
Surrey teachers work on the unceded traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Qayqayt and Semiahmoo First Nations. As part of meaningful reconciliation work, we reflect on the impacts of colonialism through self-education in order to be accountable to Indigenous people and pay attention to our students of Indigenous ancestry, providing them the tools for their success in the future. We are all on a path to learn more and understand the role of each of us as educators in healing the broken relationship with the First Peoples of this territory. We thank those who live on and care for the land.



STA Connection January 4-8, 2021

Welcome Back

Happy 2021! We hope you had a relaxed and recharged winter break. After returning to school after a two-week break, it is important that we continue to prioritize the health and safety of our staff and students. Although the Provincial Health Officer has not issued a mask mandate, we urge everyone to wear masks, especially having returned from a period where it is impossible for us to know what everyone's contacts have been.

It is important to remember that we are all working hard to support each other during these challenging times. If you have questions or concerns, please remember to consult Staff Reps at your school or bring your questions forward to your school Health and Safety Committee. Our members of the Executive Committee are also available to assist you. Please find a list below of current EC members, their role, and sites they presently work at or have worked at in the past, so you can know us better! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

EC members who teach full time

- Kelly MacDosen, Secretary-Treasurer, PTOC
- Adilah Abdirahman, Local Rep to the BCTF, STA Communications Coordinator and PTOC (K-12)
- Angela Marcakis, Local Rep to the BCTF, Creekside Elementary, Grade 7
- Amrit Sanghe, Local Rep to the BCTF, Queen Elizabeth Secondary, LST 8/9

- Lizanne Foster, Local Rep to the BCTF, Queen Elizabeth Secondary, Career Life Connections 12 and Psychology 11/12
- Rick Kumar, Local Rep to the BCTF, Ecole Panorama Ridge Secondary, English and Socials 9/10
- Annie Ohana, Local Rep to the BCTF, LA Matheson, Aboriginal Head and Indigenous Advocate, Social Justice Law, Socials Science and French.
- Violette Baillargeon, Member at Large (also BCTF Executive Committee Member), Johnston Heights Secondary School, Modern Languages Teacher in International Baccalaureate 8-12
- Dana Ebtakar, TTOC and Early Career Rep, Guildford Park Secondary, Life Skills 8-12
- Jacquie King, Member at Large - Aboriginal, Lena Shaw Elementary, Grade 6/7
- Sajeda Rashid, Member at Large- Racialized, Creekside Elementary, Grade 6.
- Andrea Leeks, Member at Large, Hillcrest Elementary, LST
- Marilynn Carr, Member at Large, Riverdale Elementary, Teacher-Librarian (K-7)

Full Time Released EC members

- Matt Westphal, President (also BCTF Executive Committee member), formerly Princess Margaret Social Studies. Law, and French teacher, and Aboriginal Teacher-Advocate
- Julia MacRae, 1st VP, formerly at Fraser Heights, English 10-12, Lit 12 and Planning 10.
- Jatinder Bir, 2nd VP formerly at Tamanawis Secondary, BASES, LST, SS and K-7 IST
- Erin Coleman Professional Development Officer, formerly at Mountainview Montessori, Grade 6/7
- Kevin Amboe, Professional Support Services Officer formerly at David Brankin Elementary, IST, Math 8-10, Grade 6-7
- Dana Neidig, Accommodations Officer formerly at Mountainview Montessori,
- Gavin Slade-Kerr, Health and Safety Officer formerly at Fraserwood Elementary,
- Joanna Cerazy, Grievance Officer formerly at Jessie Lee Elementary, IST
- Mark Keelan, Grievance Officer, Formerly at Jessie Lee Elementary Grades 3-5

Meeting with the Ministers December 17



We were very pleased to have an hour-long meeting with the new Minister of Education, Jennifer Whiteside and the Minister of Labour, Hon. Harry Bains and their staff people. Representing you were Matt Westphal, President, Julia MacRae 1st VP, Jatinder Bir 2nd VP, Gavin Slade-Kerr, Health and Safety officer, Lizanne Foster (from her portable), and Lisa Davis (in the lab coat, coming from her lab-classroom!), all Surrey teachers. We think it was the first time any BC Education Minister has met directly with our local. We explained the concerns we have about the impossibility of physical distancing in our classrooms, the need for a mask mandate for schools, contact tracing delays and confusion, community concerns about

transmission, and even touched on the FSAs. It seemed like they took note of our concerns. We hope that our efforts help bring about the changes we need. We continue to follow up.

Mask mandate? It may be up to us

After the meeting with the ministers, we debriefed the meeting and had to admit to ourselves that perhaps we have written all the letters and advocated with all the people who we can think of that could and should implement a Surrey schools own mask mandate to keep us safer. We have written to Dr. Bonnie Henry (open letter, which generated a lot of media, but no response) Our School Board Chair Laurie Larsen (response but no action), we have met numerous times with senior management, and we have met with Fraser Health officials. We will continue to pursue advocacy and lobbying, but we are also going to do all we can to implement a mask mandate ourselves in our schools. We will be developing a plan to communicate directly with Surrey parents and community members in various languages to ask for their cooperation. We have recruited an ad hoc Covid action committee of Surrey Teachers who will plan and implement this and other actions. We will make our schools safer with mask wearing and we may save lives doing so.

Call out for STA members with language(s) skills

We are preparing a communications campaign and we need as many languages represented as possible. Do you speak Tagalog, Farsi, Urdu, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Italian, Hungarian, Spanish, German, Arabic, Hindi, Korean, French? Or any other language that you know is also spoken by people in Surrey? We need your help. Please contact Julia (1vp@surreyteachers.org) as soon as possible to help us translate a simple health message that conveys our desire for masks to be worn in Surrey schools. We will provide release time for the work if needed. Let's all do what we can to make our schools safer!

FSA opt-out letters coming ASAP

It is hard to believe we still have to fight to do away with the FSA tests, with so many things wrong with them. There is the time of year they are written, the stress on the kids, the misuse of the results by the Fraser institute in their rankings that do nothing except demoralize some school communities and warp the real estate market, and on top of it all, the pandemic is hard enough to deal with, add a "standardized" test on top of that? It's almost too much. However, we shall continue to advocate and take action to thwart the process. Grade 4 and 7 teachers, the opt-out letters are coming to your schools ASAP. Please distribute to your classes' parents.

Secondary schedule for next year

The District tells us that for the moment, they have to comply with the current health order, which mandates cohorts. The easiest way to schedule cohorts effectively is with the quarter system. So until the health order changes, that is the direction the district is leaning for the fall. It is still early days, of course, and it is easier to loosen limitations than to apply them later. If you have scheduling tweak ideas that would make a difference, perhaps for your specialty area, or other reasons (e.g. prep), now is the time to suggest them. You could bring ideas to your administrators and encourage them to bring the ideas

forward, you could pass a motion with a great suggestion at your staff committee and move it forward that way, or you could email us and we could bring them to senior administration at our monthly meeting. To choose this last option, email Julia at 1vp@surreyteachers.org.

Fogging with Clorox 360

Some teachers are experiencing reactions to the chemicals in the fogging machines in our schools. Please let us know if you are one of them and contact our Health and Safety Officer at hs@surreyteachers.org.

Safety Plans

The district is offering training for developing and updating Employee Safety Plans. While members may choose to attend district in-service to know the details of Safety Plans, it is very important to know that Administrators are responsible for Employee Safety Plans. Employee Safety Plans are legal documents. Admin may find your support invaluable to create an effective plan, but the core of the document fulfills administrator's legal duty to legally ensure Employee Safety.

(From the following posted in the District Weekly Memo)

Memo #11

Attention: All Principals and Vice-Principals, Case Managers, Counselors, BASES, IST and LST

Department: Student Support

Contact: Karen Greaux, District Principal

Topic: Virtual Safety Plan Inservice January 7

Deadline: TBD – EARLY JANUARY 2021

Save the date! We will be offering a **virtual Safety Plan in service session on January 7 beginning at 3:30**. Additional information and registration will be available early in the new year.

Daily Health Check In

The public health orders for a daily health check in, that both the STA and the district thought did not apply to schools, turn out to apply to schools. Both the BCTF and the District agree. So schools are now coming up with systems requiring a daily health check in. Different schools are doing it different ways, including simply signing in with a daily health check posted beside it. Other schools are using an email response system. Email responses are fine if teachers have access to district devices to do so. Schools are not allowed, however, to require that teachers use personal devices to sign in. Sign in systems that use a QR code posted by a school entrance, for example, that ask teachers to use their phones to check in, are not appropriate.

Further, some schools have asked people to check in when they are taking a sick day or attending an event not on district work sites. Teachers are not required to do the health check when they will not be attending a district work site: in fact, it may create unnecessary concern if someone staying home

sick says on the check in that they have symptoms. Please let Gavin Slade-Kerr at hs@surreyteachers.org if your school has an inappropriate health check in system.

Isolation when not sick

When you are required to isolate at home because of a close contact but are not sick, your administrator should be trying to find work for you to do at home: supporting classes online, marking, etc. If they are unable to do so, they should be contacting district principals and assistant superintendents who are often able to find other work for the isolation period. Please contact Gavin Slade-Kerr at hs@surreyteachers.org if you are forced to isolate, not sick, and not being given the option of working from home.

Mask Reminder

Please continue to model mask wearing and keep up the efforts to have your students wear masks as much as possible. More and more we are reading studies that indicate that Covid 19 is an aerosolized transmission disease, and 3 layer masks offer protection to yourself and others. Feel free to post the BCTF Mask posters in your classroom and hallways. (See Attached)



This month we will be having two sessions of Staff Rep Training. Reps can sign up for one out of two SURT topic training sessions. Once registered, don't forget to book your TOC/LOA for the full day. Here are your choices.

Staff Rep Training: Understanding and Advocating for Public Education

- to develop a local understanding of Public Education in the 21st Century.
- to consider ways in which we can work to achieve the conditions necessary for a vibrant public education system.
- to invite a conversation with stakeholders.
- advocacy tools.

Select one of the following sessions and sign up: <https://staffrep2021-publiceducation.eventbrite.ca>

- Friday, January 8, 2021
- Monday, January 11, 2021
- Friday, January 15, 2021
- Monday, January 18, 2021

Staff Rep Training: Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Our Schools and Communities

- to develop a firmer understanding of the challenges faced by members of equity seeking groups.
- to delve deeper into the issues and barriers around equity and inclusion.
- to develop an action plan to advance equity and inclusion in our communities.

Select one of the following sessions and sign up: <https://staffrep2021-inclusion.eventbrite.ca>

- Friday, January 22, 2021
- Wednesday, January 27, 2021
- Monday, February 1, 2021
- Friday, February 5, 2021

Do you want to attend the BCTF AGM?

- Please email your name and a brief statement to sta@surreyteachers.org by **Friday, January 8, 2021 (4pm)**.
- Delegates will be elected at the **Virtual Special General Meeting on January 20, 2021**.

Each year over 750 delegates from around the province attend the BCTF AGM. It is a great opportunity to see how the BCTF operates, to hear new perspectives on important issues, meet colleagues from other parts of the province, and to have a voice in the decisions made by the union.

The 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held virtually and will begin on **Saturday, March 20, and conclude on Tuesday, March 23**. The Federation will be using a new online platform that will greatly enhance the virtual meeting for all participants. However, for the optimum user experience, every delegate will need to have access to a **desktop or laptop computer**.

Delegates will be elected at the **Virtual Special General Meeting on January 20, 2021**.

Elected delegates and alternates are **expected to attend all virtual training sessions** leading up to the AGM.

Sessions are as follows:

- February 8 – Rookie AGM Delegates training 8:30 am to 3:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- February 16 – AGM Delegates training 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- February 22 – AGM Delegates training 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- March 3 – AGM Delegates training 8:30 am to 3:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- March 8 – AGM Delegates training 4:00 am to 6:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.

If you are interested in becoming a delegate and can commit to the preparation meetings, please email your name and a brief statement to sta@surreyteachers.org by **Friday, January 8, 2021 (4pm)**.

Remember, your chances of being elected as a delegate are much better if you have a written statement! It is also possible to nominate yourself from the floor at the meeting.

If you have any questions about the BCTF AGM, or the process of becoming a delegate, please contact Jatinder Bir at 2vp@surreyteachers.org.

January 31 Qualifications Deadline

In order to be shortlisted for jobs that require certain qualifications 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, in time for Rounds 1 & 2. (CA, Article E.28.1). Information regarding job descriptions and evaluation forms can be found on [the Hub memo](#).

The Looking Glass

In response to the unrest and the attack on the U.S Capitol, teachers may find themselves questioning how to navigate addressing injustice in the classroom. It is obvious that a white supremacist mob was treated with respect in strong contrast with various acts of deadly police violence against anti racism activists over the last months.

As educators who strive towards an anti-racist teaching practice, it is imperative that we address clear racial inequalities present in the world. By naming the events that have transpired, we avoid objectivity and create opportunities for meaningful discussion, whether it is a brief conversation and check-in at the start of class or a complete lesson. As Ibrahim X. Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist*, states, "There is no neutrality in the racism struggle...One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is not in between safe space of 'not racist.' The claim of 'not racist' neutrality is a mask for racism."

Resources for teachers on the days after the attack on the U.S Capitol can be found on [Beyond the Stoplight](#). Another helpful resource is the Facebook group for educators [Teaching on the Days After Dialogue & Resources for Educating Toward Justice](#). These resources contain helpful tools on how to approach these conversations with careful thought, consideration, and planning to create a safe space for students.



International Solidarity Committee



The following members are the winners of the International Solidarity Committee Café Ético draw in December. Congratulations everyone!

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----|
| 1. Eileen Prasad | MB Sandford | 129 |
| 2. Glenys McFarlane | Hyland Elementary | 131 |
| 3. Connie Eytcheson | Frank Hurt | 106 |
| 4. Murray Henderson | Mountainview | 50 |
| 5. Angela Marcakis | Creekside | 176 |
| 6. Parm Bains | Maple Green | 130 |
| 7. Sierra Rai | Earl Marriott | 105 |

2nd STA ISC Draw for Café Ético Fair Trade Coffee

Our International Solidarity Committee (ISC) purchased 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 General meeting on January 20, 2021.** (If you are interested in submitting your name for this draw, please complete this [form](#). **The deadline to submit your name is January 18, 2021. All STA members are welcome to enter the draw; you do not need to attend the meeting to win.**

Surrey teachers support CoDevelopment Canada which is an organization that promotes, supports, and advocates for social justice and global education in the Americas. More information about the STA's efforts with this organization is provided on the [form](#).

LGBTQ+ Ad Hoc Committee

Pink Shirt Day Winner



OPD

Congratulations to Olivia Pigeon from Coast Meridian Elementary for winning the Pink Shirt Day Sticker Contest!



STA EVENTS

- January 11 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
- January 11 – Ad Hoc Environmental Justice Committee
- January 11 – Indigenous Education Committee
- January 11 – Pro-D Committee
- January 12 – Executive Committee

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

- January 17 – Raoul Wallenberg Day, credited with saving 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the Second World War
- January 18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 29 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia

January 13 – Ad Hoc Young Worker Committee
January 13 – Health & Safety Committee
January 14 – TIME Committee
January 14 – International Solidarity Committee
January 15 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 18 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 18 – Convention Committee
January 19 – Bargaining Committee
January 20 – General Meeting
January 21 – Status of Women Committee
January 22 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 26 – Executive Committee
January 27 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 27 – STARA Steering Committee
January 27 – Ad Hoc Indigenization Committee