HEADS UP

For Members

98% vote to withhold college fee - support democratic fund

At a very well attended general meeting last week 548 members (98%) voted "yes" to withholding the College of Teachers fee and instead paying the $90 into the BCTF Democratic College Fund. Province wide, 88.9% of the almost 23,000 votes cast were in favour of the action.

This week has been declared "Cheque-in Week." Staff reps have been asked to call a union meeting for the purpose of gathering cheques.

The general meeting also passed the following protection motions:

◆ THAT STA members express non-confidence in the B. C. College of Teachers.
◆ THAT if any STA member is disciplined, or their employment terminated as a result of participation in the BCTF collective action to oppose changes to the College of Teachers, no member will report to work until that member is reinstated and made whole.
◆ THAT if the Board of School Trustees, SD#36 (Surrey) is dismissed for failure to terminate a member who is in arrears with the College of Teachers, no member will report to work until the Board is re-instated.

Two thirds of the province's school boards have expressed concern or opposition to the college changes. A large majority of the public does not support the changes including almost ¾ of liberal supporters. Given the almost universal condemnation of the new "College", and our solidarity, the government has no option but to re-think their direction.

Certainly, firing teachers would be political suicide.

International Student Funds

There has been a sharp rise in the number of international students in the system. The district actively recruits these students and collects $12,000 in tuition. Schools enrolling international students receive $500 per student in discretionary funds. The money is intended to be used to support the needs of international students and could be used for special materials or additional ESL support.

The use of the money should be a school decision. We suggest taking the issue to staff committee and/ or a staff meeting.

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Your Whereabouts on Professional Development Days

Each year, usually around the October PSA day, the issue arises regarding what information you are required to provide to your principal about your plans for the day. We met recently with senior management in an attempt to reach agreement on this issue.

It was agreed that, as the employer, the principal has the right to know where their employees are on a workday. It was also agreed that it is reasonable to provide, in a word or two, what you are doing. For example: "Writers' Workshop, Granville Island" or "research on autism, SFU Library."

It was also agreed that information regarding your goals or reasons for engaging in a given activity do not need to be provided.

However, it is understood that there is a clear expectation that the days must be used for professional development activities and not, for example, catching up on marking.

It is our suggestion that the PD chairs, in consultation with the principal, circulate a sign-up list prior to a non-instructional day and make it available to the administration. Below is a suggested format. A downloadable form is available at our website – www.surreyteachers.org

Professional Development Day Sign-Up

Please complete the following regarding the upcoming _____(date)_____ non-instructional Professional Development day.

Name	Activity	Location

Dial in Direct

John Wadge
604-592-8395

Patti Turner
604-592-8392

Lynda Toews
604-592-8391

Mark Keelan
604-592-8393

Margie Willers
604-592-8397

Medical/Dental Appointments are Sick Leave

Medical and dental appointments are, and have always been, a legitimate use of sick leave. Of course, reasonable efforts should be made to schedule appointments outside of work time, but that is not always possible.

When you call Subfinder to request a TOC you will notice that "medical/dental appointment" is no longer one of the choices under "reason for absence." Select "illness" instead.