



## STA Connection November 30-December 4, 2020

### Red 4 BC Ed Campaign

At our last General Meeting, we passed a motion to put pressure on for safer schools. Considering this, the STA is starting a Red4BCed campaign to build advocacy and awareness around issues impacting our staff, students and community during this pandemic. To show we need some changes, please consider **wearing red** in solidarity on Fridays. Your reason for wearing red might be to urge for the same safety measures to apply to all other indoor public places! Or to create more action regarding limited sick days and how they can run out quickly, especially given the exposure rates in some schools. It might be that you're wearing red to raise awareness of the consequences of failure to fill and having to give up prep time. Everyone has a different reason for their decision to wear red and this could be an opportunity for you to ask a colleague or two about their reason for wearing red!

Remember - **wear red on Fridays** to show your support for safer schools!

### Newton Elementary Closed

As you all know, a second Elementary school has been closed due to a Covid outbreak. The school had 16 positive cases associated with it and a cohort sent into self-isolation before the closure was announced. We learned that if there are various self-monitoring letters in a school site, it is an indication that Fraser Health and the district is watching a site very closely. What it boils down to is if they can't rule out transmission taking place between cohorts in the school, they consider closing to get it under control.

STA members in closed schools will be paid while in self isolation, because they will still be working, albeit remotely. If they are sick, they will be able to use sick days, of course, and if they don't have any left, they would be eligible for SIP. Please contact us at the STA for support in that process if necessary. Members

who are itinerant teachers, teachers who work at more than that site or TTOCs who have to self-isolate also need to continue being paid. Please contact us at the STA to help you follow up if you are experiencing difficulties in this regard.

The entire process of closing cohorts, self-isolation, and switching to remote teaching and learning is extremely disruptive. Self-isolation means you have to stay home, get others to bring you groceries or medications etc., and to be isolated even within the home. Since teachers who are required to self-isolate can't go to the school building, if they need something from their school the district will help retrieve it, including if it is at another site where you work.

## Snack money?

Each year the STA budgets so school staffs can claim some costs of snacks for in-school union meetings. Since we can't be sharing food or even meeting in person this year, the Exec decided the money budgeted for that should be distributed to schools to be used as the STA reps and members in each site decide. Here is the motion:

THAT in 2020-2021, staff rep(s) at each school site facilitate a fair, transparent, and equitable decision as to how to spend the funds allocated for 'refreshments at school union meetings' to be voted on at a school union meeting. Elementary schools and Learning Centres would have \$160, Elementary schools with over 600 students would have \$200, and Secondary schools would have \$240.

Staff reps are encouraged to have a meeting at your site to determine what funds can be allocated to, such as to encourage attendance at STA meetings, release time for reps, hygienically distributed snacks (individually packaged), draw prizes etc.

A promotional banner for the BCTF Virtual New Teachers' Conference 2021. The banner features a background image of a group of people in a virtual meeting space. On the left, there is a logo with the year '2021' in a green box, followed by a large 'BCTF' in blue and purple, and the text 'BCTF VIRTUAL NEW TEACHERS' CONFERENCE' below it. To the right of the logo, the text 'Community and connections for early career teachers' is written in purple, followed by 'February 26, 2021' in large blue letters. At the bottom left, the text 'REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!' is written in large blue letters. At the bottom right, there is a small circular logo with a stylized flame or torch. The URL 'bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2021' is written in white at the bottom left.

**2021**  
**BCTF VIRTUAL**  
NEW TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

**Community and connections for early career teachers**  
**February 26, 2021**

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**

[bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2021](https://bctf.ca/NewTeachersConference2021)

This year, the BCTF New Teachers' Conference will be a virtual event, with many excellent workshops on a wide range of topics, such as Health and Safety, Aboriginal Education, Social Justice, Collective Agreement, Inclusive Education, French and Francophone education, etc. In addition, we will have two renowned keynotes who will present and interact with participants on Indigenous topics. There will be prizes to win at the end of the day and some fun activities such as Zumba and Yoga sessions for all! This conference is designed especially those who have been teaching for 5 years or less, members who are

new to a district or members who teach new topics or grades, this is an event designed for you by your Federation. For registration information, please visit the [BCTF's New Teachers' Conference 2021 page](#).

## Early reminder of January 31 deadline for Evaluation of Qualifications

Have you recently completed coursework? Are you qualified for positions requiring special training such as LST, IST, Helping Teacher, Counsellor, or Career Facilitator? Have a look through the Job Description Handbook (linked below), because you might already be eligible without realizing it! In order to be shortlisted in Rounds 1 and 2, teachers need to be listed in the District Qualification Book. Teachers who are interested in changing their assignments to such positions need to apply to the Human Resources Department (courier #481) by **January 31, 2021** to have their qualifications evaluated. The evaluation will be completed by March 31. (CA, Article E.28.1). Information regarding job descriptions and evaluation forms can be found on [The Hub memo](#).

## STA/SD36 Peer Support



From time to time, teachers may find themselves struggling in their career. New grades/subjects, extremely challenging students, personal health issues, or other concerns may be overwhelming. There is help available to teachers if they feel they need some extra support.

If you can identify an area of your professional practice that you would like to refine or improve, Peer Support may be for you. Find out more on the [Peer Support page](#) of the STA website.

## STA Peer Mediation

Experiencing conflict at work? Are you having a difficult time working with a colleague? Are you having trouble communicating in your professional life? Are you feeling frustrated or vulnerable? Is a working relationship breaking down? Are you avoiding interacting with a colleague? Are you feeling uncomfortable to resolve an issue without support?

As terrible as these situations sound, if you answered yes, you are probably not alone. Sometimes intelligent, articulate, sensitive, and caring professionals find themselves in circumstances that are both surprising and desperate. They feel devastated when they are unable to find a way out of the difficulties.

**The STA Mediation Service may be able to help.**

Find out more on the [Mediation page](#) of the STA website.

## Call-Out for The Advocate

Do you have a story to share? The STA is accepting submissions for our next issue of The Advocate. We encourage submissions related to Surrey teachers' experiences of COVID-19 - from journals to reflections, to poems or prose. Are you a science teacher concerned with the medical details of this virus? Are you a survivor of a bout of Covid? Have you been isolated at home, or has your cohort been isolated? There are so many stories. Please submit to [communications@surreyteachers.org](mailto:communications@surreyteachers.org).

## Your benefits, at a glance

On your paystub, you'll notice that there are several payroll deductions covering items such as pension, health benefits and employment insurance. As an employee, deductions are taken directly from earnings and allocated between compulsory and voluntary contributions. If you have ever wondered about the details of your coverage and what it all means, please refer to the payroll deductions and benefits explanation sheet attached.

## Lunch hour reality in Surrey schools

We have heard from many members with concerns about how lunch is operating in their schools. Some teachers are asked to supervise during their 45-minute lunch break. Some students in the hallways and the gym are not social distancing. Some students are required to exit the school and, as a result, parents have complained. Teachers are also faced with a difficult situation: supervision in their classroom and a limited staffroom, so some end up eating lunch in their car. Has anyone found a system that leaves people generally satisfied? Please share it with Gavin Slade-Kerr at [hs@surreyteachers.org](mailto:hs@surreyteachers.org).

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On December 6th, the New Westminster & District Labour Council will be hosting a virtual vigil to commemorate the 14 women who were murdered by a lone gunman on December 6, 1989, in what has become known as the Montreal Massacre. The online event will feature MLA Rachna Singh, BC Federation of Labour ST Sussanne Skidmore, HEU delegate Louella Vincent, Balbir Gurm of KPU and NEVR and our very own BCTF STA delegate Julia MacRae. For information on how to register, please refer to the attached poster.

Register for the Zoom link here: <https://bit.ly/2UYIZdx>

## January Marie Lapuz Youth Leadership Award

Do you know of any youth between the ages of 16-30 who have demonstrated an active involvement and commitment to leadership in the LGBTQIA2+ community? This award honours the memory and legacy of January Marie Lapuz, an empowered trans voice and advocate in the community. The recipient will receive a letter of congratulations, official framed certificate, and a cash prize. Any students, past or present, who are interested must submit their application by December 31, 2020. For more information, please visit the [January Marie Lapuz Youth Leadership Award page](#) and the [Sher Vancouver Youth Award page](#).



## International Solidarity Committee

Our International Solidarity Committee (ISC) passed a motion to purchase coffee and chocolate from Café Ético to use as prizes for STA members, with funds from our committee budget. **The results of the draw will be shared at the STARA (STA Rep Assembly) meeting on December 16, 2020.** (If you are interested in submitting your name for this draw, please send your name and school to ISC committee member Marilyn Ricketts-Lindsay at [ricketts\\_m@surreyschools.ca](mailto:ricketts_m@surreyschools.ca). **The deadline to submit your name is December 11, 2020. All STA members are welcome to enter the draw; you do not need to be in attendance at the meeting to win.**

The STA supports CoDevelopment Canada which is an organization that promotes, supports, and advocates for social justice and global education in the Americas. To learn more about the STA's efforts with this organization, please find the letter from the International Solidarity Committee attached.

## Ethical Christmas Shopping suggestions

Thinking about gifts for the holidays and want to stop shopping at Amazon? Consider ethically shopping for a conscious gift to help improve the lives of people all over the world. The STA recommends purchasing fair trade [Kampot pepper](#) to support social justice initiatives that help alleviate food insecurity and shop at [Café ético](#) to support human rights in Latin America. Consider buying gifts that gives back!

## LGBTQ+ Ad Hoc Committee

### Reminder - Pink Shirt Day Sticker Contest!

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



Come join us again at 7:00 pm this Friday for our weekly “Knit, Chat, and Wine Night”, hosted by Status of Women committee member Velma Moore! Grab your beverage of choice and some needles and yarn, as we beat the loneliness of isolation and safely connect from the comfort of our homes. 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. [Register](#) now!

## Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

Are you increasingly worried and panicked lately? Do you suffer from perfectionism, social anxiety, or phobias? If you said yes to any of these, our “Wellness Tip of the Week” is to check out MindShift CBT, a free evidence-based anxiety relief app based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). MindShift CBT features tools that can teach you how to cope with anxiety and give you quick relief so you can stay calm. In the app, you can journal and keep track of your mood, setting healthy habits and goals. The app can also help you to face your fears and challenge you to do new things. [Check it out!](#)

## MindShift CBT

Free Evidence-Based Anxiety Relief



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**

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 – STARA

#### **OTHER IMPORTANT DATES**

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