
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 February 1-5, 2021

New Covid 19 Guidelines!

We are so glad to see some movement from the Ministry of Education and the Health Authorities on improving safety measures in schools. We know you will be seeing a lot of media on this today and soon will read many more details, but in short, here are our first reactions. We are glad for the slightly stronger mask mandate for middle and secondary schools. Unfortunately in Surrey, since we don't have middle schools, that means Elementary is still not part of the new rules, so it ends up being inconsistent. We are also glad to see additional guidance for physical health education and music classes that address key concerns and allow those classes to proceed in a safer manner. We are also in agreement that there needs to be a positive and inclusive approach to enforcement that focuses on prevention and not punitive or stigmatizing approaches. A key point is the removal of the term "not recommended" in the guidelines for elementary will make it easier for teachers and school staffs to encourage more mask wearing.

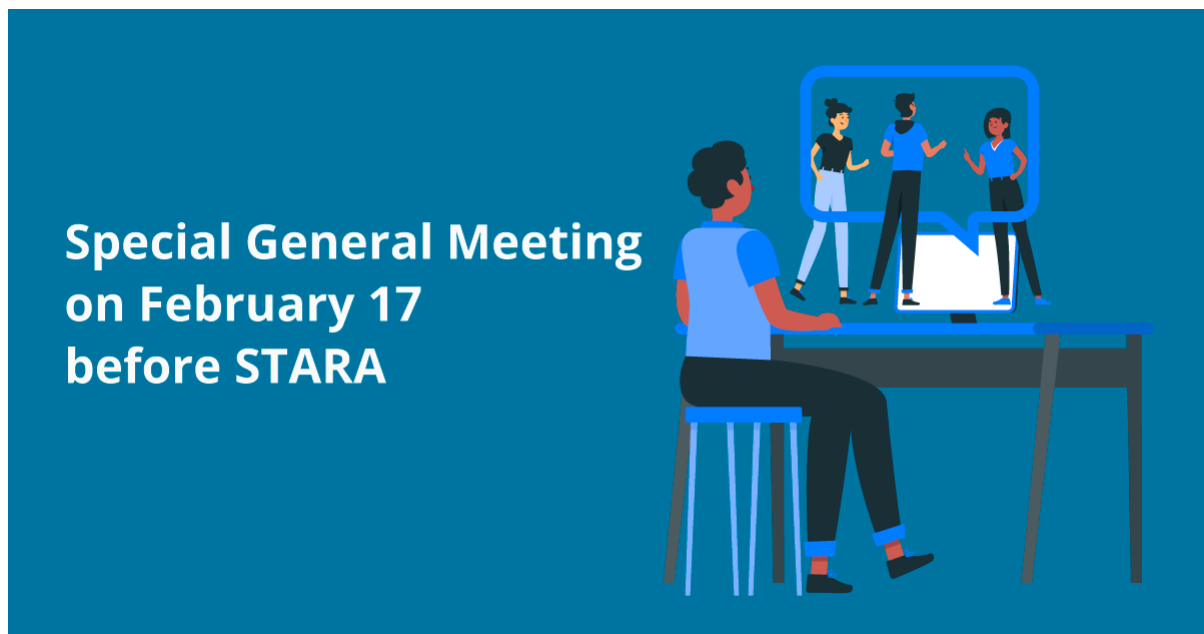
However we still have concerns, especially here in Surrey. First of all, we think younger children are also able to wear masks, so we would have liked to see a stronger mask message for Elementary. Also, the lack of action to reduce school and classroom density will not help staff and students maintain physical distancing. We also think it is problematic that the learning group cohort model has not changed and has proven to be a weak safety measure. Unfortunately there

is a lack of clear directives to improve ventilation. And of great concern to many teachers, we are disappointed in the inaction on improving the contact tracing system to specifically include teachers.

Please take a look at the [new guidelines in the government document](#) attached.

Paid Leave from for Self-Isolation

Finally! After a year of advocating, the employer (BCPSEA) has instructed school districts to accommodate or provide paid leave to teachers and support staff after being directed to isolate because of Covid 19 exposures. We will continue advocating locally and the BCTF will, provincially, that these provisions be retroactive to restore lost pay or used sick days for those who have already been impacted by a self-isolation order.



A short General Meeting will precede the regular STARA meeting on Feb. 17th so we can elect further delegates to the BCTF AGM. See next article for how to put your name forward.

STA BCTF AGM Surrey Delegation Leaders and Call for Delegates

The STA has recently appointed Marilyn Carr and Gavin Hainsworth as our new STA BCTF AGM 2021 Surrey Delegation Leaders! We are looking forward to our new leaders facilitating, mentoring, training and supporting new and experienced Surrey delegates. A reminder that the 105th BCTF Annual General Meeting 2021 will commence on Saturday, March 20, and conclude on Tuesday, March 23. 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. We still have room for 21 more delegates!

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

Appliance Use in staffrooms

The district has recently informed the STA that they will be making a disinfecting solution available at schools for wiping down microwaves, coffeemakers, etc., rather than requiring those items not to be used. Please ensure that you are maintaining covid safety protocols in using these items. Avoid gathering in groups and maintain 2m distance from others at your school, particularly adults.

BCTF Survey for teachers who have had to isolate for Covid19

The BCTF is conducting a survey in an effort to collect information about those who have to self-isolate/quarantine for COVID-19 reasons. Due to the number of members who have had to use their sick leave banks or go on unpaid leave, the BCTF is urging staff reps to share this survey at schools, especially where you know there have been exposures to teachers who provide in-person instruction to students, and have had to self-isolate/quarantine. Even though the employer has announced that going forward, sick days will not need to be used or people will not have to have unpaid leave for self isolation, the survey is important to be able to continue our advocacy for retroactivity. **The due date for the survey is Monday, February 15, 2021 at 3:00 p.m and can be found at:**

<https://questionnaire.simplesurvey.com/f//covid19selfisolationsurvey>

Covid Action Ad Hoc Committee met with Jordan Tinney

We met with Superintendent Jordan Tinney on Tuesday Feb 2 to bring our serious concerns directly from classroom teachers to our superintendent. We pressed him on the need for masks, concerns about lunch hour issues, concerns about stress, concerns about the new variants of the virus, anxiety and mental health of staff, and had a good discussion about how the COVID-19 district response has landed with members. We hope for a mask mandate to be announced this week by the health authorities, (although we don't know if they will), particularly with various alarming reports of the virulence of new variants of the virus.

3 ply masks protect you better

We understand the District Health and Safety department has received a large supply of 3 layer disposable masks which are available to staff who need them. 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, to submit an order for your school's needs to the facilities dept.. The district has said that

once their supply of disposables are exhausted, they plan to order a supply of reusable 3 layer cloth masks.

Teachers are not required to prep for their remedy

You are not required to create a plan for a remedy period. This may be a more realistic proposition for some teachers than for others, depending on what they teach and what they had planned to do at those times.

Pro-D News

Surrey Focus Day Pro-D

Registration is now open for our Focus Day on February 19th, 2021 with keynote speaker Kevin Lamoureux. This keynote presentation will be exploring truth, reconciliation and wellbeing in schools and the role teachers play in this. Please [register on the Focus Day website](#).

STA Convention Call for Workshop Proposals

Do you have a topic that you're passionate to share with colleagues? We know Surrey teachers are doing great work with their students and the STA Convention is now accepting workshop proposals for a wide range of topics. We are also proud to announce Gabor Mâté as our keynote speaker this year and be featuring a panel on equity and diversity. If you have an idea you would like to share with your colleagues, please submit your proposals to <https://staconvention.ca/index.php?Page=WorkshopProposals>.

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 three more members who are in the first 5 years of their teaching career. First come, first serve!

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. We are really happy that the BCTF is following up on ideas generated in Surrey. For more information, please review the attached memo and application form. **The deadline for applications has been extended to February 10th at 5pm.**

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!

Reminder to reps re: snack money

Each year the STA budgets so school staffs can claim some costs of refreshments for in-school union meetings. Since we can't be sharing food or even meeting in person this year, the STA 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 how to allocate these funds, such as to encourage attendance at STA meetings, release time for reps, hygienically distributed snacks (individually packaged), draw prizes etc.

A reminder about LOAs

Just a reminder that if you are on an LOA for STA business (or even ProD) and your TTOC is either reassigned to another classroom or is just a failure to fill, please remember to email Donna Stewart at accounting@surreyteachers.org. It is important that we know this information to ensure we are not billed for that TTOC.

Sad news

Roger Williams, recently retired, long-time Physics and Biology teacher at Fraser Heights and Johnston Heights passed January 28th. Please see attached obituary.

The Looking Glass – Black History Month

February is Black History Month. While this month is dedicated to uplifting and centering black history and voices, this can be done all-year round to celebrate and honour the legacy of Black Canadians. The [365 Black Canadian Curriculum](#) is an online project by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and is designed for primary, junior and intermediate educators to teach about the lived experiences of black Canadians from the past and present, 365 days a year.

UBC is also hosting a webinar on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 from 5:30 - 6:30 entitled, "[Supporting and Representing Black Educators in BC...Where Are We Today?](#)" This webinar features Black educators in BC and will be navigating issues on how to support Black educators, the importance of teacher retention, and addressing anti-Black racism in education. To register, please visit their [webpage](#).

Going Beyond Black History Month

Colleagues, facinghistory.org is an educational organization dedicated to addressing racism and discrimination. It's an engaging repository of resources. Their mission: "Using lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate". As we are agents within a system that perpetuates systemic racism, Black History Month, can be a time for us to go deeper in our own anti-racist work. Many of us have learning to do around how we may be unintentionally harming our Black students and other students of colour. On February 10th from 4pm-5pm, the organization is offering [Engaging in Anti-Racism Work: During Black History Month and Beyond](#). Some topics covered in this FREE webinar include:

- Discussing some of the educator mindsets and practices that continue to hinder the social, emotional, and academic growth of Black students.
- Gaining insight into not only the importance of Black History Month celebrations but also the year-long approaches to teaching from a racial equity lens that uplift Black students.
- Exploring the concept of “Black joy” and how to cultivate it daily.

Want to Learn More About Territorial Acknowledgements?

Unsure of where to begin with land acknowledgements and want to deepen your connection with the land? Join Ta7talíya Nahanee, Squamish, on February 24th, 2021 to personalize your connection to the decolonizing practice of Acknowledging Indigenous Territories. You may [register on Eventbrite](#).

Moose Hide Campaign 2021

The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. Join in the 10th annual #MooseHideCampaignDay – a day of unity and action against violence. On February 11th, there will be a livestream, workshops, and keynote speakers Swil Kanim and Michèle Audette. Register now at <http://bit.ly/MooseHideDay21>.

Ask A Young Worker!

"I was wondering what the difference is between the SGM and the STARA?"

Great question, the union is obsessed with acronyms, and those of us who aren't as involved can get lost pretty quickly!

SGM stands for Special General Meeting. This is a meeting where all STA members have a vote and are able to move motions. It is the most powerful decision-making body of the STA.

STARA stands for Surrey Teachers Association Representative Assembly. At this meeting, only staff reps, committee chairs, and executive members are able to vote or move motions. All members are still welcome to attend and can speak at the mic.

STARA meetings typically occur every 3rd Wednesday of the month. General meetings happen at least 3 times in the year; there is always our main one in May to pass the budget and elect our executive, one in November to pass the motions we are sending to the BCTF AGM, one in January to elect our BCTF AGM delegates, (and occasionally others whenever the president sees the need to have one for an urgent reason.)

All SGMs and STARAs are virtual this year, so it's easy and less intimidating to check out what happens at these meetings. [Register to get the zoom links](#) in your inbox for the rest of the school year.

Feel free to message the Young Worker Committee via sta@surreyteachers.org with any other questions you want answered!



International Solidarity Committee coffee draw

Our International Solidarity Committee (ISC) will be doing another coffee draw. This is your final chance to win Café Ético organic and fair-trade coffee. **The results of the draw will be shared at the STARA (STA Rep Assembly) meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2021.** If you are interested in submitting your name for this draw, please complete this [form](#).

The deadline to submit your name is February 12, 2021. All STA members are welcome to enter the draw and you do not need to attend the meeting to win.

The STA supports CoDevelopment Canada which is a non-governmental 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](#).

Status of Women Committee

STA Status of Women Committee's
Dance Classes

Wednesdays • 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
February 10 - Hip Hop
February 24 - Bollywood
March 3 - Bhangra

Have you been having trouble getting motivated to work out? Us too! The STA Status of Women Committee is hosting virtual dance classes on Wednesdays over the next few weeks. Come de-stress and have some fun with other Surrey teachers. You will burn calories and get a chance to learn choreography to a new style of dance every week! Regardless of your experience, join us

virtually from the comfort of your home on Wednesdays from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

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



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

- February 5 – [Staff Rep Training](#)
- February 5 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)
- February 8 – BCTF AGM Delegation Rookie Orientation
- February 9 – Executive Committee
- February 9 – [Zoom Meditation for Surrey Teachers](#)
- February 10 – [Surrey Teachers Virtual Dance Class](#)

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

- February is Black History Month
- February 6 – International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
- February 10 – [Engaging in Antiracism Work: During Black History Month and Beyond](#)
- February 11 – [National Online Moose Hide Campaign Day](#)

February 11 – [Job Share Info Session](#)
February 12 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)
February 17 – General Meeting and STARA
February 19 – [Surrey Focus Day 2021](#)
February 24 – [Surrey Teachers Virtual Dance Class](#)
February 26 – [BCTF New Teacher Conference](#)
February 26 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

Feb 17 – [Black history month webinar](#)
February 17–21 – BC Heritage Week
February 20 – United Nations Social Justice Day
February 21–27 – Freedom to Read Week
February 24 – [Personalizing indigenous territorial acknowledgments workshop](#)
February 24 – Pink Shirt Day