



STA Connection October 5-9, 2020

Covid concerns and teacher stress

We know the number of exposure notifications in our schools is alarming to many members. Thanks to all the health and safety committees, staff reps and staff committees who have been diligently working to bring issues of concern to us and to the administration in your schools. There has never been a time when the work of these amazing volunteers has been more important! Please continue to reach out to each other and to us for support.

Rosemary Heights Cohort isolation

After multiple notices of exposure at Rosemary Heights Elementary, Fraser Health ordered an entire division to self-isolate. This is the first such order in Surrey.

In that situation, the students would receive remote support during the period of self-isolation. If the classroom teacher is well enough to work, they can provide remote instruction. If they are not well, they would be on sick leave (and would have filed a WorkSafe claim if they are positive for Covid), and another teacher would provide the remote instruction. That could be a TTOC, but we have also reminded the employer that there are teachers who were denied accommodations to work remotely who could be doing that work. We have also emphasized the need for the district to provide support to teachers who have to rapidly transition to remote instruction, and to ensure that parents have realistic expectations about how seamless that transition will be.

Virtual Town Hall for the election

Education Issues Townhall

October 14
at 7 pm



Your STA Public Relations and Political Action (PAPR) Committee is hosting an Election Town Hall for provincial election candidates on **Wednesday October 14th at 7:00pm via Zoom**. We hope that this will provide an opportunity for members to learn about the stance of various parties related to education. There will be one or two representatives attending from each of the major parties (NDP, Liberals, and Greens), rather than a huge line up of candidates to consider. Candidates will be given an opportunity to explain their party's stance on various issues related to education, followed by questions from attendees. The event will be moderated by our STA leadership. Members are invited to send questions in advance to Amrit Sanghe by Oct 13th, 4 pm at sanghe_a@surreyschools.ca. Questioners are encouraged to focus on education issues, and questions may be consolidated if similar or recurrent themes emerge. The Zoom link to participate is https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cqHacGRaTbqdtUWA4_wW7g. We look forward to seeing you there.

Notification of STA Special General Meeting Oct 21

We will be holding an SGM Oct 21st via [Zoom](#), just before the regular STARA meeting. We will be electing delegates to the BC Fed Convention; see below for details. We will have the agenda out soon, and it will also be posted on our website.

BC Fed convention

We will be sending as many delegates as possible (max 29) to this year's BCFED convention on November 25th and 26th. At the suggestion of the STA Young Workers' Committee, the Executive Committee has decided that four of these spots will be designated for members aged 35 or younger. Please submit your name and a brief (100 words or less) write up if desired to sta@surreyteachers.org by Oct 16th. If you are 35 or younger, please indicate that when you submit your name. We will be electing our delegates at the SGM on October 21st, 2020.

Virtual School visits

The STA table officers have done hundreds of school visits in the last 3 years as a result of our push to be more accessible to members and to provide direct service, as well as to get to know our members and schools better. Now the pandemic has thwarted this campaign! We are keen to do school visits virtually, at the request of school staffs. Staff Reps, if you would like to arrange a virtual school visit, please contact repsupport@surreyteachers.org. We could be added to your school teams temporarily to be able to provide a virtual visit that way, or we could provide an STA Zoom link. Thanks in advance for organizing!

Orange Shirt day widely celebrated in Surrey

Congratulations to the many many schools who were able to celebrate Orange Shirt Day. Kudos to Creekside for sharing their photo.



If your staff have great photos to share, please send them to sta@surreyteachers.org.

Health and Safety



Fraser Health Contact Tracing

The STA continues to advocate for teachers to be regularly included in contact tracing when there is an exposure in their classroom. Students, particularly young students, will have difficulty remembering their contacts throughout the day of the exposure. A classroom teacher could greatly assist in strengthening contact tracing. Teachers have access to a great deal of private information of students and can be trusted to be included in this process and respect privacy.

We understand that Jordan Tinney will be recording a video Q&A with Fraser Health. We look forward to more clarification of the contact tracing procedures. We are also requesting a meeting with Fraser Health, along with other BCTF locals in the health region.

Teachers visiting multiple sites (such as TTOCs, Speech and Language Teachers, etc.) should make a daily check of the Fraser Health posting of school exposures to see if they were present at a school for an exposure. Although we have made clear to the District that we expect that all such employees will be informed of exposures, this is an additional safeguard you can put in place for yourself. Here is the link:

<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/schoolexposures#.X3yZnmhKg2w>

Safety Plan

TTOCs and EAs need to have access to a safety plan for a student in a classroom they are working with. Please make sure to put a copy of the safety plan in the TTOC and replacement EA folders.

Fogging

At the present time, portables are being disinfected by hand, not with the fogging machine, as the machine is too heavy to lift safely into the portables. The District is purchasing smaller sprayers to allow custodians to fog the portables in the near future.

If your classroom is not being cleaned properly, inform your administration. Keep track of the occurrences and address it with the Joint Health and Safety Committee at your school. Areas not being cleaned properly is simply not acceptable and holes in the cleaning routines must be fixed.

Plexiglass barriers

We understand that some teachers are still waiting for approval of their application for plexiglass, while others have been approved but are waiting for the plexiglass. Ask your principal to contact Nancy Johnston in District Facilities to determine a timeline for when you can expect the plexiglass.

Waiting Area

A reminder to all schools that there should be a pre-determined area where students who have covid symptoms (cough, nausea, etc.) wait to be picked up that is separated from others. School Health and Safety Committees should ensure that such an area have been designated so they are prepared for a situation where a parent is not able to come immediately.

Flu Shots

To avoid large gatherings the district is not having clinics at schools giving shots this year. Instead people

are asked to go to clinics/health units. The District is waiting for a list of who will be providing the shot and will put that in the weekly memo soon. There is a long list of people who get the shot for free. For Surrey Teachers, the Pharmasave, Surrey Centre Location will do the shot for free.

Footwear

Slip and falls are a large percentage of injuries at schools. A reminder to wear appropriate footwear: flip-flops and very high heels have been determined to not be acceptable. Here is a link with more information:

https://www.surreyschools.ca/ProgramsAndServices/HESA/safety_work/Classroom_Safety/Documents/Safety%20Talk%20-%20footwear.pdf

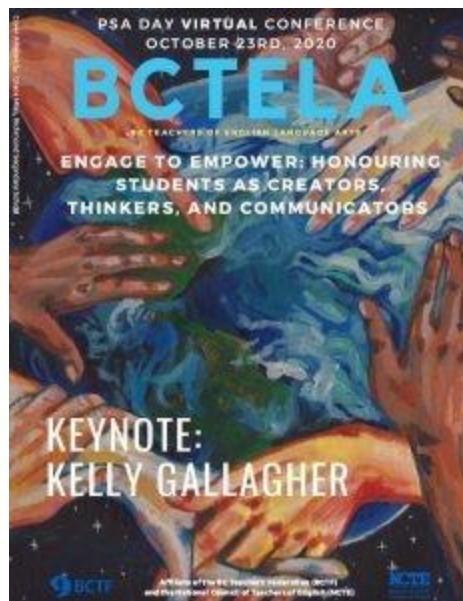
Room Inspections

Health and Safety Committee member are beginning classroom inspections. We've always argued that it made the most sense to do the inspection during instruction to get a true picture of the health and safety needs of the classroom. Some joint health and safety committee members were able to get coverage for this duty. However, it may be a better idea in light of this pandemic to ask each teacher to flag concerns with their classroom on the different areas of the inspection form, i.e. electrical, flooring, windows, ceiling, etc. The H&S committee member can come into the room when there are no students (after school?) and gather more details on the issues.

TTOCs

TTOCs: Following B.2.8.b. of our collective agreement, all information which is available about the nature of assignments will be provided to Teachers Teaching On Call when they are called by the dispatch centre. Where a Teacher Teaching On Call has reasonable cause to do so, a callout may be declined.

BC Teachers of English Language Arts Conference



Engage to Empower: Honouring Students as Creators, Thinkers, & Communicators

October 23, 2020

Join us for a wonderful K-12 conference! Keynote Kelly Gallagher is a renowned teacher and writer with deep insight on the reading and writing habits of students. Plus educators from across British Columbia—including Faye Brownlie, Jo Chrona, Shelley Moore, Leyton Schnellert, Amrita Kalsi, James Kim, Roxanne

Pope, and others—will share their teaching practice and energize your thinking about assessment, literacy, Reconciliation, identity, the classics, and more! <https://bctela.ca/conferences/>

Can you use Teams for assessment and reporting?

With more teachers using Teams this year, some are asking questions about whether we can use it for assessment and reporting. The district has offered workshops on using Teams for files and providing evidence of student learning.

Each year we can have three meetings with the District to discuss the reporting tools supported by the District. For elementary, currently FreshGrade and Communicating Student Learning (CSL) templates are supported. If you are interested in using Teams for assessment and reporting and have any comments or suggestions before we meet with the District, please send them to services@surreyteachers.org by October 12 and we will discuss possibilities with the District. In the meantime, please do not assume that you can use Teams for reporting.

Non-Enrolling Teachers - Are you taking your prep?

Remember that all elementary members are entitled to 110 minutes, and secondary members have one block out of eight (12.5%) over the course of the year as prep. Most non-enrolling teachers don't require a person to cover for them while they take their prep. However, we advise that you schedule and use your prep.

Scheduling your prep gives two specific advantages

1. Looking forward to down time, where you can intentionally plan instead of being reactive to school needs is a step for self-care.
2. If you are asked to cover Fail to Fill during your prep you can say you are on your prep and that the prep time is owed back to you.

Call for Resolutions to the BCTF AGM

As you may know, BCTF policy is ultimately created by its members through the AGM, so locals are encouraged to submit resolutions.

If any policy adopted through a resolution were traced back to its source, its origin would probably be in the mind of an individual member, who concluded, as a result of experience or of reflection on problems confronting members, that BCTF policy was lacking or deficient on a particular issue. Every individual member can therefore initiate policy. In other words, if you have a good idea for the BCTF, this is your opportunity to put it forward.

Please submit your idea by October 16 using our [resolution form](#) to the STA office at courier #000, or fax: 604-594-5176, attention: Resolutions Committee.

You can also send ideas by email to Jatinder Bir at 2vp@surreyteachers.org

Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

The Status of Women Committee will be continuing our Wellness Project for STA members this year (**open to all members, all genders**). While it is not possible to hold the wellness events we held in the past with large groups, we believe wellness is more important than ever and would like to do something to help. Please take this short survey to help us establish how best to meet your needs to stay mentally and physically well: <http://bit.ly/wellnessproject2020>

This week is **Mental Illness Awareness Week**, and our committee's tip of the week is to check out **Lifeworks**, our new District Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provider. Lifeworks has launched a new microsite called **Depression and the Pandemic: A Deep Dive**. <https://www.lifeworks.com/ca/newsletter-content/depression-and-pandemic/>

Through articles, an infographic and a video, the microsite will explore:

- The relationship between COVID-19 and depression
- How to deal with financial insecurity and debt stress
- How physical activity can help with depression during the pandemic
- Facing loneliness during the pandemic.

You can also call your EFAP provider toll-free, any time, 24/7, 365 days a year at **1-888-625-1136**. Alternatively, you can **download the Lifeworks app** or access Lifeworks online at <https://sd36.lifeworks.com>, using your Surrey Schools username & password to login.

Social Justice Grants available to teachers

You may not know that there are grants available to teachers doing projects in their schools. The Local Social Justice grant offers teachers up to \$2000! Here are some details:

- for a group of schools or teachers within a local
- the project aims to affect change within the local or sublocal and has a wider impact than the Ed May Social Responsibility Education Grant

Previous projects have included:

- improving student mental health
- community gardening
- increasing inclusive education for LGBTQ+ students

Deadline: October 15, 2020

(unallocated funds will be available until April 9, 2021)

Further information about the grants, including past recipients, can be found at <https://bctf.ca/SocialJusticeGrants.aspx>.