



TACKBOARD

Volume 22 Number 6

2008 April 24

President's Message



APRIL IN VANCOUVER

(the cruelest month?) is always budget time; we wait anxiously for the Board to decide what they will do with the increasingly shrinking pot of money they receive from the Ministry (despite the Ministry's insistent

protestations to the contrary), and then we respond. As I listen and respond to all of this yet again, I am always conscious of Robert Frost's apt quote, "education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence."

This year we begin with a balanced budget as the surplus from this year is being used to cover the projected deficit for 2008-9. We were pleased to see a mentor and peer-to-peer item in the preliminary budget which will go some way to addressing some of the issues our newer teachers face as they enter the profession and equally to provide local and specific support for other teachers who may be struggling with their assignments. Both VSTA and VESTA will be working with Human Resources on the development and implementation of this plan.

We have once again stated in the strongest possible terms that class size/class composition is the *number one issue* for our teachers. The District class size and composition committee on which both Shaun and I sit met many times since November and has proposed several recommendations, some of which have been incorporated into the budget. However, the \$150,000 designated in the preliminary budget does not come close to dealing effectively with these issues. We have stated unequivocally that the Board must commit to staffing levels that keep class size and composition configurations within the limits specified in Section 76.1 of *The School Act* (formerly Bill 33) and provide sufficient

resources so that meaningful decisions can be made at the school level when those limits are reached.

At the BCTF AGM, VSTA was successful in helping to pass two motions, the first being withdrawal from the Canadian Teachers' Federation which has not been responsive to the BCTF agenda for change, and where there was no representation west of Ontario (despite efforts to get someone from BC elected). We also had a motion around paying mileage for cyclists who use their bikes to travel on Federation business. Once again, our thanks to all the delegates who gave up part of their Spring Break to participate in this important work.

I want to remind everyone of the importance of participating in Staffing and Timetabling Committees and on the interviews in the Spring Transfer Process. Remember teachers have a voice and an important role to play in these processes. Our Staff Rep training on May 1 will have two components, one a Boundaries Workshop from the BCTF and the other a post and fill session as a reminder of these processes and the union and teachers' rights with respect to them.

Finally, we encourage teachers to attend the VSTA's AGM on Tuesday, May 13 at 4pm. This is where members elect the VSTA Table Officers and Executive for next year and where the VSTA budget is approved. There is a great social afterwards, and 'swell gifts and prizes' in the form of door prizes. We look forward to seeing you there.

Anne

VSTA Annual General Meeting

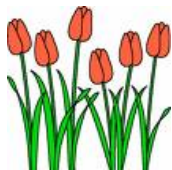
Tuesday, 2008 May 13

4:00pm at Tupper Auditorium

see inside for more details

Spring School Team Training

The next School Team Training will take place on Thursday, May 1, at the VSTA office at 2915 Commercial Drive. Each school is encouraged to send 2 staff reps, excluding members of the executive. A BCTF morning workshop, *Boundaries Issues: Teacher/Student Relationships*, will help Staff Reps identify potentially hazardous situations and provide resources for teachers. In contrast, the afternoon session will provide hands-on information to guide staff reps through the spring transfer process with the emphasis being on post and fill and the role of the interview committee.



Self-Directed Pro-D Suggestions & Ideas

For the full list of suggestions and ideas, visit the Pro-D section of the VSTA website (www.vstaweb.ca).



BC College of Teachers Council Election

We are pleased to announce that Jim Gill, a retired VSTA member and past-president, is the BCTF-endorsed candidate for Zone 10 (Lower Mainland West) for the upcoming BC College of Teachers Council election. The College will mail ballots directly to members' homes in April, 2008. Please ensure that your ballot is received by BCCT prior to the deadline date as determined by the BCCT. Teachers are encouraged to support the BCTF-endorsed candidate in their zone.

Spring Transfer Process Timeline

- May 5** HR Staffing Meeting with Principals and Vice-Principals; staffing entitlements provided to Principals/Vice-Principals
- May 12** Deadline for STP French Immersion Postings to HR
- May 15** Deadline for STP postings to HR
- May 16** Employees informed in writing of transfer because of surplus staffing
- May 20-26** STP French Immersion positions posted
- May 27-June 2** STP Positions posted
- May 27** B applicants applying for French Immersion positions must submit *List of Positions Applied For* form to HR
- May 28** Principals/Vice-Principals must submit *List of Applicants* form for all posted French Immersion positions (continuing & temporary) to HR
- May 28-June 3** Interviews for STP French Immersion positions
- May 29** * Education Centre Drop Off open from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. for STP applications
* VTF Drop Off open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for STP applications
- June 2** Deadline for ERIP applications
- June 3** B applicants must submit *List of Positions Applied For* form to HR
- June 4** STP French Immersion continuing and temporary positions offered beginning at 7:00 a.m.
- June 4** Principals/Vice-Principals must submit *List of Applicants* form for all posted positions (continuing & temporary) to HR
- June 5-13** * Interviews for STP continuing positions only
* Interviews for STP temporary positions may only proceed upon approval from HR Manager
- June 16** * STP continuing positions will be offered beginning at 7:00 a.m. to B and C applicants only
* STP temporary positions will only be offered upon approval from HR Manager
- After June 16** Employees without assignments will be placed by HR

No Oversized classes!!!

(oversized- more than thirty students or three special needs students in class)

For the last three years, the Vancouver School board has created thousands of oversized classes. No other district in British Columbia has a problem as deplorable as Vancouver. Reading this, you either are a teacher with an oversized class or your colleague next door has one. Every year teachers, staff reps and administrators have to go through the farcical exercise of 'consulting' each other about these oversized classes. Then the union and the administration spend countless hours tabulating the oversized classes. What a colossal waste of time! Think how much better that time could be used. Think how much better the classes could be if they weren't oversized.

We are always wondering why students are leaving the public school system for private schools. Their number one reason for leaving? Oversized classes. It would be better for the students, teachers and the administration of our public system to bring some sanity back into our schools.

The board has asked for input into this budget. More than any other year, it's possible to put an end to oversized classes. There are no massive layoffs this year- there is no letter from the board warning us that the sky is falling. With concentrated will on all sides, these inequities could stop. One extra instructional block put into the timetable can relieve up to five oversized classes.

It's up to the board to give those blocks to the schools.

It's up to administrators to give those blocks to instructional teachers so that class sizes can go down.

It's up to teachers to get involved in timetable and staff committees to ensure that there are no oversized classes.

As we know, the board responds to lobbying by pressure groups.

What stronger pressure group could there be than the hundreds of teachers that currently have oversized classes?

We know that when we work together we can create change- this is a battle that has been a long time coming and needs to be addressed. Pressure the administration in your school to prevent oversized classes now so you won't have to live with them in September.

Peter Hill, University Hill
WLC/Bargaining Chair

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The VSTA Annual General Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, May 13th, at 4:00pm in the Tupper auditorium.** Members will elect their executive for 2008-09 and approve the association's operating budget.

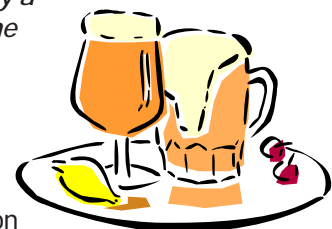
Executive positions to be filled are:

1. President
2. 1st Vice President
3. 2nd Vice President
4. Treasurer
5. Local Representatives (2 positions)
6. Members-at-Large (7 positions)
7. Teacher-on-Call Rep
8. Standing Committee Chairs (Professional Development, Working & Learning/Bargaining, Health & Safety, Social Justice)

Nomination forms are available from your Staff Reps, the VSTA office, and at www.vstaweb.ca Candidate statements and nomination forms must be submitted to the VSTA office by **May 6th** to be included in the pre-meeting package. Chairs of standing committees are nominated by their committees. Nominations for all executive positions will also be accepted from the floor of the AGM. All members are strongly encouraged to let their name stand for one of these important positions.

An assortment of door prizes will be presented after the meeting, followed by a social in the Tupper staffroom.

We look forward to your participation at this meeting!



Early Retirement Incentive Plan for June 2008

Teachers planning on retiring this year and who wish to avail themselves of the Early Retirement Incentive Plan must submit a letter of their intention to retire to Human Resources by May 31st. ERIP information is posted in all schools. Contact VSTA if you have any questions.

Age	3/EA	4/PC	Pay Grades 5/PB	5/PA	6/M	Payout Percentage
55	\$15,745	\$15,745	\$15,745	\$21,594	\$22,344	100%
56	\$14,171	\$14,171	\$14,171	\$19,434	\$20,110	90%
57	\$12,596	\$12,596	\$12,596	\$17,275	\$17,875	80%
58	\$11,022	\$11,022	\$11,022	\$15,116	\$15,641	70%
59	\$9,447	\$9,447	\$9,447	\$12,956	\$13,406	60%
60	\$7,873	\$7,873	\$7,873	\$10,797	\$11,172	50%
61	\$6,298	\$6,298	\$6,298	\$8,637	\$8,938	40%
62	\$4,724	\$4,724	\$4,724	\$6,478	\$6,703	30%
63	\$3,149	\$3,149	\$3,149	\$4,319	\$4,469	20%
64	\$3,149	\$3,149	\$3,149	\$4,319	\$4,469	20%

BCTF advises teachers to inform their employer with a letter of resignation dated one month prior to retirement, pursuant to the Provincial Collective Agreement Article C.1 Resignation.

VSTA meetings & events



Council Thurs., May 29, June 19
Executive..... Thurs., May 8, June 12
Pro-D..... Mon., May 5, June 2
Health & Safety Mon., May 12
WLC/Bargaining Wed., May 14

VSTA AGM Tues., May 13
Retirees' Dinner Wed., June 18

VSTA Scholarships

Application forms for VSTA scholarships are currently available from the VSTA Office, Staff Reps at school sites, and the VSTA website at www.vstaweb.ca. To be eligible, the 2007-08 graduate must be a child or legal ward of an active VSTA member in good standing or of a retired member. A total of four scholarships will be awarded: 1 x \$1,500 award and 3 x \$1,000. The deadline for application is May 9, 2008.

Tackboard Member Feedback

Is *Tackboard* meeting your needs as a member? Do you have any suggestions, comments, or questions that you would like to pass along to the VSTA Office? If so, please visit www.vstaweb.ca and pass along your ideas to either Mo or Debbie. Feedback from the membership is greatly appreciated and valued.



Always happy to hear from you!
Anne, Shaun, Debbie, Kim & Mo