



TODAY

President's Column

Date: December 9, 2010

Issue: #3

Superintendents and "Personalized Learning in the 21st Century"

The DTA was among a number of BCTF locals to be invited to accompany their team of Senior District Administrative Staff, Principals, and trustees to Victoria, to attend the annual B.C. School Superintendents Association Conference last month.

Keynote speakers were Valerie Hannon of Britain's Innovation Unit, and Tony McKay from Australia's Centre for Strategic Education. Stuart Shanker, of York University also presented on the topic of student self-regulation.

Specially invited guest speakers included the newly appointed (now former) Minister of Education the Hon. George Abbott, Deputy Minister of Education James Gorman, and the Premier of British Columbia, the Hon. Gordon Campbell, all of whom addressed the importance of educational change in British Columbia, in the context of three factors: 1) changing demographics; 2) globalization; and 3) technology.

But no speaker presented a compelling rationale why B.C.'s educational system needs to undergo such a radical transformation at *this* particular time.

Teachers are ready, willing and able to contribute time, energy and enthusiasm to worthwhile educational reform initiatives that they themselves are trusted to inform and carry through. Still, it remains the responsibility of government to provide a rational policy framework and stable funding to the system. Government, through the Ministry of Education, must offer clear policies to guide Boards of Education, school administrators, teachers, and the public. Government would be wise to first seek a clear electoral mandate before embarking on a substantive agenda for educational change. Is government ready to provide 21st Century funding to match the poetic idealism expressed in their 21st Century speeches? This is a reasonable and necessary question for teachers to ask.

Teachers are practical folk, well grounded in the realities of our work and the real-world realities represented in our classrooms. We know that it takes more than millennial thinking and lofty talk to weave the sturdy fabric covering the Educational system. Such cloth cannot just be spun out of thin air from threads of airy nothing. When the fabric covering BC Place Stadium ripped and went flapping in the wind, three hundred million dollars was found, to fund construction of a brand new roof. Why cannot the same be done for Public Education?

Don't shovel snow or spread ice-melt on steps or sidewalks!



In response to an administrator's advice to staff to "... spread ice-melt on ice patches of the parking lot and playground ..." and, "Let your custodian know if your site's supply runs out", a joint letter from CUPE 1091 and the DTA has been sent this week to all members of both bargaining units, advising everyone to respect the important boundary that exists between the work of the type and kind normally done by teachers, and work of the type and kind normally done by CUPE support staff. While safety is a *concern* for all employees, when it comes to shovelling snow and spreading ice-melt on steps and sidewalks, the *work* belongs to CUPE. No one, other than members of CUPE who have been assigned to these tasks, should be shovelling snow or spreading ice-melt, or other such work.

Teachers do not write items for, nor mark FSA tests

Foundation Skills Assessment tests are scheduled to be administered from January 17, 2011, to February 25, 2011. The 2009-10 BCTF campaign that raised our concerns, and encouraged parents to withdraw their children from writing the FSA tests was successful. Despite the concerted push-back by the ministry and local administration, participation rates in the FSA tests continued to decline. Early in the new year, the DTA will be asking members to engage the public in a dialogue regarding the damaging impact of externally mandated tests on both teaching and learning.

Holiday Greetings from the DTA

This year, the final DTA Newsletter of 2010 coincides with the symbolic middle of the school year. On behalf of The DTA Table Officers and Members of the Executive Committee, I wish everyone reading this a very Happy Holiday, and for those who celebrate Christmas, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Seasons Greetings

From all of us at the DTA office: We wish you a happy and restful holiday. All the best for 2011!



DTA General Meeting

Tuesday, February 8

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Seaquam Secondary Multi-Purpose Room

Agenda Items:

- Election of BCTF AGM Delegates
- DTA Audited Financial Statements

BCTF Annual General Meeting

Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, BC

March 19 - 22

Contact the DTA if you are interested in letting your name stand for election to our delegation.

Maternity Leave Workshop

4:00 pm - Wednesday, February 2

Education Room

Delta Manor Education Centre

Guest: Rob Taylor, BCTF Income Security Staff

Topics Include:

- What are your contractual rights?
- What are the implications of Maternity Leave for your pension?

For catering purposes and printed material availability, please RSVP to the DTA office at 604-946-0391 or e-mail marilyn@deltateachers.org.

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BCTF New Teachers' and Student Teachers' Conference

Engaging Students in Learning

February 25-26, 2011

Radisson Hotel, Richmond, BC

Conference registration information/booklets will be available December 20 on the BCTF website.

bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2011.aspx

Discretionary Day and Personal Leave Day

Although the Discretionary Day and Personal Leave day has been part of the Provincial Collective Agreement for several years, questions do arise from time to time.

Discretionary Day:

- Every continuing teacher (full-time or part-time) is entitled to one Discretionary Day per year.
- These days do not accumulate from one year to the next.
- The Discretionary Day can be taken for **any** purpose and can be taken at **any** time during the year.
- You do not need to apply for the Discretionary Day. Use the same process you would use if you were calling in sick, except key into the Smart Find Express System the reason for your absence is your Discretionary Day (reason #2). (It is helpful to the Board if you give as much advance notice as possible).
- You receive full salary and benefits when you take your Discretionary Day.

Personal Leave Day:

- You must apply to the Human Resources Department for this day. Application forms are in your school. Make your application as far in advance as possible.
- You receive your full salary less the cost of a teacher-on-call for the day.
- This day **cannot** be attached to Christmas Break or Spring Break. Also, it **cannot** be attached to a discretionary day, which is attached to Christmas break or Spring break.
- Smart Find Express Reason #7 - Leave at TOC cost.