



## President's Report



Dear Colleagues,

Hello and happy holidays! Congratulations on making it this far.

It has been a challenging fall. We have been dealing with fear for our safety and that of our students and community. Within this, we have not felt entirely supported by the Province's approach. Many of us were disheartened to hear comments such as, "Schools are not public spaces," "Children are not transmitters," "Shutting down schools was probably a mistake," and "The BC education minister wants to avoid school closures completely," from the PHO, Premier Horgan and Minister Fleming.

We continue to press the BC Government and our PHO to mandate masks in school settings, but it is a difficult battle. We are cautiously optimistic that a new Minister opens an

opportunity to have our concerns heard in a new way.

Also encouraging is that the BCTF won a precedent-setting case at the BC Labour Relations Board and we now have a K-12 Troubleshooter process to address any health and safety issues that we cannot immediately resolve at our site-based JOHSC meetings.

Here at the NDTA, despite the pandemic, we have accomplished a great deal. We have a new NDTA handbook which we will be making available to all members. We have been working on our website and have recently put all members into our members-only portal. By now you should have received an email which allows you to enter the portal. If you have not received such an email, please contact us. Finally, we have been providing members with support where needed as always.

Though the days are dark and still darkening, solstice is approaching quickly and vaccines are on the horizon. While we are in what is left of the winter, we should be doing everything in our power right now to eliminate unnecessary and easily avoidable risk. Please join me in modeling the use of PPE and doubling down on our health and safety protocols and procedures beyond the minimum guidelines. It has been mandated for ALL staff and students in middle and high schools to wear masks in hallways and other public areas where cohorts mix. This is enforceable. Please make sure this is being enforced at your school. Let's work together to keep our little corner of the world safe.

I want to give a special shout-out to our social justice chairs who have provided a variety of articles/resources for this newsletter. I deeply appreciate their contributions and know you will too.

Before you go your various ways for the Holidays, I want to thank each of you for your contributions to our community and our schools. I know you are all making a difference to your students and their families. Stay safe, relax over the break and we'll connect in the New Year!

~Carla Wilson

## Restorative Justice Week

November 15-22nd was National Restorative Justice Week! You may have seen the banners at the School District office and on Baker Street. The week was meant to increase awareness in students and staff of the option to use restorative practices in our schools. It's a way to make things right after a harm has happened. Some teachers are already adopting restorative practices in their classrooms as a daily practice for resolving conflict, strengthening relationships and increasing social emotional learning.

The Nelson Police Department Restorative Justice Program has provided an educator package to help explore the philosophy of restorative justice with your classes in a developmentally appropriate way. Visit the SD8 website link: <https://www.sd8.bc.ca/events/restorative-justice-week> or ask your school administrator!

The Restorative Action Schools program offers support for teachers through professional development designed to build classroom community and through reflective exercises in a circle framework. Look for training opportunities in SD8 on February 12th, 2021 for your professional development option. The program offers teachers weekly-support through a team of well-trained volunteers and facilitators virtually or in person (once COVID settles) and the referral component of

the program. The referral program invites youth, teachers, administrators or parents to contact the Restorative Justice Program if they are experiencing conflict or harm with peers, colleagues or the law. The intention is to support and empower people to take responsibility for their actions. Their collaborative approach works towards repairing harm by allowing all stakeholders involved to be heard and enabling meaningful conversations. Outcomes are determined by the needs of the individuals involved, and can include closure and healing that allows people to move forward with their lives in a good way.

For more information contact Sophie or Lisa, Restorative Action Schools Coordinators at [restorativeaction@nelsonpolice.ca](mailto:restorativeaction@nelsonpolice.ca), 250-354-3919. <https://www.nelson.ca/311/Restorative-Justice-Program>



## AGM Resolutions

Do you have a resolution that you wish to submit to the BCTF AGM? The deadline to submit local resolutions is December 15th, 2020 meaning that any resolution you wish to submit should be brought to the next NDTA meeting. This deadline allows the BCTF time for the preparation, printing, and mailing of the Reports and Resolutions book, which must be in schools no later than February 19, 2021.

Page 25 of the BCTF Member's Guide outlines the resolutions procedures as well as the format and timelines for the submission of resolutions. If you can't find a copy of the Member's Guide at your school, you can find it in the Member's Portal on the BCTF website.

Please forward any resolutions you wish the membership to vote on at our next meeting to [lp07@bctf.ca](mailto:lp07@bctf.ca).

Resolutions can be submitted at any time, all year round, but ones intended for the AGM must be submitted no later than December 15.

## Key Dates

Date Time	Event
Dec 8	Board Meeting
Dec 14	NDTA Meeting
Dec 19	Winter Break
Jan 4	School Reopens

## Retirement Workshops

The BC Retired Teachers' Association is pleased to announce that they are now offering their popular workshop ***Making Sense of Your Pension, CPP, OAS and Group Benefits*** online.

This free workshop would most benefit teachers who are age 50+ as it will help them navigate important decisions that will determine their retirement lifestyle.

With the emphasis on Teachers' Pension Plan, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and voluntary group benefits, this workshop complements the ***Approaching Retirement*** webinars provided by the Teachers' Pension Plan.

You can register for this workshop as: <https://bcrrta.ca/workshop>.

Session dates are: Jan 20; Feb 17; March 3; April 7; April 21; May 12; May 26 and June 2.



## AGM Delegates

Are you interested in attending the 2021 BCTF AGM? If so, please submit your name to the local by December 8th.

The AGM begins on Saturday, March 20th and will conclude on Tuesday, March 23. This year's meeting will be held online due to the ongoing pandemic.

Each delegate will be given one release day to use at their discretion before the end of June as a thank you for their service to our members.

## Sick Outs

There has been ongoing conversation on social media regarding parents having a "sick out" and keeping their children home from school on December 1st and December 15th to protest school safety conditions. I appreciate the parents' concerns and their willingness to apply political pressure to make schools safer.

In addition to parents, there have also been some BCTF members who have been vocal at encouraging teachers to also stay home "sick" on these days. There are critical reasons why this approach is not appropriate for teachers.

1. The employer and arbitrators will view this sort of action as a theft of time.
2. Such actions would be in conflict with your BCTF Code of Ethics.
3. The Teacher Regulation Branch would hold such actions in violation of their standards.

Please do not stay home "sick" on these two days unless you are actually sick.

Even discussing the idea of "sick outs" online may put you at risk. If you have participated in such a conversation online and then find yourself legitimately sick on either of the two "sick out" days, the employer may assume you were not sick and may apply consequences. Although I have no desire to shut down legitimate expression of member concerns, for your own protection, I strongly recommend that you do not discuss teachers participating in sick outs online. This is above and beyond my usual advice to take care to not publically criticize the employer.

Please do voice concerns to your staff rep, your site based health and safety committee and/or your union president. They can make sure that your concerns are heard and addressed through the proper channels.



## Resource Recommendation

As many of you are aware, November 13 - 19th was Trans Awareness week which was then followed by Trans Day of Remembrance on November 20th. It is a week that honours transgender members in our community and trans youth.

To honour that week, the Social Justice Chair team would like to share this fantastic resource - [The Trevor Project's Guide to Being an Ally for Transgender and Non-Binary Youth](#).

This resource is full of tangible ideas for your teaching practice. For example, did you know that usage of a student's chosen name resulted in a 29% decrease in suicidal ideation and a 56% decrease in suicidal behavior? That is a HUGE difference that you can make in your classroom.

The guide includes the difference between sex and gender, identity, addressing people by names, pronouns, or honorifics, and (a personal favourite) a guide of common mistakes and what to do if you've made one.

We would love for you to sit down with this short and sweet guide, and consider your impact on the transgender and non-binary youth in your classrooms and school community.

Yours in Solidarity,  
Hannah Lunn, Sophie De Pauw,  
Helena Bryn-McLeod

## Wellness Project

To get us through the pandemic, we are looking for wellness tips to share in our monthly newsletter. Do you have a wellness tip that you'd like to share with other teachers? If so, please email it to [lp07@bctf.ca](mailto:lp07@bctf.ca).

This month's wellness tip is for those who like yoga and are yearning for an app or subscription. We recommend you check out "Down Dog," which is currently FREE for all teachers and students (K-12 and college) until July 1, 2021! To get the free subscription, go to [www.downdogapp.com](http://www.downdogapp.com), choose what type of fitness you'd like to do (Yoga, HIIT, Barre, 7 Minute Workout, Prenatal Yoga), and sign up using your SD#8 email address. That's it! You're ready to practice.

While a yoga app is no replacement for practice in a studio with a community of yogis, the Down Dog app comes pretty close to the real thing and you get to practice on your own schedule in the privacy of your home. If you like engaging sessions, clear instructions, and customization options such as duration, level, intensity, sequence, and music, then you should try the Down Dog app.

## Please Consider Signing

Our Social Justice team is endorsing the NEVR (Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships) petition to the federal government to develop a national prevention plan that includes a media campaign on healthy relationships and the consequences of relationship violence and to proactively address educational goals and societal change to establish a society with healthier and happier relationships. Please consider signing the [petition](#) and sharing it widely with your networks.

For more information about [NEVR](#), please visit their website: <https://www.kpu.ca/nevr>

