



## STA Connection November 2-6, 2020

# New Teachers' Conference

November 17, 2020



Are you new to teaching and wondering about what your union has to offer? Have you ever felt confused by your pay cheque? Your benefits? Your contract? Would you like a day away from your class to review these things? Please feel invited to attend our New Teacher's Conference on Nov 17th. It will be virtual, and there will be a leader of the BCTF in attendance to speak to us and induct new members into the union. Please follow this link to register. Open to teachers in the first 3 (or so) years of teaching, who have not attended before. We have room for 9 more teachers, so please [register soon!](#)

# Representative Assembly this weekend

The BCTF Representative Assembly meets three times a year and is scheduled to convene this weekend on November 6th and 7th. The six Surrey Local Representatives Amrit Sanghe, Annie Ohana, Rick Kumar, Angela Marcakis, Lizanne Foster and Adilah Abdirahman will be in attendance to represent Surrey's interests and engage in discussion and debate.

Please email the Surrey LRs at [lr@surreyteachers.org](mailto:lr@surreyteachers.org) with any comments to take forward to the Representative Assembly.

If you're wondering how the BCTF democracy works, please see the attached poster.

## Remedy Update

We have received questions about accessing remedy from last year. To do that requires an agreement between the STA and the District. The STA and HR are working on such an agreement. The reason there is no agreement yet is that we are looking at including other forms of remedy in addition to ones that have been used previously, and there are many complexities to deal with. We will be meeting with HR next Monday to discuss it.

## H & S committees

If you have a health and safety concern, you should first bring it to the attention of your principal and vice-principal. They are responsible for health and safety at the school. If they do not deal with the issue to your satisfaction, bring it to your health and safety committee. They can recommend that your admin has to explain in writing the reasons if they do not follow it. If possible, attend the meeting. Make sure there are good minutes recorded for the meeting. Those minutes may become important later in making sure the issue is addressed.

## 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.

## Pro-D Updates



**Do you  
have Pro-D  
Questions?**

### Pro-D Q&A Session Thursday Nov. 5

Are you a Pro-D chair interested in learning more about Pro-D? If so, there will be an upcoming Pro-D Update and Q&A session on Thursday November 5, 2020 at 3pm. This will be an opportunity to expand on previous training, a chance to bring questions forward and hear what other people's questions are.

Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctfumrqDouHNLBFjLrohgbuBffijyHf6hZ>

### To Shine A Light On It: Self-Directed Pro-D Edition! Friday, Nov. 6

The STA Indigenous Education Committee is sad to announce that we will not be able to host our annual pro-d event this November due to COVID-19. In lieu of our event, we would like to suggest some activities to help facilitate a self-directed professional development day with an Indigenous education focus. Please see the attached .pdf document with clickable images to direct you to more information. Most of us are "zoomed out", so the focus is on movies and books where you can learn while relaxing at home. Many of the films are free to stream through CBCgem or NFB, which the district has paid for a subscription for this year. We look forward to seeing you all again when it is safe!

## LSA Council

The LSA council met on October 28 with 11 Local Specialist Associations represented. We had a great conversation and look forward to continuing support of the great work that has been done and is continuing to be done by your colleagues here in Surrey.

Soon we will have the full list of current LSAs and contact information on the STA Website. We do not have current information if some LSAs (see list below) are still active or if members want to work to re-initiate the LSA as a specialist voice within Surrey.

LSAs have an important place in our union and are supported with two grant opportunities.

Contact Erin Coleman – [pd@surreyteachers.org](mailto:pd@surreyteachers.org) for more information

### LSAs represented include:

- Surrey Association of Math Teachers
- Surrey Chapter of Teacher-Librarians
- Surrey Culinary Arts Specialist Association
- Surrey Drama Teachers' Association
- Surrey English Teachers Association
- Surrey Home Economics Teachers Association
- Surrey Music Educators Association
- Surrey Primary Teachers' Association
- Surrey Tech Theatre Teachers' Association
- Surrey Technology Educators Association
- Regrets for this meeting
- Association des Professionnels d'Immersion – Surrey
- Surrey Speech-Language Pathologists Association
- SEED 36 (Surrey Ecological Educators in District 36) (EEPSA LSA)

Below is a list of LSAs that may have been inactive for several years. It only takes 3 teachers from each specialty to reconstitute an association. This would be a dynamic opportunity for teachers to engage and collaborate with colleagues from the same discipline and provide information to members, or perhaps start to advocate for things your specialty area needs! If you would be interested in reviving any of them, please contact Erin Coleman – [pd@surreyteachers.org](mailto:pd@surreyteachers.org) for more information.

### LSAs that may have been inactive for several years

- Adult Education
- Art Teachers' Association
- Association for Educators of Gifted Education
- Association of Phys Ed Teachers
- Association of Teachers of Modern Language
- Business Educators
- CUE
- Elementary Drama Teachers
- ESL LSA
- Hospital / Homebound TA
- Humanities LSA
- Intermediate TA
- Learning Assistance - Surrey LATA
- Peace and Global Ed
- School Counsellors
- Science Teachers
- Secondary Math Teachers
- Secondary School Dance Teachers
- ASSET (Association of Special Education Teachers)
- Teachers of English as an Additional Language

## Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

Our “Wellness Tip of the Week” comes from committee member Maire Walker, sharing an article about toxic positivity versus optimism in teaching during a pandemic.

“Has positivity ever had a negative effect on you? Or do you catch yourself giving advice or offering tips to friends and colleagues who are having a difficult time without them asking for it? I find myself reaching out to colleagues/friends who seem to be drowning in worry and offer my support. I am also having my down days, weeks and have been questioning whether I can really do this pandemic teaching thing but more often than not I am focusing on how best to support my friends and family. Teachers are naturally helpers after all. In the spirit of wellness as a member of the STA Status of Women Committee, I share this article as it outlines how to convey genuine positivity rather than toxic positivity.

<https://thehealthsessions.com/toxic-positivity/>

Perhaps, the article attached will be helpful in a positive way whether you are the friend/colleague who is struggling or the supportive friend not wanting to be toxic rather wanting to be genuinely supportive. I know that I am going to be studying the section in this article about alternatives to hollow words and words that are really supportive, listening more and remembering to wait for the ask.”

Thank you, Maire! 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](mailto:marcakis_a@surreyschools.ca).

## International Solidarity!

### Colombia urgent action

The threats took the form of a funeral wreath with the words 'rest in peace'. Sixteen candles and 16 obituary notices with the name of each targeted union leader were also delivered to the home of Carlos Rivas, FECODE's Secretary for legal affairs. The threats come in the aftermath of national actions led by trade unions over the social, health, education and economic crisis in the country. FECODE (Federation of Colombian Educators) is also leading an initiative to promote schools as 'zones of peace' through community dialogues, (which we sponsor directly each year with STA dues.). Enough is enough.

FECODE and the Education International have launched a major new online campaign on LabourStart demanding that the Colombian authorities act to ensure immediate protection measures for the entire ENCODE leadership, and for all union and social leaders and activists. Let's join in this urgent action to demand safety for our partners in Colombia. Those trade unionists must be allowed to exercise their right to express opinions, to demonstrate and to organise to defend the public education system. Please take a moment to show your support for this campaign - [click here](#).



Last chance to get a free ticket to this event Nov. 7th

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](mailto:1vp@surreyteachers.org)

## Are you okay?

by Christie Weigel (Learning Support Teacher, H.T. Thrift Elementary)

As I write this, I'm shocked to discover we are eight weeks into the school year, and halfway to Christmas break. In some ways it feels like we have been back for far longer than we have. All of the challenges we are facing demand increased energy and attention, and so much is so different than before.

Worried, stressed, overwhelmed... these are the some of the words we hear ourselves and our colleagues using to describe our current feelings. The external stressors we are facing can create inner turmoil that we struggle to manage. Some of what we do (or view!) may increase our feelings of anxiety during this time. While we can't control much of what is going on in the world right now, we can influence our own inner worlds. Counselling, which is available through our Employee and Family Assistance program, can help. Let's take a moment, though, to consider ways we can care for ourselves right now.

Have you seen a "fill someone's bucket" bulletin board in a colleague's classroom? Maybe you've done this project with your own class. If you're unfamiliar with the strategy, I'll sum it up as an opportunity for classmates to write affirming words to their peers and develop their social responsibility as they care for and encourage one another. I'm a huge fan of this! I wonder, though, if we've taken any time, recently, to ponder what fills our own buckets. What fills your bucket?

A few years ago, I created a list of "Joys" using Notes, on my phone. There are about ten things on the list, and they are all pretty simple pleasures. "Watching birds coming to the bird feeder outside my office window" is on there. A few sports and hobbies are on there, too. Even looking at that list makes me happy! And, it reminds me to make time for the things I know will bring me joy.

How about you? What kinds of things make you feel good, energized, loved even? Would a forest walk fill your bucket? Does working on a project at home, in a studio, or outside bring you pleasure? A hilarious comedy? Maybe some kind of social interaction... is there someone whose conversation always lifts you up? If you were to create a list of your own joys, what would you include?

As teachers, we give a lot of ourselves to others. We sometimes need a reminder to assess and plan for our own needs. Please consider doing yourself a kindness today. Your investment in self-care will likely pay off in your work, your relationships, your wellness, and your ability to cope with all that is on your plate right now.

Enjoy!