



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

April 2010

PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY INITIATIVE

*"Remember- It is still your classroom."
R.Noonan, Feb.26, 2010*

Teacher Professional Autonomy is the ability for teachers to exercise their own professional judgment for determining the best instructional and assessment practices for their students. This concept is being challenged as a result of the accountability model that uses standardized tests results to try and direct the instructional and assessment practices of teachers.

We are pleased that Mr. Randy Noonan agreed to be the keynote speaker at our February 26 Professional Development Day. Randy is a well-experienced lawyer on matters facing teachers and school districts in British Columbia. Randy spoke to the decision of Arbitrator James Dorsey regarding the mandated use of the DART in the Sooke School District. While Dorsey sided with the school district stating that there was a purpose of using the DART assessment to fulfill requirements to complete an accountability contract with the Ministry of Education, teachers still have the right to use their own professional judgment to determine the classroom instructional strategies and assessment practices that work best for their students. Randy also highlighted the following key points from the Dorsey decision:

- The ability for teachers to be free to exercise their professional judgment is a critical element in public education;

- There is no obligation for teachers to include Common Grade Assessment results for report card marks;
- The need for data is a bureaucratic requirement of the School District which often results in conflict with the professional viewpoint of teachers;
- There is no requirement for teachers to use their own time to create or modify the School or District Common Grade Assessments

THE NEXT STEP- TEACHER CONVERSATIONS- YOU ARE INVITED

The next step in our Professional Autonomy Initiative is to provide the opportunity for teachers to discuss professional autonomy issues in School District 70 with the goal of finalizing a plan of action for the 2010-11 year. As a result we are pleased to offer a Workshop - Conversations about Teaching, Testing and Autonomy. This one-day workshop is offered on three successive days at the end of April (April 27, 28 and 29) at the Cedarwood Lodge. A fax-back registration form is included with this newsletter. Participate in an enjoyable day with your colleagues discussing teacher professional autonomy issues and help us plan a strategy to protect our rights to determine the best educational practice for our students.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY FOR ABORIGINAL TEACHERS

As part of our 2006-11 Collective Agreement with SD70, school districts and BCTF locals are encouraged to have an Employment Equity Program for Aboriginal Educators. The ADTU

will be starting the process of developing an Employment Equity Program with School District 70 with the aim of a completion date of no later than June 30, 2011. A Frequently Asked Questions document is included with this newsletter.

BARGAINING 2011

With our current collective agreement expiring June 20, 2011 we are currently preparing ourselves for the upcoming bargaining round. This spring, we will be undertaking a series of school visits to highlight our bargaining preparations including what issues we can bargain locally, the membership survey and setting of local priorities. Bargaining objectives will be finalized by Oct.29, 2010- the date of the BCTF Bargaining Conference. Bargaining can begin March 1, 2011.

BOTTLED WATER

Please note that we will no longer be providing bottled water at ADTU events, including District Professional Development Days. We have also encouraged the School District to do the same.

Reasons for this decision include:

- Free access to safe drinking water should be a basic human right.
- Bottled water promotes privatization and ownership of what should be a basic public resource
- Globalization is a threat to public services, selling water, including school vending machines, sets the stage for further privatization.
- 85% of water bottles escape recycling and end up as litter or in landfills

FSA CAMPAIGN

Congratulations on another successful FSA campaign! Over 500 SD70 students received the BCTF documents to take to their parents. Reports indicate that there was a very high return rate of parents requesting that their child

be exempted from writing the FSA's. While SD70 mandates that all Grade 4 and 7 students write the FSA's the province-wide participation rate continues to fall with approximately 17% of eligible students being withdrawn from writing the tests in 2009. Of note is that even CanWest Global is suspicious of the Fraser Institute Rankings as they declined to publish the rankings this year in their newspapers (Vancouver Sun, Province and Victoria Times-Colonist).

BCTF NEW TEACHERS CONFERENCE

We are pleased to have assisted five ADTU members with attending the BCTF New Teachers Conference on March 26 and 27. The five participants were: Jelena Dyer (EJD), Andrew Edgell (EJD), Susan Place, (TTOC), Jenine Snider (AES) and Janine Widsten (Eighth Avenue).

BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We once again sent a full delegate of participants to the BCTF Annual General Meeting, March 6-10 in Vancouver. Our Delegates were: Lisa Laslo, Brian Lavery, Ilse Hill, Jackie Zydyk, and myself. Kevin Nixon and Erin Kostashuk represented our sub-local the Ucluelet-Tofino Teachers' Union. Current First Vice-President Susan Lambert (Burnaby) was elected President replacing Irene Lanzinger who is stepping down after the customary three years on the job. Significant debate was held regarding ethical investing of our pension funds. Generally, AGM delegates decided that we should be moving in a direction of more ethical investing of our pension funds and we will be encouraging our partner groups in the Teachers Pension Plan to do the same.

TTOC TASK FORCE REPORT

The ADTU brought the following motion to the 2009 BCTF Annual General Meeting which was carried:

"That the BCTF investigate the challenges, benefits, and reasons for retired teachers

returning to work as Teachers Teaching On Call and the impact on the employment of non-retired TTOC's, with a report to the 2010 AGM".

As a result, a BCTF Task Force was formed that included representation from Teachers Teaching on Call, a Local President, BCTF Executive and Staff. The conclusions of the Task Force include the following:

- With the elimination of mandatory retirement legislation, retired teachers on call have a right to work.
- Retired teachers have many reasons for working as teachers on call. Reasons include personal, medical issues, teacher burnout, not receiving a full pension, supporting family, significant change in spouse's health and/or financial situation, divorce.

Retired teachers working as teachers on call provide the following benefits: "freeing up" a position, bringing their wealth of knowledge and skills to the classroom, mentoring newer teachers and teachers on call, providing coverage for a particular subject area that is tough to fill, for example music, band, and French Immersion. The report also reviews the various call-out procedures used in BC. A copy of the full report is available from the ADTU Office and is on the ADTU Bulletin Board at each school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are reminded of our upcoming PD Days- April 19 and May 31. School-based Professional Development activities are to be determined by the School PD Committee led by the school PD Chairperson. All teachers are encouraged to participate on the School PD Committee to help determine the activities for school-based days. The ADTU receives \$150 per FTE from SD70 for the District Professional Development Fund. Of this amount \$20 per FTE is allotted to School PD Committees to help meet expenses on school professional

development days. The remaining amount is used to pay for District PD Day activities and expenses, our share of the PD Chairperson's release time and individual PD claims. Individual teachers receive an initial \$100 (\$200 for Ucluelet-Tofino and Bamfield) reimbursement for professional development activities with the outstanding amount being reimbursed on a percentage basis as calculated annually by the District PD Committee to a maximum amount of \$500.

TTOCs are eligible for a maximum \$50 reimbursement for professional development activities but they do not qualify for the percentage reimbursement of the balance.

The deadline for submitting your claim this year is May 13, 2010.

Note:

If you are intending to engage in professional development activity during July and August you must provide us with an estimate of expenses by May 13, 2010 in order for the claim to be considered as part of your 2009-10 reimbursement.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our School Social Justice Representatives attended a BCTF Training Workshop on February 25 where they developed plans for the next twelve months. SJ Committee plans include distributing posters and wearing pink on Anti-bullying day, establishing a Gay-Straight Alliance at ADSS, producing a series of short video clips and primary reading kits using Social Justice topics, considering a Social Justice theme for a District Professional Development Day and encouraging SD70 to develop policy protecting LGBTQ students. Please contact the ADTU Office if you would like to join our Social Justice Committee.

ELECTRONIC PAY STATEMENTS

SD70 has asked us about initiating electronic pay statements beginning September 2011. Pay Statements would be emailed to employee accounts instead of a paper copy via the "bunny

bus". Please discuss this issue with your Staff Representative as we will be making our decision at our April 21 Representative Assembly.

KNOW YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT – YEAR END STAFFING PROCEDURES

ARTICLE 42 - TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

- 42.1 Teacher assignments within a school are the responsibility of the principal after consultation with the staff committee, and in the case of Associated Professionals the Superintendent of Schools.
- 42.2 Any reference in this Article to "Superintendent" shall be deemed to include a reference to a designate of the Superintendent.
- 42.3 Certification, educational preparation, experience, related experience, distribution of workload, and personal preferences of the ADTU member shall be taken into consideration before assigning a member.
- 42.4 Teacher assignments shall not be used for disciplinary purposes.
- 42.5 Upon request of an ADTU member, the principal or Superintendent in the case of Associated Professionals shall meet with the member to discuss the member's proposed assignment.
- 42.6 When an ADTU member's instructional level and/or subject area is changed during a school year, resulting in new preparation, the member shall be entitled to a minimum of one (1) day's release time.

ARTICLE 43 - STAFFING PROCEDURES IN SCHOOLS P

Year End Staffing

- 43.1 Prior to April 15 the Superintendent shall place ADTU members returning from approved leave of absence onto the staff roster of the school from which the leave was granted.
- 43.2 An ADTU member who left a continuing position at one school in order to temporarily fill a position at another school, at the conclusion of the temporary position, shall be returned to the staff roster of the school at which the member held a continuing position.
- 43.3 ADTU members having a continuing appointment and who cannot be placed pursuant to Article 43.1 and 43.2 shall be placed pursuant to Article 43.10.1.
- 43.4 By April 15 the Superintendent shall notify each school of the intended staffing allotment for that school for the next school year
- 43.5 Prior to May 1:
 - 43.5.1 the Principal, or designate(s), of each school will develop the initial staffing needs of the school and shall propose a draft timetable(s) and staff assignments for the next school year;
 - 43.5.2 the staff committee will meet to consult with the Principal regarding the draft timetable(s), the staff positions, and the teaching assignments required in the school for the next school year;
 - 43.5.3 following the staff committee meeting the principal shall assign the ADTU members on the staff roster to assignments based on their certification and educational

preparation or experience or related experience;

43.5.4 if there are more ADTU members of a particular discipline or teaching area in a school than are required in that school, and the extra member(s) cannot be placed in another assignment for which the member(s) is qualified, the principal will provisionally assign the extra member(s) into the department(s) or teaching area(s) in the school for which he/she is qualified.

43.6 On or about May 1, ADTU members shall be notified of their intended assignment for the next school year.

Surplus Teachers

43.7 Where there are more ADTU members assigned to one discipline or teaching area than are required by the school, and those members cannot be placed pursuant to Article 43.5.4, the principal will first ask for a volunteer to be declared surplus to the school. Should no volunteers be available, the ADTU member with the least district seniority in that discipline or teaching area shall be declared surplus to the school.

43.8 After first notifying the ADTU member(s) concerned, the principals shall notify the Superintendent and the Staff Committees of the names of those members declared surplus to their schools.

43.9 A list of all ADTU members declared surplus in order of seniority will be compiled and made available from the Superintendent of Schools.

Surplus teachers can identify positions pursuant to the "Bumping" Procedures Mid-Contract Modification.

PARTICIPATING IN STAFFING DECISIONS

Teachers are reminded that we should not be participating in discussing staffing decisions that would result in reducing the FTE amount at the school and/or reducing services to students. Also, we should not participate in class organization discussions that would result in the Class Size and Class Composition Limits being exceeded.

ADTU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 19 at 4:00 p.m. in the Neill Middle School Library. Agenda will include the election of Executive Officers for 2010-11. Executive positions include: President, First Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Local Representative to the BCTF, Professional Development Chairperson, Working and Learning Conditions/Bargaining Chairperson, Social Justice Co-Chairpersons (2 spots), Aboriginal Education Contact, Teacher On Call Representative, and Member at Large. Become involved in your organization and run for a position on the Executive Committee.

ADTU RETIREMENT DINNER

Our Retirement Dinner is on Friday, June 11. **This year, retirees will have the option of either speaking for themselves, or having someone speak for them.** The dinner is being organized by Gill Elementary School.

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F.A.Q.s

Employment Equity for Aboriginal Teachers Letter of Understanding

1. **Does this affect seniority?**
It does not affect seniority because this language only applies to new hires.
2. **How will the recall procedure work for newly laid off teachers?**
The recall procedure is determined according to the local collective agreement provisions.
3. **What are the sources of funding for hiring Aboriginal teachers in the district?**
There are two sources for funding - core funds and targeted funds. Some boards use only targeted funding to hire Aboriginal teachers. Teachers hired with targeted funds are restricted to Aboriginal programs. This proposal will use core dollars to hire Aboriginal teachers into all areas of the B.C. public education system.
4. **Why do we need a special employment equity program for Aboriginal teachers when no special arrangements are being made for other minority groups?**
Racism exists for all minority groups. However, Aboriginal students are increasingly at risk for dropping out of school. Many live in extreme poverty, and are at risk for suicide and substance abuse. This is generally not the case for other minority groups. We need this language to attract and retain Aboriginal teachers as role models for our Aboriginal students.
5. **What is the Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers?**
In 2005, the BCTF and BCPSEA signed a Letter of Understanding to address the under representation of Aboriginal teachers in the public education system. The intention of the LOU is to achieve a proportional representation of Aboriginal teachers within the teaching population in B.C.
6. **What are the benefits of Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers?**
The intention of the employment equity program is to provide students with positive Aboriginal role models in schools in order to:
 - To increase the Aboriginal student graduation rates.
 - To reduce risk factors for Aboriginal students (i.e. drug and alcohol abuse, low self esteem, suicide, involvement with the criminal justice system).
 - To validate and recognize Aboriginal people's worldview and lived realities.
7. **Why do we need Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers, if we can't fill existing postings for Aboriginal teachers?**
Employment equity needs to be in place in every district, because unions and school boards will be supporting new applicants who self-identify as Aboriginal.

The BCTF is working with high schools and universities to attract more Aboriginal students into teaching.
8. **We already have Aboriginal support workers in our school district. Isn't that enough?**
No. In fact, the intent of this language is not to replace or compete with Aboriginal support workers. The intent of the language is to hire and retain more self identified Aboriginal teachers. We need to have more self identified Aboriginal teachers in the classrooms. Aboriginal children and other children need to see Aboriginal people represented in all public schools.