

January 2015

STA in TOUCH

A newsletter of the Saanich Teachers' Association BCTF members of Local #63 (Saanich)

Hello Saanich Teachers! You've probably heard it a 100 times recently but we'd also like to add our "Happy New Year" wishes to you. We hope you had a break that provided the time you needed to relax, recharge and prepare for the wet and (perhaps snowy!?) months of winter. For those in high schools, the semester end is nearly upon you.

By now you should have received your BCTF settlement cheques. If you haven't please contact the BCTF and inquire about the status of your cheque. You can call toll-free at 1-800-663-9163.

If you are looking to make a resolution for the New Year, please consider stepping forward and volunteering more with the STA. Each school should have a Staff Rep, Pro-D Chair, Social Justice Chair, Health and Safety Rep and a Staff Committee. If you don't, please consider bringing it up at the next STA portion of your staff meeting. If you need any help setting these roles up or learning more about what is involved, please contact the STA office at 778-426-1426.

Thanks for reading and hope you've had a good first week back!

-Colin Plant and Angie Savage

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President's Report

by Mark Skanks



Happy New Year everyone!

I hope you enjoyed a restful break. Coming off the uncertainty and stress of a five-month strike, followed by working like crazy in a shortened fall term, it was certainly well-deserved. Getting a settlement cheque just before Christmas hopefully was a nice relief for you as well.

I don't know about you, but I'm still finding it a little hard to get back to normal, emotionally. It is getting there, though. Definitely I'm looking forward to coming around and visiting the schools and seeing all of you again, and I'm hoping that some of you will join me in a mini "staycation" when the BCTF AGM comes to in Victoria in March. See below for more on the AGM, as well as benefits, pay, increments and more.

Cheers,

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Health & Wellness Program and EFAP

Last month I told you about the new online stress reduction course available to all BCTF members at starlingminds.com. I thought that this month I should remind you of two other support systems available to you to support your well-being.

The first is the BCTF Health & Wellness Program. This is a voluntary program, funded by your dues, that supports members who are recovering from illness or injury of any kind. Members might be off work and receiving benefits, or might be continuing to work despite their health challenge – the program is independent of one's work status. The goal of the program is to help the member regain an optimum state of wellness, health, and productivity by providing rehabilitation services and promoting self-care.

More information is [here](#).

The second is the Employee/Family Assistance Program. This is a benefit accorded to us by our contract with the district, and provided by Tina Leist & Associates. Each employee, and each member of that employee's family, has access to 12 counselling visits at Tina Leist per calendar year. While there is some cost-sharing between the STA and SD63, it must be acknowledged that SD63 is very generous in its ongoing contribution to this plan and we thank them for this.

Likely, though, the District realizes the success of both of the above in helping to maintain the emotional and physical well-being of its employees, something which is of course mutually beneficial. If you have any questions about these programs, send me a message and I would be happy to answer your questions.

AGM delegates

This year the BCTF AGM is taking place in Victoria, as it does once every 5 years (It is held in Vancouver most years). I would encourage all of you to consider putting your name forward as a delegate for Saanich.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

We send 8 delegates to represent Saanich alongside our Local Representatives. This delegation of 10 teachers helps to set the direction of the BCTF for the next year, which includes electing the BCTF leadership, setting the fee for the year, and much more. It is a fascinating and eye-opening experience and the Saanich delegation always has a good time.

Delegates are elected (or acclaimed 😊) at our February General meeting. You can put your name in the hat ahead of time, or if you want to ask some people who have been for their thoughts first, you can nominate yourself at the meeting in February.

Benefits

I have been asked by the BCTF to share some more information on the new Health plan (below). For those of you who are not on the plan currently, Saanich's new Payroll Supervisor, Diana Oxendale, is waiting on information on opting in that should be coming later this month. When it comes I will pass that on to you.

PBC Blue Advantage: The PBC Blue Advantage program offers significant discounts on various services and merchandise to all Blue Cross members. Members simply present their PBC card to the participating provider or merchant and mention the Blue Advantage program. The list of participating merchants includes; Sears Optical, Beltone Canada, ClearlyContacts, Costco Optical and Hearing Aid Centres, Crystal Vision, Regency Medical Supplies, Ace Optical, Bayshore Home Health, Image Optometry, Nipro Diagnostics, LASIK MD, Curves, Pearle Vision, Diabetes Express Inc., LensCrafters, Diabetes Direct Supplies, Loblaw Optical, MyMobility Ltd., Prescription Optical and many more. For a full list of merchants and savings visit www.blueadvantage.ca/Default.aspx.

Provincial standardized PBC EHB plan information: For detailed information, forms, and updates regarding the provincial standardized EHB plan, members can visit the PBC microsite for teachers at www.pac.bluecross.ca/teachers/.

InnoviCares and RxHelp: BCTF members with pay direct drug cards can also apply for an InnoviCares card at www.innovicare.ca/bctf. InnoviCares offers a drug card that covers nearly 100 brand name medications.

For members whose particular brand name medications are not covered by the InnoviCares card, a good source for assistance is RxHelp at <https://rxhelp.ca/en/default.aspx>. RxHelp offers "patient assistance" cards for some brand name medications that InnoviCares does not yet cover. In both cases, the InnoviCares and RxHelp drug cards are free and generally pay the difference between the cost of the generic medication (covered by PBC) and the cost of the brand name medication. The drug cards are accepted at pharmacies province-wide, and can be used in conjunction with the member's PBC pay direct drug card at time of purchase.

Direct billing for EHB services: Members should also know that their PBC pay direct drug cards can be used for direct billing to PBC for eyeglasses, contact lenses, eye exams, massage, physiotherapy, acupuncture, speech therapy, podiatry, and other services. Members will need to check with their service provider first to make sure they have signed on to PBC direct billing, and if so, PBC will be billed directly from the point of service by the service provider. Members will no longer need to submit claims for these services.

Increments

As a result of our most recent collective agreement, the district will now be managing a two-pronged system for granting increments (or, in other words, steps up the salary grid).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

The existing system (described in article B.27) will continue for all FT and PT contract teachers. This system grants a step up once 160 days (that is, the equivalent of 8 months FT work) is achieved, but that step is only applied twice a year: either on September 1 or January 1.

The new article C.4 specifies that, for TTOCs only, a step is merited after 170 days; however, new steps up the grid are credited each month. In case you were wondering, Norbert Ziegler (STA TTOC rep) and I have done some number-crunching to confirm that, in the long run, the advantage of moving up the grid sooner definitely outweighs the disadvantage of requiring 10 extra days to reach an increment.

Paul Standring and I will be meeting to confirm the details of teachers moving from one system to another as their work status changes, but we don't anticipate any difficulties or disagreements. Paul has already confirmed that they will be looking backward to see if any current TTOCs are owed increments retroactively to Nov 1 or Dec 1.

Takin' Care of Bidness

Below are a number of deadlines and other things that fall into the "no one else is going to do it for you" category.

1. New Pay Grid: Here's the new grid, effective Jan 1. Make sure to check your pay stub. Your category and step should be listed, and your daily rate should be either 1/200th of your Cat/Step (if you are a contract teacher) or 1/189th if you are a TTOC.

SALARY GRID, Jan 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

Step	Category 4	Category 4+	Category 5	Category 5+	Category 6
0	\$44,776	\$45,687	\$48,944	\$52,128	\$53,247
1	\$46,857	\$46,857	\$51,505	\$54,900	\$56,093
2	\$48,938	\$48,938	\$54,065	\$57,672	\$58,938
3	\$51,019	\$51,019	\$56,627	\$60,443	\$61,784
4	\$53,101	\$53,101	\$59,187	\$63,215	\$64,631
5	\$55,182	\$55,182	\$61,748	\$65,987	\$67,476
6	\$57,263	\$57,263	\$64,308	\$68,758	\$70,322
7	\$59,344	\$59,344	\$66,870	\$71,530	\$73,168
8	\$61,426	\$61,426	\$69,430	\$74,302	\$76,015
9	\$63,507	\$63,507	\$71,991	\$77,074	\$78,860
10	\$67,556	\$67,556	\$76,788	\$82,241	\$84,158

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – CONTINUED

2. Settlement Cheque Issues: So far I have only heard from a handful of teachers who did not receive their settlement cheque in December (ie the “signing bonus”). Hopefully that means that the rest of you did get yours. If you didn’t – or if you think the amount is wrong – your first step is to contact the BCTF at 1-800-663-9163. You should do this soon, because BCTF and BCPSEA have agreed to a cutoff date of January 23. After January 23, I will be taking all the names of teachers who were referred back to me by the BCTF, and going over any discrepancies in employment information with the District.

3. Qualifications: If you have any change in your training or certification that might affect your qualification for postings within the district, please make sure that you report this promptly to Paul and Breanne in HR. There have been several situations in the last couple of years where the employer has disqualified members for postings because the resume on file is out of date or doesn’t reflect the member’s actual experience. It takes a little effort on your part to confirm what you are qualified for, but it could save a lot of hard feelings on the other end.

4. January Deadlines: January 15th is the deadline for notifying Monica Schulte in writing that you now have sufficient credits to warrant a category change on the salary grid. An email will do. After that you have until April 30 to submit the actual documentation. The category change will be effective Jan 1. The contract reference is article B.28.



Professional Development Report by Holly Mair

February 20th, 2015: Our Next PD Day

By Holly Mair, STA PD Chairperson

Looking for an affordable, local conference this February?

Check out the Tapestry 2015 Conference which will be held at Esquimalt Secondary school. This conference has been jointly planned by the Saanich Teachers' Association, Greater Victoria Teachers' Association and the Sooke Teachers' Association. There are over 44 discrete sessions to choose from with sessions ranging from rugby, to math, to dance and drumming. This year, our keynote presenter will be David Bouchard. David will also be providing a workshop called “Reading: The Ultimate Aboriginal Challenge”.

Register at <http://tapestryconference.weebly.com/>. Those registered before January 30th will be eligible to win a free ipad.

Registration fees are as follows and include a gourmet lunch provided by the Esquimalt Culinary Arts students:

- \$25 for TTOCs, Student Teachers and CUPE
- \$50 for contract teachers from SD 61, 62, 63
- \$75 for administrators and teachers from other districts

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT – CONTINUED

Sessions of note:

The following sessions are being offered by members of the Saanich School District Community!

- "Paddling Forward to the Past The Saltwater People and the Future of Education: What Every Educator Needs to Know" by Dr. Jason Price and Nick Claxton
- "Drum-making and Protocol Teachings" by Diane Sam, Sandy Morris Sr and Sandy Morris Jr. – Tsartlip First Nation.
- "So you have to teach a dance unit? Hip Hop Dance for Elementary and Middle School by Chelsea Giordano
- "Primary Science Workshop – Force and Motion / Properties of Matter" by Glenn Kachmar
- "Taking the Learning Commons to the Next Level" by Jean Prevost and Aaron Mueller

And for those of you who worked with Susan Augustyn in November (or those who wished you had!), you can see her at Tapestry!



First Nations Report

by Ginny Underwood

Happy New Year to one and all! Cheers to new beginnings and a fresh start in 2015. I have come and gone to yet another First Nations Education Steering Committee Conference (FNESC) this past December. I am forever grateful and thankful to attend on behalf of our Saanich School District. I am more than happy to share with you what I learned (in a nutshell). I am committed to helping or supporting you with advice, make suggestions, direct you to another person who can help you or offer weblinks where you can access more information to read at your own leisure. The timing of the workshop is not a timely one, but I would not pass up the opportunity to attend and participate in the FNESC Conference. There is something to be said for the exhilarating, invigorating surge of energy I receive from just being there, surrounded by 750+ First Nation Educators from around North America. The theme of the conference was *Transforming Education*.

I would love to share another tidbit of information about our First Nations culture. I am going to plant a seed and it is in your hands to water it, nurture it and to help it grow. You can do that by continuing to ask questions, reading books, researching topics or by checking out weblinks I share with you. This month's topic is thirteen moons. In the *Authentic Peoples Resources for Grades K-7* workshop at FNESC the facilitator shared a write up about *Thirteen Moons on a Turtle's Back*. Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London state, "Did you know that every group of Native Americans has names for their thirteen moons and their stories to go with each new moon. Thirteen moons make up the lunar year. There are 28 days between new moons." In our Saanich culture our book is called The Saanich Year. There are seasonal activities and stories to highlight what is happening in our culture during each particular moon. Bruchac and London also go on to say, "In other First Nation cultures they share the knowledge of the thirteen moons on a turtle's back. There are 13 segments on a turtle's back which represent the thirteen moons which represent the 13 moons which make a up the lunar year. Their book also tells the seasonal stories from thirteen different tribes." That sounds very interesting to

FIRST NATIONS REPORT – CONTINUED

me, so I hope you will check it out and share what you learn with your students. The weblink is as follows:
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosmd/turtle.htm>. Two other links from the Presentation were:
<http://video.nhptv.org/video/2365105563/> and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lz_aeyCbE6Y. Project Heart continues to be a valuable resource for Residential Schools and other general information which may provide springboards for your own learning journey. Shannon's Dream and Seventh Generation are also other key words you could google for exploring further. I will not inundate you with more weblinks, but feel free to email me if you would like further information.

The last thought I will leave with you is to talk about the theme of *Transforming Education*. Although we have made progress, there is still much room for improvement in providing a quality education for our First Nations students in our province. Our Keynote Speakers spoke so eloquently and passionately about the topic and I will merely repeat some ideas. Dr. Joanne Archibald states that, "To transform means to make radical, dramatic change! To have a better learning experience with curriculum. It also means to talk about difficult questions. To question the status quo and to ask ourselves. What has not been working? She also says that it takes one caring person who takes interest in a child, smiles, talks to that child and it takes that *will* to make a difference to that one child's educational journey. There needs to be a *Sense of Belonging* for each child in his/her school. Someone to advocate for him/her. For every ten First Nations students, four don't attend, three finish Grade Twelve with an average of C or less and three finish with an average of C+ or more. It is time

FIRST NATIONS REPORT – CONTINUED

to **Call to Action and To Build on Success**. The Land...the future. Children are a Gift...a Loan from the Creator...to help...Caregivers. **It is time to Transform Education...Transform Relationships...Transform the System**. *Our First Nations students deserve Higher Learning, a Right to Employment and Life Choices. We need systemic change! It is going to take a long time, but be patient and persevere! So remember the next 20 or 40 years...Children give us our Inspiration to transform Education."* I have been inspired, I hope you will too.

The Teachers' Corner

Celebrating and Sharing What's Happening in our Schools
 by Angie Savage



The EA/teacher team created a holiday-themed watercolour club at Royal Oak Middle School. They had some funding from the school canteen as well as from the students. Ms. Kardash facilitated the registration, put a write up on the school website, and organized daily announcements, while Ms. Spencer purchased supplies and instructed the workshops. Melanie has a passion for watercolour and it was a pleasure for her to share the techniques behind the magic of this medium. Each student learned several techniques: washes, salt, masking fluid, and tips on how to fix bloopers. The results were incredible and

we enjoyed the outcomes and experiences with the club. The kids each have several beautiful cards to share with their families and had fun learning in a social atmosphere. It was such a success that the EA/teacher team hope to continue sharing and collaborating with each other in 2015.

Contest

Congratulations to:

Jean Prevost -ROMS
Joan Trill -TTOC
Shon Ryan -Claremont
Linda Ryall -Bayside
Charlene Rozon –Bayside

January Prize: This month we will be awarding a SPECIAL prize: TWO tickets to see CBC comedian Mr. Gerry Dee of the TV show Mr. D on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28th. Gerry will be bringing his stand-up comedy act to the McPherson Playhouse.

Because the performance is on January 28th, the contest will close January 21st at 5pm.

If you haven't seen this show, it's a sitcom that looks at the misadventures of a strange school teacher.

January's Trivia Question:

TRIVIA QUESTION: *We know this is a bit tougher than usual, but feel free to use Google!*

Each year during Spring Break, the BCTF holds its Annual General Meeting. For 2015, name the location (city will be fine) where the AGM is occurring? Email the answer by 5pm on January 21st to Colin at cplant@sd63.bc.ca

Let's Get Social!

The STA is getting more and more connected to the world of Social Media. Join us!

Our website is:

www.saanichteachers.com

Follow us on Facebook at:

[Saanich Teachers' Association](https://www.facebook.com/SaanichTeachersAssociation)

Follow us on Twitter at:

@BCTF63

Phone us:

778-426-1426

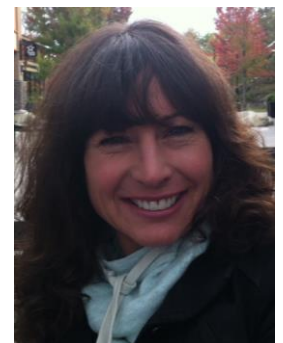
Our mailing address is:

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If you have any feedback on this newsletter,
or would like to submit an article, please contact:

Newsletter Editors:
[Colin Plant](#) & [Angie Savage](#)



IMPORTANT DATES FOR STA TEACHERS

1 HR TO FACILITATE PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS RE. STUDENT PROGRESS

DATES

Brentwood Elementary	Oct 16	Nov 5	Nov 6	Feb 24
Cordova Bay Elementary	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Feb 11
Deep Cove Elementary	Oct 22	Oct 23	Nov 20	Feb 26
Keating Elementary	Nov 4	Nov 5	Nov 6	Mar 3
KELSET Elementary	Oct 7	Oct 9	Nov 19	Apr 1
Lochside Elementary	Nov 4	Nov 5	Nov 6	Feb 26
Prospect Lake Elementary	Oct 8	Oct 9	Feb 18	Feb 19
Sidney Elementary	Oct 8	Oct 9	Nov 20	Mar 5
Bayside Middle	Oct 15	Oct 16	Feb 12	May 21
North Saanich Middle	Oct 8	Oct 9	Feb 4	Mar 6
Royal Oak Middle	Oct 28	Oct 29	Feb 4	May 28
Claremont Secondary	Oct 2	Nov 27	Feb 5	Apr 30
Parkland Secondary	Oct 2	Dec 4	Feb 26	May 7
Stelly's Secondary	Oct 2	Nov 27	Feb 25	Apr 29

ALL SCHOOLS (TWO WEEK SPRING BREAK IMPLEMENTED)

Friday, October 24, 2014	Province Wide
Friday, November 7, 2014	School Based
Monday November 10, 2014	School Based
Friday, February 20, 2015	Individual (Province Wide)
Friday, April 24, 2015	School Planning Day
Monday, May 4, 2015	School Based

LAST DAY OF CLASSES: FRIDAY JUNE 26TH (Not that we are counting)