



August 28, 2012

**Welcome back** after a well-deserved summer break. Events unfolded rapidly at the end of June and below are a few notes to help bring you up to speed as we begin a new school year. Please note that there will be a **VTF General Meeting on Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>**. We will be voting on a number of important items so all members are encouraged to attend.



## From the Provincial Table

Teachers concluded an agreement this June after a long and difficult round of negotiations. Despite the threat of fines and strong pressure, we were able to make some modest gains and succeed in halting the drive to force contract concessions. The Memorandum of Agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF was ratified at the end of June and covers the period from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2013.

This agreement provides some improvements to leaves (unpaid discretionary, bereavement, family responsibility, compassionate care, and union) and recruitment and retention allowances.

Within the agreement is a Standardized Benefits Plan that is of value to approximately 75% of teachers in the province. While a cursory examination of the proposed plan indicates many areas where our current plan is superior, an itemized comparison of the two plans will be compiled and made available to teachers. The VTF will then vote at the General Meeting on Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 on whether to adopt the Standardized Benefits Plan proposal or to retain our current plan.

The BCTF and BCPSEA have also agreed to discussions this fall regarding moving Post & Fill and Layoff & Recall items to local bargaining. In return, the employer will be looking for an agreement on Professional Growth and Standardized Evaluation Language.

## Strategic Plan

The agreement in June left important matters unresolved. The agreement provided no improvements to class size and composition, despite the BC Supreme Court ruling that Bills 27 and 28 are unconstitutional and invalid. Government refused to redress this legislation, which stripped teachers' collective agreements, restricted our bargaining rights, and eliminated provisions for class size and composition, as well as staffing ratios for specialist teachers such as special education teachers, ESL teachers, counsellors and teacher librarians.

In response, the BCTF has developed a **Year of Provincial Action** with a theme for each month that highlights a timely issue. The themes for the first two months are September: Class Size and Composition and October: Investing in Education. Much of the media campaign and provincial and local actions for the first two months will focus on these themes.

The LRB made it clear this spring that extra-curricular activities are performed by teachers on a voluntary basis. For the coming year, **teachers are encouraged to maintain a focus on teaching and work-life balance** in determining whether they participate in extra-curricular activities, evening performances, or other voluntary activities. As well, teachers are the authentic voice of education and so are encouraged to add to the input provided by the BCTF through individual participation in ministry opportunities for feedback on education and curriculum change.

## From the Local Table

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At the Local Table agreement was reached between the VTF and the VBE on improved contract language for five items:

- unpaid leaves
- transit pass
- administration of medication
- staff meetings
- access to information

This agreement will need to be ratified at the VTF General Meeting before they are incorporated into our collective agreement. Further details on the agreed upon language will be available at the meeting.

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### CHANGE OF CATEGORY FOR TEACHERS

Human Resources has printed and distributed copies of “**Information Regarding Teacher Salary Including Application for Change of Category for Teachers**” to all schools and sites. It is **extremely important** that Teachers anticipating a salary change due to completion of a diploma program, additional coursework, completion of master’s degree, etc) refer to this information. It is also available online on the VSB website at myvsb portal site (under Staffroom).



### WORLD TEACHERS' DAY –

### TAKE A STAND FOR TEACHERS

The United Nations' (UN) World Teachers' Day commemorates the work of teachers and their contributions to society on October 5<sup>th</sup> each year. Join the VSTA in an early celebration of our collective work on Wednesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mark your calendars now and plan to join your colleagues for the acknowledgement you deserve (and a bit of fun). Details to follow.

### EXECUTIVE VACANCIES

The following two positions are now open on the VSTA Executive for the 2012-2013 school year:



- **Health & Safety Committee Chair**
- **Member-at-Large**

Please consider these positions and forward your name to the VSTA office if interested. An election will be held at the VSTA Council meeting on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to fill these positions. For more information, please call the VSTA office at 604-873-5570.

VANCOUVER TEACHERS' FEDERATION

## GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, Sept 19, 2012

4:00 pm, Tupper Auditorium (419 E. 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue)