

Issue 1

September 2007

Sue Heuman, TOC Rep  
2007-08



SURREY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

# TOC NEWS

## Dear Teachers,

Teacher on Call. Substitute. Stand-in. Chameleon. Stunt Double. By now some of you might be asking yourself, "What have I signed up for? 5:30 wake up calls? A different school everyday? P.E. 9? Did I take another teachers' parking spot? chair? coffee cup? Whether you are a rookie or a seasoned veteran, I hope this September will be a good one for you.

This is a great year in terms of work. There were fewer lay-offs at the end of last year and HR has been busy placing those teachers into positions. If you have checked out the "blue and yellow pages" recently, you will have seen the high number of contracts. What an optimistic outlook compared to the past few years.

This is also a great year to get involved. The TOC Committee needs you. If you enjoy helping out your fellow TOCs, keeping TOCs informed, organizing Professional Development workshops for TOCs, speaking up about TOC issues, writing newsletter articles, and getting first hand information, please put your name forward to be elected at the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to put your name forward email me on First Class. You are also invited to attend STA and STARA meetings, and Professional Development activities offered by the District. If you regularly teach at a school, ask the administrator if you could join in the school's Pro-D. Every year Surrey sends delegates to the BCTF Annual General Meeting. If you like meeting teachers from across the province and getting more involved in the BCTF, I encourage you to attend. It's in the spring but I wanted to get it in the back of your mind early. Information on elections will be in the next newsletter.

I look forward to working with you this year. Sue Heuman (TOC Rep)

The TOC newsletter will be mailed to the home address of every Surrey TOC for whom we have a current mailing address. It will also be posted on the STA web site at [www.surreyteachers.org](http://www.surreyteachers.org).

You can help us with our mailing costs. If you do not wish to have this delivered to your home, please call us (604-594-5353), give us your name, and tell us not to send the TOC newsletter. If you'd prefer to receive notice of the mailings by email, call us and give us your email address, or send us a message with that information, to [sta@surreyteachers.org](mailto:sta@surreyteachers.org).

### *Important Websites and Phone Numbers:*

Surrey Teachers' Association	<a href="http://www.surreyteachers.org">www.surreyteachers.org</a>
B.C. Teachers' Federation	<a href="http://www.bctf.ca">www.bctf.ca</a>
Surrey School District	<a href="http://www.sd36.bc.ca">www.sd36.bc.ca</a>
STA Office	(604) 594-5353
Debbie Anderson (dispatch)	(604) 599-7446
Kathy Fournier (payroll)	(604) 599-7449

# TOC Meeting

The first TOC meeting of the year is on  
Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, from 4 – 6 at the Surrey Conference Centre,  
9260 – 140<sup>th</sup> Street.

There will be food and drinks.

The following is the tentative agenda:

1. **Welcome and Introduction by Sue Heuman (TOC Rep)**
2. **Meet the STA Executive**
3. **Guest Speaker (to be advised)**
4. **Election of STARA Reps (see “role of STARA rep” below )**
5. **Open Mic: A chance for TOC’s to voice their concerns, comments and suggestions**
6. **Notices of upcoming events**

Participation by TOC’s is vital to stay informed and to have our voice heard. We need to stick together and show support for each other and our union. I am looking forward to meeting you and hearing your comments.

## Calling for STARA Reps

At our TOC Meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007, we will be electing STARA reps. These are important volunteer positions. TOC’s are allowed to have six STARA reps. STARA reps provide three functions. Firstly, they are advocates for staff with management on union issues. Secondly, they represent their school at STARA meetings. Lastly, they take back union updates and information and report to their schools.

Because TOC’s don’t have a school to liaise with, their jobs are slightly different. The TOC reps would attend STARA meetings and voice TOC concerns and issues. TOC STARA reps would also update TOC bulletin boards and would help with TOC projects like updating the listserv, TOC meetings and they would meet with the Chair of the TOC Committee, Sue Heuman to discuss TOC issues. STARA meetings are held about six times a year. All STA members can attend STARA meetings with voice (i.e. can speak at the meeting) but only Reps can vote. Each school in Surrey sends their rep(s) to voice staff concerns and to vote for their school.

It is very important for TOC’s to have full representation at STARA meetings, so our voice can be heard and counted. If you are interested and would like more information, contact Sue Heuman by email at [sjheuman@hotmail.com](mailto:sjheuman@hotmail.com) or come to the TOC meeting and put your name forward.

## TOC Listserve

TOC’s have a listserv which is a “virtual staffroom” to ask questions, give opinion or read comments. It is a great way to stay in touch with other TOC’s. Our job can be very lonely so this is an easy way to stay informed about what’s happening. Signing up is easy. All you need to do is send an email to Sue Heuman on FirstClass with your request. Include your full name and she will sign you up.



*Watch for updates on the TOC boards*

# A Short History of Bargaining for TOCs in Surrey

## The Right to Bargain

Through the 70s and 80s teachers in B.C. fought for the right to bargain all conditions of work. The School Act at that time allowed teachers to bargain only salaries and benefits, and if they couldn't come to an agreement, there was binding arbitration.

The right to bargain all conditions of work, and the right to strike, came in 1987. In 1988, 1990, and 1993 Surrey teachers bargained one of the best agreements in B.C. and at the same time negotiated the right to bargain for TOCs for the first time.

## Only in Surrey, you say?

There are two things that we have for TOCs in the Surrey agreement that don't exist anywhere else. The first is sick leave. TOCs in other districts have no access to sick leave, even on long-term assignments.

The second provision that Surrey TOCs have is the conversion to continuing contract teachers after 75 days in an assignment. In some districts, TOCs are converted to term contract teachers after a specific time, but only in Surrey do you receive a continuing contract with full layoff and recall rights.

## Small gains under provincial bargaining

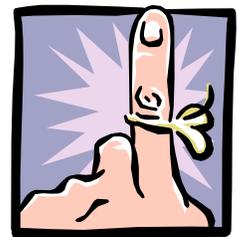
Since Provincial Bargaining was imposed in 1993, that agreement has remained largely stagnant, so the terms and conditions that were considered "a good start" became the status quo. In the early years of these agreements and until about 4 years ago, the Surrey Board and other boards around the lower mainland were hiring up to 200 new classroom teachers every year, so many new teachers did not stay on the TOC list for very long. The Surrey agreement at that time included TOCs being paid on scale after day 4 of a long-term assignment. The 1996 provincial round of negotiations, brought TOCs up to payment on scale after day 3. In the last round of provincial bargaining, the BCTF took the position that TOCs should be paid on scale for every day that they work, but as you know, the government legislated a stripped contract in January 2001, and these objectives were not achieved.

## The Ready Report

After the job action in October 2005, Vince Ready mediated and tabled a report improving salary payments for TOC's. Prior to that time, TOC's were paid differing rates depending upon the district, some locals paid higher than others. Surrey was one of the lowest paying districts. The daily TOC rate was raised to \$190.00 a day. Even more significant, TOCs go on the contract grid pay on the fourth day of TOC work (based on 1/189 of scale) in any combination of TOC assignments in the same district. The at-scale pay and seniority are retroactive to the first day. Should you work every work day of the year in Surrey, you will be on scale pay the whole year. Weekends and holidays do not break the assignment. If you do take a day off, day one starts again when you return to work.

## Helpful Hints for TOC's

- Introduce yourself to the secretaries and neighbouring teachers when you are on an assignment.
- Leave your phone on, even if you have a job, in case Sub Finder needs to get in touch about changes to your assignment. Call Debbie Anderson (604-599-7446) or Sherri Muscardin (604-599-7496) if you aren't getting work so they can check your records and make sure there are no mistakes.
- Inform Sub finder when you are **and** when you are not available for work.
- Stay informed about what is going on in the district and union (contact Sue, STA Website, Listserve, TOC Bulletin Boards at schools.)
- Visit the staffroom while on assignment.
- Be punctual (the earlier the better)
- Dress professionally.
- Wear your ID badge
- Introduce yourself *before* you get asked: "And who are you today?"
- Talk to staff reps or neighboring teachers if you have any questions or concerns
- If injured on the job **file, file, file** a WCB form, found in the school office



# TOC Issues:

## Classroom Keys

Tired of asking the secretary for keys throughout the day? At a recent STARA Meeting I brought up the safety issue of not having a classroom key. As it turns out the STA addressed this issue with AOs some time ago and it was agreed that all TOCs would be given keys to use for the day. You have the right to work in a safe environment. While it is rare, there are times that classrooms have to be locked down because of intruders and other code red scenarios. Please bring this up with the principals at the schools where you teach. Perhaps if we keep this issue at the forefront they will follow through on their word to make the keys. If you are having difficulty with this issue please call Denise Moffatt, STA Health & Safety/ Grievance Office [grhs@surreyteacher.org](mailto:grhs@surreyteacher.org)

## Objective Call Out

To be requested or not to be requested? That is the question (among many.) There are many positives to being requested: you know the students, the teacher, the school, the staff, and the principal and they all know you. However, TOCUTAC is working towards having all of the districts follow the BCTF policy of objective call out. While requesting specific TOCs might not seem like a big deal in a huge district like Surrey, where jobs seem to be plenty, there are reasons to have an objective call out system. Here are a few:

1. It is BCTF policy (49.19): That the BCTF locals be encouraged to seek the elimination of the practice of contract teachers calling out, selecting, or expressing a preference for particular TOCs to fill a teacher absence. This policy was passed by teachers and TOCs from across B.C. at a BCTF AGM.
2. Teachers are not TOCs' employers. It is not up to the teachers to decide who should get to work. Some teachers request or not request based on the TOC's performance, or perceived performance, in their classrooms, or even what they hear from other teachers. This violates the Code of Ethics: criticizing a colleague's teaching performance. With the Vince Ready report, TOC's are also eligible for seniority on the fourth day of consecutive teaching, a teacher colleague is determining who gets seniority.
3. You should not have to market yourself. Teachers are hired based on their seniority and qualifications - not on the quality of the brownies they bake or how many hours of extra-curricular activities they volunteer for. A call out system based on seniority would see experienced TOCs called out before new TOCs, who get requested by the staff at their practicum schools. (Sometimes new TOCs don't get requested at their practicum schools because the staff has decided that this teacher is unsatisfactory.)

## Don't let TOCing become an isolating experience.

Come to meetings

Join the listserv

Talk to other TOCs in the schools you go to

You are invited to write an article for

*The Examiner* or *Teacher* magazine

or even this TOC newsletter.

## Remember that there are many ways TOCs can stay informed

**TOC Hotline 604-592-8396**

**TOC Website [www.surreyteachers.org](http://www.surreyteachers.org)**

**TOC Newsletter (mailed to TOCs)**

**TOC Bulletin Boards in staffrooms** (talk to the staff rep if you can't find TOC information) **TOC Listserv - virtual staffroom for TOCs**

*(to register, e-mail Sue Heuman on FirstClass with e-mail address, employee number and full name)*