



STA Connection April 6-9, 2020

Annual General Meeting Call for Nominations

We are in the process of determining the timing and format of our STA Annual General Meeting in light of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. We will provide more details once we have completed our planning.

Attached is a call for nominations for all the positions that will be up for election at the AGM. If you are interested in running for a position (whether as a full-time table officer working in the STA office, as a member of the Executive Committee, or as a member of the Resolutions Committee), please review the attached "Call for Nominations" document. If you are considering whether you would like to run for a position, or are curious to know more, please contact Matt Westphal at pres@surreyteachers.org. If you wish to provide a candidate statement (for Executive Committee and Resolutions Committee) to be distributed to the membership before the AGM, **please submit it to the STA office by April 30, 2020, via email to sta@surreyteachers.org or via fax to 604-594-5176**. The maximum length for candidate statements is 600 words.

Time to Prepare for Transfer Rounds!

We have reached an agreement with the District to [adjust the transfer round timelines](#) slightly, as seen in the attached document. **If you are a teacher with a continuing contract, you are eligible to apply for positions in Rounds 1 and 2.**

Last year, the STA filed a number of grievances related to the transfer rounds. In our discussions with Human Resources and school principals, we got some insight into the inner workings of the process.

There are three parts to the transfer process. The first is the online application. Apply for postings using Employee Self Serve. The first page includes your personal information. The Collective Agreement requires that principals shortlist candidates for positions by seniority, provided they have the necessary qualifications. **Make sure the personal information page of Employee Self Serve makes it clear how you are qualified for the position for which you are applying.** You have the option on this page to indicate whether or not you agree to have your current principal or vice-principal contacted for a reference. We have been assured by Human Resources that if you select “No” to having current admin contacted, they will not be. However, you will need to provide the names and contact information for two people, usually administrators, who have recently seen you teach.

The other two parts to the transfer process are the interview and a reference check. The STA's position is that the interview should come first, followed by the reference check. The district does not agree.

The interview is perhaps the most important part of the process. The Collective Agreement states: “The Board will appoint the most senior applicant possessing the necessary qualifications except where it can be demonstrated that a less senior candidate is more suitable.” Most principals use the interview to determine suitability. **Principals indicated to us that, rather than hearing theoretical or general responses to questions, they are interested in hearing about real examples of what is happening in teachers’ classes.** Prior to the interview, read the School Profile in the posting and be ready to indicate how your practice will fit into the culture of the school. Use the interview to help the principal to understand how you will be an asset to the school. You should also use the interview to decide whether you think the position would be a good fit for you.

Principals almost always contact someone for a reference check. Regardless of whether or not you agree to your current administrator providing the reference, or if you choose someone else, talk to your references prior to the deadline for submitting applications. Ask the references to tell you what they will say and take notes of what they tell you. Do not assume that because you get along well with your principal, or that they have never expressed any criticism of you, they will give you a positive reference. In several of last year’s grievances, teachers were shocked to learn that their principal had provided a negative reference.

The transfer process is stressful for many members. Being prepared may help alleviate some of the stress and will ensure that you can present yourself as strongly as possible to principals.

Supporting the K-12 Education Response to COVID-19 Framework Summary

The Ministry of Education prepared a [framework document](#) for how learning is to continue while students are not physically in school. As that document is 45 pages long, the BCTF has prepared a summary (attached to this email), which we hope teachers will find helpful.

Remote Emergency Learning

Here at the STA we know teachers are embracing the work of providing remote emergency learning opportunities as well as we can. Some are able to translate much of what their regular classroom consists of into a remote format, whether that consists of on line or other methods. Others are finding that simply doesn’t make sense, based on their students or their class content, grade level or other factors. What we and the district firmly agree upon is that we all need to slow down and make sure we are showing with our practice that we know these are unusual times, and things are not “school as usual.”

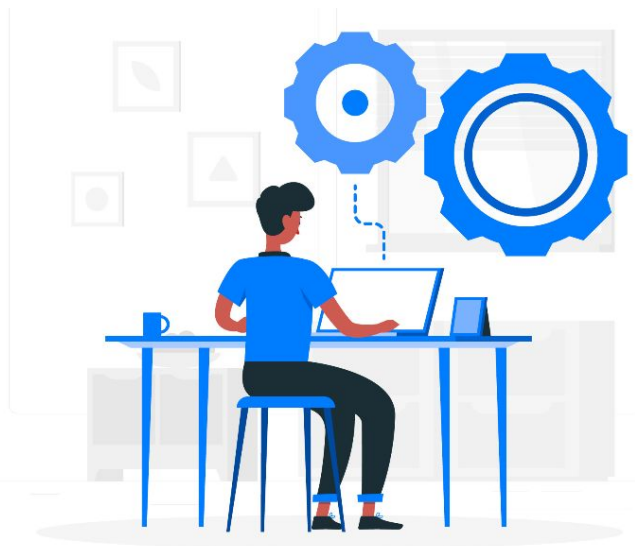
At this point, elementary teachers have likely made contact with your students and their families, and provided a couple of basic literacy and numeracy learning opportunities for students to try. During the past week, you probably discovered that some of your students do not have access to devices or internet service and that some have not engaged in the learning opportunity you provided. Now, as teachers continue to provide some more learning opportunities, in week two, many of us are already thinking ahead about how to assess and evaluate our students' learning and how we will tackle report-cards in June. Here are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, please consider that the students you are working with have widely varying access to technology and adult support at this time. Please think about families' individual and changing circumstances, and how these factors may impact the ability of your student to attempt or complete the assignment you have provided. Try to embrace the mindset that we are all doing the best that we can right now, and that includes the kids and the parents.

In the same way, Secondary teachers are reaching out to students, and we have heard the response from kids and parents is mixed. Some are champing at the bit for entire on-line courses, others are (apparently still in the stable or out in a field somewhere, to extend the metaphor) not responding at all to your outreach to them. This can be frustrating, or add to stress, but again, we need to remember the circumstances are highly unusual and families and kids respond in different ways to change and or stress. Some of this pressure and stress is also produced internally in us; we want to soldier on and complete our work in as normal a way as possible! But we need to go slow. I'm sure many of you have read on line this week a wise person who points out that evaluation at this time is really only evaluation of privilege. As in Elementary, the most important thing is to reach out to students to show that they matter to us and there is hope for the future. Quite possibly this is the time for more creativity and openness in our teaching, where some of our content may need to be discarded in favour of somehow responding to this historic moment we are all living in.

Many secondary teachers are wondering about April reports. Discussions are taking place at both the local and provincial level about what, if any, secondary reports will be provided before June. We know this issue is very important to teachers, and will provide more information on this issue as soon as we have it.

We need to be mindful that there may be trauma in our community from deaths and illness associated with CoVid19, and fear of the virus is felt by many people. We need to attend to the needs of our individual students, and to slow ourselves down. Everything seems to take longer than what we are used to in the classroom, and that is expected. Teachers are doing the work, and it matters.

Questions from Employer about “Working Alone”



You may receive questions from your administrator about whether you work alone, and your work environment at home. The purpose of such questions is to meet the employer's WorkSafeBC obligations, and **not** as any sort of accountability measure to monitor what work you are doing. If you have concerns about any questions you receive, please contact Dana Neidig at hs@surreyteachers.org.

Professional Development Applications

With school closures resulting in limited access to district mail, we will be accepting professional development application via email. Applications are available on our website's [forms page](#). Please ensure that your application is complete and the all receipts are clearly legible and include name of vendor, date and amount.

You can email your completed application to Donna Stewart at accounting@surreyteachers.org. If you have questions regarding Pro D, please email Erin Coleman at pd@surreyteachers.org. Please note that, due to social distancing, we will not be accepting applications in person at the STA office.

STA Convention



The May 1st STA Convention will be going ahead in an on-line format. Registration is temporarily on hold while we work out the details. You can pre-register on the STA Convention website in order to receive notification once registration opens. If you are a presenter, please check your email for a brief survey that will help us with our planning. Please watch the [STA Convention website](#) for updates. The committee can be contacted by email at convention@surreyteachers.org.

The Advocate: Teacher Autonomy and Professional Development

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!



We are so proud to be Surrey Teachers and we know there are amazing things happening around the district that we would love to hear about. In the spirit of acts of kindness, we would love for our members to send us a “shout out” about a colleague who inspires you and who you think deserves recognition, whether it is for their kindness, a great resource they shared recently, or an awesome lesson they teach.

This week’s shout out goes to Jeanette Mclean from Jennifer Crosson:

“Just wanted to give a shout out to Jeanette Mclean, teacher librarian at Frank Hurt Secondary...Jeanette is an invaluable resource to all our students, staff, parents and community. Her tireless efforts as a STA Rep and keeping us informed as well as being a front runner in not only supporting all her colleagues with teaching resources throughout the year but especially this week has been much appreciated. Thank you Jeanette....”

Thank you Jennifer, you and Jeanette are now entered into our monthly draw for a \$25 Indigo! gift certificate. Please submit your “shout outs” to Angela via communications@surreyteachers.org to spread the kindness around our local and for your chance to win a gift card too!