

## President's Message

*"If you do not sow in the spring you will not reap in the autumn." (Irish Proverb)*



Debbie and David Eby, NDP candidate for Vancouver-Point Grey, at BCTF AGM

**WITH THE RETURN OF SPRING** comes another seasonal rite: the VBE budget setting process for the upcoming school year. And, as has been the case for most of the last decade, the VSB is once again projecting an operating budget shortfall, this year \$7.91 million. The VSTA's official response to the preliminary budget took place at the Committee III/V meeting on April 16, complete with a detailed set of priorities and recommendations. Although we

acknowledged that cuts are never easy to make, regardless of where they fall, the VSTA implored the trustees to minimize and/or eliminate the cuts to K-12 classrooms, to restore the district's working/learning conditions so as to ensure "success for all students." Of particular concern is the proposed wholesale elimination of the peer to peer positions, a program that provides invaluable confidential support to teachers. Since its inception in 2008-09, the program has proven to be highly successful and has provided direct service to hundreds of teachers. Of further concern is the VSB's proposal to implement a Wellness and Attendance Support Program under the guise of "creating a healthy and rewarding work environment." There is no doubt that the purpose of the program is to monitor employee attendance as a cost-saving measure, pure and simple. It is my hope that many of the Board's more egregious proposals will be "off the table" by the time the final budget is approved on April 29.

The budget also proposes eliminating 8.42 FTE in enrolling teachers, a reduction that is (mis)characterized by the employer as having a "minimal" impact on schools. Equally disturbing is the Board's decision to layoff teachers yet again this year; consequently, another 365 teachers have received a *Potential for Layoff* notice. For the fourth year in a row, VTF members are facing an uncertain future as they grapple with professional and financial insecurity despite the fact that as of October 1, 2012, there were over 2800 secondary classes in violation of the class size/composition language that existed in 2002. The

final number for layoffs will be confirmed at the end of the month.

Bargaining is well underway at both the provincial and local levels, although the provincial table has adjourned until after the May 14 election. Information specific to progress at the provincial table is available on the Members' Only Portal on the BCTF website. The VTF bargaining team (comprised of 4 VESTA and 3 VSTA members) is meeting with the employer on a weekly basis, albeit progress to date has been slow. Regular bulletins are being sent to the schools and are posted on the VSTA website.

The provincial election will take place on May 14, and I encourage each of you to cast your ballot and to do your part in electing a pro-education government. The actions of the BC Liberals on teachers and public education over the past twelve years have resulted in the stripping of our collective agreement (deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada), the virtual elimination of our right to strike, a proliferation of standardized exams, the abolishing of the elected College of Teachers, and hundreds of millions of dollars being cut from the public education budget.

see *PRESIDENT'S REPORT*, back page

### VSTA Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

4pm at Tupper Auditorium

Members will receive the financial report for 2012, vote to approve the Association's operating budget for 2013-14, and elect the VSTA Executive Committee for 2013-14.

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!

#### Please Note:

*The VSTA audited financial statements for the year ending July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012, are available at <http://vsta.ca/publications/vsta-annual-general-meeting-2013/>. They will also be part of the full package sent to all schools prior to the AGM.*

# Post and Fill

## New Online Application Process

(oam.vsb.bc.ca)

With the new online application process, which allows the opportunity for employees to create an online profile and apply for postings electronically, **there will be no Central Drop Off**. No paper-based applications will be accepted at any site.

To support employees through the new process, the computer lab (Room 100) at the Education Centre will be available with HR staff every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3:30 to 6:00 pm during each STP Posting Period.

<b>MAY 21—27</b>	<b>Posting Period 1:</b> Postings for all levels—elementary, secondary and district continuing postings including French Immersion, Consultants and Mentors.
<i>beginning</i> <b>MAY 28</b>	For Posting Period 1: Interviews and offers for <u>continuing positions only</u> .
<b>JUNE 11—17</b>	<b>Posting Period 2:</b> Continuing positions (elementary, secondary and district)
<i>beginning</i> <b>JUNE 18</b>	For Posting Period 2: Interviews and offers for <u>continuing positions only</u> . No temporary positions are included in this period.
<b>JUNE 18—24</b>	<b>Posting Period 3:</b> Continuing and Temporary positions (elementary, secondary and district)
<i>beginning</i> <b>JUNE 25</b>	For Posting Period 3: Interviews and offers for <u>continuing positions only</u> . Interviews and offers for temporary positions may only proceed upon approval from HR.

## Factor 90 or 65 yrs of age? Don't Wait



**You can save the long-term fee (approx. 1.2%) from the date you reach age 64 or Factor '88'.**

Members are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the Salary Indemnity Plan once they hit Factor 90 (age plus cumulative service) or age 65. As the BCTF does not have access to your personal pension information, it is up to you to apply to withdraw from LTD.

### How and when to apply

A member who has attained age 64, or has reached factor '88' or is in receipt of a retirement pension under a registered pension plan, may **voluntarily** withdraw from the long-term portion of the Salary Indemnity Plan. In making application for withdrawal, you should ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave which, when combined with 120 days of benefit from SIP short-term, will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach factor "90" or the end of the month you attain age 65, whichever comes first.

Applications are available online at: [bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SalaryBenefits/SIP/LT-withdrawalForm.pdf](http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SalaryBenefits/SIP/LT-withdrawalForm.pdf) or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.

## Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP)

All teachers planning to retire this year must notify the board in writing by 2013 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 any further questions.

### To be eligible, an employee must:

- be on a continuing appointment
- be 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 (from September 2008), 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 2013 May 31 for a retirement date of 2013 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%

# Let's make PUBLIC EDUCATION an Election Issue

There are many arguments that can be made around government education funding decisions over the past 12 years. We can review that BC has the worst student-educator ratio in Canada or that per student funding has fallen below the National average. Or we can talk about the amount of money that has been cut out of Public Education funding since 2002 (\$3 Billion) or the number of teaching jobs lost over the same 12 year period (3,500). In Vancouver, we can point to the huge number of large classes and the complexity of learning needs within them. But when you speak with teachers the issue boils down to the work they do every day in the classroom. Teachers take great pride in the job they do every day. What they ask for are the tools they need to do a job well; the material, technological and staffing resources to support student learning and the time to meet the unique needs of each individual student in their class. And most of all, they ask for the respect that teachers deserve.

We all know the issues. The question is what can we do about it? We can marshal our resources to effect change. This May each of us has the opportunity to make a difference by exercising our right to vote. Here are three things you can do to change the course of public education in BC.

## Number 1 - Vote

Check to see if you are on the voters list. By now you should have received a letter from Elections BC. If not, you can verify that you are on the voters list at [elections.bc.ca](https://eregister.electionsbc.gov.bc.ca/OVR/RegistrationActivity.aspx) or for a direct link to registration go to <https://eregister.electionsbc.gov.bc.ca/OVR/RegistrationActivity.aspx>

**Vote in the Advance Polls** – Make sure you don't forget to vote and free yourself up to support a campaign or help others to vote.

 **Advance Voting: May 8, 9, 10, 11—8am to 8pm**

**Vote on Election Day** – Check out your local polling station in advance and make time to vote.

 **General Voting Day: Tuesday, May 14—8am to 8pm**

## Number 2 - Encourage others to vote

A good voter turnout is always a win for democracy.

- Get students engaged – Many schools have signed up for Student Vote. Statistically, individuals who vote at a young age are more likely to vote in future elections. We need to help youth develop the habit of voting.
- Take 5 to the polls – Bring at least 5 others; family, colleagues or neighbours, to the polls with you.



## Number 3 - Engage others on the issue of public education

Polling regularly shows that when it comes to education the public respects the voice of their children's teachers. We need to make use of our greatest asset; ourselves.

- Have that conversation at the dinner table, the soccer pitch or at your book club. Reach out to those you come into contact with every day.
- Share information and insight on social media. Reach out to your broader communities. We all have a wealth of social connections that can be engaged.
- Get involved in the campaign of your local candidate. Many of the ridings were won by close margins in the last election. The total voting difference province wide last election was only 3500 votes. You can make a difference in the outcome.

**After 12 years of underfunding and legislative assaults we need to take action at the ballot box.**

## Bereavement Leave Retroactivity

Last year bargaining at the provincial table led to several new or improved articles in our Collective Agreement. These changes were ratified by the VTF in September, 2012. Bereavement Leave in the event of a death of an employee's immediate family member was lengthened from 3 days to 5 days, with two more days for travel if necessary. In January, the BCTF and BCPSEA determined that this Leave is retroactive to the beginning of the contract, July 1, 2011.

The Union believes that teachers, who accessed bereavement leave last year, should be offered the chance to ask for the additional two days, providing their personal circumstances warrant more time for the leave. If you match these criteria, please contact Shaun van der Hoop at the VSTA office.



## BCTF Annual General Meeting

The BCTF AGM is always an intense experience, packed with inspiring guest speakers, informative reports and difficult decision making. This year was no exception but of particular note were two speakers. The first was Candy Palmater, a comedian and member of the Mi'kmaq Nation who gave a deeply moving and at the same time humorous account of her struggles to make a place for herself in Canadian society. She credited teachers and the support of her family in helping her to see herself in a positive light despite the challenges she faces as a large, aboriginal, gay woman. The second was Rick Moore, father of Jeffery Moore; the young man from North Vancouver whose learning needs were the subject of a recent Supreme Court of BC decision regarding the rights of students with severe learning disabilities. Mr. Moore reminded us all that equitable access to education is a fundamental right. Over the course of the last two sessions we also elected our BCTF Executive for the coming year. Elected as Table Officers were Jim Iker of Burns Lake as President, Glen Hansman of VESTA as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President and Teri Mooring of Quesnel as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Susan Lambert will continue as past president for one year. David Komljenovic, Gail Chaddock-Costello, Janine Fraser, Teresa Grandinetti and Paul Steer were elected as Members at Large joining Mike Ball and Joanna Larsen who are continuing on the Executive.



## My first AGM



Wow! What an experience. As a first time delegate to the AGM, I was trying to take it all in. My senses became alive as I stepped off the

escalator. The lobby was abuzz with activity. Teachers from various locals were united and reunited sharing joys and tribulations about their teaching. But what we were all excited about was advocacy on behalf of our colleagues. This was accomplished through a fair process where policies and procedures define who we are: Professionals.

The debates were intense, passionate, and emotional, which confirmed my belief that teachers rise to the challenge to fight for public education and working and learning conditions. I was amazed how well the event was organized, orchestrated, and executed by various BCTF specialists who were just as passionate about what teachers do. Together, we are the BCTF! I encourage all teachers to be a delegate at least once in their career.

*Katie Leung teaches at David Thompson Secondary*

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT, from cover page**

In closing, teachers are further encouraged to attend the VSTA's AGM on May 15. In addition to approving the 2013-14 budget and electing the VSTA Table Officers and Executive for next year, we will have a special presentation by Joanna Larson, a member of the BCTF Executive. Please mark your calendars and plan to partake in the meeting and the great "social" afterwards. If all goes well, you may win a coveted door prize and on the same day, celebrate the election of a new pro-education government!

Take care,  
**Debbie**

## VSTA Scholarships

Application forms for VSTA scholarships are available from the VSTA office, Staff Reps at school sites, and on the VSTA website (vsta.ca). To be eligible, the 2012-13 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 3, 2013.**



## MAY DAY MARCH

**Wednesday, May 1st**

**Down Commercial Drive  
from Clark Park to Grandview Park  
Begins at 5:30 pm**



*Sponsored by Vancouver and District Labour Council*