



Vol. 1 - Issue 7 ~ March, 2020

President's Message

On January 24th, Doug Kunzelman (president of the Creston Teachers' Association) and I sent a letter to the board of education asking them to clarify their position with regards to provincial bargaining. We were frustrated with a news release from BCPSEA which quoted Stephanie Higginson, President of the BC School Trustees Association as stating "that boards of education and the BCSTA continue to support BCPSEA through the bargaining and mediation process." Higginson further asserts that the boards were clear in their feedback to BCPSEA that our restored language was outdated and needed to be changed. She suggests that teacher workload provisions are not in the best interest of students.

Our letter to the trustees explained that we were not only offended by these remarks, we felt that they were incorrect. We feel that the concessions sought by BCPSEA would continue to undermine and destabilize education in our province.

We further argued that a reasonable teacher workload directly impacts student learning in a positive manner and that there is not a need as Ms Higginson suggests to "balance the interest of student needs with teacher workload pro-

President's Message (cont)

visions. We asserted that when teacher workload improves, student learning conditions also improve because improved conditions allow for an increase in the care and attention each student can receive from their teacher.

We suggested that if the employer truly wants to "optimize student learning conditions" as Ms. Higginson claims, Trustees should be advocating for smaller class sizes, not larger. We also state that they should be concerned with the number of students on each specialist teacher's caseload. Having working conditions in our Collective Agreement helps to guarantee supports to students.

Since bargaining began, and after 69 bargaining sessions, BCPSEA has only made one significant change to their proposals, when they tabled a "rollover" to the Collective Agreement on September 26. Teachers, meanwhile have come back to the table time and again with revised proposals seeking to actually discuss the issues in an attempt to reach an agreement.

In our letter, Doug and I asked the Board of Trustees for School District 8 to go on the record and clarify whether they continue to support BCPSEA and the concessions they have tabled during the bargaining and mediation process or if they support their teaching staff who are calling for improvements to working and learning conditions.

At the February board meeting, trustee Gribbin moved and trustee Maslechko seconded a motion to put pressure on the BC government to increase per pupil funding to the national average. At present, BC students are funded at \$1800 less per pupil than the national average. Although it is unclear as to whether this motion came about as a result of our letter, I am pleased to report that it was unanimously carried.

~Carla

Lori Jones and Jesse Halton supporting #RedforBCed



District Water Quality

As many of you may be aware from news articles in both December and January, the district recently tested the water in all of its school facilities due to changes to the guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, which lowered the maximum allowable concentrations of heavy metals in water systems. Bruce McLean (Director of Operations) reported out the results of this process at the most recent board meeting. The district tested 232 water samples representing 119 different fixtures in buildings. 35 of these fixtures failed the tests or had higher than acceptable lead levels. South Nelson Elementary had the highest lead count after Trafalgar Middle School. Both these schools are first in line for the installation of a bottle fill station which will filter out heavy metals.

Across the district, 17 drinking fountains failed the test with one drinking fountain failing both the 0-minute and 5-minute test. It has been disabled and will soon be removed. 7 water fountains have been identified as needing to be replaced with bottle fill stations. The schools which have been identified according to priority are: Trafalgar, South Nelson, Winlaw, Rosemont, Salmo Elementary, Hume, and LVR. 9 water fountains have been identified for shutoff and removal.

16 sinks failed the tests. 2 of these sinks will have signage posted that the sink is non-potable water. 32 faucets will be replaced (PCSS, Rosemont, Winlaw, Trafalgar, Redfish, Central, and Creston Operations).

Once this remedial work is complete, the district will proceed to installing water fill stations at other school sites. The goal is to have a minimum of one water fill station at each school site by September.

We appreciate that this matter was taken seriously and dealt with in a way that protects the health of both our members and our students.



Duty Free Lunch

There have been a few reports of school admin who have tried to call meetings or schedule other duties over lunch hour. The Collective Agreement in article D.22.2 is quite clear: “All teachers covered by this Agreement shall have the right to a duty-free lunch period equivalent to the school’s regularly scheduled noon intermission.” This means that you must be given the equivalent of what is **regularly** scheduled for lunch at your school. Aside from the importance of being able to sit down and have lunch for your own health and wellness, teachers use their lunch hours as a time to complete their prep, to photocopy, to collaborate with other teachers, to catch up on marking, go for a walk, feed their dog, etc. The Superintendent has assured me that all PVP have been reminded at the most recent PVP meeting that they are not to schedule any meetings or other teacher duties during lunch hour. If you are still having problems with this, please let me know.

Survey for French Teachers

Wanda Machado, the French language representative for our local is preparing for an upcoming meeting in Vancouver. If you are involved in French education (core French or immersion) please complete the following [short survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPYBPMK) so that she can better represent our region: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPYBPMK>



Kathy Couch at the political action training in Vancouver

NDTA Bursary

The NDTA offers bursaries to children and grandchildren of active or retired members who enroll in an undergraduate program at a university, a diploma program, a tech school program or a college program.

To apply, the student must:

- Provide their name and relationship to an NDTA member of former member.
- Provide the name of the current school or post-secondary institution (if applicable)
- Provide one letter of reference from an adult who can write knowledgeably about the applicant, including aspects such as talents, potential in their chosen field, their motivation, and/or their attitude.
- Provide a concise (maximum 300 words) statement about their post-secondary plans and career plans. (Tell us why it is important to receive post-secondary training).
- **Optional:** Provide one other document that helps to illustrate their ability and potential, for example, student portfolio, an original poem, a photograph of a completed project, or some other accomplishment, artwork, ect.

Applicants must apply by April 30th. An individual may apply for the bursary more than once, BUT may only receive the bursary once.



#RedforBCEd

**Every Friday
Wear RED
for BC ED**

Conversion to Continuing

With the change over in HR this year, there seems to be some confusion about conversion to continuing despite article C.20.2 of the Collective Agreement. Article C.20.2 states, "Term teachers who are reappointed to the teaching staff of the District who have previously completed ten (10) FTE months of service within the preceding three (3) school years shall be granted a continuing contract of employment." The article goes on to state, "The above notwithstanding, teachers on a term appointment under subsection C.20.1.a.i., who are replacing continuing contract teachers on a leave of absence for longer than ten (10) consecutive FTE months, shall not be appointed to a continuing contract until the leave comes to an end and the (term) teacher has subsequently been reappointed to the teaching staff of the District within the next school year.

Despite numerous requests, management has yet to provide the union with a list of teachers who qualify for conversion this year. Under normal circumstances, this should have happened sometime before the end of October. As a result, I am compiling a list to present to management. If you have completed more than ten months of term contracts within the last three years, please email me and provide me with the year(s), school(s) where you taught, and length of term(s). Please send this information to lp07@bctf.ca.

Important Dates

- **March 10: Board Meeting**
- **March 16—27: Spring Break**
- **March 14—17: AGM—Vancouver**
- **March 30: Mediation in Vancouver**
- **TBD—Mark ins—for all NDTA members to support phase 1**

British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association Golden Star Awards 2020

Are you offering a program that involves interaction between students and seniors Has your program been in place for at least one full school year or one full semester?
Could you use \$1500 to enhance your program?

If you answered 'yes' to these questions, you can apply for one of five BCRTA Golden Star Awards. One BCRTA/Legion Golden Star Award is also offered for a program that involves student interaction with veterans.

Deadline for applications is April 15th each year.

To access the Golden Star Awards application forms and a video featuring winners in 2019, please go to <https://bcrta.ca/bcrta-golden-star-awards/>