

President's Message



Debbie and Jack McDermott (BCTF),
Truth & Reconciliation Week

ALONG WITH THE PASSAGE OF SUMMER (sigh...) comes the challenge of a new school year, one that is likely to test our collective strength yet again as we continue to bargain for improvements to class size/composition, salary, and preparation time. Regardless of the structure or framework of bargaining, it is essential that the Liberal

government address the legacy of the last decade of chronic underfunding of public education by bringing adequate resources to the table. Minister Fassbender's proposed 10-year "deal" (as a solution to labour peace) is a guaranteed failure without a government commitment to properly fund public education and to bargain a negotiated solution. Provincial bargaining is anticipated to recommence in October and updates will be provided to members as they develop.

Both the government and the BCTF agreed to postpone provincial bargaining until October in order to focus on our return to the Supreme Court of BC. If you recall, through its challenge to Bills 27/28, the BCTF won the right (April 13, 2011) to bargain hours of work and class size, composition, staffing ratios, and caseloads; however, the implementation of these rights was delayed a year by Justice Griffin (the original trial judge). In addition to our "repercussions" case, the Federation also mounted a challenge to the constitutionality of Bill 22. Based on the recommendation of Justice Griffin (who is hearing both cases) and the BCTF's legal team, both applications are being heard at the same time and a full 19 court days were set aside in September to hear this significant constitutional case. Again, the local office will immediately apprise members of the outcome(s) of the case once we receive the information.

The month of September also saw the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's week of events in Vancouver. Citizens from across the city, province, and country came together to hear stories from residential school survivors and to participate in the healing process through a variety of activities, including the culminating event: the Walk for Reconciliation. Through the simple act of gathering, sharing,

and walking, thousands upon thousands of individuals braved the rain and wind on a cold and blustery Sunday morning to jointly commit to creating a new way of moving forward in our relationships with each other, to respecting each other for the unique gifts we bring. I very much hope that you found the opportunity to partake in this life transforming event, both for the survivors and for all of those who gathered to offer support and hope. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage each and every one of you to further familiarize yourself with the VSB's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA), a document that marks the district's unwavering commitment to enhancing Aboriginal student success and working relationships. The AEEA was formally signed in June, 2009, by the VSB, Musqueam Indian Band, Metis Nation BC, Urban Aboriginal community and the Ministry of Education.

In closing, I wish you great success for the upcoming school year, despite the many challenges that will undoubtedly develop. Please take the time to stay informed and if possible, increase your involvement with your school team and the local office. Council meetings are held once a month and ALL members are welcome to attend, contribute to the discussion/debate, and ask questions. I look forward to meeting many of you throughout the year! Lastly, October 5 is *World Teachers' Day*, a time to reflect on the reasons why you chose education as a career path. It is my firm belief that there is no more honourable profession than teaching and that quality public education is the great equalizer in a democratic society. Many thanks for what you do each and every day for the children in Vancouver.

Take care,

Debbie



Update Your Information

Change of name, address, telephone, email?

Remember to inform the VSTA (kim@vsta.ca) **AND** the BCTF (memberrecords@bctf.ca).

Sick Leave: Use and Abuse

The close proximity to hundreds of children and adults in conjunction with the daily stress of our jobs makes teaching, most undoubtedly, one of the occupations most prone to employee illness. Consequently, that is why we have our sick leave benefit and why teachers should never shy away from using their sick leave or ever come to work when they are not well.

The misuse of sick leave, however, is considered a serious offense in the eyes of the Board. Simply put, from the employer's perspective, fraudulent use of sick leave constitutes both theft of time and a breach of trust on the teacher's behalf. Teachers who take personal time off and claim it as an illness can expect to be disciplined with a deduction of pay for the day(s) off and an **additional suspension without pay equal to or greater than the time claimed as ill**. Additionally, such a discipline is also reported to the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education which can mete out further discipline.

Teachers wishing to take a *short term personal leave of absence* must apply in writing to Human Resources. Such leave is without pay and is limited to up to ten (10) days per year (at least five (5) of the days must be taken sequentially). Such leaves will normally not be attached to a school break unless unusual circumstances prevail (Article G.26.a.).

Please contact the VSTA office if you have any additional questions about how to apply for a short term leave of absence.

Provincial Specialist Associations



An on-line membership system for PSAs is now available; making it easy to join or renew your membership.

<https://bctf.ca/psa/join.aspx>

Now is a good time to join a specialist association, or renew your involvement.

Many PSAs will be holding conferences this October 25th.



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.

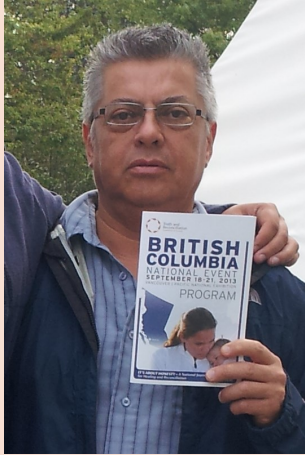
Applications are available online at:

bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SalaryBenefits/SIP/LT-withdrawalForm.pdf or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921.



Vancouver secondary retirees, VSTA Retirees' Dinner, Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, June 18, 2013

Truth and Reconciliation



I GUESS THE MOST POSITIVE ASPECT OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION EVENTS at the PNE and across the country is that it is actually happening and that it is involving the young people of Canada. My family's own educational history did not include the residential school experience because we are Métis and did not fall under the Indian Act. My mother, who loved learning, managed to make it to grade 5 before she had to quit school. As she put it, "the people of the town made it clear that they did not want half breed people attending their school." It is because of my mother's experiences that most of her children completed high school and that four of us are university graduates.

As I listened intently to the survivor stories and talked to a few elders, I realized how fortunate I was to complete grade 12 without really being subjected to the racism that they experienced. I especially enjoyed listening to the panel of high school students talking about how they responded to the stories of residential school and their suggestions for moving forward. The idea of moving forward must be central to any progress that the experience of residential schools has taught us. Guilt and sorrow will not undo the terrible

experiences that these people have suffered. At the end of the day we must continue the dialogue by not continuing to look at the past but by seeking redemption in the future. That is why I found it so encouraging to see thousands of high school children from across BC bearing witness to the proceedings. It is these earnest and non-judgemental young people who will continue to build a society where everyone, regardless of their race or religion, can be recipients of a quality education.

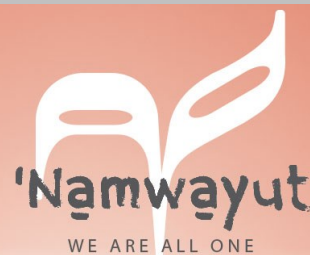
I appreciated the opportunity to attend the event myself, beyond the student focussed day. It gave me time for more listening, witnessing, and quiet reflection.

Frank Aubichon teaches at Britannia

A new way forward.

This week's Truth and Reconciliation Hearings culminated in a march in downtown Vancouver on Sunday, September 22, 2013. Thousands of people gathered in the sometimes pouring rain to hear inspirational words from a variety of

speakers including Chief Shaun Atleo, the Commissioners Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild and the keynote address given by Bernice King, daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. King spoke passionately about the need for Canadians to recognize the momentous opportunity we have to move forward and encouraged us "not to give up on the process". She reminded the crowd gathered there that "every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle."



During this past week some of you were able to take your classes to the event at the PNE or to attend yourselves and bear witness. Others of you live streamed the testimony of survivors for your classes. As was made clear on Sunday, the Truth and Reconciliation Hearings mark a turning point, an opportunity to provide healing for first nations and all Canadians alike. A full report from the Canada-wide Truth and Reconciliation Hearings will be compiled following the Edmonton Hearings in March 2014.

All Nations Canoe Gathering (False Creek)

FALL SCHOOL UNION REP TRAINING

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

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 21.**



Some of our newest colleagues at the New Teacher Induction held Tuesday, September 24, 2013.

Application Process: Change of Salary Category for Teachers

Teachers are reminded that Human Resources has distributed copies of the document, *Information Regarding Teacher Salary*, including Application for Change of Category for Teachers" to all school sites (also available as a pdf at www.vsb.bc.ca myvsb portal under staffroom/jobpostings). 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-

Salary Indemnity Fund Important Reminder



Continuing members of the VSTA SIF are reminded to submit their fee for the 2013-2014 school year **no later than October 31st.**

New applicants for membership to the VSTA

SIF must be made within *two months* of continuing appointment with the VBE in order for membership during the current year. In addition, new VSTA members *age 30 or older* may join the SIF during the *first year* of VSTA membership. Otherwise, the Age Clause Limit will bar them from future membership. If a SIF member "drops out" of the SIF after his/her 30th birthday, he/she *cannot rejoin* the fund.

If you have been an SIF member and are currently on the recall list, please contact the VSTA office for your options.

Lockouts in your own backyard!



IKEA – 130+ days

Over 300 workers (interior designers, kitchen planners, and machine operators, full and part-time workers), members of Teamsters Local 213, have been locked out by IKEA Canada at the Richmond location since May 20, 2013. The employer wants a tiered wage system, a restriction of benefits and contracting out. The workers have

remained strong and are determined to continue the fight against this wealthy employer's attempts to ratchet down wages and benefits.

North Shore Winter Club – 145+ days!

CUPE 389 members at the North Shore Winter Club have been locked out by management at the club since May 3, 2013. The lockout affects 16 CUPE 389 members: building service workers, maintenance workers, iceman and stationary equipment operators ensuring health and safety at the family recreation centre. Management continues to pursue concessionary demands and disregard for respectful bargaining processes.

We urge all teachers to respond with solidarity for our locked out brothers and sisters. Show support on the picket line or consider where you choose to spend your union wage dollars.



Debbie, Sylvia, Kim and Mo welcome Rory to the VSTA office team