

Monday Memo

Upcoming Dates

DECEMBER

6 Day of Action for Violence Against Women
Holland Park Candle-light Vigil (6:30 pm - 7:30 pm)

10 Human Rights Day

13 PBC AGM

19 TTOC Tacky Sweater Bowling Event

20 STARA Meeting + Social

JANUARY

13 EdCampBCCC

24 STA General meeting

Save the date!

SD36/STA
FOCUS DAY
February 16, 2018
with
Ivan Coyote

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!

LST Remedy Agreement!



Good news! Positions will be available come 2nd semester/september!

After many months of advocacy with the Surrey School District, our MLAs and the public, we can finally report that we have reached an agreement to help address the LST crisis that teachers and students have been facing this year after BCPSEA and the Surrey School District chose to cut 66 LST FTE. While we would have preferred BCPSEA and the District to settle this with us back in the spring, we are pleased the our agreement allows for some ability for LST teachers displaced last spring to have a process to address those displacements. As per the agreement, we need to meet with the District to discuss how the FTE will be distributed. We will put out a communication to members ASAP with more details.

The cuts to LST are only part of the understaffing issue for LST. With our stripped language restored, we continue to advocate for the District to implement our language around Tutorial Room Teachers, Resource Room Teachers and Teachers who taught in the CELD program. With these caseloads back in play, we believe there would be upwards of 200 more teachers into the current LST model. Gioia is working on setting up follow-up meetings with our MLAs and the Association continues to pursue these concerns through the grievance and arbitration processes.

Class Composition Language: A Means to Support Inclusion

With the Collective Agreement language being restored, more attention must be paid not only to class size but also class composition. Our Collective Agreement specifies that only two students with low incidence designations can be enrolled in any given class. If this requirement is not met, remedies apply. This might seem counterintuitive to the notion and practice of inclusive education for students with special needs as it can be interpreted as a means to taking away opportunities from these students. Nothing can be further from the truth; these composition limits were bargained to be included in our Collective Agreement to provide opportunities for these students to be meaningfully included in regular classes with same age peers. Its purpose was to make sure that they were receiving appropriate supports. We have come a long way when it comes to welcoming all learners in our schools; some of us can still remember students with special needs not being able to access regular classes. Importantly, by restoring the language of the Collective Agreement, we are not taking away opportunities for students, we are promoting the kind of inclusion that is meaningful for students and respects the working conditions of our teachers.

Calling all counsellors and members whose work requires privacy!

The STA is concerned that there may be professionals, like school counsellors, who have been asked to share office space with other non-enrolling members on their work days, when their roles require them to have a private space because of the confidential nature of their work. This would not include sharing an office space on alternating work days. These roles may also require these members to have locked filing cabinets to ensure student information is kept private. If you feel that the integrity of your work is being compromised because the District has not provided adequate space for the work you do, or has not provided you with a locked filing cabinet if the nature of your work requires it, please contact Joanna Cerazy (grv-spt@surreyteachers.org) ASAP.

Pacific Blue Cross AGM

Hello wonderful Surrey teachers! This is an invitation from your 2nd VP, Julia MacRae. Can a whole bunch of us show up with our PBC cards, and vote in a progressive board? We have a chance to use our numbers to make a difference! The meeting is on December 13th at The Westin Bayshore. Transportation to and back (from Surrey) is being organized, as well as from Waterfront Station to the meeting. Please email me at the STA and let me know if you plan to come - 2-vp@surreyteachers.org

We don't want to see Pacific Blue Cross lock out their employees and inconvenience their benefits-recipients again! And look, our very own Jim Iker is running for one of the positions!

Please see the attached brochure for information on all the candidates. Bring your benefits claim card with you to the meeting on December 13th!

Read more here:

http://www.cupe.bc.ca/pacific_blue_cross_board_candidates_aim_to_take_pbc_back_to_its_progressive_roots

Are you interested in what is going on with Refugee students in our schools and community?

Interested in becoming an advocate for refugee students in the district? A new committee will be looking at ways to support teachers, strengthen community relationships, and connect refugee students with activities, scholarships, services, and funding.

Please come to the first meeting of STARS (Surrey Teachers Advocating for Refugee Students) December 15th, after school, 4 pm at the STA office. There will be snacks!

STA on CBC

On Wednesday, November 29th, STA President Gioia Breda was invited to speak with CBC's Stephen Quinn, during the "On the Coast" broadcast. Gioia had the opportunity to highlight the current situation in Surrey, speaking passionately about implementation challenges, the consequences of the District's cut to 66 LST positions, and the urgent need for new school construction with 7000 Surrey students learning in portables. Listen to the clip here: <http://bit.ly/stacbradio>



The STA Convention Committee is looking for educators interested in sharing their passions, learning environments, teaching practices and/or challenges with their peers on May 4th. Please consider facilitating a session!

See the website for more information: www.staconvention.ca

Is Special Education Understaffed?!

The Special Education class size and composition limits apply to the BASES programs, and programs for students with Severe Behaviour Designations. So far the District has applied a 10.5 student average per 1 full time teacher to assign staffing. However, in some cases, this might mean that programs have been understaffed. **Please ensure that you have received appropriate staffing for your classes.** If you think that you have not received appropriate FTEs, or have a question about the calculations, ask **Joanna!** grv-spt@surreyteachers.org

The class size and composition language is as follows:

- 1 FTE per 12 students:** students with MID designations and MID/MOD combination 1
- 1 FTE per 9 students:** H designations
- 1 FTE per 8 students:** students with MOD designations and Social Development
- 1 FTE per 7 students:** multicategory - MOD, MID, ASD, Severe Profound designations or a combination of designations
- 1 FTE per 7 students:** multicategory - ASD, Severe Profound, Dependent

MDI information for Teachers of Grades 4 + 7

Teacher participation in the Middle Years Development Instrument Assessment is voluntary. Although teachers should feel no obligation to volunteer to participate in the MDI, it is not possible to prevent the MDI assessment from taking place. The District has committed to the STA that teachers are not required to administer the MDI: "In the absence of teacher participation, a school-based principal or vice principal will facilitate the assessment process for students." If you encounter pressure to participate, or have other concerns about the MDI, please contact the STA.

Excerpt from <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi>:

What is the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)?

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is a self-report questionnaire completed by children in Grade 4 and Grade 7. It asks them how they think and feel about their experiences both inside and outside of school. Both the Grade 4 questionnaire and the Grade 7 questionnaire include questions related to the five areas of development that are strongly linked to well-being, health and academic achievement.



Physical Health & Well-Being

Children evaluate their own physical well-being in the areas of overall health including body image, nutrition and sleeping habits.



Connectedness

Children are asked about their experiences of support and connection with the adults in their schools and neighbourhoods, with their parents or guardians at home, and with their peers.



Social and Emotional Development

Children respond to questions about their current social and emotional functioning in 7 areas: optimism, self-esteem, happiness, empathy, prosocial behaviour, sadness and worries.



School Experiences

Children are asked about their school experiences in 4 areas: academic self-concept, school climate, school belonging, and experiences with peer victimization (bullying).



Use of After-School Time

Children are asked about the time they spend engaged in organized activities such as sports, music and art as well as the time they spend watching TV, doing homework and playing video games.

Call for Delegates!

Each year over 750 delegates from around the province attend the BCTF AGM. It is a great opportunity to see how the BCTF operates, to hear new perspectives on important issues, meet colleagues from other parts of the province, and to have a voice in decisions made by the union. Surrey is able to send up to 62 delegates. Under our policies and procedures, the 10 members of the Resolutions Committee will automatically be delegates, so we will need to elect **52 delegates**, plus alternates.

Delegates will be elected at the **January 24th Special General Meeting** at the Bombay Banquet Hall. Elected delegates and alternates are expected to attend the training sessions leading up to the AGM.
 February 15th – Rookie AGM Delegates training (8:30 am to 2:45 pm at STA)
 February 22nd – AGM Delegates training (4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at Eaglequest)
 March 1st – AGM Delegates training (8:30 am to 2:45 pm at Eaglequest)
 March 8th – AGM Delegates training (8:30 am to 2:45 pm at Eaglequest)

If you are interested in becoming a delegate, please submit your name and a brief statement to sta@surreyteachers.org by **Monday, January 9, 2018**. Your chances of being elected a delegate are much better if you have a written statement! It is also possible to nominate yourself from the floor at the January 24th meeting. Hotel accommodation and expenses are covered by the BCTF. Childcare arrangements are also available. If you have any questions about the AGM or the process of becoming a delegate, please contact Julia MacRae at 2-vp@surreyteachers.org.

Social Justice + Activism

Surrey Teachers Fight for \$15



On November 30, Surrey teachers spoke passionately about poverty at the Fair Wages Commission Hearing. Annie Ohana along with two students from LA Matheson, spoke of general injustice, Helen Kelsey spoke about conditions at Forsythe Road, and 2nd VP Julia MacRae presented the following statement on behalf of Surrey teachers and students:

We are pleased to represent the teachers of Surrey in your public hearings on the importance of quickly increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. We see the problems associated with a low minimum wage and poverty in our work as teachers on a daily basis. Parents are working several jobs to make ends meet, and therefore are commonly working during all school hours. This means they are unable to come in to conference with teachers informally or during formal parent-teacher conferences. They are often unable to support the school activities, where more affluent parents may help with driving for field trips, supporting events such as concerts and plays, dances and other community initiatives. They are also unable to spend time with their kids reading or helping with homework. Kids need their parents around!

Children and youth are affected by super-stressed parents who are living in the crisis of poverty. We see teens hanging out at the school until very late hours, and students reaching out to teachers for emotional and homework support that is unavailable at home because parents are working very late hours. Children and teens are masters at hiding their own family's poverty, and use lots of tricks to avoid asking for financial help when it is available, for field trip fees, for example. School supplies are another area of stress for families in poverty; a recent Canadian Survey found the average family pays more than \$500 in back-to-school expenses each year, and we see this to be true in Surrey as well.

In many of our schools in Surrey there are breakfast and lunch programs offered to kids who are not getting adequate nutrition at home, and teachers often pay out of their own pockets to have snacks available in their classrooms. Food insecurity is usually a direct impact of low wages.

Thanks so much for creating the opportunity to hear from the community about the impact of low wages. We urge you to raise the minimum wage to \$15 as soon as possible, if not immediately.

Yours very Sincerely,
Gioia Breda, President.

End Violence Against Women

Day of Action is December 6th

Invitation to join members from the STA EC at a candlelight vigil from 6:30-7:30pm at Holland Park in Surrey, on December 6th.

The last ten days of the 16 Days of Action for Ending Violence Against Women run from December 1-10. Classroom activities for these dates can be found in the BCTF resource, "[WHAT YOU CAN DO](#)"

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 www.shooboxproject.org



Human Rights Day

December 10 is Human Rights Day. **IMAGINE ACTION**, the Canadian Teachers' Federation social justice website, features Speak Truth to Power Canada, a Canadian version of the Robert F. Kennedy **HUMAN RIGHTS-GLOBAL DEFENDERS LESSON PLANS**. These lessons are based on the stories of 12 global defenders of human rights, and are available in English and French.

SOGI Support Rally



On November 28th, STA President Gioia Breda attended the Support for SOGI Rally in Chilliwack. She reported that while the weather was cold, spirits were high. Approximately 350 people turned out for the rally, including BCTF members from across the Lower Mainland. More photos and videos from the event can be accessed via their [FACEBOOK PAGE](#).

Pro-D Opportunities

BCTF Workshops

DID YOU KNOW that the BCTF offers FREE workshops? There are over 80 individual workshops to choose from, which address a wide-range of interesting topics. The BCTF has a proud history of supporting members and locals with workshops and training. Workshops are led by classroom teachers (facilitators) with special expertise and training. Workshops can be booked, free of charge, for groups of 15-30 (teachers, locals, parent groups etc). More information can be found on the BCTF website:

<https://bctf.ca/PD/workshops.aspx>

For example, this might be a relevant topic of interest at your school.

Marking up the Wrong Tree?

Conversations about teaching, assessment, and reporting



The revised curriculum is placing new assessment and evaluation demands on teachers. This workshop will allow participants opportunities to make sure they are doing what is actually needed and useful for assessing student learning.

The next edition of the Advocate will feature a highlight on Curriculum Implementation.

Core Competencies EdCamp



Happening in Richmond, at McRoberts Secondary, on January 13th. This EdCamp Pro-D will be dedicated to BC's Core Competencies. Sign up soon to guarantee a spot! Registration opened on Nov. 24th, and is already 25% full! More information and registration details are available [ONLINE](#).

Joke of the Week

**What does a snowperson take when they're sick?
A chill pill!**

Thanks to Nicole H. 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.