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# President's Newsletter

January, 2011

## Happy New Year!

Welcome back. I hope you all had a restful and reinvigorating break. 2011 promises to be an intriguing year: a new Premier (with one of the hopefuls espousing teacher merit pay as I type this), inevitable changes to the College of Teachers, local/provincial bargaining, a Supreme Court ruling on the legality of the 2002 stripping of our collective agreements, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Wow. The famous Chinese curse - *may you live in interesting times* - seems to have hit the education system squarely between the eyes.

## February General Meeting

It was a squeaker, but thanks to a strong Claremont turnout, we did manage to achieve quorum at our October General Meeting. At this meeting, we elected our bargaining team, and voted upon our provincial and local bargaining objectives. I am hoping for an even stronger turnout at our upcoming February General Meeting. This is the meeting where we [elect our delegates for this year's BCTF Annual General Meeting](#). We are also planning on [further refining our local bargaining objectives](#) in anticipation of this spring's contract negotiations.

I would like to challenge each and everyone one of you to make it to this General Meeting. Helping to decide who will represent you at the BCTF AGM is important... helping to decide what our Saanich bargaining objectives will be is critical.

**What:** STA General Meeting  
**When:** Wednesday, February 9, 2011 @ 3:45 – 5:30  
**Where:** District Meeting Centre (formally the DRC)

By the way, **this year's BCTF AGM is right here in Victoria** (during the first four days of Spring Break), so this might be a good year for you to consider joining the Saanich delegation. With issues such as the College of Teachers, the Supreme Court challenge, and provincial/local bargaining all simmering in the background, this year's AGM promises to be an interesting one.

**Contact Sally at the STA Office if you are interested.**

## Policy 1360

In my December newsletter, I described the Board Policy Manual as a resource we should all get to know a bit better. Without a doubt, the policy that I find myself quoting to teachers the most is *Policy 1360: Complaints regarding Personnel, Programs or Procedures*. The finer details of this policy seem to elude many administrators, especially when dealing with parent complaints. I would like to remind all of you (so you can remind administrators as needed) that this policy has the following to say about parent complaints:

*Guiding Principle 2:*

*The Board believes that the best solutions are found as near to the source of the complaint as possible and should be investigated and resolved as soon as possible.*

*Administrative Procedure 5:*

*Complaint will be handled in the following manner:*

*(a) Should the concern be the result of an action or decision of an employee, the complainant is encouraged to discuss the issue with that employee;*

In other words (much like our Code of Ethics) the Board's own policy requires administrators to first direct any complaint back to the teacher in question. If no resolution can be found, then and only then should administrators become directly involved. So, if you find yourself called to the principal's office to discuss a parent complaint, feel free to bring a copy of this policy with you.

## Semester 2 Consultations

Don't forget that for semester-based schools, there will be another round of class size and composition consultations occurring next month. It is extremely important that teachers and staff reps fight "consultation fatigue" and once again engage in this process fully and completely. In a recent ruling, arbitrator Dorsey clearly established the requirement to meet again in semester two, with the legislated timelines for September applying again in February. If you have a class that exceeds the legislated limits, please take the time to attend these meetings (**with a Staff Rep!**), and make sure you fill out a copy of the STA form (it is your choice whether or not to also sign the principal's form). Here are some reminders:

- 🍏 IEPs are IEPs for all classes, not just those listed or specifically mentioned
- 🍏 *all teachers* who have regular contact with a class must be consulted
- 🍏 the principal has the obligation to gather/provide required and relevant information, including class lists and IEPs, before any meetings
- 🍏 teachers must **expressly tell their principals if they disagree with the make-up of their class, and must clearly articulate how the composition/size will adversely affect the normal learning expectations for a class**
- 🍏 the principal must inform the teacher that the consultation process is complete, including any offered support

Please give a copy of your STA form(s) to your principal and send the original to the STA Office (through your Staff Rep).

## Foundations Skills Assessment

This year's FSA is just around the corner, and just like last year, the Saanich Teachers' Association is asking grade 4 and grade 7 teachers to send information home to parents about these tests. In keeping with the BCTF/BCPSEA protocol agreement, all of the materials have been vetted with the Board, and will be sent home with students in sealed envelopes that are clearly identified as coming from the STA/BCTF. The Board is also planning on sending home their own letter to parents. The plan is to have these envelopes go home to parents late next week (January 12-14) so that parents can read and digest the materials well in advance of the test days. Like last year, if parents choose, they can write their principal and request that their child be exempted from writing this year's FSA test. If you have any questions about this process, please see your Staff Rep, or contact the STA office.

## Updated Contact Information

If you have had a change of address (or even a name change), it is important that you let the STA and BCTF know as soon as possible. With the potential for turbulent waters ahead, having accurate contact information for all members is extremely important. Please call the STA office and the BCTF (1-800-663-9163) if you have any personal information to update.

## Teacher Exchanges

Does all this talk of looming trouble and turbulent waters make you want to get away from it all? I have recently received the following information about teacher exchanges from the BCTF:

*More teachers from other countries want to exchange teach in B.C. than any other province. This means that the chances are high of a B.C. teacher getting a foreign school placement they want. Exchanges can be arranged with a teacher in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands. The largest numbers of exchanges are with colleagues in Australia. Exchanges can also be arranged in some U.S. states, as well as other provinces in Canada.*

*Neither the BCTF nor the Ministry of Education is responsible for the exchanges. These are arranged through a non-profit society called the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation.*

*Applications for the next school year should be in by January 31, 2011 for countries in the Northern Hemisphere. Because schools in Australia run on a calendar year basis, those applications can be submitted by the end of February.*

*If you want more information or details of the application process, contact the Canadian Education Exchange Foundation:*

*Their website is at [www.ceef.ca](http://www.ceef.ca) and their email is [info@ceef.ca](mailto:info@ceef.ca) or phone (705) 739-7596.*

# Know Your Collective Agreement

One of the collective agreement areas that teachers don't pay enough attention to are the rules that govern hours of work/prep time. Here are a few important reminders:

## Article

*D.15.1 The instructional time for full-time teachers shall not exceed:*

- a. 25 hours per week for elementary teachers;*
- b. 27 hours per week for middle school teachers;*
- c. 27.5 hours per week for secondary teacher.*

*Instructional time shall be defined as time during the instructional week devoted to the teaching of courses and lessons, and shall include time assigned to supervise curricular activities, including study periods, prep time, recess, period changes and the "morning break".*

*D.15.2 The Board and the Association recognize that preparation time can be of education benefit. Each school shall organize in such a manner that will provide preparation time for every teacher as follows:*

- a. A full-time teacher assigned to an elementary school shall be entitled to a minimum of 100 minutes each week for preparation time.*
- b. Effective September 1, 1991, a full-time teacher assigned to a middle school shall be entitled to a minimum of 135 minutes each week for preparation time.*
- c. A full-time teacher assigned to a secondary school shall be entitled to a minimum of 12 1/2% of the instructional time in that school.*

*D.15.3 Part-time classroom teachers with an assignment of 0.4 FTE or more shall be entitled to pro-rated non-instructional preparation time.*

*D.15.4 Elementary prep time will be allotted in blocks of not less than 20 minutes.*

*D.15.5 Assignments shall be scheduled in consecutive teaching blocks allowing for a maximum break in instruction of one hour per day in elementary schools and one instructional block per day in secondary schools.*

## Translation

These hours are something all teachers should be calculating, especially if you teach in a non-traditional classroom setting. Note that instructional time includes study periods, prep, recess, period changes, and breaks.

## Translation

Once a minimum threshold of 0.4 FTE is reached (see D.15.3), a teacher qualifies for prep time. This can either be given as time away from direct instructional duties (as is often the case in elementary and for full-time secondary teachers) or as additional point time (usually for part-time teachers, especially at secondary). Note that elementary and middle school prep time is allotted **per week**, so teachers who lose their prep time to a NID, assembly, etc., **should have this prep time made up to them during that week** (or at least banked for later use).

## Translation

Pretty self-explanatory, but not always done correctly. Keep an eye on this one.

## Translation

This is another area that is often mishandled. Teachers should not accept assignments that involve breaks in excess of one hour/one block... however, if a teacher wins multiple postings resulting in longer breaks, it is assumed they are choosing to accept the "illegal" break.