

STA Examiner

Surrey Teachers' Association

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Funding Cuts continue to be the number one issue on everyone's minds as further details of the School District's budget are released. Some of the most significant cuts are as follows:



Denise Moffatt

- 13 FTE reduction in Learner Support Positions**
- 8 FTE reduction in Teacher Librarian Positions**
- 10 FTE reduction in Elementary Counselling Positions**
- 6 FTE reduction in CISC and Student Support Positions**

The District has also announced that many non-enrolling teachers will no longer be replaced on the first day of their absence. This will result in essentially a double cut to service and students will lose out.

Surrey is not the only district facing such drastic cut backs. However, we are one of a few growing districts in the province. On Tuesday, April 27th, the Executive voted to continue to put pressure on MLAs in the house by sending a delegation of counselors, librarians and LST teachers to the legislature. These members will meet with MLAs, share information about the impact of the cuts, and impress on the government that the cuts are unacceptable. We will also try to reach out to neighbouring locals to send representatives as well.

Call for Participants - The B.C. Federation of Labour - Young Worker Retreat - June 11-13, 2010

The STA Executive would like to send two members between the ages of 19 – 30 to this leadership retreat. If you are interested in learning about the labour movement or are just wanting to meet other young union activists, this is the place to be. While the course work is intensive, there are

many opportunities to relax, socialize and to explore the outdoors. This includes either canoeing, low ropes course or kayaking.

Information:

<http://www.bcfed.ca/young-worker-retreat-2010>.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Chrystal Tagmann. The STA will cover the cost of registration, one day release and travel expenses.

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STA Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, May 12, 2010
District Conference Centre
9260 — 140 Street, Surrey
4:00 p.m.
Childcare available

12 Month Pay Plan Enrollment Deadlines:

Employees electing to participate in the plan must submit written application (using the application form) to the Payroll Department on or before June 15th.

Teachers hired after June 15th must submit an application form to the Payroll Department by September 30th. Deductions will begin the next pay period.

Cancellation Deadline:

Employees electing to withdraw from the 12 month pay plan must do so in writing by June 15th.

Application/Cancellation forms are available on FirstClass District Departments > Payroll department.

Employment Workshop for Laid off Teachers

Monday, June 14, 2010

3:30 — 5:00 at District

Conference Centre

Register by email to

Lorna Sheh via FirstClass

Getting to work Green

On Monday, April 26, 2010 representatives of all employee groups in Surrey and the School District agreed to submit a joint letter to Translink BC. The letter will request a meeting to look for opportunities for the Surrey School District to work with Translink to promote the use of public transportation by teachers and students. In particular, we will look at the opportunity for discounted transit passes for Surrey School District Employees. Solutions for students will also be discussed.

For teachers who are interested in promoting green initiatives, the PAGE (Peace and Global Educators) PSA has a sub network called the Green Teachers. Teachers who want to get involved can contact Karen Kilbride on First Class.

Response to the Cuts – Elementary Counselling

Elementary Counsellors will not only be experiencing cut backs in service, but also restructuring of their delivery model. This will have an impact on all teachers. An elected group of elementary counsellors prepared a report in response to the proposed changes. The report was circulated to trustees, staff reps and elementary principals. If you are interested in viewing the report, go to http://surreyteachers.org/documents/Counsellor_Report.pdf

Parent Presenters

The BCTF is looking for presenters to assist with delivering presentations to parent groups in the Lower Mainland. Parent presentations are an effective public relations tool for teachers. It is an opportunity to find common issues and to work with parents in a positive and constructive manner.

The program offers sessions on anti-bullying, consumerism, health and safety, supporting learning and raising confident boys and girls.

If you are interested in becoming a presenter, please complete the online application form at <http://www.bctf.ca/forms/default.aspx?ekfrm=17272>.

STA Retirement Dinner

Just a reminder to all of you who are planning to retire (or have already retired) by June 30th, you are invited to the STA retirement dinner/dance gala event.

Retirees are invited to attend, along with a guest. This is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old acquaintances, share memorable moments from the past, and talk about plans for the future.

After dinner there will be live music, so put on your dancing shoes! If you have friends who would like to come just for the dance, they can arrive after 8:00 pm.

We hope all the retirees will be able attend this festive event. Please RSVP to Lorna Sheh on FirstClass by June 2th.

Date: Friday, June 18, 2010

**Location: Eaglequest Golf
Course (78th & 152nd)**

Times: Cash Bar opens at 4:30

Dinner/presentations at 5:30

**Dancing: to follow dinner at
approximately 8:00 pm.**



Congratulations to the Health and Safety Reps who participated in the District Training and put their name forward for the Special Project Draw. The STA Health and Safety Committee is pleased to announce the winners. We are hoping that Sharen Cherry, Ken Cole, Katheryn Gyori, Margaret Graham, Carol Korst, Michelle McReavy, Dana Neidig, Carolyn Neufeld, James Ward and John Wyndham enjoy their B.C. Fed training. They will receive the cost of the training, TOC coverage, transportation and lunch. The education will be valuable resource for our health and safety committees in the district. Winners will be contacted by Lori Wilson to provide further information regarding training dates and registration and LOAs.

Lori E. Wilson
Grievance, Health and Safety Officer

June is Bike to Work Month: Have you ridden a bicycle lately?

by Aaron Vick

JUNE is bike to work month! Some of the exciting benefits of biking include exercise, stress reduction and a longer life!

Exercise reduces stress... reduced stress leads to a longer life!

If it is impossible for you to bike to work, try biking somewhere you feel safe and comfortable, and you will feel better about all your worries and stress! (Or at the very least you will be worried about other things instead!)

Bicycling may not be the right choice for everyone, but barriers to bicycling can be overcome. Some of the common barriers to bicycling are fitness level, time, distance, secure parking, weather, street safety and fashion.

If you are interested in bicycling to work, simply ask someone who does bicycle to work how they have found a

way to overcome these obstacles. For example, regarding safety, someone may have found a safe bicycle path to use that they could tell you about. Regarding distance and time, someone may have found away to combine another transportation option like 'Skytrain' with their bicycle commute.

Bicycling through a park can be a priceless experience. Yes it may take more time, but you might succeed in living longer and in the end gain more time. "Landscapes move us in a manner more nearly analogous to music than to anything else... Gradually and silently the charm overcomes us; we know not exactly where or how." (Frederick Law Olmstead Sr.)



Caption: A cyclist crossing a street in Mexico. (CC-BY) Aaron Vick

Check out these websites:

Translink

Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

Better Environmentally Sound Transportation

Pedal Energy Development Alternatives

Training & Safety

Bike Sense Manual

After School Bikes.

<http://www.translink.ca/en/Cycling.aspx>

<http://www.vacc.bc.ca/>

<http://www.best.bc.ca>

<http://www.pedalpower.org>

www.vacc.bc.ca/bikeskills

<http://www.bikesense.bc.ca>

<http://www.pedalpower.org/?q=afterschoolbikes>

Staff Rep Thank you Barbeque June 16, 2010 after the STARA Meeting

The Executive, on behalf of the STA, would like to acknowledge the incredible job done by staff reps this year—we couldn't have done it without you!

To do this, we are planning a year-end dinner, to take place after the June 16th STARA meeting. It will be a gala BBQ event (complete with "liquid" refreshments!)

Anyone who has been a staff rep this year (even if you are no longer a rep at this time) is welcome and encouraged to attend.

For catering purposes we are asking reps to RSVP to the STA office by Monday, June 11th by FirstClass to either Cindy Tierney, or Donna Stewart .

Hope to see you all on the 16th!!

Bargaining Preparation Training

In April, staff reps received training on the bargaining plan and started to gather information regarding bargaining priorities. The training covered the history of bargaining in Surrey, the plan for the next year, and an activity where reps had an opportunity to review sections of the collective agreement to identify possible bargaining objectives.

The plan for bargaining is bold and includes a push to return to greater scope local bargaining. Local bargaining will provide an opportunity for our teachers to be more closely involved in the bargaining process and to finally improve language that has been stale in our agreement since 1992.

Over the next two months a condensed version of this training will be offered at your school. Please ensure that you are able to attend this important workshop.



The election of STA Standing Committees will be held at the STARA Meeting on June 16, 2010, 4:00 p.m. at the District Conference Centre. If you would like to get involved, please submit your name to our office before June 16.

STA Committee Functions

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

The Convention Committee plans the yearly convention for members at 2 or more different sites.

Committee members are entitled to a PD day in lieu of the Convention Day to a maximum of \$400 per committee member with the cost to come from the committee budget.

ECONOMIC WELFARE COMMITTEE

This committee oversees our contractual benefits like the extended health plan, medical laws, insurance coverage, all salary category changes and job share issues.

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

This committee focuses on major topics of concern to teaching and the work we do in schools i.e.

- year round schooling and
- corporate intrusion into schools
- accountability contracts

They provide research and in-service to members and recommend policy changes to the association and the BCTF.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee's main role is to assist in the construction, monitoring and review of the Association's budget to ensure that the financial obligations and priorities are carried out.

GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

The grievance committee acts as an advisory committee to the grievance officers. Work on the grievance committee is an excellent opportunity for members who would like to learn about contract enforcement and labour law.

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

This committee works to educate and advise members around the health & safety concerns at the worksite. Issues of interest have been around mould in schools, lack of adequate resources to maintain clean work places and hearing issues particularly for music teachers.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The International Solidarity committee identifies and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee on projects and grants for international solidarity projects. They identify priority area and themes for those projects. As well, they make recommendations on activities that build relationships between STA members and teachers in other countries through projects such as union exchanges and training programs.

LABOUR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Labour Affairs Committee works to establish contacts with other labour organizations as well as keeps the Association informed as to issues of concern to the members. In past years the committee has focused on issues of child labour, sweat shops and multinational corporations in 3rd world countries. The committee provides resources for members in labour studies curriculum and has extensive library resources maintained in our office.

PA/PR COMMITTEE

This committee has the responsibility of investigating political candidates' positions and attitudes on education. Although the committee is usually most active at election times it can be assigned various tasks related to public relations on hot educational issues

during the course of the year.

Committee activities involve such tasks as designing and placing advertisements, writing letters or press releases, arranging speakers for public meetings, phone campaigns, mail outs and recommending candidates for public office.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The STA Pro-d Committee has been set up to oversee the Pro-d functions of the district. The Committee deals with issues regarding Pro-d concerns which include interpretation of the Pro-d guidelines and teacher requests. The Committee conducts Pro-d Rep training each year. As well, the committee coordinates a variety of Pro-D opportunities, some of which are done in coordination with other groups and organizations.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The committee includes the 2nd Vice President, the 6 local representatives to the BCTF and seven other members to be elected for a one year term at the STA Annual General Meeting in May. All members of the committee automatically become delegates to the BCTF AGM. The committee meets several times in the fall to develop, discuss and make recommendations to the November STA General Meeting about resolutions that will be considered at the provincial AGM by BCTF members.

SOUTH ASIAN STUDENT ADVOCACY BY TEACHERS

The goals of this committee are to educate students, teachers, parents, and the wider school community to order to better support the educational development of South Asian youth,

and parent participation in school activities.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The Status of Women Committee's main goals are to eliminate sexism and to increase the participation of girls and women in all aspects of education. The SW Committee provides in-service opportunities for teachers on such issues as job sharing, curriculum resources for non-sexist teaching, pensions, financial planning, ending violence against women, women's health issues, stress management, and creative writing. The Surrey Committee has compiled a library of curriculum aids, videos and picture books that promote gender equity and non-sexist teaching strategies. Teachers may borrow material for their classes by contacting the SW Chairperson.

T.I.M.E. COMMITTEE

TIME is the acronym for Teachers Interested in Multicultural Education. Our goal is to promote multiculturalism and racial acceptance in all Surrey schools. We organize and implement events such as multicultural conferences and workshops for teachers and students. We also host resource displays, as well as assist teachers in obtaining resources and funding for multicultural projects at their schools. In addition, we strongly advocate the hiring of more teachers from visible minorities.

TOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This committee provides a forum for teachers-on-call concerns and a direct link to the STA Executive as the committee chair also sits as a member of the Executive Committee. They study working conditions and contractual concerns of TOCs and make recommendations to the appropriate STA committees/bodies. The committee also liaises with the STA Pro-d and Convention committees and plans and organizes pro-d events for TOCs. Elected at the first Teachers teaching-on-Call meeting in September.

BARGAINING COMMITTEE

A new bargaining committee will be elected on May 12, 2010. The Bargaining Committee will work closely with the membership and executive in making preparations for Bargaining in 2011. This year we are making a push for increased local bargaining which means our bargaining team could be at the table negotiating local issues as soon as March 2011. The BCTF will be providing training and support for local bargaining teams. Committee members will be expected to do school visits and take release time from the classroom for planning and negotiations.

The Bargaining Committee will consist of: 2 elementary reps; 2 secondary reps; 1 adult educator and 1 teacher-on-call.

If you are interested, put your name forward at the meeting and stand for election! If you cannot take on this commitment there will be additional opportunities for members as we get closer to bargaining. Keep your eyes peeled!

Committee Vacancies:

- ◆ Bargaining: 2 Elem Reps, 2 Sec. Reps, 1 Ad Ed. Rep, 1 TOC Rep.
- ◆ Convention: 8 2-year term
- ◆ Economic Welfare: 7 2-year term
- ◆ Education Governance: 10 1-year term
- ◆ Finance: 1 2-year term
- ◆ Grievance: 4 2-year term
- ◆ Health & Safety: 5 2-year term
- ◆ International Solidarity: 8 1-year term
- ◆ Labour Affairs: 7 1-year term
- ◆ Pension: 1 1-year term
- ◆ Political Action Public Relations: 9 2-year term
- ◆ Professional Development: 5 2-year term
- ◆ Social Convenor: 1 1-year term
- ◆ South Asian Student Advocacy by Teachers: 10 1-year term
- ◆ Status of Women: 15 1-year term
- ◆ Teachers Interested in Multi-cultural Education: 6 2-year term



Professional Autonomy

Eric Bonfield, 1st VP, STA - Published in BCTF Teacher Magazine

Teachers enjoy teaching in an environment where we feel independent and self-directing and able to exercise our judgment to meet the diverse needs of our students. As professionals we feel oppressed when a single view of what it means to be a good teacher is imposed on us and we fear the loss of the rich variety of ways to educate individual students in our care. A dynamic and inherent tension between the public ethos which constrains our practice with standards, statutes, codes and discipline exist on one hand as constraints. On the other hand our creative and responsible risk taking motivates and inspires us to meaningfully respond to the relational context that defines our practice.

This tension or contradiction between constraint on one hand and creativity on the other hand is amplified when teachers as professionals become reflective practitioners. Teachers who reflect-in-action, question the definition of the task, the theories that they bring to it and the measures of performance by which they are controlled. Teachers question these things because they can often include unsubstantiated public pressure, and school board, principal or colleague decisions. Teachers challenge how these decisions become embedded expectations of their teaching practice as exemplified in the Surrey book banning case. This form of critical thinking about teaching practice includes being critical of school or district wide patterns of selective inattention to the neediest students.

The idea of reflective practice can help to demystify the tension and contradictions that we feel as teaching professionals. As professionals we claim specialized knowledge of teaching that is value laden and evaluative in its orientation and as such potentially coercive. The scope of our professional judgment is limited by

uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and conflict. When research doesn't apply or sustain our practice needs, then the teacher can't legitimately claim to be an expert, but only prepared to reflect-in action.

Teachers regard their teaching environments as unique and the application of standard theories or techniques are sometimes not useful. In the minutes that a teacher problem solves with a student, they construct an understanding of the situation as they find it and therefore reframing it is essential. It is this act of reframing the problem and its solution as a reflective activity that transforms and buttresses our professional autonomy. The emerging picture of the professional teacher is one who balances the tension between the constraints, values and principles of society, with the autonomy necessary to foster responsible and relational risk taking as reflective- practitioners.

A useful tool appropriate to resolving the tension between freedom and responsibility, as autonomous professionals, is the establishment of appropriate forms of ethical interface. While significant aspects of professional practice should be guided by teachers reframing problems through reflective practice, a professional community is useful for creating, maintaining and developing methods, standards and norms for its ethical interface. Professional conversations are important to the process of interpreting and understanding the unique and particular of practice over the universal claims of theory.

While it is important for teachers to guard against arbitrary restraints on their professional autonomy, it is equally important that teachers tolerate the statutory and ethical constraints imposed upon them as professionals.

We are responsible to our profession and to ourselves as individuals, to encourage and nurture a dialogic understanding of our practice that recognizes the work that we do as theoretically guided and idiosyncratically inspired. Authentic professional conversations help us to support our inter dependence as creators and guides to our independent practice as teachers. Our professional autonomy is built upon the language that we speak together that re-describes what we do as teachers and validates our self-conception and public persona as a distinct vocation worthy of professional status.



Grade Seven Girls Conference

The Grade Seven Girls Leadership Conference: Peace-Leadership For Action will be held at Elgin Park Secondary on Monday May 31st. Programs and registration forms have been sent to grade seven teachers in all elementary schools in Surrey. Principals have also been sent the registration packets. Canadian author and filmmaker, Sally Armstrong is the keynote and there are workshops and displays.

Parents are also able to register their child by faxing the form to the STA. If you have a daughter in grade seven who would be interested in attending please register them as soon as possible. We are only able to register 400 girls.

STA scholarships for children of members

Do you have a child who is graduating from a public school this year? 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 29, 2010. Awards are dependent upon confirmation of final grades by the Ministry of Education, and will be awarded at a STARA Meeting in the fall of 2010. *Note parents of applicants are ineligible to serve on the STA Awards Committee.

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



Money Matters - Retiring this year?

Have you...

- ◆ Contacted the Teachers' Pension Plan by letter/phone/fax/email and requested that a retirement package be sent to you?
- ◆ If applicable, contacted the Teachers' Pension Plan and (a) applied to purchase service arising from a leave of absence arising within the past five years; (b) applied for child rearing drop-out credit; or (c) applied to transfer service from another pension plan?
- ◆ Contacted your school district employer to find out when your current health benefits end to ensure you have continuous coverage until the benefits associated with the Teachers Pension Plan begin?
- ◆ Prepared your resignation letter to be sent to your employer 30 days prior to your date of retirement?
- ◆ Considered converting your current group life insurance to an individual life insurance policy?
- ◆ Contacted the BC College of Teachers as to the membership requirements for the 2010-2011 school year should you wish to remain eligible to work in the BC public school system after retirement?
- ◆ Considered joining the BC Retired Teachers' Association?



Contact the BCTF Income Security Staff if you have questions related pensions.

Congratulations to the winners of our Communication Audit Survey, and the winners are . .

Julia Poole	\$100 gift card	Ronald Prasad	\$10 gift card
Kyle McKillop	\$50 gift card	Leon D'Souza	\$10 gift card
Steve Swaddling	\$50 gift card	Jill Bryden	\$10 gift card
Sandra Willing	\$10 gift card	Gillian King	\$10 gift card
Darya Kowalski-Ewczynski	\$10 gift card	Suparsha Sharda	\$10 gift card
Kristy Elden	\$10 gift card	Penny Tyler	\$10 gift card
Amanda Ballard	\$10 gift card		

Thank-you to everyone who took the time to complete our survey.

Surrey Teachers' Association Calendar - May 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1	
2	3 12:45 All-Day K Meeting-STA	4 3:00 Anti-Poverty-STA	5 10:00 RTA Newsletter-STA	6 4:00 TIME Committee Meeting-STA	7 STA Convention Lord Tweedsmuir Sec. SFU Surrey Campus	8	
9	10 8:00 Education Minister visit Surrey 3:30 Counsellors meeting-Conf. Ctr. 3:45 Aboriginal Ad hoc-STA 4:00 Pro-D-STA	11 4:00 Executive Committee Meeting - STA	12 STA Annual General meeting District Conference Centre	13 BCTF Executive	14 BCTF Executive	15	
16	17 International day against homophobia Metro Presidents' Meeting - Mission	18 8:30 Adult Educators - STA 10:00 Table Officers - STA	19 3:30 TOC Meeting - Conf. Ctr.	20 District Health & Safety Committee Meeting - Bd.	21	22	
23	24 Victoria Day	25 4:00-Executive Committee Meeting Pro-D Wine & Cheese-Conf. Ctr.	26 4:00 Grievance Committee Meeting-STA	27 BCTF Presidents' meeting	28 BCTF Representative Assembly	29 BCTF Representative Assembly	
30	31 Non Instructional Day Girls Conference at Elgin Park Sec.	Round #2 Opens					