



NWTU UNION NEWS

DECEMBER 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sarah Wethered

Like most of you, I will be very happy to see 2020 come to a close. The year started out on a professional high for me as I was awarded the Angela Thacker Memorial Award by Canadian School Libraries and travelled to Toronto to accept this very prestigious award. The ability to get on a plane and travel seems like such a distant memory. Unfortunately, with the onset of the pandemic my life, like yours, changed entirely. I had to navigate how to run a library program with no access to the actual physical library and learn multiple learning platforms. I'm proud of all that accomplished in the spring as I stretched myself as an educator.

When I decided that I was going to run for president, it was bittersweet. After waiting almost 18 years for a new school, I would not be there on opening day. Fortunately, NWSS principal, Murray McLeod has allowed me to spend the last day in the old building with my staff, and I will also spend the first day in the new building. I am excited for the community to see the beautiful space that the students of New Westminister will get to learn in.

The last six months have been a steep learning curve, but I am proud of all we have accomplished. We finally settled our failure to fill grievance from 2018/19 onwards and this resulted in 2.6 new teaching positions. We also signed a new LOU on Summer Pro-D, which put into writing the oral agreement we've had for almost two decades. Lastly, we have begun the process of melding our collective agreement and I look forward to finally signing the finished copy in the spring.

Thank you to all the members of the executive committee for all the work they have done. Special thanks to my two VPs, Kristie and D'Alice who have proven themselves to be excellent advisors. With every day that I work with them, my esteem for them grows.

Lastly, I hope that all of you have some time over winter break to rest, relax, and recharge. Thank you for everything you do for the children of this community. Your work is very much appreciated.

~ Sarah

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.

IMPORTANT DATES

December 21 - January 1 - Winter Break

January 4 - Schools Reopen

January 12 - Executive Meeting

January 19 - Elementary Collaboration Day - Partial Day

STAY UP TO DATE

NWTU Email List

http://bit.ly/NWTU_email_list



NWTU Facebook Page

http://bit.ly/NWTU_Facebook



New Teacher & TTOC Email List

http://bit.ly/NWTU_NT-TTOC_Email



PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH OUR CUPE MEMBERS

As professionals we are to follow the professional responsibility to follow the BCTF Code of Ethics.

Item five (5) in the [BCTF Code of Ethics](#) clearly states "[t]he member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance.*It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues."

While our Code of Ethics does not specifically state that members are to uphold the same for our CUPE colleagues it is our professional responsibility to treat our CUPE colleagues just as we would treat our fellow BCTF members.

As professionals we need to create a positive working environment and to develop and maintain a harmonious relationship with our CUPE colleagues. Therefore, let's apply item five (5) of the BCTF Code of Ethics when interacting with CUPE. Privately discuss any concerns you may have with the CUPE member directly in attempts to resolve any differences before reporting to administration. **With the exception of times when there is suspicion of child endangerment or in areas of harassment.**

<https://bctf.ca/professionalresponsibility.aspx?id=4292&>



DID YOU KNOW? A REVIEW OF OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

ARTICLE G.3 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY LEAVE

The employer will grant family responsibility pursuant to the BC Employment Standards Act Part 6-52:

52 An employee is entitled to up to 5 days of unpaid leave during each employment year to meet responsibilities related to

- (a) the care, health or education of a child in the employee's care, or*
- (b) the care or health of any other member of the employee's immediate family.*

Note: In the event that there are changes to the Employment Standards Act with respect to Family Responsibility Leave, the legislated change provision (A.9) will apply to make the necessary amendments to this provision.

ARTICLE G.25 EMERGENCY LEAVE FOR FAMILY ILLNESS

1. A teacher may, when a dependent child or any other dependent member of the teacher's immediate family is confined to home or hospital through illness and where no other care is available, apply for and be granted up to five (5) days leave of absence per year, which shall be charged against the teacher's accumulated sick leave.

SO, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

While both of these articles are designed to support NWTU members in supporting a dependent child or a member of their immediately family, G.25 focuses on medical care for illness and is a paid leave. Whereas, G.3 is broader and allows leave for care, health, or education and is unpaid. If you were to take a leave under G.3, you would be encouraged to contact Services Canada with respect to your eligibility for EI Benefits should it be applicable to you.

As such, if you are taking a leave of absence under Article G.25 it is imperative that you select "Family Illness." And that if you are to go above and beyond the 5 days available under G.25, to take time under G.3 select "Unpaid Leave" and contact HR to provide details.



EI AND INCOME SUPPORT BENEFITS

If you are a TTOC or a teacher with few sick days accumulated and are asked to quarantine or to self-isolate due to COVID-19, you may be eligible for support.

The following has been shared by the BCTF:

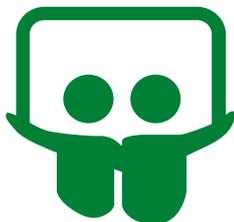
The Government of Canada has implemented a new EI & Income Support Programs effective September 27, 2020 that run until September 25, 2021. The new income support benefits opened October 12, 2020 and provide compensation retroactive to September 27, 2020. For a full list of eligibility criteria and other questions related to the programs, please consult the EI & BCTF Members Page here: <https://bctf.ca/TeachersOnCall.aspx?id=4754> & the TTOC Page here: <https://bctf.ca/TeachersOnCall.aspx>



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?

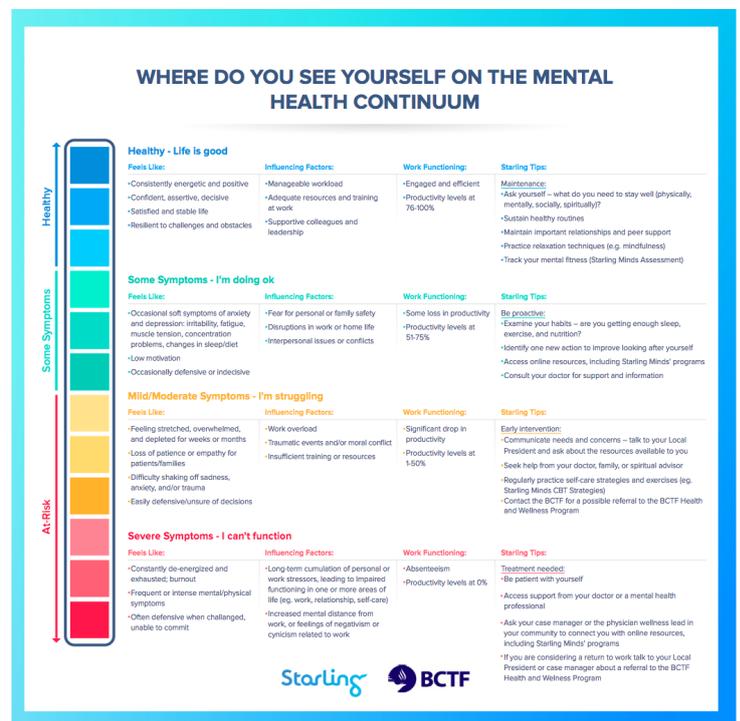
If so, please send an email to D'Alice, vp2@nwtu.ca, to have them included in an upcoming edition of the NWTU Union News.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The mental health and wellness of educators is always important. Without their own personal wellness, it can prove to be difficult to support their students and their school community. However, the mental health and wellness of educators has never been more paramount than it is today with the additional stressors caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Below you will find an infographic shared by [Starling Minds](https://www.starlingminds.com/) (<https://www.starlingminds.com/>), an online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Program.



Teachers also have free access to the [BCTF Health and Wellness Program](#), including Living with Balance workshops. For more information on what the BCTF offers, please visit the BCTF website (<https://bctf.ca/wellness/>).