



DTA Monthly Update

Issue #5 – February 28, 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Alison Kerr

The dreary weather of February is always a slog, but hopefully spring will be in the air soon! Thank you to all members who are out there supporting each other and encouraging members to call the DTA when they need help! We've accomplished a lot so far this year at the DTA office, but like all teacher work, there's a lot more to do. Some of the highlights so far this year:

- Visited all schools before the winter break to listen to member concerns and share information about bargaining and the Provincial Election.
- Attended all-candidates meetings for the Provincial Election in the North and South end.
- Warned teachers of the effects of a potential Conservative government in BC.
- Completed and ratified local bargaining. New language around Health and Safety, Professional Development, Job shares and orientation to the district. We thank the professional and good faith bargaining relationship with the Board, particularly Darren Duff, Shannon Hunt and Nicole Braid. These are also our people in our weekly HR meetings.
- Prepared and hosted five Union training days for Staff Reps, PD reps and new teachers before the end of January.
- Attended 2 weekend Local Rep Assemblies and BCTF, and Canadian Labour Congress Union training.

- Participated and brought EC members and Staff Reps to the BC Federation of Labour Conference.
- Attended the BC School Superintendents Conference as one of the few districts to bring Union Executives. Thank you to Doug Sheppard for that continued invitation.
- Elected a full contingent of delegates for the BCTF AGM coming up March 15-March 19. Very pleased to have new delegates for which this is their first AGM. Our dinner meeting to prepare was Thursday, February 27.
- Continued monthly meetings with the directors of Learning Services and Inclusive Learning, to share information and report out on member needs and concerns.
- Continued monthly meetings with Jane and Brad, Assistant-Superintendents, to discuss general systemic issues and concerns.
- Speak frequently with various administrators about staff concerns or process advice. We appreciate those who communicate with us regularly, trying to develop good processes in their sites and keeping us informed.
- Continued monthly meetings with our DTA Executive and Staff Reps.
- Attended the Board Budget Meeting to advocate for Elementary Librarians, Peer Support and continued DOC ratio that has improved shortages this year.
- Asked questions and gave input at the budget meeting with the Board and the DTA.
- Working with ongoing grievances. We recently reached an agreement to increase the number of blocks in some secondary schools for Career Ed, to even out and lower the caseloads. We haven't settled the grievance as we do not agree with the employer ratio. We continue to file grievances on behalf of members around prep time, excessive discipline, the Early Retirement Incentive Plan and harassment.
- Ongoing Support of members with medical leaves, personal leaves, unsatisfactory evaluations, Staff Committee concerns, post and fill, issues with administrators, clause 5 member issues, problematic parents, retirement questions, health and safety concerns, School Based Team issues, and a lack of resources.
- Attending monthly DPAC meetings to share teachers' concerns with parents

As you can see, most of it is ongoing. I can only imagine what your list would be like. As there are two and a half of us in the office full time, we rely heavily on information from members on the ground and the good work of staff reps and staff committee to keep us apprised of what is happening in the district. I've been out of a classroom for several years at this point, and although I've taught for over 30 years, I don't pretend for a second to know the state of a classroom these days. We need you to tell us what's happening.

Secondary Staff Meetings



Last week it came to our attention that many secondary schools continue to hold their monthly staff meetings during their Wednesday morning prep times. We thought this practice had been ended last year. We also realize that many secondary teachers enjoyed this arrangement, and are upset with the DTA. But it takes two to tango.

Let's be clear: Both the District and the DTA are responsible for upholding the provisions and practices of the Collective Agreement, and if one of us breaks them, the other side is quick to get busy. The DTA has to be vigilant about the erosion of hard-won language, even when teachers perceive an advantage to ignoring it.

There is very clear language on how much preptime you get in a week. Individual teachers cannot vote to give that up and negotiate their own contract with the employer. There are several reasons why you don't want to do that anyway.

If you are happy to give up prep time for an Employer meeting, you may find yourself unhappy when the Employer decides to have even more meetings during your prep time. Once you agree in one situation, it opens the door to force other meeting situations and use that Wednesday meeting as precedent. Starting a practice that breaks the CA can be used against you later. It's also harder to bargain for more prep time when you're giving it away to the District for their meetings.

Holding your Staff Meetings during "instructional time" is also a slippery slope. There is nothing in the CA that says you can't have a staff meeting during instructional time, which includes prep and collab time. So why not?

Because the Employer already takes advantage of this in September. All schools have 2 staff meetings in September, and HR has been clear that the meeting on the first day does not count as the "Monthly Staff Meeting" as it is during "instructional time." If your other Staff Meetings in the year take place during instructional time, administrators could start scheduling a second Staff Meeting every month. Even though CA language says once a month. Is this likely to happen with our current district administration? Probably not. However, we are always one Employer hire away at the district level to potentially see that change.

The DTA also has to think about equity, and getting sued. Elementary teachers will never get a deal where students roll in at 10 am and they can call that morning instructional

time for teachers. They're already not too happy about that. If we let staff meetings slide in for secondary teachers, we could get Section 12'd by elementary teachers. This basically means get sued because we are not upholding the Collective Agreement. It would also weaken our current grievance around elementary prep time.

If you're now thinking about some of those elementary schools that have early dismissal, those afternoon minutes had to be built back into the schedule; a shorter lunch or earlier/later days. They often have staff meetings that day, because they are not on "instructional time." They can go home on the other early days in the month.

If your staff prefers to have a morning meeting, so you are fresher, and it doesn't impact after school courses or sports events, you are welcome to. However, the potentially 90-minute meeting needs to end by 8:30 am, as that is when instructional time starts. EAs can still attend a portion of the staff meeting using LIF time, if they choose, like they do in elementary.

In our conversations with the Superintendents last week, they acknowledged they also didn't realize this practice was still going on, that it shouldn't, and informed us that administrators didn't want to continue the practice either.

Unfortunately, the emails we started getting last night tell us that the way this is being presented to some staff is that it is solely the DTA requesting this change. Needless to say, we are disappointed. Administrators are also expected to uphold the Collective Agreement and should be able to explain why the current situation is problematic for teachers.

The District sent out information to administrators yesterday, indicating that starting in May, schools are not to use instructional time for their monthly meetings. Please be aware that you may have to plan for childcare that impacts your ability to attend. Also, a reminder that all DTA members are expected to attend the May Staff Meeting, as per the Collective Agreement. The only exception is for those on medical leave who do not work that day or whose day ends early. Part-time personal leave members are expected to attend that meeting whether it is their usual work day or not.



Womens' Institute

Write Ups from Attendees of the BCTF Women's Institute

Elen Nikas

It was my privilege to attend, as Delta's delegate, the BCTF Women's Institute which started on the evening of Thursday, February 20 and ended midday on Saturday, February 21, 2025. I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from around the province. There were a variety of workshops on topics ranging from Anti-racism, conflict management, decolonization, and Métis beading, as well as opportunities for wellness activities. The keynote speakers, Moira Mackenzie and Anthonia Ogundele, also provided the delegates with inspiring words to further inform and motivate us. What I will remember from this year's BCTF Women's Institute is the admiration for my fellow delegates. Having the time to sit, talk, and share personal and professional stories brought me renewed energy and joy. It was truly an uplifting opportunity to learn from so many women who are dedicated teachers and union activists. I am truly grateful for this experience.

Pam Bahia

Attending the BCTF Women's Institute was both inspiring and unsettling. A highlight of the event was the Living Library, where we met women who had achieved the goals we secretly dream of. It was a powerful reminder of what's possible with representation and support. At its core, the event honoured the role of teachers in strengthening our communities, with discussions often touching on the social unrest and uncertainty south of the border. While these conversations were important, I couldn't help but feel they pulled focus away from Canada – what our country looks like and how we can foster more inclusive leadership here. I also couldn't ignore the lack of diversity in the room. It left me wondering – why aren't more women of colour stepping into leadership, or engaging in these spaces? This experience reinforced the importance of real representation, and I was left to reflect on how we can foster greater inclusivity within the BCTF. According to Stats Canada, Indigenous peoples make up 6% of the population in BC, while visible minorities account for 30% of the population. Was I one of the token "coloured" women selected for this event? I don't know. Are the voices of women of colour still being relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy, behind those with more privilege? These questions stay with me, pushing me to think about how we can create real change.

Newly Elected Members of the Executive Committee

We would like to announce **three new** members to the DTA Executive Committee. At the Staff Rep Assembly on Monday evening, we filled the following positions:

Aboriginal Education

Chairperson: Jessica LeBrun (NDSS)

Adult Education Representative:

Julie Kelly (DCC)

BIPOC Member-at-Large:

Pam Bahia (SE)

Thank you to these women for putting their names forward. We look forward to their strong voices adding to the discussion at the executive table and supporting our members.

Donations

Most labour movements support the community they live and work in. Delta teachers are no different.

In the DTA Constitution it states that 0.5% of our budget will be spent on donations that help local teachers and students. That amounts to \$3,300.00.

So far this year our executive has voted to give \$800.00 to DeltaAssist for food security and \$800.00 to the Delta LifeSkills Society. We will continue to make decisions around donations at future Executive Committee meetings.

Calendar of Events - March 2025

Mar 7 - Social Justice Mtg - Virtual

Mar 11 - Executive Committee Mtg - DTA

Mar 11 - School Board Mtg - District Office

Mar 15-19 - BCTF AGM - Hyatt Hotel

Mar 15-30 - SPRING BREAK



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