

# STA Examiner

Surrey Teachers' Association

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## Another Year, Another Calendar?



Denise Moffatt

When I met with School District senior management in early December, I must admit I was a bit surprised. I expected our discussion of calendar change to be similar to last year: longer days, school closure days. However, it turns out the District was interested in floating a new idea.

Most of you have likely seen a draft calendar for 2011/12. The changes involve moving the start date of the school year into mid August, three weeks earlier. There would be three - two-week breaks in each of October, December and March. The premise is that by shortening the summer break, students especially those in inner city schools will see improvements in students' retention of concepts and skills.

This isn't the first time that the District has considered a significant change to the calendar. During the late 90s, a joint committee met to look at dual track year long schools. This dual-track model was rejected by both the Association and the School District as an untenable option.

The concept of a "balanced calendar" has also been explored by other school districts in BC. There are, currently, a handful of schools that operate on this model with some variation. It has been difficult to confirm numbers. The Ministry of Education says two, other research we have read says four. We have confirmed that a school in Maple Ridge, Kanaka Creek, one in Langley, Douglas Park, and Spul'u'kwuks in Richmond use a balanced calendar model. All are elementary schools.

Research on the educational value and community impact of this change is mixed. A report on Langley's Douglas Park Community School was completed in 2004 for the UBC Faculty of Education as a *School Leadership Centre Research Backgrounder*. The report found that students made some gains in reading and was generally supportive of balanced calendars. A copy is available from the STA office.

The BCTF's Charlie Naylor has also published reports on this topic stating that "academic achievement is rarely improved by year-round schools" and concluded that "year-round education is not worth the hassle -- the problems associated with it are greater than any benefits." Charlie Naylor's research is available at <http://www.bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=5630>.

A Delta School District Joint Committee reviewed research from a variety of sources and concluded that balanced calendars resulted in initial educational gains, especially in Math, but that the gains diminished after several years into implementation. The Delta committee concluded that the effects "were not statistically significant enough to warrant the calendar change."



Teachers have raised a variety of other considerations including but not limited to the impact on families, summer school, summer employment, summer sports, vacations, and child care. Some also asked if the District had considered linear instead of semestered classes at secondary.

The STA will continue to consult with members on this topic. Please send feedback to [pres@surreyteachers.org](mailto:pres@surreyteachers.org). Staff reps will be asked to hold meetings and to assist us in surveying teachers in January before we make recommendations to a general meeting.

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**REMINDER: Next STA Rep Training - February 15, 16, 17, 18, 2010**

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# Bargaining in 2011

I wrote in the fall about the challenges that have faced locals, like ours, with respect to provincial bargaining. Provincial bargaining has produced few significant changes since the early nineties and has failed to address many of the “stale” provisions in local agreements. Many locals continue to be frustrated with out-dated and ineffective provisions that will never be re-negotiated at the provincial table.

After recommendations from the BCTF Annual General Meeting, a committee was struck to examine models of bargaining in the public sector across Canada and to make recommendations to the BCTF Representative Assembly.

The recommendations were made at the Fall Representative Assembly and included a call to contact both BCPSEA and the government regarding our wish to secure a greater role for local bargaining in the next round, including an expansion of the split of issues which sets the bargaining authority for locals. It was recommended that all provisions aside from salary, benefits, paid leaves, and work hours be returned to the local table. The recommendations also include a strategy for ensuring that local tables are able to complete their negotiations. These recommendations were adopted by the rep assembly and will form the path for bargaining over the next year and a half.

Already, BCPSEA and the government have been made aware of the BCTF’s intentions. We are now waiting to hear their response.

In our local, teachers need to be involved and fully engaged in the bargaining process if we are going to be successful in achieving improvements. To start this process of consultation and engagement, the executive has tasked the Economic Welfare committee with reviewing our current benefit provisions and surveying members. We will elect a new bargaining committee in the new year in preparation for the BCTF Bargaining Conference in the fall of 2010 and local negotiations in the spring of 2011 .

## Quick Facts:

- ◆ **Our Collective Agreement Expires: June 30, 2011**
- ◆ **Number of locals and sub locals in the BCTF: 76**
- ◆ **Number of teachers and associated professionals in the bargaining unit: approximately 41,000**
- ◆ **Bargaining agent for School Boards: BC Public School Employers’ Association**
- ◆ **Year that Provincial Bargaining began: 1994**
- ◆ **Number of Collective Agreements negotiated after provincial bargaining: 1**

**Your engagement will be critical for our success and we hope that you will join with us in the process.**



## Bargaining History:

*Thanks to VESTA and the BCTF for sharing much of this information.*

### 1917 BCTF Formed

B.C. Teachers’ Federation was formed with original objectives of dealing with the economic, professional and social concerns of teachers. Teacher salaries at this time were determined by lists developed by school boards. There was no pay equity for women or for teachers working at elementary level as opposed to the secondary level.

### 1939 STA’s First Days

STA was not a union at the time, and “officially,” a collective agreement couldn’t be bargained, but the association represented teachers and their professional concerns.

### 1974 Class size

Surrey teachers walked off the job and travelled to Victoria in support of reduced class sizes. The action pushed the government of the day to negotiate with the BCTF a commitment to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio in the province by one in each of the next three years. That had a dramatic affect on class sizes: PTR went from 22.68 in 1972-73 to 16.7 in 1981-82, and thousands of new teachers were added to the school system.

### 1987 - Unionization

STA recognized as a local of the BCTF, within a union model rather than an association model meant that the STA would officially be the exclusive bargaining agent for K-12

teachers in Surrey. Meant that we would have a proper collective agreement with all the rights & responsibilities that entails

### 1994 - PELRA

In 1994, the NDP-majority provincial government introduces the Public Education Labour Relations Act (PELRA) that creates a new provincial model for teacher bargaining in BC. The provincial government justifies this decision, basically, by citing how successful teachers have been doing in bargaining

### Provincial bargaining

Government created a new entity – BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) that would be the exclusive bargaining agent for all school districts in the province. **At the same time . . .** The provincial government designated the BCTF as the exclusive bargaining agent for all teachers in every school district in the province. In other words, the autonomy that locals had to bargain at the local level was removed.

### STA opposes provincial bargaining

Membership in Surrey immediately took a position against provincial bargaining. Complicated by the fact that the BCTF Executive Committee of the day was complicit in the enactment of PELRA, STA and some other pro-local bargaining locals had to mobilize against the province & the BCTF

### 1995 – Split of issues

“Locals for Local Bargaining” were not successful in getting an injunction against the province and the BCTF, and thus provincial bargaining became the norm. BCTF Executive Committee of the day negotiated a split of issues with BCPSEA that would allow some items to be still dealt

with at the local level. All cost items (salary, benefits, leaves, etc.) are designated as “provincial matters” Some non-cost items (evaluation, harassment, etc.) are also designated as “provincial matters”. This left very little available to be discussed at a local table.

Until 2006, no deal was reached between BCPSEA and the BCTF at the provincial table. All of our collective agreements from 1995 until 2006 were imposed through legislation.

### 2002 – Bills 27 & 28

To further complicate matters, the Liberal-majority provincial government made it illegal for school districts to bargain class size and class composition issues with teachers. All language related to class size and class composition was stripped from our Collective Agreement

### In Surrey this meant we lost ...

Guarantees and protections pertaining to class size and split grades  
Guarantees and protections pertaining to ESL service and support for students with special needs  
Guarantees and protections for inclusion of students, including integration of new students.  
Service levels for itinerant staff and non-enrolling teachers  
Processes related to School Based Team. . . and more . . .

### Awaiting a decision from the courts

A couple of years ago, BCHEU won a groundbreaking case at the Supreme Court of Canada level that recognized similar provincial government strips to BCHEU's collective agreement as being illegal.

BCTF is presently seeking a reversal of Bills 27 & 28 from the courts.

## Pension Consultations

**This past fall the BCTF pension consultation team visited members across the province to receive feedback regarding the challenges facing the Teachers Pension Plan.**

**What Now?** Recommendations will be brought to the 2010 BCTF annual general meeting regarding pension contributions rates, subsidies to the Extended Health Benefit and indexing. (inflation adjustment account)

In preparation for the AGM, the pension recommendations will be sent out to schools for members to review in mid-February. The STA will then hold meetings at the end of February/ beginning of March for members to provide input to our AGM delegates (who will be voting on the suggested changes to the pension plan). Please watch for upcoming notices. Further information on this topic is available on the BCTF website at [www.bctf.ca](http://www.bctf.ca)

**WANT TO BE A DELEGATE?  
STA AGM Delegate Elections  
January 20<sup>th</sup> 2010...see over**

**P**lan members and the employer both agreed in **1974** to an additional contribution of up to one percent each to make a one-time adjustment to pensions in payment from 1972 to 1975 and to provide ongoing inflation protection. Commencing in **1975** all past and future pensions would be adjusted quarterly by the changes in the Canadian Consumer Price Index. In addition the final average salaries of plan members on long term disability and those with vested pensions would be increased to date of retirement by the same index.

## Teachers' Pensions — A History from the BCTF

In **1981** the one percent contribution for indexing was allocated to the Inflation Adjustment Account. The quarterly indexing of pensions ceased and was replaced by an annual increase, not to exceed the Canadian Consumer Price Index, and within the available funds in the Inflation Adjustment Account.

The government agreed at this time to create an Investment Committee, with BCTF representation, to hear reports from the Ministry of Finance and to give input to the investment of the pension fund.

Changes to teachers' pension benefits are ongoing: lowering the vesting period from 10 to 2 years; basing pension eligibility on the "90" factor; lessening the reduction for early retirement; indexing the CPP offset; making available to retirees the Medical Services Plan of B.C., an Extended Health Benefit Plan and a Dental Plan with the cost sharing dependent upon pensionable service; recognizing child-rearing years for pension eligibility; simplifying and broadening purchase of service rules.

In **1992** the Teachers' Pension Plan Advisory Committee (TPPAC) was formed to create a committee to represent the interests of all pension plan members—members of the BCTF, the Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, the B.C. School Superintendents' Association and the retired members of the plan.

Full maturity in the pension plan was attained when the BCTF as Plan Member Partner and the Minister of Finance as the Plan Employer Partner signed an agreement to implement joint trusteeship of the Teachers' Pension Plan. Under the Agreement, effective April 5, 2001, the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees (five appointees from each partner) is responsible for managing the pension plan and the pension fund. Two crown corporations, the B.C. Pension Corporation and the B.C. Investment Management Corporation, are delegated the responsibility, respectively, for the day-to-day administration of the plan and the investment of the funds.

## Be A Delegate to the BCTF AGM

**I**f you want to run for election as a delegate, please submit a brief statement of no more than 50 words. Statements will be pruned mercilessly for length. Statements must be submitted to the STA office, no later than January 13. They can be submitted by email to Lorna Sheh via First Class. (lsheh@sd36.bc.ca). Members may also submit their name at the meeting but any statement received after January 14<sup>th</sup> will not be published.



**March 6 - 9, 2010 at Hyatt Regency / Fairmont Hotel Vancouver**  
**All Recommendations and Resolutions from locals/BCTF**  
**plus Pension Recommendations**

It is with great sadness that we bring you this news. On Friday, November 27, 2009, Mrs. **Barbara Lonsdale (Letson)** lost her battle with cancer. Mrs. Lonsdale has been part of the Ocean Cliff school community since September 2002. A passionate, talented and deeply caring person, she will be greatly missed.

Woodland Park teacher **Julie Boyce (nee Nelson)** passed away suddenly on Monday, December 21. Julie also taught for many years at George Greenaway before joining Woodland Park in September.

## Adult Educators We've come a long way, with a long way yet to go!

**T**wenty years ago, on the last day of school in December, 1989, two STA representatives met with Surrey Board representatives to officially open bargaining on behalf of the newly formed "Unit 2."

Does anyone remember "Unit 2?" The STA had applied to include adult education teachers into the bargaining unit in 1997 and Labour Relations Board Chair, Richard Longpre, eventually ruled that adult educators could be represented by the STA in a separate bargaining unit. It remained separate through two successive rounds of bargaining until 1996 when adult educators from five bargaining units became included in the main provincial agreement.

If you were around in those days, you may recall that teachers in Surrey and all over the province, had recently concluded their own collective agreements with School Boards for the first time. (It was local bargaining in action—see the other article in this Heads Up!) David Chudnovsky had been the President the year before, and he had spearheaded the drive to sign up adult educators in Surrey. The same thing happened in locals all over BC.

We saw enormous changes in adult education in just a few months. By the fall of 1998 adult educators' pay had nearly doubled. We also achieved medical benefits, professional development funds, an evaluation process, sick leave with TOC coverage, various other leaves of absence, professional autonomy, and class size limits. Our rate of pay was pegged at Category 6 Step 0, but there was no recognition for education or experience. There was also no access to the Pension plan, no Pro-D time, no maternity/paternity top-up, and no preparation time. We did not achieve continuing contracts at that time, but we agreed to a process of rehiring where the previous teacher who taught the course retained "Right of First Refusal."

Over the next round of bargaining, we gained Pensions and Maternity Leave top-up. Through the amalgamation of the bargaining units we were put on the salary scale, and we gained continuing contracts for a majority of our teachers.

So, over the last 20 years we have gained a great deal for adult educators through bargaining. However, since 1996, we have been frozen into significantly inferior working conditions, not just in Surrey, but in many other districts as well. Of course, we lost class size limits with the rest of the education system in 2002.

In the next round of bargaining we hope for membership support to make some gains for adult educators. There remains a lack of paid professional development time and preparation time. We are paid about 20% less for the same work as teachers in secondary or elementary schools. Another really important issue is that we need access to a full range of services for adult students including counselors, LST, and speech and language pathologists. We hope in 2011, that the STA and the BCTF will make improved conditions for adult educators one of our primary bargaining objectives.

## Pension Consultations .... the next steps

**T**he BCTF pension consultation team concluded its visits to locals on December 1. A total of 78 sessions were held with every local for all members of the Teachers' Pension Plan. Approximately 5,000 pension plan members attended. The Retired Teachers' Association offered concurrent presentations at selected chapter meetings.

After the Research Department has completed its analysis of feedback, a draft report will be prepared by staff and presented to members of the BCTF Pensions Committee on January 11, 2010. This subcommittee will draft preliminary recommendations, which will be reviewed by the BCTF Executive Committee and passed on to the full Pensions Committee and Teachers' Pension Plan Advisory Committee to finalize wording.

The report, with draft recommendations, will go to the BCTF Executive Committee for consideration and debate at their meeting in early February. Final recommendations will be sent out to schools for discussion prior to the AGM. The BCTF Executive Committee will present these recommendations to the Annual General Meeting in March.

The Annual General Meeting will hear a report from the Pensions Committee and then debate and vote on the recommendations and local resolutions that stem from the report. Once the Annual General Meeting has made its decisions, those decisions will be forwarded to the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees.

The trustees are meeting in March and will then be able to consider the input from members and the plan partner and make decisions regarding the future of subsidies to the Extended Health Benefit and indexing. The Board of Trustees must act independently in the best financial interest of the plan.

The Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees will likely announce any decisions prior to the end of June 2010.

# What is trust?

Source: David Strakes,  
www.changingminds.org

**T**rust is both an emotional and logical act. Emotionally, it is where you expose your vulnerabilities to people, but believing they will not take advantage of your openness. Logically, it is where you have assessed the probabilities of gain and loss, calculating expected utility based on hard performance data, and concluded that the person in question will behave in a predictable manner. In practice, trust is a bit of both. I trust you because I have experienced your trustworthiness and because I have faith in human nature.

We feel trust. Emotions associated with trust include companionship, friendship, love, agreement, relaxation, comfort.

There are a number of different ways we can define trust. Here are the dimensions of trust and consequent definitions.

## Predictability

It is a normal part of the human condition to be constantly forecasting ahead. We build internal models of the world based both on our experiences and what others tell us, and then use these to guess what will happen next. This allows us to spot and prepare for threats and also make plans to achieve our longer-term goals.

The greatest unpredictability is at 50%; a reliable enemy can be preferable to an unpredictable friend, as at least we know where we are with them.

**Definition 1:** Trust means being able to predict what other people will do and what situations will occur. If we can surround ourselves with people we trust, then we can create a safe present and an even better future.

## Value exchange

Most of what we do with other people is based around exchange, which is the basis for all businesses as well as simple relationships. At its simplest, it is exchange of goods. I will swap you two sheep for one cow. It is easy to calculate the value in such material bargaining. Things get more complex when less tangible forces come into play. A parent exchanges attention for love. A company exchanges not only pay but good working conditions for the intellectual and manual efforts of its workforce.

Value exchange works because we each value things differently. If I have a whole flock of sheep but no milk, then I can do business with a person who has a herd of cows but no clothes. This principle of reciprocity is what binds societies together. Trust in value exchange occurs when we do not know fully whether what we are receiving is what we expect. When we buy a car, don't want to be sold a ringer which the seller knows is faulty. When I get advice in business, I want it to be based on facts, not wild opinions.

**Definition 2:** Trust means making an exchange with someone when you do not have full knowledge about them, their intent and the things they are offering to you.

## Delayed reciprocity

Exchange is not just about an immediate swapping of cows and sheep or hugs and kisses. What makes companies and societies really work is that something is given now, but the return is paid back some time in the future. The advantage of this is that we can create a more flexible environment, where you can get what you need when you need it, rather than having to save up for it.

Trust now becomes particularly important, because otherwise we are giving something for nothing. The delay we have placed in the

reciprocal arrangement adds a high level of uncertainty which we need to mitigate through trust.

What is often called the 'golden rule' is a simple formula for creating trust. 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' It sets up the dynamic for my giving you something now with the hope of getting back some unspecified thing in the indeterminate future.

**Definition 3:** Trust means giving something now with an expectation that it will be repaid, possibly in some unspecified way at some unspecified time in the future.

## Exposed vulnerabilities

When we trust other people, we may not only be giving them something in hope of getting something else back in the future, we may also be exposing ourselves in a way that they can take advantage of our vulnerabilities. If I buy a car from you and I do not know a good price, you can lie to me so you get a better bargain. If I tell you in confidence about the problems I am having with work, you could use this to further your own career at my expense.

Although the threat of retribution or projected feelings of guilt can counteract your temptation to abuse my exposed vulnerabilities, if you succumb I still get hurt and may still end up with the shorter stick. For our transaction to complete successfully, I must be able to trust that such agonies will not come to pass.

**Definition 4:** Trust means enabling other people to take advantage of your vulnerabilities—but expecting that they will not do this.

## So what?

**So learn about trust, how it works and how to build it. If you do it well, other people will give you the earth. If you betray them, they will hunt you to the ends of the earth.**

## Have you ever been surprised at Extended Health coverage for Surrey Teachers?

We are beginning a benefits review and we need help with preparing the survey to educate our members and also reporting the results to the BCTF . Please contact Lorna Sheh if you are interested in being a part of this project. Below is a summary of the **Extended Health** benefits we currently receive.

### Benefit provisions/Eligibility

Minimum Work Week	As per collective agreement.
Waiting Period	As per collective agreement.
Effective Date of Coverage	TBA
Termination Age	None
Dependent Child Definition	Up to age 21, or 25 if in full time attendance at school, or any age, if handicapped.
Spouse Definition	Legal, common-law or same sex partner.

### General

Insurer	Pacific Blue Cross
Policy Number	E020036
Deductible (single / family)	\$25/\$25
Overall Maximum	Unlimited
Survivor Extension	N/A

### Drug Coverage

Drug card available	No
Drug definition	As prescribed and dispensed by a licensed pharmacist or Physician.
Reimbursement	80% until \$1,000 paid, 100% thereafter
Fertility drugs covered	Not covered
Oral Contraceptives	Not covered

### Hospital

Reimbursement	80% until \$1,000 paid, 100% thereafter
Private/Semi-Private Room	Semi Private or Private

### Vision Care

Reimbursement	80% till \$1,000 paid, then 100%
Vision Discount Card	Not applicable
Maximum (\$ / period)	\$150/2 years
Prescription Sunglasses	Not covered

### Services and Supplies

Reimbursement thereafter.	80% until \$1,000 paid, 100%
Hearing Aids	\$400/4 years
Convalescent Care	N/A
Private Duty Nursing	Fees for a registered nurse for special duty nursing in an acute case when ordered by the attending physician, up to 720 hours per year.
Orthopedic Shoes	\$400/year (adult), \$200/year (child)
Orthotics	Yes, up to \$200/year.
Smoking Cessation Supplies	N/A

### Miscellaneous

#### Paramedicals

Speech Therapy	\$100 maximum per person per calendar year.
Acupuncture	\$100 maximum per person per calendar year.
Chiropractor	\$200 maximum per person per calendar year combined with Naturopath.
Christian Science	Not covered
Massage Therapy	\$250 maximum per person per calendar year combined with Physiotherapy.

Naturopath	\$200 maximum per person per calendar year combined with Chiropractor.
Osteopath	Not covered
Physiotherapy	\$250 maximum per person per calendar year combined with Massage Therapy.
Podiatry	\$100 maximum per person per calendar year.
Psychology	\$100 maximum per person per calendar year.

### Out Of Province

Reimbursement	100% for Emergency, 80% for Non-Emergency
Maximum (\$)	Unlimited
Maximum days OOC	No limit provided MSP coverage is maintained.
Submit to provincial plan first	Yes. Pacific Blue Cross will not reimburse any expenses payable or provided under a Government plan.
Pregnancy limitation	2 months

### Emergency Travel Assistance

Travel Assist	Worldwide emergency medical assistance is available. Please see your plan administrator for an ID card and brochure.
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Deluxe Features	
Medical Referral Travel Benefit	N/A

### Continuation of Coverage

Maternity/Parental leave	Coverage may be continued during maternity/parental leave, but not more than the period required under the relevant legislation. Please contact your Benefits Administrator for details.
Strike or Lock out	Coverage may be continued during strike or lock out, but not for a period longer than that required under the relevant legislation or by School Board policy. Please contact your Benefits Administrator for details.
Lay-off	Coverage may or may not be continued during lay off as described in the School Board policy. Please contact your Benefits Administrator for details.
Secondments, Elections, Appointments or Leaves for Public Office	Coverage may or may not be continued during secondments elections, appointments or leaves for public office as described in the School Board policy. Please contact your Benefits Administrator for details.
Unpaid leave of absence	Coverage may or may not be continued during an unpaid leave of absence as described in the School Board policy. Please contact your Benefits Administrator for details.

# Surrey Teachers' Association - January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					January 1	2
<b>Winter Vacation</b>						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Schools reopen after Winter Vacation	4:00-Executive Committee Meeting-STA		12:00 Communication Audit - STA 3:45 Mentorship - STA 4:00 STA Convention -STA Arbitration Hearing	12:45 STARA Training- Conference Centre <b>Conversations about teaching, testing and autonomy</b> <b>President's Meeting - Chilliwack</b>		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
4:00 STA Professional Development Committee Meeting - STA BCTF Humanities Workshop	12:45 STARA Training- Conference Centre <b>Conversations about teaching, testing and autonomy</b> 4:00 Grievance Committee Meeting -STA	8:45 STA New Teachers' Conference/Induction Eaglequest Golf Centre				
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
4:00 STA Exec liaison with committee chairs – Conference Centre 4:00 STA Health & Safety Committee meeting -STA	4:00-Executive Committee Meeting-STA	STA General Meeting - Conference Centre <b>BCTF AGM Delegate Election</b> Arbitration Hearing	3:30-District Health & Safety Committee Meeting BCTF Presidents meeting	BCTF Rep Assembly	BCTF Rep Assembly	BCTF Rep Assembly
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Arbitration Hearing	4:00 Grievance Committee Meeting - STA	10:00 Surrey Retired Teachers' Executive meeting - STA Arbitration Hearing	12:00 AGM Rookie Delegates - STA Arbitration Hearing		
31	February 1	2	3	4	5	6
	4:00-Executive Committee Meeting-STA					