



# TACKBOARD

## President's Message



Rory Brown (VT) and Debbie Pawluk ballot counting at the VSTA office

**WHILE THE B.C. LIBERALS' MULTI-PRONGED ATTACK** on public school teachers proceeds with unprecedented vehemence, the in-house table officers (with the support of the executive and staff reps) have been working diligently on behalf of our local membership as we move through one of the busiest times of the year. In addition to conducting another round of school visits, holding a VTF general meeting (April 16<sup>th</sup>) and organizing the district-wide vote on the Bill 22 Action Plan (April 17/18), we continue to provide direct member support on a daily basis. As is relatively typical for this time of the year, we are engaged in discussions specific to the VBE budget proposals for 2012/13 and the school calendar, as well as the spring post and fill process and the potential for teacher layoffs. Of course, we are also grappling with how best to proceed with the government's newly created Learning Improvement Fund (LIF) and Education Plan Supplement, provincial funding initiatives which are woefully inadequate when compared to the \$330 million per year that was illegally stripped from our Collective Agreement through Bills 27/28.

Although not as dire as last year's projection, the VBE's estimated operating budget shortfall for 2012/13 is \$4.68 million, significantly less than the \$14.1 million that was initially announced in June, 2011. Nonetheless, the Board of Trustees is faced yet again with the difficult task of finding "cost savings," of further paring down the bone. As a direct result of Bill 22, the elimination of a district-wide class size average at kindergarten and grades 1-3 means that class size limits normally placed on a district are no longer in place for these grades; consequently, the budget recommends a reduction of 19 FTE teachers. The VBE is also considering four options for next year's local school calendar, including the current model of 10 school closure days (for an expenditure savings of \$1.0 million annually). The options

were presented to Committee I on March 29<sup>th</sup>, but the final decision will not be made by the Board until April 30, the same date when the 2012/13 Preliminary Operating Budget will be approved. That the local school calendar may look different again next year exemplifies the instability created by this government's ongoing, chronic underfunding of public education.

Equally disturbing is the all too real possibility of teacher layoffs for 2012/13, the third year in a row! Approximately 280 teachers were notified of the potential for layoffs (based on a projected shortfall of \$8 million), many of whom attended the VSB's information session at Tupper Secondary on April 11<sup>th</sup>. While the number is significantly less than in previous years (800 in 2009/10 and 399 in 2010/11), it is nonetheless equally unpalatable and hugely disruptive. Given that the Superintendent's Report (October, 2011) itemized 1174 secondary classes that exceeded the class size/composition limits of Section 76 of the School Act, it is difficult to conceive of having even fewer classroom teachers next year.

Another topic I wish to address is Bill 22 and the BCTF Action Plan (approved by the AGM delegates in March). The plan, ratified by a decisive province-wide vote of 73%, engages members in a resistance strategy to oppose Bill 22. The details of the plan have been widely circulated and discussed amongst both the provincial and local membership; however, as a result of the recent LRB ruling on report cards, the original plan has been amended and can be viewed on the BCTF Members' Only Portal. There is no doubt that Bill 22 is a continuation of this government's decade long attack on teachers, students, and public education. In addition to imposing a two-year wage freeze, Bill 22 will strip more provisions and rights from our collective agreement in the areas of professional development and autonomy, seniority, and evaluation practices. Bill 22 will also eliminate the

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### VSTA Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, May 15, at 4:00 pm at the Tupper Auditorium (419 E. 24th.). Members will receive the financial report for 2011, vote to approve the association's operating budget for 2012-13, and elect the VSTA Executive Committee for 2012-13.

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!

## 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 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.) between from **7:30 AM - 6:00 PM** on the following days

- Posting Period 1** **Thursday, May 24**
- Posting Period 2** **Wednesday, May 30**
- Posting Period 3** **Wednesday, June 13**
- Posting Period 4** **Wednesday, June 20**

## Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 30 years old this April

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a set of principles guaranteeing rights to Canadian citizens, and in some cases, to everyone in Canada. As part of the Constitution Act, which is part of the Canada Act, it was signed into law on April 17, 1982. As millions today around the world are protesting for basic freedoms, Canadians marked 30 years with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a document which seeks to guarantee fundamental human rights, from speech, to religion, to association. The irony of it occurring on April 17<sup>th</sup>, coinciding with our vote on the Bill 22 Action Plan could not be more apparent. On April 13, 2012, the teachers of BC won a tremendous victory in the BC Supreme Court. In a landmark decision, Madame Justice Susan Griffin ruled that Bills 27 and 28, introduced in 2002 by then Minister of Education Christy Clark, were unconstitutional because they violated teachers' rights to freedom of association under Section 2 (d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A full year later teachers find themselves voting in response to Bill 22, a further piece of draconian legislation, this time introduced by Minister of Education George Abbott, which repeals and then reintroduces parts of the very same legislation that was ruled illegal. Check out the Charter Project, a celebration of the Charter at <http://charterproject.ca/>, at the same time as you weep at the loss of one of our fundamental rights.

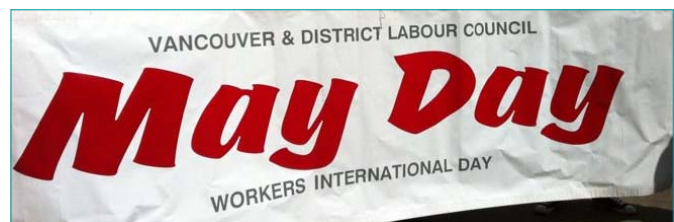
## School Union Team Elections

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
- 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)
- One (1) Rep to the VSTA Technology Committee (who will also represent the school on the VSTA Technology 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).
- One (1) Staff Rep for local election/political action contact
- One (1) Staff Rep for parent contact

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.



### Power to the 99%: May Day Celebration

Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> from 3:00-7:30PM

beginning at Vancouver Art Gallery.

Sponsored by VDLC, BCFED and Occupy Vancouver.

## An AGM to remember

This year's AGM was a unique experience for me, despite having attended a fair number over my 20 plus years of teaching. Perhaps it speaks to the severity of the threat we are under that this year's meeting was vociferous, contentious, raucous and yet at the same time highly focused. The main task looming over us was to develop a response to Bill 22 that did justice to the egregious nature and scope of the legislation and yet struck a compromise that pulled our diverse union membership together. After multiple sessions of debate an action plan was passed that has now been put to the membership through a province wide. In the urgency of that discussion it was almost possible to lose sight of the rest of the business of the meeting. One social justice issue that does come to mind is the fight against the Northern Gateway pipeline which was highlighted in a moving performance by Ta'Kaiya Blaney, an 11 year old member of the Coastal First Nations who sang her song "Shallow Waters" to draw attention to the role of aboriginal peoples in this fight. On a truly positive note, our former BCTF President David Chudnovsky was presented with the G.A. Fergusson Memorial Award to honour the broad scope of work he has accomplished in support of Public Education. *Sylvia Metzner, VSTA*

### The results of the BCTF elections are as follows:

- Susan Lambert was elected president
- Jim Iker was elected first vice-president
- Glen Hansman was elected second vice-president
- Mike Ball, Joanna Larson, Denise Moffat and Wendy Turner were elected as new Members at Large, while David Komljenovic, Teri Mooring, Paul Steer and Christine Stewart will be continuing as Members at Large on the Executive Committee.



## BCTF AGM Experience



*Liliane de Oliveira teaches at Killarney Secondary*

After having taught in Vancouver for eight years, and seeing what our profession has endured, I decided that this was the year to let my name stand to be a delegate at the annual BCTF AGM. Let me tell you, this was definitely the year to attend! I cannot imagine how future years would compare to being a first-time delegate during bargaining and job action. During those four days it was amazing to be surrounded by passionate educators contributing their thoughts and suggestions to make a difference in BC students' education.

Day one was exciting and intimidating all at the same time. I don't think I was quite prepared for the grandeur of this event. Watching the Chairs manage the floor where 700 delegates interacted and shared their views was impressive. The 12-hour long days were exhausting, but exciting. The debates were passionate and the dialogues stimulating. It was amazing to see such democracy in action.

The AGM reignited a passion inside me. It reminded me how proud I am to be a teacher, and how if we stand strong in solidarity we can make a difference.



### A New Site

The BCTF has created a new site within the members MyBCTF portal called **Your Union Cares for You**. This site gives you access to six areas of member services such as pensions, health and safety, and WCB advocacy. Once in the member portal, locate Services and Resources on the left column. Underneath you will find the heading Your Union Cares for You: [bctf.ca/myBCTF/YourUnionCares](http://bctf.ca/myBCTF/YourUnionCares).



**Always happy to hear from you!**

**Debbie, Sylvia, Shaun, Kim & Mo**

## Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP)

All teachers planning to retire this year must notify the board in writing by 2012 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 ERIP, 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 2012 May 31** for a retirement date of 2012 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	4PC	5PB	5PA	6M	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%

## Teacher's Council Election Results

The elections for the 5 elected members of the 15 member BC Teachers' Council have been completed. Ballots were counted for all five geographical zones on March 21 and 22, 2012. The final results are:

<b>Fraser:</b>	Laurence Greeff
<b>Interior:</b>	Bruce Cummings
<b>Northern:</b>	Avi Gupta
<b>Vancouver Coastal:</b>	John Hall
<b>Vancouver Island:</b>	Fred Robertson

The new Teachers' Council has yet to meet.

## 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](http://www.vstaweb.ca). To be eligible, the 2011-2012 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 7, 2012.



## "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.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, *cont'd from cover*

meagre class size/composition and workload protections found in Bill 33 and end consultations with teachers. By introducing Bill 22 the Liberals have chosen to ignore the decision of the BC Supreme Court which ruled that the contract-stripping legislation of 2002 was illegal and invalid. Most significantly, Bill 22 robs teachers of our Constitutional right to free collective bargaining and imposes a sham mediation process that requires teachers, in effect, to be complicit in the stripping of our collective agreement. The Action Plan empowers teachers to stand united as we work to protect the future of public education in this province.

It is imperative that teachers maintain solidarity while continuing to put pressure on the government to withdraw Bill 22. No matter how you voted on the Action Plan, please respect the democratic majority and support the collective decision. I encourage all VSTA members to stay united, stay strong, and stay the course as we continue to work through this challenging time together. Even more importantly, please stay well.

*Debbie*