



President's Message

Dear colleagues,

We are now more than half-way through a school year. I acknowledge that February, for many teachers, is the toughest month to get through.

Last month has also had its challenges from my perspective as you may have noticed from some of my communications. We are continuing to work towards positive resolutions to some of the challenges teachers have been facing and will keep you updated where we can.

On a positive note, we were able to send 9 teachers to the BCTF New Teachers' Conference. We have also received our portion of the province's mentorship money to continue to support our newest members and are developing a plan that we hope to have in place by September.

I am incredibly pleased with the response to our first set of anti-racism workshops. We had over 100 people sign up. I am floored to see so many teachers who are willing to go the extra distance after school to learn and participate especially considering all the challenges and work this year has brought.

We will be offering a follow-up workshop: Antiracist Strategies for Educators on April 6. Please try to join us for these important conversations and learning.

A second staff-rep training will also be happening this spring. I will send out details soon and hope every school is able to send a representative.

As always, I would like to end this message with a big thank you for all that you do to make our schools a safe, kind, and caring place for the students in our communities. I hope that you all have a safe and restful spring break.

~Carla Wilson



New Teachers' Zoom Gathering

Following the BCTF New Teachers' Conference, the BCTF is creating regular opportunities for new members to connect with each other and with their local and provincial unions. In that spirit, they are offering a New Teachers' Zoom Gathering every month. The next one will take place on March 10 from 3:30 to 4:30. It is a free event where members can meet and chat.

If you are in your first five years of teaching, I encourage you to attend. To register, visit <https://www.bctf.ca/NewTeachersZoomGathering.aspx>



COVID LEAVE

Fortunately, we have gotten through the year thus far without any COVID outbreaks in our schools in contrast to some other districts. The numbers in our community also remain low. We are aware, however, that with the new variant, that may change.

In response, and also due to BCTF lobbying, the Ministry of Education has added a new leave provision for teachers who are required by public health officials to self isolate. This leave provides assurance that sick days will not be used when required to self-isolate for COVID-19 related reasons. Additionally, with this leave, teachers who are COVID positive but are asymptomatic (meaning they are able to work) can also access this paid leave without using sick time. Where an employee is directed by a public health official to self-isolate due to a potential exposure to COVID-19 and is asymptomatic, they should:

1. Log into the SFE system under Paid Leave - COVID (I believe this will be added to options).
2. Call your principal to let them know. They may provide remote work for you or direct you to contact HR. The work

provided could be at the school level or you may be redirected to do some other work.

3. If there is no work available, the teacher would remain on paid leave (not required to use sick days) until work became available or the isolation period was over.

Additionally, it is important to remember that this leave does not apply to members:

- who are required to quarantine because they traveled
- who are COVID positive with symptoms or have other COVID like symptoms
- who chose to self isolate and were not recommended by a public health official.

My understanding is that TTOCs who are booked for work prior to being told to self-isolate will also have access to this leave (will be paid while they are in isolation). Teachers may be required to provide written proof that they have been told by a public health official to self-isolate. Please be sure to ask for documentation to avoid any delays to your pay.

Leaves and Transfers

If you are wishing to take a full personal leave from your current position for the 2021-22 school year, article G.21.17 of the Collective Agreement requires you to let HR know **before March 31**.

If you are hoping to take a partial leave (a reduction in your assignment), article C.22.1 provides a mechanism to apply for a partial leave without the same date restriction. It is good practice, however, to make these requests early to avoid the request from being denied.

Although we only have board initiated transfers in our Collective Agreement, this year, the district is collaborating with the union to transfer continuing teachers to their preferred location without going through the post and fill process, provided there is a position available. I believe these postings will happen before the spring postings go out.

Your admin should have recently provided you with a document to indicate your plans for next year. If you are hoping to transfer to another school, but feel uncomfortable letting your admin know, please email HR and copy the NDTA.



Income Tax Claims

The Federal government recently announced that it is simplifying the process for an employee to claim a deduction on their 2020 tax return for home-office expenses incurred while working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers can claim under the temporary flat-rate amount (\$2/day up to \$400) without any additional documentation from the employer.

To claim using the detailed method (calculating work-from-home expenses as a portion of time/square footage), the employee has to request a T2200S from the employer.

The following link will direct you to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) webpage that provides the criteria that need to be met in order to be eligible to claim a deduction for home-office expenses: [CRA Webpage](#).

- Minimum eligibility requires an employee to have worked more than 50% of the time from home for a period of at least 4 consecutive weeks during 2020.

If an employee is eligible to claim a deduction for home-office expenses as a result of

working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are two methods available to the employee: 1) New Temporary Flat Rate Method, and 2) Detailed Method (Simplified Process).

If an employee chooses to apply the **New Temporary Flat Rate Method**, which provides \$2 per day worked from home to a maximum of \$400, the following items are applicable:

- The employee does not need to request a **T2200** (Declaration of Conditions of Employment) or **T2200S** (Declaration of Conditions of Employment for Working at Home Due to COVID-19) tax form from their employer.
- The employee does not need to retain supporting documentation for expenses incurred while working from home.

If an employee chooses to apply the **Detailed Method (Simplified Process)**, the following items are applicable:

- The employee needs to review the [T777S](#) (Statement of Employment Expenses for Working at Home Due to COVID-19) tax form to de-

termine if they have eligible expenses to claim.

- The employee needs to retain supporting documentation for eligible expenses being claimed.
- The employee needs to request a **T2200S** (Declaration of Conditions of Employment for Working at Home Due to COVID-19) tax form from their employer.

School District employees will not be eligible to apply the **Detailed Method (Regular Process)** for home-office expenses.

If you have additional questions about claiming home-office expenses related to working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact the CRA directly. Neither the employer nor the union is able to provide tax advice to individuals.

Key Dates

Date Time	Event
March 2 & 4	How to be Anti-Racist workshop
March 9	Board Meeting
March 13-28	Spring Break
March 20-23	BCTF AGM