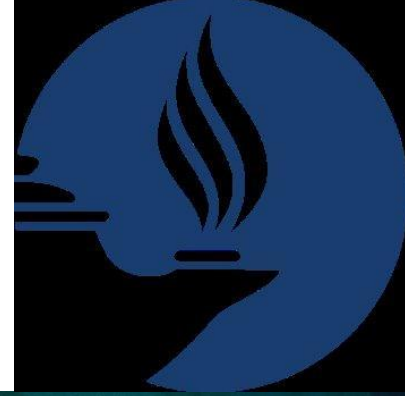




ABCDE
ASSOCIATION OF BC DRAMA EDUCATORS



BCTF

**In
Focus**



Allie Sieben and Wil Taylor in OKM 3T's Josph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

**Winter
2020**

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello drama friends ,

Hopefully you have all managed to dig yourselves out of the snow and find yourselves back in the drama room! I see many of your posts with updates on shows opening, painting and costuming underway and general drama fun! I chuckled when I saw a picture of someone else's office cluttered with the odds and ends of props and costumes. I often think my office is a good indicator of the current state of the inside of my brain... and right now it's cluttered with crazy things like a pirate ship, Christmas lights, an old typewriter, mini swords and birthday party supplies! Lots of exciting memories in here!

I think it's important that we all support each other and make an effort to get out and see each other's work where and when we can. I always appreciate when my colleagues in the north travel with their students to come and see our shows. Did you know that you can find a list of shows and performance dates on our website?

We make an effort to keep our website current and to keep people informed of what is happening in drama classrooms around the province... but we need your help to do that!! Ryan Grenier has taken over the media and newsletters so do make sure you send him photos of your shows, updates on what's happening in your drama classroom or any lesson plan ideas that you have to share. (ryan.grenier@sd23.bc.ca)

Scriptwriting has been keeping many of our kids busy as of late! We had 11 scripts submitted to the ABCDE Youthwright competition and our adjudicator, Mark Leiren-Young is busy reading all of those! We look forward to his feedback and to inviting 3 of the top plays to present at the NTS Drama Festival.

You may have seen on our Facebook page that the Arts Club Theatre Company offers an amazing, free to you and your students, program in scriptwriting called Digital LEAP. This program is intended to reach students outside of the lower mainland and having had students participate in the past I can tell you that this is another phenomenal opportunity for young people to develop their skills and passion in script writing. Do reach out to smacdonald@artsclub.com if you have any questions. This is a great way to spur more interest in writing in your school and perhaps develop a scriptwriting class as part of your program.

Over and above our busy drama classrooms, the ABCDE executive is meeting regularly and advocating for drama teachers in BC. We continue to send messages forward requesting that the ministry respond to our concerns with the proposed funding model. It is important to note that the funding issues are not related to contract bargaining but rather an entirely separate matter happening at the same time. Because of this it will be easy for that conversation to get lost beneath the weight of contract talks. If you haven't already done so, contact your MLA to officially express your concerns.

Do make sure you are also keeping up to date with the ongoing bargaining news on the BCTF portal. Should teachers vote to participate in job action we have requested that there be some clear guidelines on how 'extracurricular' is defined to protect performing arts teachers and programs. Those of us who teach performing arts know that what we do is curricular and part of our learning outcomes. I look forward to meeting with the PSA Council at the end of February for updates and conversation around where we are moving on these topics.

In the meantime, the ABCDE drama conference is done but our two big festivals are still to come! Don't miss out on the Goodwill Shakespeare Festival in Vernon and the NTS Drama Festival in New Westminster this spring. Thank you Lana, Gord and Sharon for all of your work on these exciting events. There is more information in our newsletter about how to register and get involved.

While we officially said goodbye to Katie Everson, Jennifer Ohlhauser and Christine Knight from the executive last fall, they have all been around and supporting the work we are doing. We are so grateful for all of the hardworking, dedicated drama teachers in the province. We are happy to welcome Brian Billo and Coco Roberge to our executive this year.

Whatever your current work involves, I wish you all the broken legs! Hope to see you at a festival soon!!

Heather Lee

ABCDE President

Spotlight on the ABCDE BC Drama Teacher of the Year Jason Donaldson

This award is for an exemplary teacher and ABCDE member. It may go to anyone who teaches K-12 and incorporates Drama in and beyond the classroom, such as touring shows to other schools, going to see other people's theatrical work, having professionals in the school working with students etc.



Jason Donaldson is presented the award
by ABCDE President, Heather Lee

Bio: Jason Donaldson teaches theatre at Gulf Islands Secondary School and the connected academy program, Gulf Islands School of Performing Arts, on Salt Spring Island. He has worked there since 2004. Jason has a Masters in Arts Education from SFU (2012), and did his undergrad at UVic with Juliana Saxton (2000). He is an alumnus of Dave Brotsky's 27th Street Theatre at WL Seaton (1991) - Jason's work is rooted in integrated arts, collective creation, devising and Improvisation.

ABCDE Drama Teacher of the Year Jason Donaldson Q&A

Q: Could you describe your program?

A: I teach Drama 9/10, Theatre Company 11/12 and the Theatre strand of the GISPA program. We offer Theatre tech and production, Directing & Script Writing and Theatre performance as well. However, enrollment is low and so those students are usually in the Company 11/12 class. I usually have one English class per year as well. GISPA also involves a mixed grade, performing arts focused English class.

Q: Favorite shows you've seen?

A: In terms of inspiring productions we have seen, recent highlights have included the Electric Company/Kidd Pivot collaborations of Betroffenheit and Revisor, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime (We have had the good fortune of Frantic Assembly workshops these past three years). I also want to mention the Old Trout Puppet Workshop's Famous Puppet Death Scenes and Eric Davis's Red Bastard shows.

Q: Favorite shows you've directed?

A: I want my answer to this to always be the current show I am working on, which right now is a very unDisney reimagining of Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid story... We are also in the early stages of considering Kafka's Traveling Doll story for next semester's show, but we'll see. Shout outs to Urinetown, Mary Zimmerman's Metamorphoses and Peter & the StarCatcher for scripted work.

Q: Any Career Highlights you'd like to mention?

A: A highlight has to include my work with the GISS Improv team and our seven trips to the national tournament of the Canadian Improv Games, including placing gold, silver and gold in the finals for the past three years. More importantly however is what the CIG community means to me and all that it has provided for my students by way of mentors, teachers and friends.

Q: Influences?

A: I am deeply influenced by a hybrid of methods via Anne Bogart's ViewPoints training, Julie Taymor's aesthetic and production history, the clown training of Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier, Blind Summit puppetry and the teachings of Keith Johnstone. We call our approach ThemeRolling as it is built on thematic emergence and expression.

Q: Advice to new Drama Teachers?

A: Acknowledge and embrace the emergent curriculum, ask better questions (trying to avoid asking any that you already know the answer to and most that could be answered yes/no). As Drama teachers we employ an arsenal of games, exercises and activities that are not about getting it right but rather creating conditions to credibly fix it when it is wrong. We could get really, really good at playing these games, but then there would be no point in playing them. Education is about relationships.

Q: Why ABCDE?

A: The ABCDE provides me with a network of educational professionals with a tremendous depth of experience and wisdom and a diverse range of skill sets and methodologies. These resources have been an integral part of my professional growth and have provided me with tremendous examples, dear colleagues and lifelong friends. The October conference is a highlight of my year, every year.

Activities to support your goals/classroom teaching (Submitted by Heather Lytle)

CORRIDOR

(Practicing good opening statements in improv scenes)

Have students line up in two lines facing each other (I make two group - four lines - when the group is large).

The student at the top of Line A will start by making a statement to the person at the top of Line B that indicates who they both are and where they are. I always stress that relationship is an important part of the 'who'. They only get one sentence. Ie) "Samantha, you are the love of my life... will you marry me?"

Student B also gets only one sentence to respond and they must find a reason to leave and go down the corridor. ie) "Let me go ask my mother!" Student B then walks down the corridor and crosses to the other side, they get one more sentence with the person at the end of Line A to bring the scene to a close. ie) "Mother, Billy asked me to marry him what should I do?"

The student at the end of Line A finishes the scene with one line. ie) "Run!!"

Next round the student at the top of Line B will start. It switches back and forth.

Ideally the lines have an uneven number and so students will end up in different partners when they get back to the top.

Activities to support your goals/classroom teaching (Submitted by Heather Lytle)

4 CORNERS:

(Practicing scene structure)

Students set up chairs in the four corners of the room and divide themselves evenly into the 4 corners.

There should be open playing space in the center.

Corner 1: Beginning (establish the who and where of the story).

One or two people from this group get up and start a scene. They may not make anything 'happen', anyone can 'buzz' if that happens. Rather they are to clearly establish their relationship and their surroundings through dialogue.

Corner 2: Middle (conflict)

Once the beginning is clearly established someone from this corner will jump into the scene and introduce a problem/conflict. This problem needs to be connected to who and where they are.

Corner 3: Middle (raise the stakes)

Once there is a conflict someone from corner 3 will enter the space and raise the stakes (clarify why this problem is important or urgent).

Corner 4: End (resolution)

***Of course someone from corner 4 will now enter the scene and resolve the scene (good, bad or otherwise). Their job is to ensure that all the threads are tied up.**

Notes:

-There is no specific number of people that have to jump in the scene, it can be 1, 2, 3 even 4 sometimes.

-People do not all have to stay in the scene so if for some reason you character can or should leave you can go sit back down.

-Once the scene is done players will go to a new corner so that they are constantly changing groups and actions in the scenes. Sometimes I just keep them in a corner and rotate what each corner does for the next scene.

-Remind them that they are acting 'in the round' and should make an effort to stay open to everyone in the room.

-Allowing the people on the sides to make note of when a scene is off track really helps them to notice and understand the importance of scene structure.

Spotlight School
Production:
Rockridge Theatre
Company

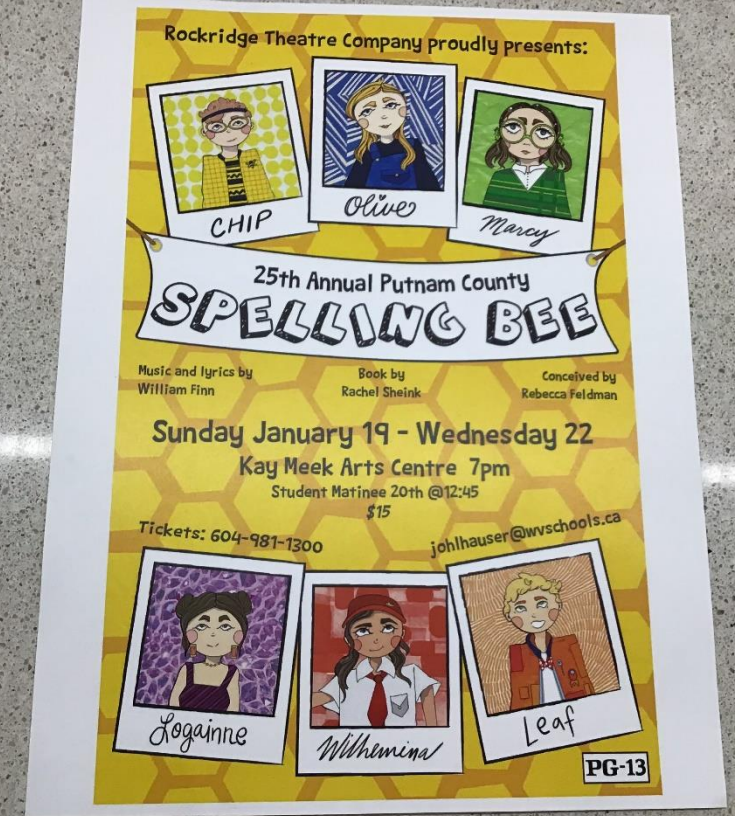
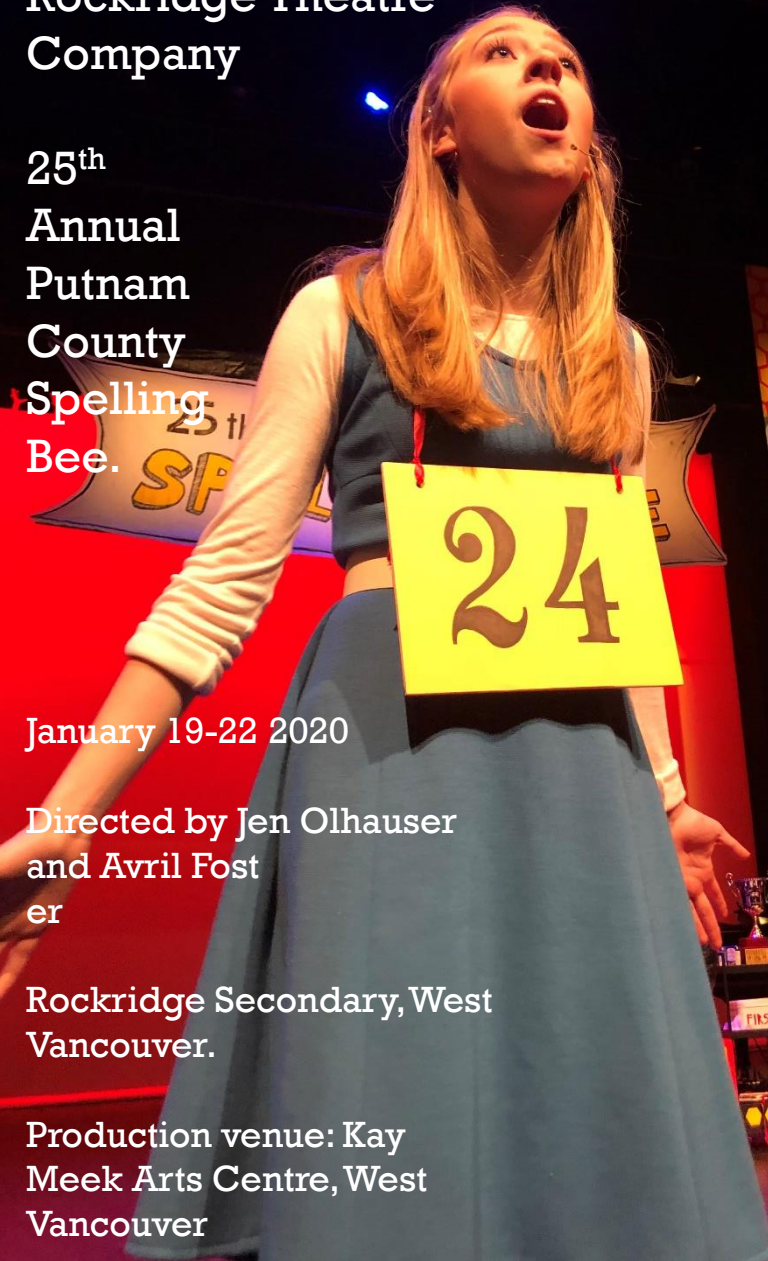
25th
Annual
Putnam
County
Spelling
Bee.

January 19-22 2020

Directed by Jen Olhauser
and Avril Foster

Rockridge Secondary, West
Vancouver.

Production venue: Kay
Meek Arts Centre, West
Vancouver



**Spotlight on
Lana O'Brien –
Winner of the
SIMPSON and LYNDS
DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE**

This award has been renamed after Laurie Lynds and Keith Simpson who were the founders of the ABCDE, to honour their years of contribution to this organization.

This award is for an individual who is an advocate for Drama in B.C. schools and whose work reflects the policies and goals of ABCDE. This award could go to administrators, university instructors, community members, parents, professional individuals and companies etc.



Lana O'Brien and ABCDE
President Heather Lee

Bio: Born and raised in the Okanagan, Lana graduated from PVSS in Armstrong and moved to pursue an Education degree, specializing in Drama, at the University of Victoria, under Carole Miller and Juliana Saxton. After graduating from there in 1995 she taught drama in Grand Forks for her first year. After that she taught three years of drama in Invermere before moving back to Vernon in 1999, where she since has been teaching drama at WL Seaton Secondary School.

Q+A with ABCDE Outstanding Drama Education Award winner, Lana O'Brien

Q: Could you comment more on your personal history and growth as an educator, I assume you'll specifically mention your time at Seaton Secondary?

A: My final long practicum was at Seaton Secondary school under the guidance of master teacher, Dave Brotsky, and I was lucky enough to return to Seaton to work alongside him for the last 5 years of his career. He left an incredible legacy and I have always felt honoured to keep that legacy alive and well, and growing. I am extremely proud of the fact that for the past 20 years of my time at Seaton we have maintained the thriving program with 1.5 drama teachers (11 blocks of Drama 8 through 12, Theatre Company, Musical Theatre Company, and Stagecraft) in a school of 850 students. Dave Brotsky continues to be a wonderful supporter, mentor, and best of all, a great friend. On a more personal note, while at University, I met and married my husband, Mike. He has supported the crazy drama lifestyle alongside me for the past 30 years. Any of you with an extracurricular, or co-curricular, program know the hours you spend away from home. I could not do what I do without that love and support. We made three totally awesome kids too! Shaughnessy, our eldest, is an apple who fell extremely close to the tree. She is currently studying in the Acting Conservatory program at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. We also have 16 year old twins – Delaney, who is also an incredible performer in the theatre program, and Fraser, who is currently in his second year with the Banff Hockey Academy, playing Midget Prep. I always tease him that if hockey doesn't work out he should go into theatre because he is a fabulous performer too! One of my favourite things is when they are all home and they sing together. MAN, do they sing!!!!

Q: Why ABCDE?

A: In my first year of teaching, when attending the ABCDE conference, Vernon's Monty Hughes (who I eventually replaced at Seaton) persuaded me to sit as a member at large on the executive. He had known me through the Vernon and Armstrong community theatres where my parents, and I, were actively involved, and where I got my earliest exposure to theatre. It was on the executive that I met Linda Beaven, who would become "my other mother." Linda taught drama for 30+ years at Summerland Secondary and was the founder of the Good Will Shakespeare Festival, which she created as a way of bringing "big city" theatre arts workshops to our rural students. When Linda needed to retire from the festival after 16 years, she hoped and dreamed it would live on. Having attended all 16 of those festivals, I took the reins and with the help of Laurie Anne Lorge (VSS) and Shon Thomas (KAL) the festival moved to Vernon. One doesn't let ones Mom down, does one? I am happy to report the festival continues to grow in Vernon, and Linda's legacy is alive and well.

Q+A with ABCDE Outstanding Drama Education Award winner, Lana O'Brien *continued*

Q: How do you create quality theatre?

A: Creating good theatre requires knowing what good theatre is. In Vernon we have an amazing Performing Arts Centre, and the Artistic Director is a Seaton alumni too! Erin Kennedy (graduate of NTS) curates incredible shows for our community and offers \$5 tickets to EVERYTHING for our students. Some of the highlights have been Catalyst's Nevermore, and Arts Club's Onegin, and Volcano's Infinity with Vernon's own Jon Young. Speaking of Jon, one of the best shows I've ever seen in my life – and I had to see it twice, was Kidd Pivot/Electric Company's Betroffenheit.

Q: Favorite Shows?

A: Looking back at all the shows I've done over the past 25 years, choosing a favourite is always difficult. I like to think that I learn more with each show. I learn new ways into directing, new building techniques for the set designs, and LOTS of new things with the advent of LED technology. I love the rollicking good fun musicals, Shakespeare, and the occasional really meaty drama. I have done Little Shop of Horrors twice, once at school and one at the community's Powerhouse Theatre. And, I would do it again – maybe in my retirement year. So it's way up there on my favourites list. Linda begged me for years to do both Suessical (Ahrens & Flaherty) and Mary Zimmerman's Secret in the Wings. I don't know why I was reluctant, because both of those shows are also really high up on my favourites too. Last season our wonderful ABCDE president, Heather, sent me a copy of George Brandt's Elephant's Graveyard, and it will forever be a favourite experience both for the journey we went on as a company, and for the social awareness we raised about performance elephants. Currently I am working on The Addams Family (Brickman, Elice & Lipka), thanks to my other wonderful long-time friend from the ABCDE exec, Gordon Hamilton. He said, "Do it!" I am so glad I listened. It is so much fun and I think will also top the favourites list.

Q: Tips for choosing shows?

A: Choosing shows is difficult for me. With so many talented kids to work with, I always steer away from "star" driven shows, and look for shows that involve a strong ensemble and/or chorus. This is one of the great advantages of being part of the ABCDE. Every event, and meeting, is also a wonderful opportunity for chit chat, sharing, and collaborating. When I was presented with the award for Outstanding Achievement in Drama Education, I was tremendously overwhelmed, and honoured, but I also felt strange being focused on. Everything we do in theatre is in collaboration. Nothing happens without tremendous teamwork. I am eternally grateful to the people who walk into the theatre every day and say "Hey, let's make some art together!" What a lucky girl I am

Good Will Shakespeare Festival

April 23-25/2020 Vernon Performing Arts Centre, Vernon BC

Web: Goodwillshakespeare.ca email: info@goodwillshakespeare.ca

Theatre has the power to transform lives.

This festival provides secondary school students with the opportunity to meet and learn from a variety of internationally acclaimed actors, musicians, and artists. The festival attracts world class performers and teachers to work with our students.

Over 400 students and their teachers attend the Good Will Shakespeare Festival ready to be involved in one of the richest possible learning experiences. Although “Shakesfest” focuses on Shakespeare, it covers an array of subjects including art, film/TV, choral music, writing, improvisation, costume design, set design, acting, dance, make up, and directing. By participating in these workshops, and learning about the theatrical process, the students experience the trans-formative power of theatre and the arts.

Throughout the festival students will act, sing, dance, design, write, and connect with others from around the province. It is our hope that they will be inspired to take their passion for the arts – in all it’s varied forms – and share with others so they will see the value of the arts in their lives.





B.C. National Theatre School Festival 2020 VISION

<https://ent-nts.ca/en/intro-nts-festival-british-columbia>

The B.C. NTS Festival will take place from Thurs. Apr. 30 - Sun. May 3 at Douglas College in New Westminster. All delegates participate in workshops during the days and attend the theatre performances in the evenings. Social activities occur every evening after the shows and everyone has the opportunity to meet other high school theatre people from around the province and share stories and experiences.

We are thrilled to have Kim Collier as our Adjudicator, an innovative Canadian director, actor, writer, and dramaturge. Kim will be providing a short public adjudication at the end of each evening's performances and then a 45 min. private adjudication the following day for the previous evening's productions.

The following Zones have completed their festivals:

Zone 9 - Upper Fraser Valley

Outstanding Production: Dead-Tective, Robert Bateman Sec., Ms. Jo-Ann Fernandes

Alternate Production: The Familiar Case of Kate Black, W.J. Mouat, Mr. Brian

Zone 10 - North Island

Outstanding Production: The 146 Point Flame, Carihi Sec., Ms. Christine Kn

Alternate Production: Ghost Story, Highland Sec., Ms. Lisa Williams

Zone 13 - Surrey

Outstanding Production: The Sandbox, North Surrey Sec., Mr. Craig Wrotni

Alternate Production: Huebner the Reluctant, Enver Creek Sec., Mr. Jonathan McIntosh

Zone 14 - TriCities

Outstanding Production: God of Carnage, Terry Fox Sec., Mr. Dan Tilsley

Alternate Production: Radium Girls, Riverside Sec., Ms. Coco Roberge

The following Zones will be completing their Festivals soon:

Zone 2 - Northwest: Feb. 13-16 at Caledonia Sec.

Zone 3 - North Central: Feb. 28 - Mar. 1 at Vanderhoof Sec.

Zone 16 - Vancouver: Jan. 30 at Magee Sec. (continued next page)



Pictures from Carihi
Secondary's Zone
production
The 146 Point Flame.



NTS Zone Results *continued*

Zone 14 - TriCities

Outstanding Production: *God of Carnage*, Terry Fox Sec., Mr. Dan Tilsley

Alternate Production: *Radium Girls*, Riverside Sec., Ms. Coco Roberge

The following Zones will be completing their Festivals soon:

Zone 2 - Northwest: Feb. 13-16 at Caledonia Sec.

Zone 3 - North Central: Feb. 28 - Mar. 1 at Vanderhoof Sec.

Zone 16 - Vancouver: Jan. 30 at Magee Sec.

In addition to the Zone Productions, the three Outstanding Scripts from the Youthwright competition will be invited to perform at the Festival.

Look for an announcement in early February about the plays that the Youthwright Adjudicator has chosen.

Some of the workshops we have to offer are:

That is One Big Stick with Robinson Wilson

A stage combat introduction to the theatrical use of the quarter staff.

Casting from A to Z with Kris & Kara from K & K Casting

Find out what and how to prepare when you're being considered for a role.

Finding your Other Voices with Noel Johansen from On the Mic Training

You'll discover the fundamentals of Voice Over work and learn how to create your own unique voices.

If you are interested in bringing a group of your students to the Festival as Nonperforming delegates, please contact Sharon Conrad

@ theatre.garden@yahoo.ca for an invitation. There are a very limited number of non-performing delegate spaces available so apply before the Feb. 15th deadline.

The registration fee for the B.C. NTS Festival is \$125.00 and is the same for all delegates, regardless of whether you are performing or not!

Any graduating gr. 12 student who is planning to attend a post-secondary institution in a Theatrical discipline in the Fall or Winter Session of 2020 can apply for the B.C. NTS Festival Scholarship valued at \$1000.

Don't miss out...bring your students to the Festival!

See you in New Westminster at the end of April!



Carihi is the Zone 10
Selection to compete at
the NTS provincial
festival!



Funding Model Letter from Heather Lee

ATTENTION ABCDE MEMBERS

RE: PROPOSED FUNDING MODEL / POTENTIAL CUTS TO ARTS PROGRAMS

As many of you know from our conversations on FB in the spring, and around conference in the fall, the ministry of education has struck a committee to review educational funding and this committee has forwarded a "Proposed Funding Model". There are a number of concerns that have risen from this document and it's potential implications. You may have heard about the proposed 'prevalence funding' for special education for instance.

Are you familiar, however, with recommendation 9 which reads, "The ministry should base funding allocations for school-age educational programming on the number of students, rather than on the number of courses being taken. The ministry should phase out the current course-based funding model by the 2020/21 school year." In a nutshell this could have a profound impact on schools and teachers that teach 'outside the timetable' courses such as musical theatre, theatre production etc. For many of us the students enrolled in these classes are taking a 9th, 10th or even 11th course!

Some will argue this will all balance out in the end. Others still will say this is a done deal and there is nothing we can do about it.

I feel strongly that we shouldn't stay silent on this issue as it could mean very different things from one district to another, and that probably the only way we will get any attention on the matter is if we make a VERY LOUD call for action.

We collectively need to join our colleagues in dance and music to alert our parents of these potential program losses, talk to you local and district PAC and talk to your local LSAs about what is happening. We need to get everyone we can to alert their MLAs and get the message to the ministry that we are concerned. Hopefully enough of us will act that we can make a plea for the ministry to revisit this recommendation.

I have attached the letter that I have sent in to the ministry.

I have also attached a letter you as a teacher can use (please just alter the headings and footers to suit your circumstance, whether you are a teacher or an ally, where you are etc.) to send to your MLAs and a third that your parents can send to their MLAs.

Heather Lee

Teacher of Drama and Theatre,
Smithers Secondary School

President, ABCDE

(Association of BC Drama Educators)

January, 2020

***Urgent! Do you understand how detrimental the new Funding model being proposed could be to Drama in BC? See below the model letter we urge you to send (also available for download on our Facebook page, *ABCDE on Facebook*) to your local MLA!**

_____ (name), MLA for _____ (region)

Re: Proposed education funding model and the threat to arts courses in schools

I am a fine arts teacher working with students at _____ (school) in _____ (town). I would like to bring your attention to the potentially devastating effect that the ministry of education's proposed funding model could have on our schools, specifically on 'outside the timetable courses'. I'm requesting that you officially and strongly advocate for the protection of arts education and other such courses that would be affected by an 8 course / student funding policy.

As part of the rich educational offerings in schools around BC many students are afforded the opportunity to take more than 8 courses in a school year. Considering the number of mandatory courses a student needs, such as career life connections and capstone projects, the option for a 9th, 10th or even 11th course is very important to many students to fulfill their personal interests and growth. Moreover, these students are better able to access post-secondary programs because of their well-rounded transcripts.

In a document titled "Improving Equity and Accountability: Report of the Funding Model Review Panel 2018" there is a list of recommendations under the theme "Equity of Educational Opportunity." While fine arts teachers in no way dispute the aspiration of the panel to "allocate funding in order to support improved student outcomes by providing equity of educational opportunities to every student in BC," we would like to make sure you are aware of the potential issues that could gravely impact the educational opportunities students currently have in British Columbia.

Recommendation 9 on page 9 reads, "The ministry should base funding allocations for school-age educational programming on the number of students, rather than on the number of courses being taken. The ministry should phase out the current course-based funding model by the 2020/21 school year." We read this to mean that if a student chooses to fill their timetable with 8 courses during the day and then add a 9th or even 10th course, such as musical theatre or theatre production outside the regular timetable, then those students would no longer be funded for those courses and therefore there would be no funding for teachers to run those courses. Consequently a significant number of those courses may be terminated!

These cuts will no doubt have a profound impact on the performing arts (drama, dance, and music) but also on a number of other courses offered outside the timetable in schools across British Columbia. Programs such as leadership, athletics, and trades often operate this way as well. If we were forced to move courses like musical theatre into the timetable, we would see a decline in our numbers, and lose the freedom of a flexible after school schedule that currently accommodates these interesting, rigorous and rich learning opportunities. For example, a class cannot run a 4 hour dress or tech rehearsal for a 2 hour show in a 60-minute period, but we can extend rehearsal after school to accommodate for these needs, in turn providing the meaningful and thoughtful space to learn such skills. This kind of choice and flexibility for students in BC is exactly what the ministry is telling us they want to see in schools!

The fact that a student can load their timetable with 9 or 10 different options is precisely what makes the current education model flexible and full of choice for students. Many students, when faced with an either/or scenario in course selection, would have to limit themselves and their opportunities. Moreover, students in special programs such as French immersion, distributed learning, sports academies or trades programs, who already have fewer elective choices, could be further limited in their choices. The current system allows students to take the academic courses offered in the timetable and still learn and grow in other creative and skill-based courses in the morning or after regular school hours.

Many students can't afford to access these programs privately but can have these meaningful experiences within the public school setting. Some communities don't even offer these programs outside of school!

These are some of the richest learning environments we offer students in school, and for many students it's the sole motivation for attending school. Every single drama teacher in this province could attest to working with students whose high school years were fraught with trauma and disadvantages, yet through the supports and processes of arts education they were able to heal, thrive, graduate high school and carry on to function as contributing members of society. I can say first hand that these course offerings are not only valuable but essential! Likewise, many of our highest functioning students with multiple talents and rigorous academic schedules are the very students who are enriching themselves through this type of learning. I would plead with you to consider carefully how the wording in Recommendation 9 could influence school district decisions and impact course offerings in British Columbia.

Currently our students have the option of a full load of academic courses, topped off with a number of applied skills, athletics, and arts to both round out their educational opportunities and foster creative growth and development. As you already know, the core of 21st century education mandates this type of learning. Arts programs like drama and theatre have always been proficient at meeting core competencies for children. Our young people would be at a huge disadvantage if districts were to start cutting "outside the timetable" course offerings.

Recommendation 11 reads, "Notwithstanding Recommendation 9, funding for the following programs should remain course-based: graduated adults, non-graduated adults, continuing education, distributed learning, summer school." Is there some way this provision could also protect the types of courses we offer? Is there another way to revisit this issue? Can you provide us an assurance that these courses will be protected in some way?

I hope that I have helped you to understand the urgency and gravity of this issue and I look forward to hearing back from you regarding this concern.

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Address)

Your 2019-2020 ABCDE Executive

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