



# TACKBOARD

## President's Message

**“In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something less.”**

*Lee Iacocca-*



WELL, WE'RE MOST OF THE WAY through the Olympics and as far as transportation and everyone getting to school without too much difficulty, all seems well. And Vancouver weather finally began to cooperate for the athletes and visitors. The aftermath and downloading of costs to provincial School

Boards will, however, be a major concern for all of us. Currently the Vancouver Board of Education is facing a deficit of between \$18 and \$36 million. 800 qualification letters have gone out to teachers with five years or less seniority and unless something dramatic changes between now and March 15<sup>th</sup> (when the Boards' receive their operating budget) we will be facing lay-offs, program cuts and closures and fewer resources overall (not least of which with fewer teachers, the impossibility of meeting the guidelines around class size and composition in Section 76 of The School Act).

An advocacy committee (consisting of trustees, VSTA, VESTA parents and other unions and a community coalition) is currently meeting regularly to discuss strategy, draft letters to the government and to establish a publicity campaign around prominent Canadians who had their start in a Vancouver school. Along with VESTA, we are planning a rally for **Monday March 1<sup>st</sup>**. This will take place outside the Education Minister's office at 1245 West Broadway and we would appreciate a big turnout of teachers to send our message to this government.

We're also currently working with the Board (HR) on the revised Spring Transfer Process guidelines and timeline. A short VTF meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>** (Tupper 4pm) to ratify this process (Mid-Contract Modification). The feedback from members around this change was very positive last year and, with some modifications, the process of being able to apply for any position without giving up your current position will be the same.

The sense of feeling undervalued in this profession is often acute. For that reason I share below some comments from Tony Wilson a prominent Vancouver lawyer writing

in Bartalk, a monthly magazine for Canadian lawyers. Some of his comments around billable hours (had we such a thing) are salutary. When discussing the hours that teachers have put in to educate his daughter, currently in Grade 12, he suggests that it would be in excess of \$6 million each (at his hourly billing rate). He then goes on to say the following:

“Sure it's great for me to charge \$400 per hour for what I do, but why is drafting a franchise agreement for yet another new chain of pizza restaurants worth more than teaching my kids French or Biology or how to successfully jump through the hoops that life will put in front of them? Regrettably it's the same society that thinks CEOs, Hedge Fund Managers and professional hockey players are worth gazillions of dollars a year, but teachers shouldn't be paid more than \$70,000 a year because they get summers off and can get home by 4pm. *Unpaid it should be noted and how many of us get home by 4pm?* (my italics). It's all too easy to be seduced by our own sense of self-importance because we're paid a lot of money, or we know how the levers of power work..... In many ways, teachers are more valuable than lawyers, because unlike us they don't talk about changing the world. They do it day by day -child by child. Some of my closest friends in the world chose to become teachers rather than lawyers. And it makes me very happy that my daughter wants to become one too.”

Nice to get a bit of respect for a change innit? And to think that all your efforts do not go unnoticed. Hope to see you at the March 1<sup>st</sup> rally.

*Anne*

VANCOUVER TEACHERS' FEDERATION

## General Meeting

Tuesday, March 2nd, 2010  
4:00-4:30pm at Tupper Auditorium

A general meeting has been called to ratify the Post & Fill - Mid-Contract Modification process. All teachers are encouraged to attend.

## OECD rates Canada

Canada receives solid marks in “Doing Better for Children,” the OECD’s (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) first report on the well-being of children. But there are areas that need policy attention to improve the lives of Canadian children, including reducing child poverty and youth risk-taking, and ensuring timely immunizations.

In terms of overall spending, the OECD concludes that all member countries should spend more for better starts in life for younger, disadvantaged children. Equally, governments should ensure that current rates of spending on older children become more effective in meeting the needs of disadvantaged teenagers.

Child poverty rates in Canada in 2005 were at the high end of the OECD, with 15% of children living in poor households versus an OECD average of 12%. However, educational outcomes for Canadian 15-year-olds are among the best in the OECD. Average performance is high and the gap between good and poorly performing students is small. In both cases, educational performance is bettered only by Finland and Korea.

Canadian youth (15- to 19-year-olds) suicide rates are 14.7 per 100,000 boys and 5.1 per 100,000 girls versus OECD averages of 10.2 and 3.4 respectively.

Risk-taking in Canada is a tale of two extremes. Smoking rates are half those of the OECD average with fewer than one in ten 15-year-olds regularly smoking. Canadian youth drunkenness is more of a problem. Around one in four Canadian youth report repeated drunkenness. Only the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Finland have higher rates.

## Pension Consultations: The next steps

The BCTF pension consultation team concluded its visits to locals on December 1. A total of 78 sessions were held with every local for all members of the Teachers’ Pension Plan. Approximately 5,000 pension plan members attended. The Retired Teachers’ Association offered concurrent presentations at selected chapter meetings.

The online survey was closed on Friday, December 4, 2009. There were over 8,200 online responses to the survey and an additional 160 paper surveys were mailed in to the BCTF office. At the time of writing, the BCTF Research Department staff is working to remove duplicate surveys, correct spelling errors, and analyze the data.

After the Research Department has completed its analysis, a draft report will be prepared by staff and presented to members of the BCTF Pensions Committee on January 11, 2010. This subcommittee will draft preliminary recommendations, which will be reviewed by the BCTF Executive Committee and passed on to the full Pensions Committee and Teachers’ Pension Plan Advisory Committee to finalize wording.

The report, with draft recommendations, will go to the BCTF Executive Committee for consideration and debate at their meeting in early February. The BCTF Executive Committee will present their recommendations to the Annual General Meeting in March.

The Annual General Meeting will hear a report from the Pensions Committee and then debate and vote on the recommendations and local resolutions that stem from the report. Once the Annual General Meeting has made its decisions, those decisions will be forwarded to the Teachers’ Pension Board of Trustees.

The trustees are meeting in March and will then be able to consider the input from members and the plan partner and make decisions regarding the future of subsidies to the Extended Health Benefit and indexing. The Board of Trustees must act independently in the best financial interest of the plan.

The Teachers’ Pension Board of Trustees will likely announce any decisions prior to the end of June 2010.



Jody Polukoshko, Christina Schut, Glen Hansman, Chris Harris, Jack MacDermot, Anne Guthrie Warman, Sylvia Metzner, Susan Gallpen, Bill Hood at the Winter BCTF Representative Assembly, January 2010, Victoria BC



## HOPES and DREAMS RALLY

Help Our Public Education System and Deliver  
Real Equity and Meaningful Support

Every Vancouver teacher and student will be  
affected by the huge projected deficit of the  
Vancouver School Board.

**When: Monday, March 1st, 2010**

**Time: 3:30 - 4:30 pm**

**Where: Education Minister's Office  
1200 Block of W. Broadway  
(between Cambie & Granville)**

### Bargaining History:

## Did You Know?

### MATERNITY LEAVE

1. All requests for Maternity Leave shall be submitted in writing to the Superintendent of Schools as soon as the condition of pregnancy has been ascertained.
2. A teacher will be required to take leave, without pay, commencing at least five months prior to the expected birth of a child except that when this regulation would require the withdrawal of the teacher at the end of May, the Superintendent may permit the teacher to continue on duty to the end of June.
3. A teacher shall not be permitted to return to duty until at least 12 months after the birth of the child except that when the birth occurs in September or October, the Superintendent may permit the teacher to return to duty on the first school day in the following September.



Board of School Trustees  
Vancouver, BC  
September, 1960

## Important Upcoming Deadline: March 31, 2010

Teachers on continuing appointments are reminded of the upcoming deadline for the following requests:

- Increase in Teaching Time
- Decrease in Teaching Time
- Personal Leave Without Pay of One Year or Longer
- Intent to Return to Work for the Terms Beginning September 01 or January 01 for the Coming School Year

Please ensure that the required paperwork *is received by Human Resources* by March 31, 2010. Forms for requesting an increase or decrease in teaching time are available at your school and the VSTA office. Do not hesitate to contact the VSTA office if you have any questions.

## Congratulations and THANKS to the following VSTA members elected as BCTF AGM Delegates

Michael-Don Borason (VT), Young Cheng (PG), Victor Choy (WC), Henny Coates (Magee), Moira Ekdahl (DLS), Mary Filleul (WRE), Louis Jefferson (WC), Rosalind Kellett (EH), Laurie Kidd (PW), Brin MacIntyre (TEMP), Shelley MacPhail (BRIT), Duane Mugford (EH), Trish Mugford (Magee), Lisa Pacheco (GLAD), Bal Panesar (EH), Pat Parungao (GLAD), Debbie Pawluk (VSTA), Kris Price (JO), Christine Stewart (BRIT), Leo Strong (CT), and Shaun van der Hoop (VSTA). Katie Leung (PG) and Raza Mirani (GLAD) were elected as alternates.



Marcy Toms (Retiree), Rory Brown (VT), Anne Sander (BRIT), Susan McIntosh (GLAD), Sue Inglis (PG), Mary Filleul (WRE). VSTA Staff Activist Mentors, January 2010.

# Alternate Calendar Proposal for 2010-2011

## Background

The Vancouver Board of Education's Associate Superintendent of Human Resources is **proposing** changes to the school calendar and hours of work. Essentially, a standard time would apply to all of the secondary schools in the district. The District Calendar Committee (VSTA, VESTA, IOEU, CUPE, VASSA, and VEPVPA) has been meeting to consider the **proposal** and to provide member feedback.

## Proposed changes

After discussion at our General Meeting, the suggested changes were made to Human Resources to reflect the comments around an earlier start and finish. They are reflected in the revised schedule below:

Period	Start	End
1	8:30	9:52
2	9:57	11:18
Lunch	11:18	12:18
3	12:18	1:39
4	1:44	3:05

- This schedule includes an additional 17 minutes & allows for five minutes between classes
- *Nutrition break could be added by shortening the lunch hour*
- *Silent reading can be included where appropriate*
- The extra time worked (per day) could result in working 10 fewer days throughout the school year:
  - A day in October to create a four day weekend around the Thanksgiving stat

- A day in November to create a four day weekend around Remembrance Day
- Two days in February to create a four day weekend
- A day in May to create a four day weekend around Victoria Day
- Five days added to the Spring Break

## Why are these changes being proposed?

- Having a standard time for secondary schools will benefit 1/2 day TTOCs
- Teacher wellness
- The projected budget shortfall for 2010-2011 is between \$18 and \$36 million
- Implementing a common start and end time will save \$1.0-1.5 million which is the equivalent to approximately 14 FTE

## Motion passed by the VSTA membership at the General Meeting (Feb. 3, 2010):

**THAT we adopt this proposal in principle with appropriate modifications to break and lunch hour and to include silent reading where appropriate, as needed, remaining within the legal number of minutes required.**

**NOTE: This is still a proposal** and will need to be approved by both the District Calendar Committee and the Trustees for implementation for the 2010-2011 school year.

Please contact the office if you have any additional questions and/or concerns.



## TEACHERS AS LEADERS AND MENTORS

A NEW Graduate Diploma in Advanced Education developed by Field Programs in partnership with School District No. 39 (Vancouver), VESTA and VSTA for Elementary and Secondary Teachers. Completion of the program increases your salary scale from 5 to 5+.

### PROPOSED START MAY 2010 IN VANCOUVER

For more information please contact Alison Davies:  
adavies@sfu.ca or 778.782.3067

## 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](http://www.vstaweb.ca). To be eligible, the 2009-10 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 7, 2010.



**Always happy to  
hear from you!**

Anne, Debbie, Shaun, Kim & Mo