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Local Teachers' Union Declares Jan. 15th as "Teachers' Mental Health Awareness Day"

(PRINCE RUPERT) The Prince Rupert District Teachers' Union (PRDTU) Executive Committee voted at its regular meeting last week to declare Jan. 15th as "Teachers' Mental Health Awareness Day" to draw awareness to the stress, fear, and working conditions of teachers and other school staff in School District 52. The union is preparing for the day now.

"Teachers and other school staff are frontline workers in this pandemic," said Gabriel Bureau, president of the PRDTU. "Many teachers and other school staff report extreme worry and stress on the job, especially over safety concerns and working conditions during the pandemic."

To raise awareness and to help school staff, the union plans to distribute resources on counseling services, mental health programs, and ways of responding to stress and fear at work in the lead up to Teachers' Mental Health Awareness Day. Each school will be invited to raise awareness of mental health and programs in creative ways, with the union providing funds to help support teachers at individual schools.

"Many teachers feel overwhelmed, especially because they feel responsible for student safety but at the same time feel powerless to put in place the measures needed to ensure that things are as safe as possible," said Bureau. "While teachers are being as proactive as possible, it can take a toll on our mental health to have such a responsibility without being backed by your employer."

In addition to the stress of being a teacher under current circumstances, school staff are affected in the same way as all other workers as well. Teachers' Mental Health Awareness Day will raise awareness of issues such as isolation, fear, caring for family members, and other COVID-related stresses that everyone in the community is facing together.

For more information on the Prince Rupert District Teachers' Union (PRDTU) visit <https://prdtu.com>.