



TACKBOARD

President's Message

"Education, properly understood is that which teaches discernment"

Joseph Roux



AS THIS GOES TO PRESS I am happy to report that after all your hard work completing the Bill 33 consultations and holding management to account on the IEP timelines, the Board has agreed to devote \$500,000 from the local capital reserve to alleviate CSCC overloads. In

Enrons of educational change" (Hargreaves, 2005). While Deputy Ministers and government advisors of this and other provinces talk in welcoming tones of developing greater capacity within their systems "it is important to grasp that human capacity, like water capacity is enlarged not only by *increasing the supply* of training , materials and resources, but also by *reducing demand* of unnecessary and excessive external initiatives (Hatch,2002). All this needs to be borne in mind in any system review.

early October your VSTA table officers produced graphs for the last four years, clear argument and many egregious examples to a special Committee IV meeting. As a result, \$450,000 will come to secondary teachers and \$50,000 to elementary who have far fewer violations of the Bill 33 guidelines.

In November your three table officers and some members of the Executive will be visiting schools to talk with teachers about some of these issues as well as bargaining objectives and options for our next round beginning next year. We look forward to seeing all of you there.

Anne

VSTA President and Vice-Presidents will meet with Human Resources this week to determine where blocks can be added and the remaining money will be assigned to schools for release time for teachers who disagreed with the size/composition of their classes. And while \$500,000 will not alleviate all the overloads, it is a step in the right direction by this Board who also added 25 extra positions up front in the spring to help address this issue. Additionally there was no staffing hold back in the fall this year at the direction of the trustees.

Possible Changes to your Pension

Within the next year, the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees will be making decisions that should allow your pension plan to maintain some measure of indexing into the future.

The Board's Finance Committee given the threat of even further cuts this year is contemplating a system review and asking for our input. For us the answer is relatively simple; no further cuts to classrooms and direct service to students. Using the "all hands on deck" principle, we think that anything which does not contribute to getting class size/ composition back to the levels before 2001, with its carefully nuanced language and non-enrolling ratios restored could be reviewed for efficacy. We do not, however, want to be suggesting to this government that there is anything "extra" in the system to be cut. It is a delicate balancing act. The pressure of this Education Ministry for short term results without the long view has contributed to the funding shortfall. Endless initiatives and interventions from the top do not do much except "doom schools and systems into becoming devious little

The BCTF is looking for input from you, members of the pension plan, to give the Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees feedback on options that meet the needs of both active and retired members of the plan. Your pension plan will be the major part of your income when you retire. Its spending power through full indexing (an increase applied to pensions to try to maintain the spending power of the pension over time) is not guaranteed.

There will be two opportunities to attend a meeting to provide your input: These meetings will be well attended by current retirees and we feel it essential that active members also attend to provide advice. Please take the time to attend one of these meetings.

November 2nd Tupper Auditorium 7-9pm
November 3rd Tupper Auditorium 4-6pm

Financial Planning Seminar

A free seminar, **Seven Principles of Good Financial Planning**, will be offered by professional financial planners on **Tuesday, November 24 at 4:00pm at the VSTA Office**. All members are welcome!



Friday Absences

Members are reminded that they *must report a full day's absence* when away on the shortened Friday, even when they have prep in the last block.



Supervision

Secondary teachers are not required to provide more than sixty (60) minutes of supervision per month, *averaged over the school year* (Article D.20.9.).

Employee Assistance Program

All VSTA members and their immediate family members have access to the Employee Assistance Program, a confidential and voluntary service that provides practical, relevant support to assist you in solving all types of problems and challenges. There is no cost to use your EAP. You can contact your EAP toll-free at 1-800-268-5211 (24 hours a day, seven days a week) or visit counselling at www.fgiworldmembers.com. A brochure providing further details of the EAP will be distributed to all members in October.



The Best Professional Development Activity... Ever!

In early October, I participated in what I call "The Best Professional Development Activity... Ever!" This began in September, at our VSTA Executive meeting where I was asked to participate in a training to prepare for local bargaining/negotiations. It seemed harmless enough so I said yes. Then as the curtains were drawn back I began to see I was in for a three day roller coaster ride. As the Staff Rep at Churchill, I was familiar with our collective agreement and thought this would be a prudent time to review our contract in all its 204 glorious pages including Addenda and Letters of Agreement; after all, the bargaining negotiations would center on it.

I arrived Thursday morning to a conference room filled with more than 100 people from many different locals throughout the province. We were assigned groups and then each group divided: Union vs. School Board. I was in the Union group (do I hear 'Solidarity Forever' playing in the background?), and we were assigned a BCTF liaison officer, George Taylor. He was our link to other districts, the BCTF, and reality, but he was also our taskmaster with a velvet glove in one hand and a boxing mitt in the other. We chose different roles such as bargaining chair, local president, communications officer, etc. and then rotated through these for the next three days.

The three objectives before us were TOC language, post and fill language, and prep time. We were a serious bunch who also knew when to laugh and our team put in work that went past 11pm on both nights and finished Saturday at 3pm. I really enjoyed the role of the Bargaining Chair where I had face-to-face negotiations with the School Board. The biggest challenge was the need to think fast on the spot and the things I said had to be accurate, precise, and concise. However, we faced stalling, manipulation, non-cooperation, legal challenge, strike mandate, LRP injunction, and of course the petty stuff like name-calling and posturing. As I said, it was real. At the deadline, we served strike notice with a 98% mandate. Does that sound familiar?

Although the hours were long and the work very intense, I have never pushed myself more, got back more for myself and made good friends than in these 3 days of professional development. I hope to make some sort of contribution the next time when we have the opportunity for bargaining.

Victor Choy

Member-at-Large, VSTA Executive Staff Rep at Churchill Secondary

Salary Indemnity Fund (SIF) Important Reminder



Continuing members of the VSTA SIF are reminded to submit their fee for the 2009-2010 school year

no later than October 31st. New applicants for membership to the VSTA SIF must be made within *two months* of continuing appointment with the VBE in order for membership during the current year. In addition, new VSTA members *age 30 or older* may join the SIF during the *first year* of VSTA membership. Otherwise, the Age Clause Limit will bar them from future membership. If a SIF member "drops out" of the SIF after his/her 30th birthday, he/she *cannot rejoin* the fund.

Educational Leave: Opportunities and Deadlines

Continuing contract teachers with the VBE are eligible for a variety of educational leaves (G.9.):

- Teachers with a continuing contract for at least five (5) consecutive school years immediately preceding the date of requested leave may apply for a paid (60% of annual salary and allowances) education leave of one (1) year. Teachers applying for an education leave of one school year must apply in writing to the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources on or before December 15 for a leave commencing in September 2010.
- Teachers with a continuing contract of not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the requested leave may apply for a paid (60% of annual salary and allowances) education leave of less than one (1) school year, but longer than ten (10) school days. Teachers must apply in writing to the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources at least three (3) months prior to the commencement of the leave.
- Teachers with a continuing contract of not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the requested leave may apply for a paid (100% of annual salary and allowances) education leave for ten (10) school days or less. Teachers must apply in writing to the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the commencement of the leave.

Application forms are available from the VBE.

VSTA Executive 2009-2010

The VSTA welcomes Leann Buteau (WRE) and Govan Keng (DLS) to the Executive Committee. Leann and Govan were acclaimed at September's Council Meeting.



Front: Debbie Pawluk (VP1), Anne Guthrie Warman (President), Shaun van der Hoop (VP2) **Inside:** Victor Choy, Govan Keng, Sylvia Metzner, Leann Buteau, Christine Stewart, Lisa Pacheco, Susan Gallpen, Brin MacIntyre **Back:** Young Cheng, Moira Ekdahl, Raza Mirani, Susan McIntosh, Mary Filleul, Louis Jefferson **Camera shy:** Rosalind Kellett

VSTA Website

The VSTA website has been designed to meet the needs of our members. Teachers can access the “melded” VTF Collective Agreement, as well as find information about salary, benefits, and important upcoming events.



A variety of forms can be downloaded and printed. In addition, the website provides links to a wide variety of teacher supports and contacts, and has a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page. Check out this invaluable resource at www.vstaweb.ca.



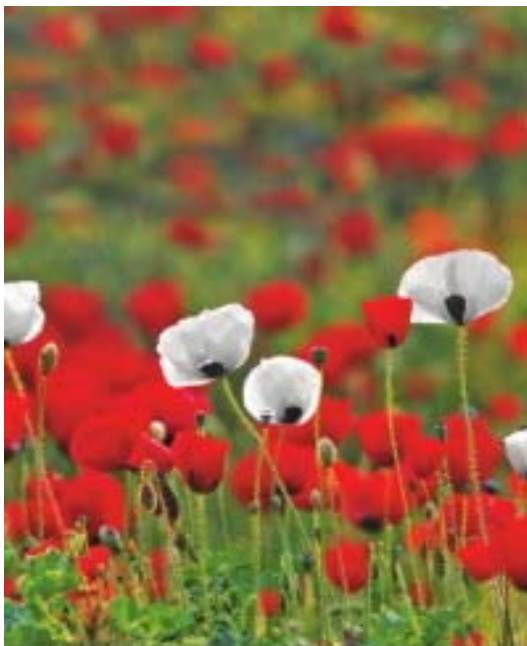
Vicki Vidas (Math Dept Head, Britannia Secondary) honoured for her work with Aboriginal students by Christine Stewart (VSTA Executive, BCTF Executive) at BCTF Aboriginal Education Conference (PSA). October 22, 2009, Nightingale Elementary

VSTA meetings & events



Council	Nov. 26 & Dec. 17
Executive.....	Nov. 5, 19 & Dec. 3
Pro-D.....	Nov. 2
Health & Safety	Nov. 16
WLC/Bargaining	Nov. 4

Meetings begin at 4:00pm at the VSTA office - 2915 Commercial Dr. at E. 13th.



Leaves Refresher (Article G.21)

Listed below is a *partial list* of employee leaves under Article G.21 of the *VTF Collective Agreement*:

- **Citizenship Court Appearances (G.21.5.):** Two (2) half-days with no deduction from pay for an employee to attend his/her interview and official granting of citizenship in Citizenship Court.
- **Educational Ceremonies (G.21.10.):** One-half (1/2) with no deduction from pay to receive a degree or diploma from an educational institution or to be present when a member of the immediate family receives a degree or diploma. If the educational institution is outside the metropolitan area of Vancouver, an additional one-half (1/2) day shall be granted for travel, if required.
- **Examinations (G.21.12.):** One-half (1/2) day with no deduction from pay to undergo or write an examination related to his/her employment or, if required, one (1) full day with the prior approval of the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources.
- **Funeral (G.21.13.):** Up to one (1) day allowed with no deduction from pay.
- **Illness of an Immediate Family Member (G.21.15.):** Up to five (5) days of sick leave per year with no deduction from pay but with a deduction from the employer's sick leave.



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