

Good Evening to all Stewards and Members at Abbotsford School District No. 34,

The challenging times we live in today bare a world-wide magnitude and as a result we are finding new and creative ways to live and interact with each other, and I truly appreciate the hard-work each person employed at the School District is doing to help ensure children continue to learn.

It is without question times have been tough on all members and their families. As President Stan Hennessy recently stated in a letter, "When times become difficult, Teamsters, always rise to the occasion." Continuing forward together, we will find the solutions to our changing workplace landscape. With your assistance, my Union office will ensure that your concerns and questions are answered and your rights under the collective agreement are protected.

At this time, I will address the current membership concerns regarding the signing of the, "Remote Work Agreement." Several meaningful conversations have occurred between your Local Union's office, the Abbotsford Teachers Union office and the Abbotsford School District No. 34 office. The parties are working together to provide the School District with valuable membership input. The input will help shape a new version of the Remote Work Agreement. The new version should be completed today and handed out to our brothers and sisters tomorrow, April 3, 2020.

To be clear, members not working from home will not be required to sign the Remote Work Agreement document. However, those who decide to work from home will be required to sign the new document after such time each person has been given the opportunity to carefully read the new document, which has been vetted by the Teamsters Legal Counsel, without concern. In reviewing the document, at this time, I also do not find any concern for our members to sign the Remote Workplace Agreement.

For those who do not seek to work from home, the School District will set-up a work station at a school or at a facility within the School District. Social distancing guidelines will be followed to keep the workplace safe. If you have any concerns involving safety, please immediately address your concerns with a Principal or Supervisor or speak to a Shop Steward or reach me directly at 604-504-4520 or lmatricardi@teamsters31.ca

I have prepared a **Q&A** to help provide clarity for those working from home:

Q: Does the Remote Work Agreement violate the collective agreement?

A: No, inside information box #7 states, “The provisions of all relevant workplace policies and guidelines, legislation, Terms and Conditions of Employment and / or relevant Collective Agreement provisions will continue to apply.”

Q: Do I have to work outside of my regular work hours?

A: No, you will be required to be at your workspace and available to answer calls or concerns during your scheduled work hours, no different than when you are at a school or office workplace.

Q: Will I have to buy my own work equipment?

A: No, the district will supply all required work equipment and supplies. In instances where a purchase of a workplace item is needed, please consult with your Principal or Supervisor in advance by written email to receive an approved confirmation.

Please do not purchase pens, paper, and paperclips. Office supplies will be made available for you at the school location or offices.

All big print jobs, booklets, and manuals can be done at the schools or office for pick-up, upon making arrangements with the Principal or Supervisor.

Q: Do I need to purchase or update my home insurance?

A: Please review your home insurance coverage to ensure it will provide protection to your home and assets during the time you work from home.

Q: If I am working from home, is it possible to write off any of the costs on my taxes?

A: For tax purposes, please consult the advice from a certified accountant. However, keep all monthly household statements and receipts while you work from home. Submit the statements and receipts to a tax specialist or certified accountant for the year 2020 and ask about your options.

If you require a T2200 for the tax year 2020, please speak to your Principal or Supervisor.

Q: Do I have the right to terminate my Remote Work Agreement?

A: Yes, the employee will have the right to terminate the agreement at any time if the workplace arrangement does not suit your comfort of working from home. Please notify your Principal or Supervisor in writing and the School District will find you another work arrangement.

Q: Will the employer perform an occupational health and safety visit to my remote work place?

A: No, there will be no home visits, however Occupational Health & Safety Procedures for Working at Home will apply.

Example:

In the event a workplace injury like, carpal tunnel syndrome occurs while working from home, the School District may ask you to take a photo of your work station. The School District will assess the photo and may make suggestions to reduce your risk of injury at remote workplace.

Be mindful of your workplace surroundings to not have personal belongings or products that may not give a professional image. Also, you may wish to cover family photos or other similar items, in the event it is necessary to take a photo of your home workspace.

VPN

- Please note, the School District VPN cannot be installed on Chrome books or IPADs.
- Not all employees require access to the U-Drive or other non-cloud directories necessitating VPN.
- A School District VPN will be set-up on your laptop, if required for work.

I hope this email addresses some of your concerns. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

I look forward to working with all Shop Stewards and Members to improve the working conditions at the Abbotsford School District No. 34.

Fraternally yours,

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