

We acknowledge with gratitude and respect that STA members have the privilege of working on the unceded ancestral territory of the Coast Salish peoples, the q'wa:ñł'əñ (Kwantlen), q'icəy (Katzie), qiqéyt (Qayqayt) and səmi'ɑ:mu: (Semiahmoo) who have cared for this land for thousands of years, and who continue to care for this land. As educators, we are committed to actions aimed at healing the broken relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples.

MATT HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

After 7 years of being involved in union work, first as a Picket Captain at Princess Margaret during the 2014 job action and finally as BCTF Member-at-Large and President of the STA, Matt made the wise decision to prioritize his health when he resigned in December 2021. Matt's last two years as president coincided with the most challenging time for STA members during the COVID-19 pandemic. In his numerous [media interviews](#), including throughout the summers of 2020 and 2021, he advocated strongly for more safety measures in schools as well as more support for students



Amongst the flood of well wishes that poured in after the announcement of his resignation were many mentions of Matt's responsiveness, pragmatism and dedication. No one mentioned how much he didn't really like wearing red shirts because he said that red was not his colour. A bit of a challenge during Red4BCed events. Now that he won't have Table Officers to surprise with his droll sense of humour, we trust that his cats, Oscar and Sam, will be a tolerant audience. We wish Matt well on his journey to the full recovery of his health.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

This week, on Tuesday, January 25, we learned from Chief Willie Sellars of William's Lake First Nations that they had [found signs of 93 potential unmarked graves](#) at the St. Joseph's Mission residential "school". These findings are in addition to [1,300 unmarked grave sites](#) already found on the sites of former residential "schools" across Canada over the past year. Founder of the [Orange Shirt Day](#), Phyllis Webstad, had her orange shirt taken away from her on the first day of attending the St. Joseph's Mission residential "school" in 1973. To get a deep understanding of what it was like for children who attended the "school" read [They Called Me Number One](#) by Xat'sull chief Bev Sellars who had to attend St. Joseph's Mission residential "school" in the 1960s.

ELECTIONS

There will be elections for a new 1st Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer at the February 16 SGM/STARA Meeting. In addition, we also need to elect an additional 16 STA delegates to attend the **virtual** BCTF AGM on March 19 - 22. BCTF AGM delegates will need access to a desktop or laptop as you will not be able to access the meeting via a phone or a tablet. All interested candidates should send their name and statement to sta@surreyteachers.org. Please see the [Election guidelines](#) for more information. Remember to [register](#) to attend all our STARA/General meetings.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES



Message from Professional Support Services Officer, Pauline Veto

Through the Peer Support Program, a joint initiative between the Surrey School District and the STA, there is help available for those who feel they need extra support during these very difficult times for educators. Peer support consultants are available to offer support, in a non-directive and non-judgmental environment. It is a free, confidential service provided through the STA. Contact Pauline Veto at services@surreyteachers.org for more information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mask Exemptions

If you have concerns with how the policy on mask exemptions are being addressed at your school, please bring your concerns to your admin. If you are not satisfied with their response, bring the matter to your school Health and Safety committee and ask them to recommend that potential strategies are explored regarding those with mask exemptions. [Read more](#)

Ventilation

The [January 2022 Addendum](#) from the government provides additional prevention measures that schools must implement. In terms of ventilation, it asks schools with recycled/recirculated air systems if they have upgraded their current filters to MERV 13 where possible or have identified mitigation efforts. The STA is tackling the issues on a few fronts. [Read more](#)

Daily Health Check

The Ministry of Education has released an updated [Daily Health Check and What To Do When Sick](#) resource. Please use this updated resource to do your daily health check. It applies to both staff and students. The [Thrive Self Assessment tool](#) should no longer be used to do a daily health check, but is to be used to determine whether you should seek a COVID-19 test. COVID-19 public health guidance is rapidly changing. Please refer to the [BCCDC COVID-19 page](#) for the most current information.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Save the Date for Focus Day 2022

SD36/STA Focus Day 2022 will be on Friday, February 25, 2022. Our keynote is [Len Pierre](#). His address is *Decolonizing Education & Institutionalizing Cultural Safety*. The Focus Day committee is also looking for more workshop presenters. If you have a workshop you would like to present, please submit a proposal by January 10, 2022. For more information and a reminder to register, please visit www.surreyfocusday.ca.



Interested in Job Share?

The STA is facilitating a Job Share information session on Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 4:00 pm via Zoom. Connect with potential job share partners and learn about your rights when it comes to job shares. In addition to the application process, learn about possible denials and what options you have available. [Sign up now](#) for the information session. For more information, check out the [Job Share page](#) on our website.




ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tweets celebrating historic STA election


 The Sikh Community of BC (Unceded Indigenous Land) @BCSikhs
Congratulations 🌟 to @BadhBir, the first BIPOC woman in the 81 year history of @SurreyTeachers Association to be elected President!

The role of "first" is a privilege & burden. Let us examine why a first took so long & do more to support community leaders like Jatinder. 🙏

 Jatinder Badh-Bir @BadhBir · Jan 20
@SurreyTeachers has been in existence since 1941. Our 1st & only BIPOC president, Lloyd Edwards was elected in 1974. 48 yrs later, 2022 here I am 🙏 representation matters !!
Put simply, it matters bc you can't be what you can't see. Please accept my sincere gratitude 🙏

 BCTF @bctf
Congratulations to @BadhBir, the first ever BIPOC woman President of @SurreyTeachers!

Jatinder was on @CBCEarlyEdition this morning to chat about her new role and top priorities for the STA. Listen here: cbc.ca/listen/live-ra... #bced #bcpoli

 shanee @shenshen83
Thx @BadhBir keep paving the way for women like me! So much gratitude!

 BCTF @bctf · Jan 24
Congratulations to @BadhBir, the first ever BIPOC woman President of @SurreyTeachers!
Jatinder was on @CBCEarlyEdition this morning to chat about her new role and top priorities for the STA. Listen here: cbc.ca/listen/live-ra... #bced #bcpoli

 Kiran Singh @kiranitsingh
@SurreyTeachers has a new president. Jatinder Bir, @BadhBir, becomes the first female BIPOC president since the association's inception in 1941.

@CBCNews @CBCVancouver

 Jatinder Badh-Bir @BadhBir · Jan 20
@SurreyTeachers has been in existence since 1941. Our 1st & only BIPOC president, Lloyd Edwards was elected in 1974. 48 yrs later, 2022 here I am 🙏 representation matters !!
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Surrey teachers in the news!
[Read Surrey Now-Leader](#)

SURREY NOW-LEADER

communicator, good listener and a reliable resource to the community.



TOP HONOUR

Craig Tessier

Like most teachers, Craig Tessier is driven to help others.

In his time as a teacher, Tessier has taught in most school departments but is currently a career development facilitator at Guildford Park Secondary School.

In his role, he says what keeps him going is "knowing you're making a difference in people's lives."

He spends countless hours talking with students about their career goals and helping them apply and get

into their choice of district programs, which provide students with their first year of university-level training, paid for by the district.

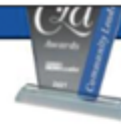
Working at an inner-city school, many students are faced with financial and family challenges. Tessier says some kids are already working part-time jobs to support their families and are "anxious and eager" to make a difference.

This year, Guildford Park has 34 students in district programs — the highest

number of successful applicants from all Surrey schools.

As a career counsellor, he has former students calling him to keep him up to date on where they're at in their careers and what they've accomplished since graduating.

"As with most teachers, you don't know the impact you make on the student until you happen to run into them years down the road," he says. "It's really cool to actually see."



HONOURABLE MENTION

Jacquie King

In her career, Jacquie King wears many hats within her school as a teacher leader to province-wide work and district-wide work.

King, a Grade 7 teacher at Lena Shaw Elementary School, is an advocate for decolonization and indigenization in schools, and has helped teachers across Surrey grow in their under-

standing of truth and reconciliation.

Her work has helped build professional development opportunities for teachers and the Surrey community that builds bridges, celebrates culture and elevates Indigenous voices of students and staff.

King says she's driven by the people she works with to continue doing the work

she does.

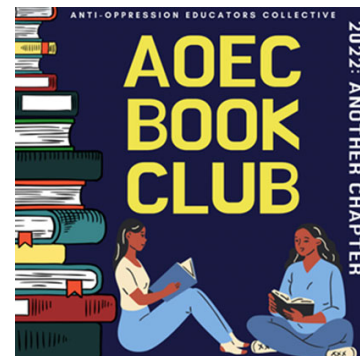
King has always been a caregiver, and the role of teacher just made sense.

"I love the people I get to work with," she notes. "The staff that I work with, the students and their families are what keeps me coming back to this amazing place where we do amazing work."



AOEC Book Club 2022

AOEC is looking forward to their [2022 Book Club](#)! Over three months, they are going to take a deep dive into Mariame Kaba's revolutionary bestseller [We Do This 'Till We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice](#). [Register](#) to join!



BCTF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Nominations

The BCTF is seeking nominations for four awards. Please note that two of these awards – Bob Rosen Social Justice Award and Stewart Schon Award – are named after former Surrey teachers. Note that deadlines for nominations are coming up soon.

- The newly created [Connie Jervis Early Career Teaching Award](#) will be granted to a BCTF member in the first 10 years of their career who has made an outstanding contribution to the pursuit of the BCTF goals for public education and BCTF members. Deadline for nominations is **Monday, January 31, 2022**.
- The [Bob Rosen Social Justice Award](#) is granted to a member or honorary associate member who has made an outstanding and sustained contribution in working for systemic change on issues of social justice. Deadline for nominations is **Monday, January 31, 2022**.
- The [Stewart Schon Award](#) is granted to a member or honorary associate member who has made an outstanding and sustained contribution to the health and safety of BCTF members. Deadline for nominations is **Monday, January 31, 2022**.
- The [G.A. Fergusson Award](#) is granted annually to a BCTF member or former member who has made an outstanding contribution to public education. Deadline for nominations is **Thursday, February 10, 2022**.

SHOUT OUT!

Send us a “shout out” about a colleague who inspires you and who you think deserves recognition, whether it is for their kindness, a great resource they shared recently, or an awesome lesson they teach. You and the colleague you shout out will have your names entered into our monthly draw for a \$25 Indigo Gift certificate. Submit your “shout outs” to Lizanne via communications@surreyteachers.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 31

Bargaining Committee

February 1

Ad Hoc Members of Colour Committee

February 2

Health & Safety Committee

STARA Steering Committee

Ad Hoc Members of Colour Self-Care Event

February 3

Rookie BCTF AGM Delegate Training

International Solidarity Committee

February 4

Bargaining with the Employer

February 7

Bargaining Committee

Ad Hoc Environmental Justice Committee

Labour Affairs Committee

Pro-D Committee

February 8

Bargaining with the Employer

Executive Committee

February 9

Ad Hoc Indigenization Committee

February 10

Indigenous Education Committee

Job Share Meeting

February 11

Ad Hoc Young Workers Committee

February 14

Ad Hoc Covid Action Committee

February 15

Bargaining Committee

PA/PR Committee

February 16

Bargaining with the Employer

STARA

February 17

Bargaining with the Employer

Ad Hoc Podcast Project Committee

BCTF AGM Delegate Training

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

February

[Black History Month](#)

February 1

[Lunar New Year – The Year of the Tiger](#)

February 11

[International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#)

February 15

[Anniversary of the 1974 Strike led by Lloyd Edwards, former STA President](#)