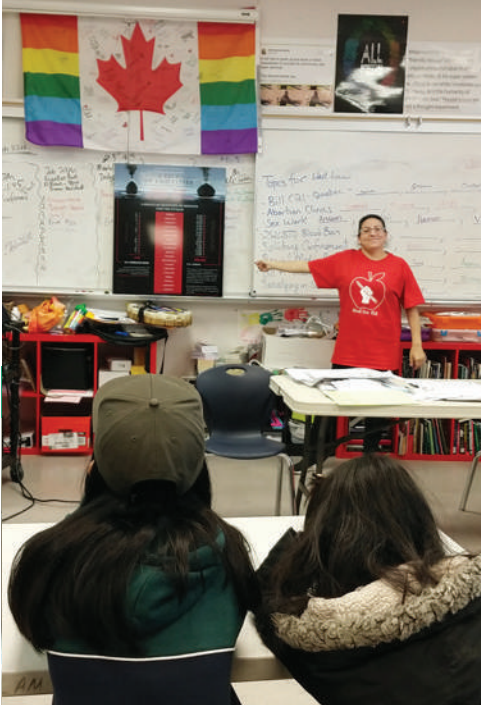


SURREY
TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION

The Advocate

TEACHER AUTONOMY AND PRO-D • APRIL 2020



In this issue of our STA Advocate we celebrate **teacher autonomy**, which creates quality, dynamism and strength in our profession. When a teacher considers their class and plans learning activities in response to the needs of their students, this is teacher autonomy in action. When teachers also consider what is going on in the world around them and take the time to incorporate aspects into their teaching, this is also teacher autonomy in action. Inside are various articles written by Surrey Teachers about how they reflect on their autonomy. We have also included some information about Professional Development to inspire you!



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What Teachers Do During A Pro-D Day

Reflection by a Teacher

By Velma Moore, Teacher, Princess Margaret Secondary

Professional development requires so much more than five days a year. It is an ongoing process for teachers who want to stay current and bring the latest ideas into our classes. Often professional development takes a teacher out of the class, either when a department head release day is used; or a release day is given. It is nice when this happens because it protects a teacher's personal time, right? I am not sure that this is true.

Every time we take a department head release day or go to a district training, that also takes a teacher out of their class and they lose their prep time. That is not all that is lost. The time it takes to prepare a TTOC to teach your classes is almost the same amount and sometimes more than the time you are absent from your class. Then you come back to all the marking and assessing, for the work the students have completed. We also lose prep time if we take kids on a field trip. This means that we end up spending extra time before or after school or on weekends marking and prepping.

There are constant emails about book clubs and trainings happening after school several times a year 330 – 5pm or 330 – 730 – dinner included. These are very enticing events often with gifts of books and resources... and it is lovely to connect with other teachers across the district, but do we have time to implement what we are learning, read the resources? Are we moving too fast? Trying to do too much too fast without enough pre-thought?

How does a teacher nurture self-care and keep up with the latest priority practices? It is hard to do it all in addition to volunteering for committees, attending staff meetings, coaching or operating clubs outside of the day. Finally, there are our own family needs. How do we marry these ideas successfully? I think it takes remarkable planning.

Take time for yourself and your family first. Just like the oxygen mask in a plane, you have to put yours on first before you can help another. Know where your passions lie, and be sure you are becoming involved in things that feed you

and energize you. When you join a group, be sure the people in that group are people you want to spend time with and that you enjoy. If not, change groups. It is ok to be selfish in our giving. Teacher autonomy is the right to learn at our own pace and participate in the new practices a little bit at a time. Integrating these practices into what we are already doing is the only thing that makes sense. Take the time to enjoy the learning. Be kind to yourself. You have to fail to succeed. Do not lose your sense of humour. This is the most important skill I have learned in my 26 years of teaching. Laugh often and with abandon, the chemicals released in the brain will serve you well.

Reflection by a Student

This reflection was sent to us from the Guildford Learning Centre H-hour teacher team. What is H-hour? Once a week, students are invited into the Humanities classroom to discuss a wide range of topics (climate change, food production, elections, black history month, current events). The teacher team provides background to the topic, shows relevant videos and printed material and then opens up the classroom for discussion. The students then provide a reflection piece on their learning. This week, when some of the teachers were talking about what they did on the convention day Pro-D with each other, a student questioned, "what, don't you guys just get a day off or mark and stuff?". So the teacher team decided to have a panel of teachers present what they actually did. The hour started with discussing our collective agreement and historically why we have Pro-D, what constitutes Pro-D, etc. Then, 6 different teachers presented on what they did.

The following is one of the student's reflections on what is Pro-D and their understanding of its importance.

I never really thought about what a Pro-D day really meant, I initially thought that it was a day for stabilization in the school almost like a catch-up day in a sense, and I honestly thought it was just one day where they get to concentrate on grading and paper work, but that's not the case at all. From what I learned from this H-hour is that the purpose of these Pro-D days (Professional Development day) they're actually meant to improve their teaching, it's a day where the teacher does something outside of school that will either teach, guide, or inspire them to create their ideal work environment.

From what I understood about this H-hour is that these Pro-D days are a day for the teacher to explore outside of school and find an educational venture that will better their teaching in an aspect they feel is lacking, this ultimately benefits the entire classroom because if teachers are gaining experience in a particular area of themselves that a student may have thought needed improvement it

enhances the teaching; making it better on both ends.

What I found really interesting was the fact sometimes they go to places to educate them on inner peace, or something that benefits them mentally which I found was a really important thing because I think it's important that the teachers are able to find things outside of school that will help their mental health, especially how we kids can be, it seems like a stressful job at times and it's just nice to see that these Pro-D days give them the resources to strengthen themselves in any area they feel is needed.

Knowing what teachers do during Pro-D days is important and relates to the course because its insight on the teachers, it shows the vision they have for the classroom and how they want to execute their ideas in a way where they can teach the way they want while making sense for everybody in the classroom.

Professional Development is Precious

By Kelli O'Malley, STA Member at Large, Johnston Heights Secondary

I have always been a Professional Development “junkie”. It began when I started my teaching career as a TOC; I frequently attended after school sessions offered by teacher experts, who helped me learn and expand my understanding of a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Often what I learned would help me cope in the classes I covered. I was always impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of these teachers, who would volunteer to share their expertise after working all day, in order to share their wisdom with new and not-so-new teachers looking for inspiration, advice or more ideas for their teacher toolkit.

After getting my first teaching position in Surrey, my enthusiasm for great Pro-D expanded, as now I had access to my Professional Development Committee. I came to understand the value of self-directed and needs-based Pro-D activities that I could develop and shape to meet the needs of my classes and school. Working with the Pro-D Committee expanded my understanding of the valuable role professional development plays in a teacher's career, and of the many hard-won battles the BCTF waged and won to promote relevant, autonomous and responsible professional development. I quickly joined, and often served as chair, on the Pro-D committees in the schools where I worked, bringing exciting and relevant PD opportunities, speakers, and experts on differentiated instruction, assessment for learning, integrating the use of technology, infusing Aboriginal content, Mindfulness, and STEM, to name a few.

I could completely relate to past BCTF President Jim Iker's statement that we “take a lot of pride in [professional development]. We're the highest educated teaching force in Canada.” I saw this in action, year after year. And knowing this made me feel a bit protective of my, and our collective, Pro-D. I would never want to lose the amazing learning I could choose to access all year, if I wished. So, **when Bill 11 was introduced in March of 2015, I read it with considerable alarm, and even a bit of horror. If enacted, this bill would:**

1. Remove sections of the School Act which has strict controls over who has access to students' information and how that information is used. With Bill 11, it will no longer be an offence to violate students' privacy. Our government will hand over students' personal information to Pearson's, the same company that is embroiled in a controversy in the U.S for selling students information to marking companies and tracking students' social media accounts, with no restrictions on how this information is shared and no

penalties if this information is sold to corporations.

2. Remove our right to live and participate in a democratic society by giving the minister of education the right to remove elected school trustees and replace them with people of their choosing as they see fit.
3. Drastically change the way in which boards report on student achievement, using language that reflects the BC Liberals' infatuation with the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM), which emphasizes high-stakes testing, accountability, standardized learning, and cut-throat competition between schools and between students. It's worth noting that GERM countries usually don't do very well on the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The U.S., which is heavily invested in GERM, ranked 36th in 2012.
4. Completely control teacher Pro-D, dictating how, what, and possibly even when teacher Pro-D could be used. First, government-mandated Pro-D could become a condition of certification. Second, the Minister would have the power to require teachers to take certain courses. Many teachers love their summer Pro-D; Bill 11 opens the door to teachers being required to take professional development in the summer (when they are not employed), and be told what they must attend, and they may be

required to pay for this Pro-D out of their own pockets. This power to dictate the content of Pro-D is unprecedented for any profession. It's important to remember that teachers voluntarily added five unpaid days to the school calendar to cover these professional development days. Bill 11 is a slap to the face to our profession.

Bill 11, and its implications, concerned me so much that I put my name forward to be a member the Surrey Teachers Association Professional Development Committee. I have been a member of this committee for 2 terms, and have had the opportunity to serve as chair. Part of the duties of the committee are to promote relevant, collaborative, and responsible Pro-D for the teachers in our district (and frequently, for teachers in other districts). Working with other committees, we form the content of Focus Days, The STA Convention, and STA/District collaborations. We also look at the individual needs of teacher Pro-D through administration of Pro-D funds, vetting and approval of applications, and updating of the language that guides our professional development. It is challenging, but very satisfying work.

Teachers are a diverse group of professionals. They work in increasingly diverse and challenging classrooms, with mounting pressures from government, districts, parents, and the media. Their Pro-D is precious, and needs to be valued, respected, and preserved from attacks like those presented in Bill 11.





Curriculum and Pedagogy: Understanding the difference between the “how” and “what” of teaching

By Jennifer Wadge, Past-President, Surrey Teachers' Association

This article is being published post-humously as Jennifer died unexpectedly on December 29, 2015 during her time as a Surrey Teachers' Association president. Jennifer was a passionate speaker, especially for social justice, and a strong advocate for improved working and learning conditions in Surrey schools. While we have published this piece before, we felt that Jennifer perfectly described the difference of curriculum and pedagogy, and was exactly what was needed in this issue on teacher autonomy, and is a way to keep her voice and wisdom alive.

As BC teachers prepare to begin implementing the new K-9 curriculum in September 2016, many teachers are feeling nervous about what this change will mean for their practice. In a CBC BC news story from last October, Nancy Bennet, principal at Eagle Mountain Middle School in Anmore, was interviewed about the new curriculum, BC's Education Plan, and the changes taking place at her school. When asked how these changes would impact teachers, Bennet was quoted as saying “we're a 'guide on the side model' rather than 'sage on the stage;...[students] have an opportunity to follow different paths with their learning.”

It is quotes like these that leave many teachers with the impression that the implementation of the new curriculum means that they have to completely change their practice, including how they teach students and how they report on student progress. There's no doubt that many districts want teachers to change their practice to include inquiry-based learning, project-based learning and the catch-all “21st Century” learning. As well, many districts are

encouraging teachers to move to a portfolio style report, like FreshGrade. But does this push from districts mean that we all need to change the way we teach and report?

It's important to unpack this message of “education change.” While some continue to push their version of the BC Ed Plan, it is not actually a part of the implementation of the revised curriculum. We need to see the new curriculum as separate from this push to implement personalized learning.

The key to understanding this distinction is to consider the difference between pedagogy and curriculum. Pedagogy is how we teach. Curriculum is what we teach. This division is particularly important because it is pedagogy, or how we teach, that is where we have professional autonomy. Changing your practice to incorporate inquiry-based learning, or moving to an ongoing model of assessment, like a portfolio, are examples of how you teach. As professionals, we have the choice to change our pedagogy, or not.

Many teachers are making the choice to look at new ways of teaching. These teachers see the changes in the new curriculum as an opportunity to experiment with how they teach. This is different from districts, through principals, pushing teachers to make changes to how they teach. Teachers should not be pressured into changing their pedagogy as part of curriculum implementation. We have the professional autonomy to decide how best to teach the new curriculum.

As the framework for curriculum implementation, which was developed collaboratively between the BCTF and the Ministry, says, “the process [of curriculum implementation] needs to be one that honours teacher autonomy and professionalism.”

Given that teachers are having to do all of the work of preparing to implement the new curriculum in a relatively short timeframe, and in an underfunded system with overcrowded classes and not enough supports, taking on the additional task of changing how we teach is not going to be possible or productive for many, many teachers. Taking the time to focus on what we teach, the new curriculum, may be more than enough additional work.

As teachers, we are professionals who understand how best to teach to the diverse needs of our students. Understanding that the change to the curriculum is only a change to what we teach, gives us the freedom to make choices about whether or not we want to make changes to how we teach. That choice will depend on a number of factors and is best left to the professional autonomy of each teacher.

Most locals have collective agreement language defining professional autonomy rights. Contact your Local President for more information.

The Provincial Government - Humanized: A Personal Report from the British Columbia Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy, Victoria, October 22-26, 2019

By Steve Brügger, Classroom Learning Facilitator (formerly known as "Teacher"), Green Timbers Elementary



I recently had the good fortune to attend this multi-day professional development event with teachers from around the province, including from Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Kamloops, Sechelt, and even a colleague from Surrey, Joshua Weiss from Elgin Park Secondary. This institute was meticulously organized by Karen Aitken, Director of the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO), Jennifer Ives-Fournet, PEO Officer, and their assistants.

After everyone arrived on Tuesday night, our "legislative session" started on Wednesday morning with a welcome speech from Daryl Plecas. He is a passionate "speaker" and he spoke about the importance of integrity and how many people in all sorts of places could use more of it, as well as the traits of effective leadership. Plecas embodied another theme that would emerge for me over the next few days: at the end of the day, behind all the titles, roles, committees, and so on, are human beings, people not so different from you and me. Hence the importance of integrity and responsible leadership.

After that, our sessions, including learning more about the Hansard record, the role of the Lieutenant Governor, watching Question period, and the role of the clerk and some history around the evolution of parliament in general. The day was capped off by a delicious supper hosted by the Speaker and the Clerks at the Union Club.

Thursday saw another early start and the

Legislative Council, Sherie Verhulst, entertained us with "Drafting Legislation and Orders in Council." Seriously, she was very engaging and presented the processes in simple and straightforward way. After that everything was put on hold as we all watched the ceremonies and speeches around the adoption of the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples act. That was a special moment and I felt honored to have been there when history was made in such an important way.

We refocused over an informal lunch with multiple MLAs, including the Minister of Education. Many of us got to meet the MLA from our school or home ridings. The afternoon became more formal again and our sessions included the Treasury Board, a 3-member MLA panel, the Minister of Education, Elections BC, and the role of parliamentary committees. Dinner at the legislature saw entertained by the Parliamentary Players and we "met" BC's first female MLA, Mary Ellen Smith, and the infamous architect of the legislature Francis Mawson Rattenbury.

On Friday the day began at the Provincial Court with Madam Justice Jennifer A. Power to help explain the role of the judicial branch of the government. Next came the media panel attended by Keith Baldrey, Vaughn Palmer, and Andrew MacLeod. They were entertaining and filled in another piece of the whole government pie. A presentation from CIVIX continued this theme of the role of the public before we had a personalized tour with Leslie

McGarry, a fountain of personal knowledge and wisdom, of the Pathways to Appreciation in the First Peoples Gallery at the BC Museum. There was a guided tour of the Parliament Buildings before some free time and then an informal networking event at the hotel.

Saturday was a more casual affair and saw us focusing on developing new or refining existing lesson plans and ideas for the classroom. There was a session from Elections Canada and the PEO resources as well before we presented our ideas to each other, said our goodbyes, and then left to disperse back to our regular lives.

One of the biggest takeaways for me personally was having the titles, roles, functions, and responsibilities of the provincial government humanized by passionate and caring people who all seemed genuinely interested in serving the province, and, perhaps more importantly, who all cared about moving our democracy forward together.

My last two thoughts, if you're thinking about applying to this program, and I would like to encourage all of my colleagues to consider it, you will be well fed, and, if you take the ferry there and back like I did, you will be reminded of just how beautiful a place our province is. More information about the BCTI can be accessed at: www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/educational-programs-workshops/bcti.

My Time Abroad: Education, India, and Me

By Rick Kumar, Local Representative to the BCTF, Salish Secondary



India, a land of immense beauty and rich culture, offers quite a saturation of the senses. Having taught in the foothills of the Himalayas in 2015 in a rural Tibetan refugee community I had experienced the remnants of the British education system that imprinted itself on those that lived and learned on this land and those that had come due to circumstance. The Tibetans fleeing execution and religious persecution came to India in hopes of temporary refuge, but more than a few decades later their resource rich homeland remains under the Chinese government. Having taught as part of the Tibetan Education system which was set up by the Tibetan In-Exile government I had the opportunity firsthand to work with amazing students who had lived through so much, but remained optimistic and always met me with a smile.

Years later, when I won the International Professional Development opportunity through the Surrey Teachers' Association I decided to return to where my teaching journey began; though this time I was going to see what the Indian Education System was like. I admittedly did make my way back to see those young faces that I once taught in a little village two hours away from McLeod Ganj in the Indian State of Himachal Pradesh, though that was only after having experienced an eye-opening three-day conference on Indian education. The conference and associated vendors area were a flurry of activity, and similar to the bustling streets that lay just outside the conference center the conference floor was full of energy and a wind of commerce. To say I wasn't ready for the systematic bombardment of offers and promotions by different vendors would understate what it was that I truly witnessed. I was speechless as each of the vendors here were discussing pricing for students and what it would "cost" to make my school truly great. I didn't understand what that meant until I began my first session, and by the time I had hit the third panel of "educators" in the evening I was disillusioned with the mass. India's education system at least how it was explained to me by a few participants that I spoke to and by the presentations themselves revolved around extreme privatization. The education sector when turned private created a three-tier system. The government sponsored schools offer free education, but attending a government school marks a child as a lower-class citizen given their inaccessibility to resources. The kinds of jobs and opportunities presented to those in government schools is quite limited, and the stigma of attending a government school carries with these students through their lives. Next comes tier two schools which is where many students end up. These schools are costly and take up a large portion of a family's budget as students move through elementary and secondary. For context, a driver I spoke to made 8000 rupees a month (\$148CAD) and his daughter's school fees were 4500 rupees a month. These schools offer students special applications in the workforce, and of the vendors and conference attendees I spoke to, nearly all had attended

a tier two school. Tier one schools are prestigious and boast waitlists. These schools promote their high achievement rate and seldom focus on anything other than STEM programming. These schools also offer other "perks" such as CCTV cameras in classrooms so parents can watch their children during the day and to make sure that teachers are teaching their students to a high standard. I watched one panel discussion on the ethics of monitoring teachers and 5 of the 6 panelists agreed that parents should be able to critique a teacher's teaching and their lessons.

I was flabbergasted when one "educator" who while sitting on a panel on the future of education in India stated, "I didn't build schools to teach children, I built schools to make money."

I was quite upset with the state of things until I met a teacher that had taught in a government school and had moved into the higher tiers. We sat and had a chai together as they shared with me a story from their career. They told of how despite the moving focus of Indian education towards profit, that the work done in the village communities was what was important. They shared a story of a young girl who was the only child to a father who had lost his legs in a farming accident and a mother who worked on a farm while taking care of the home. The teacher told me that they taught this girl for three years and when the girl had finished grade 10 she left school. The girl left school because now that she could read, write, and practice arithmetic she was a commodity in her village. She was able to write letters for her neighbours and help some shops with bookkeeping. The teacher told me that the girl had become the breadwinner for the family and that sometime later she had eventually gone to work in a government position. For all that it was, this story was real and while only the one story, it was enough to change my perspective about what I was a part of in this conference. I could make my privileged claims about what education should look like, but I couldn't discredit the hard work that my colleagues were doing here in India. Every day teachers who are paid far less than I am teach in Government schools and commit themselves to providing an education to those who otherwise wouldn't receive one. While the complexities of education in this place are different than what I'm accustomed to I left the conference hopeful for those young students who could do just a little more in their lives thanks to those teachers. There ultimately was so much to see and comment on, but I thought I'd end in this way, an acknowledgement of the hard work I saw and of the optimism I feel for those that have gained a small step up because of those teachers who gave all they had.

This story is only my perception of what I saw and experienced and I acknowledge that it may not be true for all those that have been connected to this system or experienced it in some way.



West East Institute Conference in Barcelona, Spain

Camila Muir, Career Development Facilitator, Elgin Park Secondary

Thanks to winning the Pro-D lottery, I experienced my first international conference in Barcelona, Spain in March. What a wonderful spot to attend a conference! The West East Institute hosted a three day humanities and education, academic seminar event with a truly international list of countries represented including Australia, Bulgaria, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine and the USA. Presenters were graduate students and educators from primary to post-secondary.

Although there was a wide range of topics, some common themes emerged such as a focus on inclusion, educational access, and differentiated learning. One particularly interesting session included an exploration of how living in a culture of consumption creates unrealistic expectations and is resulting in higher rates of anxiety and depression. Technology use in schools, computer addictions, the struggles of refugees, and the epidemic of homelessness were other fascinating sessions I attended.

I was inspired by educators fighting for social justice around the world; the ongoing need for HIV prevention education in South Africa, the

struggle to fight against cultural gender ideologies that pose barriers to equity, the resettlement challenges refugees face and the epidemic of homelessness.

Essentially, this experience provided me with a perspective check. In terms of the global trends in education, teachers in Surrey are fortunate to work in a relatively progressive district and although we certainly face our own challenges, we work with colleagues who are generally open to embracing new ideas. We are fortunate enough to be in a union which helps us fight for the resources to support our students. The same supports and opportunities just aren't there for many other school districts in the world. Fortunately, there are committed and tireless activists, like the educators I had the privilege to meet at the WEI Conference, who are ardent in their desire to make significant improvements to education.

This experience was the Professional Development highlight of my career!

Action as Professional Development

By Annie Ohana, Teacher, L.A. Matheson Secondary

Teaching is a front-line profession, and our schools are microcosms of the realities of our wider world. Dive deeper and the call for anti-racist policies, climate change action, Indigenous sovereignty alongside Truth and Reconciliation and overall decolonization, solutions to economic inequities to gender violence, 2SLGBTQIA+ acceptance and representation of IBPOC all exist and can be brought to life in our classrooms, curriculum, pedagogy and resources.

As we become more aware to the problematic nature of our education system built to perpetuate the many modes of oppressive societal norms and systemic discrimination, how does a teacher take on professional development that goes beyond acquiring the latest assessment technique, knowledge base and skill, but also dares to question and analyze what we teach, how we teach, why we teach.

I put forward the following possibility, that we need to be people of solidarity action, allyship, who create and hold brave spaces for dialogue.

Removing filters of bias, corporatization, and even educational dogma, and learning from grassroots social movements and actions always provides narratives, and even examining strategies rarely seen as depending on systemic prejudices, or ways of knowing and certain stories, which are assimilated or even hidden/erased. The very structures we learn in as teachers are not always welcome or safe places for those who have been stigmatized, marginalized, traumatized by the system.

Professional development should not simply be about getting “trained” (the horrors of scripted, prescriptive’ American so called Pro-D come to mind) but should also allow teachers to use our skill sets of inquiry to critically analyze content we currently use, question what is considered “best practice” and undo the strains of White Eurocentric Cis-HeteroNormative Patriarchal Neo Liberal ideology that erases IBPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ (to name just a few marginalized groups) contributions.

Here are some examples locally of adding grassroots action to your professional development and the professional development that can come from it.

1. The Women’s Memorial March

The Women’s Memorial March is held in the Downtown Eastside on February 14th each year. It’s a chance to come together in allyship with Indigenous women as they fight to commemorate and remember the thousands we have lost to genocidal violence. Being amongst thousands, speaking to family members allows for a deeper understanding of what TRC actually looks like and what is meant by ongoing genocide.

2. Black Lives Matter Protests

The words of Angela Davis come to mind... “it is not enough to be against racism, one must be anti-racist.” While multiculturalism and diversity-based actions feel good, does what we teach allow for a problematization of such practices? I would suggest attending protests such as those organized by Black Lives Matter (and of course many other IBPOC groups) allows for those facing discrimination to be front and center. Listening in solidarity means we start to do our own research and instead of simply being against racism, start to understand what it means to build

curriculum and school processes that allow for anti-racist dialogue and practices. Cultural portraiture and the trap of dine, dance, and dress, is one that must be avoided as it creates environments where those portrayed have their culture and heritage often minimized and misrepresented. How to learn to avoid this? Go to the roots of the anti-oppression fight for human and civil rights.

3. Ongoing Climate Actions

Many incredible activists are on site during these actions. For those teaching science curriculum, the power of chemistry and biology (among others) takes on a new importance, and builds more place based and collective education. A question I always have, how do we assess excellence in science, by a student’s memorization of formulae or by learning to apply science concepts to our world’s biggest crisis?

4. 2SLGBTQIA+ actions to include Pride Parades

To understand the power of a Rainbow crosswalk, to comprehend the extent of the gender and orientation spectrums, representation matters. The beauty in PRIDE action is that it steps the educator into the processes of what it took to gain anti-discrimination laws, human and civil rights. PRIDE has always been political, no doubt in that. Amidst the celebration lies the roots to Anti-Oppression understandings that we need in our curriculum.

5. Anti-Gentrification Actions

Attending such events helps to undo the trap of vertically aligned charity work on issues of poverty, housing and food insecurity. Our voices can do more than support short term charity or band aid solutions. Meeting activists and those with lived experiences gives educators a more nuanced understanding of layers of policy and action. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition speaks for example, of upstreaming one’s food bank collections. While it feels good to donate, this now decades old band-aid solution that no longer covers the ever-widening gaping wound, asks participants to take systemic action alongside their donation.

For many of us our unearned privilege makes it less likely that such non-violent protests are part of our everyday lives. This results in often shallow understandings of the root causes and root solutions. When applying the filter of education, we must develop our understandings beyond our blind spots built from privilege.

I will leave you with a question:

If we as teachers constrain ourselves to Professional standards that reinforce systemic discrimination, are we developing ourselves or simply perpetuating practices that silence and force both ourselves and our students to become complicit in cogs of oppressive systems?



Professional Development Opportunities

By Sandra Willing, LST Teacher, Prince Charles Elementary

I am grateful to the teachers who fought to establish our current professional development opportunities within the school year. We have five days to engage in an array of professional learning opportunities. This is not the case for some teachers, like those in Washington and Oregon, who are expected to fulfill their professional learning requirements in part at weekend conferences and after school sessions. There are also other professions within BC where members must complete their professional development on their own time. It is important that we constantly develop our skills as teaching continues to evolve.

One of the best professional development opportunities available to teachers in BC is to attend one of the many Provincial Specialist Associations' conferences in October. The members of these associations work hard to provide interesting and relevant keynote speakers and a plethora of workshops to attend. The networking opportunities these conferences provide is also a useful, informal way to learn from each other. Teachers teaching teachers is key.

Another opportunity for teachers to teach teachers is at our annual STA Convention

Day. The committee responsible for the multiple sites and focuses on this big day is always looking for more teachers share their successes, experiences and areas of expertise. We have so much to learn from each other, and we all have something to offer.

The many committees of the Surrey Teacher's Association quite regularly offer events to help further our professional learning. Several Lower Mainland locals are working together to host the Cross Border Conference for BC, Washington and Oregon Teachers on February 29, 2020. The theme this year is climate action and it's entitled: Leaping into Action – Teachers Rise for Climate Justice. The day promises to be full of motivational and thought-provoking discussions. There will be sessions for elementary and secondary teachers looking to further their social justice and environmental education instruction.

We are the lifelong learners of education systems past. It is in our mandate. Although our requirements in tracking our learning are minimal, the opportunities are numerous. Our professional growth is beneficial to our well-being and sense of accomplishment, our students and our profession at large. Consider

contributing to your school's professional development committee, attending joint District and STA Focus Days, and becoming a Staff Rep. The latter will give you access to in-services that strengthen your understanding of the responsibilities of teachers and the policies that underlie our work.

Every day I learn something new about teaching, whether it is from a conversation with a colleague, a comment from a student, self-reflection, or an educational text. I value the days that have been set aside for me to focus my efforts, access experts and attend sessions that push my practice to the next level.

What does teacher autonomy have to do with a peace process? What I learned in Colombia, November 2019

By Julia MacRae,
1st Vice President of the STA

It might be impossible to overstate the beauty of the countryside in central Colombia. There are mountains, fertile valleys, farms where almost any food can be grown, lakes and rivers with fish, pasture animals everywhere, gold, copper, and many precious minerals; sadly, with all this bounty of resources, it is no wonder there is such a long history of conquest and exploitation of the land and people.

The 50-year civil war has left deep scars in Colombian society. A peace process is underway, but it is deeply imperfect, with armed groups still active and impunity for the state's paramilitary enforcers still a reality. According to our partner FECODE, (Federacion de Educadores de Colombia) the government's peace accords were never negotiated with a vision of social peace, but rather to offer a more stable place for international companies to invest. Their concept of peace had nothing to do with unions, the student movement, dignity of the human being, human rights, etc., rather it is to impose a dictatorship of corporate interests that would degrade the rights of all workers. On top of that, the right-wing Colombian government is agreeing to international trade agreements (including with Canada) and privatizing institutions and whole sectors of the government, which is not a path to stability or prosperity for the average Colombian.

Yet many citizens see the need for a robust and truthful process if there is ever to be a hope for a civilized society and a dramatic de-escalation of violence, and are doing what they can to transform a cynical situation. FECODE and other unions, student and community groups and civil society launched strikes and walkouts in November in a massive mobilization against the inadequate official peace process, punitive pension and labour reforms, privatizations, and many other injustices, and have kept up the pressure through legal channels and appealing to the international community for solidarity. All of this is having some effect, and we are



proud to be part of the international solidarity response. However what really struck me as interesting was how FECODE also sees the importance of working at a micro level, in individual classrooms. We came to Colombia to see that side of their important work in action.

Teachers are working in their schools and through their union to bring about meaningful peace. One way they do this is through the **simple power of each teacher using their autonomy as a tool to create a peaceful society**. It is not hyperbole to say that the teacher intentionally creating peaceful space in her class and using pedagogy to teach concepts that create peace in the next generation is a **teacher in resistance**.

We attended provincial pedagogical encounters in 3 different places where teachers involved in the FECODE project "Schools, Territories of Peace" reported to their colleagues about the projects they were carrying out with their students. Each teacher had a different idea (philosophical focus) different way of doing it (pedagogy), different skills built among their students (curricular design) and different outcomes and successes both short and long term.

One way several teachers work is to do classroom projects that take action in resistance to the forgetting. There is an active campaign to negate and forget the years of conflict, which benefits the powerful in society. Therefore, teaching about the truth of the conflict, and making sure the tragic

results of acts of violence are not forgotten, (by doing actions such as commemorating an assassination or making sure the site of an act of violence is memorialized, or doing other projects that make history visible) is part of a moment of open confrontation of this negation of history. These teachers are teaching critical thinking skills, as well as writing, acting, art, public speaking and other skills at the same time.

Another project a teacher explained to us was about classroom behaviour by the teacher. He said "our image as Colombian people is as a violent people. We teachers sometimes commit acts of violence against our students. I recognize I am sometimes violent, but now I am learning seven ways to express myself without violence." He went on to explain how the school needs to be a place of peace where kids know their rights and people learn to respect each others' differences. He said "we cannot say 'peace will arrive,' we need to construct it." So in his process of understanding and modifying his own behaviour he was able to create his pedagogy of peace in his classroom, featuring memory, respect, rights, healthy competition and trust.

Other teachers worked seemingly more tangentially, such as having students learn more about the natural world. One teacher's birdwatching project was particularly interesting to me. She took her kids on five or six hikes over the course of a couple of months where they observed birds in the countryside and forest. Amusingly, there is a



Image Source: FECODE

term for skipping school in Colombia called “pajareando”, (birding) and so some parents were complaining that she was not doing serious school work with their kids if they were just “pajareando,” so she answered that hesitation by asking them to come along so they would see the scientific purpose, and lots of other benefits. Kids learned mapping skills as they recorded the routes of the hikes, they learned about bird species in that area, they did bird counts and recorded these, which is of course basic scientific observation skills, they did art projects where they made masks of the different species, they learned valuable details about birding and how it is a big part of international tourism, (and lucrative tourism, at that! So many people would be thrilled to be able to see the tropical birds in that area that local people don’t even pay attention to!) They learned about conservation, had experiences in group building and outdoor leadership, and learned from and shared bird drawings with community elders. She noted that one child in particular who was unable to behave in the classroom blossomed in the outdoor learning environment and dramatically improved his behaviour. Kids also discussed the impact that violence and war has had on the bird populations, and on their habitats. During the conflict, people were often afraid to go to

place such as jungle hikes, where there may be guerilla encampments or dump sites for victims of extrajudicial killings. It is part of a reconciliation process that natural and wild sites also be places of peace and learning, and so what at first seemed to be tangential to the process of peace making actually was a time of profound learning about the impacts of war and what it takes to heal and envision a peaceful society.

There were many many more projects explained to us, and the sheer breadth of the ideas of the teachers was astonishing. I have always thought teacher autonomy to be important for quality education, and have promoted it here in BC as best practice. **But I never before thought so deeply about how individual teacher autonomy creates and maintains a peaceful and democratic society.** Working for peace through mass demonstrations, legal challenges, international appeals, diplomacy, and political pressure all are important. But in the life of one child, one class, one community, one city, a country, a lot depends upon the work of each individual teacher acting autonomously, using their education, intelligence, critical thought and care to bring about a better world.

Our colleagues in FECODE have undergone horrors over the last several decades, including over 1100 assassinations of teachers in recent years, most of whom were social leaders. This is unimaginable to most Canadian teachers; we just don’t think we will be killed for standing up and leading in our communities and schools. In the 1980s and 90s there was a killing almost every day of a union leader, and threats, attempted murder, displacement and actual assassinations are continuing and even increasing now against Colombian teachers, supposedly because of their influence on their students. I am so proud to have been a witness to these regular classroom teachers doing the work of creating a better Colombia, one student, one class, one school at a time. I congratulate them and support them.

Note: The STA is an ongoing supporter of FECODE’s “Schools Territories of Peace” project. We can be proud of the impact of the funds we send to our partner projects in Colombia and Central America – approximately \$1.50 per STA member per year.

School Climate Strikers and the Duty To Not Remain Neutral

By Violette Baillargeon, BCTF Member at Large, and Julia MacRae, 1st Vice President of the STA

On March 15th 2019, a global climate strike led by students around the world gathered more than one million strikers. Around 2200 strikes were organised across 125 countries, and in Vancouver, about 50 of our students marched onto Vancouver City Hall and met with the newly elected city Mayor, Kennedy Stewart demanding council declare a climate emergency. Since then, the determination of students around the planet, and of those in our own communities, has not abated. A series of coordinated strikes have been organized and well attended, of note Sept. 27th where over one hundred thousand shut down Cambie Street Bridge and marched to the city core. There are also many who strike every Friday, without fail, to protest government inaction in the face of what has become the most pressing social justice facing our planet and our youth today.

As a teacher, I have often asked myself, how can I best support students who are taking this courageous step and are there any professional limitations in doing so?

Well the answer to this is simple, considering it deals with such a complex subject.

In this case, supporting students who are striking for climate means taking the initial step of teaching the elements of the climate emergency in schools and the good news is, because of the work done by countless teachers before us, BC's public-school teachers retain the professional autonomy to do so, without limitations! (Thank you, union activists of the past!)

Today, our students face an impending climate catastrophe that defies all predictive models. The scientific community has reached consensus (something that is rarely achieved among scientists); human activity is the cause of global warming and the impact on the climate and the planet's inhabitants (both human and non-human) will be catastrophic. The reality is that climate change is already dramatically impacting parts of the world such as the global south and indigenous communities, leading to mass migrations,



animal extinctions, armed conflicts, fires, droughts, and food insecurity. The work of teachers then, is to begin to tell those stories, or at least to make them accessible to our students, and to help them to learn what they will need for their futures. We all need to prepare in many ways for solutions that will require massive participation.

Is it intimidating to wade into something as complex as climate change without the necessary qualifications?

Yes, absolutely, but this crisis requires all of us to ACT.

In this case, advocacy, education, and inquiry cannot be left only to those who have the scientific background to contend with it because it is not solutions that are lacking, but rather, awareness and political will. Once made aware and empowered, our students have shown they are worthy contributors to a conversation that needs to happen, and one that if ignored, stands to deliver the harshest of consequences on those very same students.

Are there supports to help teachers tackle the climate emergency in their classrooms?

Yes! The Surrey Teachers' Association's International Solidarity Committee is responding to teachers' needs in this area and has made the climate crisis the theme of its upcoming conference. On February 29th, 2020, join the Surrey teacher activists and environmentalists as they host teachers from

BC, Washington and Oregon at the 2020 Cross Border Conference – "Leaping in to Action – Teachers Rise for Climate Action" where excellent workshops will be featured to help teachers of all disciplines integrate the most important question of our times into their lessons.

One month after the first global climate strike, Vancouver City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency with a throng of students gathered outside in support. City councillor Christine Boyle, mover of the original motion, later suggested that the students had been integral to the resolution being passed. Our students are already leading this struggle, it is time we supported their efforts and used our professional autonomy for good, to both name the crisis and to advance solutions that stand to change its outcome.

Part of the response to the climate emergency requires teachers to act. Students need us to change our practice in our classrooms to be more fearless, to learn new things, and to help kids see what is in front of them clearly. Not only the entire economy and transportation system needs to be retooled to counteract climate change, also our tools, which are ideas and pedagogy, need to adapt. Join us!

Attending a Conference in “The Big Easy”

By Andrea Leeks, Teacher, Hillcrest Elementary



New Orleans is a city known for Mardi Gras, the Mississippi River, fried alligator, streetcars, jazz bands and a rich, vibrant history. It was also home to the 2018 American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference. Thanks to the STA's International Pro-D draw, I was lucky enough to have a quick, whirlwind conference experience in “The Big Easy” from November 14th-17th 2018.

As an elementary Core French teacher, being the only language teacher in a school can be an isolating working environment. Opportunities for face-to-face collaboration and resource sharing are far and few between, even more so if you're wanting to connect with someone from out of district. While there is the fabulous annual BCATML (BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages) Conference, I was wanting to attend a conference with a wider reach, giving me the chance to see how people in other area of North American teach languages in their own classrooms.

ACTFL was everything I had hoped for and more. The two-day conference was held at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Centre on the banks of the Mississippi River. To kick things off, the convention opened with a grand, Mardi Gras style parade, full of dancers, singers and a complete brass ensemble. Next up was the keynote presentation by Dan Buettner. Dan is a National Geographic Fellow, award-winning

journalist and a New York Times bestselling author. He spoke about how a high school visit to Spain and a university study abroad program helped him become bilingual and led to a lifetime of exploration. The keynote had me energized and excited for the workshops that I had ahead of me.

At the conference, I definitely had my opportunity to connect with languages teachers from across the country. With over 100 presenters and workshops, I listened to and worked with teachers from California, New York and everywhere in between. I ate lunch with a teacher from Ontario who teaches in a Mohawk-Immersion program, talked about the merits of textbooks in a language classroom with a Spanish teacher from Kentucky and brainstormed summative assessment ideas with a French teacher from Texas. There was so much to take in at this conference, but some of the things I learned about were: research-based practices on effective and actionable feedback that keeps focus on communication, using visible thinking routines as a way to introduce new concepts to students in the target language, and how to create a teaching environment where students feel a greater sense of ownership.

Beyond the content of presentations, I had open, honest conversations about the state of education in North America. Most of my

American colleagues were taken aback when they learned about how little (in comparison to their own state's) standardized testing occurs in British Columbia. I learned about education funding models that reward schools located in higher socio-economic areas and punish those in lower ones. Teachers described the pressure created by a district mandated number of required summative assessments each term. Interestingly, I learned about the opt-in/opt-out nature of some state teacher unions. It wasn't all doom and gloom though, there was much celebration for both teacher and student successes. For teachers who found new tools and resources that work for them in their own classrooms, teachers and students alike who were overjoyed to have a full-on conversation with one-another in the target language and teachers who were excited to take in and learn from the conference.

After conference hours, I spent as much time as I could exploring the French Quarter of the city. New Orleans was founded in 1718 by French colonists and was the capital of French Louisiana until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The rich history and culture of the area radiates through the local shops, restaurants and markets. I rode the historic streetcars to the French Quarter, sipping delicious café au lait and taking in the sights. Jackson Square, a historic square first built in 1721, has both Spanish and French influenced-architecture, and provides a beautiful space to sit and watch the world pass by. Just a short walk from the square is Bourbon Street, producing a cacophony of sounds from the numerous karaoke pubs, dance clubs and piano bars. I also took in as many of the local delicacies as I could: fried alligator, crawdads, shrimp po'boy, chicken and waffles, grits, beignets, pecan pie and catfish (I promise that eating wasn't the only thing I did while in town!). The ACTFL Conference could not have occurred in a more ideal setting.

I feel incredibly lucky and fortunate to have had my name drawn in the STA International Pro-D draw. I would like to thank the STA for creating this opportunity for its membership. I highly recommend that everyone put their name in the lottery and attend the Annual General Meeting on May 20, 2020 for the draw (you must be present at the time of drawing in order to win!).

Professional Development Defined



THE BCTF MEMBERS' GUIDE LANGUAGE REGARDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

30. Professional Development A. General POLICIES 30.A.01—

1. Definition of Professional Development

Professional development is a process of ongoing growth, through involvement in programs, services, and activities designed to enable teachers, both individually and collectively, to enhance professional practice.

2. Purposes of Professional Development

The purpose of professional development is to assist members in:

- a. building and strengthening themselves as a professional body.
- b. establishing and maintaining a professional relationship with students/parents.
- c. initiating curriculum and instructional reform directed to improve teaching and learning.
- d. developing, discussing, revising and applying educational theories.
- e. improving the quality of professional practice through career-long professional development.
- f. engaging in professional and collegial conversations.

(00 AGM, p. 15)
(June 06 RA, p. 8)
BCTF Members' Guide

THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT LANGUAGE REGARDING NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS (NIDS)

*F.21.1 NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

Six (6) non-instructional days and four (4) early dismissal days, as herein set out, will be included within the school year.

*F.21.2 SCHOOL NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

At least four (4) non-instructional days will be approved by the Board for school planned and teacher-directed professional development activities. Board approval will not be unreasonably withheld or denied.

*F.21.3 STA CONVENTION DAY

One (1) non-instructional day will be granted for the Surrey Teachers' Association Convention.

F.22.1

The Board and the Surrey Teachers' Association recognize the value of professional development activities to enhance curricular knowledge, to heighten instructional skills, and to broaden exposure to pedagogical theories, methods and strategies.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Teacher Driven

Professional Development is controlled by teachers. Ideally, it should be teachers teaching teachers.

2. Diverse in Form and Content

Professional Development is often collaborative. There are many ways of participating in PD. Some of the best PD activities involve networking with colleagues.

3. Autonomous Choices Made by a Teacher

Professional Development means that a teacher makes a conscious decision to participate in a particular PD activity as part of their ongoing professional growth.

HOW THE SIX NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS ARE ALLOCATED

There are four teacher-directed Professional Development days in addition to the STA Convention in May, and one Admin-directed non-instructional day.

- Four NID's can be used for teacher directed, whole school pro-d activities, or self-directed pro-d activities.
- The NID on the first Friday in May is set aside for STA Convention. STA Pro-D Funds may not be applied to any expenses incurred for alternate pro-d activities on that day.
- One day (either the first NID in September, or the last NID in May) is planned by a school's administration and all staff must attend. STA Pro-D Funds may not be applied to any expenses incurred on admin-directed days.

VALUE AND PURPOSE OF PRO-D DAYS

Professionals in most fields routinely network with fellow practitioners, conduct and review research, and talk to experts and colleagues about trends, issues, and plans for ongoing professional development. There are numerous ways to grow professionally.

As active learners, teachers use PD days to keep on top of changes that affect their work with students, such as new technology, new ideas about teaching and learning, and different community needs. PD days help keep teachers current.

Topics for PD days come from the classroom experience of learning and teaching. Teachers decide individually and collectively the issues to address. They attend workshops and conferences, participate in mentoring programs, pursue self-directed professional development, and undertake other activities designed to enhance teaching and learning. They take their new skills back to the classrooms.

In addition to PD days many teachers attend university, take evening classes and weekend workshops, read professional journals, and attend summer school. These experiences promote a culture of teaching and professional development that has teachers working together as members of a learning community, rather than in isolation.



HISTORY OF PRO-D DAYS

Professional development days represent a hard-won recognition of our needs and responsibilities as teachers. For many years, the BCTF made representations to our employers and the Ministry of Education to recognize the importance of teachers having the time and resources necessary to engage in professional development.

In 1972, PD days were added to the school calendar at the request of the teaching profession after years of advocacy from the BCTF. The inclusion increased the number of days of work for teachers with no loss of instructional days for students. PD days in the school calendar recognized that teachers needed time during the school year to hone their skills, improve practice, and stay current with changes related to teaching and learning.

During local bargaining most locals of the BCTF were successful in achieving provisions regarding PD days. In general, the contractual provisions provide for school and/or local PD committees to determine and plan the activities for PD days. A related provision of local agreements provides most local PD committees with control over the allocation of PD funding for teachers.

Want to get involved in the planning of Pro-Ds for Surrey Teachers? Check out these committees!

PRO-D COMMITTEE

Chair: Kelli O'Malley

Members: Erin Coleman, Dana Neidig, Jatinder Bir, Glynis Cawdell, Nicole Hurtubise, Anne McNamee, Melanie Miki, Jas Nagra, Dana Neidig, Velma Moore, Raman Sangha, Carolyn Sousa

The Professional Development Committee is comprised of 10 elected members who represent Surrey teachers in matters related to professional development. Its mandate is to interpret the Professional Development guidelines with issues and teacher requests regarding Professional Development funding. This committee provides Professional Development Representative training each year and coordinates Professional Development opportunities during Focus Days and the STA convention. The committee may update the Pro D funding rules periodically, and the Professional Development officer trains the Pro D reps from each school each year.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Chair: Erin Coleman

Members: Angela Marcakis, Jacquie King, Annie Ohana, Carolyn Sousa, Vanessa Broadworth, Marilyn Carr, Christy Van Ieperen, Kevin Amboe, Tiffany Gibson, Dana Neidig, Amrita Kalsi, Karen Moon, Velma Moore, Nota Spencer, Alison Leslie

The Convention Committee plans the yearly STA Convention which falls on the first Friday in May, as one of the Surrey Teachers' Pro D days, according to our contract. We plan full programs with keynote speakers and workshops for members at several different sites, hosted at Secondary schools in our district, and we plan excursions as well. The STA convention is the largest teacher-planned conference for teachers in BC. We need committee members to plan for each of our sites, Primary, Intermediate, Secondary and Aboriginal, as well as for the excursions. If you have a panache for organizing, please join us! Teachers in Surrey can be really proud that this Pro D day is our marquee event of the year, and each year it is improving. Often, we have Surrey teachers leading workshops for their colleagues, trying out their ideas and developing their leadership and presentation skills. Check out staconvention.ca!

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Chair: Julia MacRae

Members: Jacqueline Alvarado Cruz, John Ames, Lizanne Foster, Kate Henderson, Helen Kelsey-Etmanski, Karen Kim, Rick Kumar, Annie Ohana, Niovi Patsicakis, Karen Pearson, Nicole Roberts, Alvin Shum, Christie Weigel, Sandra Willing

The International Solidarity Committee identifies and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee on projects and grants for international solidarity projects. We have also developed a DVD lending library for STA members, featuring films on various social justice issues. In 2019, and 2020 we have hosted the Cross Border SJ conference for teachers in BC, WA and OR, in an effort to promote teacher-to-teacher international solidarity. We sometimes host international visitors and offer them school tours and experiences. Please see our special advocate from 2018 to find out more about our recent work.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chair: Carolyn Sousa

Members: Gavin Hainsworth, Allison Hotti, Helen Kelsey, Jacquie King, Tammy Mackie, Angela Marcakis, Phyllis Minsky, Brandon Misura, Annie Ohana

The Indigenous Education Committee recommends programs and initiatives to recruit, retain, and support Indigenous teachers. This committee also examines the conditions for Indigenous learners within our school district and recommends strategies that better support Indigenous learners in classrooms throughout the district. The Indigenous Education Committee meets regularly, sometimes twice monthly, to organize its three annual district-wide events: 1) our pro-d day events, which take place in November and May each year, where teachers come together to share in a pro-d day of Indigenous everything, from teachings, speakers, dancers, drummers, hands-on, experiential art, and traditional food; and 2) our National Indigenous Day Celebration each June. All three of these events are free to Surrey teachers.

Do You Do Great Things in Your Classroom?

The [STA Convention on May 1, 2020](http://staconvention.ca) is the largest convention put on by teachers for teachers in British Columbia. We know Surrey teachers are doing great work with their students and the website is now open for workshop proposals. If you have a great idea you would like to share with your colleagues, please submit your proposal to www.staconvention.ca.

Be Kind to your Pro-D Rep

Your school Pro-D Rep works hard for you in a number of ways and does this work in addition to their teaching work. Below is a list of the duties your Pro-D Rep has voluntarily taken on:

- Advocate for teacher professional autonomy in Pro-D
- Attend STA training (mandatory) in September
- Work with Pro-D committee in school
- Approve individual Pro-D Funding forms
- Keep track of financial allotment

It is important for teachers to keep in mind that you are responsible for keeping track of your Pro-D Funding applications, not your Pro-D Rep. You can help your rep by doing the following:

- Photocopy your approved application and give the photocopy to your rep
- Hold on to your original approved application until you have attended your event
- After you have attended the event, attach your receipt(s) to your original approved application and send it to the STA in the blue courier bag
- If you have questions or concerns about your application after you have sent it to the STA, call or email Erin Coleman, Pro-D Officer, at 604-594-5353, or pd@surreyteachers.org

Your Pro-D rep is doing the important, voluntary job of protecting your professional autonomy, working with your Pro-D committee, and keeping track of your school's Pro-D funds. Please be kind to your rep by keeping track of your own requests for Pro-D funding.

Professional Development Funding Opportunities Available to STA Members

The school district provides the STA with Professional Development Funds based on the number of FTE in the district.



INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

Each school site is given an allotment of \$97.50 per FTE in the school. The staff can then vote on how that funding will be disbursed to individual members. To access Individual Professional Development Funds, members should fill out an Individual Pro-D Funding Application and have it approved by the school's pro-d rep. Once the event has been attended, members should send the approved form, with original receipts attached, to the STA for reimbursement.

CONSOLIDATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

All STA members are entitled to apply for Consolidated Professional Development funds, including TTOCs and Full Time Table Officers. A maximum of \$450.00 will be available to members on a first come, first serve basis, for a SINGLE SPECIFIC EVENT, once every two years. Applications for Consolidated funds must be pre-approved by the STA Professional Development Officer and applicants are notified by email to let them know if their request has/has not been approved (pending availability of funds at the time).

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES FUNDING

Professional development funds may be applied to the purchase of professional resources. The resource must be related to a member's teaching area and must be used to support a specific professional development activity. In addition, it must be a professional resource as opposed to a teaching resource (which are resources that will be used directly with students, such as a book primarily composed of lesson plans, activities, or blackline masters) or a learning resource (books that students will use themselves). Applications must be pre-approved by the STA Professional Development Officer prior to the purchase of the resource.

TTOC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

A maximum of \$150 per TTOC per school year may be available. TTOC's will be treated as a "school unit" and must apply to the STA TTOC Chairperson for funding approval. To be eligible for STA Pro-D funds, TTOC's must have worked at least 20 days in Surrey in the past three months. TTOC's on indefinite or long-term assignments of more than 50% should apply first to their base school. Pro-D funds may not be used to cover the cost of lost wages while attending a Pro-D event.

SPECIAL PROJECTS PRO-D FUND

The Special Projects Pro-D Fund is a fund for small groups of teachers to access once per school year to pursue professional growth opportunities in addition to regular opportunities for STA members. Any group of 2 to 4 STA members may apply. Group members do not all have to work at the same school. A group can apply for up to \$250 times the number of members in the group. The \$250 is designed to cover one release day (TTOC cost) for a regularly scheduled work day for each member of the group, plus any necessary resource for the experience to be carried out. For example, if a book needs to be purchased for the group members, this could be covered from the fund. Possible professional development opportunities for the use of the fund include reciprocal teaching opportunities; sharing/collaboration for instructional practices, management techniques, or intellectual connections; or a book study pertinent to the teaching experiences of the group.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING DRAW

All STA voting members are entitled to apply, including Full Time Table Officers. Successful applicants may reapply after four years – all others may apply annually. Each year, four grants of up to \$2500 of Pro-D funds will be awarded. To be considered, completed application forms and accompanying documentation must be received by the STA office before 4:30 pm on the first school day in May. Names will be drawn from eligible applicants at the end of May Annual General Meeting.

For more information, check out STA Pro-D Forms at www.surreyteachers.org/forms-resources/forms/

How to Think Outside the Box for Professional Development Opportunities

AN A-Z LIST

A

Activate your membership in your local association – join a committee!

B

Be a sponsor teacher for a student teacher.

C

Consider becoming a BCTF workshop facilitator, and give a workshop locally, regionally, or provincially.

D

Develop innovative programs for use in your classroom.

E

Explore ways to Job-shadow in a related work situation.

F

Form/join a teacher research group.

G

Generate an annual personal PD plan, and maintain a PD portfolio.

H

Have a hand in an inquiry project with colleagues.

I

Investigate new resources.

J

Join a professional organization/network: Provincial specialist association (32 within the BCTF); Local specialist association/Local Chapter of a PSA; International network (ASCD, MSCD).

K

Knowledge-share with colleagues what you found at a conference/workshop.

L

Lend a hand to help keep your local's PD committee.

M

Mentor a beginning teacher.

N

Notice new ideas in professional literature.

O

Observe another teacher, and talk together about the lesson/program.

P

Participate in curriculum development.

Q

Question an expert.

R

Reflect, discuss, and research for the purpose of planning individual or group ongoing professional development.

S

Serve as your school's PD representative.

T

Translate something learned from a professional video to your own classroom practice!

U

Undertake discipline of reflective journal keeping.

V

Revive your goals, continue taking university courses.

W

Work on a provincial committee.

X

Examine the new curriculum, implement bit by bit!

Y

You can make a field trip to another school or district.

Z

Zoom in on a lesson through mutual peercoaching with a colleague.



SAVE
THE
DATE

STA CONVENTION

MAY 1, 2020

Keynote Speaker: Ryan McMahon

Digital Media Maker & Community Activator

Ryan McMahon is an Anishinaabe comedian, writer, media maker and community activator from Couchiching First Nation in Treaty 3 Territory. As the founder & CEO of Makoons Media Group, Ryan brings indigenous stories to light through conversations, research & investigation. He provides audiences with an in-depth, challenging analysis of the indigenous experience & the reconciliation movement. Ryan inspires audiences to play their part in building a more equitable country.