

Burnaby Teachers Association

Staff Representative Handbook



**BURNABY TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION**

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Contents

ABOUT US.....	4
OUR BACKGROUND.....	4
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.....	4
TABLE OFFICERS.....	4
WHO ARE BURNABY TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION MEMBERS?.....	4
THE ROLE OF THE STAFF REP IS ENSHRINED IN OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT.....	5
COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT (excerpt)	5
BTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (excerpt).....	6
BTA BYLAW (excerpt)	7
FIVE SIMPLE TRUTHS	8
ROLE OF THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVE IN COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT ENFORCEMENT AT SCHOOL-SITES	8
KNOW YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT	8
OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT.....	8
Appendix 1: Provincial Matters and Appendix 2: Local Matters	8
Section A: The Collective Bargaining Relationship	8
Section B: Salary and Economic Benefits	8
Section C: Employment Rights.....	9
Section D: Working Conditions.....	9
Section E: Personal Practices.....	9
Section F: Professional Rights.....	9
Section G: Leaves of Absences	9
Section H: Committees	9
The Collective Agreement is grounded in statutes, regulations, and provisions including.....	9
LOU stands for Letter of Understanding	9
TIPS FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE REP	10
OBJECTIVES OF THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVE.....	10
SCHOOL UNION TEAM.....	10
WHAT TO DO WHEN A COLLEAGUE IS CALLED INTO THE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE	10
ADVOCACY TIPS	10
NOTE TAKING.....	10
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT	11
BURNABY TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION (BTA) SERVICES.....	11

MENTORSHIP	11
JOB SHARE	11
SCHOLARSHIPS.....	11
CAPACITY BUILDING FUND	11
DETACHED DUTY.....	11
DISTRICT PRO-D DAY	11
BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION (BCTF) SERVICES.....	12
SALARY INDEMNITY PLAN	12
HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM	12
BCTF HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM.....	12
PENSION AND BENEFITS.....	12
WHAT IS LIVING WITH BALANCE?	13
WHAT IS THE BCTF WCB ADVOCACY PROGRAM?.....	13
WHAT IS TEACHBC?	13
HOW CAN I BOOK A BCTF WORKSHOP?.....	13
CODE OF ETHICS	14

ABOUT US

OUR BACKGROUND

The Burnaby Teachers Association has been in existence since 1914 and is a union of professionals representing approximately 1,600+ public school teachers in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. All public school teachers in Burnaby belong to the BCTF (British Columbia Teachers' Federation) and the BTA.

Employer	Union
Ministry of Education BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA)	British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF)
Board of Education Administration	Burnaby Teachers' Association (BTA)
Collective Agreement	

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is comprised of elected members who represent the voices of Burnaby's 1600+ teachers. The Burnaby Teachers Association is governed by its Executive Committee – comprised of the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, 3 Local Representatives to the BCTF, Secretary, Treasurer, Elementary Representative, Secondary Representative, Elementary Member-at-Large, Secondary Member-at-Large, Representative to the Labour Council.

The Chairpersons from the Adult Educators, Bargaining/WLC, Grievance, Health and Safety, Indigenous Education, Political Action/Public Relations, Professional Development, Social Justice, Teacher of Colour, and Teachers-on-Call Committees sit on the Executive Committee as well.

TABLE OFFICERS

There are 3 Full-Time Table Officers, who work to support the 2000+ members in Burnaby. They are there to answer any questions you may have and provide any support you may need. Officers are members who have been elected and released from their teaching assignments to serve full-time in the union office.

Work-site union reps are: Pro-D Rep, Health & Safety Rep, Social Justice Contact, Staff Committee Chair, and Staff Reps

WHO ARE BURNABY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS?

We work at more than 60 sites! The term "Burnaby Teachers' Association member" as used in the Collective Agreement means all Board employees hired as:

- a. Teachers,
- b. School psychologists,
- c. Speech/Language pathologists,
- d. Summer school teachers
- e. District Behaviour and Learning Support Specialists

THE ROLE OF THE STAFF REP IS ENSHRINED IN OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The Collective Agreement is a shared agreement between the employer (Burnaby School District) and us the Burnaby Teachers' Association

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT (excerpt)

A.35* STAFF REPRESENTATIVES/UNION COMMUNICATION

1. The Board recognizes the Association's right to select Staff Representatives to act on behalf of the Association. The Burnaby Teachers' Association agrees to provide a list of B.T.A. Staff Representatives to the Director of Employee Relations by October 15 of each school year and notify him/her regularly as changes are made.
2. A Staff Representative will request release time from his/her immediate supervisor in order to attend to emergent situations. Such request will not be unreasonably denied.
3. It is the intent of the parties to investigate grievances or conduct grievance meetings outside the school day so as not to disrupt instruction or preparation time. Where the investigation cannot be effectively accomplished outside the school day or if the redress sought in a grievance is of such urgency as to require a grievance meeting during the day, a request will be made of the superintendent or designate to arrange for a mutually agreeable time for the investigation or grievance meeting. Where release time is arranged, then the teachers involved in the grievance meeting or investigation will suffer no loss of pay.
4. Local association representatives will have the right to conduct association business or convene meetings on the work site provided instruction is not disrupted and appropriate space is available.
5. A member has the right to be accompanied by another association member at any meeting with an administrative officer.
6.
 - a. The Board shall provide a bulletin board in an appropriate place in each school or worksite for the use of the local association. Notices on the bulletin board shall be posted and removed on the authority of the Staff Representative(s). Posted notices shall be signed by a Staff Representative or B.T.A. Executive Council member. Original signed copies of photocopied material will be kept in file at the B.T.A. office for one year.
 - b.* At any location where the Board does not provide a bulletin board for BTA use, the Board shall provide the BTA with a list of the names of adult educators who work at such sites.
7. Subject to availability and there being no additional cost to the Board, then the Association will have the right to use the Board facilities during the week for meeting purposes without charge.
8. The local association will have access at the employer's expense to use of the in-district mail system. The Burnaby Teachers' Association office shall be designated a route stop.

BTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (excerpt)

75. STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

(Procedure)

- 75.02 That BTA members of each school in the district shall, at or before the first staff meeting of the new school year, elect their Staff Representatives from among themselves. Immediately thereafter the Staff Representatives shall choose one of themselves to be designated Senior Staff Representative.
(RA MAY 1975)
- 75.04 Each school shall be entitled, on a per capita basis, to one Staff Representative for each twenty BTA members, and one for any major additional fraction thereof, and an equal number of Alternates. Schools with less than twenty BTA members shall be entitled to elect one Staff Representative and one Alternate.
(GM MAR 1969)
- 75.06 That voting at BTA Representative Assemblies be on the basis of one vote per Staff Representative, Committee Chairperson or Executive member in attendance at the time of the vote. (RA NOV 1986)
- 75.08 That the Burnaby Teachers-On-Call and each Adult Educators' worksite be designated a school for purposes of voting at BTA Representative Assemblies and receiving BTA publications. (RA JUNE 2008)
- 75.10 The Senior Staff Representative shall communicate to the BTA Secretary on, or before, the 15th day of September, the several names, home addresses and telephone numbers of the Staff Representatives and Alternates elected in his/her school; and shall also, from time to time, notify the BTA Secretary immediately of any changes that may occur in this information during the year. (RA NOV 2009)
- 75.12 All BTA members not directly associated with a school staff shall be considered as a school for the purpose of representation on the Representative Assembly. (GM MAR 1969)
- 75.14 That in order that there be accurate and prompt class size surveys in the fall, and in the second semester for semestered schools, release time for Staff Representatives be provided on the basis of up to 2 days per Staff Representative entitlement. These days may only be taken by elected Staff Representatives.
(AGM MAY 2002)

BTA BYLAW (excerpt)

4. REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

- a. Membership of the Representative Assembly shall be comprised of:
 - i. the Staff Representative(s) of each school. (For purposes of representation, each Adult Educators worksite will be considered a school, as will the Teachers-on-Call Committee.);
 - ii. the members of the Executive Council.
- b. Other members of the BTA are entitled to be present at meetings of the Representative Assembly. They may speak but they may not vote.
- c. The QUORUM at a meeting of the Representative Assembly shall be one- third of the members of the Representative Assembly.
- d. Meetings of the Representative Assembly shall be held on a regular basis with a minimum of five per year.
- e. An emergency meeting of the Representative Assembly shall be summoned by the President if petitioned by ten per cent (10%) of the members of the Representative Assembly
- f. Between General Meetings, a Representative Assembly shall manage the Association's affairs in the areas of:
 - i. initiation of general policy;
 - ii. budgetary control;
 - iii. advice and direction of the Executive Council on any matter concerning the welfare of the Association;
 - iv. authorizing or prohibiting any proposal of the Executive Council for action which is contrary to or beyond the scope of Association policy;
 - v. reports, submissions and recommendations to the Annual General Meetings of the Association and Federation;
 - vi. nominations of candidates for election to the Association's Executive Council and the Executive Committee of the Federation;
 - vii. reception of full reports of all actions of the Executive Council, its appointees, and the Association's committees;
 - viii. granting Honorary Association Membership or Honorary Membership in the Association;
 - ix. election of members to fill casual vacancies on Standing Committees on the Executive Council;
 - x. election of members to other committees as required; and
 - xi. such other duties and powers as may, from time to time, be assigned to it by an Association General Meeting.

FIVE SIMPLE TRUTHS

1. The staff rep is the **peer of the principal** in matters related to the interpretation and application of the Collective Agreement in the school.
2. The rights and responsibilities of the staff reps are firmly **grounded in the Collective Agreement, in statute** (Labour Relations Code, School Act, Employment Standards Act, Workers' Compensation Act, Industrial Health and Safety Regulations) in **arbitration jurisprudence** (case law, court decisions.)
3. The Collective Agreement was not imposed by the union on the employer; the CA **represents the mutually agreed terms and conditions of employment** for teachers in the district.
4. The union has a legal obligation to **fairly represent** the members of the bargaining unit.
5. The grievance procedure represents the **most appropriate and least disruptive** way of resolving disputes between employees and employer.

ROLE OF THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVE IN COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT ENFORCEMENT AT SCHOOL-SITES

- Is familiar with the collective agreement
- Raises staff awareness of contract provisions
- Ensures that all parties **abide by the collective agreement**
- Attends to problems identified by staff members
- Determines whether problems are collective-agreement related
- Communicates problems/potential grievances to local union office

KNOW YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

We are currently awaiting our new Collective Agreement, for now the previous one can be found on our website [here](#).

OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Appendix 1: Provincial Matters and Appendix 2: Local Matters

This is an agreed upon split of issues that lists what can be bargained provincially or locally. The simplest way to determine if it is a provincial or local issue is if it costs money. If it does cost money it is a provincial issue.

Section A: The Collective Bargaining Relationship

Deals with the working relationship between the employer and the union. It recognizes the union as the representative for the workers and how it will function and resolve disputes.

Section B: Salary and Economic Benefits

Deals with compensation issues such as salary, allowances and benefits.

Section C: Employment Rights

Deals with employment rights such as the process for resigning and how seniority affects apply for positions

Section D: Working Conditions

Deals with the school calendar specifying bookends for the school year and number of hours in the school day. It also will specify the number of minutes that teachers are entitled to preparation time.

Section E: Personal Practices

Deals with providing a non-sexist environment and a harassment/sexual harassment resolution procedure. It could also include appointments, transfers, post and fill procedures. Evaluation procedures and personnel files.

Section F: Professional Rights

Deals with professional issues such as curriculum change, professional development and professional autonomy.

Section G: Leaves of Absences

Deals with the many types of leaves that are available to teachers. They would include: sick leave, compassionate care leave, maternity leave, bereavement leave, discretionary leave, leave for union business and other leaves with or without pay.

Section H: Committees

Deals with the many types of committees that are available within the school district and joint committees.

The Collective Agreement is grounded in statutes, regulations, and provisions including

- Collective Agreement provisions
- Letters of Understanding (LOU's)
- Local union and district policies
- WCB regulations
- Human Rights Code
- Employment Standards Act
- BC Labour Code
- School Act

LOU stands for Letter of Understanding

A Letter of Understanding is a formal text that sums up the terms and understanding of a collective agreement which mostly has been negotiated up to this point only in spoken form. It reviews the terms of an agreement for a service, a project, or a process and is often written as a step before a more detailed article is incorporated into the collective agreements.

TIPS FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE REP

OBJECTIVES OF THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

- Try to develop a cohesive, positive and productive school team. Ask questions and gather all relevant facts.
- Support each other in your roles.
- Develop a plan at the school level for school union reps to communicate about and coordinate their work.

SCHOOL UNION TEAM

To establish effective member advocacy, collaborate with the Staff Committee Chair, Health & Safety Rep, and Pro-D Chair. Set a time monthly, or whatever works best for you all to meet together, to strategize, debrief and troubleshoot issues.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A COLLEAGUE IS CALLED INTO THE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE

If an administrator wants to see a teacher for a potential discipline issue, they should always have a staff rep of their choice with them. Staff reps are advocates who are present, an information source, a legal authority, a recorder, a witness, an accompanier, and a defender. If they are not comfortable, they can call us at the office at (604) 294-8141. One of our Full-time Table Officers will provide support.

ADVOCACY TIPS

- Plan your meeting strategy before going into any meeting with an administrator.
- Ask questions and gather all relevant facts.
- Be watchful that the member does not jeopardize their rights. Intervene when necessary.
- Remember that advocacy is not the same as problem solving.
- Watch your body language.
- Build a paper trail. Take clear notes!
- Keep the Local President informed.
- Refer issues that you are uncomfortable with to the local office.

NOTE TAKING

Date: _____

Time from: _____ to _____

Location: _____

Meeting initiated by: _____

Reason for meeting: _____

Present: _____

Notes take by: _____

Notes: _____

Keeping a file of notes from meetings and incidents is key if an issue becomes a grievance.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

The BTA has many committees, events and opportunities for members. Please communicate to your school staff all the different opportunities via communication you receive from the BTA.

BURNABY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (BTA) SERVICES

You can help members' access services they need. Here are some BTA and BCTF services and programs.

MENTORSHIP

Many teachers find supportive, understanding colleagues at their schools, and to help support and formalize those relationships, the BTA and the School district sponsor a Mentorship Program. The mentorship program is a wonderful opportunity for new teachers to benefit from the expertise of a more experienced colleague, someone with a sympathetic ear, and someone who will be there to answer their questions.

JOB SHARE

Job sharing refers to two (2) employees who elect to share a full-time position. The BTA holds a meeting every spring to provide teachers with a continuing contract information about the job share process and assistance finding a partner.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The BTA awards several scholarships throughout the school year. One of our annual scholarships is awarded to the graduating grade 12 Child of a BTA member currently employed by School District #41. The scholarship application forms are available in the Spring, being awarded in the Fall after the BTA Scholarship Committee meets.

CAPACITY BUILDING FUND

The BTA reached a grievance settlement with the District in 2017 awarding the local \$75000 to be used for capacity building initiatives consistent with the objectives of the BTA/BCTF, ongoing professional development opportunities, and other similar activities. Last year, teachers applied and accessed these funds by applying to the BTA Capacity Building Fund Committee. There are still funds available for our members. See our website [here](#) for more information and the application form.

DETACHED DUTY

Detached Duty is a funding program that was established by the Board for the purpose of promoting the professional development of the teaching staff of the School District. If you wish to apply to go to a professional development event/ workshop that requires funding, please see the attached document on how to apply or check out the BTA website [here](#)

DISTRICT PRO-D DAY

The District Pro-D Day is held in February every year. It is organized by the BTA Pro-D Committee and the Joint (BTA and administrators) Professional Development Committee.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' FEDERATION (BCTF) SERVICES

SALARY INDEMNITY PLAN

The BCTF operates a Salary Indemnity Plan that provides benefits to members who are prevented from working due to illness or injury. This plan is funded by BCTF member contribution and provides benefits beginning the day after the last day of paid work or sick leave. However, if the injury or illness is work-related the member must file a Workers' Compensation Board claim. If anyone is almost out of sick days, they should contact Income Security at the BCTF, to request a short-term SIP package.

HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Health and Wellness Program, operated through the Salary Indemnity Plan, is a rehabilitation program to assist members who have medical conditions or disabilities to return to work as early as possible. The program is also available to members who are having difficulty maintaining their teaching assignment because of medical conditions. Support for individual members is available on a voluntary basis, through the Health and Wellness Program. The BCTF has rehabilitation consultants throughout the province who provide these support services to members which includes the following:

- working with teachers in their own communities
- co-ordinating and plan individualized treatment and wellness interventions in consultation with health care providers
- working with employers and unions to support a return to work that is durable and sustainable
- knowledge of the work that teachers do and the workplace environment.

BCTF HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM

Following the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation that applies to all workplaces, the BCTF Health and Safety Program provides support and advice to local officers and members regarding:

- fundamental health and safety rights
- potential hazards and risks
- processes to follow in reporting hazards and incidents
- training program for health and safety representatives

PENSION AND BENEFITS

The BCTF has full time staff dedicated to providing information regarding your teachers' pension and group benefits including MSP, Extended Health Care, Dental Care, Life Insurance and BCTF group RRSPs. Assistance can be provided on a variety of topics, such as:

- how your pension is accrued
- how to purchase service after leaves
- what pension options are available upon retirement
- what happens to your pension in the event of a marriage breakdown
- transferring service from another teachers' pension plan or public service pension plan
- Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement
- optional life insurance available through the BCTF and your school district
- optional BCTF group RRSPs with payroll deduction.

LIVING WITH BALANCE

Living with Balance is a group wellness initiative exclusively for members. Developed and piloted in 2009, the program consists of a series of workshops to provide strategies and skills for living a healthier lifestyle and managing the stressors that exist at home and in the workplace, including:

- improving personal well-being
- understanding our problems and learning to restructure our thinking
- defining work-life balance and boundaries
- attaining goals toward wellness
- understanding the importance of social connections.

BCTF WCB ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Following the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation that applies to all workplaces, the BCTF WCB Advocacy Program provides support and advice to members regarding:

- fundamental health and safety rights
- processes to follow in reporting injuries or occupational diseases
- advocacy in appealing WCB claims which have been denied or are inaccurate in the compensation.

TEACHBC

The BCTF has launched TeachBC, a website and online database for BCTF members to share teaching resources relevant to the BC K-12 curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to help us build this resource by uploading your teaching materials, lessons, and research.

Looking for a lesson plan, learning activity, or teaching resource you can use in your classroom? TeachBC may just be the resource you need. With hundreds of entries, it's the BCTF's resource-sharing website and online database created to help teachers find teaching materials and research relevant to the BC K-12 curriculum.

You can search by subject, grade, or type of resource and download any item for free. We only ask that you please help build this resource by uploading your teaching materials too.

HOW CAN I BOOK A BCTF WORKSHOP?

There are workshops available to your staff (Pro-D days, for example) through the BCTF. They are free to book as long as you have minimum 15 participants. For more information, please visit the BCTF's workshop page:

<https://bctf.ca/pd/workshops.aspx?id=233053>

CODE OF ETHICS

The Code of Ethics states general rules for all members of the BTA/BCTF for maintaining high standards of professional service and conduct towards students, Colleagues, and the professional union.

1. The member speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity, and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.
2. The member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare. The member follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.
3. A privileged relationship exists between members and students. The member refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
4. The member is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/guardians the practices employed in discharging the member's professional duties.
5. The 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.
6. The member acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in her or his professional union.
7. The member adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.
8. The member acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of her or his professional union.
9. The member, as an individual or as a member of a group of members, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals.