South Okanagan Similkameen Teachers' Union



Newsflash

Teachers, do you teach in a specialty area? Here are some tips to increase your chances of getting a replacement who is also in your specialty area:

- book as far in advance as possible

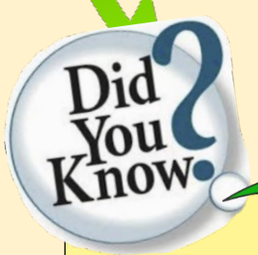
- put your specialty subject (i.e. grade 12 Physics) first in your teaching subjects

- put a second-choice subject area that may also be a specialty

- leave a message on Atrieve, letting the person know what they would be teaching

All these tips will not guarantee that someone qualified will get the position, but it will increase the chances.

Callout system continues to be of concern for members, both TTOCs and contract teachers. There seem to be a variety of reasons; please send SOSTU your concerns as these are followed up. (Include dates, times, dispatch, any and all details.)



BC Government Announces Changes

What does this mean? Newly elected governments always implement change. Some changes will arise out of cost cutting and others may signal a difference in direction or policy. This government has promised both; do not get caught up in the headlines. Students will always remain at the forefront of our work.
Stay informed.



Use your Blue Cross Benefits

This is your annual reminder to use your benefits before the amounts reset on January 1st.

Login to the Blue Cross website to see what you have used for coverage so far this year.

Blue Cross Extended Health Plan Benefit Improvements & Additions

- Effective July 1, 2026, hearing aids will be covered up to $4,000 per 48 months.
- Effective July 1, 2026, audiologist services included in speech therapy coverage.
- Effective July 1, 2026, Gender Affirming Care benefits up to a lifetime maximum of $30,000.
- Effective July 1, 2028, counselling services will be covered up to $1,750 per year.

Other recent improvements already in effect you may not be aware of:

- Counselling services now include psychologist, registered clinical counsellor, and registered social worker services up to $1,500 per year.
- Coverage for Shingles and HPV vaccines.
- The vision care maximum is now $650 per 24 months.
  Naturopath coverage is now $1000 per year.

Free Pension Workshops through Zoom - BCRTA

Since the BC Retired Teachers' Association workshop was introduced in 2016, more than 5,000 teachers have participated, learning more about the Teachers' Pension Plan, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and voluntary group benefits (dental, extended health, travel) *These workshops are in addition to the Teacher Pension Videos.*

The meetings are held by Zoom and after a 2 minute registration, you will receive a Zoom link and reminder. You can also find the registration and dates on the BCRTA Events Page www.bcrta.ca. Link is below the newsletter
There are 8 more scheduled online sessions for 2026-27 school year.