



STA Connection October 19-23, 2020

**Provincial Election this week - Election day
is October 24th**

VOTE
FOR CANDIDATES COMMITTED TO
**INCREASING FUNDING
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION.**
SCHOOLS ARE THE ♥ OF OUR COMMUNITY!
PROVINCIAL ELECTION • OCTOBER 24

Your STA PAPER (Political Action-Public Relations) Committee organized a virtual town hall on education issues which was held last week, at which we heard from BC Green and BC NDP candidates. (BC Liberals were invited, and confirmed their attendance, but did not appear.) A video recording of the event is available at surreyteachers.org. We have also placed ads in local papers this week encouraging citizens to vote for candidates who strongly support public education. The votes of teachers are important; we are

a large, thoughtful, informed segment of the BC population. We encourage you to exercise your voting rights, wherever you live, and to vote in this election. When a new government is elected, we shall continue our active lobbying of MLAs, emphasizing the importance of investing in and prioritizing Public Education.

Update on Blended Learning

Blended learning raises many issues, and we are having ongoing discussions with the employer about various issues that members have brought forward. We can report the following:

- It no longer seems that all elementary blended classes will end in January. Since the program was a response to parent demand for a blended option, and that demand is likely to continue, the District is no longer planning to require blended students to return to face-to-face in January. That is still the hope, and parents will be asked to decide (sometime before Winter Break) whether they want their children to return to regular classes. Some reorganization may be required at home schools as a result.
- Grade 8 and 9 Transitions classes in Secondary will likewise continue, at least for the second quarter. The goal is to get such students back to regular classes.
- The District has set aside staffing to create new divisions or open new sections to accommodate students who return to face-to-face learning.
- Six full-time Blended Learning Support Teacher positions will be posted (3 secondary, and 3 elementary) to support teachers working in blended learning. We are working on an agreement with the District to permit these positions to be open to teachers currently in other assignments, and to provide that they have a right to return to those assignments in the next school year.
- The STA has grieved the District's failure to apply the class size and composition limits, or provide remedy, to blended learning classes.

Secondary Scheduling: Any Changes?

We have heard concerns from many secondary teachers about the significant disparity in student contact hours between Grade 8/9 and Grade 10/11/12 courses. We have raised these concerns with senior management, but their current plan is not to make any changes to school schedules for the second quarter. However, they are interested in hearing from teachers about their concerns. If you want senior management to understand how things are playing out at the secondary school level, Please write to Julia at 1vp@surreyteachers.org and she will convey the information directly to Assistant Superintendent Andrew Holland.

Accommodations

We are trying to find people who have been denied accommodation and would like to know what you are up to now. The District, citing privacy, does not share this list with us, and we want to provide support to our members. We have received only numbers data from HR – no names. When last we spoke to HR about this issue, they informed us that:

1. 130 members requested a COVID-19 related accommodation to work remotely from home.
2. 7 members have been approved to work remotely from home.
3. 25 members are taking an unpaid leave of absence and 17 members are accessing sick leave due to their request not being approved.

We have filed a grievance on the District's failure to meet its duty to accommodate for members who requested to work remotely from home during this pandemic period, based on medical recommendation from their doctor due to their own personal health concerns, or concerns for the health of their immunocompromised family member.

Please email accommodations@surreyteachers.org if:

- your accommodation request to work remotely from home was not approved AND
- you are now accessing sick leave or taking an unpaid leave

Call out for workshop submissions for BCTF New Teachers' Conference

If you have a great idea of a workshop to reach the needs of new teachers, please consider offering a workshop at the BCTF New Teacher Conference Feb 26th, 2021. See attachment for more details. Deadline to submit is Nov 6th. <https://bctf.ca/forms/ntc.aspx?ekfrm=51454>.

Indigenous Education Committee asks you to stand with the Mi'kmaw Peoples



We at the Indigenous Education Committee of the STA want all of our amazing teachers to turn their eyes to the Mi'kmaw Peoples and stand in solidarity for Indigenous Rights. The Sipekne'katik Nation are facing settler colonial violence at both the individual and state level. We cannot be a social justice union if we don't shine a light and provide any and all support we can to the Mi'kmaw. They have the Charter right to traditional hunting and fishing practices, treaties over 250 years old that established the rights originally and the 1999 R v. Marshall case which solidified the rights to a "moderate livelihood" via small fisheries outside the season. Whether settler, visitor, or fellow Indigenous humans, we must pressure our government to intervene in the face of the racism and terrorism occurring in Nova Scotia. We cannot dare to espouse principles of decolonization if we do not stand strong alongside the Mi'kmaw.

So, what can individuals do? There is a rally this Saturday, October 24th, downtown at 1 pm in support of the Mi'kmaw, (see poster above) or consider making a donation to "buy" virtual lobster to support the Sipekne'katik Nation. Donations for the Sipekne'katik fishers can be made electronically via e-transfers or PayPal to monicah@sipeknekatik.ca. Donated funds will be used to support the fishers by replacing fishing gear and paying legal and wharf fees

Please and Thank you,

All Our Relations

STA Indigenous Education Committee

Unceded Coast Salish Territories of Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, and QayQayte peoples

Leadership training opportunity for members

The BCTF 2020 virtual Federation Leadership Institute will take place from November 19 through 21, 2020. This three-day event is a training opportunity for local union officers. The schedule includes a mixture of short (90-minute) workshops and longer courses (three 90-minute sessions), that will focus on supporting members and upholding the Collective Agreement. Sessions will also focus on health and safety COVID-19 related issues, as well as assisting locals with their work on equity and inclusion within the local.

The BCTF invites **Six members who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour)** who would not otherwise be attending the Federation Leadership Institute to apply to attend the Institute:

Positions will be appointed by the BCTF Executive Committee.

Details on the application process can be found at <https://bctf.ca/opportunities/BCTFCommittees.aspx>

The deadline for applications is Friday, October 30, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Staff Committee Chair Zoom webinars

Do you feel confident as Staff Committee chair? Would you appreciate a little tune-up? Please feel invited to an afternoon zoom seminar on effective staff committees. We will review the Staff Committee Handbook and discuss issues of concern to attendees. Please choose from the below listed dates, 3:30-4:15 pm. Although the seminar is aimed to staff committee chairs, any STA member is welcome.

Oct. 29: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87667771582?pwd=VGQ0dWNJK0tLQzg2K3ZMWnVYb1BIQT09>

Nov. 3: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85387818956?pwd=VEVyeVRTOGQzY0h4UVZYNmZQK2N6QT09>

Nov. 4: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87239454922?pwd=eVAzM2hhZy80aUNxUGhzTGlyZzNWdz09>

Nov. 12: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83140645795?pwd=UXpzQmlzNllwZmNSUitlOUZhQkppZz09>

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!

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.

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 invites you to this virtual event: Spotlight on Colombia: Cultures of Resistance (see attachment) happening on Saturday Nov 7 from 3-5pm. 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 and unusual 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! If you would like a ticket, please contact Julia MacRae at 1vp@surreyteachers.org.

Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

Thank you so much to the 43 members who have taken the time to respond to our survey so far! If you haven't taken it yet, it's short and sweet and will help us establish how our committee can support you to stay mentally and physically well this year: <http://bit.ly/wellnessproject2020>

Our "Wellness Tip of the Week" comes from committee member Velma Moore. Velma recommends doing some yoga at home, as it helps us to both manage our fitness and our relaxation. There is a free series on

YouTube called "Yoga with Adriene" that you can find here: <https://www.youtube.com/c/yogawithadriene/>

"I learned about Adriene through a couple of friends. I had tried other teachers, YouTube is full of them, but Adriene is a step apart from all of the others. Are you worried about your fitness level and if you can manage a class? Adriene provides classes at every level. Do yourself a kindness and check her out."

Thank you Velma!

Do you have a wellness tip you'd like to share with other teachers? Feel free to email any tips to Angela Marcakis at marcakis_a@surreyschools.ca.

Head's up New Teachers!

Are you curious about how the union works and what the union offers you in terms of support and advocacy? Would you like to know more about your rights as a worker? Mark your calendars for Nov 17th, we are organizing a new teachers' conference. You will receive a paid day away from your class, and you will learn a lot! More details and registration link will be in this newsletter next week.