



## Variations: Do You Teach an X-block?

The process of looking at possible variations to the school day for 2018 – 2019 secondary classes has begun! Article D.22.1 of the collective agreement limits the length of a school's instructional day. Some courses involve multi-grade classes that do not fit neatly within a timetable designed to comply with the collective agreement. For years, the Association has approved a limited number of "variances" to the instructional day in order to accommodate such courses.

Secondary staff reps will soon receive information and application forms to be forwarded to the Fine Arts Department Head. Most of the approved variations are for fine arts classes. The following criteria apply:

- The course(s) could not be offered during the instructional day, (not during lunch break)
- The course(s) is a provincially or locally developed course where students are enrolled. i.e. cannot be a "drop in" or tutorial session,
- The course(s) is multi-grade AND it is educationally sound/appropriate to run it as a multi-grade course, and
- If not multi-grade, the course(s) may be a fine arts foundational course (such as Jazz 8)

The Variance Application forms need to be completed, and returned to the STA office by **November 14, 2017**. Please contact **Mark Keelan**: [grieve@surreyteachers.org](mailto:grieve@surreyteachers.org) if you need further information.

## FSA's: Watch for opt-out packages!

As in previous years, the BCTF and STA are urging parents to withdraw their children from the Grade 4 and 7 Foundation Skills Assessment, which will be written starting next week. The new FSA suffers from the same issues regarding validity, stress, usage of class time, and misuse by the Fraser Institute, as the old FSA. Please watch for packages that will be sent to elementary schools for the end of this week. Please note that letters that are sent home to parents with students **must** be sealed in the envelopes that are provided. If you require the documentation in another language, such as Punjabi or Traditional Chinese, please let us know and we will work on getting it to your school. The two documents that will be included in the envelopes are attached. We encourage all members to review these documents to be aware of the issues, and to opt their own children out of the FSA if they are in Grades 4 or 7.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Friday, September 29th - Orange Shirt Day

The STA is encouraging teachers and students across the district to participate in this awareness campaign by wearing an orange shirt to school on Friday, September 29th. Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity for schools to come together in the remembrance of residential schools, and in a spirit of reconciliation.

\*Note: there is no 'official' shirt - participants are encouraged to design their own! Click [here](#) for more information.



### Thursday, October 5th - World Teachers' Day

Join your colleagues in celebration of World Teachers' Day on Thursday, October 5th! Your STA will be hosting events at THREE venues in the city: Central City Brew Pub, Brown's Social House on 16th Avenue, and The Henry in Cloverdale.

Grab some teacher friends, and come by after school to socialize, unwind, eat, drink, and be merry! The event will kick-off at 3pm, but you're encouraged to come by whenever, and stay as long as you'd like. Appies will be provided by the STA, and members will receive their first drink free. Throughout the evening there will be multiple prize-draws for a wide variety of teacher appreciation gifts!

**You're encouraged to talk-up this event with your colleagues as we have hundreds of new teachers in our schools this year. Please reach out to staff members who are new to the profession, new to the district, or new to your school. Welcome them warmly into our community!**

Take advantage of this opportunity to relax, and catch up with friends throughout the district. Go on, treat yo'self! You deserve it!

Hope to see you there!

Confirm your attendance here and help us gauge how much food to order: <http://bit.ly/stawtd5>  
More information about World Teachers' Day: <http://bit.ly/2fwxbdl>

## Implementation of Restored Language

Under our Memorandum of Agreement with the provincial government and BCPSEA, the District must make “best efforts” to comply with limits on class size and composition. If a class does not comply with those limits for even one day in a month, then starting October 1 the District owes the teacher a remedy for that month. We will provide more information about remedies in October, but please note that effort at the school level will be essential in verifying whether the District actually has made “best efforts” not to have classes that are too big, or exceed the limits on class composition. Please see the attached document for guidance on what questions staff reps need to be asking of principals at the school level, and do not hesitate to contact the STA office for guidance in how to approach such discussions.

## No seismic-upgrade plan for ‘high-risk’ Surrey Elementary School: CBC reports

In light of recent tragedies in Mexico due to earthquakes, parents are once again advocating for timely upgrades to their children’s schools. The education Minister plans to increase funding in coming years to address needs. Currently, there is \$560 million dollars for seismic upgrades over the next three years. Of the many schools requiring work, only one in Surrey is still waiting on a plan: George Greenaway Elementary is considered to be high-risk.

Source:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/155-high-risk-b-c-schools-still-have-no-plans-for-seismic-upgrades-1.4299742>

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### Pro-D Rep Training

There are only four training days remaining! If you have not already registered, please do so ASAP! Click [here](#) for more information and to sign up for the required one-day training.

### Inquiring about Inquiry?

Teacher inquiry has become a well-established model of self-directed professional development throughout the province, and the BCTF is pleased to offer teachers the opportunity to be part of one of 18 joint inquiry projects. Project applications should be submitted to the STA office (attention: June James) by Wednesday, September 27th. More information and project applications can be found at <https://bctf.ca/TeacherInquiry>.

## Countdown to PSA Superconference: 1 month!

You have LESS THAN 30 DAYS to complete your registration for the PSA Super Conference. Click [here](#) for more information, and to register! The conference is almost full. In addition, other Provincial Specialist Associations are holding their own conferences on that date.

## Mentorship Program

The SD36 Mentorship Program is now accepting applications from new and experienced teachers. All teachers who are new to the district, or new to their role are welcome to apply. Of course, we are also looking for experienced teachers, particularly in elementary, to join the mentorship team! Go to [www.mentor36.com/join](http://www.mentor36.com/join).

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

### STA Mediation Service

Your STA Executive Committee will appoint up to two Surrey teachers to the STA Mediation Service. Successful applicants are appointed for a three-year renewable term. Release time will be provided to attending training in conflict resolution and mediation, as well as to conduct mediation sessions.

More information about the service can be found [here](#). Teachers can apply using the attached [STA Curriculum Vitae form](#).

### Mentorship Advisory Team

The STA Executive will appoint up to two teachers to the joint STA/SD36 Mentorship Advisory Team. The Team will be made up of an equal number of STA and District appointees, and will work with the Mentorship Helping Teacher to design the Mentorship program, and guide its operation. Release time will be provided as needed for the committee to do its work. It is very important to have teachers who have participated in mentorship, either as a mentee or a mentor, on this committee.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please return the completed [CV form](#) to the STA office by Friday, October 6th. Contact Anne McNamee if you have any questions or need more information.

### Volunteer as a Peer Support Consultant!

The STA is seeking applications from teachers who are interested in volunteering with the Peer Support Program, which is jointly funded and coordinated by the District and the STA. Click [here](#) to access more information, and the application form. Please return your completed application to the STA office by Friday, October 6th. Don’t hesitate to contact Anne McNamee should you have any questions.

Peer Support Page:

<http://www.surreyteachers.org/peer-support>

## Call for Workshop Submissions

The BCTF is currently accepting workshop proposals for their upcoming New Teachers' Conference in March. If you have an idea for a workshop that could be valuable to those teachers new to the profession, why not share your expertise? Click [here](#) for more information about workshop proposals. Click [here](#) to submit your workshop.

## Feedback Required



### BCTF Curriculum Survey

For the past several years, British Columbia have been in an intensified period of curriculum change. The BCTF wants to know your thoughts on the proposed direction of curriculum change, as well as the resources, time, and support needed for implementation.

By providing your feedback by **October 2**, you will help us to develop a deeper understanding of the state of curriculum change across the province, and shape the Federation's priorities for supporting members in relation to curriculum change. The results will be used to help teachers and the BCTF make critical assessments of curriculum change over time and advocate for a teacher-led process that enhances public education in BC. This includes working to get you the resources, time, and support you need for the 2017-18 school year.

Please click [here](#) to begin the survey. Or copy/paste the following link into your browser:  
<http://questionnaire.research-recherche.net/f/s.aspx?s=E3D8E872-93FC-475E-BF50-FAD39365AE18>

### Curriculum Feedback

The Core French curriculum team is meeting **October 23-24th** to review feedback. Please send your suggestions to [curriculum@gov.bc.ca](mailto:curriculum@gov.bc.ca) before October 15th. You're encouraged to work on feedback suggestions with your department, but reminded that EACH PERSON should send the feedback INDIVIDUALLY, as they 'count' each email as '1-feedback' even when multiple people collaborate, agree, and submit together.

## WE NEED TO KNOW! INFORMATION REQUIRED: PLEASE CONTACT US!

### Secondary Teachers on a Split-Shift

If you are a secondary teacher who has been assigned to teach a split-shift schedule, we want to hear from you! For example, if there are 5 blocks in a day, and you're teaching block 1 AND block 5. Or if you're on a .57 contract, and your blocks are staggered 1 in the morning, 1 in the afternoon.

## Classroom Space Issues

Some schools are adding additional divisions to accommodate increased enrollment, and we are starting to hear from non-enrolling teachers who are losing their classroom space. Please let us know if this is happening for you, particularly if there are other spaces available in the school, such as a multi-purpose room or a daycare.

## Integration Support Caseloads

If you are an Integration Support Teacher (IST) and have more than 15 students on your caseload, please let us know.

## Owed Prep Recovery

If you know of any teacher who left the district last year (maybe they retired, or moved to teach in another district closer to home), and they were still owed prep-recovery, we want to hear from you (and them!). Please pass on their names to the STA office.

## Joke of the Week



**Why didn't the shrimp share  
with the others?  
Because he was shellfish!**

This week's joke was submitted by Sara Zentner. If you would like to participate in 'Joke of the Week', please submit a short, clean, (but not necessarily education-related) joke to [hello@surreyteachers.org](mailto:hello@surreyteachers.org). If your joke is drawn for publication, your name will then be entered into a draw for a gift card at the end of the month.

## Contact Us! The STA is here FOR YOU!

We want to hear from you; questions, concerns, advice - everything! Not sure who to contact? Send your message to [STA@surreyteachers.org](mailto:STA@surreyteachers.org) or [hello@surreyteachers.org](mailto:hello@surreyteachers.org) and it will get directed to the right place!