



TACKBOARD

President's Message



Debbie Pawluk & Gerry Kent (VESTA President)

WHILE SEPTEMBER is always a hectic month, school start-up this year has been considerably smoother than it was last fall. Unlike last year, teachers returned to their classrooms with a current collective agreement in place (until June 30, 2013), the final resolution to a long and difficult round of bargaining and province wide collective action (and the threat of harsh fines and punitive legislation).

While the agreement provides some gains in benefits (for approximately 75% of BCTF members) and in leaves' provisions, it fails to provide improvements in two key areas: class size/composition and salaries. The government refused to compromise on the net-zero mandate or to redress the legislation (Bills 27/28) which stripped teachers' collective agreements, restricted our bargaining rights, and eliminated provisions for class size/composition, as well as staffing ratios for specialist teachers. Of significance, however, is that the employer's concession demands regarding seniority and "suitability" were removed from the table, clearly a major victory for teachers. Furthermore, the BCTF and BCPSEA are currently discussing a trade-off agreement which involves moving Post and Fill and Layoff and Recall to local bargaining for an agreement on Professional Growth and Standardized Evaluation language. If the parties fail to reach an agreement, the concessions and the renegotiated split of issues will fall off the table. Stay tuned for further updates.

Another significant change this year involves Bill 22 and amendments to the School Act. While principals are required to meet with teachers who have classes in excess of 30 students (provided they are not on the "classes not subject to 30-student limit"), there are *no restrictions on the number of students with IEPs* in a class/section and there is no requirement to consult. Of particular concern, additionally, is the appalling "Cash for Kids" scheme. Teachers know that it is unethical to personally profit at the expense of students'

learning conditions, that it is a clear violation of the BCTF's Code of Ethics.

I encourage all teachers to not partake in this "remedy," but to request either additional teaching time for the school or more prep time. All staff reps have been provided with an extensive communication on this new procedure; nonetheless, all members are encouraged to contact the VSTA office if you have any additional questions and/ or concerns.

Also related to the topic of class size is the Learning Improvement Fund (LIF), the government's ploy to divert attention away from the chronic underfunding of the public education system. Vancouver received \$5.77 million, 12.5% of which was allocated to support staff as per the provincial agreement with CUPE. The remaining balance, allocated over 3 stages, has been used to address the most egregious learning and staffing needs in our schools with all of the funding going directly to teaching positions. As was all too apparent during the process, however, the LIF is woefully inadequate and does not satisfactorily address the shortage of teaching staff in our schools.

In closing, I thank all of you for the incredible work you do each and every day to support each other and your students. As we move forward with the school year, it is my sincere hope that all VSTA members experience enhanced professional satisfaction. Lastly, please mark your calendars for October 3rd and plan on joining your VSTA colleagues in recognition of World Teachers' Day. It's time to come together, to celebrate, and to focus on the great joy of what we do....teaching children.

Take care,

Debbie

VTF General Meeting
Tuesday, October 16th, 2012
4:00 pm at the Tupper Auditorium
(419 E. 24th Avenue)

All teachers are encouraged to attend our VTF General Meeting. We would like to see every school well represented.

The following issues will be addressed at this meeting:

- **Ratification of Bargaining Objectives: 2013 Round**

How I find Joy in teaching



SEPTEMBER HAS arrived, and along with the shorter days of sunlight and back-to-school specials, comes the return of teachers to their classrooms. I love this time of year, because it means I will

soon be meeting a new group of students and starting up the year's activities. I consider myself one of the luckiest people in the world to have a job that I love. I feel especially lucky, because I teach both in the classroom (Science) and in the Learning Commons (Teacher-Librarian). As the year progresses, when I find my desk piling up with assignments and my calendar filling with dates for meetings and clubs, I like to remind myself of the joys I find in teaching, in my classroom, and in the Learning Commons.

The smiles that greet me when my students arrive to class; the excitement I hear between friends who have discovered their favourite book; the sense of pride seen on my students' faces when they learn a new concept... these all bring me joy. Finding ways to engage students in their learning; to help them make connections and think critically as they research and apply their knowledge... this also brings me joy. Collaboration with my colleagues and the sense of community I feel at my school enhances this joy. I may love my summer holiday, but it is all of this joy that puts a bounce in my step as I make my way back to school in the Fall.

Stephanie Lemmon teaches at Hamber Secondary

This is the first of what we hope can be an ongoing segment for Tackboard and our website. Please submit your 200-250 word submissions on "How I find Joy in Teaching" to the VSTA office.

FALL SCHOOL UNION REP TRAINING

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

Holiday Inn Vancouver-Centre
711 W. Broadway (at Heather)

Registration is open to 5 reps per school plus members of Executive. Registration deadline:
Monday, October 15.



Did You Know? Wage Increases

While some civil servants in BC were held to wage freezes under the provincial government's net zero mandate, other public sector employees—including municipal civil servants, and private sector employees—negotiated fair and reasonable salary increases.

Average percentage increases in BC over past 5 years as reported by the BC Ministry of Labour

| | Public Sector | Private Sector |
|------|---------------|----------------|
| 2007 | 2.58% | 2.54% |
| 2008 | 2.84 | 4.51 |
| 2009 | 2.79 | 2.56 |
| 2010 | 0.95 | 1.19 |
| 2011 | 0.53 | 1.09 |

Below are a few examples of wage settlements for employees in BC that were negotiated in the first five months of 2012 as reported by the BC Ministry of Labour that far outstripped the average.

From the Private Sector:

National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada
(Rio Tinto Alcan, Kitimat) 13.5% over 5 years

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
(Air Canada) 12% over 5 years

International Longshore and Warehouse Union
(BC Maritime Employers Assn) 19.97% over 7 years

CUPE Flight Attendants
(Air Canada) 9.0% over 4 years

From the Public Sector:

CUPE
(City of Victoria as well as Nanaimo, Sidney, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, etc) 6.0% over 3 years

BCGEU
(City of Fort St. John) 8.25% over 3 years

Sources:

<http://www.bcbargaining.ca/>
<http://www.bcbargaining.ca/Reports/2012/July/SEV05N03.pdf>
<http://www.bcbargaining.ca/Reports/2012/July/QWSV05N03xls.pdf>

Local and Provincial Bargaining

THANKS TO ALL who were present at the September 19th Vancouver Teachers' Federation General Meeting. It was a momentous occasion and several significant decisions were made that will impact every teacher in Vancouver.

Local Bargaining

In response to the 2010 survey of members, the local bargaining team brought 33 objectives to the bargaining table. The bargaining team was able to reach agreement on 5 of these items and Vancouver teachers have now ratified improved language in the following areas:

1. Access to Information (Article A.25)
2. Limits and support for teachers administering medication to students (Article E.34)
3. Personal Leave Without Pay (Article G.21.26)
4. Continuation of the current Employee Transit Pass Program
5. To limit the frequency and duration of administrator-called staff meetings (A.30)

Provincial Bargaining

The Memorandum of Agreement ratified by teachers in June contained new language with respect to leaves and a proposal for a Standardized Provincial Extended Health Benefits Plan.

Leaves

New leave provisions (Article G) are part of this language. Five of these provisions are either entirely new to the contract or represent clear improvements to our current language. These will become part of our new Collective Agreement.

- Family Responsibility Leave (New)
- TTOCs Conducting Union Business (New)
- Bereavement Leave (Improvement)
- Compassionate Care Leave (Improvement)
- Leave for Union Business (Improvement)

*The provision for Unpaid Discretionary Leave was brought to a VTF General Meeting for consideration. **The VTF General Meeting voted to retain our current language on Unpaid Personal Leave** as it is a superior local provision.*

Extended Health Benefits Plan

The Memorandum of Agreement also provided for a Provincial Extended Health Benefits Plan proposal that is optional for locals to adopt. **Vancouver teachers voted to retain our current Extended Health Benefits Plan** as it is significantly superior.

CLASS SIZE/COMPOSITION UPDATE

At Long Last

The union has finally resolved the oversized classes from 2008 through to 2010. We have negotiated a total of 103 days of increased preparation time for teachers to be used this school year. Unfortunately, in 95% of the cases, the Board did not give this time because the classes were "inappropriate for student learning", but because *the administrators did not properly consult with teachers.*

Grievances for 2010-11 oversized classes remain outstanding, although we have agreed on more than 126 days of increased prep time for teachers due to technical violations related to a failure to consult in a timely manner. This results in a total of 230+ days of additional time for teachers to help them plan this year's classes. Very little of this was ordered by the arbitrator in each of the two years of over 1,000 oversize Vancouver classes that we forwarded to him. While this time is welcomed by teachers, the cost to the Board is insignificant compared to what it would cost to increase staffing to schools, in order to truly address class size and composition issues.

Bill 22 has now eliminated all regulations governing class composition. The impact of this legislation on the working conditions of teachers and the learning conditions of our students is already apparent.

JUSTICE, NOT CHARITY

A discussion of inner city schools and creeping corporatization

Saturday, November 3, 2012

9:00AM to 4:00PM

Peretz Centre

6184 Ash Street, Vancouver

(one block west of Cambie at 45th Avenue)

Guest speakers include Heather-Jane Robertson, Christine Stewart, Adrienne Montani, and Gwen Giesbrecht.

\$20 suggested donation-pay what you can.

Lunch is provided. Register online:

<http://copevancouver2012education.conference.eventbrite.ca/>

or by telephone: 604-255-0400.

Produced by the COPE Education Committee

Application Process: Change of Salary Category for Teachers

Teachers are reminded that Human Resources printed and distributed copies of the document, *Information Regarding Teacher Salary*, including Application for Change of Category for Teachers” to all school sites (also available at www.vsb.bc.ca/myvsb portal under Staff). Teachers are strongly advised to consult the document to gain an awareness of the procedure in place and the application form required to get retroactive pay when they apply for a new TQS card for their salary change. All applicants must apply through TQS, the Teacher Qualification Service. Go to the TQS website at www.tqs.bc.ca for further information or call TQS at 604-736-5484.

New BCTF postings process



There is a new procedure for advertising current and vacant BCTF committee positions. Positions will be posted, and teachers will receive an e-mail message when vacancies occur. Currently there are opportunities for members on the Bargaining Team, and for Peer Support Service Consultants. Please view <http://bctf.ca/opportunities/BCTFCommittees.aspx> for further information and details.



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

COME CELEBRATE THE
CONTRIBUTIONS TEACHERS MAKE
TO SOCIETY EACH AND EVERY
YEAR. KICK BACK, RELAX AND
JOIN US AT:



TOBY'S PUB AND GRILL
2733 COMMERCIAL DRIVE, 2ND FLOOR
WEDNESDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2012
4:00 – 6:00 PM

TASTY SNACKS • EXCITING DOOR PRIZES • GOOD COMPANY
NO HOST BAR



**PAUL BAE AT 5:00 PM WITH HIS TAKE ON
“THE JOY OF TEACHING”**

Paul is a premier headlining comedian (and VSTA teacher) who has appeared in Montreal's *Just For Laughs* and is a regular on the hit CBC Radio and TV series, *The Debaters*.

“88 and Out” – Save up to \$800 Per Year

BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan regulations provide for a member who has reached age 64, or a total of age plus contributory service of 88, to withdraw from the long term portion of the plan. You may wish to continue the plan, however, if your accumulated sick leave and BCTF Short Term SIP (120 days) will not protect your salary until you reach the age of 65 or factor 90. Members who withdraw from the Long Term portion of the plan will still receive the 2% SIP allowance. Call the Income Security Division at the BCTF at 604-871-2283 or VSTA for more information.



Vancouver secondary retirees, VSTA Retirees' Dinner, Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, June 19, 2012