



NWTU UNION NEWS

NOVEMBER 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sarah Wethered

Hello colleagues,

I'm certain that I just sat down in the chair in the president's office on July 1, and when I looked up, it was the end of November. The last five months have been a blur, but I would like to highlight what I have been doing this month.

At the beginning of the month, I was given a guided tour by Superintendent Hachlaf of the new New Westminister Secondary School building. The new NWSS is a beautiful building and I'm certain it is one that all members of the school community would be proud of. Unfortunately, the only place I couldn't see was the new library learning commons as the staircase to it was being worked on. I'm hoping to go in again in December and see this space.

After many months of negotiations, we finally signed a Local Letter of Understanding on Summer Pro-d, putting in writing the verbal agreement that we have been using for the last 17 years, an agreement I negotiated with Superintendent Ron Bennett, when I was a newly elected Pro-D Chair. This LOU provides us with written assurances that Summer Pro-D can occur, if a site wants to do so. The big differences between our verbal agreement and the LOU is that Summer Pro-D is limited to 2 days and that in lieu days cannot be taken on a District Day. Many thanks to VP Kristie Oxley who kept this issue in the forefront of our work.

I am happy to report that Darryl Schelp, our Bargaining Chair, is working with both me and the Bargaining Advisory Committee to complete our contract melding. Draft 1 has been sent off to the BCTF and BCPSEA and in our next draft, we will incorporate all the stripped language that was restored because of our Supreme Court of Canada win. Thank you to Darryl and the BAC for all their work proof-reading our draft collective agreement. I look forward to actually signing our completed collective agreement sometime in the spring.

VP D'Alice Marsh, Bargaining Chair Darryl Schelp, and I attended all or parts of Federation Leadership Institute last week. I took part in sessions on grievances, mentorship, and union leadership during a pandemic, while D'Alice took part in sessions on investigations and discipline. Darryl attended the session on contract melding.

Kristie and I have been working with TTOC/New Teacher Reps, Karin Krueger and Dominic Pistor, as well as Patricia Pain, to implement a mentorship program here in New Westminister. As part of our last round of bargaining, a mentorship fund was created, and we now have \$150 000 to work with. I look forward to using this money to create a mentorship program that will assist our early career teachers.

I know that this time is busy for everyone, especially as it's report card season for most of you. Please remember to care for yourself first and the rest will fall in place. Winter Break will be here soon enough.

As always, if you wish to contact me, please email lp40@bctf.ca or call me at 778 789 5713 or call our office at 604.526.8990. You may also contact Kristie Oxley, 1st VP, at vp1@nwtu.ca and D'Alice Marsh, 2nd VP, at vp2@nwtu.ca.

~ Sarah

IMPORTANT DATES

November 30 - District Pro-D Day

December 2 - NWSS
Collaboration Day - Partial Day

December 8 - NWTU Executive
Meeting

December 21 - January 1 - Winter
Break

CONGRATULATIONS BARB!

by Nancy Baird

Barb Paul from Lord Kelvin School was selected as this year's Outstanding Professional Music Educator – Elementary by the BC Music Educator Association! This was a well deserved recognition of a life time commitment (over 40 years at Kelvin) to the music education of thousands of students in New Westminster.

The quality of Barb's music program cannot be understated, it is well rounded and diverse. From playing on the Orff instruments to singing seasonal songs, composer studies, learning the instruments of the orchestra (with live demonstrations of how to play many of them!) and music appreciation. The students are always excited to go to music class!

Barb spends many hours outside of class time to give the students of Lord Kelvin an opportunity to shine musically. Each year Barb coordinates and does most of the work for a Christmas play. Every student in the upper grades who auditions for a part will get a part, even if Barb has to write more parts! No one gets turned away. Barb will write parts for students with special needs that are as unique as they are and draws out their strengths. Writing parts, directing the play, and conducting the choir are not the only tasks that Barb needs to undertake to see to the success of the annual Christmas play. She also designs and builds sets, arranges lighting, moves risers, sews costumes, does make-up; the list is endless. And she does all this while still teaching her regular classes.

With the after-school choir, Barb's musical talents really stand out. Over 90 students signed up for choir this past year! Barb has an amazing ability to draw out each child's very best singing voice, leading to a high caliber of performance, often singing challenging songs in harmony with multiple parts. It is wonderful to see the pride of the students as they wear their choir shirts and perform with confidence and joy.

Barb's leadership is not limited to the music classroom. Barb is the heart and soul of the school. The close of each school year has many special traditions. Our annual final assembly always ends with the students singing "The Irish Blessing". It always brings tears to many eyes (especially those leaving the school) to hear those young voices joined in song. Barb hosts the staff year end bar-b-que. And the piece de résistance, on the final day of the school year, Barb makes an Eggs Bennie breakfast for the staff, not an easy task when the staff numbers are close to 60!

Barb plans on retiring at the end of this school year. The Lord Kelvin will miss her a lot.



Photo retrieved from <https://newwestschools.ca/a-tale-of-three-award-winning-teachers/>

CONGRATULATIONS KRISTIE!

by Sarah Wethered

At our recent awards ceremony, Kristie Oxley was named the BCTLA Teacher-Librarian Diana Poole Memorial Award winner.

Kristie has worked in the New Westminster School district for the past 15 years. She began as Montessori teacher, and gradually transitioned to the position of teacher-librarian once she finished her UofA Masters degree. For the past 4 years, she has been the district teacher-librarian.

Kristie provides amazing leadership to the library staff in New Westminster. As district teacher-librarian, she is always available to us to help with anything we need. She is as equally happy to help us learn about a new initiative as to help us with the often grueling task of inventory. She is seen throughout our district as a hard-working, intelligent woman who gets the job done. Ever the overachiever, Kristie currently serves as pro-d chair and 1st vice president of the New Westminster Teachers' Union, as well as chapter president of the NWTLA. Kristie is also a sessional instructor in the UBC teacher-librarian diploma.

Kristie is current president of the BCTLA and provides leadership throughout the province. She has helped organize 4 PSA conferences and has worked to revise "The Points of Inquiry." She also serves on the PSA Council and is a rep on the Professional Issues Advisory Committee. Recently, she was a teacher rep in the working groups established by the Ministry of Education to help guide the restart of schools in September.

It is wonderful to see our district teacher-librarian honoured by BC teacher-librarians. Well done, Kristie!



Photo retrieved from <https://newwestschools.ca/a-tale-of-three-award-winning-teachers/>

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, to have them included in an upcoming edition of the NWTU Union News.

STAY UP TO DATE

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LET'S CREATE A MASK-WEARING CULTURE



By now we have all heard that Dr. Bonnie Henry has been cracking down on public gatherings, private gatherings in homes, celebrations, and mandating mask in all indoor public spaces and businesses. She is even limiting our travel between health authorities, while John Horgan is seeking national travel restrictions. All of this and no changes to the school setting.

It is evident that onus is on those of us in schools, NWTU, CUPE, and administration, to make sure that we are modelling the mask-wearing and behaviours for our students and colleagues.

What does this mean? This means wearing your masks as much as possible in school buildings, not only in our shared public spaces as required, but also in our classrooms and workspaces. Especially when we are unable to physically distance ourselves from others outside of our cohort.

As many of you have been, continue to have the important conversations with your students around COVID-19. Making sure to remind others that only in part do we wear masks for ourselves, but predominantly for those around who are vulnerable and who have compromised immune systems. Wearing a mask is a sign of respect to everyone within our school community, our local community, our province, our country, and the world.

It is important to note that the District encourages staff to wear masks and personal protective equipment in school, that they will not prevent any teacher from modelling mask-wearing or attempting to create a positive mask-wearing culture in their classroom. However, you cannot enforce mask-wearing within the cohort. You cannot make refuse to provide a student education or support if they do not wear a mask in the classroom. But, you can create a culture within your space that encourages students to voluntarily wear a mask.

(Inspired by conversations with colleagues throughout New West, across the province and further.)

DID YOU KNOW? A REVIEW OF OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Please recognize that the Articles below are from the working 2013-2019 Collective Agreement, as contract melding is still in progress for the newest Collective Agreement to be finalized.

ARTICLE E.23.6 PERSONNEL FILES

"Where material critical of the teacher, or in the nature of a reprimand, is placed in the file, the teacher may make written request to the Director of Human Resource Services to have the material removed two (2) years after the filing, provided that no further material of that nature has been subsequently filed."

Why this is important? If there were ever a time that a member may be subject to a new investigation any material contained within the personnel file can be used against them during the investigation during the process.

ARTICLE A.25.1 & A.25.2 RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

1. A teacher shall have the right to be accompanied by a representative who is a member of the Union at any meeting which includes that teacher and a school based administrative officer or that teacher's immediate supervisor if

- a. the meeting is discipline related, or*
- b. the teacher or the administrative officer has reasonable cause to believe a member of the Union should be present.*

2. A teacher shall have the right to be accompanied by a representative of the Union at a meeting between that teacher and a Board representative not referred to in A.25.1 if

- a. the meeting is discipline related; or*
- b. the teacher or the Board representative has reasonable cause to believe a representative of the Union should be present.*

Why this is important? All too often, members are requested to attend meetings with their administrator and do not have representation with them. What is said during these meetings can be used against a member as a part of an investigation or disciplinary action.

You are also entitled to representation if you are called as a witness as part of the investigation process.

Please note, it is also a member's right to choose not to have representation.