



STA Connection October 13-16, 2020

Provincial Election coming up!



This week the STA PAPER (Political Action Public Relations) Committee hosted a virtual town hall on education issues, which was organized to invite representatives from the three main parties to present their ideas on education. Unfortunately, even though we had invited and confirmed their attendance, no representatives from the BC Liberals appeared. NDP and Green candidates from different Surrey ridings let us know their answers to a series of questions. You may view the whole event below that we recorded on zoom or by visiting our website. Please see attached a grid that shows the education promises we

gleaned from looking at the party websites. And remember to vote, Election day is October 24th, and advance polls are now open.



Here is the recording of our zoom townhall, we hope members will watch what we proposed and how politicians responded to our questions.

Please meet virtually

The 50+ Covid 19 exposures in Surrey schools are alarming to all of us and we want to emphasize that it is also up to us to change our behaviours at work. For example, if your staff can meet virtually, no matter the size of the meeting, do so. This includes Staff Committee, SBT, department meetings etc. If you normally go to the photocopy room or mail room several times in a day, try to do that once, instead. If you normally would eat with colleagues at lunch hour, eat alone. Yes, it seems somehow negative to isolate ourselves as much as possible during our workday, but it is important that we adults take intentional steps to make sure physical distancing is adhered to. Also, please be sure to sign in if you attend any district facility or school. If you are a TTOC, itinerant teacher, doing your work as an SLP or helping teacher, or dropping off a resource, or meeting a colleague, insist upon signing in! At the STA building we have implemented office building Covid measures, such as eating alone in our offices, entering through specific doors/ stairwells and doing all our meetings remotely, including between table officers. Please think about how your personal habits need to change to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

Federal benefits relating to Covid

There have been changes to EI, and new federal benefits have been introduced, to address interruptions on work related to Covid. Although the union continues to press the provincial government for a Covid-specific leave, in the meantime there are benefits that can provide income support in various situations:

1) *If you must self-isolate, whether you are ill or not*

- If you do not have sick days, apply for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit, which pays \$500 per week for two weeks
- It can only be claimed once in a 52-week period. So if you are required to self-isolate twice, you cannot claim this benefit for more than the total two weeks. But you would still be eligible for the Canada Recovery Benefit.
- If you test positive for Covid-19 and it is connected to an exposure at work, you need to file a WorkSafeBC claim.

2) *If you applied for an accommodation to work remotely from home, were denied, and are currently on an unpaid leave*

- You should qualify for the Canada Recovery Benefit, which pays \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks

3) *If your child is ill with Covid or required to self-isolate and you cannot work because you need to care for them*

- Apply for the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit, which pays \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks.

For more details, please see the attached document summarizing these benefits. **Please note that if you get any of these benefits, income tax will not be deducted at your full rate, so you can expect to owe further income tax on them at tax time.

Notification of TTOC transfer deadline Nov 15

Adding TTOC Experience to Contract

Since September 2014, TTOCs who get a contract and have TTOC days accumulated are able to add the TTOC days to their contract experience in order to go up the salary grid. The TTOC days are divided by 17. Each 17 days equal one month. 170 days are needed for an increase. For a transfer of TTOC experience to be effective December 31, teachers must apply to the payroll department in writing by November 15. And for an increase to be effective September 01, the deadline is June 30.

Sick Leave Bank

TTOCs in Surrey who have worked for more than 20 days earn sick day credits for each day worked. They get approximately 1 sick day per every 13 days worked. When TTOCs get continuing contracts their TTOC sick bank should be transferred by the Employer to their contract sick leave bank. If you are TTOC who has just gotten a continuing contract, please check your pay stub to make sure that your TTOC sick bank has been transferred. Also, if know a teacher who has just gotten their first continuing contract, please make sure to share this information with them.

Reminder of STA Special General Meeting Oct 21

Oct 21 is a Special General Meeting for the purpose of electing our delegates to the BC Fed Convention. (see below) It will take place just before our regular STA Rep Assembly (STARA) meeting. Here is the zoom link to the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rlrwCcSuTP-Jf2hR_fx8fA

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. We will be electing our delegates at the SGM on October 21st, 2020, and you can run from the floor or send in your name to sta@surreyteachers.org.

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. Reps, thanks in advance for organizing!

Thinking of taking a leave?

Please contact us at the STA to advise you, as sometimes members are unaware that taking an unpaid leave may affect your pension, moving up the salary scale, benefits etc. Remember, leaves are outlined in the G section of our collective agreement, which is available on our website, here:

<https://www.surreyteachers.org/forms-resources/collective-agreement/>

Survey for Class Size / composition

When we won back our Class Size and Composition language, that was a huge victory to RESTORE our previous collective bargaining. In the last round, we did attempt to make improvements but were unsuccessful. We have also tried to ensure that distributed learning had clear class size and composition rules as well.

Unfortunately, the District's position is that blended learning classes are distributed learning much like SAIL. We do not agree. We have filed a grievance because many blended or online classes have been created that violate our class size and composition language.

Please help us understand fully the number and type of violations of our Collective Agreement language by completing the following survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020csc>



Next Friday is the Provincial Specialists' Associations day, where PSAs offer Pro D opportunities, and this year it is virtual. There are so many offerings, it's hard to choose. Check out the many offerings at psaday.ca.

Put some international flair into your zoom experience!

At the same time our world has narrowed with very little travel happening and all of us keeping as close to home as possible, you may not know there has been a blossoming of international solidarity sharing through virtual platforms, and we would like to invite members to participate!

The STA International Solidarity Committee (ISC) would like to invite you to an event happening on Saturday Nov 7 from 3-5pm. CoDevelopment Canada is hosting a virtual event: Spotlight on Colombia: Cultures of Resistance. Come and share an afternoon of solidarity with our Colombian Partners, featuring presentations and cultural activities from the Buenaventura Strike Committee and the Association for Social Research and Action (NOMADESC) We invite you to listen, learn and ask questions. This is an exceptional opportunity to hear directly from our partners about the situation in southwestern Colombia in the midst of the global pandemic. There will be simultaneous translation!

The committee has purchased 10 tickets and we would like to offer one to you if you are interested. The ISC has had a long history with CoDev and have learned much from the struggles of educators in other parts of the world. As we struggle in our own ways during these unprecedented times, we invite you to join with those who share similar sensitivities to the importance of education in the pursuit of justice. If you are interested in a ticket, please contact Julia MacRae at 1vp@surreyteachers.org.

Do you know a deserving young person?

Did you know there is a local youth prize for 2SLGBTQ+ activism given out by SherVancouver? Last year, the Guildford Park GSA won the Emerging Leaders award!

The award is open to 16 to 30-year-olds who demonstrate involvement, commitment, and leadership in the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Youth of any gender identity or sexual orientation can apply.

Cash prizes of \$1000, \$600, \$400 plus additional prizes are donated by our exclusive sponsor DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society.

<https://www.shervancouver.com/youth-award.html>