

# Langley Teachers' Association



## Staff Representative **REFERENCE MANUAL**



*January 2022*

# **LTA STAFF REP REFERENCE MANUAL**

## **Table of Contents**

**BENEFITS OF BEING A STAFF REP**

**INTRODUCTION AND JOB DESCRIPTION**

**STAFF REPS WEAR TWO HATS**

**ROLE OF STAFF REP (BCTF MEMBER'S GUIDE) 25.H.04**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE STRUCTURES AS PER THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT**

**QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**

**WHAT TO DO WHEN A COLLEAGUE IS CALLED INTO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

**POST AND FILL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO LTA MEMBERS**

**BCTF INTERNAL MEDIATION SERVICES (IMS)**

**ARTICLE A.24 SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES**

**ARTICLE A.26 RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION**

**CLAUSE 25 - STAFF REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**SUPPORTING NEW MEMBERS - A CHECKLIST**

## 1. BENEFITS OF BEING A STAFF REP

When we asked people why they became a Staff Rep, and why they continue to be one, here are some of the responses we got:

- I feel empowered
- I like helping colleagues
- It's a moral obligation
- It evens the playing field with administration
- I've become an advocate for colleagues and for teachers
- It's about being a part of something bigger
- It's like participatory democracy – we are the union and we have to make it work
- I like the collegial interaction with my peers at school – it's a change from being with students
- It gives me time to think about the profession and the role of teachers
- It reaffirms our value as public school teachers



## 2. INTRODUCTION AND JOB DESCRIPTION

Thank you for taking on the role of Staff Representative at your school. This is a voluntary position with both challenges and rewards. It can be a meaningful one for you as you provide support and service to both your colleagues and our union.

Being a Staff Rep can mean wearing many hats; it's hard to completely describe on paper, but here are some of the key elements:

- Keeping staff updated on both Union and District initiatives by disseminating information and holding regular staff organization meetings to promote discussion & union involvement. You can also leave a copy of minutes in a binder in the Staff Room to keep staff up to date
- Meeting with Staff Reps from across the district at monthly Staff Rep meetings
- Being aware of issues of conflict on staff and supporting members in resolving them as best you can
- Ensuring that Staff Committee functions well and is effective & that decisions are made collaboratively at the school level
- Resolving issues with administration
- Representing ALL teaching staff
- Understanding & utilizing the Collective Agreement
- Upholding the BCTF Code of Ethics
- Being the "face of the union" in the school
- Reporting concerns to the LTA Table Officers
- Advocating for members when dealing with administrators around concerns, challenges & issues
- Meeting regularly with other School Union Team members to discuss issues
- Keeping an up to date personal email and phone list of members (to disseminate information)
- Being a mentor to work with and recruit new Staff Reps

There can be challenges linked with all of these descriptors. It is essential to respect your boundaries with colleagues and maintain a respectful tone. You won't always have all the answers so it's important to check in with the LTA office if you are unsure of a policy, a procedure or an interpretation of the Collective Agreement



### 3. STAFF REPS WEAR TWO HATS



### FIVE SIMPLE TRUTHS

1. The staff rep is the peer of the principal **in matters related to the interpretation and application of the Collective Agreement in the school.**
2. The **rights and responsibilities** of the staff are firmly grounded in the
  - Collective Agreement
  - Labour Relations
  - Teaching Profession Act
  - Employment Standards Act
  - WorkSafe BC
  - Industrial Health & Safety
  - Arbitration jurisprudence (case law and court decisions)
3. The **Collective Agreement represents the** mutually agreed to terms and conditions of employment for teachers in the district. **It was not imposed by the Union on the Employer, or by the Employer on the Union.**
4. The Union has a **legal obligation to fairly represent the members** of the bargaining unit.
5. The **grievance procedure** represents the **most appropriate and least disruptive way** of resolving disputes between employees and employers.

#### **4. ROLE OF STAFF REP (BCTF MEMBER'S GUIDE) 25.H.04**

*That the BCTF encourage locals to adopt and promote the following description of the role and function of staff representatives:*

##### **1. Staff Representatives—School Level**

###### **a. Communicate:**

- Attend local staff representatives meetings to provide liaison between the local and the school staff.
- Hold school meetings to report on local/BCTF activities and concerns.
- Post policies and all relevant information regarding local and BCTF activities.

###### **b. Advocate:**

Serve as the school advocate for all staff members regarding:

- Services and benefits
- Contractual rights and responsibilities
- Grievance procedure
- Local and BCTF policy

###### **c. Organize/Lead:**

- Ensure that elections for school-based positions are held annually.
- Carry out duties and responsibilities assigned by the local
- Translate school concerns into local action/policy
- Ensure that democratic structures (e.g., staff committees) are in place so that all staff members can be involved in decisions that affect them
- Be a member of the school staff committee.
- Increase the school staff's participation in the bargaining process (e.g., setting objectives, action to support objectives).
- Ensure that staff/professional development be promoted so that the real needs of school staffs can be assessed and addressed

##### **2. Staff Representatives—Local Level (LTA responsibility)**

- That locals ensure that each school in the district elects at least one staff representative by September 30 of each year.
- That locals ensure that the role and function of staff representatives be included in local constitutions or policies.
- That locals ensure that regularly scheduled meetings of staff representatives be held each year.
- That, each year, locals provide for ongoing training of staff representatives.
- That locals be encouraged to provide release time for staff representative training.

##### **3. Staff Representatives—Provincial Level (BCTF Responsibility)**

- That the BCTF, when communicating with individual schools, should normally do so through the elected staff representative(s).
- That the BCTF promote and provide a training program for staff representatives in locals.
- That the design and planning of all local staff representative training programs include consideration of the needs identified by the staff representatives participating in the training program.
- That staff representatives inform and advise school regarding BCTF policies. (May 86 RA, pp. 16-21)

## 5. CODE OF ETHICS

# BCTF CODE OF ETHICS

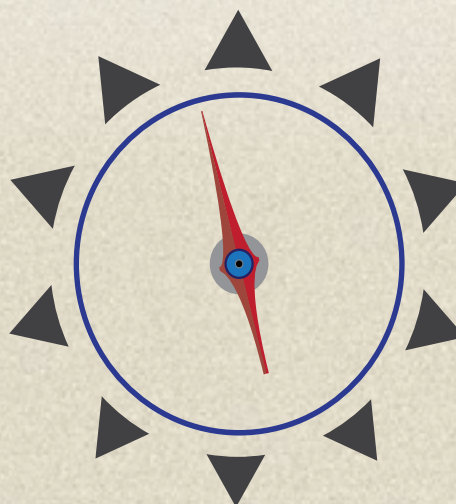


The Code of Ethics states general rules for all members of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) for maintaining high standards of professional service and conduct toward students, colleagues, and the professional union. Members are advised to contact local union officers or appropriate BCTF staff for advice on how to proceed with issues related to the BCTF Code of Ethics.

1. The member speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity, and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.
2. The member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare. The member follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.
3. A privileged relationship exists between members and students. The member refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
4. The member is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/guardians the practices employed in discharging the member's professional duties.
5. The member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance. *\*It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues.*
6. The member acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in their professional union.
7. The member adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.
8. The member acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of their professional union.
9. The member neither applies for nor accepts a position which is included in a Federation in-dispute declaration.
10. The member, as an individual or as a member of a group of members, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals.

2016 AGM

## ETHICS



\*See 31.B.12 of the Members' Guide to the BCTF.

## 6. SCHOOL COMMITTEE STRUCTURES AS PER THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The School Union Team consists of

- one Staff Representative for every 15 teachers or fraction thereof on staff
- one Health and Safety Rep
- one Professional Development Rep
- one Aboriginal Education rep
- the Staff Committee Chairperson
- any member of the staff elected to the LTA Executive

All LTA members on staff shall meet to elect LTA school reps to the School Union Team in June or early September. Active LTA members may run for a position(s).

The School Union Team, to the greatest extent possible, works together as a supportive team. They meet regularly to discuss issues arising at the school and share information from Staff Rep meetings, LTA and BCTF communications. They share routine duties, especially the distribution of LTA and BCTF communications, among all team members on a rotational basis. While each rep has their particular responsibilities, they should be willing to assist others when needed. Depending on the school's Staff Committee constitution, some reps may also be a member of Staff Committee. At least one rep **must** be a member of Staff Committee. (Article 11.D.1)

### Reminder of Roles & Responsibilities

#### Staff Representatatives

- willingness to advocate on behalf of your colleagues
- attend monthly LTA Staff Rep meetings
- effective two-way communication between members and the LTA and BCTF
- basic familiarity with teachers' Collective Agreement rights
- basic familiarity with benefits and services available to teachers
- initial representation of members with school administration

#### Health & Safety Rep

- willingness to advocate on behalf of colleagues
- attend regular LTA Health and Safety Committee meetings
- participate in the school's Health and Safety committee
- effective two-way communication between members and LTA and BCTF about health and safety issues
- basic familiarity with WCB and School District Health and Safety regulations and procedures
- initial representation of members with school administration around health and safety issues

#### Professional Development Rep

- willingness to advocate on behalf of your colleagues
- attend regular LTA Professional Development Committee meetings
- chair the school's Professional Development Committee
- effective two-way communication between members and LTA and BCTF about professional development issues
- share information about events and opportunities

#### Staff Committee Chairperson

- willingness to advocate on behalf of your colleagues
- chair the school's Staff Organization and Staff Committee
- establish, jointly with the principal (vice-principal), each Staff Committee meeting's agenda



## 7. QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Don't hesitate to call the office for answers to any of these questions. We always welcome your call.

The LTA website is also an excellent source of information <https://langleyteachers.com/>

Please find below the relevant location of various types of leaves in the Collective Agreement.

All language regarding leaves of absence is in Article G of the Collective Agreement. To apply for a leave, you can email Human Resources at SD35 or book the leave yourself in Staff Administration System. It is important to read the language regarding the kind of leave you want to take to make sure that you abide by the deadline dates.

### Langley Teachers' Association Common Absence Items

Article #	Title	Allocated time	Details	Limitations	Booking Code
G.3	<b>Family Responsibility</b>	Up to 5 days	Care, health or education of a child Care or health of an immediate family member.	<b>Unpaid</b>	<b>Family Responsibility</b>
G.4	<b>Bereavement Funeral</b>	5 Days (+2 days if travel is required)	Death of immediate family member. (see pg 87 of CA)	Unpaid leave can be granted for a family member	<b>Bereavement/Compassionate (Travel Bereavement/Compassionate)</b>
G.4.8	<b>Funeral</b>	1 day	One day to attend a funeral of a family member, friend, colleague etc... Up to 3 days without pay if extensive travel is required.	One day with pay	<b>Bereavement/Compassionate</b>
G.5	<b>Unpaid Discretionary</b>	Maximum 3 days	Subject to needs of the district/availability of replacement. (Must be preapproved)	<b>Unpaid</b>	<b>Discretionary</b>
G.6	<b>Leave for Union Business</b>		For union business including SURT Training, Rep Training or Committee meetings.	Approval submitted in advance	<b>BCTF Business/LTA Business</b>
G.23	<b>Sick Leave</b>	15 granted days per year	Teachers receive 30 days or portion thereof based on FTE when they begin employment. -for illness, accident or unavoidable quarantine.	Superintendent's office may request a doctor's note at any time to verify illness.	<b>Illness – 5 Days or less Illness Over 5 Consecutive Days</b>
G.29	<b>Paternity Leave</b>	2 days	Two days to coincide with date of the child's birth		<b>Paternity/Adoption</b>
G.30	<b>Adoption</b>	2 days	Two days to coincide with date of the adoption of a child or date of legal guardianship.	5 additional days available for interview or travel to receive the child. ( <b>less the cost of a TTOC</b> )	<b>Paternity/Adoption</b>
G.31	<b>Family Illness</b>	Up to 6 days per year	illness of a family member when no other can provide care. <b>- family member must reside with the teacher</b>	-up to 3 consecutive days -part days are counted as full days used. Max 6 days/year	<b>Family Illness</b>
G.32	<b>Compassionate</b>	5 days (+3 if extensive travel is required)	Serious illness where recovery is in doubt. Immediate family members. (see pg 96)	Upon written request, additional leave with or without pay may be granted	<b>Bereavement/Compassionate</b>
G.35	<b>Personal</b>	1 day	Personal requirement that cannot be met without absence	-part days are counted as full days used	<b>Personal (with pay)</b>
G.36	<b>Marriage</b>	1 day	To attend one's own marriage	must be the day of the marriage ceremony	<b>Marriage</b>
G.37	<b>Jury &amp; Court Appearances</b>	As required	-Jury duty or appearing as a witness - Private affairs of the employee which require an appearance in legal proceedings	Any remuneration shall be paid to the district. -Other private legal proceedings will be <b>less the cost of a TTOC.</b>	<b>Court/Jury Duty (with pay)</b>
G.38	<b>Leave for Examinations</b>	1 day	To write a university exam related to professional improvement	Once per year	<b>Examination</b>
G.39	<b>Graduation Leave</b>	1 day	To attend one's own graduation from recognized post secondary institution.	Once per year	<b>Graduation</b>
G.40	<b>Leave for Competition</b>	Up to 3 days	Participation in a recognized Provincial, National, or International Competition	<b>-less the cost of a TTOC</b>	<b>Competition (less the cost of TTOC)</b>

## 8. WHAT TO DO WHEN A COLLEAGUE IS CALLED INTO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

If an administrator wants to see a teacher for a potential discipline issue, they should always have a staff rep of their choice with them. Your role:

Meet with the teacher, pick a time that works for you and the member

- Listen to what the administrator has to say
- Take notes
- Keep your colleague out of harm's way – while they should respond to the administrator's questions, you may wish to help them stay focused on the issue at hand and not wander off into other territory
- Ask clarifying questions
- If the member receives a Letter or Expectation, we would like a copy of it.
- Let the LTA office know if you sense the potential for a larger issue, or if you have questions

## 9. POST AND FILL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Discuss job postings with admin
- Make sure they are published in job postings
- Check job postings that are posted for your school

## 10. SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO LTA MEMBERS

Health and Wellness is an emerging area of concern for the teaching profession. The CMHA reports that 20% of all Canadians will struggle with mental health at least once in their lifetime. The BCTF reports that 46% of our members on leave are struggling with mental health. Although discussions around mental illness have become more common, there is still stigma attached to the notion that we might be suffering from mental health issues. Even if we ourselves are not facing a mental illness, all of us are, or will be, directly affected by those who do. Teachers in particular would appear to be facing higher than average cases of anxiety and depression, in part due to greater challenges in our working conditions. We have listed supports available to us below:

**Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)** – paid for by the Employer.

Confidential and voluntary, this program offers short term counseling, resources for parenting and care giving, financial counseling, addictions support and health and wellness support. Phone (24/7) 1-800-387-4765. <https://www.workhealthlife.com/>

### **BCTF Health and Wellness Program**

We all pay into the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan (SIP) to provide short- and long-term disability coverage. Through the Health & Wellness Program, the BCTF assists members who are unable to maintain, or return to, their teaching positions due to a medical illness or disability by funding an early intervention rehabilitation program. This is a voluntary program that can happen by self-referral, referral through the LTA office, referral by the employer or by the BCTF SIP. <https://bctf.ca/wellness/>

### **Starling Minds**

Starling is an online program that provides education and a mental health toolkit to manage stress and prevent depression and/or anxiety. Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy tools, the online modules help you manage your own depression and/or anxiety and help you

understand what is triggering your symptoms. This is free and voluntary and has had very positive feedback from teachers who have engaged with it. <https://bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=38267>

## **The Well Teacher**

One of BCTF's Health and Wellness Program's Rehab Consultants, Wade Repta (OT, Vice President at humanworks consulting group) has published a comprehensive book on health and wellness designed for educators based on his 20 years of experience working with public school teachers in BC. The chapters cover topics such as mental health, physical health, classroom ergonomics, return to work, and many more topics. Staff reps can ask their site to order a few copies for their staff through various funds such as Pro D.

<http://www.humanworks.ca/thewellteacher/>

***The BCTF has developed the following workshop for teachers. It can be requested for your school by your Pro-D chair and is free of charge:***

## **Staying Well at Teaching**

Teaching is complex. High public expectations, class composition, educational cutbacks, and increased accountability affect schools, teachers, and students. BCTF surveys identify increased workload and stress as significant concerns for teachers. This workshop helps teachers stay well. Setting boundaries around workload, self care and smart choices, and destressing are key themes. All focus on building shared solutions to both the demands of the work and the isolation of teaching. Participants will reconnect with colleagues, laugh, and tell stories as they assess their work life balance and explore staying well and creating a healthy workplace. Skilled teacher facilitators will design the session to suit the needs of each school staff.

For further study and exploration, the Mental Health Commission of Canada has created a Mental Health First Aid program. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/resources/mental-health-first-aid>

***If you know of someone who is struggling in the classroom, there are supports for them. Both are confidential and voluntary.***

## **Teaching Supports**

### **BCTF Peer Support Service**

If you have ever hit a tough patch in your teaching career, you may have wondered where to turn to for help and coaching. Who can you call? Where are the resources? When is it safe to admit you could use some colleague support? Who can actually help with the classroom practice questions you have? The Federation has such a service to support teachers with their teaching practice. This Peer Support Service (PSS) is designed to provide direct, individual assistance to active teachers who are experiencing difficulty with their teaching practice, and may be on plans of assistance or personally concerned. <https://bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx?id=36999>

## **Teaching Resources**

The BCTF has a number of resources available to enrich teaching across the curriculum. See Teach BC at <http://teachbc.bctf.ca/> for a searchable database of unit and lesson plans. These are resources created by the BCTF and/or teaching colleagues in BC. You can search by grade level or subject area. Staff Net>Instructional Services>Teacher Resources

## 11. BCTF INTERNAL MEDIATION SERVICES (IMS)

- Is a work-related dispute getting worse and you don't know what to do?
- Are you feeling stressed because of a break down in a workplace relationship?
- Are you less effective as a teacher because of a workplace conflict?

The BCTF Internal Mediation Service (IMS) may be able to help. All you have to do is ask! BCTF members are entitled to access the confidential services of trained teacher-mediators who provide effective processes through the BCTF Internal Mediation Service. Their mandate is to aid in resolving disputes between members and others. <https://www.bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx?id=31876>

Contact Sherry Payne :  
spayne@bctf.ca 604-871-1803



### ARTICLE A.24 SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

1. School staff representatives, elected in accordance with Union procedures, shall have the right to:
  - a. convene meetings to conduct Union business and be involved in matters of staff concern, including teacher-teaching-on-call concerns, provided such activities do not interfere with classroom instruction.
  - b. be involved in grievance meetings.
  - c. attend meetings between Administrative Officers and teachers pursuant to Article A.26 Right to Representation.
2. The Union shall advise the Board of the staff representative(s) elected for each work location.
3.
  - a. School Staff Representatives shall arrange to conduct grievance investigation or preparation so that such activities do not disrupt class room or other instruction.
  - b. In the event that it becomes necessary for a teacher other than a School Staff Representative to leave the classroom or other instruction to investigate or prepare for a grievance, the Staff Representative or the teacher shall obtain authorization from their Administrative Officer.
  - c. Authorization to investigate or prepare for a grievance shall not be unreasonably withheld taking into account the urgency and nature of the grievance and the availability of the grievor or other witnesses.

- d. A School Staff Representative or a teacher who is authorized to leave the classroom or other instruction for a reasonable period of time, to investigate or prepare for a grievance, shall be on paid leave.
4. Upon notification to the Administrative Officer, the School Staff Representative shall be relieved of duties, without loss of pay, to participate in a grievance or arbitration procedure as provided for in this Agreement. Whenever possible, such activities will be conducted outside of instructional hours.

## **ARTICLE A.26 RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION**

1. A teacher shall be accompanied by a representative, who is a member of the Union, to attend a meeting which is discipline related between a teacher and a school-based administrative officer or that teacher's immediate supervisor.
2. A teacher shall have the right to be accompanied by a representative, who is a member of the Union, to attend a meeting between that teacher and a school-based administrative officer or that teacher's immediate supervisor if the teacher or the administrative officer has reasonable cause to believe such a representative should be present.
3. A teacher shall be accompanied by up to three (3) representatives to attend a meeting which is discipline related between a teacher and Board representative(s) not referred to in Article A.26.1 or A.26.2 above.
4. A teacher shall have the right to be accompanied by up to three (3) representatives to attend a meeting between that teacher and Board representative(s) not referred to in Article A.26.1 and A.26.2 above if the teacher or a Board representative has reasonable cause to believe such representative(s) should be present.
5. In the event that a meeting as referred to above takes place during instructional time the teacher and representative(s) will be relieved of instructional duties with no loss of pay.

## **CLAUSE 25 - STAFF REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

- a) The Staff Representative Assembly shall consist of elected representatives who are Langley Teachers' Association members.
- b) Staff representatives shall be elected by LTA members in each school and by district staff. A school shall be defined as the school or schools and annexes, if any, under the supervision of a principal. Representatives of the Early Career Teachers/Teachers Teaching-on-Call Committee will be elected at a meeting of the Langley Teachers' Association Early Career Teachers/Teachers Teaching-on-Call Committee.
- c) Each School or district staff may elect one staff rep on the basis of representing every 15 members or fraction thereof, in September of each year, with a minimum of one staff rep per school as defined in b).
- d) Staff Representative Assembly shall meet at least eight (8) times a year at the call of the Executive. Agendas shall be set up by the President in consultation with the Executive and subject to the approval of the staff representatives.
- e) The Staff Representative Assembly shall make recommendations to the Executive or to a general meeting when appropriate. The Staff Representative Assembly shall address items properly referred to it by the Executive or a general meeting. Otherwise, the Staff Representative Assembly shall assist with communications within the Association.

## Supporting New Members - A Checklist

- Introduce teachers to colleagues and the staff as a whole
- Assist new teachers in understanding their rights and responsibilities under the collective agreement
- Accompany new teachers to a local general meeting
- Check in with new teachers from time to time
- Explain the role of the Staff Rep and provide examples of how he/she/they can assist
- Encourage new teachers to attend the BCTF's annual New Teachers' Conference, PSA or LSA conferences
- Give new teachers a recent issue of *Teacher* magazine and show them how to access pdf version. See BCTF resources under school PD reps and Teach BC
- Assist new teachers with the evaluation process- look at contract language and board policies together
- Introduce new teachers to the PAC (Parent Advisory Committee)
- Provide information about the District Mentorship Program
- Show new teachers the BCTF website [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca)