
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

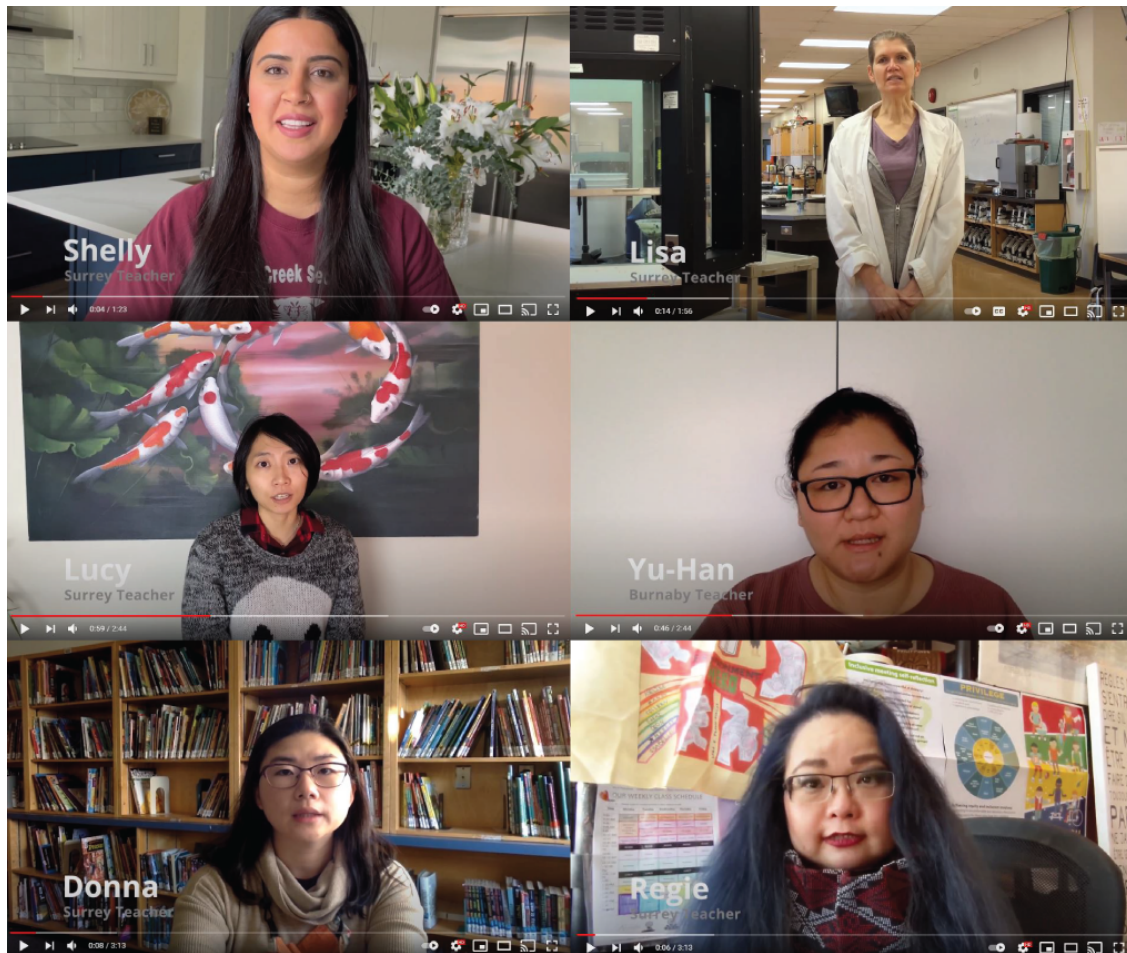
February 16-19, 2021

Still lots of cases and isolations

This week there continues to be a steady stream of notifications of exposure, self-monitoring letters and self-isolation orders in our schools. Over the long weekend, we received word of 37 different schools with exposure notices, 66 self-monitoring letters. As of February 17th, we now have 5 classes in self-isolation at 4 different schools. When classes/ cohorts and their teachers are sent into isolation, the disruption to routine upsets everyone. If you are asked to self-isolate and you have questions, please feel welcome to contact us for help.

We all need to do our part in trying our utmost to prevent transmission of this virus, with the most effective methods also being the simplest: wash hands frequently, maintain distance, wear a mask, increase ventilation as much as possible and minimize interaction with others. Even though we have not yet been able to pressure government enough to convince them to declare a universal school mask mandate or reduce class sizes to make better physical distancing possible, we will persist. Teachers can directly request parents to help promote mask wearing as much as possible. It does make a difference, bit by bit.

Surrey teachers appeal directly to parents to send kids to school with masks!



We have been working on a project to translate a message in various languages to encourage mask wearing in the district. This outreach is aimed at parents and community members to support our efforts and we have had tremendously talented help from Surrey teachers who have shared their language skills. To help get the word out, we have issued a press release, and we are relying on our members to promote and share these videos with their networks and in various language speaking communities. **Please help promote them in your networks** when you see them on social media! So far, we have English, Punjabi, Mandarin and Tagalog, with more to come! Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-0tO650aTR7f-XOVjN-HUQ/videos>

Letters to Indian and Canadian PMs from STA

The STA stands in solidarity with Indian Farmers and their democratic right to peacefully protest. As part of our support for farmers to defend their rights and livelihood, The EC has written letters to Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Justin Trudeau which we attach to this week's STA Connection. Yesterday STARA carried the following resolution:

That the Surrey Teachers' Association publicly stand in solidarity with Indian farmers protesting in India and facing authoritarian anti-democratic attacks, through actions including, but not limited to, writing letters to the governments of India and

Canada, and providing members with information on how they can take action themselves.

You can also show your support by writing to the Prime Minister of Canada and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Just go to <https://hsabc.org/supportfarmers> to speak out against state-sanctioned violence in India and call for a full repeal of the 2020 Indian Farm Bills.


District Cyber Security Steering Committee seeks STA members

We invite members to apply for the opportunity to participate in the District Steering Committee dealing with the Cyber Security Training Program rollout. If your interest is piqued and you would like more information, please email Julia directly at 1vp@surreyteachers.org, and then [submit a CV](#) to reception@surreyteachers.org. Deadline Feb 19th.


Surrey Focus Day Pro-D

Focus Day is tomorrow! (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



Surrey Teachers' Association
Annual Convention
Friday, May 7, 2021



Dr. Gabor Mâté
Renowned addiction expert, speaker author
Keynote Speaker • Panel on Equity and Diversity

Do you have a topic that you're passionate about? 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 Maté as our keynote speaker this year and be featuring a panel on equity and diversity. Sometimes teachers underestimate how good their own work is, but often there is nothing more powerful than someone sharing examples from their teaching practice, and the exchange of ideas in the ensuing discussion. If you have an idea you would like to share with your colleagues, please [submit your proposals](#) by February 26th.

Attention Surrey Teachers who live in Langley

We would like to draw your attention to the by-election for Langley School Board. Please find attached a questionnaire of the candidates that was created by the Langley Teachers' Association, so you can familiarize yourself with their ideas. We know teachers are motivated voters for school board elections and can really make the difference.

How does an LST teacher get their students to wear masks?



A special thank you to Katerina Bardouniotis from Woodward Hill for this feature!

"I would like to share how I've gotten students to wear masks in my LST office:

I currently have 40 students on my caseload and only one is exempt from wearing a mask due to medical reasons. All the other students wear one.

- I have the BCTF mask poster on my office window, so students see it as they enter or walk by.
- I've had discussions with my students about how we wear masks to keep each other safe.
- Regardless of having plexiglass on my table, I always wear my mask while teaching.
- I keep a box of disposable masks in my cupboard in case students forget to wear them to school.
- If I see that a student's mask is slipping down, I ask them to pull it up to stay safe.

- If I see that a student pulls their mask down to talk, I remind them that their parents / guardians sent them to school with a mask to stay safe.
- My students may not always wear a mask in their classroom, but they know to wear it when they are in my office so that we can all work safely together, as we are in a small space.
- Mask wearing amongst students is strongly encouraged at my school.
- All staff at my school model mask wearing every day."

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.

Honoring the Contributions of the STA President Lloyd Edwards in Local Black History

This week we acknowledge the role of [Lloyd Edwards](#), a Black immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago, and our former Surrey Teachers' Association President, for his contributions to Public Education and labour history in B.C.

On February 15th, 1974, galvanized by then STA President Lloyd Edwards, 1000 Surrey teachers walked out of their classrooms and traveled to the grassy Legislature in Victoria to protest the underfunding of public education and Surrey's increasing class sizes. This collective action, which was an illegal walkout, ultimately led to a reduction in class sizes across the province and the hiring of 3000+ teachers.

Lloyd Edwards led Surrey teachers into action in 1974 because it was the right thing to do, despite it not being legally sanctioned. He helped us put into action that together, in solidarity with each other, we can effect change. For more information, check out [The Surrey Teachers' Strike of 1974](#), produced by the BC Labour Heritage Centre.

Ask a Young Worker!

Q: "I would like to get more involved with the union but don't know how! Where do I start?"

A: One of the easiest ways to get involved with your union is to read the Surrey Teacher's Association Connection (STAC for short). The STAC is emailed out weekly by school staff reps. Through the STAC you'll learn about union news, updates on important issues, committee opportunities, links to social events and other ways to stay informed and get involved.

You can also join a committee meeting that may interest you, in Surrey we have a committee nearly for every need. We have a committee that focuses on the environment, another for economic justice, another for labour affairs, and among them all even one dedicated to supporting young workers in the teaching force. The Young Workers Committee is a great place to visit to see what other young teachers are up to and it's a great jumping off point for other opportunities.

If you don't have time for an ongoing commitment, drop in for one of the Special General Meetings throughout the school year or the Annual General Meeting in May.

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



Status of Women Committee

FREE Self-Help Program for Surrey Teachers

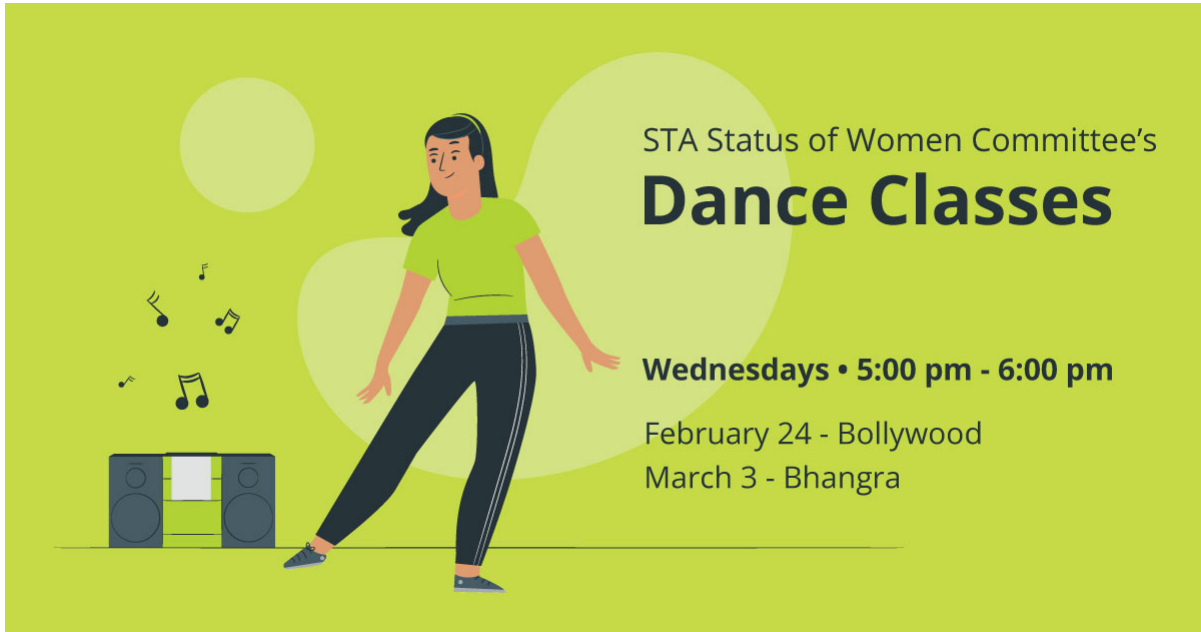
The STA Status of Women committee has ordered a number of brochures and videos for Surreyteachers and their families for the Bounce Back, a free self-help program. The video resource Bounce Back Today is to help one feel better and learn how to tackle depression, anxiety and stress. Inside the CD casing there are five cards on topics of Assertion, Problem Solving, Improving Sleep, Thought Review, Worry and Panic each with tips and activities. Please 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.

Meditation Resources

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Zoom meditation earlier this month! The Status of Women committee is happy to organize these wellness events for our members. Some participants inquired about more resources from our facilitator, Catherine Etmanski, and we thought it would be great to share these with the whole membership in hopes that they will be helpful for you. Catherine shared the following:

- My favourite meditation teacher is [Heather Martin](http://www.saltspringinsightmeditation.ca/dharma-talks) with the SaltSpring Island Vipassana community. If you explore their website, you can find some of her Dharma talks and teachings. <http://www.saltspringinsightmeditation.ca/dharma-talks>
- For moving meditation, these days I'm really enjoying a Qi Gong instructor out of Vancouver named Westley Salter. He's put together a series of short (less than 10 minute) videos called [Qi Gong for the Busy Bee](#) which can be done any time and any place, even while standing in front of my computer. I always have a good chuckle and feel great afterwards, even with such a short practice!
- If sleep is challenging for you, I highly recommend checking out Jennifer Piercy's Sacred Sleep Yoga website. You can download various resources there: <https://sacredsleppyoga.com/>
- There are a number of Apps that offer guided meditations. You might ask around to find out people's favourites. These days I'm enjoying one called "Tapping Solution" that offers

several free ~10 minute meditations you could do while tapping on specific acupressure points that serve to release stress and anxiety. <https://www.thetappingsolution.com/>



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>



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>

International Solidarity Committee

Congratulations to the following [Cafe Ético coffee](#) draw winners!

1. Katrina Wisniewski, M.B. Sandford Elementary
2. Katerina Bardouniotis, Woodward Hill Elementary
3. Kamal Bilkhu, Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary
4. Sierra Rai, Earl Marriott Secondary
5. Rick Kumar, Panorama Ridge Secondary
6. Murugan Vinayagam, North Surrey Learning Centre
7. Gurpreet Andrews, Beaver Creek Elementary

Your pound of fair trade, organic, cooperatively grown, shade grown, bird friendly, non-profit coffee is on its way in the courier to you lucky winners.



STA EVENTS

all STA committee meetings are open to all members, contact us for more information.

February 19 – [Surrey Focus Day 2021](#)

February 19 – Ad Hoc Covid Action Committee

February 22 – BCTF AGM Delegates Training

February 23 – Executive Committee

February 24 – [Surrey Teachers Virtual Dance Class](#)

February 24 – Ad Hoc LGBTQ Committee

February 25 – International Solidarity Committee

February 25 – TIME Committee Anti-Racism consultation

February 26 – [BCTF New Teacher Conference](#)

February 26 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

March 1 – Pro D committee

March 2 – Ad Hoc Environmental Justice Committee

March 2 – Ad Hoc Members of Colour Committee

March 3 – Ad Hoc Indigenization of the STA Committee

March 4 – Political Action Public Relations Committee

March 4 – Status of Women Committee

March 4 – Status of Men in the Teaching Profession Committee

March 5 – Labour Affairs Committee

March 5 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

February is Black History Month

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