



BCTI Alumni NEWS

issue 2 | volume 13 | Nov. 2014



Return to the BC Teachers' Institute as a Facilitator!

Teachers who have attended a BC Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy are eligible to apply to return once as a facilitator.

Facilitators are the first point of contact and provide ongoing guidance and support to participants. Facilitators are expected to be approachable, knowledgeable, and to have excellent organizational and leadership skills. In addition, facilitators will have the ability to promote discussion and critical inquiry into key issues on parliamentary democracy.

Successful applicants will have their accommodation, meals, travel, and ToC costs paid for by the BC Teachers' Institute. The registration fee is waived for facilitators. Applications to become a facilitator at an upcoming Institute are being accepted online now!

[Facilitator Application Form](#)

Upcoming Winter Institute | *February 24-28, 2015*

Do you know a teacher who would be interested in participating in a unique professional development program? What about the opportunity to meet Madame Speaker, MLAs, and collaborate with fellow professionals from across the province?

As a former educator herself, Madame Speaker is a passionate advocate of learning and a proud sponsor of this program for BC teachers. We encourage all teachers of social and related studies for children in grades 4 through 12 to come to Victoria and explore parliamentary democracy in the place where it all happens! Applications are being accepted online now until December 15, 2014. More information is available at www.leg.bc.ca/bcti.

NEW LESSON PLANS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE NOW!

Four new lesson plans were created by your provincial colleagues during the Spring 2014 session of the BC Teachers' Institute. View them online now by visiting the [Learning Resources](#) page.



In this issue...

PAGE 2 & 3
Thoughts from an Alumna & Parliamentary Trivia
PAGE 4
Update on Capital for Kids

BCTI Alumni Corner

To complete a BCTI Alumni Survey or to view photos of past Institutes, visit the Alumni Corner.

For any other inquiries, to update your contact info, or to unsubscribe to this newsletter, email: PEO@leg.bc.ca.

ELEMENTARY

- **Lieutenant Governors of British Columbia**

SECONDARY

- **Dude, Where's My Bill?**
- **Blunders in BC Politics... To Err is Human**
- **La démocratie: le droit de ne pas être d'accord et la responsabilité de coopérer**



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The BCTI and Me

Thoughts from an Alumna

This is an interesting moment in our common history to think about what democracy is, how we know it and live in it in our daily lives, how we define democracy both as individuals and as a nation. My connection to the BC Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy goes back almost 10 years, when I first applied to attend a session, in my role as a (then) grade 5 teacher who wanted to understand our system of government more deeply. Teachers, in my opinion, have a different way of viewing the world. We are always looking for the Teachable Moment. Being immersed in the history, the rich legacy of the basis of our democratic society, the physical manifestation of all that is British Columbia... the BCTI brings teachers into an experience that I like to think of as a Magic School Bus adventure. Except that the Legislature is so massive, we don't have to be shrunk down in a tiny bus!

There is much to learn for participants of the BCTI. One of the most meaningful is the historical connections. Much of the running of government seems ceremonial -- things like the "dragging in" of The Speaker at the opening of Parliament, or the presentation of the mace, even the ceremonial garb of clerks and the Sergeant-At-Arms. Recent events in Ottawa underscored for me that those ceremonial elements are not just a facade, they are at the core of who we are as Canadians. They represent our journey, and clearly that journey continues, and the ceremony is still relevant.

Besides learning more about our collective history, I also gained deeper personal connections to the Parliamentary system. It is, perhaps, hard to illustrate what I mean, but I'll give a couple of examples. I attended the Institute as a curious and eager teacher, and then again a few years later as a facilitator. During a BCTI session, the group of teachers are introduced in the House before Question Period. As a facilitator, I was introduced by name. I am now, officially, recorded in Hansard (the written record of what is said in the House). This has created an anchor, for me, forever--knowing that I am officially part of the historical documentation of my Province. It's kind of a big deal. Another connection I made was to my M.L.A. Participation in the Institute created an opportunity for me to really see what my representative did with his days, and to know I was more than just a constituent. I had walked the same halls, sat in the House, revelled in the beauty of the Legislative Library. I was connected.

Continued on page 3...



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Parliamentary Trivia



Statutory Officers play an important role in holding the government accountable to the Legislative Assembly and to the public.

Q. How many Statutory Officers do we have in British Columbia?

Email your answer to
PEO@leg.bc.ca

The first correct respondent will receive a prize from the Parliamentary Gift Shop!

Attending a BCTI session requires a certain amount of stamina--there are a lot of stairs and a good bit of walking. But much more, it requires stamina of the brain. We do tend to spend a lot of time in our heads in this profession, and being immersed in a learning experience like the Institute is demanding. There is historical perspective, procedure, laws and regulations, ceremony and pageantry that dates back to Confederation. It's a lot of information, condensed into four short days of learning. But there is also a stamina of spirit required--there is something overwhelming about being in that building, surrounded by all that it means to be a British Columbian, a Canadian, a citizen of the Commonwealth. You can feel the weight of the mantle of responsibility settle across your shoulders. But with it, you also feel honoured, in every sense of the word. The honour of privilege to be in attendance, and the honour of being called upon to share with your learners once you return to work, and perhaps most relevantly for BC teachers in recent years, realizing that our work is valued, and yes honoured, by all the members of the House, despite our sometimes fractious relationship with government.

And perhaps that is the most germane piece... the BCTI is not about Government. It is about democracy, our history of democracy that carries on through any change of government, any partisan reforms or actions. No matter who is the Leader or who is the Opposition, the Legislature remains steadfast, unchanged, a rock-solid reminder of our history.



Lisa Read's session of the BCTI ~ Fall 2007

Lisa Read
District Information Technology Coordinator
School District No 79 (Cowichan Valley)



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Book a Guided School Tour Today!

If you would like to visit the Parliament Buildings with your class in the winter or spring, now is a great time to book a tour and schedule time in the Public Galleries.

Observing the lively debate in Question Period can be exciting, which is why this time of day books up quickly. However, there is much to be gained from observing throughout the daily proceedings.

In fact, the majority of the day's sitting is spent debating bills. Each bill must pass through three "readings" and an in-depth study by the Committee of the Whole House before becoming law. Observing what takes place at these different stages can be very instructive.

Other interesting business can include debates on the Throne Speech, Budget, and in Committee of Supply.

Visit our [website](#) to book a school tour online today!

UPDATE ON CAPITAL FOR KIDS TRAVEL FUNDING

In June 2014, travel funding for student and youth groups moved from the Provincial Capital Commission to the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

Work to transition the program and prepare to fund travel in Spring 2015 is underway.

Applications are available online now and the new deadline for applications will be January 22, 2015. Please visit their [website](#) for more information.

Please note that before applying for travel funding, you must first book a tour of the Parliament Buildings with the Parliamentary Education Office.

