

## QUESTIONS FOR 2020 BCTF EC CANDIDATES

### Table Officers

#### 1. What specific strengths would you bring to the Executive table at the BCTF?

##### PRESIDENT

###### Teri Mooring (Quesnel):

I have an extensive set of experiences and a varied background. My experience as a classroom teacher for 20 years in grades 6 and 7, informs my perspective and priorities. I also took on a variety of roles at the local level, including chairing various committees, Local Representative, Vice President and Local President. My provincial experience includes being a Member at Large, 1st and 2nd Vice President and currently BCTF President.

Over the years I have also placed a priority on developing relationships with government, the other education stakeholders and various education-related groups including parent groups dedicated to inclusion of all students.

I am also one of the lead negotiators on the provincial bargaining team. Balancing all these roles requires stamina, tenacity, strategic-thinking and a deep knowledge of the issues.

###### Dave Harper (Campbell River):

I bring 30 years of activism and institutional knowledge of my local and the BCTF to the table. As a result, I have developed a sense of long-term local and provincial perspective when it comes to serving the members. I served as a member at large (2000-2002) when the BC Liberals stripped our provincial contract and vaporized many local agreements. As a result, I have experience in working with a team to solve difficult BCTF budgetary and policy decisions. It was with great pride that I saw our long-term plan to restore our provincial and local language restored by the courts.

##### 1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT

###### Clint Johnston (Chilliwack):

Integrity, a growth mindset, and the ability to synthesize different pieces of information to see the big picture. Additionally, I would bring considerable experience at both the local and provincial levels of our own union, and the federal level through working with teacher unions across the country as a Vice President of the Canadian Teachers Federation.

###### Richard Hotson (Nisga'a):

My interest in listening to and understanding all sides of an issue.

My awareness of and sensitivity to racism, privilege and colonialist attitudes acquired by over three decades working in School District Nisga'a and my nonthreatening way of explaining what I observe.

My passion for learning about the everyday experiences of teachers in the classrooms and raising awareness of both the successes and challenges faced by teachers.

I believe I have a unique creative thought process when considering issues.

My unwavering belief in the power of true solidarity.

##### 2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT

###### Carole Gordon (Central Okanagan):

I have extensive experience, not just at the BCTF Executive level but in many areas that connect to the broad work of the Federation: local union (2nd VP, various chairs), labour movement (labour council president), political action (provincial candidate), community partnerships (United Way director)

I am a good listener who appreciates everyone's perspectives on an issue. It's important to me that I understand the experiences of others, discuss issues, and receive feedback as part of decision-making.

###### Stephen Querengesser (Haida-Gwaii):

My varied experience as a TTOC, an elementary, and a secondary classroom teacher is one of my greatest strengths. My experience in nearly all of the positions on my local executive also deeply informs my leadership so that I can lead with integrity and example, only asking members to do things that I too am willing to do. I listen deeply to my colleagues, and think creatively in bringing different viewpoints to a common understanding. I am an active political lobbyist in our region, and have been involved in local negotiations for the past three contracts, including chairing the bargaining table. As a past president of a small rural local for almost 4 years, I bring lots of experience in all of the functions of a local from grievances and arbitrations to chairing meetings and fiscal management.

## 2. Describe a specific action, initiated by you, that resulted in a positive change for your Local/BCTF.

### **PRESIDENT**

#### **Teri Mooring (Quesnel):**

There are a number of areas where I have acted to improve the lives of members. As 2nd Vice President, I took a lead role in the changes made to our Teacher Pension Plan; I also took the lead in communicating the changes to members. I'm extremely proud that we were able to work with government to modernize the plan and eliminate the built-in inequity experienced by lower paid members and those who work part time.

I am also committed to our work on equity and inclusion. Breaking down barriers faced by equity seeking groups benefits our entire membership. I am also committed to our work on the SOGI Collaborative, this group involves all the education stakeholders and works cooperatively to eliminate the systemic discrimination faced by students and members who identify as being LGBTQ2S+.

I'm also proud to have been on the BCTF executive committee when we made difficult decisions to reduce our expenditures, and recommend to various AGMs, that our membership fees remain consistent. This work enabled us to build our fund balances including our Collective Bargaining Defense Fund. The BCTF is now on solid financial footing because of decisions made by the various executive committees over the last 6 years.

#### **Dave Harper (Campbell River):**

Last year we used our local professional development language and the hiring of a new superintendent to get our local and site-based professional development allotments increased from \$100 per F.T.E. to 250 dollars per F.T.E. , thereby increasing our membership's professional autonomy around their professional development choices and options.

### **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

#### **Clint Johnston (Chilliwack):**

In my time as president of the Chilliwack Teachers Association, I initiated the creation of a Chair of the Aboriginal Education committee, who sat on our Executive. This resulted in individuals becoming more engaged and pursuing other leadership opportunities within the BCTF. It was one of the steps that raised the prominence of Aboriginal Education issues in the local and there has since been continued work by the local-including hosting an Aboriginal style Induction ceremony.

#### **Richard Hotson (Nisga'a):**

Promoted ultimate accountability of our local officers by working to create the impeachment process in our local constitution. I think I may have played an early role in the creation of the BCTF policy of members being able to vote in one local only. I approached a BCTF EC member from Nelson and stated (tongue in cheek) that if I ever decided to leave Nisga'a I might come to live in Nelson and organize and encourage all the TTOCs in Nelson, Castlegar and Trail (this was before amalgamation) to sign on to the TTOC lists in all three locals and attend all three Local's AGMs. We could have the largest voting block in each local and we could influence the decisions and elections in all three locals. Sometime after that conversation the BCTF moved to allow members to vote in one local only. I believe this was a positive change for the BCTF.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

#### **Carole Gordon (Central Okanagan):**

As a table officer in my local, I challenged the district's requirement for women on pregnancy leave to return at a natural break, resulting in them either giving up part of their statutory leave and time with their child or taking the full leave and giving up their school position. While we can't imagine this happening today, but it turned out that 8 other locals were experiencing the same violation of the Employment Standards Act. My perseverance had a positive change for women in my local and numerous others.

#### **Stephen Querengesser (Haida-Gwaii):**

I listened to the voices of Haida and other Indigenous teachers in our local and brought the employer and teachers together to find solutions to the sources of discrimination and resentment. I guided our local to move a motion with the purpose of motivating our district and the rest of the province to act on revitalizing Indigenous languages. This successfully resulted in our district creating a teacher position to add support and resources to the instruction of the Haida Language across the district. It also influenced our school board to more actively advocate for Indigenous languages at the BC School Trustee Association AGM.

### 3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them?

#### **PRESIDENT**

##### **Teri Mooring (Quesnel):**

My top three priorities include successfully concluding the negotiations for our collective agreement, continuing to push back on the prevalence model of funding for inclusive education, and working with government to address the teacher shortage.

In terms of bargaining, we are returning to the table at the end of February. The bargaining team will pursue the priorities laid out by the bargaining conference to achieve the best possible deal for teachers. It has been frustrating to face concessions and we need to continue to push back against any erosion of our restored language while gaining class size and composition language for the locals that don't have these provisions. The other top priority is improving our salary. We are the second lowest paid teachers nationally, restructuring the salary grid and an additional lift at the top of the grid is necessary to improve our salary beyond the 2/2/2 mandate. A better salary will enable BC to attract teachers from other jurisdictions.

We were very happy to learn that government would not implement prevalence funding in this budget cycle. Our collective advocacy created enough pressure on government to influence this decision. However, we need to remain vigilant and continue to build the case around the negative consequences of this model.

The teacher shortage disadvantages many students across the province, particularly those who are most vulnerable and those living in the Northern regions of the province. The shortage also puts pressure on teachers who provide support to those teaching under Letters of Permission. The shortage further impacts teachers who aren't able to engage in Professional Development opportunities, or come to work sick, due to the lack of available TTOCs. There are many actions government can take to improve the situation, including implementing the recommendations from the 2017 Recruitment and Retention Task Force. We need to continue to pressure government to direct resources to resolving this issue.

##### **Dave Harper (Campbell River):**

My first priority is to work with the E.C. and the Representative Assembly to gradually return the BCTF membership fee to 1.69 percent. This would be dealt with through the BCTF budgeting procedures, as per policy. The Finance report at the AGM will make it clear to delegates and members that the fee is very much in excess of the needs for ongoing expenses. A significant surplus exists as a result of the addition of 4,000 new members, due to the SCOC win. And that is without any new revenues from any future or retroactive raises.

Secondly, I would like to see the Federation, starting with the Executive Committee as the role model, move more committee meetings online with high-end broadband web technology, to engage in true carbon neutrality, as opposed to buying "carbon offsets". The BCTF needs to model the necessary behaviour, not just call for support for climate strikes. Carbon neutrality must come from within our own organization. Finally, I want to see a provincial survey of all BCTF members to develop baseline data on what members know about BCTF services and governance in 2020. Only then can we develop a membership education plan in order to increase the engagement of the membership.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

##### **Clint Johnston (Chilliwack):**

Priority one will be contributing to the successful conclusion of fair contract bargained at the table. Another priority would be to continue working to increase the equity of representation and opportunities in our union by recognizing and removing barriers to members of equity-seeking groups in our membership. A third priority will be to continue advocating to government to make some changes in the Ministry of Education that will improve the relationship and ability to advocate on behalf of our members for positive changes. Much of our work that affects the working conditions of our members happens through policy change, and we need better access to and influence on those in the ministry in order to have a greater positive effect for our members.

##### **Richard Hotson (Nisga'a):**

My first priority is to publicly acknowledge the important vital work the teachers do everyday and encourage them to share their stories. I hope to visit (by invitation) classrooms, schools and locals and listen and learn about the challenges and joys that teachers are experiencing. I believe that public awareness of teachers stories is the best way to create public support during Bargaining and help to achieve a good deal at the table for our members which is my second priority.

My third priority is to raise awareness of racism, privilege, colonialist attitudes both within and without our union.

### 3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them? - *continued*

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

##### **Carole Gordon (Central Okanagan):**

1. Getting a negotiated settlement that is good for teachers across the province is the number one priority. This will take patience, perseverance and strategic maneuvering by the Executive as well as public pressure by both leadership and members on trustees and the provincial government to come to the table and bargain.
2. Ensuring members are supported in their classrooms and schools during
  - a. the substantial change in education policy (eg. redesigned curriculum, assessment and reporting),
  - b. the constant testing of restored composition language, and
  - c. the challenges of meeting the diverse needs of students while maintaining their own health & wellness
3. Member engagement. Whether it's the local or the BCTF, we are constantly reaching out to find ways to engage members in their union so that the diversity of our membership is reflected in its decisions and direction forward. This requires imagination and a willingness to explore possibilities beyond our own experiences and paths to engagement. Project 2050 is a good start to engaging the newest generation of teachers and the work needs continued support of the Federation.

##### **Stephen Querengesser (Haida-Gwaii):**

My top three priorities will be:

1. Bargaining is a matter that impacts all members, and is a foundational part of the work of the union. Bargaining is a continuous cycle, and it is essential that we approach bargaining and the preparation for bargaining in an ongoing manner, to keep members engaged and invested. I would focus on achieving a resolution to this round of bargaining and begin early to develop a bargaining plan for the subsequent round with the priorities of professional pay, professional workload, and professional autonomy to unify teachers and to raise the status of our profession.
  - As we set the stage for the next round of negotiations, and any work we can do now to improve our communication and working relationship with the current government will lay the foundation for upcoming negotiations and ongoing discussions on the prevalence model.
2. Increased member engagement focused on reaching all teachers, especially making authentic space for under-represented teacher groups in the union.
  - I will work on this first, by visiting as many locals as I can and talking with as many teachers and local union leaders about what is and isn't working for member engagement.
  - The BCTF has done a lot of work on equity and inclusion, and I will look for ways to support the momentum that our Executive and membership has taken steps towards. This work relies on an informed and engaged membership, and we must put in the effort to lead in this regard. The outreach with members in summits and issues sessions as well as the important work of the advisory committees have provided essential perspectives on continuing to improve upon this work.
  - I will also look at how the Federation can improve its training for local presidents and school reps. I completed my major project for my Masters on transformational union leadership for member engagement, and would like to apply current academic theory with practical examples of success (eg. Chicago Teachers' Union) to develop better training that reflects the needs of our diverse locals.
  - The BCTF 2050 project has provided important insights into the barriers that members new to the BCTF face in becoming active and involved union members.
3. Unity and simplifying common vision on the EC
  - I will use my strengths of listening, and leading by example to add to the collaboration, respect, and trust that is already present at the Executive Committee.
  - Many members are unclear how our organization operates, or are unsure how to advocate within the BCTF for changes they wish to see. I would support increasing transparency about decision-making structures and ensuring that members see their voices reflected democratically in their union.

#### 4. Do you have anything else to add on educational matters, public policy or other imperatives?

##### **PRESIDENT**

##### **Teri Mooring (Quesnel):**

There are so many other imperatives we also need to continue to work on as a Federation. The FSAs and secondary provincial assessments are another area where we find ourselves at odds with government. While we were making progress in this area with the previous government, the current government has taken an even more conservative approach to standardized testing.

We also continue to push back against the accountability agenda and the over reliance on questionable data. We are doing this work at a number of tables including the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning.

We also continue to press government around the public funding going to private schools, in particular the elite private schools. While we oppose the public money going to any private school, we are encouraging government to take a phased approach by immediately ceasing to fund the elite schools. In this budget cycle \$36M went to private schools. The public system could have used this additional money to do things such as fund much-needed curricular resources.

While we applaud government for the work they are beginning on funding the development of resources for the sexual health curriculum and the infusion of indigenous knowledges and perspectives, so much more needs to be done. Many schools need basic equipment and concrete resources. It shouldn't fall on teachers to self-fund classroom resources, but that is what continues to happen due to the lack of dedicated funding.

##### **Dave Harper (Campbell River):**

I believe that we would be better served, subject to an R.A. decision, to make the Fraser Institute school rankings report the object of our opposition to the F.S.A. For example, a campaign with the partner groups to have all F.S.A. data aggregated at the district level would destroy the Fraser Institute's long held strategy and tactic to vilify public education, by denying them access to the data necessary to create the rankings.

##### **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

##### **Clint Johnston (Chilliwack):**

I think that we are experiencing right now a particularly difficult time for education in not only our own province, but across the country and globally. There is a conscious neo-liberal agenda being advanced at varying rates and by varying means in jurisdictions all over the globe, including our own country. While we have a left-leaning government right now in BC who espouse a value to public education, we cannot discount the affect that such a massive movement has on governments. Much of the influence they will be experiencing, and many of the groups they will be lobbied by and interact with will have these agendas and will exert influence on policies that affect our members. We need to be alive to this big picture, and the leadership we have in place needs to have knowledge of and experience with these issues in order to have the best lens on changes we see in our own province. We need to actively defend and promote the benefits of properly and publicly funded public education through all of our work.

##### **Richard Hotson (Nisga'a):**

I am very disappointed the current NDP Minister of Education did not replace the previous government's bureaucrats or at least impress upon them that there is a new government with a new ideology related to education and challenge them to change. As a result of this inaction we are facing what I call the BC Liberals plan B to undermine our class size and composition language.

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

##### **Carole Gordon (Central Okanagan):**

The Federation needs to be responsive to the needs of its members and locals while continuing to pressure government to hold to its stated values while in opposition. We need to continue to engage in dialogue with the Ministry, advocate for increased funding to meet the demands placed on classrooms and schools today, and advance the principles the BCTF has long held about the value of a strong public education system. I commit to listen, discuss issues, and make decisions in the best interest of the Federation, public education and members.

##### **Stephen Querengesser (Haida-Gwaii):**

The actions taken by the BCTF, all locals, and the other stakeholders in education on the prevalence funding are an excellent example of how we can influence public policy when actively working together. Equitable access to quality public education is critical to the function of a democratic society. Because of this, we as representatives of the teaching profession need to advocate for the learning conditions of our students, which are in turn our working conditions.

## 5. If elected, how would you support locals and what ideas do you have to increase union engagement?

### **PRESIDENT**

#### **Teri Mooring (Quesnel):**

Support for locals to increase member engagement can and should take a variety of forms. Locals all have their unique circumstances and contexts, what works in one local does not work in another. The BCTF has undertaken a number of research initiatives in order to better inform us around different segments of our teaching population, such as the BCTF 2050 project. This work has given us insights into the needs and expectations of new members. Being personally invited to attend meetings and local events and time for networking are a couple of areas teachers identified as being important. Our members need to find an entry point into our union whether it's through PD opportunities, Social Justice issues or our Health and Safety work, these opportunities need to be brought to members' attention.

We can also learn from each other. So many locals are doing a lot of work around member engagement and those initiatives can be shared with other locals, particularly those in the same regions. Zone meetings are a great space to share these ideas and initiatives between locals.

#### **Dave Harper (Campbell River):**

In order to increase union engagement, we need to ask our members what they know about BCTF services and governance, in order to get a baseline understanding of where the members are now. In the local office I am often "gobsmacked" to discover that members are not aware of many of the core services of the BCTF, such as salary indemnity and professional development. I would hope that these members are 'outliers', but how do we really know? Hence I support a survey in order to build a membership education plan that meets their needs. A knowledgeable membership will be a more engaged membership.

### **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

#### **Clint Johnston (Chilliwack):**

I would support locals by being readily available to them as I always have been: by email, by phone, and in person when asked. I feel that the support of being available as a resource, as a reinforcing voice at meetings, and as a representative of the BCTF when members have questions that are properly directed to the BCTF allows local leadership to focus on the work that they need to do in their local. Solidarity is a strong tool that needs to exist at all times—not just when we are undertaking large actions. By being a visible presence to leadership and members of locals, we show that we are truly a democratic and accessible organization. I will also connect with locals around the success and challenges of key functions—training, conferences, governance meetings, etc.—in order to look for solutions to any problems they perceive with those events. We need to constantly ensure that we are serving our members and locals as well as we can. In terms of engagement, I am actually much more interested in listening to and learning from the work being done by the BCTF 2050 project group. Having heard just the initial report back, I can already see that they will be providing excellent insight and advice on what our members are looking for from their union moving forward. Sometimes leadership means listening rather than speaking.

#### **Richard Hotson (Nisga'a):**

Each local is unique and has their own set of challenges and strengths. I would need to visit the locals or at least have significant conversations with the local officers to understand what support the local has determined it needs. Once understood then appropriate support can be offered. One example is the difference in accessibility to some BCTF conferences between different sizes of locals. Some conferences allow one representative from each local so my small local of less than 40 members is entitled to one representative, the same number that a much larger local with thousands of members is entitled to have, I am sure this creates some frustration in the larger locals and will need to be addressed in the future. I believe addressing these kinds of issues concerns is an important element of increasing union engagement. In my experience the best way to increase union engagement is by communication directly with members and insure they feel they are a valued member of the union.

5. If elected, how would you support locals and what ideas do you have to increase union engagement? *continued*

**2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

**Carole Gordon (Central Okanagan):**

While not necessarily in Coquitlam, many locals do not take advantage of the full cadre of BCTF grants to support local activities. We continue to promote them throughout the year but there may be different needs that locals identify that can be supported by the BCTF. In my travels to locals, I have seen the diversity in local union structures and practices --- there is no one template, yet there is great work happening in all corners of the province. It's important that locals have opportunities to share ideas and support each other, to possibly reimagine their work in making connections with members as the BCTF is doing with Project 2050. We need to ensure that opportunities to engage with the union are open to all members, that barriers are removed and, as I stated above, that the diversity of our membership is reflected in its decisions and path forward.

**Stephen Querengesser (Haida-Gwaii):**

The power of a union is in the collective solidarity of its members. Our nearly 45,000 members have many diverse experiences in the locals across the province, and engaging with their stories and perspective is what we need influencing our union.

- I will embrace the opportunities to visit as many locals to share the vision of the executive, and to hear members in the context of their local.
- I would like to explore web-based opportunities to increase regular member participation in provincial union meetings and/or training opportunities. Many companies and organizations are able to utilize this technology, and I am familiar with its use on Haida Gwaii due to our geographical layout.
- Last year I completed my Masters in Educational Leadership, with my major project focused on creating a workshop for union leaders. I would like to support new presidents and union leaders by providing better training in transformational leadership to support member engagement.
- Currently, some locals do not fully access the grants that are available to them for greater member engagement and training. I would like to task the executive to look into the reasons for this, and how to make our current grant structure more effective at reaching all locals.

**QUESTIONS FOR 2020 BCTF EC CANDIDATES**  
**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE – DESIGNATED ABORIGINAL MEMBER**

**1. What specific strengths would you bring to the Executive table at the BCTF?**

**Marjorie Dumont, C'tan (VESTA):**

I bring many strengths from my experience and the teachings of others. I think a lot of people know me as being an effective and thoughtful listener, and this means that I can continue to learn from others who bring perspectives that are different from mine. I'm able to pull ideas and views together in a way that responds to the needs of others. I'm good at finding ways forward.

I'm empathetic, passionate and caring, and I first and foremost consider problems through the lens of the collective. I'm always looking for ways to lift people up or lift the collective up. If I make a mistake, I admit to it, with students, with colleagues and in my union work.

I'm knowledgeable about my culture, and deeply connected to the traditions and cultures of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, and through my work in the classroom, and on staff at the BCTF. The designated position for an Aboriginal member requires an individual who is knowledgeable and willing to continue to learn alongside members while we continue the decolonizing work of our union.

**2. Describe a specific action, initiated by you, that resulted in a positive change for your Local/BCTF.**

**Marjorie Dumont, C'tan (VESTA):**

One of the things that I've done throughout my time at the union, in both my local and when I was on staff at the BCTF was to provide leadership when we began the process of land acknowledgments. I created a brochure with information about how to begin acknowledging the territory on which our schools and union events were located. I supported the incorporation of that practice into BCTF SURTS and other Pro-D workshops. I worked with locals to build appropriate land acknowledgment practices, and continued this work at the Executive Committee table, at the Annual General Meeting, and worked to create space for Aboriginal voices to decolonize meeting structures. I have worked to keep equity and issues that impact Aboriginal teachers on the table at the BCTF, and challenge structures that act as barriers for Aboriginal teachers or issues to receive the attention they require.

During the rollout of the redesigned curriculum, I worked with my local Aboriginal Education committee (Surrey) to support teachers with their practice when they teach the new curriculum. It was important during that time to find ways to help teachers feel comfortable with the new curriculum. Teachers will each have their own ways to approach the teaching, but our role was to help teachers feel comfortable teaching the Aboriginal content of the new curriculum.

**3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them?**

**Marjorie Dumont, C'tan (VESTA):**

Equity and Inclusion – It is important that our structures and processes do not discourage or block First Nations Metis and Inuit, members of colour and women from participating fully in our union and acknowledge the individual and systemic barriers that are at play. It's essential that our practices are respectful of and acknowledge different ways of participating. I'd work with others to ensure that supports are in place for this change to be successful and to build the capacity of the organization as a whole.

Recruitment and Retention – I have roots in rural BC but work in urban schools. I see how profoundly the recruitment and retention crisis has impacted teachers and students across the province. At the bargaining table, we need to address issues surrounding workload and salary that keep us so far behind our Canadian counterparts in order to ensure that BC is a place where teachers want to come and work and stay. All students deserve a certified teacher in their classroom, and the related workload on members being pulled to cover

failures to fill needs to be addressed. As a member of Teacher Council, I have continued to raise the issue of certification delays and the impact of non-certified teachers in the workplace.

Violence in the Workplace – We need to address the safety of our teachers as well as to create safe working and learning spaces in our schools. We're working on naming the violence in our classrooms but we need to be building proactivity into our practice. Reporting processes need to be clear and teachers need to be supported in insisting that they are safe when they are at work, that their students have safe learning spaces, and that students have the supports they need. In far too many cases, teacher safety plans are overlooked, and that needs to change.

#### **4. Do you have anything else to add on educational matters, public policy or other imperatives?**

##### **Marjorie Dumont, C'tan (VESTA):**

We need to continue to fight against funding models that remove the direct relationship between student need and targeted funding. Funding needs to be allocated to direct service for students. Pushing back against the prevalence model was an important step for teachers to take, as was educating parents and fellow stakeholders about the issues facing BC schools. The temporary shelving of the prevalence model is a success teachers should feel proud of, but the struggle is not over. New initiatives on evaluation and assessment of student learning will need to be opposed with the same vigor. Proposed changes to the funding model will disproportionately impact Aboriginal students and students with learning needs or disabilities, and this is not something we can allow to happen.

An important issue for Aboriginal communities across BC is the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. This is a crisis impacting families, staff and students. We need to create curriculum that will support students and their families, but that will also build capacity among communities to be safe.

#### **5. If elected, how would you support locals and what ideas do you have to increase union engagement?**

##### **Marjorie Dumont, C'tan (VESTA):**

Union engagement has to be personal. We've learned from years of successful outreach as well as from our colleagues who participated in the BCTF 2050 project that connections between members plays the most significant role in strong union participation and a strong union. Direct connections between members and the union, through face to face opportunities, sharing their stories and linking them to steps the union is taking to address those issues is one of our most important strategies. But this isn't just about connecting their stories to the work the union is doing, encouraging them to look at what support our union offers. Most importantly, it's about our union being knowledgeable about the issues that are important to our members and responding to them in ways that acknowledge their struggles and identities. Whenever we've listened carefully to members or built opportunities for members' voices to be raised, as we did with the BCTF 2050 project, the Issues Sessions on Racism, the Inclusion Summit or our Advisory Committees, we have become stronger as a union.

On the Executive Committee, I will continue to support and advocate for grants so that locals can do work in the way that is most effective given their membership and the context in which they work. The BCTF has an ability to co-ordinate and support, but locals will best understand their needs and determine the most effective path forward., I commit to ensuring that communications continue to be member-focused and help to unite members across the province. I support full sublocal participation in the activities of the Federation, and will continue to support provincial outreach out to members and locals through provincial structures such as zones, and Representative Assemblies, while maximizing these structures to solicit the feedback and direction of the membership through their elected representatives.

**QUESTIONS FOR 2020 BCTF EC CANDIDATES**  
**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE – DESIGNATED RACIALIZED MEMBER**

**1. What specific strengths would you bring to the Executive table at the BCTF?**

**Benula Bunjun (Sooke):**

Leadership and experience. I have been a BCTF member for over 30 years. I have also been a Local Representative in two Locals, a Local President for a larger Local, and have been a SURT facilitator for a decade. Due to these honours, I have a pulse on the membership and understand that it is important to allow all voices to be heard. I am a pre-emptive problem solver who believes in getting the work done in a collaborative manner. I understand that I am working for the membership as well as within the democratic process afforded us by our union.

**Khaled Dardir (Abbotsford):**

In short, the singular characteristic which I would bring to the executive is perspective. I hold two master's degrees and several certifications in the field of education. Having come from the US, where I worked as a teacher, supervisor, and technology coordinator, I am fortunate to see both the power of the Union, as well as foresee how government policies can complicate things if not thought through properly. I aim to build community ties and open channels of communication to ensure the general public is also privy to these insights.

**Kiran Sidhu (Richmond):**

I value the democratic principles and processes of our union and will be proud to represent teachers across BC with a strong ethical foundation based on the need to reflect and consider the diverse need of our membership. I believe in healthy debate and in promoting the collective efficacy of team dynamics. I am an organizer, active in the BCTF, my local and my community. I listen carefully, do my research, and work hard to develop informed positions based on consultation and consideration.

**2. Describe a specific action, initiated by you, that resulted in a positive change for your Local/BCTF.**

**Benula Bunjun (Sooke):**

Provincially, I was honoured to part of the movement which advocated for our français langue colleagues to communicate at our events in their working language with the assistance of a translator for their voice to be heard by all those in attendance. As a francophone, I was happy to assist with this push, and enjoy being a translator for my companions at the mic.

At the Local level, I enjoy listening to the membership and supporting their choice in choosing their own path to problem solving within our democratic structures. From voting at a General Meeting, to choosing a response in an investigation, as a leader, we must provide solutions to the membership and explain the outcome for each action. Ultimately, it is up to us to inform our colleagues, but it is not our position to pressure another into making a decision. We are a diverse, educated, intelligent body who deserve to be treated as such.

**Khaled Dardir (Abbotsford):**

I initiated a group focus program at my local recently in hopes of engaging all members with their Union. Usually, teachers come to the Union when issues are too complex to handle alone, and some teachers don't feel that what they have is "important." This is an excellent way to have teachers express their concerns freely.

Last year, I brought to the attention of our grievance officer the inequality amongst middle school teaching times. This caused many middle schools to re-evaluate their schedules, and I sat with the admin at the time and assisted in restructuring the schedule to meet the language agreed up in our contract agreement. Given I have only been working in BC for two years, but have the experience from back home in New Jersey.

**Kiran Sidhu (Richmond):**

Last year, as the chair of the SJ committee in my local, I successfully advocated for Aboriginal employment equity in our district, which is now being implemented into HR policy. I utilized my role to bring recommendations to the EC, access BCTF resources, review policy in neighboring locals, and communicate the outcome to members. I take any chance I can to support decolonization in education and am committed to continuing to do so and inspiring others along the way.

### 3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them?

#### **Benula Bunjun (Sooke):**

Bargaining, bargaining, bargaining. We need a deal through mediation which means one without taking job action, as we cannot take job action before the mediation process has come to a close. We have been teaching without a contract since June, it hasn't yet been a year. We must stay patient, keep the table open, and maintain pressure on government through our campaigns and working with our labour allies.

We can get a fairly negotiated deal for teachers, especially if close to an election. We saw how our collective voices, pressure and work at related tables regarding the prevalence model permitted a delay in the roll out of this funding model. 45,000 voices pressuring a government who may be in an election soon is very powerful. Together, we must continue to make public education the issue.

#### **Khaled Dardir (Abbotsford):**

First, I will address the needs of marginalized groups by working in tandem with the grassroots organizations that support them. This will build community awareness as well as help teachers connect with these groups that are increasingly represented in our staff and student populations.

There has to be more teacher-control of their work conditions. Resources are wasted if teachers who ultimately would have been good teachers leave the profession. The focus on the desire of teachers to leave schools reflects current policy interest in the difficulty that the province has in attracting and retaining teachers. Along with salary efforts to improve working conditions could conceivably increase teacher retention.

Highlight the vital role that education plays in our democratic society. Educate the public, build solidarity with other societal struggles, and lobby the provincial government to have policies with primarily teacher input.

#### **Kiran Sidhu (Richmond):**

My top three priorities are: A negotiated settlement and implementation of a Collective Agreement that reflects equitable workload provisions for members across the province and addresses the recruitment and retention crisis. Students deserve equitable supports and a certified teacher, no matter where in the province they live, and the failure to fill problem has a serious impact on teacher workload. It's essential that our organization continues to reflect on and review our current policies and practices around equity and inclusion. This work is happening at the local and provincial level and I support ongoing training, information and discussion among the membership. There is much work needed to ensure that anti-oppression lenses are used to consider aspects of our organization that can act as barriers to the full involvement of all members. The restoration of our collective agreement language has resulted in an unprecedented number of new teachers across the province. We need an even greater number still. Connecting new members to our union and ensuring that the needs of all members are met will be a priority, as well as embracing and growing from the exceptional opportunity to increase the diversity and voices represented by our newest members.

### 4. Do you have anything else to add on educational matters, public policy or other imperatives?

#### **Benula Bunjun (Sooke):**

We have seen BCTF pressure making a difference. We have been able to have an impact on the NDP's restructuring of education funding, as they have shifted away from a prevalence model that was to be imposed on us. Now we can focus on bargaining, as the Provincial budget is set.

Another focus for our union is resolving the teacher shortage issue, coupled with teacher recruitment and retention. We need to work with government to ensure that plans are in place which align with our restored class size and composition language in the Locals that have it, and to ensure students are receiving their education from a licensed teacher. This work has already begun, and includes talks with the Ministry in hopes that we will get acknowledgement that there is, in fact, a problem. We require funding and pressure on Universities to establish sufficient seats in their teacher education programs in addition to more staffing for the Teacher Qualification Service.

#### **Khaled Dardir (Abbotsford):**

The government's policies and expectations have no educational understanding of what actually happens in the classroom because their policies are incapable of raising the question regarding the relationship between learning and social change. Education needs to be reclaimed as critical as any viable notion of the citizenry, civic responsibility, and democracy. Also, govt spending needs to increase in percentage per GDP. We have the lowest increase in expenditure on education and spending per student in comparison to other provinces in Canada.

#### **Kiran Sidhu (Richmond):**

Public funding for public education is an important and timely matter that we need to ensure remains a priority for members and our broader communities. A fully funded education system that meets the needs of all students is an equity issue. The ongoing subsidizing of independent and private schools represents funds that should be invested in public education. Further, I feel strongly that increased government transparency around funding and resource distribution is essential.

## 5. If elected, how would you support locals and what ideas do you have to increase union engagement?

### **Benula Bunjun (Sooke):**

My involvement in the union began with an arbitration in which I was being denied a return to work from leave. I didn't know my rights, until I talked to a School Staff Committee Representative. My Local was successful with the arbitration. I mention this because our staff representatives are integral to our membership engagement. Without them, the Local, and therefore the BCTF, cannot solve the problems our teachers are facing.

As a SURT facilitator, I find myself repeating to those in the room, "You are the Union Rep, the eyes and ears and nose of the Local President, you are important." Administration gets away with a lot of things unless the Local President knows. We all need to ask questions in our schools and inform the Local President when we do not like those answers.

If elected as a BCTF Executive Committee member, I will need to foster and open, consistent dialogue with Local Presidents so that they can be my eyes and ears. Two way communication between Executive members and Local Presidents is the only way to support the broader membership. If we do not know of a problem, we cannot fix it. I will be a voice for Locals at the table and advocate to resolve issues for the Local Presidents.

### **Khaled Dardir (Abbotsford):**

I would start by making myself available to engage with the community and parents. I want to strengthen the communication of membership benefits, cultivate leaders from within, and build on teacher experience. Teachers are experts in their classrooms; their successes and challenges are all unique.

### **Kiran Sidhu (Richmond):**

The diversity among our locals is the source of so many of our strengths. In order to ensure equitable access and participation for all locals and their unique needs, work must be done to support local organizing and raise the provincial profile of local issues. Supporting locals to greater member engagement is an essential component of the renewal and sustainability of our union. The Federation can support locals to find creative ways to invite and build spaces that are open and welcoming to all members, for example, the inclusion of parents with young children and those whose voices have not traditionally been represented in our leadership structures.

## QUESTIONS FOR 2019 BCTF EC CANDIDATES

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

#### **1. What specific strengths would you bring to the Executive table at the BCTF?**

##### **Kevin Amboe (Surrey):**

I am open, honest and transparent in my conversations. My communication to an individual member would align exactly with what I would say at Executive Committee, Representative Assembly or AGM.

I understand the meeting processes very well having chaired meetings provincially, locally, and on committees.

I believe in Advocacy for members, the education system, and our students. I am a reflective thinker.

I have a knack for Exploring unique scenarios and options. don't readily accept the first solution or option. Exploring and continuing the conversation often helps to refine a solution or path as well as understand both potential intended and unintended impacts.

I have a strong believe in Inclusion. All members are valuable and bring value. A diversity of leadership voices is needed to develop options with maximum positive impact and minimum negative consequences.

I am Open Minded. I bring my experiences, beliefs, and understanding to a dialogue; however I carefully listen to the debate and reflect prior to making a decision.

I believe in Union Solidarity. Our actions need to be one of unification. Our union belongs to all of us and we need always believe that it is acting on our behalf so we can move with a unified position and voice.

You are always the most important consideration. We are a member-driven organization for members. There are many ways of doing this, but they all need to consider the impact on You.

##### **Jessica Hill (Caribbo-Chilcotin):**

I am passionate about the work we do as advocates for education, and I have great respect for our responsibility to support our members and represent their views. I believe that my greatest strengths include listening to the perspectives of others and reflecting on each perspective before I contribute to the conversation. I am asking for the membership to support me as their representative on a team of leaders, therefore I must always demonstrate these qualities in myself to ensure I meet the expectations that come with this trust.

##### **Allison Jambor (VESTA):**

I am thoughtful, engaged and persistent. I listen carefully to all points of view, work collaboratively in decision making and keep union values and equity as the primary lenses through which I view issues. My experience at the local level representing our union on Board committees such as Pro-D, Finance, and Principles of Assessment as well as playing a significant role in the work of the local including as Vice President, a member of the local grievance committee, local Finance and Building committees means I have wide-ranging experience in issues related to the organization of the union. My experience as a classroom and resource teacher, Teacher-Librarian and school Staff Representative have given me insight into the challenges teachers face day-to-day in their classrooms, schools and districts. I am a life-long learner and research issues when they are new to me.

##### **Robin Toszczak (Victoria):**

At the table, I am collaborative and solution-oriented. I like to work with others to develop effective responses to the issues facing teachers. I am curious, thoughtful and open-minded. I think our best decisions come from brave conversations where we explore challenging questions together and find common ground.

##### **Susan Trabant (Prince George):**

- listening, communication, integrity
- intersectional identities
- knowledge of being an employer and employee union concerns
- values that are in alignment with the BCTF

##### **Katherine Trepanier (Prince George):**

I seek out, hear and respond to members' concerns. I have a strong voice and use it to represent members at the table, even when it's difficult. (I have shown I can do this during my first year as a Member at Large on the Executive.) I am a keen listener, and open-minded when presented with new information. I have a strong desire to act in members' best interests, and consider each decision carefully and practically.

##### **Matt Westphal (Surrey):**

I bring ten years of experience studying, teaching, and practising law before I became a teacher. This experience gives me strong analytical skills that enable me to identify potential problems before they arise, consider issues from all possible angles, and develop innovative solutions.

As president of a large local, I understand the challenges of the union in delivering front-line services to members, and I have insight into the conditions faced by our members in a wide variety of educational contexts (enrolling, non-enrolling, TTOCs, alternate education, adult education, and the work of associated professionals).

I am not afraid to speak up and ask difficult questions, but am able to work collaboratively and effectively with people of all perspectives.

##### **Kip Wood (Nanaimo):**

- Three years experience as a local president,
- six years as a BCTF Member-at-Large,
- ability to analyze complex situations, listen to the opinions of others, make thoughtful and informed decisions

## 2. Describe a specific action, initiated by you, that resulted in a positive change for your Local/BCTF.

### **Kevin Amboe (Surrey):**

In over 20 years of activism, there are many things I have done and many ways I have supported the union. Three diverse examples include:

1. More than 10 years ago, I was Advocating and assisting development of an Aboriginal Strand in our Annual Convention. The first year only had 30 people attend out of over 3000 and 60 the following year. The Indigenous site has grown and is now self sustaining and running with its own committee. There are several ways I have supported improvements for Aboriginal teachers including twice attempting to locally negotiate Aboriginal Employment Agreements with the board.
2. I mentored in SFU's TLITE (Teaching and Learning in an Information Technology Environment) for 10 years which included coordinating 2 of the summer institutes. Over these years, I supported directly over 150 teachers in the journey to develop their own learning path with appropriate integration of technology. This program set the direction of technology use to be meaningful integration, and not fieldtrip or special event technology activities.
3. I worked with our local over the last 3 years to assist in supporting our Integration Support Teachers with our restored language. This has involved advocacy directly for this group of members' concerns with senior administration, creation of an IST Ad Hoc Advisory Committee and soon to be hosting our second IST Roles and Responsibilities Union Orientation to ensure members in these roles know the rights they have as members and specifically how that relates to our job description and roles.

### **Jessica Hill (Caribbo-Chilcotin):**

So much of what we do is a collective effort. There have been several initiatives that I have been an integral part of that have resulted in change, but there has always been the support and actions of others alongside me. One specific example that I am quite proud of, stems from our membership's vote of non-confidence.

Our vote of non-confidence in the Board and Senior Management in our district almost three years ago, resulted in a report to the minister from Diane Turner, a special advisor being assigned to straighten things out, and ultimately, a change in district leadership.

Every step of the way I have been intimately involved in how this rolled out: from meeting with Diane Turner and the Minister of Education in 2018, to participating in the Partner Table that would set the new direction for our district, to engaging our members in the trustee elections that resulted in an almost full turnover of Board members. My president and I still meet weekly with our new superintendent, and for the first time in many years, there is a burgeoning trust forming between our members and our employer. I am a firm believer that this kind of collaborative approach to problem solving will be key to addressing other concerns that arise in our local, including the recruitment and retention crisis that has become a major concern all over the province.

### **Allison Jambor (VESTA):**

As chair and co-chair of the VESTA Professional Issues Committee and as rep to the District Professional Development Committee I have been a fierce proponent of professional development and professional autonomy in Vancouver. I have co-created and facilitated School Union Rep Training workshops for our pro-d chairs on funding in our district to support the chairs in understanding and utilizing our model of pro-d funding and also on Collective Agreement provisions helping them assert their rights in their role at the school level. Through my involvement in the District Professional Development Committee I have also made improvements to the transparency of professional development funding at the district level. I obtained an accounting of our district held pro-d funds. With this knowledge I was able to make improvements in access to district funded Collaborative Inquiry and other professional development opportunities. I am also in the process of facilitating access to professional development funds for district teachers, and thereby increasing autonomy, by creating a funding model with virtual schools that mirrors our school-based funding model. Never give up and stay true to your beliefs have been my guiding principles. Some issues have taken years to resolve.

### **Robin Toszczak (Victoria):**

I undertook a project of reviewing long-term financial planning in our local. I started this when I was Secretary-Treasurer in 2017-18, and over the past three years, have chipped away at procedures and accounting practices. In collaboration with other members of our Executive Committee, I wrote amendments and new by-laws to govern a number of reserve funds, and allocated savings to those funds. These by-laws ensure that we save money on a consistent basis, and have clear processes for accessing these savings in bargaining years, for unexpected staffing issues, and to address other non-annual or unexpected events. In the process we were able to make our budgeting more transparent to members, by reducing the amount of annual surplus which had been accumulating as an "rainy day fund" without clear spending guidelines. With this clarity about our projected future need, our plans for saving, and our current accumulated savings, our local is now in a position to purchase a permanent home for our 100+ year-old organization.

### **Susan Trabant (Prince George):**

-resurrecting the local health and safety committee and then fighting for a spot on the district health and safety committee in PG. We are now making changes around a Teacher's right to know and violence against our teachers.

-pushing for a discrete stand alone LGBTQ policy and finally achieving it in 2014. Then pushing for us to join the provincial SOGI movement and we now have a district lead and a school lead in every school. Our policy has now been updated, there is an all genders washroom in every school, and our new school is being built with single stall washrooms and changerooms.

## **2. -Describe a specific action, initiated by you, that resulted in a positive change for your Local/BCTF - *continued***

### **Katherine Trepanier (Prince George):**

As the 2nd Vice-President in my local (released one day a week) I have been working to increase member engagement. In addition to organizing a successful New Teacher Celebration (induction), I have organized a large variety of social activities for this year. I have tried to appeal to as many members as possible, so these activities range from very popular “Learn to Knit” and “Paint and Wine” nights to curling, outdoor activities, and regular pub nights. As members spread the word about how much they’ve enjoyed various events, we have seen interest and attendance grow. I believe that when members feel connected to their colleagues, they are more open to learning about union activities, supports and opportunities available to them.

### **Matt Westphal (Surrey):**

My work as a local officer has shown me that many of our members are experiencing racism and other forms of discrimination in their workplace, and, unfortunately, within their own union. Last year I initiated two actions to begin addressing these issues. The first was creating a local committee for members of colour to provide a safe space for members of colour to connect, strategize, and create initiatives. The second was establishing a position on the Surrey Executive Committee designated for a person of colour. (There already was a position designated for an Aboriginal person.) There was debate on our executive about the latter measure—not about the concept itself, but about whether the change should be made on its own, or as part of a more general review of representation of all equity-seeking groups. However, it seemed to me that the need for action was urgent, so I brought the issue back to the executive and secured its support. At our local AGM last year, I moved the necessary bylaw changes to create the position, and they carried unanimously. These measures are just a start, but I believe that such structural changes are a vital foundation for making a more equitable union.

### **Kip Wood (Nanaimo):**

As part of my local's bargaining team, we negotiated a significant improvement to posting and filling language in 2014. Two years before that, in 2012, as a BCTF Member-at-Large, I arranged a lobbying effort to get posting and filling of vacancies designated as a matter that could be bargained locally.

## **3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them?**

### **Kevin Amboe (Surrey):**

1. Ensure open dialogue to consider how decisions play out under various scenarios understanding where intention and impact may not align. This includes asking hard questions at the executive table so everyone can fully understand the implications
2. Look to how we can effectively navigate the bargaining climate. Exploring the issues and considering methods to change the bargaining context so that we can make significant gains to our salary and (the impact on teachers of) working conditions. This may be a 10 year plan that includes supporting teachers to run as allies to education in provincial elections. I want to be a part of developing the long term strategy such as that proposed in Resolution 108
3. Men are leaving the teaching profession and fewer men are entering it. We need to better understand the exodus and explore challenges for men in teaching. In the last 25 years the percentage of men in teaching is down from 38% in 1991 to just over 20% now. The situation in Elementary for men is closer to only 5% of the teaching force. The trend is a decrease of .75% decline per year. I want to bring the issues forward and encourage the dialogue. We need to changes to first stop the loss of men and encourage men to consider teaching, and stay in teaching. We need to put resources into understanding the challenges better and once we understand the issues better to bring recommendations to return the number of men in teaching closer to societal representation.

### **Jessica Hill (Caribbo-Chilcotin):**

My top three priorities would be: new member support and engagement, Collective Agreement enforcement, and member outreach. Our newest members are entering the profession at a time when there is a significant amount of added stress to the system in the face of teacher shortages and a general lack of support in the average classroom around this province. These issues are on top of the usual challenges faced by new teachers. I want to be part of the work that is already being done to identify the exact needs of these members, and contribute to the strategies that are being developed to meet these needs. Member outreach also seems to be a natural part of the Member-at-Large position. I look forward to any opportunity I get that will allow me to engage with members in a way that permits me to authentically represent their voices at the Executive Committee meetings. Finally, I want to be part of developing strategies that see our Collective Agreement enforced in every local. I realize we do not have a new contract, and we may not have one before summer, however there is much that we can learn from our recent arbitrations that may allow us to develop a provincial strategy to support all locals in the interpreting and enforcing Collective Agreement language.

### 3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them? - *continued*

#### **Allison Jambor (VESTA):**

Membership engagement is a passion of mine and it is a key issue our union is facing now and will face in the future. Whether we are bargaining still, or looking towards the next round, it will be a top priority to ensure that all members understand and participate in our union decision-making and consultative structures. We are a truly democratic institution, but that requires the participation of all members, especially our newest members. Much of this work happens on the ground in conversations with individuals or in facilitated discussions with groups of people. I will take every opportunity to speak to individuals or groups, to hear concerns and provide whatever information I can to address those concerns. I will take issues back to the table for further consideration and problem solving. I respect and highly value the consultative and committee structures built into the workings of the BCTF. We are stronger together.

Another top priority is teacher workload. Untenable and uneven workload can have an effect on the health and mental health of our members, an impact on recruitment and retention and is directly indicative of student learning conditions. Negotiations will determine what we are able to achieve at the bargaining table this round, and doubtless for rounds to come, but we can also have an impact on teacher workload by pushing back against government policies and the austerity funding that downloads work onto teachers and removes support from students. We can be responsive to members' workload challenges by continuing to support our members' access to wellness initiatives, professional autonomy and professional development, and through bargaining priorities wherever we are in the process.

Equity is another area we need to continue to develop both within our own structures and within our society as a whole. I support initiatives that seek improvements to the voice and impact of Aboriginal members in our organization, the decolonization of the BCTF, the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We have made some changes to our BCTF Executive Committee structure with the positions for a member who identifies as Aboriginal and for a racialized member. I supported these changes and am in support of the proposed additional changes to the structure of the EC. Listening to the voices of those who have been marginalized and improving access and representation will continue to require thoughtful consideration and action in the coming years. I am committed to moving these issues forward, and ensuring those affected have a say in how it will be done.

#### **Robin Toczak (Victoria):**

1. Welcome, engage, and empower new members: Thousands of new members have recently joined the Federation. In the process of bargaining and contract implementation, we have an opportunity to invite these members into the union as valued participants and respected colleagues. Workshops, training, committee appointments, mentorship programs, and teaching resources are some of the ways that we can support and engage members.

2. Support locals in contract implementation: Bargaining is a cyclical process, and any new Collective Agreement provisions are only as strong as our enforcement. By supporting members at the school union teams and local, we connect members to their contract, realize actual improvements in working conditions and start to build strength for the next round of bargaining.

3. Advance equity, diversity, and inclusion: The BCTF has a long history of work in social justice, and we have more to do to address barriers for under-represented and/or equity-seeking groups in the Federation.

#### **Susan Trabant (Prince George):**

1-bringing a negotiated collective agreement to the membership to vote on- continuing to sit at the table, working on shrinking our package further, and supporting the membership through the mediation/bargaining process by answering questions, phoning, social media, and one on one conversations. I will continue to put pressure on the government in my own local and support my zone to do so as well.

2- decolonization and reconciliation- speaking and teaching about Indigenous issues, stepping back and making space for fellow Indigenous peoples, personally working on my own ingrained racist ideals, pushing for change in our institutions and systems. I will continue to promote the need to recruit and retain indigenous teachers throughout BC.

3- promote the good of public education: this is one way to continue to recruit and retain teachers in BC. I will continue to promote in our locals, with the public, with our government that public education is important, having certified teachers in every class is a must, and salary has to be in alignment with the rest of Canada. I will support motions and action to stop the financial support for private schools, and will continue to lobby the government for these changes.

#### **Katherine Trepanier (Prince George):**

First, if we have still not achieved a negotiated contract, my priority will be to accomplish that as soon as possible. I believe we need to take a hard look at our package of proposals, keeping in mind what our members are telling us to prioritize. As well, it's important to understand what members are willing (or not willing) to do to get a deal in this round of bargaining. Second, I will continue to connect with members across the province to find out about their priorities and the issues they are facing locally, so that I can best represent the voice of members at the Executive table. In addition to communicating with the locals in my assigned zone, I will continue to speak with members from across the province at meetings, conferences, and online. We have many members who are disengaged from our union, due to various legitimate reasons (family priorities, lack of time, mistrust due to past experience, etc.). I will make it a priority to engage members on whatever level they are able to. Third, I want to continue working towards making the BCTF a truly inclusive union for all members. We are making some good progress in this area. However, we still have much to learn about the racism and barriers many of our members face, and how we can become better allies. I believe that through continued education and being open to possible structural changes, we can improve in this area.

### 3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities and how will you deal with them? - *continued*

#### Matt Westphal (Surrey):

1) Securing a reasonable collective agreement. Members expect us to get a deal. Many are afraid of a repeat of the strike of 2014. That does not mean we will not consider job action, because a positive strike vote may be required to get the government to provide more money to fund a reasonable deal. But we do need to be realistic about what we will be able to achieve this round, so I would push--as I have at Representative Assemblies--for us to reduce the size of our bargaining package to get closer to a settlement zone. Cutting our bargaining package involves difficult choices, but they will need to be made.

2) Advancing equity within the union. Many members are expressing that they experience racism and other forms of oppression within their own union. Initiatives such as the Issue Session on Racism, and efforts to ensure that the EC will be more representative of our membership, are a good start. I would seek to build upon this work. That requires being aware of my own privilege, and listening carefully to members of equity-seeking groups when they share their experiences, and say what structural change they need.

3) Ensuring excellent services for locals and members. The foremost obligation of a union is to represent the interests of its members. Our members pay a lot in union dues, and rightly expect the best possible service. Most of that service is delivered by our locals, and as a local president, I understand the supports that locals need from the BCTF—training, advice and support on legal issues, and advocacy—in doing this vital work.

#### Kip Wood (Nanaimo):

1. funding for public education - negotiated provisions on workload. Without enforceable workload limits, funding is less stable. Achieving this requires a multi-faceted approach: bargaining, political work, legal challenges and contract enforcement.

2. Equity of opportunity in the BCTF. Achieving this requires affirmative action policies - the designated seats on the Executive Committee is a start but these policies have to now go beyond the EC.

3. Accountability mechanisms that are focused on system improvement rather than mechanisms that undermine confidence in the public education system. At every level - school, district, province - we have to be vigilant about the need for a culture of support and security rather than a culture of scrutiny and uncertainty.

### 4. Do you have anything else to add on educational matters, public policy or other imperatives?

#### Kevin Amboe (Surrey):

With this being my 20th AGM, I have seen many changes over time including with overheads, projectors, CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation), Accessible Microphones, Aboriginal Welcoming, signing for members, Indigenous personal Introductions and speaking in your working language. While many changes have occurred over time, we have much more we need to do to examine our current AGM policies and procedures to adapt to an open and inclusive mindset. I have tried for the last two years to bring forward that members can request a visual or info-graphic be projected when they move motions. We already do this with executive and committee reports before motions, so members and locals need to have similar tools to debate with tools that encompass other learning styles than just auditory. We need to be asking more questions about how we can make speaking at meetings safe for all, diverse voices are able to be heard, and we become nimble enough to get the work of the meeting done.

#### Jessica Hill (Caribbo-Chilcotin):

Like many other members, I was thrilled when the government announced that they would not be pursuing the prevalence model in their most recent funding announcement. While this is no doubt welcome news, and the proposed funding to support mental health and children in care is sorely needed, I know that the conversations around how education funding can best support our students in an equitable and inclusive way is far from over. As teachers, we know what it is like to work with students with a range of abilities and needs on a daily basis. While there is a fiscal reality that prevents us from realizing a utopic vision of what true inclusion in the classroom could look like, our perspective can and should shape all policies that are related to education in this province. Constant advocacy based on experience and action research needs to continue to keep education funding and policies moving forward in a positive way.

#### Allison Jambor (VESTA):

We have just had the good news that the government has backed off from its intention to implement the prevalence model for funding students with special needs for 20/21, but the fight to defend and improve education funding is far from over. Our continued advocacy in this area will determine the direction government ultimately decides to take.

I am also concerned that the Ministry of Education Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL), which replaces the old Accountability Framework, will have a significant impact on teacher workload and professional autonomy. We have seen the increasing priority the Ministry of Education is placing on data. Teacher workload has increased this year with the greater push to have all students participate in the FSA, the Student Learning Survey, and other district and ministry assessments. Our district is mandating standardized report cards for elementary next year, limiting teacher innovation and autonomy, likely so they can use that data for FESL reports to the Ministry. I would like to be able to push back at the provincial level on this and other Ministry initiatives that increase workload and decrease autonomy.

#### 4. Do you have anything else to add on educational matters, public policy or other imperatives? *continued*

##### **Robin Tosczak (Victoria):**

Teachers have to be strategic and responsive, no matter who's in government. Whether it's bargaining, contract defense, elections, or education policy, we have seen in the past year that we can't depend on the courts or political parties to fully defend public education. Elections and court cases are only part of the strategy. We must also sustain our values-based organizing and mobilizing. When the government finally agreed to dial back implementation of the prevalence model for education funding, we saw that when we use our voices collectively, teachers are powerful in affecting education policy and change.

##### **Susan Trabant (Prince George):**

I am passionate about the culture of consent we have been working so hard for within the BCTF. I am involved in the climate emergency, following what is happening, making changes, teaching about it, demanding acknowledgement. It doesn't seem so scary in the north, so it is a bit hard to get people to take note.

##### **Katherine Trepanier (Prince George):**

I am relieved that (largely in response to effective public pressure from teachers) the government has delayed the implementation of the prevalence model for another year. However, it is currently just a delay, so we need to continue doing much work and lobbying to ensure this model is not adopted.

We are facing a near-crisis level of teacher shortages around BC. As well as addressing recruitment and retention through the bargaining process, we need to look at ways to restore and increase public respect for the teaching profession.

I would also like us to work to include anti-racism education throughout the curriculum. I have seen the positive effects of including indigenous content, and I would like to also include more general anti-racism teaching at all levels.

##### **Matt Westphal (Surrey):**

Educational matters: The pace of educational change is making members' work more difficult. For example, teachers have had to adapt to the overhaul of the curriculum, with almost no additional resources or training, at the same time as reporting requirements are becoming more work-intensive. These changes are not necessarily bad, but together they are too much at once, and there needs to be more support for teachers to make them successful. It is vital that the union uphold our professional autonomy and our control over our professional development. These issues are particularly pressing given the increasing trend of districts hiring non-teachers to fill teaching positions.

Public policy: Although the BCTF's ultimate purpose is to provide representation and services to its members, it is also a political organization. Our social justice work helps create a more equitable society, but on a practical level can gain us allies on various issues, both in BC and beyond.

##### **Kip Wood (Nanaimo):**

On education, my priority is the conditions where teachers do their work. Teachers try to create optimum conditions for learning but they can only do this if their workplaces are properly resourced and workloads are not untenable. On public policy, there is an austerity agenda because tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations have been prioritized over public services like education. I believe strongly that public education needs to be funded through a fair and progressive taxation system.

## 5. If elected, how would you support locals and what ideas do you have to increase union engagement?

### Kevin Amboe (Surrey):

Members are engaged when they have reason to be. I want to see us also expand member engagement opportunities and opportunities to feel their engagement matters. We do get higher involvement approaching strike actions because we need to be unified at those times. The majority of teachers are busy teaching and already overwhelmed that physical union involvement may seem minimal outside of bargaining years.

A key action is to have more low barrier activities that are personally meaningful and reasons to be involved without large commitments. The PSA super conference was a big success and that engaged more members than normal during that event. I was proactive with PSAC when I was CUEBC president to start the conversations to make it happen. While it took extensive work by the union and disproportionately for organizers, it was successful at demonstrating union involvement in Professional Development. We need to extend our efforts to grow member engagement.

Zone meetings are also an easy way to expand the involvement of members who are already active. I know a review was just completed; however, I think we need to review the findings with a new lens of how to expand engagement and use the zones to increase engagement beyond the core activist. This could start as simple as simple as each activist / committee representative bringing a second rep to a zone dinner event.

While the Representative Assembly only has Local Reps as voting members, local presidents and BCTF executive are also members with expenses paid to attend. Ideas that I have supported before and would champion again are considering that PSA presidents and committee chairs (or alternates) also be included to expand the voice and knowledge/expertise represented at the Assembly.

Lastly, as I have suggested several activities that would increase costs, we need to look carefully at the budgeting process to identify areas that could be cost savings. Some areas may need to be protected as even though they represent a high cost, we see they have high value as well. In the same conversation is whether we need to examine our fee. If we get a significant salary increase, the fee will automatically increase and thus our budget. If we don't get the desired increase, we may need to look at cost saving tools again (such as more shared accommodations, organized bus transport to major events such as Summer Conference)

Your survey asks me what my ideas are. If we want more engagement, we also need to engage you in the process. I have not yet met with your local to ask the specific question about how to increase engagement, but look forward to that opportunity. I am currently working through the recommendations and resolutions and providing my transparent thoughts for each one at [bctfagm2020.amboe.ca](http://bctfagm2020.amboe.ca)

### Jessica Hill (Caribbo-Chilcotin):

As I have mentioned, I am a strong believer in member outreach. I am acutely aware of the responsibilities associated with the Member-at-Large position, particularly the required involvement in committee work as well as representing one of the Zones within the province. I see these two facets of the job as my starting points. There will no doubt be much to learn in the beginning, but perhaps the most important knowledge I can gain will be from listening to the members I meet while serving a Zone and working with the committees. I am confident that the members I encounter will feel listened to when they come to me, and I believe that feeling of being heard is what leads to better engagement. I have met a lot of members who felt like their thoughts and perspectives are not being represented by their union. When I took the time to listen, when they started to feel respected and valued, I began to see their faces at our General Meetings and social events. I want to apply what I have learned from this local engagement to the work I can do as a Member-at-Large.

### Allison Jambor (VESTA):

Each local is unique. Local autonomy and decision-making is an essential part of our provincial structure, and any support needs to acknowledge both the strength of locals and also the challenges locals face on the front line with members, districts and with students in schools. The BCTF has a role to play in supporting, coordinating and providing information and resources to locals. But the BCTF also has a role to play in listening and communicating with locals, being alive and being responsible in the representation as part of our provincial structure. Our local has concluded a successful round of local bargaining where we were able to make changes that are better for us and better for the employer. We also have an Adult Education sub-local that has its own Collective Agreement and that bargained many changes, signing off on local solutions to local issues. Protection of superior provisions is another way that locals are empowered to make decisions that make sense for them. I will promote and protect local bargaining and the local's right to determine superior provisions.

The BCTF 2050 Project: Engaging New Members brought to light the need to reach out to many of our newest teachers in multiple ways. As the Table-Officer liaison to our TTOC Committee, I worked to help TTOCs understand existing Collective Agreement provisions and how those change once engaged in a temporary or continuing contract. I arranged for the New Teacher SURT and our New Teacher Induction. I was also instrumental in bringing a mentorship program to our district. All these initiatives help to involve new members in our union. Professional Development is also often a stepping stone to union involvement and I have worked tirelessly in this area for all our members. Member engagement is key to the future success of our union and with your support I will bring forward suggestions, actions and a perspective that brings that key to light.

## 5. If elected, how would you support locals and what ideas do you have to increase union engagement? *Cont'd*

### **Robin Toczak (Victoria):**

The Federation has a very robust program for training and supporting local leadership, though Summer Conference, Zone Meetings, SURTs and workshops. We are currently in the process of reviewing the role and effectiveness of Zone meetings for supporting locals and building capacity and networks. We have also been looking at strategies for ensuring that Summer Conference and the Federation Leadership Institute respond to the needs of local leadership in supporting their members. When these opportunities reflect the actual needs of members in leadership positions, locals are able to support members directly, and also support succession-planning, capacity-building and establishing broad bases of knowledge and experience in the locals and schools.

### **Susan Trabant (Prince George):**

I will always make sure I go to every local I am invited to, if it is at all possible. I will shift things and always prepare for coverage so I can travel to you. I will carefully consider motions that come forth about action groups when issues arise that need to be dealt with (eg- Anti-Racism). Equity and inclusion are words that are spoken every day. To me, they mean that the people who carry more privilege step aside and make space for those who don't, myself included! I talk the talk, and have shown I will walk the walk.

### **Katherine Trepanier (Prince George):**

In addition to regularly communicating with my assigned zone's presidents, I will continue to connect with local LRs and local presidents at Rep Assemblies, EC meetings and the AGM in order to find out what is happening in locals around the province. I make an effort to read the list-serves so that I stay current about the issues locals are facing. I am then able to speak about these issues at the Executive table.

I would also like to support locals in their work towards becoming more equitable and inclusive to all members. This could include information about accessing grants, mentorship, education and training. This in itself will build local capacity and increase engagement, as more members will see themselves reflected in their local leadership.

I also recognize that we have a large number of new teachers in each local around the province. Again, these members need encouragement and support, to feel connected to our union.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities and some of my ideas with you! I would love the opportunity to continue to represent members as a Member at Large. I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

### **Matt Westphal (Surrey):**

As a local president, I know well how challenging it is for locals to balance their day-to-day work on behalf of their members with advancing provincial initiatives and priorities. I am fortunate enough to work in a local office with other full-time released officers. But most local presidents work on their own, and they require strong support from the BCTF. Although we have opportunities such as zone meetings, the Federation Leadership Institute, and Summer Conference, it would also be helpful to provide mentorship by connecting new local presidents with more experienced ones in comparable locals (e.g. between Metro locals, or between rural locals in different parts of the province). Building greater capacity among local presidents is essential to supporting members.

Member engagement is our most important work. Project 2050 is an excellent start, and has provided valuable insights. We need to build on that work to understand how we might need to adapt our union structures and processes to attract new generations of members. The traditional "Invite them to a meeting" approach simply doesn't work with a lot of members--for various reasons, including family responsibilities, second jobs, or simply being worn out by the end of the day--so we need to find other ways to connect with them and ensure they feel included in their union.

### **Kip Wood (Nanaimo):**

Supporting locals and increasing member engagement are achieved through similar strategies. As leaders, we have to be seen as more than simply union reps who solve problems. We need to be seen as leaders of movements. And to do this, we have to meet members where they are, listen to their concerns and priorities, then build a movement with their involvement.