



# School Team Bulletin

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STAFF REPS

**The VSB Budget** setting process has begun and the VSTA wants to present its priorities to the Board with the full knowledge and support of our membership. At our Executive meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> the following motion was passed and will be presented to Council on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Please make an effort to meet with staff before February 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss and prepare feedback for Council. If your staff has suggestions for changes, please prepare the amendments in advance of the meeting to better facilitate the discussion.

We have presented the motion below with supporting statements and explanations in *italics*. We look forward to receiving your input.

### THAT VSTA recommend the following priorities for the 2008-2009 VSB budget:

**1. Instructional staffing consistent with the most likely revenue projections, not the most pessimistic.**

*The amended budget proposes to appropriate \$3.54 million of the 2007/2008 projected operating budget surplus to offset the projected 2008/2009 funding shortfall. This should result in instructional staffing based on a balanced budget and realistic projected enrolment. Hold back of instructional staffing should be avoided as it is disruptive to teaching and learning when re-organization happens throughout the fall.*

**2. Sufficient instructional staffing to ensure full compliance with class size and class composition limits.**

*The Board's Class Size and Class Composition Committee is working hard to develop staffing formulae that will respect Bill 33 limits, but without adequate funding for instructional (enrolling and non-enrolling) staff, that work is meaningless. The Board must commit to those staffing levels up front. Using the information from the class size/class composition consultation forms, the number of classes with more than 30 students has not increased, but the number of classes that have 4 or more students with IEPs has risen by over 18% over last year.*

**3. District direction to secondary schools to set a limit of two non-instructional blocks per school.**

*For years, the VSTA has objected to the use of instructional staffing for non-instructional purposes such as timetabling, athletic directors, school stores, computer support, intramural sports and portfolio. These blocks directly increase the class sizes and restrict the school's ability to offer electives or specialty courses. Nonetheless, the use of these blocks persists and the VSTA is proposing a fixed limit, rather than a blanket opposition. It is understood that teachers, through Staff Committee, would provide the advice for the allocation of these two blocks.*

**4. An equitable distribution of release blocks for district alternate programs.**

*There should be a review of district alternate programs and the release blocks attached to them. There appears to be a proliferation of both programs and attached release blocks in the VSB. A review of these programs should establish equity; release blocks attached to programs are almost always taken out of instructional staffing.*

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**5. A balanced approach reflected in school organizations in the placement of students and the workload of teachers through the use of a weighting formula or similar tool.**

*This was a direct recommendation of the Class Size and Class Composition Committee when it first met in 2004. It is once again a recommendation from the 2007/2008 Committee. We strongly urge the Board to follow the recommendation of this contract committee to use a weighting formula or similar tool in this year's timetable construction.*

**6. On-going Board advocacy for additional funding to address Class Size/Class Composition issues, including mid-year changes.**

*The VSB, together with stakeholder groups, need to continue advocacy efforts with this Government to improve funding levels and to create consistent and stable funding to effectively implement Section 76 of The School Act (Bill 33).*

**7. Restoration of 2007 funding clawed back from learning resources, technology, and school libraries.**

*By citing the need to link equity to schools and financial stability/sustainability, the VSB Director of Learning and Information Technology unexpectedly made an announcement in October 2007 that the Board would be retaining \$156,518 at the district level. Consequently, funding for library resources and computer hardware was reduced by 5%. Additionally, funding for educational resources and supplies and expenses was reduced by 10%. VSTA strongly opposes this further erosion of funding and its subsequent impact on district wide working and learning conditions. Full restoration of the clawed back funding is essential.*

**8. Funding increase for learning resources to support new curriculum.**

*Apart from the new Math and Science Curricula mandated for several grades over the past several years, ongoing development of curricula in a variety of subject areas means that new resources to support and implement these courses must be found. Funding for these resources needs to be factored in to any budget setting exercise.*