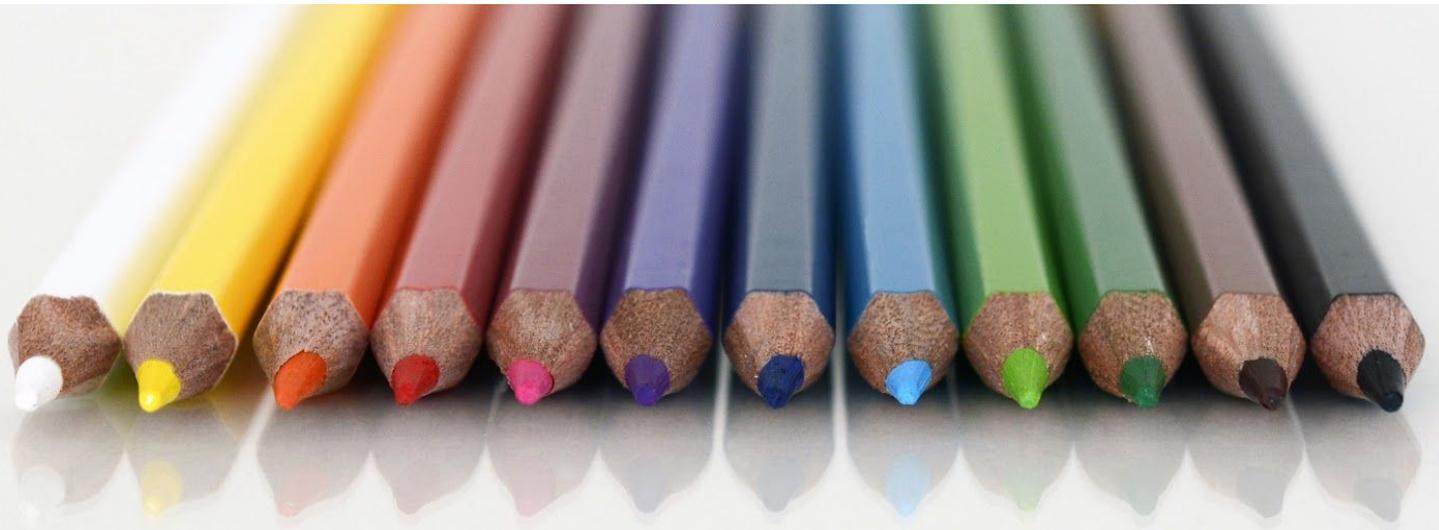

MAPLE RIDGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



News from the Office || September 2020

wELCOME BACK TEACHERS !

A Word from the President: *“Wins, Losses & Bullets Dodged” from the Summer*

As most will recognize by now, there is little about this year’s start-up that resembles an ordinary year. We recognize the high level of uncertainty and anxiety many teachers feel, and want to encourage teachers who need support to reach out to us. The MRTA office, or your school based staff reps are there for assistance or guidance on where to find help. There are many programs through the BCTF to help teachers struggling with the increased stress this year. For many teachers, the concerns and anxieties come from a lack of confidence or clarity in the provincial plan, laid out by the Provincial public health officer, the government, and Worksafe BC.

On June 29, the government laid out the initial plan for education in the upcoming year, and with that, Summer break ended for many of us, working through the rest of the summer to interpret and plan the upcoming year.



The first item of business was to work with the BCTF to determine which aspects of the plan were province wide mandates, which were off the table to negotiate locally, and which aspects were open to interpretation and negotiation at a local level. For example, a contentious aspect of the provincial plan told teachers they could not demand students wear masks in school and when this changed to say that some students could be told they must wear masks, where social distancing outside their cohort could not be ensured, the change came at a provincial level. This inability to alter the plan at a local level was a primary focus of frustration.

That being said, there were many aspects of planning for the new year that did fall within the purview of the local partners, MRTA, CUPE, and SD42 senior team. During the summer, Martin, Sonja and I had endless meetings with the district to plan the year, and address concerns about aspects of the plan and their implementation. We felt it would be helpful to give a bigger picture perspective of what happened over the summer to allow everyone to see where we have had success working with the district. To follow are some of the local agreements that were made.

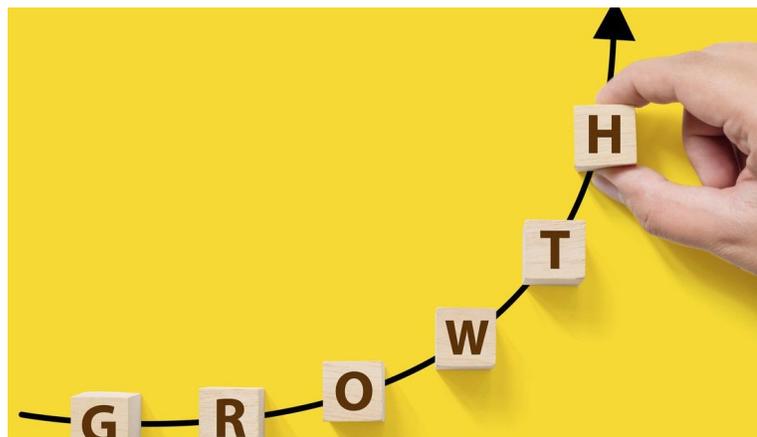
Pay for part-time teachers:

We were initially told mid-summer, that the secondary teachers would be paid only for the quarters in which they teach, and they would not receive pay for the quarters they did not work. This meant that part-time teachers could conceivably not receive any pay until January, if they only worked half time for the later part of the year. This also meant that part time teachers who were off work during Winter break or Spring Break would not be paid for those breaks, when ordinarily they would be paid.

There are other districts in the province who have forced this on their locals, and have chosen to avoid paying their part time teachers for these breaks. We were fortunate that Harry and Sylvia were quick to agree with the collective agreement language, which says that teachers will be paid in twenty equal installments throughout the year. If there is a need for adjustments at the end of the year, we will make them at that time.

Increased Staffing:

There have been several ways in which the district has agreed to use the Federal Funding to increase staffing. The most significant way the district agreed is by offering “work at home” options for students, through DL/ Online, increases in Odyssey, and the gradual re-entry options. By allowing students to be double enrolled, where students are double staffed, the class where the student is scheduled can continue to run, even though a separate



teacher will be staffed to plan for, teach and assess the student when they are not in the classroom. In doing so, our district was able to keep the number of collapsed classes to three for the district and these three collapsed classes occurred due to regular decreases in student numbers through normal transfers between schools. At the worst, there looked like there could be up to twenty-two collapsed divisions, in elementary alone in SD42. In Burnaby, it was reported that they collapsed forty-four divisions. By working with the district, we were able to keep our number to three, through the use of increased staffing from Federal Funds and other sources. Some presidents from other locals are being told that any requests for increased staffing will be answered with “surplusing”/redeploying teachers instead. Our district answered much better and agreed to increased staffing and have committed to maintaining the number of divisions.

Supervision Duties:

Teachers will not supervise before school, during lunch, nor after school. While the collective agreement says that recess breaks are officially “instructional time”, the other times are not, and therefore teachers will not be expected to watch students. Some districts are expecting teachers to supervise their classrooms during lunch time, because students will need to stay in their cohorts if they are in the building. Instead we were able to agree that there should be increased time for lunch time supervisors, and that teachers will not be expected to stay in their classrooms at lunch.

Prep Time at Secondary Schools:

From early on, it was clear that moving to a Quarter System would create scheduling challenges. One non-negotiable was that teachers would be assured they would all receive their full allotment of prep time. The district agreed very early and told principals that when making the schedules, they needed to ensure that teacher prep times were worked into the schedule.

Reporting Periods for the Secondary Quarter System:

With the increased number of semesters, from one linear term to four quarters, it became apparent that there would need to be four reporting periods, up from three official reports to parents. In order to help with this change, the district has agreed to give teachers two days without instruction, to prepare their report cards at the end of each quarter.

Work during August:

For teachers who have worked during August through a staff committee or staff meetings, to plan for the new year, the district has agreed to allow teachers to use the “School Planning Day” in September as a holiday in lieu of the time they worked during the summer.

Alternative platforms for primary teachers:

While we understand the high level of frustration many teachers feel about the mandate by the district that each school use one or two platforms at most, when we sought advice from the BCTF, it became clear that the district has the authority to provide the tools we use to do our jobs, and it is within the teacher’s rights, under “teacher autonomy,” to choose how to use those tools.

One significant concern was the very obvious lack of an adequate platform for primary teachers. Over the summer, the district held a few meetings with teachers to hear their concerns, and we are hopeful that the primary teachers will be provided an adequate platform, which works for them, though the final decision is still pending a few final steps of review.

MRTA Roles & Responsibilities: Who You Gonna Call (or email) ?

Roles of the President: Trevor Takasaki | trevor@mrtaoffice.ca

- Member Supports regarding:
 - Emergency Situations
 - Retirements
 - Leaves (except medical)
- Enforcing breaches of the Collective Agreement:
 - Letters of Understanding (LOU)
 - Remedy & Best Efforts
- MRTA Committees & Issues regarding:
 - Executive, Staff Rep Assembly, General, Early Career Teachers, Finance, MRTA Building
- District Meetings:
 - School Board, Convention, JECIC, Joint Professional Development, Fine Arts, Technology



Shared Roles of President & 2nd Vice President: Trevor Takasaki & Sonja Krzus

All initial communications start with Trevor first.

- Teacher Investigations & Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB)
- Enforcing breaches of the Collective Agreement:
 - Grievance Investigation

Roles of the 1st Vice President: Martin Dmitrieff | martin@mrtaoffice.ca

- Member Supports regarding:
 - Post & Fill of positions / Lay-off & Recall
 - Health & Safety concerns: Injuries, Threats/Violence
 - Medical Leaves, WorkSafe BC & Salary Indemnity Plan (SIP)
- Enforcing breaches of the Collective Agreement:
 - Grievance Organization & Coordination with BCTF
- MRTA Committees & Issues regarding:
 - Bargaining / Working & Learning Conditions (WLC), Social Justice, Professional Development, Ad-Hoc Safety in Schools, Communications (& Social Media)
- District Meetings:
 - District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), Safe & Caring Schools, Health & Safety, Social & Emotional Learning (SEL), Assessment

Roles of MRTA Office Staff: Elaine, Kelly & Brooke/Chona*

Elaine | elaine@mrtaoffice.ca

- Minutes & Agenda coordination: Executive, Staff Rep Assembly, General
- Correspondence, Memos and Emails to the Membership
- Website & Facebook Maintenance
- Accounting/Finance
- MRTA office (clerical) workload management & coordination

Kelly | kelly@mrtaoffice.ca

- Pro-D applications & Use of Remedy Funds Accrued 2018/19
- Minutes & Agenda coordination of Committees: Convention, Pro-D, & Finance, Executive, Staff Rep Assembly, General

Chona* | brooke@mrtaoffice.ca

- Minutes & Agenda coordination of Committees: Social Justice, Early Career Teaching, Communications, WLC/Bargaining, Executive, Staff Rep Assembly, General
- Newsletters
- Office filing systems

Shared roles of Kelly & Chona*

- fielding MRTA phone calls
- pickups at the MRTA office

Reine | no email

- MRTA Office Greetings
- Generally keeping everyone happy

**Brooke is currently on temporary leave & Chona is in for her for this teaching year*



The Team | **MRTA Office Phone 604-467-2111**

trevor@mrtaoffice.ca

martin@mrtaoffice.ca

sonja@mrtaoffice.ca

Elaine elaine@mrtaoffice.ca

Chona brooke@mrtaoffice.ca

Kelly kelly@mrtaoffice.ca

Our website: <https://www.mrtaoffice.com/>

Important Checklists: **Have You...**

...Checked your Pay Stub?

- Identified how many sick days you currently have**
- Checked that you've been paid for the correct number of days for the pay period**
(High importance for Part-Time Employees, TTOCs with In-service training done)
- Looked for Retroactive Pay, (some time in the next month) for First Aid Attendants of the 2018/19 year**
(correcting errors in the Stipend, now that the related Grievance is closed)

... Elected / Acclaimed MRTA roles for the year?

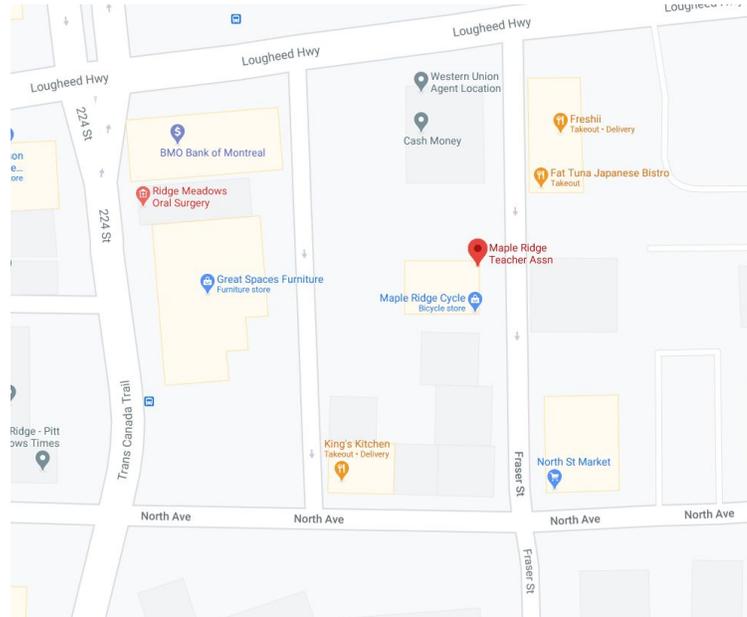
- Staff Representatives for your School** (As per Contract, Article A21, Section 5 | pg 16)
 - Can be up to 1 representative per 15 teachers
- Staff Committee Representatives for your School** (As per Contract, Article D26 | pg 63)
- Teacher Representatives on your Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee**
(As per WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation Part 3)
- MRTA Professional Development, Health & Safety & Social Justice Representatives**
 - Can be up to 1 representative per 25 teachers



Visiting the MRTA Office in the Time of Covid

Members are still welcome to visit us at the MRTA Office, typically open 8:30am until 4:30pm each school day. Until recently, an unannounced drop-in process was fine. During Covid times however:

- No formal appointments are required, but you need to notify us before dropping in. Same day notification is fine, and can be done via phone (604-467-2111), or via email, kelly@mrtaoffice.ca if done with advanced notice.
- Appointments are best, if you specifically want to have a conversation with a release officer, such as Trevor or Martin.
- Upon arrival, due to contact tracing, we will have a visitor sign-in, that will include a requirement to leave a contact number.



Office location: 11771 Fraser Street, Maple Ridge

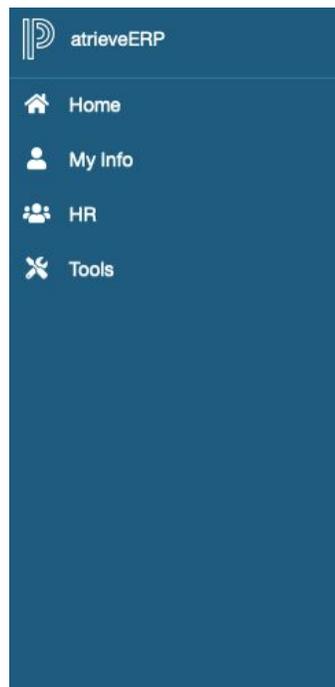


Sneezed on? Coughed on at work? You Now Need to Report as a “Workplace Injury”

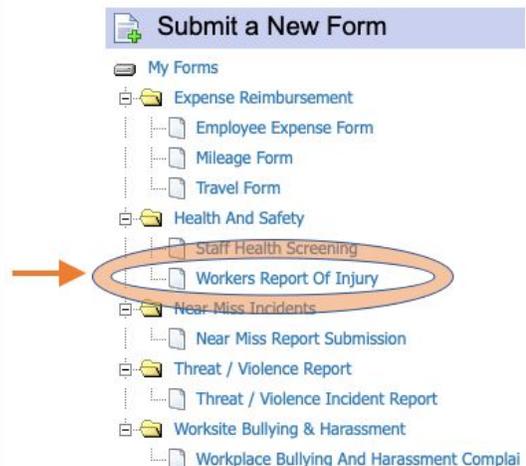
WorksafeBC makes a distinction between Covid-19 caught at home vs. Covid-19 caught while exposed at the worksite, just as the same distinction occurs between breaking a limb at home vs. at work.

Therefore it is in an employee’s best interest to fill out a Worker’s Report of Injury Form 6A if they feel they’ve been exposed to symptoms that look Covid-like *at work*. Here is the process you want to follow:

1. After exposure (due to cough, sneeze, touch to facial area, etc.) access the online Worker’s Report of Injury form at [mySD42](#) & login with your SD42 ID (same website where you log an absence).



2. From the left menu click: My Info → Documents & eforms → eforms → My eforms list



3. In the “Submit a New Form” menu, under the “Health & Safety” folder, click on “Workers Report of Injury”. This is the 6A form to fill out for WorkSafe.
4. No further action is required **unless** you now become sick with Covid-like symptoms. If you do suffer these symptoms you now need to start a WorkSafe BC claim, as per directions here <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/claims/report-workplace-injury-illness/how-workers-report-workplace-injury-illness>

Feeling Sick? What should I do?

Penny Morgan, Past President & current Local Representative

If you start to feel sick you should do the COVID-19 self-assessment and get tested for COVID immediately. The closest Urgent and Primary Care Centre is located at Ridge Meadows Hospital Campus. It is in the Carelife Building (153 11762 Laity St) which is to the west of the main building. It is accessible off Laity St, or via the main route by turning left before the main building, and then left again. There is a white tent at the entrance. You can just show up, or you can make an appointment, 604-476-7890. The hours of this centre are 9am-8pm, 7 days a week.



Your test result will take 24-72 hours. During this time you will need to self-isolate. A negative test result is only 70% accurate and because of this, you will be required to remain off work until all of your symptoms disappear. It is possible to have COVID and still get a negative test result, which is why you must stay at home until your symptoms are gone. You will only be contacted if you have a positive test result, but you can check your result by phoning or checking online at *myehealth*.

COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool - <https://ca.thrive.health>

It is a good idea to have a generic day plan with 'stand-alone' lessons, ready to go in your TTOC binder so that you do not need to prepare a day plan if you do not have one already done and need to leave work immediately, or are at home when you start to feel sick. For elementary, this could include activities around an anchor picture book, including literacy and numeracy activities, and art project.

The MRTA Stance on Covid-19 Protocols: Recent Updates to Covid-19 Guidance for K-12 Settings

All page references for this discussion come from:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf

Is the only case where someone stays at home where they test positive for Covid-19?

No.

- When someone is a close contact of a confirmed case they must remain home.
- When they have travelled outside Canada they must remain home. (pg 15)
- When anyone fails the health check, with any kind of illness, even if they test negative, they must remain home. *Especially* if symptoms show no improvement, even if mild (pg 16).

(Daily Health Check section states: “Symptoms of Covid-19 can be mild and are similar to other respiratory infections”, pg 15).

- If symptoms were mild and remain so, or if they worsen, they should remain home (pg 16).



Exceptions:

- If symptoms have improved to the point where they are mild within a minimum of a 24hr period (“mild” cannot include any kind of fever symptom), they may return.
- If symptoms are part of an *underlying condition*, where no “new or unexplained symptoms” have emerged, they may return (pg17).



If someone has a pending Covid-19 test, can they come to work?

Not normally no.

Exception:

In cases where mild symptoms persist, after some improvement and the person still seeks a Covid-19 test – or if they seek one even though they are told by a doctor they don't need to, they may come to work.



What is the difference between a Covid “Cluster” and an “Outbreak”?

A “Cluster” is when there are “multiple confirmed linked cases of Covid-19 [that] occur among students and/or staff within a 14 day period”.

An “Outbreak” is a “declaration” that “is at the discretion of the school medical officer” to assert. It is instituted “only when exceptional measures are needed to control transmission” (pg 7).

If there is a Covid-19 case or cluster at my school what will happen?

The best resources to check is *Appendix B* of the Guidance document (pg 22). It outlines a synopsis of what will occur in your school as a flow chart.

For all details on this process refer to the 11pg document “Covid-19 Protocols for School and District Administrators:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-carin-g-orderly/covid-19-protocols-for-administrators.pdf>

Has there been a change in the Physical Distance parameter in Schools?

Yes.

Physical Distancing was identified as “2 metres”. It is now defined as “1 to 2 metres”. It should be noted that “within and outside of cohorts, there should be **no crowding**” (pg10).

Has there been a change to the symptoms in the “Daily Health Check” ?

Yes.

The core symptoms to check are outlined in ‘Appendix C’ (pg 23).

They no longer include symptoms of: sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches, headache.

A Year of Healthy Teaching & Teaching Healthily

Martin Dmitrieff, 1st Vice President

Trevor, Sonja and I at the MRTA office know that front and centre in most teacher's minds right now, is a priority of keeping themselves, their families, and their students all healthy as possible.

Health - it should come before educationally sound teaching practice. It should come as a priority above making sure you hit all the needed points in the curriculum you hope to cover. This may mean your lessons with your class focus on hygiene protocols in the classroom. It could even be happily married with numeracy skills -- teaching the metric system through physical distancing for instance.

Activities that help students become more mindful of their social and emotional well-being will be more front-seat, incorporated into literacy skills building, through journaling activities, and in other manners. It will likely involve a much stronger component on building relationships with and between students. School community connections we know are important to supporting the well-being of all.

And not only classroom school connections are important -- connections between staff members will as well. We will need to check-in on one another. Many out there during a time of Covid are at higher risk of infection -- they'll need to know their colleagues have got their back. There will be workload issues. There will be other challenges that will creep in -- teachers will continually need to self-assess whether or not their situation is sustainable. Teachers need to ask themselves: with the current level of support I have access to, can I sustain myself? If at any time you doubt the sustainability of your position, or observe signs that your school community staff members are showing signs of high stress, advocacy needs to begin.

Find allies to advocate with: confide in a trusted Staff Member, a respected Staff Rep, and supportive Administrator. Advocate for yourself, and make sure your needs are heard. If you need help outside your School environment, rely on your union. Trevor and I are frequently dedicated to problem-solving the issues you as teachers face, and you can reach out via a phone call or email to us.

Look after each other out there, look after the well-being of your students, your greater school community and colleagues, and most importantly, look out for your own health and well-being of you and your family.

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 G.5 - Unpaid Discretionary Leave

1. a. An employee shall be entitled to a minimum of three (3) days of unpaid discretionary leave each year.

b. The leave will be subject to the educational requirements of the district and the availability of a replacement. The leave must be approved by the superintendent or designate. The request shall not be unreasonably denied.

2. The leave will be in addition to any paid discretionary leave provided in local provisions.*

3. The combination of this provision with any other same provision shall not exceed three (3) days.

Implementation:

1. Any and all superior provisions contained in the previous collective agreement shall remain part of the collective agreement. The combination of this provision with any other same or superior provision shall not exceed three (3) days.

2. The provisions of this article establish a minimum level of entitlement for unpaid discretionary leaves for all employees. Where the minimum level of entitlement has already been met through any previous provisions relating to discretionary leaves, an employee shall receive no additional entitlement.

*Article G.35 Discretionary - 2 days per year, with 50% of cost of the TTOC paid by the teacher. This provision does not apply to adult educators.