
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

March 29-April 1, 2021

Concern for Astra Zeneca risks and reactions

We have heard from members who are experiencing significant post-vaccine symptoms after having received the AstraZeneca/Covishield Vaccine before March 28. In addition, we know that there is also the added worry of wondering whether the more serious side-effects (which led to its use being suspended for people under 55) will materialize, and the frustration that, within days, a different vaccine without these issues was provided to District staff.

We are sorry that many of you are having to deal with these issues. At the time this vaccine was administered, its use was permitted by public health authorities, and everyone (the Centre for Disease Control, Public Health Office, Fraser Health, SD36, and the union) was relying on that approval. Vaccinating Surrey school staff as soon as possible made sense to provide people with that added protection quickly, given their risk of exposure at work. Now that this vaccine has been suspended for people under 55, people who have received it should monitor themselves for symptoms of the more serious side-effects, and seek medical attention as appropriate.

People are naturally wondering what will happen next, particularly around their next dose. The simple answer is that we don't know. Public health authorities and AstraZeneca are working on this issue, and should have it resolved by the time people would be due for a second shot.

However, at this time we do not know what vaccine that would be, or whether they will have any choice in vaccine. As soon as we have information on this or other issues about the vaccine, we will share it with members.

ONE YEAR OF COVID

One year ago this week we had to sign-up in order to go to our classrooms to pick up what we needed for the remote teaching adventure we were about to embark on. Remember climbing up that steep learning curve? Whew!

A year later, Surrey consistently has the highest numbers of Covid cases in BC as we learn to live and work in the hot zone of a pandemic. But, the good news is that, after seven months of persistent advocacy on multiple levels, not only have Surrey teachers been prioritized for vaccinations but we also now have a Grades 4-12 mask mandate as ordered by the Chief Medical Officer for Fraser Health.

Even though we now have a mask mandate for Grades 4-12, we continue to roll-out and promote our [videos in many languages](#) to appeal to parents to send their children to school with a mask, including those in K-3 for whom the mask mandate does not apply. You can check out all the videos in our YouTube channel, and soon we will be adding Russian, Farsi, Japanese and Greek! Please help promote the message of mask compliance with parents and through social media if you speak any of the languages used in the videos.

Just before Spring break we learned about Enhanced and Targeted Measures that the District must now implement. Each Health and Safety Committee needs to fully engage in discussions with school administration about how these measures are being implemented. It's especially important that staff know how to bring concerns forward without fear. The facilitation of Enhanced and Targeted measures is fully within the purview of the H&S Committees.

As WorkSafeBC has confirmed, educators have the second highest number of approved claims which is why it's crucially important that we fully follow the measures aimed at reducing the possibility of transmission between and among colleagues.

It's been a hard slog for the past year and we may not all be feeling refreshed after spring break as we would be in the "Before Times" but we hope that being vaccinated and having a mask mandate along with the Enhanced and Targeted measures goes a long way to easing anxiety while we continue to do the best we can teaching during this historic pandemic.

2021 BCTF AGM report

From 20-23 March 2021 the BCTF AGM was held online. 35 Surrey delegates shared the 66 votes that our union is entitled to. Days started early for the Surrey delegates with a Breakfast Caucus meeting at 7:45 to prepare for each day's meeting which began at 9am and ended at 6pm.

Although being online all day for 4 days in a row was onerous, there were many great moments as the Surrey delegates, under the deft leadership of Marilyn Carr and Gavin Hainsworth, brought their comedic selves to lighten the mood between debates and discussions that were difficult at times.

Violette Baillargeon was re-elected to another two-year term as Member-at-Large on the BCTF Executive Committee. President Teri Mooring, First Vice-President Clint Johnston, and Second Vice-President Carole Gordon were acclaimed to return to their positions for another year.

The delegation was proud to watch our 2nd VP, Jatinder Bir, remain firm but friendly when barraged by multiple Points of Order and Points of Privilege during the various sessions she chaired throughout.

Among Surrey Resolutions that were passed was one to declare 4th October as "Sisters in Spirit Day" to honour the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and another to support calls to lower the voting age to 16.

There was a concerted effort over two days to pass a resolution aimed at triggering a move to Stage 3 in the Covid Restart Plan. This would mean going to remote learning, when Covid cases are above 5% in communities. Surrey delegates were instrumental in finally getting an amended version of this resolution passed when only a few hours remained for the AGM. Since then there's been a submission to the Labour Relations Board by the BCTF to resolve issues around ventilation and density.

A highlight of the AGM was the Keynote address by Dr Shauneen Pete who presented a masterclass in what it means to be in a Just Relationship with each other and the land. Delegates were profoundly moved by her words.

Do consider joining us for AGM 2022 to gain a deep understanding of how the BCTF functions and learn about the range of opinions and ideas amongst hundreds of delegates representing all 47,000 teachers in B.C. Let's hope it is in person!

Important Notice for Teachers on Pregnancy, Parental or Compassionate Care Leave 2019-2020

When our last contract was settled in the Spring of 2020, teachers were given a retroactive pay increase of 2% for the 2019-2020 school year. The Surrey School District did not apply that retroactive increase to the top-up for those on pregnancy, parental or compassionate care leave. We have filed a grievance and have been pursuing all avenues available to us to get them to do so. As part of our efforts we will be filing a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal in the coming weeks. If you were on pregnancy, parental or compassionate care leave between June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2020, please contact Gavin Slade-Kerr, Health and Safety/Grievance Officer, at hs@surreyteachers.org, to be included in the complaint.

Job Share Deadline Extension

The Surrey School District and the Surrey Teachers' Association have signed an agreement that extends the April 1 job share deadline for members waiting for entitlements for their specific position. The deadline will be extended by one calendar week from the date that entitlements for a teacher's specific position were sent to principals. For example, If Core Music entitlements are sent out to principals on April 5th, Core Music teachers interested in job share would have until April 12th to provide the job share proposal to the principal. Principals will then have one week to provide applicants with a written approval or rejection. All other job share applications are due by

April 1st. Application should be made through the principal with a copy to the Human Resources Department. Please email questions to Erin Coleman at pd@surreyteachers.org.



Staff Rep Training
**Staying well
at teaching**

Monday, April 12, 2021
Tuesday, April 13, 2021
Wednesday, April 14, 2021
Tuesday, April 20, 2021
Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Staff Reps – please remember to register for Spring SURT Training.

Not only do we have a very pertinent topic, Staying Well at Teaching, we have a special guest presenter booked for the afternoon portion of the session.

Wade Repta is the vice president of humanworks, co-founder of humanworks press, and author of *The Well Teacher*. In addition to being an author and business owner, Wade is an occupational therapist and Certified Disability Management Professional who has dedicated almost 20 years to working with teachers to help them minimize barriers and remain working in the classroom. Read more about [Wade](#).

Register today to secure your seat: <https://surt-stayingwell.eventbrite.ca>.

Virtual Special General Meeting and STARA

April 21, 2021 • 4 pm



Reminder of the Special General Meeting and STARA on Wednesday 21st April during which there will be elections for:

- Elementary rep (1) and TTOC rep (1) on the Bargaining Committee
- TTOCs and Early Career Teachers Representative (this is one position) on the STA Executive
- Local Representative to the BCTF (one vacancy until the end of 2020-21)

If you would like to put your name forward for one of these four positions, please submit your name and a short write up (150 words max) by next Wednesday April 7 to be included in the meeting materials. It is also OK and normal to run from the floor.

If you have not already received your voting and Zoom links for the 2020-2021 year, [sign up](#) for this year's links.

CONGRATULATIONS - 2021 BC Teachers' Council Election Results

The 2021 BC Teachers' Council elections have been completed. Ballots were counted for four of the five zones on March 19, 2021. All BCTF-endorsed candidates have been successfully elected. Congratulations to all!

Fraser Zone: Jatinder Bir: declared elected

Interior Zone: Shelley Balfour: declared elected

Northern Zone: Lisa Kishkan: declared elected

Vancouver Coastal Zone: Marjorie Dumont: declared elected

Vancouver Island Zone: Alice Kedves: declared elected

BCTF Opportunities for members

Racism Session

BCTF members who identify as First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and persons of colour are invited to apply to participate in the BCTF 2021 Issues Session on Racism. The session will take place virtually on the evening of **Thursday, April 29 and all day, Friday, April 30**. The issues session will include:

- A keynote address followed by an ice breaker on the evening of Thursday, April 29
- A facilitated session on Friday, April 30. The BCTF will provide a Leave of Absence for this date.

The facilitated session on Friday will provide opportunities for BCTF members who identify as First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and persons of colour from diverse geographic regions around the province to:

- Continue to strengthen connections between the community of BCTF BIPOC members.
- Develop proposals for concrete actions to address racism that align with BCTF Executive Committee decisions based on reports from the previous Racism Issue Sessions* and the 2020 Representative Assembly Task Force, as well as decisions made at the 2021 BCTF AGM.
- Develop a professional statement of principles to guide the antiracism work of the BCTF.

Deadline for application is April 9, at 4:30 p.m.

Information: <https://www.bctf.ca/IssueSessionOnRacism/>

LGBTQ2S+ Issues Session

The BCTF is seeking members to virtually attend a two-day Issues Session for members who identify as LGBTQ2S+ on **May 17 and 18, 2021**. The first day of the session will be facilitated by Cicely Blain.

The first LGBTQ2S+ issues session will provide opportunities for BCTF members who identify as LGBTQ2S+ to:

- strengthen connections and community for BCTF members who identify as LGBTQ2S+ from diverse regions of the province.
- examine current issues for LGBTQ2S+ teachers, including what it means to be out/not out as a teacher, and what supports are needed in this area.
- provide recommendations regarding future advocacy, supports, policy and/or programs that could further support LGBTQ2S+ members.

Deadline for application is April 6.

Information: <https://bctf.ca/OpportunitiesforMembers.aspx>

Advisory Committees to the BCTF

Would you like to be released to connect with teachers across BC on issues that matter to you?

Consider joining an advisory committee! As a member of an Advisory Committee you will advise the BCTF on how to respond to a range of issues and concerns.

Sometimes a lack of members on a committee has unfortunate outcomes such as what happened this year when a lack of members on the G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award committee meant that no one received the award this year. The committee only meets once a year for the sole reason of recommending the award!

We are the largest local in the BCTF and it's important that the voices of Surrey teachers are represented at the BC Teachers Federation. Be sure to contact the STA's President and/or VPs for endorsements! We would love to have a whole slew of Surrey teachers involved!

The following BCTF Advisory Committees are seeking members for terms between 1 year and 3 years:

- Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee
- Advisory Committee on French Programs and Services
- Committee for Action on Social Justice (several spots available)
- Finance Committee
- G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award Trustees
- Health and Safety Advisory Committee
- Income Security Committee
- Pensions Committee
- Professional Issues Advisory Committee
- Teacher Magazine Advisory Board
- Teacher Qualification Board
- Teachers Teaching On Call Advisory Committee
- Working and Learning Conditions/Bargaining Advisory Committee
- W.R. Long International Solidarity Fund Committee

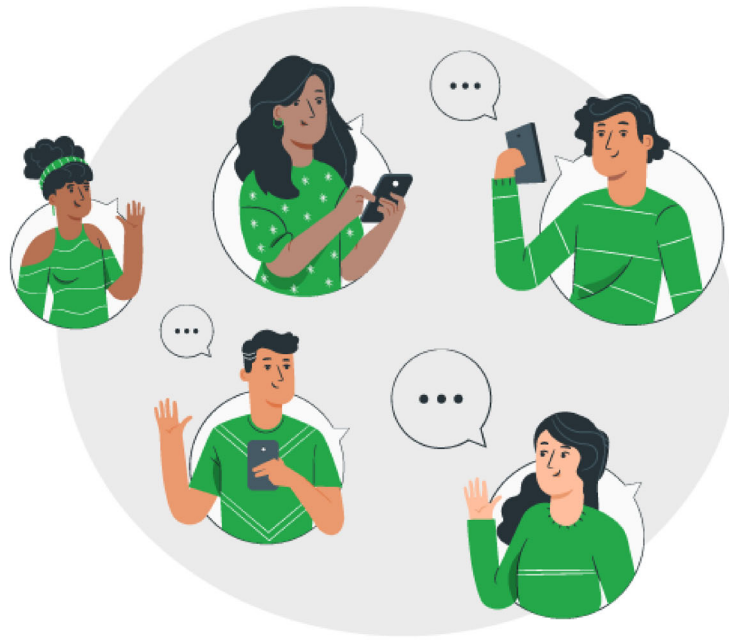
Please see attached to this memo a list of all committee openings and description of the committees' work.

Preparing grade sevens for high school

As done every Spring, high schools are connecting with elementary schools to prepare grade sevens for the transition to high school. It has come to our attention that in some cases this has resulted in students from multiple cohorts being put in one room with teachers from both the elementary and high schools. Such a process will almost certainly be impossible to use and follow the present covid health and safety protocols. Some schools have been very successful in using Teams for the process and we strongly recommend that everyone do so.



2nd STA Virtual Social Event of 2021



Join STA Social Committee on TEAMS - send Sharon Sall your name by Wednesday, April 7th.

When: Thursday, April 8th, 2021 at 4:00 PM

Who: All interested STA members

Why: Why not get rewarded for reading the STA Connection? Meet some new people across the district. Join in some laughter and have a good time. **You can win some fabulous prizes!**

STA Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee's **Art while Apart**

Guided Painting Session via Zoom
April 8, 2021 • 6 pm - 8 pm

Painters of all levels are welcome!
Paint supplies will be free of cost and available
at two pick up sites in Surrey if needed.



Are you looking for a fun way to relax? Come join other teachers 35 and under for "Art While Apart," a Young Workers Committee event for young workers. McKenzie Matthews, a secondary art teacher, will be leading a painting of a starry night. This guided painting session is no-stress, laid back, and aimed for painters of all levels. Paint supplies will be free of cost and available at two pick up sites in Surrey if needed. Locations for pick-up sites to be announced after registration close. Registration is limited so [sign up now](#) via Eventbrite! If you have any questions please email the YWC at reception@surreyteachers.org.



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 starting April 9, 2021!

Register here: <http://bit.ly/knitchatwine>



STA EVENTS

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

- April 1 – AGM Delegates Debrief
- April 6 – Convention Committee
- April 7 – Ad Hoc Environmental Justice Committee
- April 7 – Awards Committee
- April 8 – Indigenous Education
- April 8 – International Solidarity
- April 8 – STA Virtual Social
- April 8 – [Art while Apart](#)
- April 9 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)
- April 13 – STA Executive Meeting