

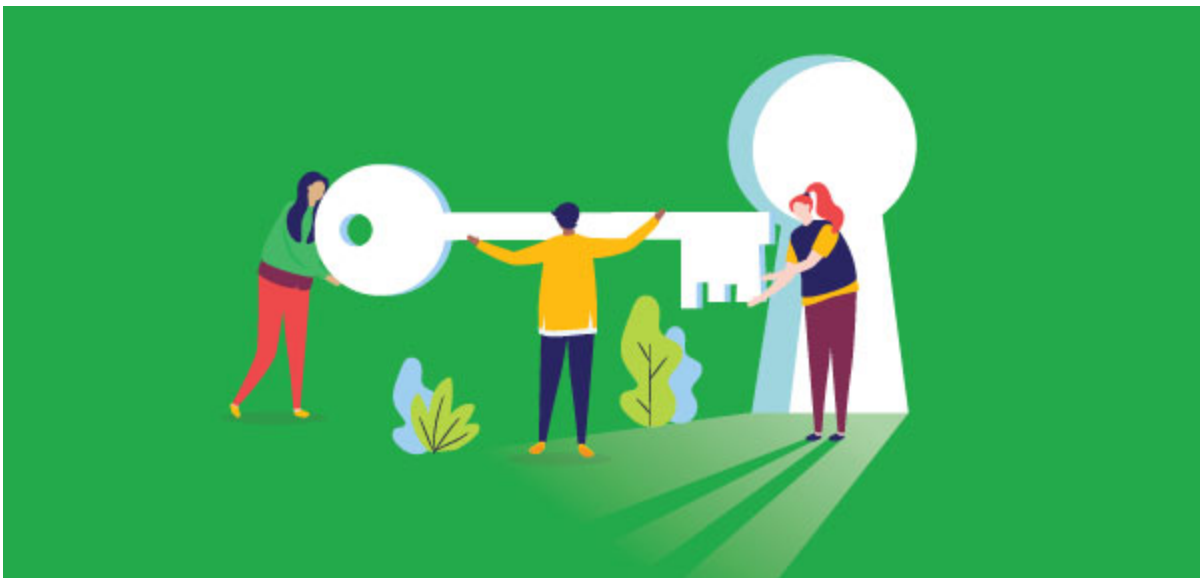


STA Connection September 14-18, 2020

As we approach the second week of September we are hearing of many issues relating to Covid around the district, including reports of exposure in nine of our schools. It is perhaps not surprising, considering the rate of disease in Fraser Health, but upsetting nonetheless. Please take precautions with your own health; try not to mingle closely with other staff members as much as possible.

There are just so many changes to our regular work and so many adjustments to guidance on the daily, it is frustrating to try to keep up. Remember we have our site based staff reps, our health and safety committees and health and safety reps, and our staff committees in each work site who are hard-working volunteers helping make this year as safe, fair, and workable as possible. If you have a concern or request about health or safety, make sure you email your concern or request to your principal, and cc your H&S rep, as a “paper” trail is important.

Change to Staff Rep Training!



The dates for the staff rep training may change. We are working on adjusting the schedule to permit full-day sessions, instead of half days. Registration is currently on hold, but stay tuned for more information!

Provincial Update

The BCTF continues to push the provincial government on issues such as reducing classroom density to permit physical distancing, having a stronger mask mandate, and improving the health and safety protocols.

The BCTF has applied to the Labour Relations Board under section 88 of the Labour Relations Code to address our concerns as quickly as possible. You should have received an email from the BCTF Thursday, and President Teri Mooring will be discussing it with the media Friday. You can review the application on the [BCTF member portal](#). Once you log in, just click the COVID-19 tab on the menu bar. If you are already logged in, you can access the page directly at <https://members.bctf.ca/content/187/covid19.aspx>.

Our advocacy with the district

We have been doing our best to bring many concerns forward to district level meetings, with Human Resources or the Superintendents. We have been in contact with our trustees. There are ongoing concerns in various areas and some issues have been resolved.

TTOC dispatch system

It was brought to our attention that there were some changes made to TTOC dispatch, including limiting the ability to request a certain TTOC within 24 hours of the dispatch time and that dispatches couldn't be cancelled online. We asked about it and found out that on the 15th of September these changes were reversed, and the system now should be working as it did before. Please let us know if it doesn't.

TTOC Access to Sick Days

The STA reached an agreement with the employer that will make it easier for TTOCs to get access to sick days if they are not well enough to work on the day of a dispatch. Please see the attached agreement.

Using Sick days for Covid isolation

Our position is that people who are required to isolate because of Covid exposure should have a paid leave, and not use sick days or lose wages if they have no sick days. Two other school districts are doing so. We do not yet have a clear answer on this matter despite repeated inquiries and applying pressure in various meetings, but have been told that a decision will be made soon.

Blended model FAQs

Should a blended learning teacher be pulled from their teaching duties to provide coverage in the case of failure to fill? We pursued that question, and the district agrees with us, that NO, a blended learning teacher is teaching during instructional time, and so can't be pulled for failure to fill except in case of emergency. Like other teachers, however, they could be pulled to cover failures to fill during their scheduled prep time, which can be paid back. Apparently, erroneous information was shared with principals and has now been corrected.

Can new students be added to a Blended learning class or switch to face to face at this point? The HR department tells us that the deadline for parents choosing Blended learning was Sept 8th at 4 pm, after which time any requests would be placed on a waitlist. The deadline for returning to Face to Face was Sept 10th at the end of the school day. After those deadlines there should be no switching.

Don't class size and composition limits apply in blended learning? It is our position that Class Size and Composition and remedy contract language applies to the blended learning classes. The District disagrees, saying the blended classes are distributed learning, so that class size and composition limits don't apply. We will be pursuing a grievance on this matter. The District has instructed principals to organize blended classes without composition limits, but close to what the contractual size limits would be (with some exceptions). See the image below. Please note that this is not something that the STA agreed to, but it is what the employer is doing.

Superintendent Approved Guidelines

- Multi Age Class including Kindergarten – 20^x
- Multi Age Primary (no Kindergarten) – 22^x
- Multi Age Intermediate – 26^x
- Multi Age Primary and Intermediate (no Kindergarten) – 25

^x - When low incidence and/or high incidence (Severe Behaviour) students with special needs are enrolled, that class will be smaller (-1)

My Grade 8 and 9 classes are really big! How is this possible? We are also hearing that some secondary (Gr. 8 & 9) remote transition classes are very large (48 and 50 are two examples we have heard, from Princess Margaret and North Surrey, respectively). Groups that size raise serious workload concerns. Please provide other examples (indicating the school) by emailing us at the STA.

Duty Free Lunch

We have a duty free lunch as a right. Some principals have been asking teachers to supervise students eating lunch, but that is a violation of our contract. The STA's position is that lunch breaks should be at least 45 minutes long. Some schools have creatively added eating time to instructional time, where a story could be read or some other instructional activity, while the kids eat. Then the lunch break can still be supervision free. The need for students to wash hands is not a reason to shorten the lunch break, because they can do it during instructional time.

If your school has a lunch break of less than 45 minutes, whether by shortening it outright or by requiring supervision during part of the 45 minutes, please contact Mark Keelan at grieve2@surreyteachers.org including anything you have in writing from your administration. (Note: we are already working on the situation at Kwantlen Park.)

Health and Safety



Have your meetings virtually!

The Health and Safety Guidelines say that unless it is not possible to do so, **meetings should be virtual**. This includes staff meetings, committee meetings, and all other meetings, even when physical distancing is possible. Please be careful when eating as well.

TTOC masks

The District has directed that TTOCs are to get masks from the first site they attend. You or the school are asked to contact HRES-Safety through district mail if there are concerns.

Plexiglas

The District has asked those that feel they need plexiglas to contact Nancy Johnston in District Facilities. The STA is seeking to have plexiglas automatically approved for those teachers working within 1m on a regular basis. We will keep you informed of any changes in the policy.

Returning to Work Form

You have been asked to sign off on an online form “Returning to Work for Stage 2 (September 2020)” that includes links to many documents. We have contacted the district about this form and they have confirmed that a teacher is not agreeing to anything by signing off on the form, merely acknowledging that that they have received and read the documents. As a result, our advice is that teachers can sign off on the form.

What are the health and safety requirements for Staff Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities where Physical Contact may be Required?

Supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student. When staff are in close physical proximity with a student within their learning group, personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting). Non-medical masks are required in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group. As such, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield)

Exceptions will be made for staff who cannot wear masks for medical and/or disability-related reasons. Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff. Wearing a non-medical mask, a face covering, or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools outside of the circumstances outlined above is a personal choice and will be respected. For more information, see the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) section.

There is a BCTF Health and Safety Handbook available to all teachers on the Members' Portal.
<http://file:///C:/Users/julia.macrae/Downloads/2020%20BCTF%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Handbook.pdf>

Staff Committee should be up and running

By Sept 30th, according to our collective agreement, staff committees should be established by being elected at a staff meeting. This year there are so many potential issues arising from changes and adjustments to normal procedures that we hope all staff committees are already formed. Please find attached to this email our Staff Committee handbook which goes over the role and function of staff committees so that all STA members can be aware of this valuable opportunity we all have for answering questions about school admin decisions, making helpful suggestions, and finding solutions that improve our schools. If you are a new or veteran staff committee chair, we will be hosting virtual staff committee chair training sessions coming up. Look for an announcement next week. Any urgent questions please feel welcome to contact Julia MacRae at 1vp@surreyteachers.org.

First STARA (STA Representative Assembly) via Zoom



All teachers are welcome to attend any STA committee meetings, including the STARA, and Reps, Committee chairs, and Executive members are particularly invited. Information has been sent to Reps this week. If you would like to attend please register by 2 pm on Sept 23rd via this [link](#).

Registration for the Pro-D Rep Training for the 2020-21 Year is now open



We will be holding am and pm ½ day virtual training sessions for our already experienced reps from September 21st to September 24th and full day of virtual training for our Rookie Reps on October 14th, 2020.

Experienced Pro-D Reps: <https://pd-sept2020.eventbrite.ca>

Rookie Pro-D Reps: <https://rookiepd-oct2020.eventbrite.ca>

PLEASE NOTE: Pro-D Funds will only be released to your school once you have attended a Pro-D training session. Space is limited so we can only accommodate one Pro-D rep from each school.

Bandwidth to do our work!

Do you and your students have access to the consistent internet connection and high bandwidth at school that online learning requires?

The District has told us that the school district networks were upgraded recently and should be robust enough for your needs. We want to hear from you - do you have any specific concerns about inadequate internet connection and bandwidth at your schools? If so, please notify Jatinder Bir at 2vp@surreyteachers.org, so that she can relay the concerns to management.

Lobbying with Politicians

This week we met with all six of the Surrey NDP MLAs: Hon. Bruce Ralston, Hon. Harry Bains, Jinny Sims, Rachna Singh, Jagrup Brar and Garry Begg to bring up various concerns about the school reopening plan. We know they know what happens in schools can affect them politically, and they are curious about teachers' concerns. One issue for teachers is density; it is obvious that being in a small room all day with large numbers of people and being unable to physically distance is a risk for Covid transmission. We particularly raised the issue of the federal money that is flowing to Surrey for Covid

impacting education, and asked them to pay attention to where that money is being used. If class sizes are huge, then where is this money being used for staffing? Where is this money being used to provide plexiglas barriers for counsellors, librarians, and other members who must interact far beyond a small cohort? Lobbying will continue!