

## President's Report



Dear colleagues,

We are now into our second month. I thank everyone who came to our first executive meeting to share both the challenges and successes of their school's September start-up. We had approximately 40 people attend the Zoom meeting. Your attendance adds weight to the issues that I have brought and will continue to bring forward to management.

Due to concerns about COVID cases in SD20 and reports about a large party near the Bombi Summit during the second weekend of September, the following motion was brought forward and passed at our executive meeting: That the NDTA demand that the school district send a letter to parents regarding recent risky behaviour by students and explain how it undermines the public education system's ability to continue to

provide in-class instruction; and that the letter further remind families that students are mandated to wear masks in public areas and encouraged to wear them in classrooms; and that everyone must follow the social distancing protocols and remain home if presenting any symptoms of COVID-19.

I brought this request forward to the Superintendent on September 16th and on September 17, the Superintendent sent a letter to families which you can read [HERE](#).

There were also concerns about the PVP meetings; in particular, having them meet in person and then go back to their respective schools. Senior management agreed that all management meetings going forward would be done via Zoom for the continuation of the pandemic.

Further there are concerns

about the discrepancy between the BCCDC Guidelines which are less strict, and the Operational Guide for School Districts, Including the Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines. The Ministry's position is: The COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 (BCCDC) are the foundation of the health and safety plans collectively developed in the K-12 system. The Operational Guidelines (Ministry of Education Guidelines) are more comprehensive and stringent than the BCCDC Guidelines. The Ministry Guidelines build on the BCCDC Guidelines and contain a broader range of content. In the case of any discrepancy between the BCCDC Guidelines and the Ministry Guidelines, the Ministry Guidelines will prevail. School districts are expected to implement and enforce Ministry Guidelines as they would other ministry requirements and should consult where there are concerns. Please continue to forward any issues you have.

~Carla Wilson

### Key Dates

Date Time	Event
Oct 2	Staff Rep Training
Oct 12	Stat Holiday
Oct 13	Board Meeting
Oct 19	NDTA Meeting
Oct 23	PSA Day

## Reporting Safety Concerns

If you have a health and safety concern, there is certain protocol that must be followed to get it addressed. The steps are as follows:

1. First, inform your supervisor (principal) and your health and safety rep. Depending on the concern, you may need to fill out a [Worker's Report of Injury](#) or a [Threat/Violence report](#). If you fill out a Threat Violence Report, send a copy to Russell Warick and to Carla Wilson.

2. The health and safety rep will bring the issue to the site-based health and safety committee.

3. If you or the health and safety rep decides to call the Work-Safe Prevention hotline without following the above steps, they will redirect you to first bring this to your principal and/or site-based health and safety committee.

4. If the issue has gone to the site-based health and safety committee and it remains unresolved, then you can contact the Prevention Hotline. The Prevention Officer Designate in Nelson is: Marek Peters - [Marek.Peters@worksafebc.com](mailto:Marek.Peters@worksafebc.com).

5. The Prevention Officer regional designates are in place primarily as "point persons for their officer peers as they have worked with school districts and are more familiar with the typical concerns brought forward

and the nuances in this industry.

6. Local presidents only contact Prevention Officers designates when looking for general consultation from an officer, requesting a presentation, or consulting on issues that are coming up frequently.

7. Site specific issues need to be dealt with by the site employer and worker (joint health and safety) rep(s) as they arise.

## Refusing Unsafe Work

Unsafe work is defined as "undue hazard to the health and safety of a person." You have the right to refuse unsafe work, but in terms of COVID-19, keep in mind the following: in past pandemics, such as SARS, the pandemic was not enough to legally be considered an undue risk. An undue hazard would be one where a worker's job role places them at increased risk of exposure **and adequate controls are not in place to protect one from that exposure.**

The controls in place to protect us from exposure are our district and site based health and safety protocols and the [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#).



## Face Shields

We have been informed that the Deputy Minister has confirmed that any teacher who requests a face shield will be provided with one. If you have requested a face shield and have been told that you cannot have one, please let the NDTA office know so that we can follow-up.

Also, any teacher who has not yet been provided with two reusable face masks can stop by the board office to pick them up.

## Staff Reps

The executive committee and staff reps met last Friday for virtual staff-rep training. There were many new faces in addition to members who have served in this capacity previously.

They are well prepared to help you with queries about specific union-related information such as your Collective Agreement or to accompany you to a meeting with your administration.

Some information to consider:

- The staff rep is the peer of the principal in matters related to the interpretation and application of the collective agreement.
- The CA was not imposed by the union on the employer, but represents the mutually agreed to terms and conditions of employment for teachers in the district.

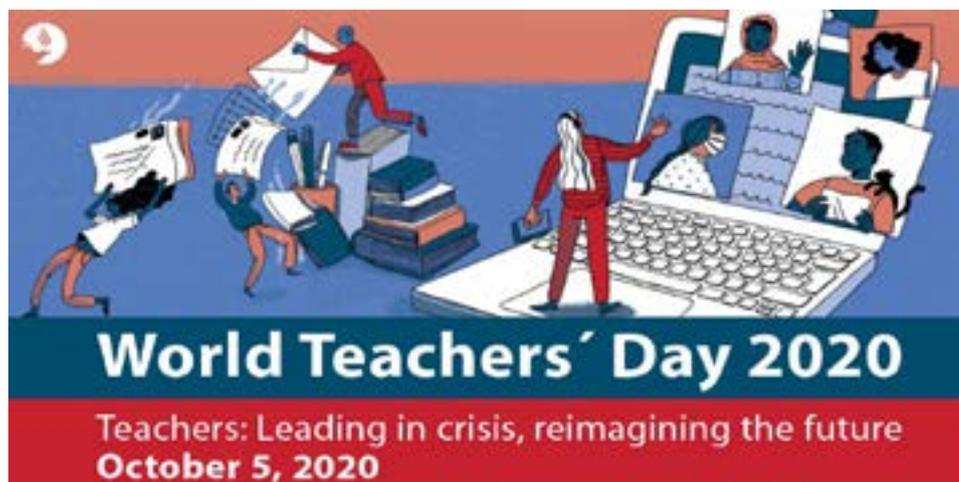
## A Culture of Mask Wearing

Mask wearing is quickly becoming the norm in many places in our community and is a physical representation of consideration for those around us. Thanks to the advocacy of the BCTF and partner groups, masks are mandatory in all areas of schools outside of classrooms for all middle and high school students.

Wearing masks inside classrooms has been a regular topic of discussion during the weekly BCTF president calls. It has been made clear that we cannot mandate mask wearing in our classrooms as that conflicts with the guidelines set out by the provincial health officer. However, we can encourage a culture of mask wearing within our classrooms.

Having regular conversations with our students can be an effective way to encourage this culture and normalize the wearing of masks. Communicate that you are wearing your mask out of respect for them and their family members who may be vulnerable while expressing that you would prefer or appreciate them wearing their masks as well when you come together.

## World Teachers' Day



October 5th was declared World Teachers' Day by UNESCO in 1994 to raise awareness and understanding of the challenges facing teachers every day. This year teachers face more challenges than they have ever faced due to the pandemic. Our jobs are not easy. Thank you for all you do each and every day.

## Online PSA Conferences

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, the BCTF's Provincial Specialist Association Conferences, on the October 23, 2020 PSA day, will be held online. The BCTF has provided significant support to the PSAs to help with their move to virtual conferences as they recognize the importance for members to have access to quality, teacher-led professional development.

Each PSA is running its own unique conference, and delegates will be able to register for their chosen PSA conference as normal. Many PSAs have also decided to offer two streams of core sessions, that are being facilitated by the BCTF, in addition to their own programming. Please find information [HERE](#).

As the PSA day is driven by BCTF sub-organizations, traditionally teachers have gone away for these conferences and did not need to be in their school buildings. Teri Mooring the president of the BCTF has indicated that as this is still a provincial pro-d day, teachers are free to participate in the professional development from the location of their choice.

