



STA Connection November 16-20, 2020

November Special General Meeting will continue on December 2!

On November 18 we held a Special General Meeting. The focus of the meeting was on Covid. The meeting carried the following motion:

THAT the STA demand that the Surrey school district implement the following actions immediately:

1. All students and staff be **required to wear a non-medical mask** when physical distancing is not possible in all places in schools with exemptions for those who are not able to do so.
2. All Surrey schools need to immediately move to education stage 3 (**50% density for all classes**).
3. Surrey school district needs to **reopen online learning programs** for those families that choose not to send their children to school.
4. **Accommodations need to be provided** for immunocompromised teachers and/or with medically supported health concerns. These same teachers could teach remotely rather than being forced to take unpaid leave.

Given the depth of discussion on these issues, we were not able to complete the other scheduled business of the meeting, particularly the consideration of resolutions to go to the BCTF Annual General Meeting. Since we have to meet a December deadline for submitting AGM resolutions, we will be reconvening the meeting on December 2, 4 pm on Zoom. Come and have your say, learn a little more about our union, and experience participatory democracy at the granular level. All those who registered for participation in this year's STARA and AGM meetings will be sent the links to participate. If you have not already received your voting and Zoom links for the 2020-2021 year, [sign up](#) for this year's links.

Covid outbreak = Cambridge Elementary closed. Be ready in case your school is next.

Surrey and Fraser Health are all over the news this week because of the closure of Cambridge Elementary with an outbreak of Covid. The staff and students (and itinerant teachers, TTOCs etc.) are all in self isolation for 14 days starting Nov 14th, and all are required to have Covid tests. They are not to leave their homes, and must order in groceries, cancel any appointments, etc. We are really relieved that the situation at Cambridge was finally addressed by Fraser Health, and hope the tests show that the outbreak was not extensive. We are also very concerned for the health of the school community, especially for one teacher who is sick with Covid and in the hospital.



These dramatic developments reminded us that Fraser Health has the power to shut down sites, and will do so if needed, so we teachers need to put our minds to being ready to switch gears if it becomes necessary to shift to remote teaching and learning. Of course it is the District's responsibility to communicate with you about a closure if it happens, and to make a plan about how to get a remote option up and running, but there are steps we as professionals can take to make this possible scenario a little easier on ourselves.

Are you prepared and taking precautions?

There are also many questions to consider if we want to be prepared while teaching in a pandemic. If your class was told to self-isolate, would you and your students be prepared?

- Has your admin provided any direction on what to do to prepare?
- Have your students all logged into Teams and have their username and password memorized or written somewhere safe?
- Do you know which students would need access to technology from school to support home learning?
- Do you have access to your unit and day plans from home? (a document or photo of paper plans)
- Do you bring your laptop home with you?
- If you need assistance with any of these points, consult your school admin.

Stay home when sick, even with mild symptoms!

We urge all members to remain vigilant and maintain healthy habits to protect yourselves and your colleagues. Do not report to work if you are sick, even with mild symptoms of a cold. Try to minimize your interaction with colleagues and try to avoid circulating around your school as much as possible. If possible, avoid the staff room, mail room, photocopy room, office, library, etc. Be vigilant with mask wearing and hand washing. Your health is important to your students, to us, and to the district, but even more, it is important for your family and loved ones. Take care of yourselves and help protect all of us.

If you are required to self-isolate, push to be working from home

With teachers being told to self-isolate with possible Covid exposure or awaiting Covid test results, it is important that we are still paid. There are various scenarios, among them:

- If your cohort is also isolating, presumably you will keep on teaching remotely and will therefore be working.
- If you are sick, use sick days, and if you have none left, contact us to help you file a claim with WorkSafeBC and access Salary Indemnity Plan benefits through the BCTF.
- If you are not sick but are required to isolate, we hope you will be able to work from home. Be sure to ask your principal if you can work remotely, either teaching remotely or doing some other tasks. Suggest work you could do from home. For example some ISTs are able to complete IEPs whilst isolated. Other teachers are able to support teachers remotely, for example, by reviewing certain online resources for their colleagues.

We believe the more people able to continue working from home when they have to self-isolate, the better. Contact us for support, and also to tell us what work you are doing remotely!

RIP Margie Willers, Past President of the STA



bargaining round was when we won the most significant gains in 40 years of bargaining before and after, and Margie was co-chief negotiator. Margie retired in the early 2000s, and in her career in Surrey, in addition to her time as a released officer, she worked at Brookside and before that, Senator Reid. We were able to hear a bit more about Margie at our General Meeting Nov 18th. Please find attached an article about Margie that was published in the Teacher a couple of years ago. She was a truly great Surrey teacher, and the rights of Surrey Teachers were her great focus. More information to come in next weeks' bulletin.

Calling our office

"The person you are trying to reach is unavailable at this time, your call is very important to us."

As you can imagine, the STA office has been inundated with emails and calls. We understand that when people call, they want to speak to someone immediately, and that it can be frustrating when that does not happen. Given the volume of calls, and the many meetings we are involved in, we have to triage calls and emails. We may not be available to speak when you call, and it may take some time to respond to you.

Please be understanding when you are speaking to our reception staff, who are doing their best to connect you to the assistance you need. However, we are all trying to respond to voicemails as soon as possible, so please leave a message ! Also, all our table officers, Matt, Julia, Jatinder, Kevin, Erin, Dana, Gavin, Joanna and Mark are available by email and you can find all [these emails on our website](#).

Call Out for The Advocate Submissions – COVID-19 Issue

We are looking for submissions for our next issue of The Advocate. Many of us have stories to share in how our lives, both professional and personal, and the world as we know it have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From virtual teaching and remote learning to redesigning and adapting in times of crisis, COVID-19 has changed education dramatically. Considering this and the variety of issues that have been brought to the forefront, we are dedicating the next issue of The Advocate to this theme. We encourage submissions - from journals to reflections, to poems or prose. Please submit to communications@surreyteachers.org.

Violent Incidents

We have had a number of calls to the office about violent incidents in schools. Some incidents involve special needs students and others do not.

WorkSafeBC says, "Violence" means "the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury." It does not have to be intentional to qualify as violence.

If you have been involved in a violent incident, intentional or not, you should fill in a [Worksafe 6A form](#). This includes written or verbal threats of violence as well. Please send a copy to your principal, the District at HRES-Safety@surreyschools.ca, and Gavin Slade-Kerr, our Health and Safety Officer, at hs@surreyteachers.org. He will follow up with the District after he receives the form.

Your principal may be confused by the 6A as the District uses a different form (long story), but this is the form BCTF members are to use. You do not need to fill out both forms: the principal should use the 6A to complete the District form.

You also have the option of a refusal of unsafe work. Here is the information from the BCTF to walk you through the process.

- http://www.ndta68.ca/files/6916/0090/2423/2020_BCTF_Health_and_Safety_Handbook.pdf
- <https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/HealthSafety/Advice/RefusalOfUnsafeWorkFlowchart.pdf>

When new students are admitted to your school, you have a right to know if they have a history of violence. Exercise your right to know and make sure you are informed of any potential risks.

Unscented Hand Sanitizer

The district now has unscented hand sanitizer. If your school is still using the scented hand sanitizer that arrived in the Spring, contact your administrator to order unscented from the district.

Shout-Out Section Update - Introducing "The Looking Glass"

A reminder that the STAC is looking to highlight and showcase the work our members are doing to promote reconciliation, decolonization, and anti-racism in their classrooms. As such, the STA Connection Shout-Out section for the 2020-2021 year will be renamed "The Looking Glass." The intention behind this is to promote thoughtful self-reflection and continuous learning since the work towards activism and

social change in our communities begins with the self. We invite members to submit lesson plans, resources, activities, events or acts from their classroom or school community which help their students experience or learn about the following themes: anti-racism, reconciliation, Indigenous history/culture and/or Black Canadian history/culture. Please submit to communications@surreyschools.org.

In addition to recognizing Louis Riel Day on November 16, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) has declared the week surrounding November 16 as "Métis Week." Métis Week in Alberta celebrates and honours the Métis nation in their pursuit towards rights and recognition. The University of Calgary is hosting a free online Digital Storytelling event on Thursday, November 19th to present intergenerational Métis stories. Please find more information regarding registration, as well as resources, attached. A special thank you to Jennifer Brooks from Sunnyside Elementary School for sharing this with us!



This week is Trans Awareness Week which raises awareness through education about issues concerning the trans community. November 20th is Transgender Day of Remembrance which honours and memorializes victims of transphobic violence. How can allies and community members take part in advocacy and raise awareness during this time? Understand that every week is Trans Awareness Week and an opportunity to be trans-inclusive and remember that transgender people face unique challenges.

Post and share about the significance of this week, challenge anti-transgender remarks, follow trans-led organizations on social media and listen to members of the trans community. Bring attention to the community by educating those around you and the public by sharing trans stories and experiences and take part in increasing visibility and advocacy around issues of prejudice, discrimination and violence that affect them.

Educate yourself by reading books like "Beyond the Gender Binary" by Alok Vaid-Menon, "Redefining Realness" by Janet Mock, and "Amateur" by Thomas Page McBee. To further support the effort in creating safe and inclusive spaces, please visit [BCTF's LGBTQ2S+ Action Group](#), [GLAAD](#), [The Guide to Being a Trans Ally](#), and [BC SOGI Education](#).

STA Status of Women Committee's

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WORKSHOP

December 4, 2020

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM
via Zoom



**PRESENTED BY
ANASTASIA GAISENOK**

DR. BALBIR GURM

Founder of the Network to Eliminate
Violence in Relationships (NEVR)

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November to 10 December. In the spirit of this campaign, the Status of Women Committee is hosting a full-day workshop on gender-based violence, with the goals of working to end violence against women and girls, and promoting gender equity, healthy relationships, and a new vision of masculinity. Anastasia Gaisenok is back to lead us through her powerful session on ending violence against women. Dr. Balbir Gurm, founder of the Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships (NEVR), will also be facilitating a session, sharing free resources that you can use both personally and in your classrooms.

The full day gender-based violence workshop will take place on Friday, December 4, 2020. The Status of Women Committee will cover the costs of your TTOC. Spots are limited, so make sure you [sign up via Eventbrite](#) first before booking your LOA. The Zoom link will be sent to you after you register.

"If it were between countries, we'd call it a war. If it were a disease, we'd call it an epidemic. If it were an oil spill, we'd call it a disaster. But it is happening to women, and it's just an everyday affair. It is violence against women."

– Michael Kaufman, White Ribbon Campaign

STA STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE'S

Knit, Chat, and Wine Night!

NOVEMBER 20 • 7 PM



The Status of Women Committee is excited to start planning virtual wellness events, beginning with a weekly "Knit, Chat, and Wine Night" hosted by committee member Velma Moore! Grab your needles and some yarn and safely connect with us from the comfort of your home. Open to all levels of knitters, beginners can learn something new, and those with more experience can enjoy the company while you work on your own projects. Who better to vent about the week's events than other Surrey teachers? This BYOB event begins at **7:00 pm on Friday!** Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvc-6przkqH9P4ch8xJIC632-eL3XgKU-H>

Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

Our "Wellness Tip of the Week" is to check out **BounceBack**, a free skill-building program designed to help adults and youth manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry. Delivered online or over the phone with a coach, you will get access to tools that will support you on your path to mental wellness. Check it out here: <https://bouncebackbc.ca/>



Do you have a wellness tip you'd like to share with other teachers? Feel free to email any tips to Angela

Responding with Professionalism

by Christie Weigel, LST, H.T. Thrift Elementary

I knocked loudly on the tiny window of the closed door to the counsellor's office. Standing on my tiptoes, I made eye contact with our school counsellor, whom I'd only just met the week before, and frantically motioned for her to come out of her office. I had urgent news about a student that I felt I needed to share with her. My own students were arriving for their LST time, so I only had a few seconds. She rushed away from her student, stepped into the hallway, and heard me tell her what she already knew. "That's why I'm here today," she said.

"Okay, good," I said and turned away with relief. Back in my room, I got into my writing lesson, intending to follow up with the counsellor later, at recess or lunch. As things often go, it was a busy day and we didn't get a chance to reconnect.

I've replayed this short interaction in my mind a few times, wondering how it landed for my new colleague, and feeling embarrassed about my impulsive actions. I wished I'd apologized for interrupting her and I wanted to smooth things over. I like this person. Have I already compromised my ability to have a great working relationship with her?

So often, the way we communicate with each other as professionals leaves something to be desired. I think it mostly stems from the fact that there is never enough time to truly collaborate with one another. Lots of information is shared in brief snippets as we walk down the hall together. A spontaneous, unedited email is sent. The meeting minutes are scanned at lightning speed. So much information, so quick! Be that as it may, let's consider some ways we might become more respectful colleagues who respond with professionalism.

Slow down. It's not easy to slow down, but it's something I'm working on. If I'd left the counsellor a friendly note – Please come see me- I would have shown respect for her work with students and still been able to share the information with her. I could also have waited until recess. How much of an emergency was it, really? Slowing down, and making a plan for when to meet and chat, communicates that I value listening as much as sharing. It says, "I'd like to figure this out with you." And slowing down works for email, too. Sitting with a draft email for a few moments, editing, and 'softening' when necessary, usually makes for a more easily received message.

Check for understanding. What we say so often does not come out in quite the way we intend it, and what someone hears is not always what has been said. I'm working on trying to assess whether my idea has landed well with the other person. Do I need to clarify something? Is there some harshness in my tone, or vagueness in my request? And have I listened to the other person's response thoroughly? Am I tuned in to their needs and ideas, or distracted by my own thoughts? Using the active listening strategies, as awkward as they might feel, can help us understand each other.

Put on the rose-coloured glasses. During our hurried, sometimes harried, school days, it is not surprising that we make communication mistakes. Most of us have said thoughtless things. Many of us have taken offence at someone else's thoughtless comments. Let's let some things go, and demonstrate patience and compassion towards our colleagues.

Get some help. Reflecting on my communication style and learning about better ways to share my thoughts and feelings is an on-going process, and there are plenty of resources out there to help. The Justice Institute, for example, offers courses on communication skills. And, if you're in the midst of a communication breakdown, our Peer Mediation service can help you and a colleague get back to a respectful and professional relationship.

It's not too late. Even though a few days may go by with some discomfort about a conversation, it is rarely too late to make things better. For me, calling my colleague and acknowledging my thoughtlessness in communicating with her the way I did, went well. Our professional relationship is back on track, and I feel comfortable continuing to communicate with her. Is there someone you want to reconnect with to work things out?

Things are tough right now, aren't they? Let's help each other by taking the time to communicate with kindness, professionalism and respect.



IN
SUPPORT
OF

UN75
2020 AND BEYOND

SHAPING
OUR
FUTURE
TOGETHER

Seth Klein
Founder of Canadian Centre for
Policy Alternatives (CCPA) Author
of "The Good War: Mobilizing
Canada for the Climate
Emergency"



Roma Gry



Artist/Speaker Trenton Pierre
Katzie First Nation



Rochelle Prasad

SHAPING PEACE TOGETHER VIRTUAL FESTIVAL 2020

On November 27th 7:00 pm, 28th & 29th 2:00 pm

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations
and the International Day of Peace

Please Join us on Facebook or Youtube

The Wild Moccasin Dancers



Glsha

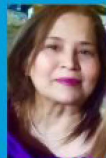


Jackson Crockett



Satsuki Kai Japanese dancers

Vietnamese Dancers



HUMA KIRMANI Global Inspirational Woman
Honorary member of United Nations of Pakistan

Pratyaksha
Our Youngest GPA Member



Over 30 Multicultural songs and dances, peace speakers and poets, youth leaders and activists
Discussions of Truth and Reconciliation, social justice issues, conflicts in our world
Recognition of art and literary contest winners
Jackson Crockett's remarkable paintings that support charity
An Event that will inspire and bring us all together during this pandemic

PeaceArch
news



SURREY
NOW Leader

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