

President's Message



Patti Bacchus & Debbie Pawluk
VISION Back to School Barbeque

WHILE SCHOOL START-UP was undeniably anything but typical, VSTA members nevertheless report a general sense of relief at simply being back in their classrooms doing what they love: teaching children! And, although many of our workaday world routines have more or less fallen back into place, members have nonetheless returned

with an enhanced understanding of their role as public education advocates. In pushing back the government's neo-Liberal agenda, teachers across this province worked collectively to raise public awareness about several of our key issues: chronic underfunding, class size and composition, specialist teachers, and adequate supports for our most vulnerable students, to name just a few. The challenge now is for all of us to make a personal commitment to carry on that important work and to not revert to relative silence. To quote Jim Iker, "We need to harness that new understanding, nourish it, and grow our network of allies who want to see BC's education system improved and properly funded." I strongly encourage you to stay informed and to actively seek to engage others, whether through social media, the local newspaper, conversations with parents and community members, or direct political action. Let's work together. Let's not squander the opportunity at hand. Let's continue to raise the level of public awareness that we fought so hard to earn through our prolonged (and financially challenging) job action.

One thing we can all do is vote in the upcoming municipal election on November 15. Given the current challenges (and ensuing frustrations) confronting the public education system, *there has never been a more important time* than now to vote for strong, progressive trustees. There is no doubt that teachers in Vancouver have been extremely fortunate (when compared to significant numbers of their provincial colleagues) to have Patti Bacchus and the other Vision trustees at the helm, but we cannot assume that the present-day status quo will dominate at the polling stations. As we unfortunately learned from the last provincial election, there is no place for complacency or apathy when it comes to predicting election results. Mass electoral support for worthy incumbent trustees can never be assumed. Whether a resident of Vancouver or another municipality, it is critical that all teachers do their homework and determine which candidates are vocal advocates for public education. Imagine a province where

every trustee championed public education just like Patti Bacchus does? Imagine the possibility if every school district had trustees who were willing to stand up for what is right (and necessary)? Imagine the improvements that might result from having supportive trustees consistently challenging the government's current (inadequate) funding model?

In addition to casting your own ballot, members are strongly encouraged to simply *get out the vote*. Consider working in a campaign office, participating in a phone bank, putting a sign on your lawn and/or in your window, sharing your message through twitter/social media, and/or bringing one or more friends with you to the polling station. Another suggestion is that you vote in the advance poll, thereby freeing up your time on November 15 to work for your trustee(s) of choice. My message is a straightforward one. What you do is not important. What is critical, however, is that *you do something*, even if it is as basic as casting your ballot! While we cannot reverse the last provincial election results (sigh....), we can and must play a major role in determining the outcome of the upcoming municipal election. By working collectively, we can ensure that strong, vocal proponents of public education are elected as school board trustees for the next 4 years.

There are, of course, a myriad of other issues facing VSTA members each and every day as we work to restore some sense of normalcy, whatever that may be! Like classroom teachers, those of us in the office have also encountered numerous road-bumps as we navigate the early stages of the 2014-15 school year. As always, we nonetheless encourage you to stay in touch. Please feel free to contact us when necessary, attend local meetings and social events, and participate in your school union team. Maintaining and defending a dynamic public education system requires each and every one of us to actively participate in one way or another. Many thanks and most importantly, please vote in the upcoming municipal election.

Take care, *Debbie*



VTF GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

4pm at Tupper Auditorium

Agenda: RATIFICATION OF LOCAL LANGUAGE

Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

Hello to all the teachers I know,

As the first week of a tardy school year winds down I'd just like to pass on my extreme gratitude to all the teachers in this province that made great sacrifices in the last weeks standing up for public education in BC. In a more sane society it would be all the parents, past, present and future, who would rally and insist the current government recognize their obligation to properly fund our public education system. Unfortunately, that seems not to be the case and it was left to the teachers to shoulder the burden of protest relatively unassisted.

I know the outcome for the teachers was far less than what you had hoped for. I would not fault you for thinking your prolonged job action was a waste of time and money. However, I saw glimmers of hope for the future breaking through the apathetic armour of public perception.

I saw conversations starting in the mainstream media and on the streets that I had not seen or heard for some time. Conversations about thirteen years of corporate and personal income tax cuts that have bankrupted the province. Conversations about changing the term "tax payer" back to "citizen". Conversations about demanding that the government recognize its role as a provider of services and not just a manager of money. And certainly conversations about how public education in BC has been systematically and deliberately starved by thirteen years of BC Liberal policy.

I am optimistic that your job action of the last months might have finally halted the gradual erosion of public education funding in BC. I believe public opinion is on your side and I believe the government's case going into their appeal of the Supreme Court ruling on Bills 28 and 22 has never been weaker.

Thanks again for all your hard work, please feel free to pass this on to any of your colleagues.

Anonymous Parent

Thank You Teachers



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 604-736-5484.



Raymond Moy, Greg Chan-Henry and Kelsey Bemister (Killarney)
School Union Rep Training, 2014-Oct-28

Educational Leave

Continuing contract teachers with the VBE are eligible for a variety of educational leaves (G.9.):

Teachers with a continuing contract for at least five (5) consecutive school years immediately preceding the date of requested leave may apply for a paid (60% of annual salary and allowances) education leave of one (1) year. Teachers applying for an education leave of one school year must apply in writing to the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources on or before December 15 for a leave commencing in September 2015.

- Teachers with a continuing contract of not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the requested leave may apply for a paid (60% of annual salary and allowances) education leave of less than one (1) school year, but longer than ten (10) school days. Teachers must apply in writing to the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources at least three (3) months prior to the commencement of the leave.

- Teachers with a continuing contract of not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the requested leave may apply for a paid (100% of annual salary and allowances) education leave for ten (10) school days or less. Teachers must apply in writing to the Associate-Superintendent-Human Resources at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the commencement of the leave.

Application forms are available from the VBE.



Leanne Hagglund, Tobey Steeves, Sylvia Metzner and Phil Lee —
VSTA Delegates to the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

– ELECTION 2014 –

Looking back to inform our moving forward...

During the past three years we have been fortunate enough to have a majority of progressive trustees on the Vancouver School Board. Without the support of a strong and supportive Board the nightmare of the last round of bargaining (if you can call it that) could have been much worse. Consider districts which mindlessly submit balanced budgets: slashing programs, reducing services, cutting support for vulnerable students in order to adhere to the “affordability zone” dictated by the province. Consider districts who did not pay teachers for the full eight days worked in September. Consider districts which used LIF to purchase iPads, hire additional support staff and pay for Pro-D.

For the past three years we have had a Board that listens to stakeholder groups, advocates vociferously for adequate education funding, submits a restoration budget as well as a balanced one, works hard to maintain services with dwindling

resources and supports the VTF’s position that every cent of LIF is used to put teachers in front of students.



We must cast our ballots for trustees who will not make Sophie’s choice as Crawford Kilian (contributing editor of the Tyee and former North Van trustee) puts it: “Those who campaign for a trustee’s seat next November 15th have one positive option: to use that seat to speak out on behalf of their students and their communities. If nothing else, they will represent their voters and remind their provincial master that today’s students are the heirs of tomorrow’s British Columbia, the final judges of the government that educated them. Trustees from Pauline Weinstein (fired in 1985) to Patti Bacchus (still fighting in 2014) have been willing to put their jobs on the line. More should follow them.” It is up to us to choose champions of public education. We expect no less of ourselves.

Trish Mugford teaches at Magee Secondary



VANCOUVER VOTES

ADVANCE VOTING:

Advance voting will take place over 8 days (November 4-12, excluding November 11) at eight locations in the city from 8am to 8pm.

- Vancouver City Hall
- Kerrisdale Community Centre
- Killarney Community Centre
- Kitsilano Community Centre
- Roundhouse Community Centre
- Sunset Community Centre
- Thunderbird Community Centre
- West End Community Centre

ELECTION DAY: Saturday, November 15

Eligible voters can vote at any of 120 voting locations across Vancouver. Follow this link <http://vancouver.ca/your-government/where-to-vote.aspx> to find the location most convenient for you.

For complete Information on voting and registering to vote in the Vancouver Municipal election go to <http://vancouver.ca/your-government/2014-municipal-election.aspx>.

Ed May Social Justice Grants

Individuals or groups of teachers may apply for Ed May grants of up to \$2000 for school-based social justice projects.

Application forms **MUST** be signed by your social justice contact and local president. Please make sure you include the evaluation page that incorporates an analysis of your project using the social justice lens.

Here is the abbreviated version of the application process:

- may be classroom or school-based, or may involve the community and school
- can be a current or new initiative
- funds may be used for release time, materials, publicity, communication, coalition building
- funds may not be used for travel, overseas projects, purchase of food or school hardware (computers, furniture, etc.)
- a budget must be included with the proposal.

For more information, go to <http://www.bctf.ca/SocialJusticeGrants.aspx>. **Revised application deadline to follow.**



Carole Birks, Adele Esnault-Oka, Bianca Henderson at SURT

Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP)

All teachers eligible to retire at the end of December may do so and receive the ERIP which is normally available only at the end of June. To receive the ERIP, all the normal rules will apply (see below) except that notice of retirement must be in by 2014 November 30 to begin retirement, with pension, on 2015 January 01. Contact the VSTA if you have further questions.

Rules of Eligibility:

- 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 January 2009, 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 December 31st in the year of retirement
- submit request to retire, in writing, **on or before 2014 November 30** for a retirement date of 2014 December 31.

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	\$19,419	\$19,419	\$25,604	\$26,698	100%
56	\$17,477	\$17,477	\$23,044	\$24,028	90%
57	\$15,535	\$15,535	\$20,483	\$21,358	80%
58	\$13,593	\$13,593	\$17,923	\$18,689	70%
59	\$11,651	\$11,651	\$15,362	\$16,019	60%
60	\$9,710	\$9,710	\$12,802	\$13,349	50%
61	\$7,768	\$7,768	\$10,242	\$10,679	40%
62	\$5,826	\$5,826	\$7,681	\$8,009	30%
63	\$3,884	\$3,884	\$5,121	\$5,340	20%
64	\$3,884	\$3,884	\$5,121	\$5,340	20%

Note: For more information on applying for the ERIP, please call the VSTA office or Human Resources.

Upcoming Pension Seminars

YOUR PENSION, YOUR FUTURE. This free seminar is aimed towards new- and mid-career plan members. Join us as we explain your pension benefits and help you understand how decisions you make today can impact your future pension income, no matter how far into the future it may be.

Seminar Dates and Locations

NOV 19 Vancouver Holiday Inn Vcr Ctr 6-7:30 PM

THINKING ABOUT RETIRING. If you are within 5 years of retirement, then this free seminar is for you. Thinking about retiring and starting your pension may raise many questions for you. We can help you with this period of change.

Pre-registration is required. Dates and location are subject to change. To view the most current schedule and register online, visit tpp.pensionsbc.ca.

Seminar Dates and Locations

NOV 5 Surrey Comfort Inn & Suites 6-8 PM
DEC 4 Richmond Best Western Abercorn 6-8 PM

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.



Phil Lee, Brett Gabelman and Paul Bae—VSTA Solidarity Celebration