



SAANICH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

October 2020

S.T.A. in TOUCH

A Newsletter of the Saanich Teachers' Association -- BCTF Members of Local #63 (Saanich)

President's Message

Well, welcome to a new school year. It is going to look different, but at least, unlike last year, we already know that it is going to be different. As you know there are a lot of differences this year. We see the quarter system at the secondary level. We have a new Remote Learning Program that has the enrollment of over 400 students, (the size of a school) this was a program put together over a matter of a couple of weeks. SIDES is bursting at the seams.

I recall last year for the October issue of the STA-in-Touch writing about going into the year with a number of unknowns. The main unknown being about the new funding model. If I had only known in advance what our year was going to look like. Clearly that is a year that will be remembered for a long time. I am glad that you all made it into this year, and I look forward to working with or meeting with you as well.

My Goals for the year:

Every year in October, I like to let you know what my goals will be for the year. Last year, it was to support the Staff Committee process and the Local Specialist Associations. We had a lot of success last year with the Staff Committees, but with the pandemic, I had less of an opportunity to focus on Local Specialist Associations.

This year, there are the areas that I want to focus on:

- **Supporting the Association Standing Committees:** The Association just established a group of standing committees that will allow members who are interested in specific topics to meet and get more involved. The Executive Committee just appointed the members to the committee last week, and I am providing support to the chairs of the committees.
- **Supporting the Health and Safety Process:** Given that our school based Health and Safety Committees are front and center this year, this is a really good year to give more attention to this area. I know that violent incidents in our schools are under reported. I hope to change this this year. Also I want to see our Health and Safety Committee members have a better understanding of the role and the powers of the Health and Safety Committees. The Executive Committee, using a part of Special BCTF COVID Response Grant, has released **Taryn Mah** for 3 middle school blocks a week to work on Health and Safety Issues until the end of December. There is the potential that the release can go to the end of the school year.

- **Pandemic Issues:** Of course, most of my time is being spent on a variety of Pandemic issues around the protocols. Things are going well in this area, but there is significant work to be done in other areas. For example, the Association has already filed a Grievance at the Elementary Level because of additional supervision requirements. The Association is also tracking issues around non-replacement of custodial that have resulted in classrooms being cleaned as a result of the protocols.

Don Peterson, STA President
lp63@bctf.ca

President's Report

by Don Peterson

Pandemic Protocols

As I did my writing for this month's STA-in-Touch, I have been asked several questions around the pandemic protocols. I am concerned that not all the protocols are being followed according to the information that we have received from the government. What is important, the protocols are not an option. They are a layer of protection for staff, students and families from transmission of the virus. We are lucky, in the islands, there have only been two exposure events in schools. This would suggest that the risk that we will be exposed in Saanich is relatively low. Nevertheless, we are still required to follow the protocols, get systems and processes in place. We can not be complacent around the protocols. When (not if) exposures start to occur in Saanich we need to be ready for it.

If you are concerned that protocols are not being followed as they should. There are people that you can talk to. Please speak to your Staff Representative, Health and Safety Representative, or you can even contact myself at the STA office.

Pandemic Benefits

I understand that there is a new benefit package from the Federal government. I do not know a lot about it, but here is some information for you. There are three new ones:

- Canada Recover Sickness Benefit (CRSB)
- Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)
- Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)

For more information on these please see this link:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/10/backgrounder.html>

Personal Protection Equipment

At the Association office, we have 247 face shields that have been supplied by the BCTF. If you would like one, please email sta_office@saanichschools.ca. and let us know which school you are at and we can send one out to you. We will be sending them through District mail on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.



Health and Safety

As I already mentioned, the Association is looking to support the Health and Safety process. **You can help!** Please, if you are aware of any Health and Safety issues at your school, please let your Health and Safety Representative know. The Association has a survey the reps can use to log these concerns, so the Association can track the issues to see how they are resolved and to see what kind of trends we can see across the District. As I mentioned earlier, we are concerned that some issues are not being reported correctly, and therefore, there is no resolution to the issue. We are hoping to address that this year.

Committee Appointments

There are a lot of them this time around! Unless I make a comment otherwise, these members were appointed at the Executive Committee last week.

- *Grievance Committee:* **Don Peterson** (as President), **Anne Stewart** (as Bargaining Chair), **Taryn Mah, Sarah Hoyland, Shauna White,** and **Andrea Clesele**
- *Staff Committee Handbook Committee:* **Nadine McIntyre, Sarah Hoyland,** and **Elaine Ting**
- *Social Justice Advisory Committee:* **Ayala Johnson** (Chair elected at AGM), **Michelle Cunningham, Lindsay Rochon, Naomi Fitzgerald,** and **Justin Potestio.**
- *French Educators Advisory Committee:* **Michael Trottier, Ines Receveaux,** and **Danille Miller**
 - This committee still has a number of vacancies. Please contact Alison Cuthill or Cindy Lister for more information
- *Teachers on Call and New Teachers Advisory Committee:* **Matt Coulson** (Elected at AGM) and **Luanne Marchand**
 - This committee has 3 vacant positions if you are interested.
- *Aboriginal Advisory Committee:* **Shelly Black** (Elected at AGM) **Christa Cowie, Dania Stachiw, Ginny Underwood,** and **Lorelei McEvay**
- *Political Contact:* **Denise Jones**

Contract Awareness Series

Evaluations: Are you being evaluated this year? Are you wanting to get a better idea of how the evaluation process should work? Log onto Zoom on **October 21st, 2020 at 4:00 pm** to learn more about this important topic:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3694192344?pwd=bmFyTG9zZFh1RGFIUGFzRGs5dG1Kdz09>

Maternity, Pregnancy, and Parental Leaves: Over the last couple of years there have been a number of changes in legislation around maternity, pregnancy and parental leaves, including benefits. There are even new changes to top-up coming December 1st, 2020. Please log onto Zoom on **November 25th at 4:00 pm** to learn everything there is to know about these important leaves:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3694192344?pwd=bmFyTG9zZFh1RGFIUGFzRGs5dG1Kdz09>

BCTF Local Representatives' Report

by Elaine Ting & Nadine McIntyre

BCTF AGM Motion Referrals

- Have you ever wondered how the BCTF develops its position on particular issues?
- Is there a way for you to influence the BCTF's position?
- Is there an issue that you would like the BCTF to take a position on?
- Is there something you would like the BCTF to do differently?

Yes, in fact, there is a process that allows you as a member to bring an idea forward.

This how it is done:

- Step One:** Come up with an idea.
- Step Two:** Send your idea/motion to the STA Staff Representative Meeting.
- Step Three:** All ideas sent in will be debated by staff representatives and if approved will be sent to one of the BCTF decision making bodies, Executive Committee, Representative Assembly or even the BCTF AGM.

The STA-Staff Representative Meeting on **November 4th, 2020** will have a focus on motions that STA members have put forward that could be sent to the BCTF AGM. In the recent past, the STA has not sent any motions to the BCTF AGM. Perhaps, once our members are aware of this process, we might see teachers across the province debating our ideas.

If you have an idea, send it to either Don Peterson, Elaine Ting, or Nadine McIntyre and we will help you get your motion on the Agenda for our next Staff Representative Meeting. Please note, that if you want your idea to go to this year's BCTF AGM, the deadline to submit is the November STA-Staff Representative Meeting.

Professional Development

PD during COVID: How can I spend my money?

By: *Holly Mair - Joint PD Committee, Secondary Rep*

Ruth Wadsworth - PD Co-Chair – STA Executive

With October 23, our Province-wide PD Day, approaching us conferences have been cancelled or moved to online formats. Teachers are now asking about different ways they can spend their Professional Development money. Here are a few to get you thinking:

Professional Resources: Any book or magazine subscription needs to be a resource that "teaches the teacher". For example, you could purchase a book on how to teach the alphabet, but you could not purchase "Z is for Zamboni". The distinction can get trickier as you go up in the grade levels. Another way that might be helpful is to ask yourself if this is a purchase that would qualify as a student learning resource. If your answer is "YES", you shouldn't be purchasing that title with your professional development fund.

Join Your PSA: There are a number of different Professional Specialist Associations you can join. These Associations provide a supportive environment in which you can connect with colleagues. For example, there is a PSA for Dance Teachers, Culinary Arts Teachers, Social Studies Teachers etc. The list is too long to include them all. All you need to do is log into the BCTF Portal and click the tab on the Navigation Bar that says My PSAs. There is a tab that says "Join a PSA". You can register online and a receipt will be emailed to you so you can claim the fee.

Register for Virtual PD Sessions: Check out the various PSA conferences that have gone online: <https://bctf.ca/PDCalendar/> You may choose to attend the conferences from 'virtually' anywhere. Some sessions are free and some may include fees to join their PSA. (see above). Also note that you may claim your per diem for the day just as you would have if you were to attend in-person.

Book A TTOC: Book a TTOC and spend time in another teacher's classroom. This will give you the opportunity to see how someone else tackles that topic that you've always found difficult to teach or that group of students that you are having difficulty reaching. You can learn so much from watching each other and this is a great chance to do that. A half day TTOC will cost you \$182.00.

Many teachers ask about purchasing hardware (i.e. a new computer) or software programs (i.e. Zoom) with their professional development fund. It is the position of the BCTF and the Saanich Teachers' Association that these things should be provided by the employer. Anything you need in order to do your job should be supplied for you.

On Oct. 5th, PD school reps met and held their training session virtually. Led by Maren and Ruth, topics such as, 'role of the school PD rep' and 'reimbursement process' were included.

So, before you do anything, please make sure you check with your Professional Development Rep at your school and get pre-approval. It is important that your personal professional development allocation is enough to cover the cost of your expense or you could be out of pocket for your expenses.

Staff Committee Corner

Here are a few items that Staff Committee could be considering for this year.

Staff Committee Remedy

It is now possible for teachers to give some or all of their remedy to the Staff Committee. The allocation of this remedy would be up to your staff committee.

Non-Instructional Day

As you know there are three school based Non-Instructional days, the teacher staff, through the Staff Committee should be determining how those days should be allocated. They can be used for professional development, parent-teacher interviews or report card preparation.

D.22.2

I suggest that Staff Committees consider D.22 of the Collective Agreement. This is the clause that deals with making joint decisions around staff meetings. If your school has made such an agreement with your admin, please forward it to the STA. If your school has not yet made such an agreement, we strongly encourage you to do so. The STA developed a template agreement that you could use. If you would like it, please contact the STA office.

D.3.10

Each school will be allocated a portion of \$35,000 to facilitate School Based Team meetings. Your school's exact share is being determined by the Joint MoA committee. The allocation will be based on September 30th numbers.

The purpose of this money is to release teachers for SBT and IEP meetings or for teacher/EA consultations.

“School staff committee and the administrative officer shall jointly determine the portions of each of each school's allocation which will be applied for the above purpose”

In other words, the staff committee of the school will have a say in how their share of the \$35,000 will be spent. If you are unaware of what your share is, please contact the Association office.

Provincial Election Report

by Denise Jones

Provincial Election - October 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues and fellow STA members,

My name is Denise Jones. I am a teacher at Cordova Bay Elementary, a member of the STA Executive (Secretary), and I am your Political Action Contact for the upcoming Provincial Election.

General Voting Day is October 24th, but you have a few options for advance and alternative voting:

From now until 4pm on October 24th you can **vote at any district electoral office**. Offices are open from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday, and from 10am to 4pm on Saturdays. During advance voting they will be open from 8am to 8pm.

- District electoral office for Saanich North and the Islands: 500 Block B – 2261 Keating Cross Rd Saanichton V8M2A5
- District electoral office for Saanich South: 304-3960 Quadra St Victoria V8X4A3

Advance voting will take place Thursday October 15th until Wednesday October 21st from 8am to 8pm (check your local advance voting place for site specific hours). Anyone can vote in advance.

- Head to <https://elections.bc.ca/docs/advance-voting-places.pdf> to see a full list of advance voting place information.

General Voting Day is October 24th, from 8am to 8pm. Voters have an assigned voting place on General Voting Day. It is generally faster to vote at your assigned voting place, but you can vote at another voting place if it's more convenient for you.

- You should receive a Where to Vote card in the mail in advance of General Voting Day, or you can check the list here: <https://elections.bc.ca/docs/GVD-voting-places.pdf>



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The option to request a **vote by mail** package is still available on elections.bc.ca. You can also request a vote by mail package by calling Elections BC at 1-800-661-8683. Vote by mail packages must be received by Elections BC before 8pm on October 24th.

Last week, I invited all candidates running in Saanich North and the Islands and Saanich South ridings to provide a short article outlining why Saanich teachers should vote for them to be published in this edition of the *STA in Touch*. See below for responses from Saanich North and the Islands candidates Adam Olsen (Green Party), and Zeb King (NDP), and Saanich South candidates Lana Popham (NDP), and Rishi Sharma (Liberal).

Candidates Stephen Roberts (Saanich North and the Islands Liberal Party candidate) and Kate O'Connor (Saanich South Green Party candidate) were contacted but a response was not provided.

Keep an eye out for further communication regarding our upcoming election on the STA Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Please feel free to connect with me should you have any questions, concerns, or comments relating to the upcoming provincial election.

Warm regards,

Denise

djones@saanichschools.ca

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

Adam Olsen, Saanich North and the Islands Green Party candidate:

I am, and will continue to be, a vocal advocate for public education. As the incumbent candidate I have learned a lot about education in our riding and I have invested in building trusting relationships with key education stakeholders in our community.

During the three and a half years that I have served as the MLA representing the Saanich and Gulf Islands schools I have regularly met with educators and the Saanich Teachers Association President Don Peterson, trustees and school administrators. I have also consulted and engaged with education support staff, outside and inside workers and CUPE 441 President Dean Coates to best advocate for public education on the Saanich Peninsula.

During the protracted contract dispute between the District and CUPE 441, I stood on the picket lines to show my support for members of both associations. I have shown I am willing to advocate both in private with the Minister, and publicly in Question Period and the media.

My actions have shown I am prepared to do the groundwork necessary to understand the issues. I act when needed.

I will continue to advocate broadly for public education in British Columbia. While Covid-19 has highlighted the need to ensure class sizes and composition are appropriate and that they are foundational to ensuring quality education for our children and the quality of the workplace for educators, I recognize that these issues were challenging pre-pandemic under the BC NDP. I am committed to ensuring that there is a strong voice of advocacy holding the government accountable, demanding transparency and making sure they are going much further than just the bare minimum.

Zeb King, Saanich North and the Islands NDP candidate:

My name is Zeb King and I grew up among teachers. My dad is a retired special education teacher and all my early life I was surrounded by friends and family who loved their work in education. I attended local schools (Claremont in the 90s) and I've walked picket lines with teachers during labour unrest in the 2000s. I've stood in solidarity with teachers as they fought the regressive actions of the BC Liberal government all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court victory took a shameful 12 years to achieve and a generation of kids consequently struggled in an underfunded system.

After 16 years of BC Liberal government attacks on public education, I believe we need to stand with teachers and support our education system. I have and will continue to support increased classroom supports and smaller class sizes.

I want to express my eternal thanks to you for working so hard to provide the highest quality education during this pandemic. Your creativity and dedication are remarkable and exemplary. You provide top quality education while keeping our youngsters safe.

As your BC NDP candidate in Saanich North and the Islands, my mandate will be to repair the damage that was done and work hard to improve our system of public education. Thank you again for your dedication in our education system.

Sincerely,

Zeb King

Rishi Sharma, Saanich South Liberal Party candidate:

Hi - I'm Rishi Sharma, the BC Liberal Party candidate in Saanich South.

This school year is like no other, and as far as we can tell, things are going to be this way for the foreseeable future. So, first and foremost my heartfelt thanks to each of you for all you're doing to keep our children safe in this unprecedented time.

You are one of the most profound influences on our children's lives. We owe it to you to ensure you have the support you need to in this most important role in our world.

I have three daughters in the public school system. I am a member of a parent advisory council. I'm also, at the moment, volunteering as a coach for my eldest daughter's basketball team. As many do, I once had thoughts of a career as a professional athlete. At a young age, having the opportunity to play blacktop ball with Steve Nash, I quickly realized that perhaps I should think in another direction.

Our public school system needs continuous, proactive access to the Ministry of Education officials so we can resolve issues before they become crises. Teachers need to be at the decision-making table when curriculum changes are being contemplated.

We need to continue to adequately invest in education - to ensure smaller class sizes, quality buildings, increased use of technological advances. Our children will compete on the world stage more than ever in the years to come and we have a responsibility to equip them to be able to succeed.

We also need to provide substantive, funded avenues for professional development for teachers. You need to have proper support to manage and curate the myriad of information in our world into actual education plans that can be implemented.

In short, education needs to never be an afterthought. It must be at the forefront of our social and economic structure, the bedrock of our society.

Lana Popham, Saanich South NDP candidate:

Dear Saanich Teachers' Association,

Thank you for all your work! You are a valued and important part of the wellbeing and success of our community.

Your work is especially difficult, stressful and important during a pandemic. Thank you for doing your best to help students safely learn!

A BC NDP government will continue to help keep schools safe during the pandemic with new ventilations systems, plexiglass barriers in key areas, comprehensive cleaning stations and more cleaning in schools.

In the last three and half years the BC NDP government has hired 4,200 new teachers and we now have the smallest class sizes in a decade. We've made a record \$2 billion investment over three years for new schools, expansions, and seismic upgrades. That includes 13,000 new spaces.

We've worked hard as a government to make up for 16 years of underfunding by the previous government. They took B.C. from the second best funded education system in Canada to the second worst. B.C.'s added investment to education over the past three years increased four times faster than the average of other Canadian provinces

I'm also proud to note that we will support teachers who spend money out of their own pockets on essential school supplies each year with a \$30 million dollar annual school supplies fund that can also help schools continually acquire and upgrade learning technologies for the classroom.

My own son recently completed twelve years in the Saanich public school system. I know what you do and I am thankful. We are all in this together, and your work makes a difference.

I'm running for re-election to help our provincial government continue its work to make life better for all British Columbians. A re-elected BC NDP government will focus on continuing to invest in people and building an economic recovery that works for everyone.

It's about looking after each other, and building back better. Please vote!

Warm regards,

Lana Popham
BC NDP Candidate, Saanich South
lanapopham@gmail.com