

# MAPLE RIDGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



## News from the Office - May 2020

### A Word from the President...

Although Pandemic 2020 is an extremely challenging time for everyone, there are certainly some silver linings that I have identified. The slower pace of life that comes with less choice and less options has been freeing. I have likened it to camping; not much else matters except provisions, shelter, safety. I have also noticed so much creativity coming out in people, as a way to express emotions as well as to relieve tension and maybe even boredom! In terms of work, remote meetings have provided me with more freedom too. I have found that it is not necessary to meet face to face most of the time! The technology for online meetings has been reliable and easy to use. I think that this will be a great way to proceed into the future, when possible. Less time is needed to organize for meetings, less time needed to get to meetings, and less consumption. There is more brain space to focus on the work. I have also found a greater sense of calm when working from home. My familiar surroundings are comforting. Less time is needed to get ready, to pack lunches, to make sure the dogs have been let out, etc... I have been able to focus in on the things that are essential and critical, while weeding out the extraneous. I am not keen to introduce those brain, time, and energy suckers back into my life. Moving forward I urge you to focus on what you want to nourish, and keep out the weeds. Less is more!

Take care,

*Penny Morgan*

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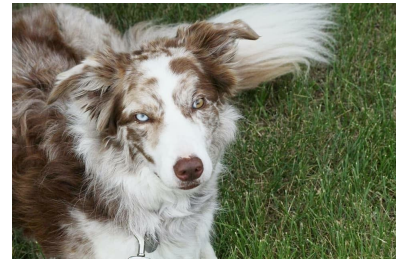
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Our website:

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## MRTA Donates \$2,500 to Food Bank

A recent motion passed at our April Staff Rep. Assembly recommended that the MRTA donate the money budgeted for the Staff Rep. Assembly and Executive Meeting dinners to the Friends in Need food bank in Maple Ridge. A total of \$2,500.00 has been donated on behalf of the Maple Ridge Teachers' Association. This donation will directly help those students and families in the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows area that access the services provided.



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# Annual Practice Fee - Due May 31st

For most teachers, this annual fee of \$80 is automatically deducted off your pay cheque. If you are on a leave or not working right now, you will need to pay this fee yourself. **This is particularly relevant right now for Teachers who are Teaching on Call who's ability to work has been impacted.**

Visit the link to find out more and to make sure that you pay this fee on time to ensure that you remain in good standing.

[Pay the Annual Practice Fee - Province of British Columbia](#)

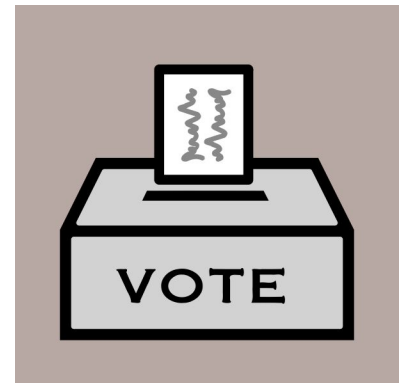
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## MRTA AGM on May 20, 2020 at 4:00pm

using the GoToMeetings platform.

*“Wait... if the meeting is online, how will we vote?”*

Due to the current circumstances, voting will look differently this year as we are not permitted to meet in groups larger than 50+ people. Voting will not happen at the AGM. Using the SimplyVoting platform, members will need to register their email address with the MRTA Office in order to vote in the local elections. Nominations for Release officers and LRs will close **May 6th** (two weeks before elections). Nominations for all other positions and committee will close on **May 13th**. Voting will close May 20th at 12:00pm.



**Members will need to register  
to vote by 4:00pm on May 13, 2020**

If you are planning to vote, please email [kelly@mrtaoffice.ca](mailto:kelly@mrtaoffice.ca) to register before the deadline.

## MRTA Nominees for Election

A Special Elections Newsletter will be sent out next week to introduce candidates who are running for the Release Officer and Local Representative positions. Nominations for release officers and Local Reps close May 6th.

<p><b>President</b></p> <p>Trevor Takasaki</p>	<p><b>Local Reps (3 + Alt)*</b></p> <p>Martin Dmitrieff</p> <p>Dale Hardy</p> <p>Kiel Lemmen</p> <p>Ryan Neufeld</p> <p>Penny Morgan</p> <p><small>*it is recommended that the 1st Vice President be an LR</small></p>	<p><b>Other Exec. Positions</b></p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Treasurer</p> <p>Member-at-Large</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>Health &amp; Safety Rep.</p> <p>Ab. Ed. Contact</p> <p>Local Elections Rep</p>
<p><b>1st Vice President</b></p> <p>Martin Dmitrieff</p>		
<p><b>2nd Vice President</b></p> <p>Sonja Krzus</p>		

## Want to get involved? Join an MRTA Committee!

The MRTA has a variety of committees for members to become involved in. A brief summary of the committees is listed below. We need your voice and input! Please consider putting your name forward for one or more of the committees.

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## MRTA Committees

### JECIC (Elementary & Secondary) (3 appointees)

The purpose of this committee is to review, advise the Superintendent and plan the implementation of all District level programs and/or curriculum implementation matters such as new Ministry initiatives. The committee consists of five (5) MRTA appointees: 1st Vice President, Pro-D chair, and three (3) elected JECIC members representing primary, intermediate and secondary areas.

### Working Learning Conditions/Bargaining (6 appointees)

The purpose of this committee is to identify areas of concern pertaining to the Collective Agreement. This committee reviews past and present grievances to help determine problem areas that can be negotiated in future rounds of bargaining.

### Communications (7 appointees)

The purpose of this committee is to prepare communication to members regarding a variety of topics such as Pro-D, Bargaining, and Social Justice initiatives. This committee is responsible for creating and developing information for members like newsletters, content for the MRTA facebook page and MRTA website.

### Finance (7 appointees)

The purpose of this committee is to determine areas of importance for the governance of the MRTA association. The finance committee investigates the feasibility of a variety of projects like looking into building improvements, membership fees, and the MRTA budget.

### Early Career/TTOCs (7 appointees)

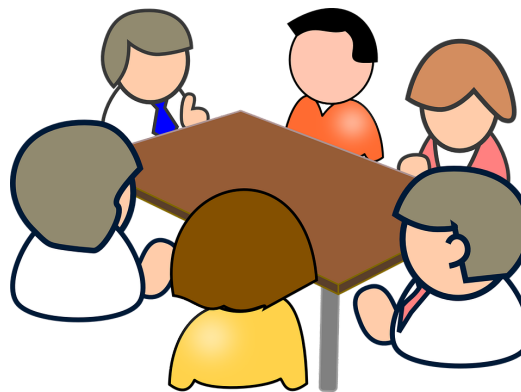
The purpose of this committee is to help and support early career teachers and TTOCs through the planning of workshops and events.

### Social Justice (7 appointees)

The purpose of this committee is to implement social justice initiatives and policy. The committee also plans events that recognize important social justice dates of recognition like International Womens' Day.

### Pro-D (7 appointees)

The purpose of this committee is to support teachers in their professional development by advocating for teacher autonomy and through funding of opportunities and time. The committee participates in the development of district Pro-D days and supports school based Pro-D reps and committees in their roles and in planning.



## Locally Bargained Language & Ratification Vote

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Details for the ratification vote on our local Agreement in Committee will be coming out next week, along with the package. The vote will occur May 12-14th. The process will be very similar to the Provincial ratification vote that just occurred. We wanted to inform members on what was negotiated during last year's round of local bargaining. For those interested, we will be holding an information session on May 8th, 12:00pm. The Negotiating Team and Executive Committee recommends this agreement.

**Below is a summary of the Tentative Agreement reached by the MRTA and the District negotiating teams.**

## **Executive Summary of the Tentative Agreement in Committee - 2019-2022**

### **A.21.9.b - Access to Information**

The Board proposed a change to the language of the Collective Agreement that further clarifies the current process that occurs with access to information like agendas and minutes of Public Board meetings.

### **A.23 – Copy of Agreement**

The Collective Agreement will be provided electronically to members but printed copies will still be made available to MRTA Staff Representatives at each school and work site, MRTA Released Officers, MRTA Office Staff, members of the MRTA Executive Council, members of the WLC/Bargaining Committee and an additional 30 copies for the MRTA for other purposes.

### **D.29.1 – Health and Safety**

Language has been added to the collective agreement that states each worksite and facility operated by the employer shall comply with the Workers' Compensation Act and related Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

### **D.29.5 – Communicable Diseases**

This language was added to ensure that members are not put at risk and that union representatives are informed of potential risk to vulnerable members.

### **D.33.1 – Space and Facilities**

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This language is to further ensure that teachers are provided a suitable work area in the schools they are providing services to.

### **D.33.3 – Space and Facilities**

This language is to further ensure that portables are functional and equipped with the same resources, amenities and services found in school classrooms. These portables shall have the necessary equipment to communicate emergencies and emergency procedures.

### **D.33.4 – Space and Facilities**

This language was added to have clarity on community and/or commercial use of school facilities. There is a lack of understanding on how the procedures for the use of spaces in schools occurs. These procedures will be located on the staff intranet to provide more clarity to members.

### **E.22.1 – Hiring Priority**

The language negotiated here is meant to address the inconsistency that sometimes occurs in job postings. This language is to clarify the role of the Human Resources Department.

### **E.23.7 – Posting and Filling Vacant Positions**

The negotiated language is to help provide transparency around the hiring process. Members will receive an email confirming the receipt of applications and those unsuccessful applicants will be notified and provided written reasons upon request. This is meant to improve communications around the hiring process.

### **E.24.1 – Transfer and Assignments**

This language was negotiated to help those teachers who are transferred move their resources to their new school site. The Board will provide district delivery services to move those teachers who have a Board initiated transfer under Article E.24.1(a).

### **G.41 – Board Policy Leaves**

An additional leave is available to all employees through Board policy. This leave has been added to this section to help inform members of where they can find the details of this leave in the policy manual on the district website.

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# Get to Know the Contract

Each month, the MRTA will be featuring a part of the Collective Agreement that may be useful to members around the District. This month's featured section of the Collective Agreement is regarding:



## Article B.33 General Salary

1. Part Month Payments and Deductions
  - a. The basis for salary adjustment in respect of increases or deductions shall be 1/22 of the current annual salary of the teacher.
  - b. A continuing or temporary contract teacher shall be paid 1/10 of current annual salary in respect of each month in which the teacher works all prescribed school days.
  - c. For purposes of Section B, Article B.33.1.b, prescribed days on which the teachers is on authorized leave of absence shall be deemed to be a day of work, and deductions (if any) which are authorized by the Agreement in respect of such leave of absence shall be made from the monthly payment provided.

**d. The rate of pay for teaching a partial month shall be:**

**Number of days taught in a month/200 x current salary**

What does the highlighted section (B.33.1.d) mean? If you are on a leave of absence during a month in which there is a holiday or break, you will only be paid for that holiday or break **if you are set to work all prescribed days**. For example, if you are on a leave of absence and return to work on Dec. 10th, you would **not** be paid for the Christmas holiday period, as you did not work all of the days in December. If you planned your return to work for Dec. 1st, then you would be paid for Christmas break. This is important information to keep in mind if you are planning a leave or a return to work.

For more information on General Salary, please feel welcome to contact Penny Morgan [penny@mrttaoffice.ca](mailto:penny@mrttaoffice.ca) or Kaitlin Thorarinson [kaitlin@mrttaoffice.ca](mailto:kaitlin@mrttaoffice.ca) at the MRTA office.



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# SD42's Proposed Budget for 2020-21

The Board has proposed a number of changes for the 2020-21 school year. The proposed preliminary budget changes are summarized below.

## 1.0 - Literacy

It is recommended that 2.0 FTE literacy helping teacher staffing for a cost of \$210K and \$20K for supplies be funded on a one-time basis in 2020/21 from contingency reserve (\$97K) and reallocation of existing budget (\$133K).

### **Supporting All Learners - Improving Student Engagement**

It is proposed that \$40K be allocated on a one-time basis to support 0.14 FTE teacher staffing (\$14K) at Thomas Haney Secondary, and the grade 4/5 math series (\$26K) district wide. It is further proposed that a 0.571 FTE CUPE school learning coordinator position (\$31K) be funded from increased fees and grants.

### **Safe and Caring Schools**

It is proposed that \$202K be allocated from contingency reserve to fund 2.0 FTE teachers for the Riverside program and that \$202K be allocated from the secondary instructional bank on a one-time basis along with \$58K from contingency reserve to provide three additional blocks of safe and caring staffing at each secondary school (\$260K). It is further proposed that \$183K be allocated from the instructional bank and the safe and caring bank to fund 4.0 FTE child and youth care workers for 2020/21.

### **Early Learning**

It is proposed that \$63K be allocated from contingency reserve to support 0.60 FTE early learning helping teacher on a one-time basis.

### **Educational Leadership**

It is proposed that \$152K be allocated from the contingency reserve to support improved administrative allocation formulas for elementary schools (1.50FTE).

### **School Clerical Allocations**

It is proposed that \$25K be allocated on a one-time basis from the contingency reserve to support maintaining the allocation of 5.84 FTE Lunch Hour Supervisors for elementary schools with only one clerical person.

### **Operational Savings**

It is recommended that operational savings of \$156K be achieved by reducing the budget allocations for emergent expenditures, secondary equipment, school teams and reporting.

## 2.0 - Support for Operational Plans

### **Technology Support**

It is proposed that \$128K from contingency reserve be used to fund 1.0 FTE Junior Developer and 0.50 FTE Database Developer.

### **Human Resources**

It is proposed that \$71K be allocated from the contingency reserve to fund the Health and Safety Senior Secretary position for 2020/21.

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## Facilities

It is proposed that \$67K be allocated from contingency reserve to support 2 custodial positions for 6 months in 2020/21. It is further proposed that supplies and utilities budgets allocated to Facilities be reduced by \$50K.

## 3.0 - Learning Services

### Collaborative Teaching – Supporting Early Intervention and Inclusionary Programming

It is recommended that 8.57 FTE co-teaching staffing to further support early intervention and inclusionary programming at the elementary level be funded on a one-time basis from the instructional bank (\$868K). It is further recommended that \$25K be allocated from contingency reserve to support the purchase of specialized equipment for students with special needs in 2020/21.

### Learning Services Staff

It is proposed that the leadership of Learning Services be reorganized with 1.0 FTE Director Learning Services, 1.0 FTE District Principal Early Learning and Intervention and 1.0 FTE District Vice-Principal fully funded from reallocation of existing budgets for special assignment administrative time and school teams.

## 4.0 - International Education

### International Education Staffing

It is proposed that \$161K be allocated from the contingency reserve to fund 1.0 FTE Principal for 2020/21. It is further proposed that staffing for international education be reduced by 1 FTE Homestay Coordinator, 1 FTE General Clerk, 1.125 FTE secondary liaison blocks and 1.943 FTE teachers for total savings of \$233K one-time and \$196K ongoing.

## 5.0 - Transportation

### Transportation Fees

It is proposed that transportation administrative fees be re-introduced effective 2020/21 for estimated cost recovery of \$113K.

## 6.0 - One-Time Use of Contingency Reserve Funds

It is proposed that \$2.23 million be transferred from the local capital fund to the operating fund to assist with balancing the estimated operating shortfall for 2020/21. Any available surplus that will be realized in 2019/20 will be utilized first to top-up instructional bank (up to \$200K) and then to replenish the contingency reserve for local capital.



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# MRTA's Feedback on the Preliminary Budget

By Penny Morgan and Kaitlin Thorarinson

As we read through and contemplate the Proposed Preliminary Budget 2020/2021, the questions we must ask are:

- \*How will the financial measures taken directly support students in our schools and classrooms?**
- \*How is the learning, emotional well being, and health and safety of the students secured?**

Using this lens, there are a number of concerns that the Maple Ridge Teachers' Association has regarding the proposed preliminary budget for 2020-21. We hope that you take these suggestions seriously as a way to make significant and positive changes to the services to students in this proposed budget.

## Learning Services Additional Administration Staffing

The total cost of the proposed Director of Learning Services position, the Principal of Learning Services position, and the Vice Principal of Learning Services position is \$390,642. Particularly worrying is that the Director of Learning Services position carries an annual salary of \$188,598. In a recent article by Lori Culbert, Kevin Griffin, & Natha Griffiths of the *Vancouver Sun*, the Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows school district was highlighted for the top salaries it continually awards its directors. This proposed budget is a continuation of this out of touch practice of adding additional staffing to the 'top', rather than 'putting boots on the ground' in school.

**Most certainly there is a need for adequate administration, but not at the sacrifice of staff at the school level where direct support for students to ensure the well-being and safety of all learners is desperately needed.** In response to the article, the District was quick to justify the reason that four of SD42's positions out of the top 25 paid public sector employees in the province was due to long

service incentives that have since been eliminated through contracts. It seems that this isn't actually the case if the board approves a newly created Director of Learning Services position. It is concerning that the district is willing to bring in this position at a time when a deficit is being forecasted.

**It is the opinion of the MRTA that this proposed position be postponed until the district navigates through this unstable financial time. We recommend that the current structure of 1.0 Principal of Learning Services and 1.0 Vice Principal of Learning Services remain.**

## Additional Co-Teaching Staffing

Time and time again it has been brought to your attention the need for more school based teacher staffing in order to support our diverse and complex students.

**We believe that the funding that has been proposed for additional Learning Services Administration be directed towards adding more co-teaching time at schools (currently proposed at 8.547 FTE, p.43). This will provide more teachers to help to plan and program**

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**for, and support students, by collaborating with classroom teachers and support staff, as well as work directly with students.**

Currently there is little to no time for Classroom Teachers to meet with Support Teachers in order to consult with, program, and plan for meeting the needs of their students. This is an essential part of successfully serving students.

### **International Education**

The full time position of Principal of International Education is not warranted (salary of \$161,554).

**It is the opinion of the MRTA that the district reallocate and combine administration duties to reflect the decline in enrollment of potentially 30% that it will face this fall for its International Education program.**

A reduction in administration should be in line with the other proposed reductions in services for this program, which include -1 FTE Homestay Coordinator, -1 FTE General Clerk, -1.125 FTE secondary liaison blocks, and -1.943 FTE teachers. We further oppose that funding for this position comes from the Contingency Reserve. This is not a prudent use of our contingency reserve.

### **Revenue from International Education Tuition**

In 2018-19, the district provided funding to teachers that helped support international students in classrooms. These funds were used to help teachers support international students through professional development, resources, and field trips. In the 2018-19 school year, the district had 554 international students. Approximately \$800 per international student for the entire year was allocated to teachers

across the district for a total of roughly \$450,000. Merely 4.6% of the funds received from international education went directly to classrooms to purchase resources and provide learning opportunities to these students. In the 2018-19 school year, the district received a total of \$9.6 million in revenue from international student tuition. Last year, the district announced that it would no longer be providing teachers with funds to support international students in classrooms. Although a relatively small amount from the total revenue generated through international student tuition, the funds had a direct impact in classrooms around the district and helped provide more learning opportunities to students. The absence of these funds for the 2019-20 school year is continuing to be felt across the district by teachers and their classrooms. **It is our opinion that revenue from International Education Tuition should be funneled back to classrooms to directly support students.**

### **One-Time Use of Contingency Reserve Funds**

The district plans to use a total of \$2.23 Million in contingency funds to help offset its budgetary shortfalls for 2020/2021. Even then, this will result in a structural deficit of \$1.19 Million. Whereas we believe that there is a need to access *some* of these funds to address budget needs this year, this should be done with prudence and with a look to future needs. This is not the time to enhance programs and increase administration.

There is a forecast of shortfalls for the next three years. It would be financially prudent to ensure that there is enough contingency to address budget needs in these upcoming years. MRTA is concerned that the district's generous allocations in this proposed budget will lead to future budgetary issues and necessary cuts, as shortfalls are also forecast for the 2021/2022

and 2022/2023. As stated in the Proposed Preliminary Budget 2020/2021 (on p45) "The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring the district is protected financially from extraordinary circumstances that would negatively impact school district operations and the education of students." By proposing to use \$2.23 Million to assist with balancing the estimated operation shortfall for 2020/2021, the district would be left with a mere \$1.89 Million in contingency.

The MRTA recommends that the district reduce the number of administrative positions, Helping Teacher Positions, as well as costs to district initiatives to offset this shortfall rather than use up all the available Contingency Reserve. These programs and positions can once again be enhanced once the budget allows for it, especially with a revitalization of International Education enrollment. If the district is anticipating a significant drop in enrollment from international students, the district needs to look at where it can make cuts from areas that are not directly funded from the Ministry of Education.

### District Initiatives to Rethink

To 'free up' more money, the district should further reduce funding to some of its initiatives. Modest cuts to School Teams and Reporting have been proposed, but there are other places where funds could be reallocated. The following initiatives could be further explored for fund reallocation (numbers are approximate):

- School teams Funding for 2019/2020 was \$150,000
- Social Emotional Learning Funding for 2019/2020 was \$70,000
- Fine Arts Funding for 2019/2020 was \$60,000

- Literacy Funding for 2019/2020 was \$140,000



### Addressing the Teacher Shortage

The MRTA made a presentation on April 6th, 2020 imploring the Board to consider addressing the continued devastating issue of the teacher shortage in our district. There is nothing in this proposed budget that will help the district recruit and retain teachers in order to help address the lack of TTOCs and shortage of new teachers to take on positions due to increased enrollment and retirements. Shortages will continue to occur and it will be on the backs of our members and students to make up for the lack of TTOCs. Our non-enrolling teachers will continue to be pulled away from their jobs of supporting students and our students will suffer. In addition, without the retired teachers who make up a majority of our TTOC list, the number of shortages would be significantly higher.

**The MRTA recommends that the Board look at ways to recruit and retain TTOCs. Without the retired teachers who make up a majority of our TTOC list, the number of shortages would be significantly higher.**

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# Joint Retirement Tea Party

Save the Date:  
**June 9, 2020\***

\*depending on gathering restrictions due to COVID-19



*As we would love to celebrate our retirees,  
please contact us to let us know you are retiring.*

*Please email Chona at [brooke@mrtaooffice.ca](mailto:brooke@mrtaooffice.ca) as soon as possible.*

