
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 April 6-9, 2021

Vaccinations update

The District's vaccination plan has focused on all school-based staff (including teachers, support staff, and school admin) and active TTOCs (and spareboard CUPE staff). In other words, vaccinations have gone first to those who work directly and consistently with students. If this is you and you have not yet been vaccinated, contact your principal who will work with the Assistant Superintendent in your area to get you vaccinated.

The next phase of the vaccination plan, which has not yet been revealed, will include staff not yet vaccinated: teachers and TTOCs on leave, directors, senior management, district principals, non-school clerical, grounds and maintenance, helping teachers, STA officers etc. Although Fraser Health would like to have all Surrey staff vaccinated as soon as possible, there is also urgency in getting school-based staff in other districts vaccinated. We will share more info as we have it.

Concerns about Covid-19 and variants of the virus

The latest numbers of cases in our district reflect the continuing rise in Covid numbers in Fraser Health. Since last Thursday (as of April 7) we have been notified of the following:

- 55 Early Notification letters issued at 38 different schools
- Variants of Concern notifications at 4 different schools
- 4 Entire Elementary Classes in self-isolation at 4 different schools
- 116 Individual Elementary staff/students self-isolating at 22 schools
- 5 Entire Secondary Classes in self-isolation at 2 schools

Even though most teachers have had their first vaccination shot and most students are wearing masks, we are not fully protected from the virus and need to continue implementing, as much as possible, distancing protocols in our classrooms. We can't afford to become complacent. There should be a pool noodle distance between you and students (and colleagues) always. Handwashing and ventilation are still important. Remember to raise any concerns about increased risks for Covid exposure with school admin and your Health and Safety Committee. If you can, take your lessons outside. Here are some ideas for teaching outside: <https://takemeoutside.ca/resource-directory/educational-resources/>

Call for items for a Covid Commemorative issue of *The Advocate*

Remember April 2020 when we all had to learn about Emergency Remote Teaching? How Facebook pages became collaborative hubs for sharing tips and resources for how to cope with switching from being a classroom teacher to being an online teacher? Remember how James Kim's cartoons kept us giggling through our frustration?

It's been a year since we ratified our new contract and a year of learning to live and teach during a pandemic so a perfect time to collect items for a commemorative issue of *The Advocate*.

We're looking for images, graphics, reflections, essays, any creative content to showcase what we did to survive a year of Covid. Reflective pieces, happy or sad pieces, all acceptable. Please send items to communications@surreyteachers.org.

Supporting students through Ramadan

Tuesday, April 13th will be the first day of Ramadan, a holy month for Muslims. Many of our Muslim students and colleagues will be fasting for the next 30 days and they are going to be exhausted! They'll have woken up before dawn (which is currently around 6:30 am) to have a meal before beginning their fast. This early awakening will get earlier over the next 30 days. They will have their evening meal after sunset and will be up late participating in prayer services. Ramadan ends this year on Wednesday, 12 May. See attached article with more information.

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>.

STA Convention May 7, 2021

Registration is now open!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Bargaining Committee positions, Local Rep and TTOC/Early Career Rep on STA Executive

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

Elementary and TTOC representatives on the Bargaining Committee

These two members would forward ideas about the needs and concerns of elementary teachers and teachers teaching on call to be considered by the Bargaining Committee.

TTOCs and Early Career Teachers Representative on the STA Executive

This member would represent the concerns of TTOCs and Early Career Teachers during STA Executive meetings, and help organize the annual EI workshop. They would also help organize the TTOC committee.

Local Representative to the BCTF (and member of STA Exec)

This member would join 5 other Surrey Local Representatives representing Surrey at the Spring BCTF Representative Assembly at the end of May. Hopefully they enjoy that experience so much that they'll run for the 2021/2022 position at the May AGM!

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

STA Donations Policies

In March, the STA Executive passed the following motion:

THAT we strike an Ad Hoc Committee of up to 8 members, constituted by May of 2021 to create a first draft of a donations policy.

If you are interested in serving on this Ad Hoc Committee, please consider [submitting a CV](#) by April 23 indicating your interest. Participants will be appointed at the April 27, 2021 Executive Committee meeting.

The work of the committee will include reviewing current donations policies, donations made over the last 5 years as well as making recommendations for policies to adopt for our association.

CTF Symposium opportunity - great response!

Thanks so much to all who put their names forward for the draw, there were 64 applicants and we drew three lucky winners, Manvir Thiara, Lynne Mench, and Sanjit Sangha. We were thrilled with the response, as it means our Surrey teachers will be well represented at this national event. See below for some further opportunities to get involved provincially in the BCTF.

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/>

Advisory Committees to the BCTF

The BCTF has committees that do the work of the federation, advising the Executive Committee, Representative Assemblies and the AGM on particular topics. Joining an advisory committee is a great way to learn more about your union and contribute to our profession! We are the largest local in the BCTF and it's important that the voices of Surrey teachers are represented. Be sure to contact the STA's President and/or VPs for endorsements! We would like to see a slew of Surrey teachers get involved in these provincial committees. Check out the [BCTF site with opportunities](#).

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,



2nd STA Virtual Social Event of 2021



Join STA Social Committee on TEAMS - send Sharon Sall your name by Wednesday, April 7th, yes, that is TODAY!

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!**



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 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 – Executive Committee
- April 14 – Health and Safety Committee
- April 14 – Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee
- April 15 – TIME Committee
- April 16-17 – BCTF Zone Meeting
- April 20 – Bargaining Committee
- April 21 – Special General Meeting/STARA