



TODAY

Issue # 6

December 7, 2006

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

President's Column

Water in all its forms has animated the working lives of teachers and students this past month. Wind-lashed rain, black-ice, snow, access to boiled and bottled drinking water, congested traffic and frayed nerves have been constant worries of those who live in the B.C. Lower Mainland and commute daily to work its public schools.

Teachers are looking forward to the approaching break hopeful that all of the outstanding issues stemming from last summer's provincial contract negotiations will be fully resolved. Both the BCTF and BCPSEA have submitted various outstanding matters for decision by mediator, Irene Holden. Supplementary responses by the BCTF and BCPSEA to each others' original submissions were made on October 29th. As of the writing of this column, there is no word from Irene Holden.

Despite the implementation of the provisions of Bill 33 across the province, the DTA continues to be aware of teaching situations where the number of students, students with special needs, and those in the grey-areas combine to make successful teaching and learning much more challenging. With proper support, teachers would be able to do their jobs more effectively. Class composition issues compounded with other factors continue to make teaching especially challenging.

The ongoing shortages of Teachers on Call and increasing expectations of administration for "Internal Coverage" often intrude upon teachers' limited preparation time. Given the complexity of their jobs, teachers need their preparation time to get the classroom part of the job done. It is no surprise that teachers defend their prep time tenaciously. When teachers cooperate with school administration requests to provide internal coverage—and they do, not only in response to emergent situations -- teachers expect their contribution to be noted by having their prep time restored in the quickest manner possible.

In this, the final President's Column of 2006, the DTA extends the very best wishes of the season to all. May you find fulfillment in the work you do each day in support of students and learning.

SOCIAL JUSTICE UNDER REVIEW AT THE BCTF

In the 2004-05 school year the Executive Committee amended the social justice program of the BCTF by adding four action groups on the topics of antiracism, homophobia & heterosexism, poverty and status of women. This was a pilot project to be reviewed after three years. As this is the third year of the program, the Executive Committee has called for a review of the Federation's social justice work generally, as well as a review of the action groups' effectiveness.

Members are welcome to describe their experiences with or doing social justice work in the Federation to either Pat Clarke or Jane Turner at the BCTF. As well we hope members will answer the on-line survey available at <http://survey.bctf.ca/SJ/2006.htm> and make their views on the social justice work of the BCTF known. Surveys and feedback will be collected until December 22, 2006. The Social Justice Review Steering Committee will then collate the information and make recommendations to the Executive. Look for Social Justice Recommendations to be presented at the 2007 Annual General Meeting being held from March 17 – 20, 2007.

PB + 15 Information

Article G3 of the Collective Agreement states that salary category changes as a result of the completion of PB+15 will be effective at the beginning of the term following notification from you to the Board that you have completed PB+15. If you know you will complete your PB+15 during the summer, please notify the Board in writing before school starts in September in order to be placed in your new category for September. You can forward your transcript to the Board once you receive

From all of us at the DTA office, we wish you a very happy holiday and all the best for 2007!

Seasons Greetings



DISCRETIONARY DAY AND PERSONAL LEAVE DAY

Although the discretionary day and personal leave day has been part of the 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 SEM 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 Personnel Office 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;

SEM System Reason: #7 Leave at TOC cost.



Interlock Employee & Family Assistance

Teachers interested in **e-counselling services** can access it through the Interlock website www.interlock-eap.com and click on the **e-counselling icon**. It is a secure confidential online service that builds on the telephonic and in-person counselling services.

The PD Perspective

Are you tired, not as effective as you could be, need reenergizing? If you answered **YES** to any of the above then I would highly recommend that you go back to university. Both Simon Fraser and UBC offer off campus graduate programs right here in Delta that are convenient and motivating. Working with a cohort broadens, enriches and stimulates your teaching and may be just what you need at this time in your career. If you simply cannot fit a university program in then start a "study group" at your school and collaborate with your colleagues; or consider mentoring one of the new teachers on your staff. Go for it!

"Learning comes more from giving than from receiving. By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence, and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn."
(Roland Barth)

Jacquie Schierer, PD Chairperson

Elementary Teachers: Fax back your compensatory release time code requests. It's to your advantage to do so as soon as possible.

The DTA is aware of the efforts of HR staff and Principals in encouraging enrolling teachers to book *all* of their release codes for their compensatory prep time before the Christmas Break. Some teachers have asked, "What's going on? Why are they reminding us so many times?"

The DTA supports the idea of requesting these release codes now instead of later. The DTA encourages teachers to fax in their release code requests by Dec. 22.

Planning ahead now helps the Board anticipate days when TOCs may be in particularly short supply. But booking now also works to the benefit of teachers. By obtaining release codes now, enrolling elementary teachers will have a better selection of dates available to them. If they wait until they are absolutely sure of the day they want to book, they may find that their preferred day is unavailable to them.

Need a fax-back form? See your DTA Staff Rep.

