



Welcome back! We hope that you are returning to your schools refreshed and reinvigorated from your summer, and eager to find new ways to bring social justice into your classrooms, schools, and communities.



This past year, the BCTF has moved forward in its internal processes towards a more inclusive and equitable union. As recent events south of the border and here in BC have sadly pointed out, there is still much work to be done as we move along the path of equity, inclusion, and diversity. You now have a real opportunity to reflect on the need for all educators to incorporate lessons on diversity into your classrooms to effect systemic change in society at large.

Recently, former President Barrack Obama reminded us of the following quote from Nelson Mandela: “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion...People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love...For love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

The BCTF has many resources available to teachers that can be found on the [BCTF website](#) under the [Social Justice](#) heading on the home page, as well as lessons found on [TeachBC](#). Please consider using recent events as a teachable moment.

## Social Justice September Mail-out

Ask your staff rep or school-based social justice rep about the September BCTF social justice package, which was recently mailed to schools. It contains the BCTF [Social Justice Calendar of Events](#) and the [Summer/Fall 2017 Social Justice Newsletter](#).

**September**



- 4: Labour Day
- 8: International Literacy Day
- 24–30: National Forest Week
- 21: UN International Day of Peace
- 26: International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

The [Social Justice Calendar of Events](#) highlights important national and international dates to consider when planning how to integrate social justice into classrooms.

Each of the monthly editions of *Seeds of Social Justice* will highlight resources teachers can use to engage students in activities related to that month’s calendar of events. *Seeds of Social Justice* is emailed to Local Presidents and local social justice contacts for distribution to BCTF members a few days before the beginning of each month. You can also find the latest edition of [Seeds of Social Justice](#), along with copies

dating back to March 2016, on the [Publications page](#) of the BCTF website under [Newsletters, Bulletins, and Alerts](#).

Equity and inclusion are a key topics in the [Social Justice Newsletter](#). Articles addressing these issues include Maria Ishikawa's discussion of the importance of validating cultural identity, past BCTF Member-at-Large James Sanyshyn's reflection on the importance of making space for people with less privilege, Annie Ohana's recommendations for infusing Aboriginal curriculum, and Sonja van der Putten's article on women in political leadership roles.



**PRIVILEGE**  
Is a special right or advantage available to only a particular person or group

- Is something we should all have
- Is not about guilt
- Is important to acknowledge
- Is experienced by everyone to varying degrees
- Is difficult to see

**Achieving equity and inclusion involves:**

- + engaging in uncomfortable but necessary discussions
- + making space for those who have less privilege
- + being open to learning more.

Visit the BCTF Equity and Inclusion webpage at [bctf.ca/equityandinclusion.aspx](#)

Over the last several weeks, a number of counter rallies in response to white supremacist, anti-immigration, and Islamophobic gatherings have been organized across Canada and the United States. Approximately 4,000 people voiced their opposition to racism and Islamophobia at the August 19 rally in Vancouver. While Aboriginal people, new immigrants, Muslims, and people of colour speaking at the rally thanked participants for their tremendous show of support, they also challenged them to do more by speaking out on racism with colleagues, friends, and family members. It is easy to self-identify as antiracist and condemn the racist acts of others. It is much harder to examine one's own beliefs, behaviours, and biases, and challenge oneself to do more.

These newly developed resources can be used to support the development of allyship skills in your classroom, school, and local.

The first step in supporting inclusion involves acknowledging our areas of privilege in order to identify steps we can take to act as allies for those with less privilege. The new poster on privilege and accompanying [tips sheet](#) provide strategies to initiate discussions around privilege with colleagues or students.

The **Being an Ally** section on the BCTF's [Equity and Inclusion: Raising Awareness page](#) contains links to videos and other useful resources, including the two new posters shown below, to support the development of allyship skills. The video [5 Tips For Being An Ally](#) provides a helpful introduction to the topic of allyship.

### Becoming an Ally and Practicing Allyship

There are many ways to consider or become an ally in anti-oppression or social justice work. The first is that the ally "is" (not just identity—it's who you are, it's what you practice). Being an ally means practicing allyship: offering support and solidarity with marginalized groups, listening to and supporting their needs, and working to change the system.

Allyship involves:

- ACTION**: Highlight the needs of marginalized groups and work to change the system.
- LISTENING**: Listen to the needs and concerns of marginalized groups.
- LEARNING**: Learn about privilege and oppression.
- YIELDING**: Make space for marginalized groups.

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For more information, please visit [bctf.ca/equityandinclusion.aspx](#)

### Actions of Allyship

There are many ways and forms to practice allyship, and all are important.

- Model**: Show your support and solidarity by using a protest, supporting a protest, and participating in a protest.
- Take political action**: Write letters, support the campaign or progressive candidates with expertise and resources, and stand by vulnerability and protesting these campaigns in public platforms.
- Listen**: Listen, support, and co-organize anti-oppression, raising awareness, and working.
- Use social media and public platforms**: Use social media and public platforms to raise awareness, support, and co-organize anti-oppression, raising awareness, and working.
- Interfaith engagement**: Engage with other people with different religious beliefs and practices. Engage in faith in ways that are not, racist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, ableist, sexist, and ageist.
- Volunteer**: Use all opportunities to contribute your time and energy to support of and solidarity with anti-oppression work.
- Provide financial support**: Donate to marginalized groups, movements, and organizations.

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For more information, please visit [bctf.ca/equityandinclusion.aspx](#)

Visit the [BCTF Equity and Inclusion web pages](#) for additional resources to help [raise awareness](#) about these issues, find [tools](#) to create more equitable spaces, and [delve deeper](#) into specific issues.



The [social justice resources brochure](#) highlights a variety of social justice materials available from the BCTF.

To request hard copies of these resources, email [socialjustice@bctf.ca](mailto:socialjustice@bctf.ca). Please include the name and number of each item, along with your mailing address.

The recently updated Social Justice Binder contains a number of useful documents for teachers, including information on social justice grants, workshops, resources, and tools to help incorporate social justice into your classroom. Ask your Local Social Justice Contact to download and share the electronic version of this resource from the Social Justice Contact tab on the BCTF Member Portal.

## Social Justice Workshops



[A Place for Everyone: Equity and inclusion in your local, classroom, and school—an anti-oppression framework](#)

This newly developed workshop will provide teachers with strategies to help contribute to more inclusive environments. Participants will be introduced to a number of barriers to inclusion based on race, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, and physical ability. They will then explore strategies and resources available on the BCTF Equity and Inclusion web pages to address these barriers. Through an inquiry model, participants will begin thinking about specific actions they can take in their classrooms, schools, locals, and communities.

To request this or another Social Justice workshop for a school-based, local, or regional professional development day, or for a School Union Representative Training (SURT) day, click on the “Book this Workshop” link below the workshop description on the BCTF [Social Justice and Global Education Workshops page](#).

## Opportunities for Members



The **BCTF Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ)** has an opening in its **Environmental Justice Action Group**. Responsibilities of CASJ members include making recommendations to the BCTF Executive Committee on social justice issues, creating resources for teachers and locals, assisting locals and zones in developing general social justice programs and projects, and developing links with other unions and community groups. More information and application forms are available on the [BCTF Committee/Facilitator Postings page](#). The application deadline is September 12, 2017.

If you have a passion for social justice and are looking for a way to contribute to your school without committing a large amount of time, this year might be the time to put your name forward as a **school-based social justice rep**. The time commitment required for this role depends on you. Teachers with limited time can help by simply forwarding social justice-related information from the BCTF and local social justice contacts to teaching staff. School contacts wishing to play a larger role may choose to work with colleagues to set goals and carry out projects. School-based contacts can also advocate for policies related to social justice within a school, local, or community.

If you are new in the role of school-based social justice contact or would like to learn more about your role, see Leon D'Souza's article, *Social Justice: Is it on your agenda?*, on page 8 of the [Summer/Fall 2017 Social Justice Newsletter](#), and ask your local social justice contact about opportunities to participate in a [Staff Union Rep Training \(SURT\)](#) workshop for school-based social justice contacts.



### **Imagineaction Social Action Projects—A social justice program of the Canadian Teachers' Federation**

Imagineaction is designed to assist teachers to meet the stated desire of parents, teachers, and students to use a critical-thinking model to teach citizenship through active participation in community-based projects. Supports for students and teachers can be found in both English and French.

Imagineaction provides:

- funding subsidies of \$300 payable to the school (within finite windows of opportunity)
- access to expertise (resources, connecting with community partners, etc.)
- professional development (workshops, resources, and staff)
- a public project showcase page ([www.imagine-action.ca](http://www.imagine-action.ca)).

**Next funding window for school-community social action projects is September 2017.**



Did you know that the BCTF provides grants and funds of up to \$2,000 to support teachers in carrying out social justice projects? If you have a project in mind for the 2017–18 school year, you are invited to apply now.

The [Regional Social Justice Conference Fund](#) is designed to provide funding for social justice conferences to be held throughout the province. The intent behind these grants is to build capacity and support the growth of social justice in a given region. Funding occurs on a biennial basis. **The deadline for applying is November 15, 2017.**

The [Ed May Social Responsibility Education Fund](#) promotes socially responsible teaching in inclusive, safe, and healthy schools by providing money to assist teachers in developing and implementing resources focusing on violence prevention, antiracism, multiculturalism, gender equity, environmentalism, or peace. **The deadline for applying for grants for the 2017–18 school year is November 22, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.**

[Local Social Justice Grants](#) provide seed money for activities or projects at the local or sub-local level that will bring about systemic change for social justice in schools, districts, and/or communities in British Columbia. Grants to eligible applicants are awarded on a first come, first served basis. **Submissions are accepted from September 5,**

**2017 to April 12, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.** To ensure you have time to complete your project by the end of the year, please apply as early as possible.

The [criteria, timelines, priorities, and tips](#) document is a useful resource to help identify which of the two grants is most applicable for your project.

Some of last year's grant recipients have shared their experiences in the [Social Justice Newsletter](#). You can read them on page 11, "Homelessness and Addiction in Maple Ridge," and on page 17, "The Social Justice Symposium 2017." These articles may provide you with inspiration to develop your own project this year.

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