
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 11-15, 2021

STA General Meeting next week

Please feel invited to our General Meeting on Jan 20th via Zoom. We will be electing our delegates to the BCTF AGM. If you are a young worker, (i.e., under 35,) please feel especially invited to put your name forward to attend the BCTF AGM, as we reserve 2 spots for you! The deadline has passed for submitting your name in advance with a writeup, but you can still send us your name or run from the floor. There is no way to attend as a delegate if you are not elected at a General Meeting. We will also be discussing advocacy for more safety in the pandemic.

All are welcome. Agenda and candidates' statements are attached.

STA Ad Hoc Covid Action Committee Formed

Thank you to the 10 people who put their names forward to help us advocate for needed safety improvements during the pandemic. The committee met Wednesday for the first time and is working on ways to get our voices heard more effectively. Stay tuned!

Language skills needed!

We are planning to make short videos requesting and encouraging members of the community to send their children and teens to school with masks, and to review other Covid safety protocols. We have volunteers for Tagalog (2), German (2), Punjabi (2), Hindi (2), Somali (1), Farsi (1), Russian (1), Japanese (1), French (1), Spanish (1) Korean (1) and Cantonese (1). We need volunteers for Urdu, Vietnamese, Polish, Tamil, etc. It would be ideal to have 2 people for each language. Please email Julia directly at 1vp@surreyteachers.org ASAP if you can offer your fluency skills in a language spoken in Surrey. We will be starting this project imminently. Thanks in advance!

Health information is Private

We know it is frustrating to have limited information about Covid exposures in your school, and we are actively advocating for information to be more transparent. But in the absence of satisfaction there, please remember that everyone's health information is private, and do not ask people about their Covid status nor share information you may have around. This is important because humans are complex! We need people to feel confident that their test results are confidential, or some might avoid the screening. We have had some upset members contact us to ask us to deliver this message to colleagues and we thank everyone very much for helping with this.

Pro-D Townhall on January 21, 2021

Are you Pro-D Rep with questions? Do you want to learn more? There will be another Pro-D Townhall and Q&A session on Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 3 pm. 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 now!](#)

STA New Teachers' Conference #2 February 2, 2021



Please feel invited to register for our next New Teachers' Conference, which is a chance for new teachers to spend a day learning about what your union can do for you, and what your rights are. We will go over how to read your deductions on your pay cheque, leave provisions, Pro D, ethics scenarios etc. Many teachers say this one day spent learning about these things really helped them avoid problems and misunderstandings! If you are in your first few years of teaching, have not attended our conference before, and have a continuing or temporary contract, you are eligible. TTOCs are not eligible and we will have a separate conference for TTOCs in April. [Register now](#), it fills up fast!

BCTF New Teachers' Zoom Gatherings

The BCTF will be hosting regular New Teachers' Zoom Gatherings. The first one will be on January 27th at 3:30 p.m. The goal is to provide space for new members to meet and chat informally. Members can [register now!](#)

BC Teachers' Federation hosts its first

New Teachers' ZOOM Gathering

- An informal, open discussion for teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience.
- Share ideas, initiatives and resources with new teacher colleagues from across the province.
- Connect with new teachers from your local.

DATE: Wednesday January 27, 2021
TIME: 3:30pm to 4:30pm
REGISTRATION: <https://members.bctf.ca/Event.axd?e=2251>



I am surprised by...

My favourite teaching moment is...



STA statement on Attack on Capitol Hill

We condemn the terrorist attack on the US capitol that took place January 6, 2021. In keeping with our commitment to anti-racism, we, the STA Executive, condemn racism in all its forms. We believe racism and white supremacy were evident in the attack. We believe that it is imperative to speak out in solidarity and to also draw attention to the fact that Canada is not immune to the dangers of White Supremacy. In the past few months, we have seen it in the response to the Wet'suwet'en defending their land, racial profiling by police, Mi'kmaq fishers being attacked, and attacks on women on transit wearing the hijab. We know that 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere' which is why, as educators, we are ethically obliged to raise awareness of injustices. The events in Washington share characteristics with all actions that assert white supremacy everywhere and we are deeply concerned about such racial injustice. As part of an anti-racist teaching practice, it is important that we address clear racial inequalities present in the world and here in Canada. By naming the events that have transpired, we create opportunities for meaningful discussions about the world we live in, whether it is a brief conversation and check-in at the start of class or a complete lesson.

Acknowledging autonomy in the classroom, we hope that Surrey teachers will continue to debrief and discuss the historic events in the US with their students in an age appropriate, considerate manner that will help students to make sense of an event that will be in the textbooks of the future. We hope that we can come together as a collective of educators unified in our stance to oppose and speak out against all forms of racism.

BCTF Masks for distribution

Over 70 schools will soon receive their BCTF masks in the courier, and we have more for the rest of you. If you have not received them, please check with your rep to ask if they have requested the masks from us, and if not, please offer to help! We will be sending them out in the courier to school sites. Contact sta@surreyteachers.org to place your request.

MDI survey

There is a survey that is part of a research project from UBC that is being rolled out in schools affecting Gr. 4 and Gr. 7 teachers. Administering the survey and spending time doing the training is voluntary for teachers.

Status of Men Survey

The Status of Men committee has been meeting this year and would like your support answering [9 quick questions to start examining the decline of males in teaching](#) from 38% in 1991 to 23.6% in 2016. The fact that we have such a pronounced gender imbalance in our profession has many implications. The committee would like to hear from all Surrey teachers about this issue, regardless of gender or orientation. Please consider answering this very short, anonymous survey to provide the committee with some of your thoughts on the matter.

Mentor36 Elementary Pilot project

Using funds from the Collective Agreement settlement that included local work on early career mentorship, we are working with the district on rolling out a new mentorship pilot for 5 elementary schools.

The Elementary Mentorship Pilot Program is designed with two key elements in mind: creating meaningful relationships and building professional capacity.

With this wrap-around approach, we secure our early-career teachers with a sense of belonging, a desire to grow professionally, and the tools required to do both successfully.

This week schools will be informed about this project through the weekly memo with a deadline for application of January 22, 2021.



This Friday January 15th, students and educators across BC will be wearing black shirts in solidarity with the anti-racism and civil rights movements led by Black and racialized Canadians. This initiative was started by the Anti-Racist Coalition of Vancouver (ARC) and like Pink Shirt Day and Orange Shirt day, advocates to promote awareness and civil rights. Please join the STA in wearing a Black shirt this Friday! See the attached document for more information.

Very interesting opportunity! Call for Project Team Co-Researchers

School liaison officers (SLOs) exist in many schools across BC. How does their presence impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) educators and students? The BCTF is collaborating with the Surrey Teachers' Association (STA) and 3 other locals to carry out research on this issue. The BCTF invites STA members who identify as BIPOC to apply for a role as Co-Researcher on the Project Team. The Project Team will consist of 2 representatives from each of the participating locals and one representative from selected BCTF committees. For more information, please review the attached memo and application form. We are really happy that the BCTF is following up on ideas generated in Surrey.

Success stories for mask wearing

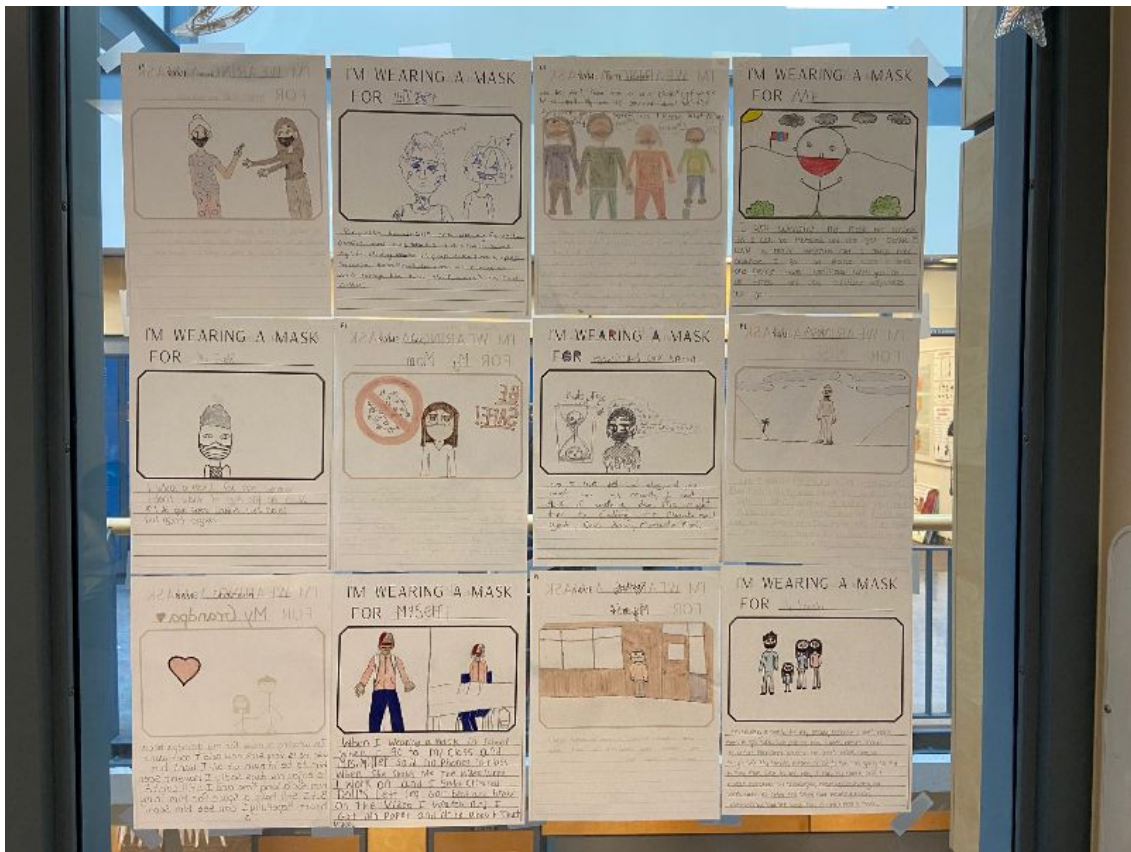
The STA Connection is looking for success stories about how you have encouraged or motivated students to wear masks in class. Although we sometimes can't achieve a 100% compliance rate in our classes, we've love to hear from our membership and exchange tips on how we can work together to reduce the risk of Covid.

This week we've received some tips from educators at L.A Matheson, a school notable for creating a culture of mask wearing. A common theme expressed by teachers there is the importance of taking the time to create this culture of expectation around mask-wearing. "It also helps to be honest with students and let them know that it isn't mandatory, but it is a way of doing their best to protect other people" adds

Xylia Burns, a Humanities 8 teacher. Courtney Flemming, who teaches Dance, shares that she has received no push back from students in her classes who are able to wear them while dancing. To be considerate of student's needs, Flemming and her colleagues also provide students with mask breaks where they either stand by the hallway door while social distancing and safely face away from their peers. Annie Ohana credits support from staff to remind students to wear masks and how all members of the school can contribute to working together to achieve a high compliance rate. These three educators have also created an awareness campaign called "CovidTeacherTruths" where teachers can submit truths navigating the difficulties associated with teaching during Covid. For more information, please visit their [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#).

What has helped Kyle McKillop, an English teacher, is discussing different populations that are vulnerable and more at risk. "Then I asked who lived with someone who was elderly or had other vulnerabilities. There was a sea of hands. So, we agreed to keep our masks on to protect those people" he shares. Similarly, Xylia Burns and other teachers have been using the "I'm Wearing a Mask For" worksheets featured below to have students draw personal connections and feel motivated to wear masks in class. By displaying them in class, students have a reminder of who they are wearing masks for, what they value, and are inclined to keep them on.





A special thank you to LA Matheson for this feature! Please share any useful strategies on how you or a colleague have achieved mask wearing in your class by emailing communications@surreyteachers.org. We would like to highlight the active effort of our members to make our communities safer.



International Solidarity Committee Draw – enter to win some fantastic 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 STARA (STA Rep Assembly) meeting on Wednesday, 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.**

The STA supports 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](#).



STA EVENTS

January 15 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 18 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 18 – Convention Committee

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

January 17 – Raoul Wallenberg Day, credited with saving 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the Second World War

January 18 – Ad Hoc Covid Action Committee
January 19 – Bargaining Committee
January 20 – General Meeting
January 21 – Status of Women Committee
January 21 – [Pro-D Townhall](#)
January 22 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 25 – Local Reps Meeting
January 26 – Executive Committee
January 27 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
January 27 – STARA Steering Committee
January 27 – Ad Hoc Indigenization Committee
January 28 – Ad Hoc Members of Colour
Committee
January 28-29 – BCTF Rep Assembly
January 31 – Deadline for Qualifications book
February 1 – Pro-D Committee
February 2 – STA New Teachers' Conference
February 8 – BCTF AGM Delegation Rookie
Orientation

January 18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 29 – National Day of Remembrance and
Action on Islamophobia