



NEWSLETTER

May 2026

Ideas to spark curiosity and inspire change.

Please read and discuss with your colleagues.

Important Dates

- May 13th – Joint Pro-D
- May 15th – Indigenous Day of Brilliance
- May 18th – Victoria Day
- May 20th - Staff Rep Meeting
- May 27th - Pro-D Rep SURT
- May 29-30 - BCTF Rep Assembly
- June 3 - Exec Meeting
- June 17th - Retirement Gala @ Crown Isle

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Mental Health
AWARENESS MONTH



Your May Update

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

For All Who Mother

I recently came across a reflection that has stayed with me: motherhood is not something you simply are, but something you continually do. It shows up in the steady ways care is offered, in a presence that sustains, and in love that is practiced over time.

Mother's Day can hold many truths at once. For some it is light and celebratory, for others it is tender or complicated; it can carry memory, absence, or longing alongside gratitude. There is room for all of it. What remains true across every experience is that the ways we are cared for and the ways we care for others do not disappear when the moment passes. They shape us quietly, becoming part of how we understand love, belonging, and ourselves.

This Mother's Day, I hope those who mother in all the ways that word can be lived felt some sense of being held in return, by others, and by themselves.

Teacher Appreciation Week - Beyond Words

Teacher Appreciation Week is one of those moments that reminds us appreciation can't just be a once-a-year gesture, because the work you do doesn't operate on a one-week calendar. Many of you are exhausted, and yet you still show up every day and give so much of yourselves to your students and your school communities. There is something really meaningful in that kind of care and consistency. And at the same time, it's important to say out loud that this isn't something that is sustainable, and it's not how this work should have to be done. You deserve conditions that support you, not just your ability to keep pushing through them.

From your local, we see it. The workload, the emotional labour, the constant adjusting, and that "I'll make it work" energy that keeps classrooms going even when the conditions are too much. We want to be clear that appreciation alone isn't enough. Our role is to stay with you in this, to advocate for better conditions, and to keep speaking honestly about what you are carrying every day.

So, although we want to express our admiration and thanks, we also want to re-affirm our commitment to you. We are deeply rooted in our tenacious representation of you, our valued colleagues.

Moose Hide Campaign Day

The Moose Hide Campaign Day is a day of ceremony where all Canadians are called to join together to take a stand against violence towards women, children and all those along the gender continuum and to take practical steps for our collective journey of reconciliation. This year's event will take place on Thursday, May 14th.

Register and find out more about the virtual event and workshops [HERE](#)

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

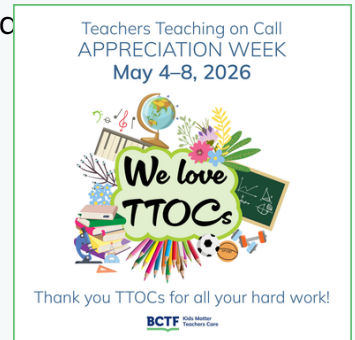
This year's theme, "Come Together, Canada," highlights the role of connection in building resilience and supporting mental health. For teachers, this feels especially real in the middle of busy, emotionally demanding school days where staying connected to each other isn't just nice, it actually helps keep us going. Simple things like checking in with a colleague, sharing a quick laugh in the hallway, or having an honest conversation over coffee can make more of a difference than we often give them credit for. And outside of work, staying connected to the people and things that refill your tank matters just as much, even if it's easier said than done during a school year.

Find out more and take the quiz [HERE](#)

TTOC Corner

by: Meagan Roberge (TTOC and New Teacher Chair)

May 4-8 was **TTOC appreciation week** and while we appreciate the hard work that TTOC's put in all year, last week was the kick off to our TTOC Pro-D Book Blitz. We've had 72 TTOC's sign up to receive part of the \$3000 TTOC appreciation grant given to us by the BCTF. This is an opportunity for TTOC's- who don't have access to pro-d funds- to upgrade their professional skills and knowledge. While we are no longer accepting names, we will be using any unused funds to purchase books for any TTOC who is interested.



Re-assignment of TTOC's.

TTOC's are increasingly being asked to cover classes during the classroom teacher's prep time. This predominantly is happening at the high school level when a classroom teacher books a full day absence but has a paid non-teaching block. The collective agreement states that: Under normal circumstances a TTOC who is engaged for a full day will be requested to assume only the duties of the teacher that the TTOC is replacing; however, in some instances the TTOC may be requested to perform other reasonable duties. (ARTICLE C.26: 16) The CDTA is investigating the frequency of this practice and would like to know if this happens to you.

If you are a TTOC who was booked for a full day (1.0) and were asked to:

- A) cover for another teacher during a prep period or
- B) cover an administrator's teaching block during a prep period, please email meagan.roberge@gmail.com.

Additionally, if you are a classroom teacher who left work for their TTOC to complete during your prep period, and that TTOC was reassigned, please contact Shawn or Jacqui. Work is anything that you need to have done and if you clearly express this in your TTOC notes, you may be able to get that time added back to your available-leave bank.

CALL TO ACTION FROM THE BURNABY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

by: Burnaby Teachers Association

The Burnaby Teachers Association (BTA) is calling for support to ensure teachers receive wages owed following a 2022 agreement that removed the first step of the salary grid. The province committed to fund this change, but a recent arbitration award confirmed a \$9.4 million shortfall in Burnaby that remains unfunded. Without provincial support, the district may be forced to absorb the cost, impacting classrooms and setting a concerning precedent for collective bargaining.

How to help: Take a few minutes to email BC's Treasury Board urging them to provide full funding. A template and instructions are available [HERE](#), and contacting your local MLA is encouraged if they sit on Treasury Board.

For more details, read more [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#)

In solidarity, Alex Peters (BTA President)
Preet Lidder (BTA 1st Vice-President)
Elysha Fong (BTA 2nd Vice-President)



New Ways to Stay Informed

by: Peter Lorian (Social Justice Committee Chair)



The CDTA is now on social media. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and Instagram (@cdta71) for updates, news, and resources. It's another way for us to stay connected, so give us a follow!

Racism in BC Schools Is Not Being Addressed. That Has to Change.

by: Peter Lorian (Social Justice Committee Chair) and the Social Justice Committee Chair

In January 2026, the Centre for Family Equity published **Erase Racism in BC Schools: Families Lead the Way**, a survey of 104 Indigenous and racialized parents across BC. Every person in this local should read it.

The findings are not surprising. But they are unacceptable.

- 79.8% of families said their child personally experienced racial harm or bullying at school
- 66.4% said their child was targeted with racial slurs or verbal hate by other students
- Only 28.85% felt their family was believed and taken seriously when they raised racism concerns with the school
- Less than 4% heard about a racism incident from a teacher or administrator. Most found out from their own child.
- 75% of families had no idea whether their school was acting on BC's K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan

“My child has lost their desire to go to school and work hard. He feels targeted from racism and does not engage because he knows his concerns are not taken seriously.”

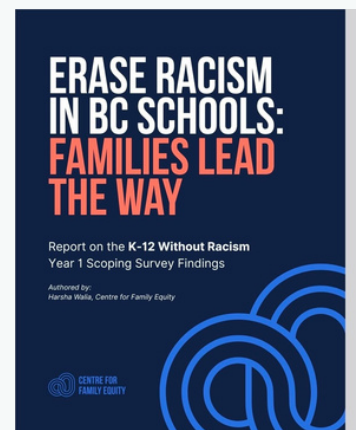
This Is Our Responsibility Too

Families are not failing to report racism. They are telling us they do not believe anything will happen if they do. Children are not failing to speak up. They are telling us they do not feel safe enough to try. That is on all of us.

Black students reported the worst experiences across nearly every measure. Indigenous students reported the highest rates of racial harm and bullying. These are not edge cases. These are the students sitting in our classrooms right now.

As educators we have both a professional and moral obligation to act. That means knowing BC's Anti-Racism Action Plan and demanding our districts implement it. It means taking every report of racism seriously, every time. It means paying attention to who gets disciplined in our schools and how, because the data shows racialized students are treated differently.

Read the full report at www.centreforequity.ca. Then ask what we are doing about it.



A New Role in Supporting Racial Equity Across the District

by: In conversation with Simmy Paul

Simmy Pahl is the District Racial Equity Support Teacher for School District 71 (Comox Valley), a role she began in January after 17 years teaching secondary Math and Science in the district. Over the course of her career, she has taught in every middle and secondary school in SD71, as well as at Nala'atsi, the district's Indigenous alternate program. Along the way, Simmy has always looked for ways to help students feel connected to their school communities. As a certified Tennis Canada coach, she established tennis clubs at several schools where she taught, creating spaces where both local and international students could build friendships and develop a stronger sense of belonging.

Simmy holds a BSc in Biochemistry, a Bachelor of Education (K-12), and a Master's in Educational Leadership. Her graduate research focused on digital citizenship and cyberbullying in collaboration with the White Hatter, exploring how educators can better support students navigating online spaces. She has also served for several years on the district's Indigenous Education Liaison Committee and continues to remain involved in that work.

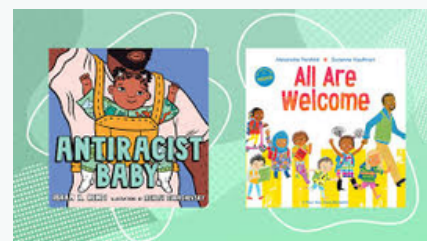
Born and raised on Vancouver Island and a first-generation Indo-Canadian, Simmy brings both professional insight and lived experience to her work. Experiencing racism personally helped shape her commitment to supporting schools in building environments where every student feels valued and a genuine sense of belonging.

In her current district role, Simmy works alongside educators across SD71 to support learning and dialogue around equity, identity, and belonging. This includes coordinating professional learning opportunities such as a recent district anti-racism workshop, sharing curated classroom resources connected to important learning days like BC Black Excellence Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and supporting schools in implementing district anti-racism resources and classroom materials.

Much of Simmy's work happens through collaboration and capacity-building across the district. She works with groups such as the district's Curriculum Support Teachers (CST) team and the Middle Years Inquiry Group, meets with educators and school teams to support the implementation of anti-racism learning resources, and provides one-on-one support to teachers and schools looking to deepen this work in their classrooms. She also continues to invest in her own professional learning through conferences, courses, and training, with the goal of continually strengthening how she can support educators and students across the district.

At the heart of Simmy's work is the belief that when educators feel supported in their learning, students benefit from classrooms and school communities where they feel seen, respected, and that they truly belong.

Feel free to reach out to Simmy at simmy.paul@sd71.bc.ca



2026 BCTF AGM – Key Highlights

by: Michael Aldridge (Local Rep)

The CDTA was represented at the 110th BCTF AGM, held March 14-17th in Vancouver. Eleven local delegates joined over 700 teachers from across BC to participate in the federation's democratic decision-making process, including setting priorities, debating resolutions, and electing the provincial executive. Many from our delegation stood up to the mic to speak for the first time 🙌 David Eby spoke to the delegation and made a commitment to work alongside teachers to address the issue of complexity and meet the need of safety and staffing.

Leadership priorities for 2026

1. Continuing to support decolonization both within and outside of our structures and advocate for Indigenous Peoples' struggles for justice around the world.
2. Reclaiming professional dignity to reconnect to joy, purpose, and worker solidarity.
3. Asserting trust in teachers as experts in education.
4. Enhancing local and member political organizing capacity toward electing progressive school trustees and mobilizing on working conditions especially in preparation for bargaining.
5. Responding to immediate member needs related to excessive workload, violence in classrooms, and the influence of the far right.
6. Enhancing support and protection for members experiencing marginalization and applying a decolonizing and anti-oppression lens to practices and accountability processes.

Elections

Shawn Holland, our local president, was elected as a Member-at-Large on the provincial executive committee. CONGRATULATIONS Shawn!! Thank you for bringing our voice to the provincial table.

Passed Motions

- Include bargaining training at Summer Conference
- Include designated member at large position on the provincial executive committee for a member who identifies as disabled
- Reaffirm support for robust arts education
- Reaffirm resistance to FSAs
- Maintained status quo member fees
- Adjusted salary brackets for SIP top-up
- Directed executive to retroactively adjust all current SIP recipient formulas based on the formula passed by the 2025 AGM
- Develop guidelines for challenging unreasonable APs
- Advocate for guidelines on use of AI and effects of excessive screen time
- Investigate lunchtime supervision practices across the province
- Lobby for mandatory reporting of employment and class size/composition data from districts
- Lobby for province-wide minimum standards for inclusion supports
- Support Boycott, Divest, and Sanction efforts against Israel
- Support Manitoba Teachers' petition to advance bill C-254, making condoning, justifying, or denying residential schools a criminal offence

- Teacher magazine include substantive content on class consciousness, labour issues, and the labour movement, as well as issues relating to our contract.
- Research effects of the “counselor in every school” promise
- Recognize Indigenous language proficiency as equivalent to coursework and provide more pathways to TQS category 6 for Indigenous language teachers (of Indigenous descent)



Navigating Staffing Season with Care, Clarity, and Preparation

by: Shawn Holland (CDTA President)

As we move into staffing season, this is a time that can bring both opportunity and uncertainty. For some, it means exciting possibilities and new directions; for others, it comes with real stress and unknowns. Before anything else, it's important that we approach the coming weeks with care, patience, and a strong sense of community. The way we speak to and support one another matters, especially for colleagues who are navigating layoffs or the instability of temporary positions.

Round 1 postings come out this week, with Round two scheduled for next week. These positions will be open to all teachers who have continuing status and are either looking to move or are looking for a position (having been laid off or currently in a temporary position). These will be filled based on our **updated qualification language**.

Qualifications include:

- Certification
- Education and training
- Experience
- References
- **actively demonstrates the maintenance and updating of professional practice in line with current standards**
- **demonstrates local knowledge and a commitment to the district's Strategic Plan**

Be certain to show all these qualifications on your application. If you have done any recent training be sure to include it, and you may want to identify how you have incorporated Indigenous ways of learning and being into your classroom (thus meeting Standard 9, connecting with the Strategic Plan, and hopefully demonstrating local knowledge). Be sure to inform yourself on any school you are applying to, whether they utilize any special programs or have any unique aspects to their culture thus enhancing your local knowledge. It is also valuable to familiarize yourself with the Local Education Agreement (LEA) so that if you are in an interview and asked questions on it, you will have a response. (links attached)

Denialism: Understanding Genocide Denial and Its Political Uses

by: Peter Lorian (Social Justice Committee Chair)

What does it mean to deny a genocide? Who benefits from denial, and who pays the price? How does denial show up in classrooms, in public discourse, and in political life – and what can we do about it? Historical denial is not just a failure of memory. It is a political attack on education, and communities are pushing back.

On May 17, CDTA is co-presenting "Denialism: Understanding Genocide Denial and Its Political Uses". This panel brings together Indigenous educators, scholars, and community advocates to examine how denial functions as a tool of erasure, how it is being weaponized against public education, and what communities targeted by denial have in common.

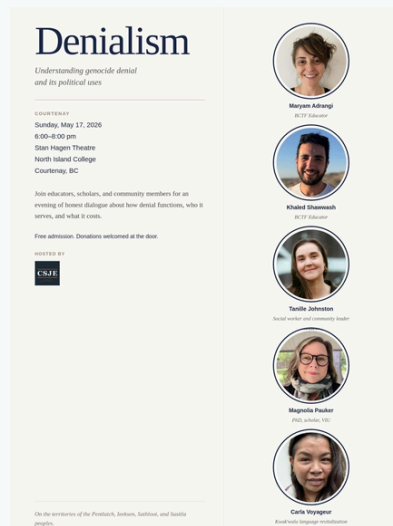
Featuring Magnolia Pauker, Tanille Johnston, Carla Voyageur, Khaled Shawwash, and Maryam Adrangi.

When: Sunday, May 17th

Location: Stan Hagen Theatre, NIC

Time: 6:00 - 8:00pm FREE ADMISSION Donations welcome.

Register [LINK HERE](#)



CDTA AGM

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Thank you to everyone who came out to this year's CDTA Annual General Meeting. It was great to see members together, taking part in the conversations and helping shape the direction of our work moving forward.

Congratulations to our 2026/2027 Executive, which has grown, with the addition of four new specialized seats. This is a positive step that strengthens representation around the table and ensures we're better able to reflect the breadth of voices and experiences across our membership. We're very grateful to everyone who put their name forward to serve.

Congratulations to our AGM prize winners:

Hannah Slomp – Day in Lieu

Michelle Lambert – \$100 gift card

Natasha Molinari – \$50 gift certificate

Well done to all three winners, and thank you to everyone who made the effort to attend throughout the year.

CDTA 2026-2027 CDTA ELECTED Executive & Committees	
President	Shawn Holland
Vice-President	Jacqueline Symons
Secretary/Treasurer	Sarah Coull
1 Local Rep to BCTF (even 2-year term)	Michael Aldridge
1 Local Rep to BCTF (odd 2-year term)	Roger Vernon
Professional Development Chair	Doug David
Health & Safety Chair	Tonya Larson-Gagné
TTOC Chair	Meagan Roberge
Social Justice Chair	Natasha Molinari
Indigenous Education Chair	Natasha Rainkie
Public Ed Defence Chair	Teri Burgess
French Education Local Chair	Rachel Welbourn
Member at Large	Erin Paul
Member at Large Self-Identifying as Racialized	Kraig Gallivan
Member at Large Self-Identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+	--
Member at Large Self-Identifying as Disabled	Sabrina Lorenz
Chair of Distance Education	Nicole Hamilton
Joint Pro-D Committee (5 positions)	Alexis Rekdal, Lynn Swift, Nick Moore, Emily Krasman & Geneviève Eby
CDTA Alternate Meetings Chair	Michael Aldridge
CDTA Alternate Meetings Chair	Meagan Roberge
Contract Committee (4 positions)	Esther Bayles, Thea Black, Denise Anderson, Jennifer Hibbert
Reporting Scrutineers	Hannah Slomp & Thea Black



Building Connection Through the District Wellness Initiative

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

Over the past year, conversations around occupational fatigue and staff wellness have continued to grow across our district. Out of those conversations came the beginning of something hopeful: the District Wellness Initiative.

The initiative first emerged through discussions between the Superintendent and Staff Reps about the increasing pressures staff are facing and the need to intentionally support wellness within our schools and worksites. What began as a grassroots idea led by a small group of teachers and HR staff has continued to grow, with financial support from the district helping bring the vision to life.

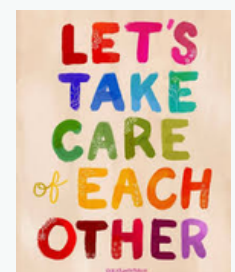
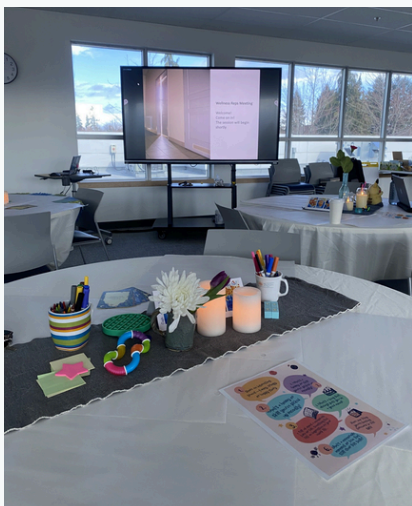
This year, a Wellness Rep role was established, and most schools now have a staff member serving in that position. Wellness Reps are provided with four half-days of release time throughout the school year: two dedicated to school-based wellness planning and two for district-wide collaboration and connection.

On Tuesday, March 10th, Wellness Reps gathered together for the first district wellness meeting. A huge SHOUT OUT to Sarah Dakin for guiding us in a hands-on and playful way, and to the HR team for providing the snacks and space. The room was full of energy, thoughtful conversation, creative ideas, and plenty of laughter.

Since that first meeting, a District Wellness Committee has also been formed. The committee includes 10 members representing a variety of lived and work experiences to help guide this work forward in a way that is inclusive, thoughtful, and equitable.

We know that wellness initiatives alone cannot solve the larger systemic challenges facing public education. However, we are hopeful that this work can help foster a meaningful culture shift, strengthen relationships, and create spaces where staff feel more supported, connected, and valued within their school communities.

If you have ideas, suggestions, or would like to learn more about the initiative, please reach out to vicepres@cdta71.org



Free Event: Mental Health and Preparing for the Transition to Post Secondary

by: Family Start

After high school, post-secondary education for our youth can be exciting but also stressful if they have struggled with their mental health. Learn from Dawn Schell (University of Victoria) and Melissa Feddersen (University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus). Discover some ways we can prepare our youth for school and support their mental health and independence while they are at school.

This event is for parents/caregivers only, and we are not able to provide childcare.

When: May 13, 2026 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm PDT

Location: Mark Isfeld Secondary (Multipurpose Room) 1551 Lerwick Rd, Courtenay

The event is free. We ask that you please register as the school is generously offering us space, and we want to make sure we are ready to welcome you.

Questions? Email: megan.watson-shelly@familysmart.ca or phone/text: 250-890-2393
Find more about the event [HERE](#).

Pro-D on The Go!

by: Jacqueline Symons (CDTA Vice-President)

10% Happier with Dan Harris

The 10% Happier podcast, hosted by former news anchor Dan Harris, explores meditation and mental well-being through a lens of healthy skepticism. The show features interviews with top scientists, meditation teachers, and authors to provide practical, evidence-based tools for managing anxiety and modern stress. While episodes are free to stream with ads on platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts, an ad-free experience is available via a paid subscription.

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



An advertisement for EMC Mortgage. At the top is the EMC logo with the tagline "Money made simple." Below that, in large bold letters, is "SPRING EXTENSION". Underneath, it says "5 YEAR TERM: 3.7%* (APR: 3.734%)". Below that, in smaller red text, it says "Must close by May 31, 2026". Then, in white text, it says "Contact us to find out more" followed by the phone number "604-739-0320". At the bottom, there is a red button with white text that says "TALK TO AN EMC MORTGAGE EXPERT". At the very bottom, the website "www.emcmortgages.ca" is listed. The background of the ad is a soft-focus image of green grass and a small white flower.