



President's Newsletter



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Fellow MTU Members,

Welcome back! We are only two weeks in and the smell of pumpkin spice is already in the air...and on TV, and the radio, and Costco (wait, that's the advent calendars – did I mention that this week it was also 100 days until Christmas?)



I have often been struck by how “life moves pretty fast,” as Ferris Bueller noted – I am feeling the pace of this year already, and I am sure you all are feeling it too! I wanted to wait to write to you all until I had been through the first District Advisory Committee for Health and Safety Meeting as well as the first Labour Management meeting to see what the potential zeitgeist for the year was shaping up to be, and both those meetings yielded information that I think it is important that you know. Here goes my first list of the year –I hope it is useful to you.



1. **Health & Safety** - The District is taking a close look at how Health Safety in general is working in the district. Be aware of both your rights and responsibilities as an employee in regards to WorkSafe.
2. **WorkSafe Claims Process** - Be sure to report any injury you receive at school to the first aid attendant and your supervisor and fill out the 6A. Same goes for falling ill at school – if you can't find the first aid attendant, be sure to at least report to your supervisor and fill out the WorkSafe 6A form. The Employer has indicated that any member who leaves school property and initiates a WorkSafe Claim without following this procedure may have their claim challenged. The BCTF does recommend following the claims process outlined by WorkSafe. Look for an email from the district outlining the WorkSafe claims process in detail.
3. **Safe Work Procedures** - These procedures need a robust review and the Employer is actively working on creating Safe Work Procedures for all the jobs in the district including teachers. If you are able, please consider participating in this process – release time for this important work will be provided.
4. **Restraint and Seclusion procedure and form** – In the event that you make physical contact with a child that could be construed as a restraint, please fill out one of these forms. There have been several instances where district investigations were initiated for small incidents which could have been dealt with at the site level had they been reported to the school administration. Your principal has been directed by district staff to go over the procedure and form for this as the Annual Admin Procedures only requires that you go over the policy pertaining to this. Reminder- the An-

- nual Admin Procedure must be done by September 30, 2023.
5. Remedy – I approached the Employer about rolling over the Remedy agreement again for this year, and the Employer has indicated they are looking to overhaul the Remedy agreement this year. I will present their proposal at the AGM so be sure and be there to have your voice heard and your vote count. I will look to the membership for their guidance for this matter.
 6. TTOC Availability Agreement - The TTOC Availability Agreement has once again been signed. Teachers may be paid out for their prep time if they are asked to cover at the middle and high schools at the end of each month, and elementary teachers may be paid out if they miss their prep and it is not made up within the month.
 7. FSA Campaign - The FSA campaign will go ahead this year. Our MTU staff will prepare the letters and they will be delivered to your school prior to the FSAs being administered. If you have early information on the timing of FSAs at your school, please call the MTU Office.
 8. Mentorship - The Mentorship Program package will be emailed out to the membership soon. Please consider being a mentor for teachers new to the profession, their grade level, or our district. Do not hesitate to put in an application if you want to be mentored, and if you can't find a mentor, we will help you do so. In addition, the BCTF has a fantastic program with different acceptance criteria which allows teachers to access mentorship over a longer period of time with the majority of the cost being borne by the BCTF. Please contact the MTU Office for more information.
 9. Cell Phone Use - Cell phone use in school – The Board is looking at a policy on cell phone use. Please be mindful of how you use your cell phone during the day as the Employer has attempted to discipline people for personal cell phone use during the school day. Be sure that you are only

using your cell phone for work reasons during instructional time. The MTU advises that posts to social media only be made during scheduled breaks – to be absolutely safe, make those posts outside of the school hours.

10. BCTF Health & Wellness - Lastly, I want to remind everyone of the BCTF Health and Wellness Program. Health and Wellness is well known to members who have had to take a medical leave but this program can actually support you with Wellness even if you are still at work. If you are curious, please get in touch with me at the MTU Office.

I want to leave you with a similar message to my message last year – look out for each other. Find your people and support each other. Be mindful of the Code of Ethics and talk to your colleagues directly about concerns. Keep an eye out for the new members of our collective – coming to work in a new district can be just as intimidating as entering the teaching profession. We need to continue to build community in this “post-pandemic” year, but I am happy to share that the Employer asserts we are in a better place for staffing this year than we were last year. I am inclined to believe them based on what I have observed alone as I have attended four hiring events since last June where they onboarded anywhere from 8 – 23 employees. That is not to say there will be no shortages, but I am hoping there will be rather less this year. Keep me informed about that - and anything else you think I should know about what is happening in the district.

I urge you strongly to come out next Wednesday to our General Meeting on September 27, 2023 at the Heritage Park Cafetorium to take part in our local governance and use your voice and your vote to guide me as I represent you this year. Take care and be safe out there, my friends.

Shannon Bowsfield

