



STA Connection October 26-30, 2020

Contact Tracing questions and frustration

We are concerned to hear about various individual cases where a teacher finds out unofficially about an exposure in their classroom from a student, parent, or colleague, and yet it seems there is no contact tracing happening, or the expected tracing call hasn't come. Another concern is the non-inclusion of teachers in the contact tracing interview when an exposure has happened in their classroom, where a child has been interviewed and yet it is hard to believe their awareness is clear enough to be a reliable epidemiological narrator. We are following up with these concerns in our district meetings. We do know that Fraser Health is working flat out. It may be the case that when an interview happens, and tracing calls don't seem to follow back where they should, it could be because the infectious period had not intersected with a school attendance day, for example, and so an exposure hadn't actually happened. If you have questions on the process, please review Jordan Tinney's video sent to our school emails on Oct 13th in the morning that went over these questions. If you do find out about a potential exposure in your school or class, and you are waiting to be informed, you can call 811 to inquire as to what your actions should be.

What are teachers asked during Fraser Health interviews?

Over the last weeks STA table officers have attended dozens of staff meetings where Covid exposures are discussed with staffs. Recently we attended one where some teachers were speaking up about what it is like to be questioned by Fraser Health about their classrooms. A teacher reported that the interview was more than an hour long and the questions went into great detail about the seating plan, where the teacher stands relative to the kids, the distance between them and the kids, and between the kids, how much face to face speaking they were asked to do, lining up routines, etc. She was able to point out to them that distancing is simply not possible between the students. Her advice to her colleagues was to

forget about small group work, keep the desks in rows, and don't switch up the seating plan, or if you do, keep a diagram of the former one, or perhaps snap a photo to be able to remember, because you may be asked to recall what was happening in your classroom 10 days ago or more!

It is helpful to have this experience explained to us because it helps us all see how seriously we need to take our daily behaviours and routines, not only for where our students are sitting and how they are interacting, but also for our own routines of interacting with other adults in the building. Make notes in your daybook noting adults who enter your room during the day, to make it easier to recall if asked. Stay out of the office, mailroom, staffroom etc. as much as possible.

Masks and Shields from your union

In the summer, we ordered STA-branded masks and face shields, and we distributed them through reps in early Sept. We are awaiting our large shipment of 6,000 BCTF masks, which we will distribute to members when they arrive. At the moment we have received and distributed a few BCTF-branded masks, and we sent them out to fill in gaps if people didn't get an STA mask. We hope all members have now received one mask and a shield if desired. We have a few extras of the initial batch of BCTF masks, and extra face shields. We are able to send masks in the internal courier, but shields must be picked up at the STA Office because they are delicate. If you never received a mask and or shield, please email sta@surreyteachers.org. Please include your name, school or work site, courier number, and the number of masks and/or shields requested.

Ad Hoc Assessment and Reporting Advisory Committee

We are looking for new members for this committee. This year will be a lot of firsts with assessing and reporting during a pandemic with various models of delivery, tools for assessment and parent communication. If these areas are of interest, please consider putting your name forward by completing a [Committee Curriculum Vitae Form](#).

STA Peer Mediation

Are you a good listener? Are you a good navigator of complex conversations? Do you find yourself supporting those around you to navigate challenging conversations?

We are looking to add to our mediation team by 1 or 2 more people. With possible mediations and training, you may be out of your classroom 6 to 10 days per year for a 3-year term. Teachers are asked to commit to a three-year term. (All release time for training and mediations is paid for by the STA)

If you are interested, please contact Kevin Amboe – services@surreyteachers.org or 604-592-8396 to discuss the idea further.

STA New Teachers' Conference, Tuesday, Nov 17

Our popular STA New Teachers' conference is back, so if you are new (in your first 3 years of teaching or so) and have never attended it before, please feel invited. You will learn about all your union has to offer in terms of opportunities, programs and advocacy for your rights. You will be released from your school for the day (replaced by a TTOC) and the conference will be virtual, so you will attend from home. To register, please [follow this link](#), and book your TTOC through ESS after being accepted.

Health and Safety Items



As of October 23, 2020, the Surrey School District had over 80 confirmed Covid exposures at school. You may have noticed an increased willingness on everyone's part to follow safety measures to limit the spread of the virus as the threat of Covid becomes more and more relevant. Please continue to be kind and supportive of each other in these difficult times.

Duty to Accommodate

The STA has filed a grievance regarding the failure of the District to provide remote teaching opportunities for members who sought an accommodation due to their or their household's health concerns. Many members who had been told by their doctor not to attend schools because of the increased risk if they contracted Covid were forced to take an unpaid leave, use sick days, or return to work with the increased threat to their health because they could not afford to be without an income. Please contact Dana Neidig at accommodations@surreyteachers.org if you applied for an accommodation to work remotely due to elevated health concerns of yourself or members of your household.

Plexiglass

The STA has filed a grievance and contacted WorkSafeBC regarding the District's process for applying for plexiglass. Many members are regularly required to work within 2m of students, such as counsellors in small offices, LST teachers in small rooms, etc. We are concerned that many teachers are unaware of the process of applying through Nancy Johnston at District Facilities and the STA is demanding a more vigorous approach. We are also concerned about the length of wait time for teachers who have been approved for plexiglass as an accommodation to their health concerns. Please contact Gavin Slade-Kerr, our Health and Safety/Grievance Officer at hs@surreyteachers.org if you are regularly required to work within 2m of students or have been approved for plexiglass but have not received it.

Fogging Spray

We are gathering information from members about the use of the fogging spray in classrooms. Please contact Gavin Slade-Kerr, our Health and Safety/Grievance Officer at hs@surreyteachers.org if you have experienced health issues you attribute to the spray or the residue left by the spray.

Benefits

Members may be considering withdrawing from our benefits package for a number of reasons: preference of a spousal plan, concern about the costs, and more. This is an option, but please be aware that if you decide to join the plan after 3 months of no coverage, you will be considered a "Late Applicant", and may find your application rejected because of health issues you are dealing with. The insurer uses a much

more detailed Late Application form and we know of members who have not been approved for coverage as a result of the information received by the insurer. Please consider a withdrawal from the plan carefully before doing so.

Covid testing

A teacher who went for a test let us know that when she filled in the form, she indicated “teacher” at the top, and her test was expedited, which meant she got results in 24 hours instead of 72. Good to know!

Flu Shots

Another teacher let us know that some pharmacies will prioritize teachers’ receiving the flu shot, so mention it when trying to book a time. Good to know!

Health & Safety Rep Meeting

November 4, 2020
at 3:30 pm



There will be a Health & Safety Rep Meeting on November 4, 2020 from 3:30 pm to 5:50 pm to give our H&S Reps a platform to ask questions and exchange information. Registration is required so please register [here](#).

Staff Committee Chair Zoom webinars

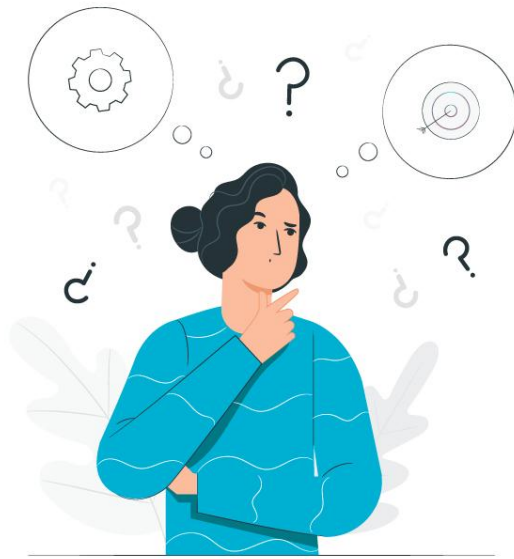
Do you feel confident as Staff Committee chair? Would you appreciate a little tune-up? Please feel invited to an afternoon zoom seminar on effective staff committees. We will review the Staff Committee Handbook and discuss issues of concern to attendees. Please choose from the below listed dates, 3:30-4:15 pm. Although the seminar is aimed at 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=VEVyeVRTOGQzY0h4UVZYmZQK2N6QT09>

Nov. 4: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87239454922?pwd=eVAzM2hhZy80aUNxUGhzTGIYZzNWdz09>

Nov. 12: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83140645795?pwd=UXpzQmIzNllwZmNSUitlOUZhQkppZz09>



Do you have Pro-D Questions?

If you have Pro-D Questions or are a Pro-D Rep feel free to signup for our Pro-D Update and Q&A Session on November 5, 2020 from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Registration is required so please register [here](#).

Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

The Status of Women Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, November 4 to figure out the next steps of our wellness project based on the survey results. Thank you so much to the 50 members who have taken the time to respond to our survey - this is your last chance to join them and provide us with some input! <http://bit.ly/wellnessproject2020>

Our “Wellness Tip of the Week” comes from committee member Marilyn Ricketts-Lindsay. Marilyn recommends doing some meditation using the Calm app. The Calm app offers guided meditations, sleep stories, audio Masterclass programs taught by world-renowned mindfulness experts, and video lessons for mindful movement and gentle stretches. They have calming music and nature scenes and sounds that can help you focus, relax, or sleep.

The Calm app was offered for free to educators through the Calm Schools Initiative, so many of us may already have premium accounts with them. Unfortunately, they are currently working on improving the program and are not accepting new applications at this time. That said, you can still access many of their videos for free on their website (www.calm.com), on the Calm app, on YouTube (www.youtube.com/c/calm), or even on Telus On Demand (under the Health Living category).

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.

Opportunity for a Video Production teacher

The BCTF International Solidarity Committee is seeking a creative partner! We would like to find a video production teacher interested in collaborating with Cuban colleagues to produce videos for English language teaching in the Cuban education system. Yes, you and your students may become really famous in Cuba, and there may eventually be travel involved. If this piques your interest, please contact Julia at 1vp@surreyteachers.org to find out more.

BCFED convention delegates list

At last week's Special General Meeting we elected 29 members to attend the upcoming BC Fed Convention. Teachers are an important part of the house of labour in BC, so we are happy to be able to send our maximum number of possible delegates.

Here is our team! NB, *yw means the delegate is a young worker. It is great to have so many younger teachers interested in this work!

- Amboe, Kevin
- Baillargeon, Violette
- Bir, Jatinder
- Campbell-Mongeon, Sasha *yw
- Coleman, Erin
- Ganda, Navpreet *yw
- Hainsworth, Gavin
- Kaila, Jack
- Kumar, Rick *yw
- Leeks, Andrea *yw
- LeForte, Kelsey *yw
- MacDosen, Kelly *yw
- Marchiori, Bettie
- McCloy, Katelyn *yw
- Neidig, Dana
- Salary, Brett
- Schroeder, Nadine
- Westphal, Matt
- Wettstein, Eric *yw
- MacRae, Julia
- Carr, Marilyn
- Miki, Melanie
- Imai, Derek
- Veto, Pauline,
- Fleming, Audrey
- Wisniewski, Katrina *yw
- Sroa, Jyotika
- Slade-Kerr, Gavin
- Sanghe, Amrit

LGBTQ ad hoc committee survey to members

Context and Goals for this survey:

At STA, we wish to celebrate the ongoing work of supporting and celebrating queer educators and students, and work done with SOGI education and practices in your schools. The purpose of this survey is to hear your voices as educators on the experience of LGBTQ2+ teachers and students in Surrey schools. We wish to use this information to support us in understanding where we stand as of now and furthering our initiatives in promoting SOGI inclusive practices.

Privacy Disclaimer:

Privacy for survey respondents is our high priority. Hence, this survey is anonymous as we wish to protect the identity of all STA members who are willing to participate in this survey. This survey does not ask you for your name, school, or any contact details. It will not collect your IP address either. Neither will "survey monkey" peek at your responses. Additionally, no specific details of this survey are shared with the school district. Summarized results of the survey may be used for future development and support services.

P.S: If providing additional information to certain questions in the survey, please avoid naming specific individuals such as students, staff, admin, parents and school.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sogista>