



TACKBOARD

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President's Message



LET ME BEGIN BY extending my personal thanks to all the teachers who attended our AGM on May 10th at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School. The members in attendance worked collectively to approve the VSTA budget for 2011/12, adopted the audited financial

statements for the year ended July 31, 2010, and approved a constitutional change which allows for the Ad-Hoc Technology Committee to be constituted as a standing committee of the VSTA Executive. Additionally, the participants also elected the 2011/12 Executive Committee, a committed group of individuals who volunteer countless hours of their personal time in support of the membership and who provide invaluable advice and support to the table officers. I also thank all of you for your continued support of my presidency for another year, and I am pleased to be joined by Sylvia Metzner as 1st Vice-President and Shaun van de Hoop as 2nd VP. I encourage all members to attend our general meetings and to play an active role in making important decisions for the VSTA.

The month of May was once again fraught with many challenges for our members and the VBE. Although the Trustees approved the alternate calendar for 2011/12 (on May 11th) at an estimated cost savings of \$1.2 million, the overall funding shortfall for the district was finalized at \$7.2 million. Nonetheless, while instructional time was not directly impacted by the base budget, 187 layoff notices were issued to teaching staff. Simply put, there are more

continuing teachers than teaching positions due to a variety of factors, including the number of conversions from temporary to continuing, and the fact that more people are returning from leaves than are taking them next year. Moreover, there are unplaced teachers on recall (as a result of last year's layoffs) and the number of retirements is lower than expected. All of these numbers, unfortunately, have created a situation where layoffs are necessary. It is imperative that Premier Christy Clark and her government act on the B.C. Supreme Court's ruling on the unconstitutionality of Bills 27 and 28 and restore the stripped language on working and learning conditions, supports for special education, firm class size and composition limits, and ratios for non-enrolling teachers. Waiting until April, 2012, to deal with the repercussions of the ruling is not tenable for teachers or students.

The spring transfer process is also underway as I write. Unlike last year, there are only four rounds this Spring, followed by another round in late August. Members are encouraged to contact the VSTA office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the posting or interview process. Let's hope that our members who received lay notice will be rescinded before the end of June so that they can return to a classroom in September.

In closing, I encourage you to "pace yourself" as you enter the ever hectic month of June! Bringing the school year to a close is undoubtedly a frantic time for teachers and students alike. On behalf of Sylvia, Shaun, and myself, have a restful summer and enjoy your well-deserved break.

Debbie



Introducing MyBCTF, a brand new, secure, member-only portal for teachers. For up-to-date bargaining information and easy conference registration, sign on at www.bctf.ca, click on "BCTF members only".

Nine iPads will be randomly drawn from the names of those signed up at 2,000 members, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 7,000, 10,000, 12,000, 20,000 and 25,000!!

Vancouver Teachers' Federation

General Meeting

Wednesday, June 8th, 2011

4:00 pm at the Tupper Auditorium

(419 E. 24th Avenue)

We are asking that all members make every effort to attend this meeting to receive an **Update on 2011 Bargaining.**

BCTF Social Justice Conference – April 15 & 16, 2011



This conference was an eye-opening and “re-inspiring” experience! It came at the exact right moment for me, as I have been considering a career change or a return to school. As a new teacher, I struggle to find out what kind of teacher I am and to puzzle out how I best fit into a system that I am

still learning about. Without a consistent teaching placement this has been difficult and sometimes the future seems bleak. This conference gave me new hope and determination, reinforcing why I’m teaching and persevering to create change in students’ lives and the education system.

The tone for the two days of learning, networking, and sharing was set with amazing keynote speakers, specifically Darrell Dennis. Darrell spoke to many truths I connected with and presented them in such a way that had equal parts humour and seriousness, of social ills he has experienced, and uncomfortable truths that don’t get addressed often enough. It was the right amount of strength and pride to heal, laugh, and move forward in our shared passions to right social wrongs through education.

I learned new ways to engage learners in active citizenship, with a clear and interactive resource provided to help me in my classroom. As I shared and discussed with my colleagues from around the province on the debate about whether or

not Aboriginal Schools are segregated; a fellow colleague shared an insightful “aha” comment that “We can change the content, but if we don’t change our perspective it doesn’t change anything.” This in itself seems common sense, but rarely do I get a chance to dialogue with fellow teachers as to how this truth sheds light on the issue of integrating curriculum. Without further teacher support it is only integrated curriculum and not integrated values within the content to create change. In global friendship I began to learn the diversity that our union and fellow teachers have engaged in; outside our communities, province and country to make meaningful connections with educators on a global scale. Most inspiring of all the workshops was International Solidarity, where I learned more about the specific partnerships our union has within BC and abroad. Learning about how other educators in other countries are treated and the problems they struggle with gives me a new appreciation for where I live and the education system we have.

If ever I decide to leave the classroom, I don’t think I will stray far from working in education. I’m proud to be an educator and grateful for the opportunity to have attended this conference that reminded me of my passion for working in education. I now find it difficult to remember why I was discouraged in the first place.

Spirit Lavallee teaches at Britannia Secondary

Political action – an opinion piece



Treena Goolieff, Carl Larouche, Kathy Hartman

A number of years ago I attended a BCFED Convention workshop aimed at unions developing effective means of mobilizing their membership at election time. It struck me that, while the name on the ballot may change, what is crucial for voters to get behind is a platform that reflects their core values. The best way I have come across is for groups to mobilize around issues. It is our communities and those who live and work in them who need to set the agenda at election time. We need to do all we can to wrestle back the conversation from media pundits and political spin doctors. One such opportunity was the May 11th by-election in Vancouver-Point Grey. In a short period of time VSTA, VESTA and the BCTF worked out a plan to make public education an issue. Information was distributed to households, letters were sent to teachers in the riding and each local union raised some consciousness out on the streets. It wasn’t a huge action, but the close result on election night made it clear that Christy Clark’s legacy with respect to education policy mattered to voters in Vancouver. The reason I raise this sort of issue-based political action is that despite having just endured a federal election and a provincial by-election within a two week period, we will likely see two more elections before 2011 is done. Municipal elections are definitely set for the fall and a full provincial election may very well be on the horizon. If we are not out there determining the public discourse, who will be?

Sylvia Metzner, 1st Vice-President

Central Drop Off for Job Applications



For this year's spring transfer process, once again the VSTA and the VBE will each have a central drop off to receive applications. All teachers applying for positions *may* deliver their applications directly to schools or to the central drop off.

Drop-off at the VSTA will be located at the VSTA office, 2915 Commercial Drive (at 13th Ave.) on the following

**Wednesdays ONLY from 7:00 am - 6:00 pm on
May 25 · June 01 · June 15 · June 22**

VSTA Annual General Meeting

The VSTA Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday, May 10th at the Tupper auditorium. Members voted in favour of a constitutional change to give standing committee status to the Ad-Hoc Technology Committee, effective September 2011. The General Meeting approved the association's operating budget and elected the following VSTA Executive Committee for 2011-12:

President: **Debbie Pawluk**; 1st Vice-President: **Sylvia Metzner**; 2nd Vice-President: **Shaun van der Hoop**; Treasurer: **Moira Ekdahl (DLS)**; Local Representatives: **Raza Mirani (GLAD)**, **Lisa Pacheco (GLAD)**, **Debbie Pawluk**; Alternate LR: **Sylvia Metzner**; Members-at-Large: **Young Cheng (PG)**, **Treena Goolieff (EH)**, **Amy Hurn (VT)**, **Govan Keng (GLAD)**, **Brin MacIntyre (TEMP)**, **Susan McIntosh (GLAD)**, **Trish Mugford (MAGEE)**, **Christine Stewart (VT)**; Teacher-on-Call Rep: **John Silver (VT/TOC)**; *Standing Committee Chairs* - Professional Development: vacant; W/LC & Bargaining: **Shaun van der Hoop**; Health & Safety: **John Thomson (VLN)**; Social & Eco-Justice: **Rosalind Kellett (EH)**.

Following the regular business of the meeting, door prizes were awarded and members enjoyed a social hour in the staffroom. Churchill had the highest percentage of staff turnout. We wish to extend our thanks to outgoing members Vic Choy (WC), Mary Filleul (WRE) and Sue Inglis (PG) and the rest of the 2010-11 Executive Committee for their dedication and countless hours of service over the past year. We welcome new members Amy Hurn and John Silver and thank members returning to serve on the Executive in September.

Summer Interview Committees

Summer postings will be taking place from **August 16th to the 22nd**, and school interview committees will need to be convened to conduct these interviews. The VSTA position is that the school union representative on the interview committee *must* have attended the post-and-fill training provided at the April *School Union Rep Training* session. If none of your school's reps will be available for August interviews, please contact the VSTA office to arrange for a table officer to conduct the interviews. A limited amount of compensatory "time-in-lieu" will be made available by the VSTA for those staff reps who conduct August interviews.

School Union Team Elections

As per established practice, elections for members of the VSTA School Union Team take place in the spring, or in the case of a school that expects significant staff changes, in the following September. Elections should take place at a Staff Organization Meeting and contested positions must be determined by secret ballot. Even if only one person is nominated or has volunteered for a position, it is important that s/he be openly acclaimed by the meeting. The School Union Team consists of:

- One (1) Staff Rep for every 25 teachers or fraction thereof on staff
- One (1) Staff Rep for parent contact
- Professional Development Chairperson (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Pro-D Committee)
- Up to two (2) Reps to the VSTA Working and Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA WLC/B Committee)
- One (1) Rep to the VSTA Health and Safety Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Health and Safety Committee)
- One (1) Rep to the VSTA Social & Eco Justice Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Social & Eco Justice Committee)
- Staff Committee Chairperson (unless a school's Staff Committee Constitution specifies that Staff Committee elects its own Chair. In either case, the Staff Committee Chairperson is a member of the School Union Team).

Members of the VSTA Executive (from the school) are also considered to be members of the School Union Team.

Additionally, members of the School Union Team are reminded that VSTA provides a budget to the team of \$2.00 per member to facilitate meetings of the Team and/or Staff Organization meetings.

VSTA Retirees' Dinner - June 21, 2011



Members retiring this June or who retired earlier this year are invited, along with one guest, to the annual VSTA Retirees' Dinner on Tuesday, June 21st at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Also invited are VSTA staff reps, standing committee reps, and members of the executive. Personalized invitations will be sent to schools in early June.

TOC Seminar - Employment Insurance

Tuesday, June 14th, 2011

4:00-6:00pm at the VSTA Office

The BCTF workshop will provide teachers teaching on call with resources and information to enable them to successfully apply for employment insurance for the summer months.

Please RSVP to Kim (kim@vstaweb.ca) or call the office directly at 604-873-5570. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.

VSTA Scholarship Winners

Thank you to all the candidates who applied for the VSTA scholarship. This year's field of candidates was outstanding, and it is unfortunate that we can offer only a limited number of awards. The recipients are as follows: \$1500 - **Alana Bolton** (Ann/Wyatt Bolton); and \$1000 for each **Julia Broderick-Hale** (Dan Hale), **Gillian Russell** (Diane Russell), and **Carly Marshall** (Colleen Marshall). Congratulations to all candidates for their outstanding achievement. We wish you the very best in your future endeavours.



Program Review II

The VSTA conducted sessions for school-based input to Stage II of the VBE's ongoing Program Review. Teachers met for two mornings in May to discuss successes and challenges with respect to the Resource Team Model in our secondary schools. Many thanks to Mary Filleul (VSTA Exec) for facilitating the sessions.



Clive Smith (EH), Barb Acob (WC), Alana Rentz (CT)

Retiring This Year?

CHECK LIST

- Contact the Teachers' Pension Plan at 1-800-665-6770 for a Retirement Application Package. Send the completed application form to the TPP no later than the end of the month in which the pension is to start (preferably at least two months earlier) to ensure prompt pension payment.
- Contact VBE payroll to find out when your current health benefits end to ensure you have continuous coverage until the benefits associated with the Teachers' Pension Plan begin.
- Consider converting your current group life insurance to an individual life insurance policy.
- Join the BC Retired Teachers' Association (telephone 604-871-2260/2262 or 1-877-683-2243, or go to the web site at www.bctf.ca/rta). Contact the BCRTA re: starting/continuing Medoc travel health insurance. The Retired Teachers' Association has branches around the province. There are many advantages to membership, and you can have the annual \$35 fee deducted directly from your pension.
- Apply to the BCTF for Associate Membership.
- Maintain membership in the BC College of Teachers as a non-practising member on pension or as practising member if you intend to teach after retirement. For fee details visit www.bcct.ca.
- At age 60, if you are not working, consider applying for your Canada Pension Plan pension. For an application kit, visit the CPP web site at www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/cpp/cpptoc.shtml.
- At age 65, apply for Old Age Security (OAS). For an application kit, visit the OAS web site at www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/oas/oastoc.shtml

Contact the BCTF Income Security Staff if you have questions related to any of the above. Phone: 604-871-1921; toll-free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1921.