



President's Column

Date: October 20, 2010

Issue: #2

Challenges in the workplace

For teachers in Delta, September/October have been especially challenging months. Teachers face a perennial struggle for reasonable class sizes, workable timetabling, and access to resources. These stressors, and many others are discussed in the recently published BCTF Report, *The Worklife of Teachers in 2009*, a BCTF study of working and learning conditions, by Charlie Naylor, Senior BCTF Researcher, and Margaret White, Senior BCTF Research Analyst.

The study is thorough, and contains a wealth of information of interest to teachers and all those who are concerned with the state of Public Education in British Columbia. Areas identified for immediate improvement are, Special Needs Education, planning and preparation time, class sizes, and improvements to teachers' salaries and benefits. These are not the report's only recommendations. The entire document is available for download by following this link, <http://tinyurl.com/265fnta>, where it is also available for partial download, chapter by chapter.

DTA Special General Meeting/BCTF Bargaining Conference

The Special General Meeting was held at Seaquam Secondary on October 13th. DTA members met and dealt with an Agenda resulting in fourteen resolutions adopted. These were forwarded to the BCTF in advance of the Bargaining Conference to be held in Richmond on October 29th and 30th. In addition to the two DTA full-time table officers, three other Delta teachers will be attending to represent us at this important meeting.

Meetings with Delta Members of the Legislative Assembly

The DTA table officers were able to meet with both Members of the Legislative Assembly this past month. On September 21st, Paul and Simon met with Delta South MLA Vicki Huntington at her Constituency Office in Ladner. The DTA raised Delta teachers' concerns about the inadequacy of current class size and composition limits. We spoke of teachers' desire to more fully meet the needs of students with special needs, including those so-called 'grey-area' students. While Vicki conceded that she is not as conversant with educational issues as she would prefer to be, she asked many good questions, and expressed her willingness to be informed. She has accepted our invitation to attend Monday's Staff Rep Meeting.

Paul met with Delta North MLA Guy Gentner on Monday, October 4th at his constituency office in North Delta. Guy responded to DTA concerns by saying that he is conversant with the class-size and composition issue having participated in the legislative debate concerning Bill 33. He too expressed his wish that he be kept informed by the DTA on educational issues. He also informed the DTA of a community safety-initiative he is promoting, which would involve the distribution of reflective 'slap bands' to students in schools.

Not just "... all about the kids"

During the course of the recent and almost fully completed round of school visits, Simon and I have had many opportunities to listen to the advice and comments of DTA members, on the topic of provincial bargaining. While these meetings have often been fairly

short, limited by teachers' work schedules, they have been invaluable in helping us to reaffirm through direct experience what I have known for a while: teachers are overworked, underpaid, and increasingly beleaguered by an array of systemic faults that impinge on our ability to do our best. While the DTA's on-line survey of teachers has provided useful objective data, there is nothing like a face-to-face visit with teachers to reinforce those things which are most important.

At one of these meetings, one of our more senior colleagues fairly levitated out of her chair when being reminded of the remark of a principal, quoted as saying, "Do this [extra something] for the kids. It's all about the kids!" How many times, in how many ways have we heard this kind of comment? As our senior colleague remarked, "It's nothing but a guilt trip!" Every day, teachers cope with 'appropriate' class structures which are not really all that appropriate, with inadequate resources, which mean that teachers struggle more than they should have to fill the gap – with yet more voluntary time, making-do, and with infusions of personal energy. The anger of our senior colleague is an expression of her unwillingness to continue to subsidize an increasingly underfunded, inadequate education system with any more of her own personal resources. In a fundamental way, this teacher knows that our shared work is an incredibly valuable service that meets not only the learning needs of students, but represents an essential part of something we value very highly: a fair, just and compassionate Canadian society. It's not just "all about the kids"!





[http://www.](http://www.deltateachers.org) **New DTA Website**

We are very pleased to announce that, as of this Fall, the DTA has a new and improved home on the world wide web! The address hasn't changed, but everything else has. Its been over a year in the making, and we are very excited about the results! A big thanks is owed to many staff-reps, and members of our Executive Committee who gave advice and input, to our web-designers at Net Climber Web Design, and of course to our office staff, Debbie and Marilyn, who have been in charge of inputting almost all of the material!

Come check it out for news, downloadable forms, and many other resources. The Collective Agreement is there, as are the DTA Constitution, all PD forms, and many district forms. And, if you think of anything else you feel should be there, let us know, and we'll see what we can do!

Visit us at www.deltateachers.org

TTOC Workshop & Meeting

Wednesday, October 27, 2010

4:00 - 6:30 pm

Delta Manor Education Centre

Workshop: *Reality 101 - Life Teaching on Call*

See the DTA Website at www.deltateachers.org for more information.

RSVP to the DTA office at 604-946-0391 or e-mail debbie@deltateachers.org.

Snacks will be provided.

REMINDER

Staff Rep Training

8:30 - 3:00, Wednesday, October 27

Delta Manor Education Centre

Please call the DTA at 604-946-0391 or e-mail marilyn@deltateachers.org to get a release code.

Lunch will be provided.

“Factor 88” ~ Withdraw from Long Term Disability Plan

Teachers aged 64 or whose combined age plus years of service equal “factor 88” are entitled to withdraw from the Long Term Disability Plan provided they have enough sick leave. The combination of short-term disability and 100 sick days will be sufficient to carry them through until they are either 65 years old or have reached “factor 90”. At this point they will be ineligible for long-term disability. Contact the DTA or phone the BCTF at (604) 871-1921 for an application form.

Category 5+ (PB+15) Information

The new provincial language term for Delta’s PB+15 salary category is **Category 5+**. As a result of TQS issuing Category 5+ status three times a year, the Board will now upgrade teachers’ salary categories for this certification three times a year - August 31, December 31 and April 30. Once you receive your TQS card, forward a copy to the Board immediately. Your pay will be retroactive to the date the card was issued. For example, if your TQS card arrives at the end of May and is dated May 6, you will be paid retroactively to the beginning of May. Remember to have a copy of your transcript sent to the Board for their records.

DTA Scholarship Winners



Burnsview

Kristin Kokolski

Delta

Rachel Littler

Delview

Joel Klassen

North Delta

Hanisha Kailey

Sands

Jaklyn Bunnett

Seaquam

Kaleigh Smith

South Delta

Sarah Cotter

Kristianne Gibson

“Tad” Boyes Scholarship

Congratulations to Hilary Romans, 2010 DTA recipient of the \$750.00 “Tad” Boyes Scholarship. Hilary is the daughter of Cathy Romans (Richardson Elementary).

Her career goal is to become a journalist.