



Meet K-12 members at work during the COVID-19 pandemic

Laurie Spooner

Custodian

CUPE 4990 VP
(SD28 Quesnel)



This pandemic is something new for all of us and there are a lot of unknowns out there. Since COVID, everything has changed.

Pre-COVID we would empty garbage, clean tables, sweep and wash floors, do a security check, and clean bathrooms and offices. Now we are more focussed on safety and are doing a lot more cleaning of high contact surfaces.

It's a little challenging because you constantly need to be on high alert—being aware if you're in anyone's space, checking if anyone is in the room, making sure you keep a six-foot distance from everyone else.

It's challenging with so many unknowns. I think it's so important to keep good relationships with each other by being understanding and kind.

Sometimes at the end of the day I am emotionally and physically fatigued and have to come home and sit in silence, by myself. ■

Susanne Bonny

DBT EA/Mentor

CUPE 703 VP
(SD42 Maple Ridge/
Pitt Meadows)



During these challenging times we're always available to members by phone and email. Our executive supports members by reaching out, sending communications, and ensuring that we participate in all partner group meetings and joint health and safety meetings.

Some jobs don't translate well to online. As EAs we work one on one and our job is all relationship-based. Working remotely has a learning curve and requires as much patience as being in class.

The biggest challenge is technology—learning new platforms like *Teams* and *Zoom* that I'd never heard of before. The biggest strength in virtual learning is how easily it can be adapted to meet the needs of each of my students.

The connections I make with the children motivate me. As soon as I go into the classroom and look at their faces lighting up, I'm so glad to do this job. EAs make such a difference in our students' lives. ■

Debbie Dierckens

Bus Driver

CUPE 2098
(SD51 Boundary)



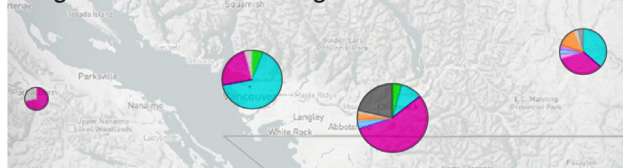
In terms of safety measures – the majority of drivers are older people – I would like a plexiglass barrier. Things have changed drastically on buses. The new rules are that kids use hand sanitizers as they step up on the bus. They cannot open their backpacks, eat on the bus, or touch the windows. I tell them, "You have to pretend you are a rock and all you can do is talk."

When we get to one of our schools, I unload the entire bus from the front to the back so no-one is passing each other. I tell them to keep six feet between each other. I spray sanitize all the seats and wipe them down before reloading the kids in the correct order for the next school.

Everything about education is for the kids. All the bus drivers I know love their jobs and enjoy working with youth. I love driving. There is a bond between bus drivers and their regular load of kids. ■

Find BCCDC data and charts about COVID-19 here

This chart shows where the virus originated in B.C.'s health regions



Distribution of Virus Lineage

- B.1 European-like/
Eastern Canada
- A.1 Washington
State-like
- B.3 China-like
- B.4 Iran-like
- B.3 Others

I want to thank all members for their hard work and continued support for B.C. students. There are many questions about September and each district will function a little differently. We will continue to update you as we get more information. In solidarity and safety,

Warren Williams

K-12 Presidents Council President