

Monday Memo

Upcoming Dates

NOVEMBER

29 **Staff Committee Chair Workshop**
"Voices for Change" concert

DECEMBER

1 BCTF Opportunities deadline
World Aids Day

2 **International Day for the Abolition of Slavery**

3 **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

6 Canadian Day of Action on Violence Against Women

13 **PBC AGM**

20 STARA Meeting

Save the date!



Update Contact Information

Have you moved recently? Does the BCTF have your current, up-to-date, contact information? Please double check that everything is correct to ensure you're receiving any important communications. Many PSA's and local Associations use the BCTF membership database to send out information to members. Don't miss out - **UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION** today!

Reporting: Please read if you are using FreshGrade

This week we heard from several members with concerns about the district's expectation that teachers who are using Freshgrade send home a "Digital Portfolio Parent Letter." This expectation came as a surprise to many of our teachers and to us here at the STA. We have concerns about the form itself, which increases workload for teachers, and requires teachers to ensure that there is a student self-assessment of the core competencies each term. We raised our concerns with Antonio Vendramin, District Principal (Education Services), and he has revised the form (attached) and he sent the following communication to principals. The STA strongly advises using this revised form, rather than the original form.

Antonio's email to principals here:

Colleagues,

We have received feedback on a couple of fronts regarding some of the information that was shared with you in the November 15th CSL update
<<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1oVAgr3VyDBuJRllwbCelxv1er5b64n3aVz5ik2pS95k>>.

1. The STA is concerned that the digital portfolio letter to parents represents reporting on top of the communication of learning that takes place in an on-going way within digital portfolios. Though we know that:

- Many teachers already make their own choices to send home communications like the ones shared with you for example: letters directing parents to specific artifacts, short progress reports, digital portfolios scavenger hunts ...); and
- Parents would likely greatly appreciate the additional information,

We do not "require" teachers to provide this extra layer of information. Therefore, you are being provided with a generic letter (attached) that teachers **can** send home reminding parents to check portfolios. Parents can provide feedback, sign, and return the form in order to help teachers gauge which parents are accessing portfolios. Please ensure all teachers using digital portfolios are aware of **this option**. Teachers may choose to continue to use the more detailed versions of the form, **but it should not be communicated as a requirement**.

2. The inclusion of a "self-reflection" during the course of the year does not align with the Ministry's requirement of a "self-assessment on the core competencies" in the summative report. Though we know:

- This is best approached as a process that takes place over the course of the year; and
- The majority of teachers actively engage their students in ongoing reflection, goal-setting, building understanding of the core competencies,

We do not "require" teachers to attach evidence of this work to any communications prior to the summative or final report, nor do we require teachers to indicate that a self-reflection is attached to any communication sent to parents prior to the summative or final report. Please ensure all teachers using digital portfolio OR the Student Progress Template are aware of this option. Teachers may choose to continue to attach evidence of student self-reflection, but it should not be communicated as a requirement.

If your teachers are making their own choices to provide additional information to parents (and we know that many do), they may certainly continue to do so.

Thanks for your continued hard work and skillful communication - It does not go unnoticed! As always, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

With Gratitude,

Antonio

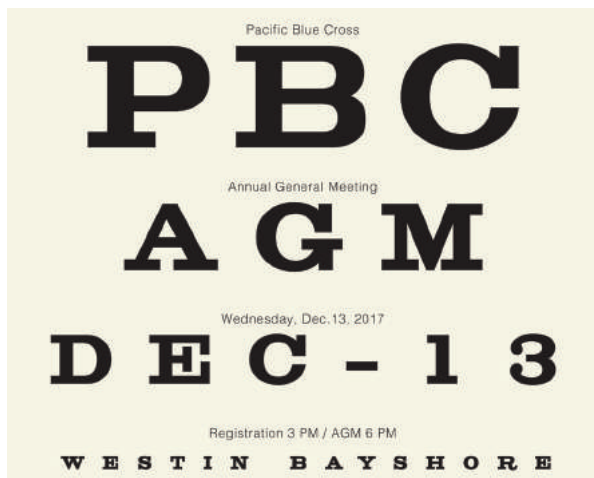


Staff Committee Chair Workshop

Happening Tomorrow! Last chance to register!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Pacific Blue Cross Annual General Meeting



DID YOU KNOW Pacific Blue Cross locked out their workers last summer? Were you inconvenienced by the lockout of PBC? Are you still waiting for a refund cheque? Are you aware that as a plan-member, you're a stakeholder with the opportunity to vote for change?

We want to see improvements, and we need members to show up to vote-in a progressive slate, including our own past BCTF president, **JIM IKER!** The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13th from 6-7pm in Vancouver, at the Westin Bayshore (**1601 Bayshore Dr**).

After the extended lockout this year by management bent on rolling back pension benefits, and a board of directors that let it simmer for far too long without intervening, it's time to elect a progressive new board of directors to ensure employees of PBC are treated fairly.

Please RSVP 2-vp@surreyteachers.org so we can reserve seats if possible. Shuttle busses from Surrey and Waterfront station to the hotel are being arranged.



Jennifer Wadge Memorial Social Justice Scholarship Award

The STA is proud to remember our past president Jennifer Wadge with two awards of \$2,000 each, open to children of STA members, who graduated in June 2017, from any public high school. Some of the most important criteria for these awards are the applicant's involvement in social justice work in the school and community, and their written statement on social justice issues.

Please note we have a **new extended deadline** for the 2016-17 Jennifer Wadge Memorial Social Justice Award! **APPLY TO THE STA** by **December 1, 2017**.

Snack & Share with STA

Schools & Staff Reps! We want to visit you. The STA Presidents are on a campaign this year to visit EVERY school in the district. Please invite Gioia, Matt or Julia to your school for a short meeting before school, during lunch, or after school. The Presidents will gladly share information about what's happening in the district, but they are particularly interested in the issues being faced at *YOUR* school, and want to find out how they can best support you.

Staffing Shortages

Colleagues, we're all very aware of the struggles our students are facing due to the unexpected cuts to 66 LST positions this year, and the challenge of replenishing the TTOC list. We know that Surrey's most vulnerable students are being negatively affected by these staffing shortages, which extend to support staff as well. An [ARTICLE](#), published this week, highlighted some of the difficulties facing our CUPE colleagues. They, like us, are struggling to cover positions. With nearly 800 failure-to-fills in October, it left some EAs trying to cover 5-6 students at a time!. During the month of October, they had nearly 800 failure-to-fills!

"Voices for Change" Charity Concert

It's time to help our community! Kristin Dorey (teacher at Guilford Park Secondary) is organizing a charity concert called 'Voices for Change' that will go towards building holiday care packages for our community's more vulnerable folks. Many students at Guildford Park struggle with food security, particularly when they are away from the breakfast and lunch program.

The concert is happening at 7pm on **November 29th** at Fraser Heights Secondary School. Performing will be the GP choir, FH choirs, YVR Pop Choir, and more!

Tickets are \$20 for adults (and includes a charitable tax receipt!) and youth tickets are \$5.

Assessment of the Core Competencies

There is no requirement for a student self-reflection at any time except on the year-end summative report. Teachers need time and space to explore the process of student self-reflection and self-assessment, and it's important that teachers do not feel pressured to have students produce a self-assessment product to attach to a report, or to embed in their Freshgrade portfolios (at this time). If it makes good sense to you professionally to have your students begin to self-reflect or self-assess through their journaling or other methods, then absolutely, go ahead and do so, but please be reassured that there is no expectation to have students produce a self-assessment document which can be attached to a report until the summative report at the end of the year. An district expectation to produce a student self-assessment or self-reflection undermines the development around the process of student self-reflection and self-assessment by placing the energy on the "product" rather than the "process."

Please contact Anne McNamee at the STA office if you have any questions or concerns. services@surreyteachers.org

Social Justice + Activism

Cross-Border Conference for Social Justice

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Surrey teachers are hosting a CROSS BORDER CONFERENCE on Saturday, April 7, 2018. We are inviting our colleagues from other BC locals, and Washington and Oregon to a Social Justice conference! Our organizing committee was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the BCTF to help create a brand new conference opportunity, which is international solidarity for classroom teachers. See crossborderconference.weebly.com for more information. We will be seeking participants, billets, and presenters!

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

The theme of this year's **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**, on December 3, is Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all. UNICEF's downloadable resource, **IT'S ABOUT ABILITY**, provides a child-friendly description of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This resource is available in English and French.



Visit the **UNAIDS WORLD AIDS DAY** website for information on how to participate in the **#MYRIGHTTOHEALTH** campaign. The Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange, provides free **TEACHING RESOURCES** in English and French.

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

The **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY** is on December 2. The **VIDEOS PAGE** of the United Nations website features real life stories of slavery and introduces students to the **50 FOR FREEDOM CAMPAIGN** to end modern slavery.

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence began on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on Saturday, November 25 and ends on the International Human Rights Day on Sunday, December 10. This is a time to both reflect on violence against women and take action to end it. This year's theme, **#MYActionsMatter**, is a call to action that asks everyone to take steps to question, call out, and speak up against acts of gender-based violence. The recent media attention and **#metoo** campaign has shone a light on what statistics have long confirmed: women continue to face disproportionate levels of violence each and every day. In response to this all-too-familiar reality **#MYActionsMatter** asks the question: what will you do?

One way you can help is by attending an event and donating items on December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action to End Violence Against Women. December 6 is the anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique Massacre, when 14 women were singled out for their gender and murdered.

- In Vancouver, the 15th Annual Shoe Memorial will take place on the steps of the Vancouver Art Gallery. They are still taking donations of shoes to represent the 987 murdered women in BC, and then donating them to women in need. Shoe donations can be dropped off at the STA Office on 9030 King George Blvd.

- In Surrey, there will be a candlelight vigil held 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm at Holland Park. This is a free event, open to all. Please bring an item to donate to local women's organizations.

The Status of Women Committee is also collecting donations for **The Shoebox Project**. The Shoebox Project for Shelters distributes holiday gifts in the form of shoe boxes to women who are homeless or at-risk. Each decorated shoe box is filled with items valued at \$50 that would help any woman feel special this holiday season. This is a great project to undertake personally or with your class or leadership groups. For more information and videos on how to make a shoe box, go to <http://www.shooboxproject.com>



Your boxes can be dropped off at the STA Office on 9030 King George Blvd by Friday, December 8. **#JustGiveLove**

Please help us honour and remember the 987 murdered women in BC and take action to end gender-based violence.

Opportunities for Members

Employment Opportunity at the BCTF

The BC Teachers' Federation is accepting applications for an Assistant Director in the Federation's Field Service Division.

This is a term position (4 years, 6 months) that will start on January 8, 2018. Reporting to the Director of the Field Service Division and the Executive Director, the Assistant Director provides support to assigned locals in contract enforcement, bargaining, political action, communications, and the handling of a range of professional, health and safety, social justice, and Aboriginal education issues. The successful candidate for this position will be involved in providing advice, assistance, and support to locals regarding the administration and enforcement of the collective agreement. This includes the provision of summary advice, the initiation of grievances, and the processing of such grievances up to, and including, Step 3 of the grievance procedure.

The deadline to apply is Friday, December 1, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

More information about the role, qualifications, and the [APPLICATION PROCESS IS ONLINE](#).

City of Vancouver Advisory Committee

wanted to let you know we've opened up applications for the 2018 Trans, Gender Diverse and Two Spirit Advisory Committee. The role of the Advisory Committee is to help in determining and evaluating Report implementation initiatives, to advise on matters referred to it, to help in public awareness of Park Board TGD2S initiatives and to assist in outreach and engagement with TGD2S communities. Quick things to know:

- the upcoming term is shorter (lasting until October 31, 2018) because of the city election cycle.
- the time commitment is up to 6 times a year.
- the Committee is looking to fill 10 community member spots.
- youth over 16 years old can apply.

More information and application instructions can be found [HERE](#).

Call for Content Submissions!

Coming this week to teachers' mailboxes, the November/December issue of Teacher magazine presents a cornucopia of topics from seizing the teachable moment for a sex talk on the carpet to pizza and paycheques. Between the covers you can find new BCTF research on teacher resilience (despite critical conditions), learn about support services for stressed-out teachers, and sample a menu of free online teaching resources. Meet Sunshine Coast teachers who love their professional autonomy and take vicarious trips with teachers on international exchanges. You can also read and share individual Teacher articles [ONLINE](#).

Do you have an idea for an article, or a short blurb that could be included in an upcoming edition of an STA publication? Maybe you have a story to share or want to mention an interesting project that you have carried out in your classroom? Maybe it didn't go exactly as planned, and you know that you'd do things differently the next time :D Is there an issue or topic that you'd like to highlight for fellow STA members? Why not write a little something for our next publication? We'd be happy to receive your contribution! Pictures help to tell your story, but please ensure that you have signed consent for publishing student photos.

Please send a brief description of your idea for an article to Kelly via hello@surreyteachers.org

Joke of the Week

**What's worse than finding a worm when
you bite into your apple?
Finding half a worm.**

Thanks to Jezreel R. for this week's joke!

If you have a short, clean, (but not necessarily education-related) joke, please send it to hello@surreyteachers.org.

If your joke is drawn for publication, you will be entered into the monthly prize draw for a \$25 Indigo gift certificate.

Contact Us!

The STA is YOUR union. We're here to help and to support YOU!

We want to hear from you. Not sure who to contact?? Send your message to STA@surreyteachers.org and it will get directed to the appropriate person.