

STA Examiner

Surrey Teachers' Association

www.surreyteachers.org

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2 + 2 = 3 The numbers just don't add up!

Every time I hear the Minister of Education speak, she refers to declining enrolment as being the main factor in School Districts' struggles to balance the budget. This cannot be true because in Surrey, our student population is increasing. This year we had more than 1400 new students. Next year that growth is projected to continue. Despite this, our Board faces an \$11-12 million dollar deficit. We need more classroom space, but must purchase portables out of the operating budget. Essentially, the district must cut one teaching position to purchase a portable.

Next year Surrey should be hiring 40-50 more teachers. Instead, we will be lucky to break even. Ask the Minister about Surrey and she will say the government has built new schools and that Surrey is getting more money than ever. This just doesn't add up, and we are getting tired of hearing the spin when we must live the reality.

Despite a growing student population more than 380 teachers received layoff notices in March. Entitlements for non-enrolling teachers have been slashed. Students in our classrooms will be affected.

The STA printed and sent home more than 35,000 pamphlets regarding the funding challenges facing our district. We collected signatures for a petition. A delegation of Surrey teachers went to Victoria for the budget announcement and to register our opposition to further cuts. (see page 7 for more details) Our teachers had an opportunity to meet with both Liberal and NDP MLAs about Surrey's unique needs. We also supported a rally organized by Vancouver teachers on March 1st at the Minister of Education's office in Vancouver. More than 150 teachers were in attendance. We must continue to get the message out through our MLAs, letters to the editor and other avenues.

It is time for teachers to act. I encourage every teacher to attend the "Rally to Build a Better BC," on April 10th at

12:00 pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Community groups, artists, seniors, and unions will come together to demonstrate opposition to the broad-based cuts to vital educational and community services. **The STA will organize buses leaving from Guildford Mall and the South Surrey Park & Ride at 10:45 am.**

Many teachers have asked me what they can do to help send the message that Surrey schools need additional funding. A strong turnout at this rally will send a message and help us to continue to put pressure on the government to fix this situation.



Elected!!

Denise Moffatt was elected as a member-at-large on the BCTF Executive Committee. The position is a two-year term at 0.3 FTE.

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Protest the Cuts - Get on the Bus!!!!

April 10th - 10:45 am (returning at 2:45 pm)

Guildford Mall by Sears entrance (152nd + 104th Avenue) OR, South Surrey Park & Ride (King George Boulevard at Highway 99)

**Pre-Registration required for a guaranteed seat
Please email Cindy Tierney on FirstClass**

Build a Better BC Rally!



Briefly...



“Balanced” Calendar

The district’s calendar proposal with an August start has been put on hold after receiving a chilly reception from parents, teachers and other staff. Surrey teachers voted in support of a recommendation to oppose the calendar at the STA Special General Meeting on March 3. The district announced the lack of support for the calendar just days after our executive recommendations were circulated.

Bargaining 2011

As we prepare for bargaining in 2011, your local bargaining committee will be involved in consulting and communicating with members. As a first step we have created an email address, bargaining@surreyteachers.org, where members can send their ideas and suggestions for bargaining objectives.

College of Teachers

At the public meeting in February, College councilors voted not to increase membership fees for practicing teachers. However, the debate around governance continues and recommendations will hit the floor at the April meeting. There is a push to limit the ability of groups of members, locals, and the BCTF to communicate with councilors. The STA will send a delegation to the meeting to ask questions and to observe the debate.

Extended Health & Dental Program designed for BCTF Teachers on Call

The BCTF Advantage Program now offers a full Extended Health and Dental program for TTOCs. This plan contains many different options

so you can take control and build the plan that best suits your specific needs.

For more info visit www.bctfadvantage.ca

Fraser Institute Rankings

The Fraser Institute Rankings were released in mid-February. The Surrey Leader ran the rankings. However, many other newspapers chose not to print them. For example, in a departure from previous years both the Vancouver Sun and Province did not publish the rankings. This is a victory that shows public support for the tests continues to diminish.

International Conference Pro-D Funding Applications

All applications should arrive at the STA office by 4:30 pm on the first school day in May to be eligible for the draw at the annual general meeting. Application forms are available on www.surreyteachers.org

Job Shares

There have been ongoing disputes between the STA and the school district regarding job shares. The STA continues to tackle the differences and will meet with Human Resources again to see if resolution is possible. Some of the areas in dispute are posting rights, dissolution of partnerships and the number of job shares held by an individual.

Layoffs

Layoff notices were distributed the first week back from spring break. The layoff date is January 1, 2008. More than 380 teachers received layoff notice. Members should call 604 594 5353 if they have questions.

Pensions

Delegates to the Annual General Meeting voted on a series of recommendations regarding the inflation adjustment account which is used to adjust pension payments to the inflation rate. The plan is needed to ensure the health of this account in the face of growing numbers of retirees in comparison to the number of contributing members. For more information visit <http://www.bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=20774>

STA members dependant’s Scholarship

The STA annually awards three scholarships and three bursaries of \$4,000 to the graduating children of STA members. The Awards Committee will select successful candidates for **scholarships** using the following criteria:

1. Graduate of a public school
2. Academic achievement supported by an official transcript
3. School involvement in a variety of areas
4. Community involvement in a variety of areas
5. Statement of how this award would facilitate future goals

The same criteria apply to applications for **bursaries** with the following additional criteria:

6. Statement of financial need

The deadline for applications is August 31, 2010.

Application Forms may be downloaded from STA website:
www.surreyteachers.org

Transfers

Teachers can request the package of handouts from the STA Transfers Workshop by phoning the STA at 604 594 5353, or by e-mailing on first class to Lorna Sheh.

Want to get rid of the HST?



The fall Representative Assembly passed a motion to oppose the provincial government's plan to implement the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) and call for a progressive taxation system. A grass roots group of British Columbians from all walks of life and political stripes are organizing to fight the HST. This initiative is the one vehicle at our disposal to block the passage of the agreement between the federal government and BC to establish the HST as of July 1, 2010.

In accordance with BC's Citizen's Initiative law, a petition will be conducted to repeal the HST. The **Citizen's Initiative Petition** requires the signatures of 10% of registered voters in every one of BC's 85 electoral districts to be successful. If the **Initiative Petition** is successful, the BC Government must submit a draft Bill that would reinstate the 7% provincial sales tax with the same exemptions as were in effect as of June 30, 2010.

The BCTF supports a fair, progressive tax system. The HST will increase taxes on those who can least afford them and in general transfers income from consumers to businesses in the order of \$2 billion. For the BC Liberals, who previously opposed any such idea, the promise of \$1.6 billion in transitional funding from the federal government was too much to resist in the light of BC's deficit. Tax shifts and cuts are not the answer to reducing the deficit.

For more information on the petition initiative www.fightHST.com.

A succinct summary of the HST and its consequences can be found in the *BC Commentary* (volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2009) by Marc Lee, published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC Office www.policyalternatives.ca.

Interested in being an Elections BC canvasser?



Sign up for a couple of hours between April 6th – July 5th

- ✓ You must be a registered voter
- ✓ You must register with Elections BC as a canvasser

To sign up, visit the Fight Against HST website
<http://fighthst.com/volunteer/>
 or contact Patricia Enair at (604) 588 7299
sdenair@telus.net

Elections BC has advised that all volunteers and petition signers **MUST** be registered voters. You can register or confirm your registration by going on-line to <http://elections.bc.ca> or calling (250) 387-5305 or toll free 1-800-661-8683.

Calendar of Events:

April 7	STARA Meeting	4:00 pm	Conf. Ctr.
April 21, 22, 29, 30	Staff Rep Training	8:30-2:45	Conf. Ctr.
May 12	Annual General Meeting	4:00 pm	Conf. Ctr.
	**STA Election & International Conference Lottery Draw		
June 2	Employment Insurance Tips for TOCs	4:00 pm	Conf. Ctr.
June 14	Employment Insurance Tips for laid-off teachers	4:00 pm	Conf. Ctr.
June 16	STARA Meeting + Dinner	4:00 pm	Conf. Ctr.

BCTF Executive 2010-2011

Susan Lambert (Burnaby) is the new president of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation.
Jim Iker (Burns Lake) is the new first vice president elected for a one-year term
Glen Hansman (Vancouver) is the new second vice-president elected to a one-year term.
Rick Guenther (Abbotsford), **Denise Moffatt** (Surrey), **Kip Wood** (Nanaimo), and **David Komljenovic** (Kamloops) were elected as members-at-large for a two-year team.



STA Convention Day

Friday, May 7, 2010

Learning through Helping

SITE INFORMATION

This year the elementary site will be Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary and the secondary site will be at SFU Surrey Campus. Both sites will provide general sessions that will be of interest to both elementary and secondary teachers and specific curricular areas are hosted at one site e.g. Language, PE and Fine Arts w/s are hosted at the elementary site. Bus. Ed., Career/Planning and full day workshops will be hosted at the SFU Surrey Campus. Look at both venues to find what would best suit your interests. It is possible to register at both sites as time will permit traveling between sites. Parking passes are required for SFU and will be distributed at the entrance of the level 4 in the parkade.

ART NEEDED

We are looking for artwork to decorate the elementary venue. We will also have a “workbee” on May 6th at Lord Tweedsmuir from 3:00 pm onwards to decorate the site. If you would like to come out and help us, it is very much appreciated. We have many small jobs that mean a lot that needs to be done in advance of the day. Please contact Monica-Rae Grant on first class if you would like to contribute your artwork or if you would like to come out and give us a hand. Many hands make light work.

REGISTRATION

The website for registration will be online at 11pm on March 23rd (www.staconvention.ca). Please make sure to register for catering purposes and as courtesy to our wonderful presenters who do so much preparation to deliver the workshops. The committee is also thrilled to welcome the counsellors and psychologists conference to the secondary site. Our keynote speakers are David Bouchard (both sites), Lauryn Oates and Diana Cruchley.

Three Ways to have a Successful Day at Convention:

- Ø **Print out your registration form** and bring it with you. You will need to show this when entering the keynote address and workshops as seating is limited.
- Ø **Print out a map** from the convention site to familiarize yourself with the site and room numbers.
- Ø **Print out the Shape of the Day** from the website and bring it with you.

Note: Workshop handouts will also be downloadable after May 7th at www.staconvention.ca

The STA Convention Committee appreciates your support.

Monica Grant, on behalf of the Convention Committee

Day of PiNK

April 14, 2010

What will YOU be wearing?

The Day of Pink is the International Day against Bullying, Discrimination and Homophobia in schools and communities. We invite everyone to celebrate diversity by wearing a pink shirt and by organizing activities in their workplaces, organizations, communities and schools.

www.dayofpink.org

DayofPink is a day of action, born when a youth in a high school in Cambridge, Nova Scotia was bullied because he wore a pink shirt to school. His fellow students decided to stand up to bullying; and hundreds of students came to school wearing pink to show support for diversity and stopping discrimination, bullying and homophobia. Moved by this event, the National Capital Region GSA Network (an initiative by Jer's Vision: Canada's Youth Diversity Initiative) decided to share this day with the world and create the **International DayofPink**.

We invite everyone (schools, businesses and community organizations) to make a difference and participate.



Annual General Meeting May 12, 2010 District Conference Centre, 9260 – 140 Street, Surrey

Election of Executive Officers and Resolutions Committee members.

President
1st Vice President
2nd Vice President
Grievance Officer (one 1-year term)
Professional Issues Officer
Local Representative to the BCTF (6 positions)
Secretary/Treasurer
Member-at-Large (3 positions)
TOC Rep
Bargaining Committee — 5 vacancies
Resolutions Committee — 7 vacancies

If you are interested please submit a candidate statement for distribution to the membership to the STA office by **April 23rd** to meet printing timelines.

Statements can be e-mailed (preferably) to sta@surreyteachers.org or faxed to 604-594-5176.



the youth global education network

educating youth
for global hope
and local action

The BCTF works closely with **Check Your Head** to promote student driven SJ activism in schools. CYH have youth led workshops which are action oriented. Their workshops are amazing opportunities for building capacity for SJ student activism in your school or local! They are also willing to travel throughout B.C.

Here is a brief description of what they offer.

Check Your Head has been engaging youth across B.C. about social and environmental justice issues for over ten years. Our youth facilitators use popular education techniques to draw out participants skills and passions to inspire them to create social change. Popular education has been used in social justice work for decades and has proven to draw on the strengths of groups to spur them into action to solve issues that are most important to them. We believe that the students that we work with have the skills and ideas necessary to solve the problems they face. What they need is agency and the capacity to advocate for change, which is what Check Your Head creates through our workshops.

Our workshops series offer students the opportunity to explore topics like

globalization, sweatshops, media, climate change, income inequality, genetically engineered food, food sovereignty and water issues, through the BCTF's Social Justice Lens. We engage participants to discuss how their role as citizens in a democracy can be used to transform society by taking action in their schools and communities. Our action planning workshops are great for classes and clubs that know they want to do something but aren't quite sure about how to get there. We recommend that schools combine an issues based workshop with an action planning workshop to get the greatest effect for their students.

We ask for an honorarium of \$75 per one hour workshop for schools in the Lower Mainland. For schools outside of the lower mainland our fee is \$500 dollars per day

plus travel and accommodation. Although most of our workshops are done within the lower mainland, we will travel to any school within British Columbia to deliver our workshops.

Our workshop participant capacity is 30 individuals and the workshops are 1-1.5 hours long. It is possible to adapt the workshops for longer sessions at a cost of 25 dollars for each additional half an hour.

To read more about our workshops and book a workshop today please visit our website at

www.checkyourhead.org

**Be Informed.
Get Involved.
Have your Say!**



Apology in Schools: Building Bridges and Restoring Trust

by Eric Bonfield, 1st VP, STA

John Kador defines apology as, “We apologize when we accept responsibility for an offence or grievance and express remorse in a direct, personal, and unambiguous manner, offering restitution and promising not to do it again.” Apology constitutes both transactional and transformational qualities. Apology is transactional because it has the potential to restore the balance in a ruptured relationship. Apology is also transformational because of the power to repair a broken relationship and make it stronger.

Most teachers welcome apology even if they suspect the person’s sincerity. We intuit that apologies can be self-serving on some level, yet we want them nonetheless. Some teachers may be resistant to accept or offer an apology out of fear of insincerity, yet we can never be entirely certain about another’s motives. Some apologies may be prompted by fear, guilt and compassion—and by the calculus of personal or professional gain. Apology may be base and self-serving or generous and sincere.

The process of apology includes a number of steps that require five dimensions of contextually nuanced intention and action. These include:

Recognition: use plain language and minimize explanations as they burden the intention.

Responsibility: do not be defensive, evasive or play a blame game—accept undiluted responsibility.

Remorse: signal contrition with the words “I’m sorry” which is a simple yet potent way to express regret.

Restitution: can be concrete or symbolic and signals making someone whole, sacrifice and commitment to the relationship.

Repetition: provides reassurance and promise of non-repetition, “I promise it will never happen again.”

Teachers are best served when understanding apology as a process that communicates these important dimensions as well as appreciating apology as an action that promises to restore the relationship. Apology is a critical leadership skill set for all teachers to practice as a way to foster transparency and reduce ambiguity at a time of great stress in the teaching profession. With the rising limits to our privacy and the agenda of accountability, teachers find themselves more vulnerable than the previous generation and therefore the profession is made more resilient through the practice of apology.

Digital technology is increasing our vulnerability in and outside of our classrooms and schools with the prevalence of camera cell phones and social networking sites like Facebook, YOUTUBE and TWITTER. We teachers need to be prudent, but not

paranoid in the face of these major shifts in how we communicate. Teachers can be prudent by practicing apology as a leadership habit of mind and action and as their first response to slips on the black ice of culture shifts.

An abundance of reliable research on trust repair strategies and the role of apology reveal the following insights:

After a trust violation, apologies are more effective than no apologies.

Apologies in which the violator takes responsibility for the violation are more effective than apologies in which the violator tries to place the blame elsewhere.

Apologies in which the violator is actually guilty, as revealed by subsequent evidence, are more effective than when the violator is eventually found not guilty.

Apologies that are conveyed with sincerity are more effective.

Apologies are more effective when they are conveyed quickly after the violation has occurred, when teachers have had a past relationship that has been violation-free and when teachers expect a violation-free relationship in the future.

Deutsch, M et al (2006). The Handbook of Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Kador, J. (2009). Effective Apology. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler

Retirement Dinner/Dance - June 18, 2010

It is a small token of appreciation to our members for their many years of dedicated service to the profession.

Members retiring this June or who retired earlier this year are invited, along with one guest, to the annual STA Retirees’ Dinner/Dance on June 18 at the Eaglequest Golf Centre. Please call the STA office at 604-594-5353 to make sure your name is on our list.

We hope to see all of you on **June 18th**

****Please pass this message along to anyone you know is retiring.**

Lobbying in Victoria over the funding crisis

by Julia MacRae

Surrey's crisis in funding is serious, so five Surrey teachers, went to Victoria March 2-4 to lobby MLAs about it. We met with both government and opposition members to press home our points and to ask for their advocacy. I am a current member of our STA executive, Ren Morley and Sandy Collins, 2 STA veteran activists, and two "newish" activists Gioia Breda and Angèle Thibault travelled with me. Our group represented other facets of the teaching scene in Surrey: elementary and secondary, French immersion, language teaching, theatre, English, counseling and speech and language pathology. We each brought our messages forward as we spoke about what we had seen or experienced in the last few years of cuts to education.

It was interesting to meet with the MLAs on both sides; lobbying is quite fascinating. On the NDP side, Sue Hammell, was very gracious, especially as she helped us organize a meeting with all the Surrey NDP MLAs, the education critic Robin Austin from Terrace, and the deputy education critic Diane Thorne from Coquitlam. They were all very keen to hear our individual perspectives and to also help us see how our messages to parents and the community are really important. Robin Austin pointed out that around 70% of citizens don't have children or grandchildren in the school system, so the political interest in what happens to kids and teachers in schools because of cuts may not be very strong. We need to keep the conversations with our friends, neighbours and extended families to help more people have insight into what the cuts mean for kids and teachers and the viability of the public school system.

My impressions of Jagrup Brar, Sue Hammell, Bruce Ralston and Harry Bains are very positive. All are very competent, articulate and professional, and their focused attention on strategy ideas to move our position forward is very



comforting. I was also really impressed with Robin Austin who I ran into later in the parking lot. He had read through the *Teacher Magazine* that I had given him, and had noticed my article about the Peru brigade. He told me he had worked as an SEA while studying for his master's. This news made me happy, because he has first hand recent experience in the classroom working closely with teachers. He really gets it!

Meeting with the BC Liberal MLAs was interesting, too, although not so encouraging. We met with Gordon Hogg, MLA from White Rock, who was friendly towards us, but impatient with our message. He says every group comes asking for more money,

and "there is only so much money in the envelope." He says we should get creative, which I took to mean we should do even more with even less resources. We also met with Dave Hayer and Stephanie Cadieux. I reminded Dave Hayer of our rainy day meeting six years ago in my portable behind Fraser Heights. I pointed out that there are eight more portables now, and asked what advocacy he has done in the meantime to get that situation fixed. He had a lot to say about how the education system in BC

is the best in the world and how his kids and he, himself, are proud graduates of Surrey schools and so on, but he didn't offer me much hope about getting more funding for Surrey. Stephanie is a newer member of

their caucus and didn't seem so jaded or reactionary towards us. She said various members of her family and many friends are teachers, so she is sensitive to our situation. She said she intends to advocate for her constituency within caucus, and I truly hope she can!

We were introduced in the house, and the petition we had been circulating in Surrey demanding proper funding was introduced by the four NDP Surrey MLAs. This visit was a successful and interesting experience. We should return with a larger delegation to keep up the pressure in the future.

Photos: courtesy of Angèle Thibault

Surrey Teachers' Association Calendar - April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	29	30	31	1	2	3
	3:45 Int'l Solidarity Committee Meeting - Clayton Heights Sec. 3:45 Mentorship Committee - STA	9:30 President's Meeting - Burnaby 3:30 BCTF AGM Delegates- Conf. Ctr.	3:30 Layoff Meeting- Enver Creek Secondary Theatre (Board and STA) 4:00 TIME Committee - STA	Good Friday		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Easter Monday	9:00 FTOs meeting - STA 4:00 PAPR Committee meeting - STA	4:00 STARA Meeting	8:30 Mediation Team Training - STA 4:00 Sign painting - STA 4:30 Communication Audit - STA	Arbitration Hearing	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	12:00 Facilitator Training - STA 4:00 Pro-D Committee Meeting - STA	4:00 Executive Committee Meeting - STA	8:45 Assessment Ad Hoc Committee - STA 4:00 Grievance Committee Meeting - STA	8:00 Peer Support Training - STA	Arbitration Hearing	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	4:00 STA Health & Safety Committee Meeting - STA	3:30 Mentorship Session - Conf. Ctr.	12:00 Status of Women "We Can" workshop - Conf. Ctr. 3:30- Cont. the Conversation - Conf. Ctr.	3:30 STA Dinner Series - STA	STARA Training - April 21 / 22. 2010	
25	26	27	28	29	30	
	11:30 Presidents' Table - Board	4:00 Executive Committee Meeting - STA	4:00 Grievance Committee Meeting - STA	9:00 Retired Teachers Exe - STA 3:45 Mentorship - Conf. Ctr.	STARA Training - April 29 / 30. 2010	