson).

Provincial 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 provincial bargaining ratification vote and where to access information to best inform yourself before making a decision. Please check your spam folder if you haven't received the email or check in with Michelle Prior at the office (office71@cdta71.org). **Members will vote** on the tentative agreement **March 2 to 4** through an online ballot sent by Simply Voting. The agreement includes wage increases, the withdrawal of previously proposed concessions, modest improvements to preparation time and benefits, and a new article on violence prevention. A recording of the townhall and frequently asked questions are available on the BCTF bargaining portal. This is an important decision for our collective future, and members are encouraged to review the information and vote in a way that reflects their understanding of the agreement and its impact. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact Shawn or Jacqui at the CDTA office.

Visibility Is Protection: Standing with Trans People in Our School Communities

by: Peter Lorian (Social Justice Committee Chair)

As Transgender Day of Visibility approaches, teachers across British Columbia face a moment that calls for clarity and solidarity. Recent reporting by The Walrus shows how the small community of Tumbler Ridge has been used as a platform to spread anti-trans misinformation and fear. These narratives do not emerge in isolation. They shape public attitudes, influence school climates, and affect the daily safety and dignity of transgender teachers, students, and families.

At the same time, a landmark decision by the BC Human Rights Tribunal affirmed what trans educators have long known through lived experience. The Tribunal ruled that former school trustee Barry Neufeld violated human rights protections through repeated public statements that degraded and denied the existence of trans people. This case, brought forward by the BC Teachers' Federation and the Chilliwack Teachers' Association, confirmed that discriminatory rhetoric in education is not a matter of opinion. It is a matter of harm.

This decision carries weight beyond one individual. It affirms that trans teachers have the right to work without fear. It reinforces that inclusion is a professional responsibility. As BCTF President Carole Gordon stated, respect and inclusion are not optional in our schools.

Research from the BCTF's Queer and Trans Think Tank shows why this matters. Trans and queer educators report higher rates of isolation, harassment, and concealment of identity. When teachers do not feel safe, students notice. When teachers are affirmed, students learn what dignity looks like in practice.



You can read more here:

[Tumbler Ridge Is Being Used to Spread Anti-Trans Misinformation: The mass shooting has become fodder for a broader campaign against an entire group by Jen St. Denis.](#)

[BCTF celebrates huge win for trans rights and school inclusivity at BC Human Rights Tribunal](#)

[How we stay: Celebrating and learning from queer and trans teachers in British Columbia](#)

Transgender Day of Visibility is not only about recognition. It is about responsibility. Every teacher helps shape whether schools are places of fear or places of belonging. Solidarity means speaking truth. It means rejecting misinformation. It means ensuring every trans colleague and student knows they are respected, protected, and valued.



Image and rights here: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Transgender_Day_of_Visibility_2023_-_Naarm_%28Melbourne%29_%2852890796262%29.jpg

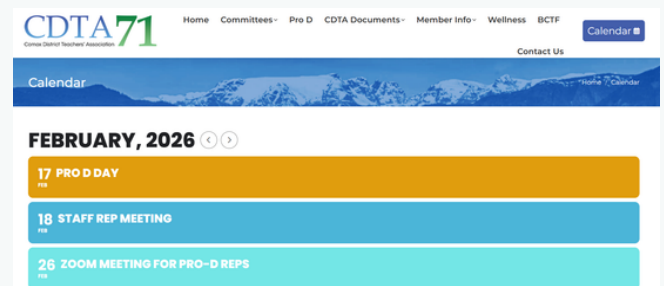
Never Miss an Event: Add CDTA Dates to Your Calendar

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

The CDTA website now makes it easier for members to stay connected and informed.

Events posted on the website calendar include direct links that allow you to add them to your personal calendar with a single click. When you select an event, additional details will appear, including information about the session and the option to save it to your schedule so you never miss an opportunity to engage. We encourage members to explore the calendar regularly and use these tools to plan ahead and stay involved in upcoming professional and union activities. The website is designed to support communication and accessibility, making it simpler for you to participate in events and opportunities that matter to our community. A reminder taht members are welcome to join us at Exec meetings and our next one is coming up on March 4th from 4-6:30pm at the CDTA office.

Find events [HERE](#)



Wellness and Capacity in Our Community

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Before you continue reading, I'd like to invite you to take three deep breaths, adding an extra sip on air at the top of your breath and extending your exhale. As you do, unclench your jaw and drop your shoulders; allow yourself to be held by whatever is supporting your body in this moment. Perhaps place a hand over your heart and check in with yourself. Is there something you need in this moment? Is there something you could offer yourself to add a pinch of wellness? A look out the window or boiling a cup of tea?

Spring has a way of reminding us that growth begins with rest and renewal. When we care for our own energy and emotional well-being, we are better able to show up with patience, creativity, and presence for our families, students and colleagues.

This past month, the District Wellness Committee hosted a viewing party of Dr. Jody Carrington's session on Burnout-Proof Teams. It was a fun and engaging session that offered validation and hope. However, although hope is great, without action, it is merely a wish. Our District Wellness team and the CDTA Executive will continue to advocate strongly with SD71 for systemic wellness practices that address occupational fatigue and sustainability, because supporting educator well-being is essential to a healthy and thriving learning community.

Where we can immediately act is within our own practices and in supporting those around us. Wellness looks different for each of us. For some, it might be quiet mornings with a cup of coffee before the day begins. For others, it might be movement, fresh air, or time spent in conversation with people who inspire and uplift. Wellness is deeply personal. It is about listening to what you need and honoring that need without guilt. Sometimes it means saying no so that you can say yes to what truly matters. Sometimes it means slowing down before moving forward. We cannot operate at full capacity without periods of rest and renewal. When we continuously give without restoring ourselves, burnout becomes unavoidable. By prioritizing self-care and restorative practices, we build resilience and capacity for the work we love.

This spring, consider what small steps might support your wellness. At work, perhaps it could be setting boundaries around work time, taking a short walk during the day, connecting with colleagues during breaks, or exploring creative hobbies that bring joy. One idea that emerged from our session was to pair up with a wellness partner, creating a space for regular connection and shared accountability around self-care. Whatever you decide to offer yourself, know that you are valued and appreciated, and that you matter. We hope you have a wonderful and well-deserved Spring Break.

If you are interested in the handouts from the session with Dr. Carrington, feel free to email vicepres@cdta71.org.



Building Power Through Strategic Organizing

by: Peter Lorian (Social Justice Committee Chair)

Register [HERE](#)

On February I joined PowerUp's Structure Test Booster Session, alongside more than 1,700 people from 90 countries. It was the most practical organizing training I've done and it connects directly to our work as teachers and union members.

What it changed for me

- The union isn't a third party. It's teachers acting together. The training pushed us to drop "the union will do X for you" language and replace it with: "When you and your coworkers act together, you have the power to win."
- Words matter. Instead of "Thank you for helping the union," we practiced: "Great work – this is how you and your colleagues win better conditions."

That simple shift reinforces that job action is about our power, not doing anyone a favour. Structured conversations win more than emails. We learned a 6-step organizing each school, identify leaders, and measure real participation. These tools are exactly what we need facing stalled bargaining, concessions, and workload issues: high-participation organizing, not just last-minute mobilizing.



NEXT ORGANIZING FOR POWER SESSION.

Next Step: March 5th PowerUp Booster

Identifying Structures and Targets

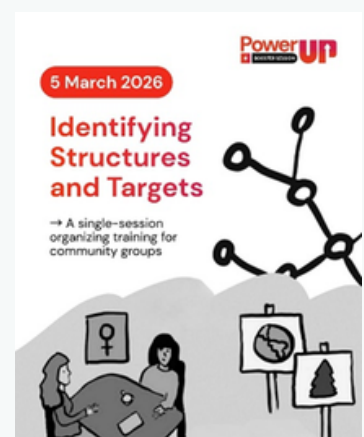
When: Thursday, March 5, 2026

Info & registration [HERE](#)

This session is aimed at community groups but is perfect for teacher unions: mapping who actually has power in our systems and how we can pressure them effectively.

If you're interested in stronger strike votes, better contracts, and a more confident staffroom, I strongly recommend taking this training.

Peter Lorian - Social Justice Chair plorian@proton.me



International Women's Day

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Educators are skilled in the art of giving and pouring into others to help them grow and advance. This International Women's Day, let us take the opportunity to pause and reflect on how our practices support gender equity. Every day we witness the brilliance and possibility in the girls and young people in our classrooms. We see their curiosity, creativity, and growing understanding of who they are and what they might become. We also see the challenges they face, moments when confidence wavers and questions about belonging, identity, and opportunity arise. When we encourage them to use their voices, we support them in discovering their power. When we amplify stories and perspectives from diverse cultures, abilities, and lived experiences, we show them what is possible and the many ways leadership and strength can look.

The year's "Give to Gain" theme invites us to think about what we can offer. We can give time to listen. We can give opportunities to see through different lenses and experiences. We can encourage our students to step outside their comfort zones and try something they may not have thought as possible or "for them". We can give courage by modeling it ourselves. In return, we gain classrooms rooted in belonging and students who feel seen and valued.

Events in the community:

March 4th: She Speaks event at the Sid Williams Theater Find limited tickets [HERE](#).

March 6th: Sacred Rage in collaboration with the Comox Valley Transition Society Fine more info [HERE](#)

March 8th: Foxy Fest Courtenay fundraiser. Get tickets and info [HERE](#)

EmpowerHER 2026: Celebrate, Connect, Inspire. Get FREE tickets [HERE](#)

Pro-D on The Go!

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

The Burned-In Teacher Podcast with Amber Harper

The Burned-In Teacher Podcast is for educators who want to talk about practical ways to break the cycle of burnout and find fulfillment in teaching and in life.

Ever wish you had a teacher burnout coach with over a decade of teaching experience to teach you all there is to know about managing your teacher burnout? That's exactly what you'll get when you tune into The Burned-In Teacher Podcast.

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