



Richmond Teachers' Association

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January 22, 2021

Board of Education
School District No.38 (Richmond)
7811 Granville Avenue
Richmond, B.C. V6Y 3E3

Dear Sandra,

Re: RTA Covid-19 Membership Survey

On behalf of the Richmond Teachers' Association, we thank you for the opportunity to present a brief to the Richmond Board of Education.

On January 13, 2021, the RTA conducted a survey of the RTA membership with regards to COVID-19. The survey was open for just under one week and closed on January 19, 2021. This electronic survey garnered responses from 694 RTA members of approximately 1600 members in total; a response of over 10% is considered to be excellent in terms of an electronic survey. The RTA, is honoured to present the initial data to the Board as a means to highlight RTA members' experiences as we approach the halfway point of the school year.

RTA COVID SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. ***I feel my current workload is manageable.***

Responses – five point scale

Strongly Agree	15.27 %	42.5 %
Agree	27.23 %	
Middle	27.09 %	29.1 %
Disagree	20.17 %	
Strongly Disagree	8.93 %	
No Opinion/No Answer	1.30 %	

2. ***What changes would you like to see with Transitional Remote Learning/cohort structures/secondary structures to make workload more manageable?***

Responses – open-ended

Elementary

- Transitional Remote Learning remains a significant workload concern, despite the reduction to two check-ins per week. Elementary teachers have too many roles to cover in the current cohort structure.
- More time for non-enrolling teachers to assume their specialist roles (remove provision of prep).
- Additional preparation and collaboration time to plan for cohorts.
- Decrease reporting demands. Make reporting easier with a fileable form or technology that is less time consuming.
- Elementary teachers support assigning designated teachers to support at home learners.
 - There is significant concern that support is insufficient for the learners and their families at home.
 - Teachers who are unable to work for health reasons should be able to teach transitional learners.
 - There is still significant concern that cohort teams are being stretched to provide support for both in-person and transitional learners.
 - Concern for the overall wellness of some learners that remain at home.
 - ELL Learners require additional support for TRL.
 - Assessment and reporting is better supported by a dedicated teacher, who has designed and implemented learning for TRL.
 - Increase home support for transitional remote learners.
- Some teachers would like to see TRL discontinued.
- Cancellation of FSAs for 2020/21

Secondary

- Add a transition day between quarters.
- Multi-grade classes should have the same schedule as Grades 10 to 12.
- ELL learners need additional support.
- Reduce reporting demands (less frequent).
- Linear preparation time is appreciated. The eighth block can be better used for learning support. Concerns about inequities in workload.
- Reduce the class size for grade 8 and 9.
- Pace of the quarter system adds significant workload for daily planning.
- Address insufficient instructional time for grade 10 to 12.

Learning Services

- Add teachers to support Transitional Remote Learning.

- Where possible, allow members of Learning Services to work from home during “office hours”. The District has few private spaces available for Learning Services staff to participate in Zoom meetings or make confidential phone calls.

3. I am worried about bringing COVID-19 to my immediate family/household from school.

Responses – five-point scale

Strongly Agree	52.31 %	75.65 %
Agree	23.34 %	
Middle	11.53 %	
Disagree	9.22 %	12.25 %
Strongly Disagree	3.03 %	
No Opinion/No Answer	0.58 %	

4. I am often worried, anxious and concerned about my health and safety in my school(s) due to COVID-19.

Responses – five point scale

Strongly Agree	38.62 %	62.68 %
Agree	24.06 %	
Middle	16.14 %	
Disagree	14.99 %	20.75 %
Strongly Disagree	5.76 %	
No Opinion/No Answer	0.43 %	

5. I am confident the Provincial H&S Protocols help reduce transmission of COVID-19.

Responses – five point scale

Strongly Agree	7.49 %	23.05 %
Agree	15.56 %	
Middle	22.77 %	
Disagree	32.56 %	53.74 %
Strongly Disagree	21.18 %	
No Opinion/No Answer	0.43 %	

6. How could Health & Safety at your school be improved?

- All students and staff should be required to wear a mask when physical distancing of 2m cannot be maintained.
- Increase physical distancing by reducing class density.
- Less cross-cohorting. Teachers and EAs should only be assigned to one cohort.
- Provide an update to each school about ventilation. Provide air purifiers.
- Ensure room capacity is consistently applied.
- More cloths and cleaning supplies.
- More information about cleaning surfaces and materials.
- Increase communication, reminders and information about Provincial Health and Safety K to 12 Guidelines.

- More resources to support individualized resources and materials.
- At a minimum, portable barriers should be supplied for every classroom.
- Teachers should be part of contact tracing, they know the close contacts and movement of students.

7. *How could the current COVID-19 exposure communication protocols be improved?*

- Faster communication about exposures.
- Early notification once the school has been informed of a positive test result.
- Exposure notices should be posted on the District and school websites, rather than a link to VCH.
- More details about the exposure incident.

8. *What school, district and/or individual changes implemented in the 2020/21 school year would you like to continue in future years?*

Responses – open-ended, RTA members provided comments on the structures, processes and their own teaching with respect to the pandemic and what they would like to see continue. Below are some highlights that the Board should consider as you plan for next year and for the 2021/22 Budget.

- Maintain elementary daytime custodians and the additional noon-hour supervisors.
- Maintain portable sinks and hand hygiene supplies.
- Maintain a focus on a healthy workplace, including staying home when sick and providing vaccinations for employees.
- Provide additional support for outdoor learning – resources and dedicated space.
- Provide additional staffing for elementary ELL and Learning Resource for cohort models of support.
- Work with Public Health to maintain messaging that students should stay at home when sick.
- Mandatory outside time (“Westcoast recess”/lunch).
- Controlled parent access to schools (safety and workload). Dismiss/welcome students through exterior classroom door.
- Later start-time for secondary students.
- Support online resources for parent-teacher conferences.
- Online professional development at home where feasible/possible.
- Online workshops and meetings where possible.
- Advocate for additional funding for smaller class sizes.

A number of other items were raised by teachers for further discussion. However, there is caution about making any permanent changes until the pandemic is over.

9. *What are the key issues the RTA and BCTF should focus on with respect to COVID-19?*

- A mask policy, consistent with public messaging for workplaces and public spaces.
- Reduced classroom density.
- Vaccine priority for teachers.
- Address workload concerns.

- Improved exposure notification process.
- Increased testing and more school data about transmission.
- A paid COVID-19 leave for self-isolation that does not require teachers to use sick leave and TTOCs incur a loss of finances.
- Accommodations that allow teachers to support students learning at home.
- More positive messaging about schools and the role of teachers and school staff in mitigating risks.

What I know is that all of us must do more to learn from the experiences of classroom teachers and staff to make improvements, increase confidence and reduce workload.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Baverstock', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liz Baverstock, RTA President

cc: Scott Robinson, Superintendent of Schools
Roy Uyeno, Secretary-Treasurer
Kelly Greene, MLA Richmond-Steveston
Henry Yao, MLA Richmond South Centre
Teresa Wat, MLA Richmond North Centre
Aman Singh, MLA Richmond-Queensborough
Tim McCracken, 1st VP, RTA
Steve Wenglowksi, 2nd VP, RTA
JW Cho, 3rd VP, RTA