

## BCTF Winter RA Report

Jessica Hill, Local Rep to the BCTF

The BCTF Winter Representative Assembly took place virtually on January 28-29. I was unable to go down in person to fulfill my role on the Agenda Committee, but I did participate virtually from my home for both days.

The meeting opened with a rather optimistic report from President Teri Mooring. She shared that the bargaining team is meeting in person at the BCTF building, but there are no bargaining dates set yet with BCPSEA. There isn't much worry with this though as other public sectors have not started bargaining yet either. There have been no spending mandates announced so far, and the public sector unions seem prepared to work together to see better pay across the sectors. All very promising news at this point given the dramatic cost of living increases we have been seeing over the past couple of years. Local bargaining also seems to be going well in many locals. Eleven locals have already closed their tables, and no one has asked for dispute resolution at this point.

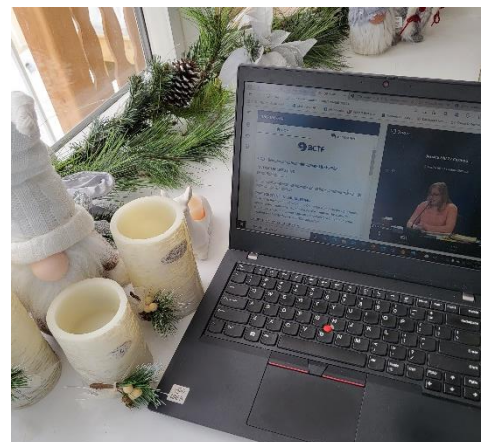
Teri shared how the pandemic has highlighted the importance of education in our society, and it's the BCTF's stance that it's time to fund it in a way that demonstrates this value. Public opinion research seems to agree. Investing in education needs to include investing in better safety measures for our schools. Right now, it is our members who are pushing for change – with some success! – but perhaps we shouldn't have to shout so loud for it. Rapid tests are on their way to districts, N95 masks have been sent out to locals, and upgrades to ventilation and some vaccine mandates are moving ahead due to our union's advocacy.

The BCTF seems to be developing a good relationship with the new deputy minister. The new reporting order has been delayed a full year which will allow for further consultation and revision. We want to see some efforts to co-develop a series of supports for members prior to implementation. There will hopefully be a new advisory group on provincial assessment formed in the near future.

Work with BCFED has been able to open the door for members with sick leave provisions in their CA but no actual sick leave (ex TTOCs) to have access to the provincial days. This is still a work in progress.

Further to the reports we heard, we also had a few elections. We elected Kevin Epp as our new BCTF Executive Committee Member-at-Large after Matt Westphal needed to step down earlier this year.

We also elected delegates to attend the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) AGM. I am honoured to be one of the six delegates elected, along with Lizzie Midyette (Windemere), Winona Waldron (Victoria), Joanne Hapke (Prince George), Doug Smuland (Abbotsford), and Jo Cornthwaite (Nanaimo).



COVID continued to be a source of much discussion. The following EC Recommendation was carried:

*That the Federation advocate for government to publicly share school closure information and the percentage of student/staff absences by district on the Ministry website.*

Other provinces already do this, and the BCTF would like our members looked after in the same way.

Given the recent press release from the WLFN regarding the 93 unmarked graves found at St. Joseph's Mission, it was powerful to not only hear the LR's and BCTF President take time to recognize the impact of this, but to see a local bring forward the following resolution:

*That the Federation support and amplify the time-limited House of Commons e-petition e-3672 which calls on the federal government to commit to ongoing meaningful support for ground penetrating radar, and not limited to the following components:*

- 1. solidarity statement to share across press releases, locals, and social media*
- 2. information to Teacher magazine and public BCTF website*
- 3. share out to BC Federation of Labour and Canadian Teachers' Federation to promote signing the petition*
- 4. host a timed item at the 2022 BCTF Annual General Meeting to honour the 7,000+ children and the communities involved and include an honour song, moment of silence, and sharing the link for members to sign electronically.*

Other local resolutions that carried were:

- That the Federation lobby districts and the government to cease the practice of hosting competing events on the October Provincial Specialist Association Day (PSA).
- That the Federation continues to fully fund and provide professional Zoom licenses for both provincial specialist associations (PSA) and locals upon request.
- That the Federation investigate potential issues with teachers' professional autonomy resulting from the implementation of the Draft Reporting Order and report back to the 2022 Spring Representative Assembly.
- That the Federation's position be that any training related to WorkSafeBC does not take place on professional development days.

Finally, we also discussed the upcoming recommendations around finance and the fee structures that will be brought to the BCTF AGM in March. At this point, all fee recommendations coming forward are status quo given the surplus the BCTF is anticipating for a second year in a row. That being said, there is a significant appetite to lower fees wherever possible so I expect there will be some amendments to these recommendations when they hit the floor.