

MEMO TO: Staff Reps
COPIES TO: STA Executive Committee
FROM: Gioia Breda, President
Date: September 7, 2017

Welcome back!

On behalf of everyone here at the STA office, welcome back to another school year! A special welcome to our new colleagues starting up this year and to colleagues who are new to our district! Hopefully everyone had a restful summer, and is excited to be back.

Transitions can be a challenging time. This year we have a lot to sort out as schools work to compose classes based on our restored language. Teachers still need to be hired, classes are still being organized, and there are classrooms/portables that are not ready for the start of the year. Limited resources, especially ones around space, can be anxiety inducing. We have to remind ourselves that these are short term problems, and once all the challenges around implementation are worked out, we will have a school system that works better for both teachers and students. We encourage you to be kind to each other during this complex time. Don't hesitate to contact us at the office for support when challenges arise that cannot be solved at the school level.

Implementation of Restored Collective Agreement Language

Do you have questions about changes to class size and composition now that our language has been restored? Please use the attached class size and composition document as a resource! We know that your schools will be working to ensure the class size and composition language of the restored language is met. We also know there will be outliers where that will be challenging, and in some cases impossible. **Teachers should not be engaging in any remedy discussions at this time with administrators** as the District first needs to demonstrate to the union that they met the test of 'best efforts' as per our Memorandum of Agreement with them. We will keep the membership posted as soon as we have more information.

The following is an update of where we left off last June with challenges around implementation:

On Monday June 26th, a meeting took place between representatives of the STA, the BCTF, and BCPSEA with Arbitrator John Hall regarding implementation of our restored collective agreement language. The focus of discussions was on who is included in the category of "Special Education Resource Teacher" (SERT), which is staffed at a ratio of 1 per 218 students. This category includes IST and LST teachers, but the District has also included staff (e.g. School Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, and teachers from a variety of programs) who we believe should not be part of this category. The more types of staff that are included in the SERT category, reduces the amount of LST positions there are. For example, if the District (following BCPSEA advice) had not included Speech Language

Pathologists and School Psychologists in the SERT category, we would have had another 52 FTE available for LST. The parties met again that week, but no resolution could be reached. This dispute, along with other issues (including our caseload language for programs like resource and tutorial room, and Career Education for Learning Disabled students), is being referred to arbitration.

We hope that with a new government in place, the obstacles we were facing around implementation will resolve themselves prior to having to go down the road of arbitration. However, fifteen years of imposed challenges can't change overnight. The BCTF has been meeting with our new Education Minister and Deputy Minister, and will have more up to date information for Presidents in an all-day meeting on September 19th. Stay tuned!

Election of STA Staff Representatives

The Collective Agreement requires that, at the beginning of each school year, STA members in each workplace will elect a staff representative(s), and that the staff representative(s) will advise the Principal/Vice Principal of their election. Each workplace **must** have a minimum of one staff representative. Additional staff reps can be elected on the basis of one per every 15 teacher staff members or major portion thereof. (E.g. if your school has 32 teachers on staff, elect two staff reps. If there are 53 teachers on staff, elect 4 staff reps.) Once you have been elected as staff rep(s), **please fill out the attached school information form** indicating **all of the various STA positions**, and send it to the STA office. Please endeavor to complete these elections before the first STARA meeting on September 20th.

Please be advised that if no staff rep is elected at your workplace, the STA will be sending a letter to your administrator advising them that the STA table officers will be the staff reps at your school and will attend meetings with administration, as well as holding union meetings at the school.

STARA/Special General Meeting, September 20th

There will be a STARA meeting and a Special General Meeting at 4:00 pm on **Wednesday, September 20th** at Eaglequest Golf Club. We will be electing two new Members-at-Large for our Executive Committee: one to replace Marjorie Dumont in the position designated for an Aboriginal person, and one to replace June James, who was elected as our new Professional Development Officer in June. We encourage anyone interested in becoming part of our STA leadership team to run for a position, and bring colleagues to vote for them! Candidates will each be able to make a **1-minute speech**. In addition, candidates should submit a **Candidate's Statement** to esther@surreyteachers.org by the end of the day Thursday, September 21st.

Information needed:

Integration Support Teacher Caseloads

If you are IST and you have more than 15 students on your caseload, please, contact Joanna Cerazy, Grievance Officer at 604-594-5353 or grv-spt@surreyteachers.org.

Prep for Retirees and Teachers who Left our District

If you know of anyone who retired or left to work in another district and who was owed prep last year please, contact Joanna Cerazy, Grievance Officer at 604-594-5353 or grv-spt@surreyteachers.org.

Pro-D Rep Training

Training for PD reps will take place this year from September 19th to September 21st and September 26th to September 29th. PD reps, please see the [attached flyer](#) and register as soon as possible, and definitely prior to September 19th! **All PD reps are required to attend a day of training**, and the later dates tend to fill up quickly.

Rookie Staff Rep training

Our first day of **rookie** staff rep training will be September 18th, with a second date of October 2nd. Information at [this link](#), posters have been sent out in the courier bag and should have arrived today, September 7th. **Regular** fall staff rep training will be on October 3rd to 5th, and October 10th to 12th, a poster for these sessions was also included.

Please note: rookie staff reps are encouraged to attend BOTH the rookie training session and a session in our regular fall staff rep training.

STA Business Leave

STA Business Leave G.21.7.h is a “will be granted” leave in our collective agreement, which means that you are able to take the leave, whether or not a TTOC is dispatched. You do not need to wait to see if a TTOC arrives for you, nor can you be called back to the school if there is no one to replace you. Please request a TTOC even if you do not believe one will be needed or dispatched, and let the STA know if you did not receive a replacement, because in that case the STA will not have to pay the District for your leave.

STA/SD36 Mentorship Program

Our Mentorship program is now open for application for 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 to join our mentorship program. Please see the attached flyer for more information, or go to www.mentor36.com

Orange Shirt Day - September 30th

The STA is encouraging teachers and students across the district to wear 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. Its roots are in the story of Phyllis, who as a young Aboriginal child, had her new orange shirt stripped from her at school. (<http://www.orangeshirtday.org/phyllis-story.html>)

As a way to promote conversations and activities around reconciliation, the STA is ordering “Every Child Matters” orange t-shirts in a unisex style and in a variety of sizes. We will have enough to send 2 to every secondary school and 1 to every elementary school/learning centre/other educational site. Please see the attached picture of the t-shirt. Staff reps, we

are asking you to help by organizing a draw at your school for teachers interested in these t-shirts. Please email (subject "Orange Shirt Day") the office at events@surreyteachers.org with the name(s) and preferred size(s) (S-XXXL) of the recipient(s) by 4:00 pm Monday, September 18th. Office staff will send t-shirts to recipients through the courier and do their best to matched preferred sizes to requests, as long as those sizes are available.

Contract Update

We have not yet completed the process with the District and BCPSEA of "melding" new contractual language from 2012 and 2014 into our 2006-2011 collective agreement (the blue book). In the meantime, our collective agreement language can be found at the following web page:

<http://www.surreyteachers.org/publications-resources/collective-agreement/>

In particular, please note that there have been improvements in leaves (e.g. bereavement and family responsibility), which are listed separately.

There is a new document attached to this Monday Memo with a summary of key class size and composition limits.

Joke of the week:

Q: What did you learn in school today, kiddo?

A: Not enough. I have to go back tomorrow.

This week's joke was submitted by Gioia Breda - *No I'm not going to enter myself into the draw*. If you would like to participate in joke of the week, please submit a short, clean, (but not necessarily education-related) joke to Gioia Breda at pres@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.

Calendar:

September 8 – International Literacy Day
September 12 – Executive Committee meeting
September 14 – Awards Committee meeting
September 18 – Rookie Staff Rep training
September 19 to 21 – ProD Rep training
September 20 – STARA meeting
September 25 – Non-Instructional Day
September 26 – Executive Committee meeting
September 26 to 29 – ProD Rep training