
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 25-29, 2021

STA Covid action Committee report

Our Covid action committee has embarked on a number of initiatives to try to make our members and schools safer during the pandemic. We are a group of teachers particularly concerned with keeping track of how the district and province is managing the pandemic response in the schools, and we make suggestions and proposals to the STA Executive and to the district as appropriate.

- We are recommending that all members do what they can to **actively promote mask wearing among our students in classrooms**. We believe that if we are able to use our considerable skills and influence as teachers to establish a culture of mask wearing among our students and in our schools generally, we can make a difference to the progress of the virus here. Even a modest percentage increase in mask wearing may save lives. Please do what you can.
- We have **written** to Honorable Jennifer Whiteside, minister of Education, with a further letter outlining our concerns.
- We are pleased to report that our project to produce **a series of videos in various languages** aimed at the parents and community to encourage mask use is progressing well, and we are thrilled that so many amazing Surrey teachers have stepped up to share

their language skills. We plan to roll them out next week, and we will rely on our members to help spread these on social media in various language speaking communities. DPAC will also be helping us get the word out.

- We are particularly concerned about the arrival of **new variants** of the Covid 19 virus, which gives impetus to the push for normalizing mask wearing in all spaces in our schools. We understand that 3-layer masks offer more protection, and are available through the district. (see below)
- We are concerned about the impact of this pandemic (and all the stressful changes we have had to adapt to in the schools) on our members' **mental health**. This along with other specific concerns we are looking forward to bringing to Superintendent Jordan Tinney who will be meeting with our committee.

STA Ad Hoc Covid Action Committee members are: Adilah Abdirahman, Isaac Louie, (co-chairs), Julia MacRae, Lisa Davis, Stephen Dawson, Lizanne Foster, Philip Wong, Mary Mulleady, Carrie Gabriele, and Gretta Heintz.

Interested in being a BCTF AGM delegate this year? You have one more chance!

The 105th BCTF Annual General Meeting 2021 will commence on Saturday, March 20, and conclude on Tuesday, March 23.

For this AGM the BCTF will be introducing a new platform called LUMI where you will be able to speak on amendments, debate, and view resolutions, presentations, and videos all on one platform, which will be a big improvement over last year's townhall format. Delegates will need a laptop or computer for the BCTF AGM as well as internet connection.

The Societies Act and our own By-law No. 2 (page 12 of the Members' Guide) require locals to elect their AGM delegates at local general meetings. So here is your **last chance** to get involved - please send in your name in advance and/or run off the floor.

Final call to be elected will be February 17, 2021 at the short General Meeting before STARA.

Opportunities for New Teachers

STA New Teachers' Conference #2 Feb 2, 2021 – LAST CALL!

We still have a few spots left for next Tuesday! Please feel invited to register for our next STA New Teachers' Conference, which is a chance for new teachers to spend a day learning about what your local 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 (3 or so) 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' Conference, February 26th

The [BCTF New Teachers' Conference](#) is now open for registration. The virtual conference costs \$25, and since it takes place on a school day, attendees will need a release day from the classroom to attend. You could use Pro D funding (check with your PD Chair in your school) or apply for funding for the registration and release time from the STA by emailing reception@surreyteachers.org. We have a limited budget, and we have received some applications already, but we can send six more members who are in the first 5 years of their teaching career. First come, first serve!

Masks!

BCTF branded Masks still available

We have sent out BCTF masks to members at 73+ schools and worksites. If you have not received one, please ask your rep if they have put in a request to us, and if not, offer to help them with this task. We also have a few shields available. Just ask! Email sta@surreyteachers.org with your requests please.

3 ply masks

The District Health and Safety department has received a large supply of 3 layer disposable masks and will be offering them to staff who need a new mask. You can request multiples at a time so that you do not have to ask every day. It would be best for orders to be done at the school level, where the school submits a work order to Facilities to place their order. Please ask your principal to do so, and if they do not, take it to your health and safety committee to make a recommendation. The district has said that once their supply of disposables are exhausted, they will order a supply of reusable 3 layer cloth masks.

When should people wear a mask? Here is a helpful table.

Current rules	Staff Distancing Possible	Student Distancing Possible	Staff Common Spaces	Student Common Spaces	Classroom
Elementary	Not required	Not required	Required	Not Required	Not required in cohort
Secondary	Not Required	Not required	Required	Required	Not required in cohort
Other Sites	Not Required	Not required	Required	Required (unless elementary)	Not required in cohort

For better safety, we are Seeking:	Staff Distancing Possible	Student Distancing Possible	Staff Common Spaces	Student Common Spaces	Classroom
Elementary	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Secondary	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Other Sites	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required

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Income Tax deduction for working at home

You may have heard that there is a tax deduction available for 2020 taxes for workers who had to work from home during the pandemic. We understand that one can claim under the temporary flat-rate amount (\$2/day, minimum 4 consecutive weeks) without any additional documentation from the employer. That will probably apply to most of us. Be sure to check the [CRA Website](#) for their guidelines, criteria and more information. NB: The STA is not equipped to provide tax advice to any members.

IST and Accommodation

Memo #8 in this week's weekly memo from the district asks IST teachers to consider referring students currently in the blended program to be serviced by an offsite teacher. The District has agreed to consider these offsite teacher positions as possible for members seeking to work from home as an accommodation. If you are an IST teacher, we encourage you to refer students in the blended program under the procedure described in Memo #8. We have members who are currently without income because they are not able to attend schools during COVID-19 due to personal or household members underlying health conditions or another reason under the Human Rights Code. If you do refer students who are in blended, please contact Gavin Slade-Kerr at hs@surreyteachers.org to strengthen our position in our weekly discussions with the District – with no student names attached for privacy reasons. If you applied for an accommodation to work from home this year and were denied, please contact Gavin Slade-Kerr at hs@surreyteachers.org.

Interested in Job Share?

The STA is facilitating a Job Share information session on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 4:00

pm via zoom. Join your colleagues to connect with potential job share partners and learn about your rights when it comes to job shares. In addition to taking you through the application process, you will learn about possible denials and what options you have available to you. If you are interested in having a job share next year, you can also fill out the Job Share Information form. The form and more information can be found on our [Job Share page](#). Don't forget to [sign up now](#) for the information session!

STA Social Event!

1st STA Virtual Social Event of 2021: Hey teachers how are your trivia skills? Dust off your typing fingers and get ready to play against other teachers in a game of Kahoot!

Where: Join STA Social Committee on TEAMS using join code: n7n8v4a (must join by 12PM on Thursday February, 4th)

When: Thursday, February 4th, 2021 at 3:30 PM

Who: All interested STA members

Why: You can win some fabulous prizes

Opportunity to participate in a seminar with Richard Van Camp

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is excited to announce the first event in our online speaker series.

On February 8th, master storyteller and best-selling author **Richard Van Camp** will share stories and wisdom that will inspire you to delve deeper into First Peoples literature, experiences, and worldviews. Richard is a member of the Dogrib (Tlicho) Nation from Northwest Territories. He is the author of several books for babies, children, youth and adults, including *The Lesser Blessed*, *Moccasin Square Gardens*, *Welcome Song for Baby: A Lullabye*, *Three Feathers*, and many more.

There will be a question and answer period following Richard's address.

Registration is free but please note space is limited. This is an online session that will take place on Zoom.

Eligibility: Educators and education administrators in BC are eligible to attend, including representatives from First Nations, First Nation schools, public schools, and independent schools.

Date: February 8, 2021, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm PST Registration: www.fnesc.ca/speakerseries

SPEAKER SERIES

Learning, sharing, and dialogue
in First Nations education



RICHARD
VAN CAMP

Master Storyteller
and Best Selling
Author

Feb. 8, 2021



Making Black History Month Meaningful

Colleagues, February is almost upon us, you may find yourself wondering how to include Canadian content into your honoring of Black History Month. How can we make Canada's Black history our focus when often, we ourselves know so little about it. This week, we offer two Canadian resources, one local and the other national in their scope for you to explore and consider.

Did you know that Vancouver had a thriving Black community from the early 1900s to the late 1960s? [Black Strathcona](#) is an interactive website that shares the video-stories of ten integral members of the Black Strathcona community. The site has a printable study guide for teachers to use to specifically support the 7-10 English Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum. However, the historical content is rich and local to Vancouver and could be a powerful resource to teachers across grades and curriculum.

Looking for more Canadian content when thinking about how to approach Black History Month with your elementary students? Kayak, Canada's national history magazine for kids, published a Black History in Canada Winter of 2018 issue that also included a [Black History Educational Package](#). Please note that this edition of Kayak included Natasha Henry, an educator, historian, and curriculum consultant, specializing in the African diasporic experience.

PITA/BCATML Spring Conference, May 21/21

On Friday, May 21/21 the Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association (myPITA) and the BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) proudly presents an Online Spring Conference featuring Leyton Schnellert speaking about Fostering Self-Regulated Learning in the Middle Years and Using Liberating Structures to Deepen Learning. Plus, workshops on teaching Core French, socio-emotional, behaviour management, portfolios, and assessment. For more information about workshops available, please refer to the attached poster. Register at <http://mypita-spring.ourconference.ca>. Early bird rate until April 21, 2021.



Environmental Justice Committee

Climate Change Workshop – open to all



Are you interested in deepening your understanding of climate justice, expanding your repertoire of lessons on climate change, or just interested in what more you can do about the climate crisis? The Environmental Justice Committee invites you to participate in the BCTF workshop "Taking Action on Climate Change." The workshop will be held on February 2, 2021 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm (via Zoom). Spaces are limited. Please [register on Eventbrite](#) by January 29.

Indigenous Education Committee

The Indigenous Education Committee would like to bring to the attention of Surrey Teachers UBC's latest actions in not standing by Dr. Amie Wolf's assessment of troubling White Supremacy in several teacher candidates at UBC. The existence and resilience of Indigenous Nations on Unceded Territories is not something you can disagree with or debate. As teachers we should always be mindful of our privilege as mostly Settlers to these lands, and the role we play in creating safe spaces for students and staff which allow for the disruption of settler colonialism. Dr. Wolf is dedicated to Anti-Racist pedagogy and we thank them for calling out prejudice. It is no longer welcome in our profession.

Status of Women Committee

FREE Self-Help Program for Surrey Teachers

The STA Status of Women committee has ordered a number of brochures and videos for Surrey teachers and their families for the Bounce Back, a free self-help program. The video resource Bounce Back Today is to help one feel better and learn how to tackle depression, anxiety and stress. Inside the CD casing there are five cards on topics of Assertion, Problem Solving, Improving Sleep, Thought Review, Worry and Panic each with tips and activities. Teachers can call the office at (604) 594-5353 or email sta@surreyteachers.org for a copy of the CD and brochure to be sent to you via courier, on a first come basis. The program can also be found on www.bouncebackbc.ca.

Zoom Meditation for Surrey Teachers

Meditation is a process of training your awareness and priming a healthy sense of perspective. You learn to observe your thoughts without judgment. In a guided meditation, the narrator explains the dynamics of the process and how your mind is likely to behave during meditation. The emotional benefits of guided meditation can include: gaining a new perspective on stressful situations; building skills to manage your stress; increasing self-awareness; focusing on the present, and; reducing negative emotions. The STA Status of Women Committee is hosting a guided virtual meditation session on Tuesday, February 9 from 4:30 - 5:30 pm. The purpose is to achieve mental and emotional release and stress relief.

Register: <https://sow-meditation.eventbrite.ca>

STA STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE'S

Knit, Chat, and Wine Night!

FRIDAYS • 7PM



Velma Moore, STA Status of Women committee member, is eager to get back to knitting and chatting with Surrey teachers! 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. This BYOB event happens weekly at 7:00 pm on Fridays! For more info, feel free to contact Velma at moore_v@surreyschools.ca.

Register: <https://sow-knit.eventbrite.ca>



STA EVENTS

January 28-29 – BCTF Rep Assembly
January 31 – Deadline for Qualifications book
February 1 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
February 1 – Pro-D Committee
February 2 – [STA New Teachers' Conference](#)
February 2 – [Environmental Justice Committee: Taking Action on Climate Change Workshop](#)

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

January 29 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia

February 4 – STA Social Event

February 5 – [Staff Rep Training](#)

February 5 – [Status of Women Committee: Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

February 8 – BCTF AGM Delegation Rookie Orientation

February 9 – [Zoom Meditation for Surrey Teachers](#)

February 12 – [Status of Women Committee: Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

February 17 – General Meeting and STARA

February 26 – BCTF New Teacher Conference

February 26 – [Status of Women Committee: Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)