



## STA Connection November 23-27, 2020

### Covid News



There continue to be more exposures, more staff meetings, and more letters to parents. Table officers have been attending as many staff notification meetings as possible over the last several weeks. Lately there have been days when we can't simultaneously be at all the meetings that are happening, unfortunately. It has been interesting to see the differences between staffs, administrations, and how the message from the district and Fraser Health is evolving. Some staffs have tons of questions and most listen to the information quietly. The health information is being refined, and your questions help in this process.

As you know the BCTF is urging a mask mandate, and frankly, our district's leadership is all for it. All of us in BC's Covid epicenter (Surrey) want to make mask wearing normal, and all of us together, teachers and administrators, could do it, despite the lack of specific Provincial Health orders. Of course we don't recommend you engage in some sort of battle with your students or the parents. And we must be sensitive to students and adults who, for medical reasons, cannot wear masks. But modeling is powerful, telling the story of why prevention is important is powerful, and encouraging as much as possible is important.

Also, all meetings among adults should be virtual. School Based Team, Staff Committee, School union meetings, Staff meetings, Department Head Meetings are all important, but not more than our health. Please insist that they be held over teams or Zoom.

At last week's General Meeting members charged the STA Leadership with pressing four demands - a mask mandate, reduced classroom density, accommodations for members who are immunocompromised and reopening the remote learning opportunities. These are things we have been advocating for months with MLAs and senior district staff, and so our next steps are to continue that advocacy and request a meeting with trustees as well. There's a role for you in the schools too! If we all post the BCTF's mask poster in our rooms, that also makes our ask visible. ASK for the MASK!

**NB: TTOCs and Other STA Members**

Schools with an exposure will not need to contact staff directly unless requested to by the District. As such, we remind TTOCs and other itinerant staff to follow the "[Checklist for multiple site staff](#)" and check the [Fraser Health webpage](#) to be informed of exposures.

## TTOCs

There are apparently more failures to fill in Elementary than in Secondary. If you are a Secondary TTOC who has days or part days without work, the district wants you to know you can work in Elementary as well. If you can't access the workboard to see all the vacancies, please contact Dispatch.

## General meeting continues next week Dec 2. All members welcome.

Given the depth of the discussion surrounding COVID-19 at the last Special General Meeting on November 18th, we will be reconvening on December 2nd at 4pm on Zoom. Please join us to complete scheduled agenda items and discuss the BCTF Annual General Meeting resolutions before the December deadline to submit them. 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 yet registered to attend any meeting this year, [sign up](#) for this year's links!

## In case of school closure or need to self isolate:

Cambridge Elementary's experience last week helped us learn - and their rep recommends to us to remind teachers to bring their devices and chargers home daily and ensuring that you and your students have access to technology to support home learning. You may not be able to return to the school to get what you need.

## BC Federation of Labour meeting this week

The BC Federation of Labour Convention took place virtually on Wednesday November 25th, 2020 and Thursday November 26th, 2020 where communities and affiliates from across BC took part. 29 STA members attended as delegates to participate in the convention to be in conversation regarding the significant issues facing workers in B.C. Notable motions brought forth were the BCTF calling for an end to “me too” clauses and Nanaimo District TA calling for a more progressive tax system with Universal Basic Income. Unfortunately neither motion hit the floor, but it was interesting to participate in all the debate that did take place.

## Posters for your classroom from the BCTF

The BCTF has designed COVID-19 resource posters available to print and put up in classrooms. Although we currently cannot enforce mask wearing in schools, we have the power to create a classroom culture of mask wearing and to model this behaviour for our students. The posters are available both in colour and black and white and will help students remember the importance of mask wearing in public settings and staying safe.

## Peer Support Consultants



The Peer Support program is designed to provide support for members by their peers in confidential and non-judgmental processes. If you or a colleague is struggling and would benefit from a peer to provide assistance you can check out more details on the [STA website under Services > Peer Support](#).

We have now trained our 6 new Peer Support Consultants and the whole team of Peer Support Consultants shared a training day on November 23.

## Positions being posted

Opening on November 26, there will be a 1.0 Peer Support Consultant position and a 0.6 Mentor Helping Teacher position. These postings will close on Tuesday December 1. Normally positions posted at this point in the year are not possible for teachers in contract positions. The STA and the District have an agreement for these positions to be open for members to apply and the ability to return to your position next year. The Mentor Helping Teacher is only 0.6 and you would be able to maintain your 0.4 that you currently hold and the remainder will be posted.

## Virtual Union Meetings

A reminder to be careful if you use the school district's Microsoft TEAMS platform for union business and meetings. Although Teams is efficient for holding large meetings, be sure about who is in the meeting, do not record the meetings, do not use the chat feature (which could leave a permanent record of comments), and ask members to have cameras on to ensure discussions are being held confidentially in solidarity with each other. It is also easy to use Zoom instead.

## Margie Willers Obituary and Memorial Event



Margie Willers passed away peacefully on Nov 17th, 2020. She was President of the STA from 1990-92 and was instrumental in bargaining many of the provisions Surrey Teachers have today. Generations of Surrey students have been positively impacted by Margie Willers and she is dearly loved and appreciated by both students and colleagues. Please [join us via Zoom](#) on Sunday, November 29 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm to help memorialize this wonderful teacher. We hope that Surrey teachers will be in attendance. To honour her memory and legacy, Margie had expressed a wish to please consider donating to the [Margie Willers Memorial Scholarship Fund](#) in lieu of flowers.

## Gender-Neutral Washrooms

The policies and procedures of Surrey School District state that a guiding principle is that schools and workplaces be safe and caring for all. All students have the right to safe and private restroom facilities aligned with their gender identity. The STA has asked every school health and safety committee to recommend one gender-neutral bathroom for students and a separate one for adults be made available in every school.

Gender-neutral washrooms are vital in promoting the respect, dignity, and equity of students who are trans\* (transgender and non-binary), and gender nonconforming (gender-expansive and gender creative). School administration should ensure the existence of at least two washrooms, that are unlocked and clearly accessible, are made available for use by everyone in the building. All such facilities must include respectful signage that makes it clear that they are not restricted by gender. For more information on inclusive washrooms, please visit [SOGI 123](#).

## The Looking Glass - a regular feature of the STA Connection!

How do you critically engage with and relate to students in order to gain a better understanding of the classroom? Many teachers recognize the importance of educating themselves and their students about racial and social justice but don't know where to begin. With the recent civil rights uprising, more conversations are turning towards solidarity and how to confront anti-Black racism. The commitment to anti-racism is an active and ongoing process and it all begins with an effort to (un)learn. In thinking about this, it is helpful to ask ourselves how the experiences of Black students in Canada are distinct to other students of colour and what meaningful changes teachers can make to address these issues.

This week, Haymarket Books is hosting an online event (with a sliding scale) to celebrate the launch of [Black Lives Matter at School: An Uprising for Education Justice](#) which is a collection of essays, interviews, poems, resolutions, and more from educators, students, and activists. This awaited book is an essential anti-racist resource and a transformative vision of the educational school system. To register, please visit [Eventbrite](#).

## White Ribbon Campaign and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

The White Ribbon Organization is a charity dedicated to ending violence against women. Each year, male allies wear a white ribbon from November 25, the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women, for one or two weeks to counter toxic masculinity and challenge racism, homophobia, transphobia and sexism. In Canada, the ribbon is worn until December 6, a day in remembrance of the 14 female students who lost their lives in the École Polytechnique Massacre and all women whose lives were lost to gender-based violence.

The White Ribbon Campaign works to promote gender equity, increase gender-based violence prevention and awareness and counter the negative socialization of boys while promoting discussion and thinking about these issues. The 16 days of Activism begins on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, until December 10th, Human Rights Day.



**LGBTQ+ Ad Hoc Committee**

Pink Shirt Day Sticker Contest

Pink Shirt Day, February 24, 2021, is a day to take a stand against homophobic bullying. It began in 2007 in Nova Scotia when a Grade 9 boy was bullied and threatened with violence because he wore a pink shirt. Upon witnessing this, two students took a stand against this which led to one idea and action that changed the world. As an act of solidarity and kindness, they mobilized and distributed 50 pink shirts for students to wear throughout the school which inspired an anti-bullying movement.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people (LGBTQIA2S+) are more likely to experience bullying and harassment. Pink Shirt Day is an opportunity to raise awareness and spread the message that it is never okay to bully or harass someone because of who they are.

This year, the STA is hosting a sticker design contest to honour this day. The winning design will be printed as a sticker and sent to all schools in the district. The LGBTQ+ Ad Hoc committee will be reviewing the submissions and select the winner. Entries need to be received before **December 16** (in consideration of the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19).

- The artwork should focus on the theme of challenging homophobia and be submitted on an 8.5x11 sheet of paper.
- Artwork submissions can be done as individuals, clubs, or as a class.
- A class or club who chooses to participate as a group will all receive a sticker.
- Designs can be submitted to [surreyschoolspinkshirtday@gmail.com](mailto:surreyschoolspinkshirtday@gmail.com) or sent through interschool mail (the blue bag) to the STA office (Courier #000).

## Status of Women Committee

STA Status of Women Committee's

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WORKSHOP

**December 4, 2020**

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

via Zoom

PRESENTED BY



ANASTASIA GAISENOK



DR. BALBIR GURM

Network to Eliminate Violence  
in Relationships (NEVR)

November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Remember all those quick and easy BCTF email campaigns? Here's a similar one that will [tell your MP that you demand a National Action Plan](#) on Violence Against Women and Girls. We've been talking about it for too long, it's time to focus on solutions and concrete action.

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.



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](#) now!

## Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

Our "Wellness Tip of the Week" is to check out Nike Training Club, a free app for iOS and Android that gives you access to over 190 premium workouts, ranging from 15-45 minutes per session, across strength, endurance, yoga and mobility targeting your abs, arms, shoulders, glutes and legs. [Check it out!](#)

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).





### STA EVENTS

November 29 – [Margie Willers Zoom memorial](#)  
December 1 – Bargaining Committee  
December 2 – [Reconvened Special General Meeting](#)  
December 3 – Awards Committee  
December 3 – LGBTQ+ Ad Hoc Committee  
December 4 – [Gender-Based Violence Workshop](#)  
December 4 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)  
December 7 – ProD Committee  
December 8 – STA Executive  
December 9 – Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee  
December 10 – Mediator Training session  
December 10 – Labour Affairs Committee  
December 15 – Convention Committee  
December 15 – International Solidarity Committee  
December 16 – [SGM / STARA](#)

### OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women: 16 days of action begins  
November 27 – Buy Nothing Day  
Dec 1 – World Aids Day  
Dec 2 – International Day for the Abolition of Slavery  
December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities  
December 5 – International Volunteer Day  
December 6 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women  
December 10 – Human Rights Day  
December 18 – International Migrants Day