CDTA 71

Comox District Teachers' Association

NEWSLETTER

November 2026

Additions to Local Executive Committee

At the general meeting on October 28, 2026, two members were elected to join your CDTA Executive Committee as members at large.

Please join us in welcoming Derrick and Stephen to your 2026-27 Executive Committee!

Two positions continue to be unfilled. One Member at Large position and one Member at Large position held for a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

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~~ Member@ Large	Derrick Nelson
TTOC Chair	Meagan Roberge
~~Social Justice Chair~~ Member @ Large	Stephen Dalley
Indigenous Education Chair	Natasha Rainkie
Public Ed Defence Chair	Teri Burgess
French Education Local Chair	Rachel Welbourn
Member at Large	VACANT
Member at Large Self-Identifying as Racialized	Kraig Gallivan
Member at Large Self-Identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+	VACANT
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

IMPORTANT DATES

Nov 4- CDTA Executive meeting

Nov 8- National Indigenous Veterans Day

Nov 11- Remembrance Day

Nov 13-14- BCTF Representative Assembly

Nov 18- Staff Rep meeting
Joint PD Committee meeting

Nov 19- Elementary N.I. day

Nov 20-21- Federation Leadership Institute

Nov 25- PD Reps meeting (Zoom)

Nov 27-28- BCTF Executive meeting

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October Update



October was a busy month with two elections and some significant news and changes at the School Board office.

By all measures we can say the trustee elections were a success. A great deal of work went into identifying and recruiting strong candidates for the positions available pre-election which resulted in most of the seats being acclaimed. In the Courtenay election, voters chose two candidates who displayed superior knowledge about our education system at the trustee forum, who are committed to continuing the work of the previous board and maintaining a culture of collaboration, and will be supportive of protecting student differences. I am excited for the next four years of working with this group.

The provincial election likely created different feelings no matter which party you supported with the Comox Valley voting one way and the province voting another. Again, no matter your political allegiance, we need to prepare ourselves for changes in education. Some of these may be very shocking to newer teachers who have never worked for a right-wing coalition government. For those of you like myself who have lived through this, please be prepared to support your colleagues as needed. There were many election promises citing major changes including the repealing of SOGI 123 curriculum, increasing the number of standardized tests, and moving back to letter grades. Oh, and let's not forget the return to the instruction of Reading and Arithmetic. I am not as excited for the next four years. Our next round of bargaining will be interesting.

There have also been some significant occurrences in district. We all saw the SBO announcement which had numerous shifts in the board office and in our schools. A number of these changes caught teachers, and the CDTA off-guard. While we were given the heads up that changes were coming, we did not have any details until receiving the announcement last Tuesday morning. We do not have any language in our contract regarding the need to consult with the CDTA around such moves – all we can do is offer our support in helping you adjust as needed.

One thing we were made aware of is the $6,000,000 surplus that was realized at the end of September due to higher-than-expected enrollment and number of designated students. We have been in discussion on how to best apply these funds to our system. There are many challenges with adding such a significant amount of money at this time of year as our primary goal – to increase classroom supports – requires hiring which is best done in the spring. Talks are ongoing, and we are hoping that there will be increased staff and other supports to make your jobs easier.

Beyond this we have been busy with trying to support, answer questions, and advocate for your needs as best we can. Please continue to reach out for help.

Shawn Holland,
President CDTA Local 71

Professional Development

District Pro D Day

Designing for Belonging is the theme of the February 26, 2027, District Professional Development Day.

The day will begin with a keynote by UBC professor Dr. Carly Christensen, who will invite educators to explore how understandings of disability, inclusion, and belonging shape educational practices and students' experiences in schools. Participants will then choose from a wide range of breakout sessions exploring inclusive practices, Indigenous perspectives, student voice, wellbeing, assessment, leadership, technology, anti-racism, and more. Educators will be encouraged to connect, learn, and reflect on how we can create the conditions for belonging across our classrooms, schools, and district.

A call for session proposals will be shared district-wide in November. Educators interested in facilitating a professional learning session will be invited to submit a proposal for consideration as part of the day's learning opportunities.

Doug David
CDTA 71 Professional Development Chair



Learn more about Dr. Carly Christensen HERE

Pro-D On the Go



Popular Podagogy: AI and Assessment in the Classroom

Produced by the Queen's University Faculty of Education and hosted by Chris Carlton, this series bridges big educational ideas, academic research, and classroom realities.

In this episode, host Chris Carlton and Dr. Christopher DeLuca unpack what classroom assessment should look like in the age of AI. They dig into authentic, human-centered, and formative approaches that let teachers harness AI while keeping learning real. Tune in for practical tips for your classroom assessments. Listen to the episode HERE (Apple) or HERE (Spotify)



Indigenous Education

In September, SD71's Indigenous Teacher Liaison Committee gathered at Puntledge Park to explore our themes for the year: reciprocity and learning with and on the land. We engaged in a relational walking practice inspired by Dwayne Donald's work on ethical relationality, inviting us to slow down and consider the relationships that connect us to the places we live, work, and learn.

This experience led us to a year-long project exploring plant allyship. Each committee member has been invited to notice the plants growing around their school and choose one to spend time getting to know. I would like to extend this invitation to all CDTA members!

As we move through fall, take a moment to notice a plant growing on or near your school grounds. Introduce yourself. Observe what it is doing as the seasons change. Consider the relationships this plant holds with the land, the other beings around it, and the people who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial. Return to your plant in winter. What has changed? What can you learn by spending time observing it? Can you deepen your relationship by learning more about the plant, while remaining mindful of whose knowledge you are learning from and how that knowledge is shared?

Then, return again in spring. What have you noticed throughout that season? Has your understanding of this plant, or your relationship with the place where it grows, changed?
Our committee has been invited to create something that reflects our learning and honours our plant ally in the spirit of reciprocity. I encourage you to consider doing the same, whether individually, with colleagues, or alongside your students. What might you offer in return for what you have learned? How might you honour this relationship through your actions?

This practice is an opportunity to move beyond learning about the land and begin considering how we might learn with it. It begins with curiosity, attention, and a willingness to build a relationship over time. Who knows? You might meet a new plant ally that changes how you see the land your school sits on.



(Wintergreen - photo by Heidi Csernak | Oct 21, 2025)

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Indigenous Education, cont'd

Pro-d on the go: In this 11-minute clip, Dr. Dwayne Donald introduces a *Relational Walking Practice* that invites us to pay more attention to the places we inhabit and consider the relationships that connect us to the land and all those who share it. His work offers an opportunity to reflect on how we approach learning, place, and our relationships with the more-than-human world.

https://www.indigenousliterarystudies.org/relational-walking-practice

Give it a try: Take a few minutes to walk around your school grounds without a destination in mind. Slow down. Notice what surrounds you. What plants catch your attention? What do you usually walk past without noticing? What relationships might you begin to recognize?

A question to carry with you: What relationships connect us to the places where we teach, and how might our everyday practices honour and nurture those relationships?

Shâw níthän - Thank you,

Natasha Rainkie
CDTA Indigenous Education Chair



Remembrance Day Resources

If you're looking for ways to meaningfully incorporate Remembrance Day into your professional practice, the following links might provide you with a good starting point:

HISTORICA CANADA – REMEMBRANCE DAY IN THE CLASSROOM: A TEACHER RESOURCE KIT

VETERANS' AFFAIRS – CLASSROOM MATERIALS

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS INDIGENOUS REMEMBRANCE DAY RESOURCES

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION- EDUCATOR RESOURCES

GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT- INDIGENOUS VETERANS' DAY RESOURCES

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

One of the frustrations I have encountered in the office is administrator decisions that contravene the contract because they don't know the contract – a responsibility they have as the employer. However, many of these administrators are former members, so it is hoped they would have a better understanding.

The contract that exists between the Comox District Teachers' Association and the Board of Education of School District 71 guides and dictates all our working conditions. It is strongly advisable that every teacher read through the document and have an initial understanding of this agreement. It has the details on how long you have to attend staff meetings (A.30), how much you get paid (B.1), what are your hours of work (D.23), how many sick days you get (G.20), and how many students the district can put into your classroom before paying remedy (LOU 12). While there is no expectation that you memorize the whole agreement, it is valuable to have a general understanding of its contents.

We are hoping in coming newsletters to highlight more specific aspects of the contract, but for now, please take a glance and see what has been negotiated for you by our past bargaining teams. And if there is something that you wish was in the contract that is not there, let us know, so we can pass that on to upcoming provincial and local bargaining teams.

SD71/CDTA Collective Agreement

Shawn Holland
President, CDTA Local 71

French Language Education

Bonjour à tous nos professeurs qui enseignent le/en français!
For those who are not aware, I am your CDTA French Education Language Chair (FELC). I just wanted to introduce myself, give you an idea of what the role of FELC entails and keep you informed of recent developments and upcoming meetings.

The role of FELC includes (but is not limited to):

1) Ensuring that all French as a First or Working Language (FFWL) teachers are aware that they have access to money from the French Federal Grant (yes, there is money and this includes for teachers who are teaching French, not just French Immersion teachers).

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French Language Education, cont'd

2) Promoting Teaching resources in French.
Here are a couple of sites that were shared at the recent Zone meeting:

BC French Education Networks and support: https://www.bcsifrenched.ca/
UVic: teaching in French- https://libguides.uvic.ca/education-francais/bienvenue
Literacy Learning Progressions from BC Ed:
https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/learning-pathways/fr_k-12-cross-curricular-literacy-learning-progressions.pdf

3) Attending zone meetings. There are two Zone Meetings a year (October and April). On October 2nd, I met with other FELC representatives from across the Island. Thanks to strong advocacy from members, and with the cooperation of administrations ànd our French Language Coordinator, over the past few years, SD71 has more support and transparency than some other districts on the Island, but there are still many improvements to be made.

Other recent meetings involving French Language member issues:

On October 5th, Shawn Holland (CDTA president) and I met with the Superintendent Jeremy Morrow to discuss key issues pertaining to FFWL teachers

On October 8th, the French Advisory Committee met. This included the French Program Coordinator (Michelle Mowbray, Vice Principal Robb Road), the local chapter of CPF (Canadian parents for French), teachers, and parents. Michelle Mowbray presented this year's federal funding and how it will likely be allocated (again, there is money for core French also, not just French Immersion).

Upcoming meeting and contact info

I will try to organize a meeting in December for French Immersion and teachers who teach French (keep your eyes open for an email from the CDTA).

In the meantime, if you have any questions/concerns/ideas about topics related to French education as well as how your local union can support your needs, please feel free to reach out to me directly at: rachelwelbourn@gmail.com.

Best regards,

Rachel Welbourn
CDTA French Education Language Chair



Financial Literacy Month



If you are like me, finances can sometimes feel like just another Adulting Monster lurking in the corner of the room. We'd rather not make eye contact, let alone invite it to sit down for a conversation. Between the demands of teaching and the rising cost of living, financial planning can often fall to the bottom of the to-do list. November is Financial Literacy Month in Canada, a great opportunity to put on your brave face and give your finances a little attention. This year's theme, "Talk Money," encourages Canadians to have open conversations about finances and build confidence in their financial decisions. *Learn more about this year's theme, as well as explore the plethora of resources HERE.*

Here are five practical ways to get started:

1. Review Your Budget
Take 20 minutes to look at your income, expenses, subscriptions, and spending habits. Consider setting up an automatic savings transfer each payday, even if it's just $25. *Need help building your budget? Click HERE*

2. Build an Emergency Fund
Unexpected expenses happen. Work toward saving three to six months of essential expenses, but start small. Even $500 or $1,000 provides a helpful cushion.

3. Get to Know Your Pension
Your BC Teachers' Pension Plan is an important part of your financial future. Review your service history and use the online pension estimator to explore your potential retirement income.
Find online and in person learning sessions HERE

4. Make a Plan for Debt and Savings
Review outstanding debts and interest rates. Explore savings options such as Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs) and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) to understand what best supports your goals.
Learn more HERE

Your November Challenge: Set aside 30 minutes this month to tackle one financial task you've been putting off. Your future self will thank you!

Jacqueline Symons
Vice-President - CDTA Local 71

Health and Safety

Prismatic Reporting

There have been many questions and frustrations expressed around Prismatic reporting, especially when in comes to violence in your classrooms. There have been conflicting details around when and why to fill out reports.

If you experience violence, if you witness violence, if you feel threatened in any way, you should be filling out a report. We have discussed this with the district and they are in agreement with us that we need to **REPORT to SUPPORT.** This is not a label for the student; it is identifying that the needs for that student are not being met. The only way we can work to ensure needs are being met is to report the incident. Remember, it is not the intention of an action – it is the action that is being considered.

You will be seeing a shared communication from the district and the CDTA in regards to violence that was part of the last provincial agreement. It contains the WorkSafe definition of violence, a definition we are expecting to be augmented by WorkSafe to include psychological violence. Please do not accept any watered down definitions from management.

If you have questions around this do not hesitate to speak to your Health and Safety rep or contact the CDTA office.

Shawn Holland,
President CDTA Local 71

Community Care Corner

The Case for Uninterrupted Time

As teachers, we are accustomed to being accessible at all times during the day. However, our nervous systems need moments of calibration, to get things done, take a breath, or simply regroup. Sometimes the most supportive thing we can do for one another is give each other a little uninterrupted time.

Prep time is an important part of the workday that allows us to plan, prepare, organize, catch up, and hopefully leave work at work. When prep time is regularly interrupted by questions, requests, quick conversations, or unexpected tasks, those minutes add up. Before long, the work that was meant to happen during the school day finds its way into evenings and weekends.

This month, consider creating some shared school guidelines around protecting one another's prep time. This might mean agreeing to avoid non-urgent interruptions, saving questions for another time, or establishing a simple signal when someone needs uninterrupted focus. A sign on the classroom door might do the trick. Something like: In My Prep Era or Quiet Zone: Protecting My Last Nerve! We all have different demands, energy levels, and responsibilities. When colleagues feel comfortable protecting those pockets of time, without feeling guilty or needing to explain themselves, we create a culture where everyone has more room to do their best work, recharge, and show up for one another

Jacqueline Symons
Vice-President - CDTA Local 71



Canucks Educators' Night is January 7, 2027

The Vancouver Canucks have a special offer available to all educators, along with their friends and family, as they face off against the Tampa Bay Lightning on January 7. Each ticket purchased through this offer includes a Canucks-branded tote bag, while supplies last. Purchase your tickets.

BC Teachers' Mortgage Savings Program

EMC Mortgages is a proud key Advantage partner of the BCTF, helping teachers across BC secure better mortgages for over 28 years with:

- exclusive savings for BCTF members
- volume discounts on mortgage rates
- access to multiple top lenders
- purchases, renewals, and refinances
- debt consolidation and equity take-outs

Many BCTF members have already benefited.
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