



Vol. 1 - Issue 5 ~ January, 2020

President's Message

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and are feeling refreshed for the new year.

At the end of this month, I will be attending the Winter Rep Assembly where I am sure the fact that we are still without a contract will dominate our discussions. Thank you to everyone who completed the bargaining survey. There is still time to give input if you have not yet had a chance. [CLICK HERE](#)

~Carla

New Teachers' Conference

Are you a new teacher or within your first 5 years of teaching? The BCTF New Teachers' Conference has workshops designed especially for you! Each year the NDTA sponsors new teachers to attend this event. This year the conference will be held on May 23rd in Nelson at the Prestige. The theme for this year's event is **Wellness, Safety, and Balance in Life and on the Job.**

If you are interested in attending, please email Carla Wilson (lp07@bctf.ca) or Tamara Martin (sportym@telus.net). In the event that more people show interest than we are able to sponsor, we will hold a draw February 15th.

Attendance Management

This fall, it has become increasingly clear that Human Resources is moving towards an attendance management model. What does this mean? Essentially, HR is looking for patterns in employee absenteeism.

Our Collective Agreement allots us 15 sick days per year, which we can bank from one year to the next. In any given year, we can use up to 150 banked sick days, if necessary, before moving onto SIP. Generally speaking, if you are going to be absent, you enter your leave into SFE and nothing more needs to be done.

With this new model, however, there are certain circumstances where HR will request a doctor's certificate. So far, this request has only been made for employees who have been sick for five days or more. Senior management has indicated, however, that they may also request a doctor's certificate if they notice an employee absence before a holiday (for example, spring break or Family Day) or if they determine that an employee appears to be sick more often on Fridays than other days.

Although the union understands the employer's interest in preventing their employees from abusing their benefits, we do not feel that this is a wide spread practice and, in fact, would argue that there are more occurrences where teachers drag themselves to work when they are not well. Further, we have seen many instances where our members, after a serious illness or injury, push themselves to return to work before they are ready and as a consequence have to go back on leave. In addition, we are concerned about the cost downloaded to our members to have a doctor complete a medical certificate. (Most doctors charge a fee ranging from \$35—\$50 or more and the district refuses to help with these costs.) Finally, doctors encourage their patients to refrain from visiting their offices for known communicable illnesses such as the flu or common cold as there is little they can do as the bug makes its way through the person's system and staying home and away from others is the best way to prevent the spread of these bugs.

Needless to say, we will continue to have conversations with the employer around this topic and would like to remind you to not disclose any diagnosis to your admins.



Call for Applications: BCTF Women's Institute

The third annual BCTF Women's Institute will be held in Richmond on February 13—15, 2020 at the Pacific Gateway Hotel in Richmond. The NDTA is looking to send one delegate. If you identify as a woman and think this might be of interest to you, please email lp07@bctf.ca to indicate your interest.

Looking for Delegates: BCTF AGM

The BCTF Annual General Meeting takes place from March 14—17, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver.

Each year, over 750 delegates from around the province attend the BCTF AGM. It is a great opportunity to see how the BCTF operates, to hear new perspectives on important issues, meet colleagues from other parts of the province, and to have a voice in the decisions made by the union. The NDTA can send up to four delegates including the president and the LR.

Hotel accommodations, travel costs, and expenses will be covered by the BCTF. Childcare arrangements are also available.

Delegates will be elected at the Special General Meeting on January 20th. If you are interested in being a delegate, please email your name and a brief statement to lp07@bctf.ca by January 20th. It is also possible to nominate yourself from the floor at the meeting. If you have any questions about the BCTF AGM, or the process of becoming a delegate, please contact Carla Wilson at lp07@bctf.ca.

Important Dates

- January 13th : Calendar Committee Meeting
- January 20th: **General Meeting** - Meeting Room at 518 Lake Street - 4 pm
- January 28: Board Meeting
- January 29 - 30: Training for New Presidents
- Jan 31 - Feb 1: Rep Assembly

Nominations Open: BCTF Awards

Nominations are now open for a variety of BCTF awards. The winners will be invited to the Annual General Meeting to be honoured by colleagues from across the province.

- The [Bob Rosen Social Justice Award](#) is granted to a member or honorary associate member who has made an outstanding and sustained contribution in working for systemic change on issues of social justice. Applications are due by January 31, 2020.
- The [Stewart Schon Award](#) is granted to a member or honorary associate member who has made an outstanding and sustained contribution to the health and safety of BCTF members. Applications are due by January 31, 2020.
- There are also various [other award opportunities](#) available on the BCTF website.

Shout Outs

We know that we have many amazing teachers in SD8 and there are fantastic things happening around the district. We would love to hear about it. In the spirit of acts of kindness, we would love for our members to send us a "shout out" about a colleague who inspires you and who you think deserves recognition, whether it is for their kindness, a great resource they shared, or something amazing happening in their classroom...even better if you send a picture. Recipients of the shout outs and those who submitted them will be entered into a draw (prize to be announced).

