



# NWTU UNION NEWS

JANUARY 2021

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Sarah Wethered*

As a teacher-librarian at NWSS, I often dreaded January as it meant the end of the first semester and time to do our annual inventory. We would spend approximately a week putting the books in order and then scanning each item, trying to determine how many resources had gone missing over the last year. No matter how careful we were, we always missed something and we would spend hours hunting down those lost resources, trying to ensure that we didn't need to spend money on items we had previously purchased. The best part of inventory was being finished and getting the reward of being able to actually go to a book vendor and purchase new materials – during school hours. What a treat!

This year, I'm not doing inventory or getting the reward of purchasing new books. Instead, I'm sitting in the big chair in the union office, leading the membership through a global pandemic. Since November, I have been working with the other local presidents within Fraser Health to improve the health and safety within our schools. In December, we met with Dr. Ariella Zbar from Fraser Health to discuss our concerns, and we followed up with another meeting in early January. We issued a press release through the BCTF outlining our need for better contact tracing and a mask mandate. This press release got a lot of traction, and many of us, myself included, were interviewed by local papers, radio, and television stations. I am working hard to secure a meeting with our MLAs, Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside, and Aman Singh of the NDP. I am hopeful that my persistence, and many requests will see a positive outcome. I have also been reaching out to the New West Record and have had several interviews and two letters to the editor published. My goal is to get the message out that we need a mask mandate and that parents can help by sending their children to school wearing a mask.

At our last executive committee meeting, an ad hoc COVID-19 committee was formed, under the leadership of Second VP, D'Alice Marsh. This committee will be surveying members about their experiences throughout the pandemic, with the results shared with the membership. This week, D'Alice and her committee put the finishing touches on a letter to Dr. Bonnie Henry outlining our concerns about the pandemic and health and safety measures in schools.

First VP, Kristie Oxley, is working with TTOC/New Teacher reps Karin Krueger and Dominic Pistor, and district mentorship facilitator Trish Pain, to develop a plan to spend our approximately \$180,000 mentorship fund. Having seen a first draft of this plan, I'm confident that this program is going to be a huge success. A finalized report will be presented at our February 23 General Meeting.

I want to thank all of you for the work that you do to provide a kind, caring, and safe place for the children of my adopted hometown. I am so proud to be serving as president of this fantastic local full of dedicated and hardworking members.

~ Sarah

## IMPORTANT DATES

**February 9** - Staff Rep SURT

**February 9** - Executive Meeting

**February 15** - Family Day

**February 16** - Non-Instructional Day

**February 23** - General Meeting by Zoom

## DEAR PARENTS

by Siân Smith

Dear Parents,

As a child I dreamed of being a teacher.

I created workbooks,  
Put stars on pages,  
Imagined what it would be like  
To have my own classroom  
With black boards that were green,  
And rows of children  
Laughing as they learned.

As a teacher I understand

Teaching is more than workbooks and stickers.  
As relationships are created  
Children's respect is earned  
Not given.  
I am responsible  
For your child's mental health,  
Not just their learning and safety.

So much happens before the learning can occur.

We honour the child  
Before the ability.  
We celebrate the victories,  
Embrace the anxious,  
And create a safe space for all.

But now I am afraid.

I am afraid that I will get sick,  
That I will take the virus home  
My family will get sick.  
I am afraid  
Because of your trip to Big White  
My parents will die.

I have been good.  
I kept away.  
I wear my mask and sanitize.

But I am powerless in my classroom.  
Your decisions control my world.  
There is no safe place for me.

## NWSS FAREWELL

by Karen Klein

As many of you know, New Westminster's only high school has been replaced.

Help us honour the history of the old building, while joining us in the opportunity to say farewell to an important part of New Westminster history. We're calling on all of you to share your stories of life at NWSS with us.

- What made your time at that school exceptional? How did those old halls or classrooms shape or change you?
- Is there some story that relates to the building itself? An old ghost that wanders the halls? What about a rumoured secret location (was there really a pool)?
- Do you have a story or notable event about the library, the drama room, chemistry class, or maybe the overpass that others over the years could identify with?

Our goal is to share some of these accounts during the live-streamed event. Collectively these stories will provide an entertaining and informative program, a memorable celebration of an important physical space in New Westminster's history.

It is the personal stories that will give life and nostalgia to the spaces in the building and its surrounds.

You do not have to send in a completed story. We can contact you for an interview or a recording or film you for the event. Just tell us a bit about the story and we can incorporate it in the live-streamed event.

**Send all stories or story threads to**

**[NWSSFarewell@sd40.bc.ca](mailto:NWSSFarewell@sd40.bc.ca) by FEBRUARY 26, 2021.**



1962 Lester Pearson and Vincent Massey schools.  
Image taken from New West Record article on November 27, 2020.  
<http://bit.ly/3pr7Sez>



## SUMMER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This year, the NWTU signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with our employer regarding Summer Professional Development. Previously, Summer Professional Development was governed by a verbal understanding between the employer and the union. This put us in a tenuous situation. With no language guaranteeing Summer Professional Development in our local or provincial collective agreements, the employer was under no obligation to facilitate Professional Development days in August or to honour lieu days throughout the school year. This LOU constitutes a formal agreement between the union and district, protecting our right to Summer Professional Development in upcoming years.

If you are interested in reading the Summer Professional Development LOU, it will be added to the Professional Development section of our NWTU website soon. School-based Professional Development Chairs have also been provided with a copy of this LOU as well as an opportunity to ask questions about it at a special Professional Development meeting held in December. If you have questions about your school's Summer Professional Development plans, please reach out to your school's Professional Development committee. Questions about Summer Professional Development in general can be sent to Kristie Oxley and Carmen Woo at [vpl@nwtu.ca](mailto:vpl@nwtu.ca).

## PRO-D OPPORTUNITIES

### Start with Joy Book Club for K-3 teachers

**Facilitator:** Tanis Anderson  
District VP of Early Learning,

**Time:** 3:15-4:15

**Dates:**

- January 14
- February 18
- March 4

**Register:** <http://bit.ly/2YpncfD>

### Supporting Our Readers: Exploring an Inclusive Environment Where All Readers Thrive

Literacy book club for K-3 teachers.

**Facilitator:** Faye Brownlie

**Time:** 3:30-4:30

**Date:** February 9

**Register:** <http://bit.ly/2KV832z>



<https://www.bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2021/>

### POPEY 2021 Online Literacy Workshops

**Facilitator:** POPEY

**Time:** 3:15-4:15

**Dates and Topics:**

- Oral Language: January 27
- Literacy & SEL: February 3

**More information and registration links:**

<https://bit.ly/36hr1I3>

### Minerals Ed BC

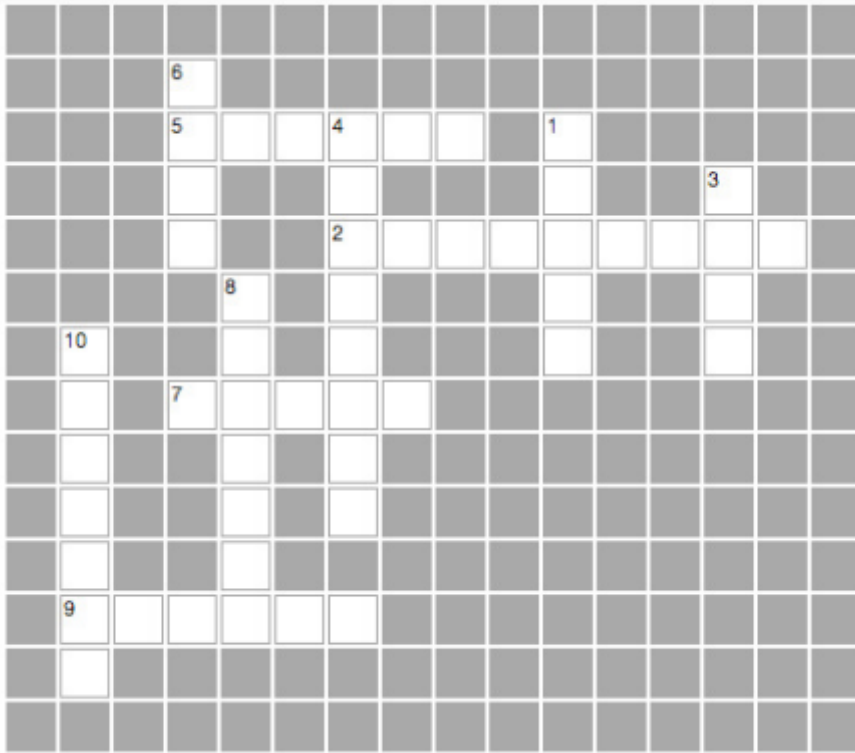
Minerals Ed BC's most recent newsletter contains links to virtual PD opportunities as well as student workshops.

You can view the newsletter here:

<http://bit.ly/3cmJ9Em>



# REMINDER



## Across

2. Act of acquiring general knowledge
5. Device used to erase marks made with a pencil
7. Study whose medium is sound
9. Give attention with your ear

Crossword retrieved from  
<http://bit.ly/3j2oJC4>

## Down

1. The year a student has reached in school
3. Sheets of paper bound together
4. Writing the letters of a word
6. Piece of furniture used in schools
8. Someone who attends an educational institution
10. Wooden sticks used for writing or drawing

## STAY UP TO DATE

### NWTU Email List

[http://bit.ly/NWTU\\_email\\_list](http://bit.ly/NWTU_email_list)



### NWTU Facebook Page

[http://bit.ly/NWTU\\_Facebook](http://bit.ly/NWTU_Facebook)



### New Teacher & TTOC Email List

[http://bit.ly/NWTU\\_NT-TTOC\\_Email](http://bit.ly/NWTU_NT-TTOC_Email)



## DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

Do you know an NWTU member that has received special recognition for their work as an educator? Or do you know a member that you would like to highlight work they are doing in their school?

If so, please send an email to D'Alice, [vp2@nwtu.ca](mailto:vp2@nwtu.ca), to have them included in an upcoming edition of the NWTU Union News.



## CONTACT US

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- D'Alice Marsh, 2nd VP, [vp2@nwtu.ca](mailto:vp2@nwtu.ca)
- NWTU Office: 604.526.8990.

