

Candidates for the 2013-2014 VSTA Executive Committee

<i>President</i>	Debbie Pawluk, VSTA
<i>1st Vice-President</i>	Sylvia Metzner, VSTA
<i>2nd Vice-President</i>	Rory Brown, Vancouver Technical
<i>Treasurer</i>	Terry Stanway, Vancouver Technical
<i>Local Representative (3 positions)</i>	Trish Mugford, Magee
	Debbie Pawluk, VSTA
	Christine Stewart, Britannia
<i>Alternate</i>	Sylvia Metzner, VSTA
<i>Member-at-Large (8 positions)</i>	Darren Gock, Prince of Wales
	Dan Hale, Killarney
	Nancy Palejko, Prince of Wales
	John Silver, Killarney
<i>Health & Safety Chair</i>	Phil Lee, Vancouver Technical
<i>Professional Development Chair</i>	Mary Filleul, DLS
<i>Social & Eco-Justice Chair</i>	
<i>Technology Chair</i>	
<i>W/LC & Bargaining Chair</i>	
<i>Teacher on Call Representative</i>	Tobey Steeves, Magee

Statements from Candidates 2013-2014 VSTA Executive Committee

PRESIDENT

Debbie Pawluk, VSTA Office

Having served as the VSTA President since February, 2011, I am once again seeking your support to continue with the work of the collective. After much reflection (and several soul searching conversations with my husband), I would like to continue for one more year with the advocacy work that has defined much of my career as a teacher and an activist. The opportunity to represent and support my VSTA colleagues on a daily basis is a responsibility and an honour that I take most seriously, one that has been life defining.

The work of the President is both complex and nuanced, a daily balancing act that requires an understanding of labour relations and our contractual rights, in addition to organization, tenacity, patience, and of course, compassion. Reconciling and balancing the everyday demands and responsibilities of life in the union office with the larger political landscape (both at the district and provincial levels) is a constant challenge. Guided by my core belief that public education and the teaching profession must be actively defended, I continue to vociferously advocate for my colleagues, regardless of the specific issue or the audience. Member support, whether one-on-one or district wide, is my driving force, the catalyst that informs my work.

Complementing my personal and professional commitment is the experience that I have gained over the last 2½ years as President. The work of the President is diverse and has required me to become immersed in district policy and procedures in order to better serve our members. As in past years, much time has been spent in meetings with the employer as we renegotiated the MCM on post and fill, finalized the district calendar, further refined the process for layoff/recall, debated the budget, and generally strove to improve the working/learning conditions in this district.

As always, however, my number one priority and the most rewarding aspect of my work has been direct member to member contact. I am in the enviable position of witnessing on a daily basis the incredible work that is being done by my teacher colleagues, dedicated professionals who make a difference in the lives of Vancouver's children. Thank you for your support.

1st VICE-PRESIDENT

Sylvia Metzner, VSTA Office

Over the course of the past 20 years working as a teacher in Vancouver, I have come to deepen my connection with the union movement. My school level work, as well as my time as a Local Representative to the BCTF and Member at Large of the VSTA Executive has given me a solid grounding of experience to draw from in the role of Vice President. For the past three years I have worked hard to support the work of teachers in our district. The voice of teachers is fundamental to the ongoing debate on public education both at the level of our own district and at the provincial level. Ongoing advocacy is essential if we are to improve conditions in our classrooms. I also believe that we are best served when we stand together as part of the broader union movement. The collective strength of unions is essential to a strong and equitable society. I am proud of our collective record in fighting for the working conditions of teachers and the learning conditions of our students, and am prepared to continue this work as together we face the challenges of the coming year. I ask for your support as 1st Vice-President of the VSTA.

2nd VICE-PRESIDENT

Rory Brown, Vancouver Technical

Over the past eleven years, British Columbia teachers have seen their working conditions, professional autonomy, benefits, wage, and government regard for their work degrade or sit stagnant as two successive governments disassemble the public education system.

Teachers stand as the leaders against these assaults and the need for strong local and provincial associations is as important now as it has been at any time in the last decade.

In my work as a school-based union representative, I have learned how important it is to strike a balance between the day-to-day needs of members in their dealings with the employer, and the need for teachers to act as advocates for the health and equity of the public education system.

I have been in many roles in the local and provincial union organizations over the last fourteen years and believe that this experience has made me ready to serve my colleagues as a full-time table officer at the VSTA. I look forward to the challenge!

TREASURER

Terry Stanway, Vancouver Technical

I have been teaching in Vancouver at Vancouver Technical since 1992. Over this period, I have had several tenures on our Staff Committee and have chaired our school Technology and Finance Committees. I am currently Treasurer of the VSTA Executive Committee and Finance Committee. In the community, I am past-president of the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of British Columbia and currently ANHBC's treasurer. I am interested in how financial management impacts organizational structure and governance and look forward to continuing to work with the Executive Committee to address the challenges facing the VSTA and district.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE

Trish Mugford, Magee

Another year has passed and we continue to struggle against all odds to provide the kind of education we know our students deserve and we still give in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. We need change: underfunding must be addressed, respectful, meaningful bargaining must take place, teachers need their voices heard over the white noise of political rhetoric.

Debbie Pawluk, VSTA Office

See candidate statement for President.

Christine Stewart, Vancouver Technical

My traditional name is Galksi' Gibaykwhl Sook' – Wilps Ksim Xsaan (Christine Stewart), and I am from the Nisga'a Nation. It is an honour to put my name forward to be a Vancouver Secondary Teacher Local Representative. As Local Representative, I will continue to represent the diversity and needs of teacher members of the VSTA. As local leaders it is our job to engage with our members in local and provincial union work. Unity is what I bring to your EC. We need to keep strong and united in the upcoming year. I appreciate your support and if you have, any questions do not hesitate send an email at chris.stewartcanning@gmail.com.

Local Experience: VSTA (7) VSTA Staff Rep (1) and VSTA Co-chair Professional Development Rep (1), VSTA Gender Equity Rep (3). VTF member working on our Letter of Understanding: Employment Equity for Aboriginal Teachers (3).

Provincial Experience: BCTF Executive Committee 2009 to 2011 and 2011 to 2013, Member of Provincial Bargaining team 2011 to 2012. SURT trainer and presenter, Summer Institute trainer, BCTF AGM participant since 1998, BCTF Advisory Committee work, AEAC 2000-2004 (4), WLC/Bargaining 2008 to 2011 (1), Aboriginal Education Association PSA President (2008 to 2010), BCTF Summer Conference participant and BCTF Aboriginal Leadership since 1998, BCTF Staff PSID Aboriginal Education: 2004 to 2008.

Teaching: I have taught in both Secondary and Elementary, as an instructor for both at SFU and UBC Faculty of Education courses, and have worked as a research assistant.

ALTERNATE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE

Sylvia Metzner, VSTA

See candidate statement for 1st Vice-President.

MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Darren Gock, Prince of Wales

I am a genuine product of the Vancouver Public Education System. It was in 1984 that I started kindergarten at Walter Moberly Elementary. I completed my elementary years at Sir Richard McBride and graduated from Eric Hamber Secondary in 1996, I went on to a successful university career at both SFU and UBC. I returned to the VBE as a Physics/Computer Science teacher having worked at Killarney and Prince of Wales Secondary schools for the last eleven years.

At both schools, I have tried to fully immerse myself into their cultures. I believe it is through active participation that understanding and positive action can take place. I have been a member and chair of several committees as well as filling several school team positions through the years (in no particular order):

- Staff Rep
- Staff Committee Chair
- Professional Development Chair
- Staffing/Timetabling Chair
- Computer Technology Chair
- Finance Committee
- PAC Teacher Representative
- BCeSIS School-Based Trainer
- School Timetabler
- Coach
- Club Sponsor

Currently as Computer Technology Department Head, the bulk of my work has been integrating and supporting my colleagues with the use of educational technology in their teaching practice. Having completed my Masters in Education three years ago I would like to be able to broaden the scope of this teacher support. I have always had an interest in the induction practices for new (either to the profession, district, or school) teachers. I also find it intriguing to see how relationships and leadership roles develop both formally and informally amongst staff and administration within a school.

This year I was given the opportunity to fill a vacancy at the Member-At-Large position on the VSTA Executive. It has been a challenging yet enriching experience. Being part of the VSTA delegation at the BCTF AGM and a member of VTF Bargaining Team this year, I have learnt so much about how we as a union operate and how we support our members. I hope to be able to continue this important work right from the start of the 2013-2014 academic year.

Colleagues would say that I bring a sincere attitude, organized approach, and strong sense of professionalism to all that I do. I welcome the opportunity to offer my time and skills to all of my colleagues across the district as a Member-At-Large on the VSTA Executive.

Dan Hale, Killarney

I first became a Staff Rep in 1988, my second year of teaching in Vancouver. I have taught in several subject areas, worked on interview committees and stood as Working /Learning Rep and Health & Safety Committee Chair. I sponsored volleyball and the Environment Club, and I coached the swim team for several years. This year, I am Staff Rep for Killarney and Modern Languages Department Head.

Over the past few decades, I have seen working and learning conditions significantly degraded in important ways. Our Union is our best safeguard against further losses and our best hope for improvements. VSTA and the VTF are our united front to maintain and improve funding, salaries, benefits, employee rights, class size & composition, staffing, and working & learning conditions in our district. As Member-at-Large, I will support our Union as we work together to support our members and improve public education until my leave begins in January.

Nancy Palejko, *Prince of Wales*

I am a languages teacher at Prince of Wales Secondary. Currently my teaching load includes French, Spanish and teaching languages to the TREK students. I have been a VSTA staff representative at PW for the last few years.

As a Member-at-Large I hope to advocate for proper funding for public education. I imagine that it is not only at my school where valuable multi-disciplinary elective courses are having to be cut because there is not enough funding from the government to keep small classes open.

If I become a member of Executive I also hope to apprise myself of what is holding our membership back from becoming more involved with the union and work towards improving the situation. I welcome the opportunity to offer my time and skills to serving as a Member-at-Large for the VSTA.

John Silver, *Killarney*

I am currently teaching Technical Education at Killarney Secondary. I am also a Member-at-Large Representative on the VSTA Executive and have been an active Staff Rep at Killarney. This year, I was a delegate at the BCTF's AGM as well as representing the VSTA on the ELL Advisory Committee. In the coming year, I hope to advocate for public education as a teacher as well as a parent of children attending school in Vancouver. Through my work on Executive and within the community at Killarney, I have strived to listen to the concerns of my colleagues as well as helping to answer any questions brought forward. Next year, I hope that I can continue to dedicate myself to voicing the concerns of my peers on the Executive level.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Health & Safety Committee
endorsed candidate

Phil Lee, *Vancouver Technical*

Professional Development Committee
endorsed candidate

Mary Filleul, *District Learning Services*

Social & Eco-Justice Committee

Technology Committee

Working/Learning Conditions
& Bargaining Committee

TEACHER-ON-CALL REPRESENTATIVE

Tobey Steeves, *Magee*

I have been a teacher on call (TTOC) for the Vancouver school district since 2010, and I would be honored to serve as VSTA's Teacher on Call Rep. for 2013-2014. While teaching in Vancouver I have worked hard to develop and sustain connections with other educators across the province, and currently curate the most comprehensive list of B.C. educators on Twitter. In 2012 I was appointed to BCTF's International Solidarity Committee, and I also successfully defended my MA thesis – which focused on '21st-century learning' policy in B.C. I presented portions of this research in 2011 and 2012 at BCSSTA's annual conferences. Additionally, it was my tremendous privilege to act as a delegate for VSTA at the BCTF's 2013 AGM, where I made a concerted effort to listen and learn while striving to honestly represent the needs of my local. I believe that a few of the obstacles facing TTOCs that warrant careful attention include access to mentorship, mystifying hiring practices, and politicization. In particular, I feel that TTOCs would benefit from an expanded awareness of and appreciation for the work of their union. I am passionate about teaching, a fierce defender of public education, and feel I have a lot to offer my union in this role. Thank you for your consideration – and support.