



TACKBOARD

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President's Message



A BELATED WELCOME BACK and Happy New Year to everyone. 2008 began with the Board's announcement of Phase I of the Facilities Review. The first area under consideration is the UBC / Dunbar Street area. The Board's response to schools in the area operating both

under and over capacity is to renovate the current NRC building at UBC and move University Hill Secondary there, to renovate the existing U. Hill Secondary as another elementary school and to offer choice programs at various other elementary schools in the area. The Board is also proposing to finance this by closing Queen Elizabeth Annex (dual track English/French primary school which currently has 24 students from the catchment area and 124 from outside it) and selling the property. In principle VSTA is opposed to selling off school property and we are urging the Board to look at all other options.

The other issue I want to address with teachers is that of the Anti-Harassment Training now getting underway in all schools. The awareness training is a requirement of the Collective Agreement which both the Vancouver Teachers' Federation and the Vancouver School Board are party to. Both the VSB

and the VTF are committed to ensuring harassment-free workplaces, and both are responsible for implementing the training as per Article 7.K.5 (Provincial Language). The training will occur for one hour and 15 minutes after school. The VTF did go to arbitration to try to get this as in-service as part of the school day but we lost at arbitration because the School Act clearly states that the school day is for instructional time only. (One consolation for all of us is that several other districts including Victoria are spending 3 hours after school doing this.) Several of our VSTA and VESTA colleagues have been trained to provide this and we ask that teachers attend respectfully and cooperatively to support the volunteer work all of them have put into this process. The plan is for all *current* employees to receive the awareness training before the end of 2008. After that the intention is for all *new* employees to receive the training early into their employment with the VSB. A question and answer information sheet will be provided for all teachers in the next week.

Finally, I want to encourage teachers to consider attending this year's BCTF AGM from the evening of Saturday March 15 to Tuesday March 18. Because of the confluence of Spring Break with Easter, we have a longer break this year and the AGM is an important occasion to participate in the 'realpolitik' of BCTF decisions. The AGM is held at the Hyatt Regency and the VSTA delegation stay in the Hotel Vancouver across the street. This year VSTA will have (or have input into) 2-3 motions coming to the floor (one with VESTA) and one something I have been working on at BCTF Finance Committee around greater equity of BCTF grants to large locals. The Federation needs to hear from strong delegations of mid to large size locals on this issue. Currently our grant from the BCTF is \$1000 while locals with sometimes fewer than 50 members have their whole President's release grant paid for by the Federation. This is clearly inequitable. The election of delegates to the AGM will be at our **February 18, General Meeting, 4pm at Tupper Secondary**. Please consider putting your name forward as a delegate and coming to this important general meeting.

Anne

Harassment

Awareness Training

The training for all teachers required by Article 7.K.5. of the VSB/VTF Collective Agreement will commence in February, 2008. Schools will be asked to identify which session they will be attending. Sessions will be organized on a Monday or a Wednesday beginning at 3:45 pm and ending no later than 5:15 pm. A list of dates will be circulated to all elementary and secondary schools shortly. A question and answer information sheet will be provided for all teachers in the next week.

Langley Special Education Inquiry Report

The BCTF is strongly endorsing the report of the Langley Special Education Inquiry that was released on January 17, 2008. The Langley Teachers' Association, CUPE Local 1260, and the Langley District Parent Advisory Council, with support from the BCTF, partnered to conduct an inquiry into learning conditions for students with special needs and teaching and working conditions for special education teachers and special education assistants in School District #35. The highlight of the inquiry was six days of public hearings which witnessed 110 presentations by parents, teachers, and concerned citizens.

The report was produced by a three-person panel of education experts: Nadine Guiltner, former classroom teacher; Dr. Shirley McBride, former education ministry official; and Mike Suddaby, former school superintendent. The panel's report concluded that special education services would not recover to their previous level "... unless the province addresses the historical funding short-fall." The report also states that the government's recent pledge to speed up the assessment of students will be "...a waste of time and money..." if appropriate services do not follow.

The BCTF is encouraging local teacher associations to use the report and its conclusions to approach their own boards. The complete report can be found online at www.bctf.ca and/or www.vstaweb.ca.

Bill 21: An Overview

Bill 21 amends the *Teaching Profession Act* and the *School Act* in relation to the College of Teachers. Bill 21 makes six main changes.

1. Employers' Registry
 - A list of all members of the college, and a list of all the school boards or education authorities those members have worked for
 - Information will be kept current for 10 years
 - Only accessible to prospective employers at the time of hiring
 - Employers must keep the information obtained from the list confidential
 - Will not be available to the public
2. Online Registry
 - Accessible to the public
 - Will include the member's name, the current status of the member's teaching certificate (valid or invalid, practicing or non-practicing), and a record of any discipline action taken by the college including all suspensions and terminations
 - Reprimands will be included where matters involve significant emotional harm, physical harm, or sexual abuse of a minor
 - Will also include college discipline for breaches of college standards
 - Sets out how long the information must be kept in the registry. Reprimands may be removed after five years. There are no provisions for the removal of suspensions or terminations.
3. Publication of Names
 - In all cases, the college must publish the disciplined member's name, even in cases where grievous harm would result from the publication.
4. Concurrent with Grievances
 - The college now does not have to wait until the grievance process is concluded. It can act on any report of member discipline while the case is still in grievance.
5. Employer Duty to Report
 - *Superintendents are now obligated* to report conduct concerns if that conduct involved a breach of college standards, and if the superintendent determines it is in the public interest to make the report.
6. Special Advisor
 - Allows for a special advisor to be appointed by the minister if the minister feels that the school board or superintendent has failed in their duty to make reports to the college.

BC Federation of Labour 2007 Convention

After a couple of years of not attending the annual BC Fed Convention, I was back once again in the cold confines of the Vancouver Trade and Convention Center last November 26-28. This was a 3 day policy convention, and it was very different from the ones that I attended in the first 2 years the BCTF joined the BC Federation of Labour. As usual in previous years, many resolutions were discussed, and passed. I was pleasantly surprised this year that the focus was not solely on the large, established unions, but on workers without unions, who cannot fight for themselves. Non-Union foreign workers imported to build Olympic sites, poorly paid and unprotected farm labourers, and underpaid youth at the start of their working lives were a large part of the focus. A one day lunchtime petition signing campaign to raise the minimum wage to \$10 was conducted in many locations downtown, and along the Skytrain route.

The parents of Grant Depatie were recognised, and they thanked the BC Fed. for their efforts in getting a law passed, Grant's Law, that will protect people who work late at night, and provide them with a greater degree of security when working alone.

The second day of the convention was spent moving through three workshops focusing on how to run a successful political action campaign, the future of the global economy in BC, and the challenges of global warming, both in our homes, and in our workplaces.

In educational matters, both Ros Kellett and I spoke at the floor on a resolution about the funding changes proposed by the Minister of Education. We were both well received. Not only did that motion pass, but a second motion was actually amended from the floor, something that may be a regular occurrence at BCTF conventions, but is virtually unheard of at the BC Fed.

Shaun van der Hoop

VSTA GENERAL MEETING

Monday, 2008 February 18
4pm - Tupper Auditorium

Agenda items:

1. Election of Delegates to the BCTF AGM
2. Amendment to VSTA Goal #5

Call for Delegates to the BCTF AGM

The BCTF Annual General Meeting is scheduled from Saturday, March 15, to Tuesday, March 18, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Vancouver. If you are interested in participating in this professionally enriching event, please attend the VSTA General Meeting at Tupper on Monday, February 18, 2008, to add your name to the list of delegates. Join your colleagues from around the province to both engage in discussions and socialize while advocating for public education.

Health & Safety: Compensation if Injured?

If you experience a fall or other form of occupational injury, **report it immediately** to your supervisor, usually the vice-principal in charge of health and safety, by completing a **WorkSafeBC Form 6A**. If an initial injury is not immediately reported to WorkSafeBC, the employee **will lose entitlement to WCB coverage**. The forms are available at the school or can be downloaded from www.worksafebc.com/forms. On both pages of the Form 6A write the following: **"The worker requests a copy of the employer's report be sent to the Workers' Compensation Board."** This note is necessary because many school boards, including the VSB, do not forward accident reports unless the employee takes time off work as a result of the accident. You should also make a copy of the Form 6A and forward it to the VSTA office and keep a copy for yourself. If the VSTA is not aware of the injury report, we cannot effectively advocate on your behalf if that becomes necessary.



White Ribbon Follow-up

As part of White Ribbon Week, many of us asked for a small donation for ribbons. We forwarded the donations to the **B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses** to support their work with women and children who are victims of violence. They were delighted with the generosity of our students and staff and put the money towards the society's Emergency Loan Fund.

"In every classroom between three to five students have experienced violence at home."

The **B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses** has developed a range of materials under their **Violence is Preventable Project**, which focuses on the root causes of domestic abuse, and its effects on children and the cycle of violence it perpetuates.

Teachers and counselors are invited and encouraged to request free materials from the society. Contact **Rhiannon Wong, Violence Is Preventable Project Coordinator** at 604-669-6943 ext 229, or at hiannonwong@bcysth.ca

Materials of particular interest include:
In Every Classroom - Schools as partners in supporting children and youth exposed to domestic violence (DVD and study guide).
It Is a Big Deal - Youth responses to being exposed to domestic violence (DVD and study guide).
Supporting Students Exposed to Domestic Violence - A Guide for Teachers (booklet).

Let's hope that one day we won't need to work on the issue of violence against women because it's been eliminated. Until that time, thank you for all your efforts to educate our peers and our students about these issues.

Tom Ross, VSTA staff rep

BCTF New Teachers' Conference 2008

The Federation will be hosting its eleventh annual New Teachers' Conference at **The Executive Airport Plaza Hotel in Richmond** (7311 Westminster Hwy) on Friday, February 29th and Saturday, March 1st, 2008. The conference is a professional development opportunity designed specifically for new teachers, those in their first five years of teaching and for student teachers. A variety of workshops of high interest to newer teachers will be offered.

More information about the conference can be found at <http://www.bctf.ca/NewTeacherConference2008.aspx>

The on-line teacher registration form can be found at http://www.sporg.com/registration?link_type=reg_form_id=96390&view_type>windowed

Distributed Learning Forum Update

For a complete summary of the major issues that were raised at the Distributed Learning Forum on November 30, 2007, please visit the VSTA website at www.vstaweb.ca



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