
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 December 14-18, 2020



In 2020, teachers have faced unprecedented challenges and stressful experiences. Amidst uncertainty and fear over the pandemic, changed schedules, the cohort model being introduced, extra activities curtailed etc., you have worked so hard and done so much wonderful work for your students. We at the STA want to commend you on your adaptability and perseverance - you made it! Best wishes to you and those close to you and let us all stay optimistic for a brighter future ahead.

Open letter to Dr. Bonnie Henry

Yesterday we released an open letter to Dr. Bonnie Henry on behalf of Surrey Teachers, asking for a safer work environment in Surrey schools. It has generated quite a lot of media interest, so that has given us a chance to speak with the public about the situation in our schools. Please see it attached.

Winter break extension?

We have heard many members express concern about returning to school on January 4th, so close to all the get-togethers for New Year's Eve that might occur, possibly engendering the spread of Covid19. We advocated on this matter to senior management, and they let us know they have no plans to extend the break, or to make the first week back remote learning.

The STA stands with Indian Farmers

The largest protest in human history is taking place in India. The Modi government has passed three bills allowing large multi-national corporations to largely control the agricultural sector. Sixty to seventy percent of the Indian population works in agriculture. Farmer-led peaceful protests have been met with water cannons and violence by police as they march to the Indian capital. Protests in support of the movement have sprung up around the globe. To learn more and take action, please visit [La Via Campesina's page](#).

Emergency Drills

While the Ministry continues to work on finalizing their expectations regarding school emergency drills during COVID, the direction we have been given is to continue with drills in accordance with the PHO's requirements on physical distancing, and that drills not be 'surprise' in nature at this time. Stagger the drills for different cohorts throughout the day to allow for physical distancing between cohorts. For secondary, wear a mask where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

WorksafeBC and Covid

If you are diagnosed with COVID, make sure you fill out a [Form 6A](#) for the time you are sick to be covered by WorksafeBC. Send the completed Form 6A to your principal, the district at District at HRES-Safety@surreyschools.ca, and the STA at hs@surreyteachers.org. Your principal may be confused by the 6A as the District uses a different form, but this is the form BCTF members are to use. You do not need to fill out both forms: the principal should use the 6A to complete the District form.

Finally, but most importantly, you need to call WorkSafeBC Claims Call Centre at 604.231.8888. If you don't call, they don't know about your claim.

If you have been denied a claim by WorkSafeBC when you have been diagnosed with COVID, please contact the STA at hs@surreyteachers.org so we can advocate on your behalf.

Plexiglass

Members continue to contact the STA regarding Plexiglass. We have filed a troubleshooter application with the Labour Relations Board and are pleased to see that the District is encouraging teachers who regularly have to work within 2m of students to apply for Plexiglass in this week's Weekly Memo. This assessment of the need for Plexiglass is the responsibility of the school administrator. The criteria for this include an exposure to multiple cohorts and the inability to maintain a 2m distance through administrative or other physical barrier means or a documented medical need. Details on the process for assessing and requesting are linked [here](#). Please contact your Principal or Vice-Principal directly with your initial requests and then reference the linked document together to assess and determine next steps. Contact Gavin Slade-Kerr at hs@surreyteachers.org if you have questions or concerns.

January 31 qualifications deadline reminder

In order to be shortlisted for jobs that require certain qualifications in Rounds 1 and 2, teachers need to be listed in the District Qualification Book. Teachers who are interested in changing their assignments to such positions need to apply to the Human Resources Department (courier #481) by **January 31, 2021** to have their qualifications evaluated. The evaluation will be completed by March 31. (CA, Article E.28.1). Information regarding job descriptions and evaluation forms can be found on [The Hub memo](#).

Do you want to attend the BCTF AGM?

Each year over 750 delegates from around the province attend the BCTF AGM. It is a great opportunity to see how the BCTF operates, to hear new perspectives on important issues, meet colleagues from other parts of the province, and to have a voice in the decisions made by the union.

The 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held virtually and will begin on **Saturday, March 20**, and conclude on **Tuesday, March 23**. The Federation will be using a new online platform that will greatly enhance the virtual meeting for all participants. However, for the optimum user experience, every delegate will need to have access to a desktop or laptop computer.

Delegates will be elected at the **Virtual Special General Meeting on January 20, 2021**.

Elected delegates and alternates are **expected to attend all virtual training sessions** leading up to the AGM.

Sessions are as follows:

- February 8 – Rookie AGM Delegates training 8:30 am to 3:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- February 16 – AGM Delegates training 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- February 22 – AGM Delegates training 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- March 3 – AGM Delegates training 8:30 am to 3:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.
- March 8 – AGM Delegates training 4:00 am to 6:00 pm – virtual zoom training session.

If you are interested in becoming a delegate and can commit to the preparation meetings, please email your name and a brief statement to sta@surreyteachers.org by **Friday, January 8, 2021 (4pm)**. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A CORRECTION FROM LAST WEEK'S DATE**. Remember, your chances of being elected as a delegate are much better if you have a written statement! It is also possible to nominate yourself from the floor at the meeting. If you have any questions about the BCTF AGM, or the process of becoming a delegate, please contact Jatinder Bir at 2vp@surreyteachers.org.

Meeting with Harry Bains, Minister of Labour lobbying for more safety!

On Thursday we are pleased to meet with Hon. Harry Bains, Minister of Labour, and MLA for Surrey Newton, in our quest for safer work spaces. We shall report back!

Ad Hoc Covid 19 Action Committee needs members

The STA Executive Committee struck an action committee to address concerns about COVID. If you are particularly energized into action by the problems we face as teachers in this pandemic, please submit your name to be appointed to this committee. Submit your [CV form](#) to reception@surreyteachers.org.



This winter we will be having two sessions of Staff Rep Training. **Reps can sign up for one out of two SURT topic training sessions.** Here are your choices.

Staff Rep Training: Understanding and Advocating for Public Education

- to develop a local understanding of Public Education in the 21st Century.
- to consider ways in which we can work to achieve the conditions necessary for a vibrant public education system.
- to invite a conversation with stakeholders.
- advocacy tools.

Select one of the following sessions and sign up: <https://staffrep2021-publiceducation.eventbrite.ca>

- Friday, January 8, 2021
- Monday, January 11, 2021
- Friday, January 15, 2021
- Monday, January 18, 2021

Staff Rep Training: Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Our Schools and Communities

- to develop a firmer understanding of the challenges faced by members of equity seeking groups.
- to delve deeper into the issues and barriers around equity and inclusion.
- to develop an action plan to advance equity and inclusion in our communities.

Select one of the following sessions and sign up: <https://staffrep2021-inclusion.eventbrite.ca>

- Friday, January 22, 2021

- Wednesday, January 27, 2021
- Monday, February 1, 2021
- Friday, February 5, 2021

Call out for articles – for a COVID-themed STA Advocate

We are looking for submissions for our next issue of The Advocate. Many of us have stories to share in how our lives, both professional and personal, and the world as we know it have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From virtual teaching and remote learning to redesigning and adapting in times of crisis, COVID-19 has changed education dramatically. Considering this and the variety of issues that have been brought to the forefront, we are dedicating the next issue of The Advocate to this theme. We encourage submissions - from journals to reflections, to poems or prose. Please submit to communications@surreyteachers.org. Submissions will be accepted until **December 26th**.

Call out for 2nd SJ rep

We have an opening for Social Justice Rep to the BCTF. Please consider putting your name forward to work with Hilary Wardlow in the role of Social Justice Rep. You would receive email notifications from the BCTF and other community notices and make sure Surrey Teachers know about them. You would help represent the STA at BCTF Zone meetings. You would put your passion for Social Justice to work within our organization. If interested, please submit a [CV form](#) to reception@surreyteachers.org. It is a two-year term and the person will be appointed by our Executive Committee in January.

BCTF Health and Wellness Program

The BCTF Health and Wellness program offers an individualized rehabilitation program for teachers who are unable to return to work due to a medical illness or disability. For more information on this return-to-work transition and support program, please refer to the attached brochure.

Surrey Retired Teachers' Association

If you or someone you know is retiring next month, SRTA is inviting members to join the Surrey Retired Teachers' Association. For more information on retirement programs and benefits, please refer to the attached letter from the President of SRTA.



Status of Women: Wellness Project 2020

For our “Wellness Tip of the Week” we want to wish you all a much deserved restful winter break. May you find some time to recharge and treat yourself when you need it! Perhaps catch up on some pleasure reading purely for yourself. Or finally download one of the free apps we have been suggesting in the STA Connection and spend some time starting a new meditation/yoga/workout routine.

Here’s a list of all the “tips” we’ve shared so far:

- Forest bathing
- [Yoga with Adriene](#)
- [Calm](#)
- [Down Dog](#)
- [BounceBack](#)
- [Nike Training Club](#)
- [MindShiftCBT](#)
- [Insight Timer](#)

Do you have a wellness tip you’d like to share with other teachers? Feel free to email any tips to Angela Marcakis at marcakis_a@surreyschools.ca.

A smile before the break

submitted by Grace Lai

(If there is nothing wrong with saying all this...)
Happy week before Holidays....

Fog the Halls

Fog the halls with lots of cleaner, Fa la la la la la la la!

CoVid season is much meaner, Fa la la la la la la la!

Don we now our safe apparel, Fa la la la la la la la!

Hope we all don’t become sterile, Fa la la la la la la la!

Quarter system- very draining, Fa la la la la la la la!

Lesson prep- it won’t stop raining, Fa la la la la la la la!

Blended class, new protocol, Fa la la la la la la la!

Oh so sad, no basketball, Fa la la la la la la la!

Follow me in Bonnie’s measure, Fa la la la la la la la!

Health and life are ours to treasure, Fa la la la la la la la!

Masked we sing now all together! **No no no no no no no no no!**
Only if out in the weather, **Brr, brr brr brr brr brr brr brr!**

Holidays are now before us, **Fa la la la la la la la!**
Sleep and rest make joyful chorus, **Fa la la la la la la la!**
Now to come and end this letter, **Fa la la la la la la la!**,
Hope twenty-one is much, much better, **Ja ja ja ja ja ja ja ja!**

Merry Christmas and a Happier New Year!