

Newsletter of the Delta Teachers' Association



TODAY

President's Column ~ Susan Yao

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Issue : #1



Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year! Or as I call it, The Ongoing Madness...

When my kids have asked me many times over the years, "Mom, what was that book/play/movie about?", they groan when I reply (very predictably), "It was about...relationships!" (How did they not see *that* coming?)

What's important right now, in this pandemic era, *is* relationships. It doesn't matter what you teach—except it does, of course! —because what's really going to count is how we all get through this. This means cutting each other some slack and keeping in mind that we are all in this together. Such well-worn platitudes I know, but how we get along with each other is actually going to make the difference in doing our jobs and surviving.

The pandemic reality underscores how benefits such as sick leave, achieved through collective bargaining structures of the labour movement, benefit the larger society. BC's teachers—when ill— can access sick days and are grateful to Teachers Teaching On Call (TTOCs) who can take over the responsibility of teaching. Without sick leave, all workers are vulnerable to financial repercussions and may come to work sick to avoid those, putting others at risk to the spread of illnesses such as COVID-19.

Here we are, more than two weeks in and still so many unknowns. It's tough going right now. Please know that you are not alone.

The DTA is grateful for a new grant from the BCTF which is funding 50 days of release time for the DTA 2nd Vice President Kathleen Macfarlane. The DTA is pretty swamped and could use the additional help. The hope is that having Kathy in the office in the second quarter (secondary system) will allow members to get a timelier response to calls and emails.

One task Kathy will work on is melding the new Collective Agreement. *What is melding?* It is putting the new language in with the older language and making sure that there are no inadvertent deletions, additions or mistakes. Since the CA is what we call upon in the labour relations settling of disputes between Union and Employer, we need to make sure it's right.

The DTA continues to be grateful for the hard work of DTA members who step up as Staff Reps, Health & Safety contacts, and other Union Reps at their schools. It is no easy thing to advocate for members when there are uncertainties and that time is now. Remember that as a Staff Rep, your most sage advice is always, "Call the DTA!" Has your school elected Staff Reps yet? **Our first Staff Rep Assembly (virtual) is this Monday, September 28th.**



I was tweeting earlier this new school year about teachers' needs—for themselves and students—for safety: the wearing of masks, the ability for physical-distancing via smaller class sizes, remote options for those with chronic health issues. This got me a sudden spot on the Lynda Steele show for ten minutes of advocating for a slowed-down return to school plan. We all saw how that played out.

Now, let's add to the current madness the sudden dropping of the other shoe...or rather, the writ (the dissolution of the legislature in preparation for provincial election).

This past Monday I called in to CBC's On the Coast and lamented how a "Snap" election would impact the provincial setting: "It's all just a little much!" I said. Teachers are under so much pressure right now; having an election along with re-thinking school routines and schedules seems like an unnecessary additional strain.

Interestingly—and if I was a betting person—I could have predicted that we were about to hear news of a Provincial election. That's because the week before the DTA was invited to meet with MLA Ravi Kahlon (Delta North) to discuss how the return to school was going. A thought crossed my mind: *Is this interest linked to a re-election agenda?*

Setting my suspicions aside, Alison and I met with Ravi who listened and asked questions about the needs of teachers, as well as students, families and staff in Delta. One downside of this "lobbying action" was that Debbie Omand, DTA Office Administrator and I also had to slog through setting up our account with the Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists by the mid-September deadline. So, my new hat is *In-House Lobbyist*.

(Continued on page 2)

This requirement of the former **Lobbyists Registration Act** which recently became the **Lobbyists Transparency Act** (LTA) is meant to increase transparency; included is requirement for lobbyists to complete a Monthly Return containing details of **lobbying** activities in the previous month. Our meeting with an MLA Kahlon is such an activity. While it's meant to create transparency, adherence to the LTA is additional work for those lobbying for change. The DTA values transparency in government—and wishes to avoid fines for non-compliance—so we are willing to do this additional work.

In my September 7th Labour Day Op Ed in the Delta Optimist, my message was this: "This current crisis is time to rewrite our story and bring everyone to a new and better future—where basic needs are met and everyone can achieve their potential. There are limits to what individuals can do, but as a collective these limitations can be overcome. All of us, together!"

I believe this and this is why I will continue to advocate for educators in Delta and BC and why I will inform myself on political issues and take action. Join me, won't you?



Cancellation of TTOCs

As part of the resolution to Grievance 130, Teachers on Call not Utilized, in September 2012, the Union and the School Board have agreed to the following:

- Teachers on call will not cancel an assignment fewer than 60 minutes prior to the start of an assignment except with extenuating circumstances.
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This resolution assures that TTOCs will not be cancelled as they are arriving at a school, and also that classes will not be left without a TTOC.

Factor 90 or 65 years of age?

You can save the long-term fee (approximately 1.2%) from the date you reach age 64 or "Factor 88." Members are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan once they hit "Factor 90" (age plus cumulative service) or age 65. The BCTF does not have access to your personal pension information, so it is up to you to apply to withdraw from LTD.

To get an application, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/7qrrnxx> or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.



World Teachers' Day 2020

Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future
October 5, 2020

Teachers around the province and in more than 100 countries celebrate World Teachers' Day on October 5. World Teachers' Day was proclaimed by UNESCO in 1994 to raise awareness and understanding of the challenges facing teachers every day. It's an opportunity to thank and recognize teachers for all the work they do in classrooms and communities every day of the year to help learners of all ages.

Committee Vacancies

Executive Committee

- Aboriginal Education Chair
- Social Justice Chair
- TTOC Rep
- French as a First or Working Language Rep
- Adult Ed, Itinerant, Non-rolling Rep

There are also vacancies on the following committees:

- Aboriginal Education
- Bargaining/Working & Learning Conditions
- French as a First or Working Language
- Professional Development
- Public Education Advocacy
- Social Justice
- Teacher-on-Call Advisory

Elections will be held to fill the positions at the Staff Rep Meetings. Please call the DTA office if you would like to let your name stand for any of these positions.



DTA Calendar of Events September/October 2020

- **September 28** - Staff Rep Meeting, 4:00, Virtual
- **October 6** - PD Contacts' Training, 9:30-3:00, Virtual
- **October 6** - Maternity Leave Workshop, 4:00, Virtual
- **October 15** - Rookie Staff Rep Training, 1:15-3:45, Virtual
- **October 26** - Staff Rep Meeting, 4:00, Virtual

In Memoriam

Colin Tilcock passed away in August 2020.

Terry Hiduk passed away in January 2020.