



TACKBOARD



Volume 25 Number 6
April 28, 2011

President's Message

As I write I am reminded of how quickly the month of April has come and gone, leaving only 2 months left in the school year. Of greatest importance this month was the landmark decision (handed down on April 13th) by the British Columbia Supreme Court that declared the legislation that stripped teacher collective bargaining rights in 2002 unconstitutional and invalid. Madam Justice Griffin found that **Bills 27 and 28** were a substantial interference in bargaining rights and infringed on freedom of association guaranteed under the *Charter of Rights*. Simply put, the *Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act* (commonly referred to as Bill 28) which stripped language pertaining to working conditions of teachers and learning conditions of students **is no longer in force**. While Justice Griffin suspends this declaration for a period of 12 months for the government to deal with the repercussions of the decision and the abrogation of our Charter rights, the VSTA has made it abundantly clear that this in no way mitigates the School Board's responsibility to follow the law and our Collective Agreement provisions that were removed by Section 9 of PEFCA. Since 2002, students have not known a time when teachers were not struggling and advocating for improvements to our working and learning conditions, class size and composition limits, supports for special education, and ratios for non-enrolling teachers.

As I reported in the last edition of Tackboard, the VBE is once again grappling with a funding shortfall for 2011/12, albeit the original projection of \$11.8 million has been reduced to \$8.4 million. While the budget's adjustments to core educational services and resources are fewer than that in 2010/11, there is a proposed reduction of from 25 to 18 FTE to manage class size/composition issues at the secondary level. That Vancouver's secondary teachers may experience even more Section 76/Bill 33 violations next year as a result of this proposal is completely unacceptable, a message that has been clearly stated at numerous public stakeholder meetings. It is also worth noting that the Board has not yet made a decision about the 2011/12 school calendar; and, if the alternate calendar proposal is passed there will be an additional \$1.2 million savings. As I mentioned above, the VSTA is also of the opinion that teachers and students alike should not have to wait any longer for the VBE to begin mitigating the harm that has been done as a direct result of legislation that is "no longer in force." The Board of Trustees will make their final deliberations and adopt the 2011/12 Preliminary Operating Budget on May 5th.

On a lighter but nonetheless important note, 24 VSTA members (5 being first-time delegates) assembled in Victoria for the first five days of the Spring Break to attend the BCTF AGM. Given that our Collective Agreement expires in June, 2011, it is hardly surprising that much of the discussion and debate centered on the topic of bargaining. Other important issues included 21st century learning initiatives, new curriculum and programs, aboriginal education, and education policy, to name just a few. For the first time in a decade, the Minister of Education, George Abbott, addressed the assembly. Dozens of teachers lined up at the microphones to share their classroom experiences, but only two members spoke due to time limitations. Nonetheless, the poignancy of their narratives made clear the challenges and frustrations resulting from our current working and learning conditions. It was also satisfying to see the VSTA's Christine Stewart (Vancouver Technical) re-elected to a second term on the BCTF Executive. Congratulations, Chris!!

In closing, I would like to extend my personal thanks to all of you for your ongoing hard work and commitment to ensuring a quality public education system. Vancouver students are so very fortunate to have such a myriad of talented teaching professionals working for the VBE. Lastly, I would like to remind you that our AGM is taking place in the Tupper auditorium on May 10th. Everyone is encouraged to attend this important meeting. Hope to see you there!

Debbie

VSTA Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, May 10, at 4:00 pm at the Tupper Auditorium (419 E. 24th.). Members will receive the financial report for 2010, vote to approve the association's operating budget for 2011-12, and elect the VSTA Executive Committee for 2011-12.

An assortment of door prizes will be presented at the end of the meeting, followed by a social hour in the staffroom. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

Proposed Constitutional Change Technology Standing Committee

THAT the Ad-Hoc Technology Committee be constituted as a Standing Committee of the VSTA Executive Committee effective September 2011.



BCTF Annual General Meeting Highlights

Two speakers at this year's AGM helped to put the political upheaval of the past six months into focus for me. On the local front we experienced an historic first. George Abbott, the Provincial Minister of Education, spoke, adopting a decidedly level tone while acknowledging that we have a good education system. While lines of teachers patiently waited for a chance to speak to the minister he took only two speakers and then begged an alternate engagement. His other commitment was a pre-scheduled press conference immediately following his address that made the point that we were heading for a strike and that his government would order us back to work. Broadening our political lens, the Vice President of the Wisconsin Education Association Council was invited to speak at our BCTF AGM. Betsy Kippers gave an incredibly stirring speech of courage and community response in the face of an outrageous misuse of power and the public trust. The scope and sophistication of their response on the streets, across the state and in the courts is inspiring. Important policy changes on 21st century learning, special education loads, a breakthrough recommendation on ethical investing and a supportive stand with respect to the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan were carried.

Sylvia Metzner, VSTA

Election results.... President: Susan Lambert (Burnaby); 1st VP: Jim Iker (Burns Lake); Glen Hansman (VESTA); Members-at-Large: Rick Guenther (Abbotsford), David Komlijenovic (Kamloops), Joanna Larsen (Prince Rupert), Denise Moffatt (Surrey), Teri Mooring (Quesnel), Paul Steer (Delta), Christine Stewart (VSTA) and Kip Wood (Nanaimo).

This year we were fortunate enough to hear from educational guru Sir Ken Robinson. I had heard Sir Ken before at a school admin day and was entertained by his wit but concerned with his message. For the AGM he customized his presentation to be 'teacher-friendly' but his underlying message is no different than the current flavor of the month: choice and flexibility legislation. Although the underlying message was inspiring the imagination of students and teaching with passion, how his message is being interpreted by those in positions of authority and decision-making is cause for concern.

Raza Mirani, Gladstone

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 a.m. - 6:00 pm:

May 25 · June 01 · June 15 · June 22

Bills 27 & 28: Judgment affirms our right to collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is a key-stone in a democratic society. Throughout the decision Madam Justice Griffin emphasizes that teachers have a right under the Charter to have a voice at the negotiating table on matters related to working conditions. Such rights honour the dignity of work, the voice of the profession, and democracy itself.

The achievement of full, free collective bargaining has been a hard won struggle and this latest judgment is yet another example of how we need to continue strenuously to preserve it. For the summary, see bctf.ca.

"The historical evolution of collective bargaining as a protected right recognizes that there is a psychological benefit to workers to be able to collectively bargain over their working conditions, a benefit that goes beyond the economic benefits as part of the freedom to associate 'reaffirms the values of dignity, personal autonomy, equality and democracy that are inherent in the Charter.'" BC Supreme Court Ruling

"The legislation, undoubtedly, was seen by teachers as evidence that the government did not respect them or consider them to be valued contributors to the education system, having excluded them from any freedom to associate to influence their working conditions. This was a seriously deleterious effect of the legislation, one adversely disproportionate to any salutary effects revealed by the evidence." Madam Justice Griffin

Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP)

All teachers planning to retire this year must notify the board in writing by 2011 May 31. Those teachers who are committed to retiring early and qualify for the Early Retirement Incentive Plan must also submit a letter of intention to retire to Human Resources by May 31. ERIP information is posted in all schools. Contact the VSTA if you have further questions.



To be eligible for the Early Retirement Incentive Plan, employees must:

- be on a continuing appointment
- retiring with a pension
- have a minimum of ten (10) FTE years' service with the Vancouver Board of Education.
- be at the maximum of their scale
- have been in active service for the previous four (4) years, during which there may be a maximum of one year leave not including leaves under Article G.21.30., and/or leaves granted due to disability (within the meaning of *The British Columbia Human Rights Code*)
- be a minimum age of 55, and a maximum age of 64 as of June 30th in the year of retirement
- submit his/her request to retire, in writing, **on or before 2011 May 31** for a retirement date of 2011 June 30

Based on the salary upon retirement, excluding allowances, the minimum salary to be PB(5), step 10, the maximum to be 6M, step 10, minus PB(5), step 3, and to be adjusted by the applicable earnings as at age upon retirement date:

Age	4/PC	5/PB	5/PA	6/M	Payout %
55	\$19,038	\$19,038	\$25,102	\$26,173	100%
56	\$17,134	\$17,134	\$22,592	\$23,556	90%
57	\$15,230	\$15,230	\$20,082	\$20,938	80%
58	\$13,327	\$13,327	\$17,571	\$18,321	70%
59	\$11,423	\$11,423	\$15,061	\$15,704	60%
60	\$9,519	\$9,519	\$12,551	\$13,087	50%
61	\$7,615	\$7,615	\$10,041	\$10,469	40%
62	\$5,711	\$5,711	\$7,531	\$7,852	30%
63	\$3,808	\$3,808	\$5,020	\$5,235	20%
64	\$3,808	\$3,808	\$5,020	\$5,235	20%

Note: For members who participate in the Payroll deduction of the BC College of Teachers' annual fee, the annual BCCT fee will automatically be deducted on 2011 April 30 for the 2011-2012 school year. Please be sure to cancel your payroll deduction by 2011 April 01 if you do not intend to teach in BC.

MyBCTF

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".

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.

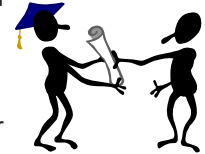
Additionally, members of the School Union Team are reminded that VSTA provides a budget to the team of \$2.00 per member to facilitate meetings of the Team and/or Staff Organization meetings.

VSTA-SIF Volunteer Needed

The VSTA Salary Indemnity Fund is seeking a volunteer to join its Committee starting September 2011. Meetings are held monthly to consider claims and matters arising from the operation of the Fund. The meetings are held after school on Mondays at Point Grey Secondary. Please contact the VSTA office at 604-873-5570.

VSTA Scholarships

Application forms for VSTA scholarships are available from the VSTA Office, Staff Reps at school sites, and at the VSTA website at www.vstaweb.ca. To be eligible, the 2010-2011 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 6, 2011.



BC College of Teachers

The British Columbia College of Teachers will be informing you of the fees that are due this spring. The recently passed fees of \$120 represent a 33% increase over the \$90.00 fee of last year. This was passed despite uncertainty around the future of the College.

Just a reminder that Vancouver is part of Zone 1 for the upcoming BCCT elections and Pat Gudlugson is the BCTF endorsed candidate.



VSTA meetings & events



<i>Council</i>	May 26, June 16
<i>Executive</i>	May 5, 19, June 2
<i>WLC/Bargaining</i>	May 4
<i>Pro-D</i>	May 2
<i>Health & Safety</i>	May 9
VSTA Annual General Meeting ...	May 10
VSTA Retirees' Dinner	June 21

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