
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 12-16, 2021

Is fear of Covid affecting attendance?

We've been watching with alarm the sharply rising number of cases of both 'regular' and variant Covid in Surrey and are wondering if attendance has been affected. We've heard that some classes continue to have full attendance but that in many classes, attendance drops after a notification of exposure.

The district is firm and parents understand that there is no option currently to move to blended learning.

In secondary schools we've noticed that many students in senior courses have been opting to drop their courses in brick-and-mortar schools and are choosing online courses offered across BC.

Something else we've heard is that some teachers have been posting their class work online so that students can access assignments whether they're in class or not. Other teachers are streaming their in-person class online. Of course this is in the context of there being no official expectation of this extra work.

Because of these and many more questions, please respond to our survey to all classroom teachers that will provide details of the current reality in Surrey classrooms to use in our continued advocacy. Here is the link: <http://bit.ly/STACovidSurvey>.

After the vaccine

We have had reports of teachers who were vaccinated and then got Covid. To keep safe, we need

to follow the Covid after-care information below:

It will take about two weeks after getting the first dose to build immunity to the virus. If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19 before or during this time, you may not yet be fully protected, so you can still get COVID-19.

Remember:

- The vaccine will NOT cause or give you COVID-19.
- Symptoms such as a sore throat, runny nose, cough or other problems breathing are NOT side effects of the vaccine.
- If you experience ANY symptoms of COVID-19, use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool at: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

Thankfully most Surrey teachers have now received the first dose.

After you have been vaccinated you should:

Continue to follow Public Health Guidelines

- Maintain physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet)
- Clean your hands regularly
- Wear a mask
- Follow Public Health precautions and restrictions

Helpful links:

- www.bccdc.ca
- http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%202%20-%20Imms/Part4/COVID-19_Vaccine_After_Care_Sheet.pdf
- <https://immunizebc.ca/ask-us/questions/can-i-carry-on-my-regular-activities-and-after-my-covid-19-vaccines>

Special General meeting coming up next week

Reminder that at the Special General Meeting on 21st April, there is a by-election for 4 positions and there will also be an update on our current advocacy efforts. Although we can't offer butter chicken like we used to in "The Before Times," you can join the meeting online while sitting in your comfy clothes at home with a cup of tea at your side! Remember YOU are the STA so bring your concerns and ideas to share. See General meeting package attached.

By-elections on April 21

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

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.

Teachers Car Caravan to bring attention to ongoing Covid 19 concerns

Mark your calendars for next Friday April 23rd, we are planning a car caravan coordinated with other Fraser Health area teachers to rouse the MLAs to action to give more attention to the pandemic crisis in Fraser Health. Join us on a route from the Panorama area, honking outside MLAs offices in various parts of the Fraser Health region. We will stay safe in our cars the entire time. To stop this pandemic, all at-risk workers need to be vaccinated! Schools need to move to at least phase 3 where the positivity rate is high! More details and the route will be shared as soon as we finalize it.

Paid Sick Leave

Although the limits of our paid sick leave have been obvious during the pandemic, at least we have it. It's shocking to realize that while 53% of BC workers do not have paid sick leave at their jobs, 80% of workers earning less than \$30,000 don't, and most of these workers are women and people of colour. The pandemic has highlighted how we are all impacted by this. When people who work in service industries can't afford to stay home when they're sick, the spread of infectious illnesses cannot be stopped.

To highlight this issue, the BC Federation has launched a campaign to urge the government to ensure all workers have paid sick leave. Please consider supporting this with your signature. Find out more here: https://www.futureforall.ca/sick_leave. What we demand for ourselves we also demand for others!

Employer and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

With all our stress levels going off the scale, many of us have been turning to the Employer and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) and we are curious about whether you've been finding the service useful. As you know support is delivered in two ways: you can phone to get an appointment with a counsellor or you can use the app. We have heard there are long waits for appointments via the phone service, and we would like to know how the app is working for members. Does the app's algorithm lead you to useful information? How do you feel about being 'guided' by it? If you have thoughts on this, please send them to Gavin at hs@surreyteachers.org. STA officers will bring feedback to a review meeting with the EFAP provider on this topic on April 30th.



Registration is open, and it is going really well. In fact, some workshops are already full after 1800 people have already registered! Please note that presenters have set their own participant limits for some workshops. Even for online classes, there are sometimes class size limits!



There will be a Town Hall on Thursday, April 22nd to discuss Summer Pro-D, come with your questions about the process. Register now at <https://summerpd-townhall.eventbrite.ca>.

Preparing for Round 1 and Round 2

There are three parts to the transfer process. The first is the online application. Apply for postings using Employee Self-Serve. The first page includes your personal information. The Collective Agreement requires that principals shortlist candidates for positions by seniority, provided they have the necessary qualifications.

Make sure the personal information page of Employee Self-Serve makes it clear how you are qualified for the position for which you are applying. You have the option on this page to indicate whether or not you agree to have your current principal or vice-principal contacted for a reference. We have been assured by Human Resources that if you select "No" to having current admin contacted, they will not be. However, you will need to provide the names and contact information for two people, usually administrators, who have recently seen you teach.

The other two parts to the transfer process are the interview and a reference check. The STA's position is that the interview should come first, followed by the reference check. The district does not agree.

The interview is perhaps the most important part of the process. The Collective Agreement states:

"The Board will appoint the most senior applicant possessing the necessary qualifications except where it can be demonstrated that a less senior candidate is more suitable."

Most principals use the interview to determine suitability. Principals indicated to us that, rather than hearing theoretical or general responses to questions, **they are interested in hearing about real examples of what is happening in teachers' classes.**

Prior to the interview, read the School Profile in the posting and be ready to indicate how your practice will fit into the culture of the school. Use the interview to help the principal to understand how you will be an asset to the school. You should also use the interview to decide whether you think the position would be a good fit for you.

Principals almost always contact someone for a reference check. Regardless of whether or not you agree to your current administrator providing the reference, or if you choose someone else, talk to your references prior to the deadline for submitting applications. Ask the references to tell you what they will say and take notes of what they tell you. Do not assume that because you get along well with your principal, or that they have never expressed any criticism of you, they will give you a positive reference. In several of last year's grievances, teachers were shocked to learn that their principal had provided a negative reference.

The transfer process is stressful for many members. Being prepared may help alleviate some of the stress and will ensure that you can present yourself as strongly as possible to principals.

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

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 poetry, images, graphics, reflections, essays, any creative content to showcase what we did to survive a year of Covid. Please send items

to communications@surreyteachers.org.

Young Worker Q & A

Q: People are asking me if I'm applying for the upcoming Rounds, but I'm not sure what that means. What are Rounds? What is the difference between them?

A: "Applying to the rounds" is a common phrase you may hear this time of year. If you win a continuing assignment in Round 1 or 2 you will usually continue at that school indefinitely.

Round 1 starts April 20, and closes May 18th. Round 2 opens May 25th. If you have a continuing contract, ie. you are not a TTOC, you are eligible to apply in these rounds. Earlier this year we also had a new school round for the new schools opening in September, but this doesn't happen every year.

Between round 2 and round 3 there is a process where people who are owed assignments are placed by Human Resources. Then there is round 3 where what's left over is posted externally. External applicants are TTOCs, adult educators and people who are not employees of the district.

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER!



In a relaxed, interactive, and reflective environment, staff reps will have an opportunity to:

- recognize that we need to look after ourselves first, especially during this challenging time.
- explore what teacher wellness is.
- recognize a wide range of mental health issues relevant to teaching.
- review physical health challenges teachers may face.
- explore strategies to stay well.

Select one of the following sessions and sign up: <https://surt-stayingwell.eventbrite.ca>

Sessions available April 20, and 21, 2021

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 (insert link) 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.

Professional Development Funding Draw (formerly known as International Conference Draw)

The Pro-D committee has made the decision to postpone the 2020/21 Professional Development Draw that would have been held at the May 19th AGM. Travel outside of our health regions remains uncertain and seems un-likely to open up broadly over the next year. As the intent of the draw is to make attendance at national and international Pro D activities accessible, we feel it is best to hold this draw when travel is more certain. The committee will also be increasing the budget for the 2021/22 Professional Development Draw to \$30,000.00 which will give twelve applicants an opportunity to win the draw at the May 2022 AGM.

Unceded Lands Stickers Project

A team of Kwantlen Polytechnic University students have created and are leading the #youareherestickers project. They can send you free Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Stickers by mail or drop them off to you.

Before sending your request, please first explore their website to understand the project, their process, and the meaning at <https://wordpress.kpu.ca/recognition/>.

You are invited to share their website, which also has links to a Digital Traditional Map and more information about Indigenous land and history.

To get your sticker, please message the You Are Here Project on social media or over email:

Instagram: [@YouAreHereStickers](#)

Twitter: [@YouAreHereKPU](#)

Email: YouAreHereStickers@gmail.com

Facebook: [We The First Nation](#)

BCTF Opportunities for members

Advisory Committees to the BCTF

The BCTF has committees that do the work of the federation. 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 bunch of Surrey teachers get involved in these provincial committees. For more information, visit the [BCTF opportunities page](#).

Teacher Inquiry Program facilitators opportunity

Up to twenty facilitators are needed to join the BCTF's Teacher Inquiry Program (TIP)/Inquiry team for three-year terms. TIP facilitators co-design and facilitate inquiry sessions for groups of teachers, school staffs, and provincial specialist associations (PSAs) who are interested in strengthening their teaching practice through observation, reflection, conversation, and research on teaching. See attached brochure, and the deadline to apply is May 7th.



Art While Apart

Thank you, Young Workers!

Last week on April 8th, the STA Young Workers Committee held their first paint night led by artist extraordinaire Mckenzie Matthews. The event exceeded event registration and continued to be sought up until the event itself. With over 55 attendees, this group of young people sought to draw (and paint) new connections to their union and each other.

Young Workers face new challenges entering what is often their first profession, first exposure to unions, and are often more susceptible to being taken advantage of. One in every three early career teachers is likely to experience burnout and leave the profession. Events like this are integral to keeping our young workers connected and supported.

So stay tuned for more fun and engaging ways to connect coming your way from the STA Young Workers Committee.



STA EVENTS

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

April 16 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

April 16-17 – BCTF Zone Meeting

April 20 – [Staff Rep Training](#)

April 20 – Bargaining Committee

April 20 – Executive Committee

April 21 – [Staff Rep Training](#)

April 21 – Special General Meeting/STARA

April 22 – [Summer Pro-D Townhall](#)

April 23 – Car Rally (more info TBA)

April 23 – [Knit, Chat, and Wine Night](#)

April 26 – Grievance Committee

April 27 – Executive Committee

April 28 – Ad Hoc Members of Colour Committee