



President's Message



Rory Brown, Sylvia Metzner, Katharine Shipley

Welcome back to work! As teachers start the new school year, getting to know their new students and colleagues, and reacquainting with former ones, I know we are all thankful that we are not in the position that we were in last September, facing a strike that would ultimately last three weeks into the start of the 2014-15 school year. No doubt, this year will present its fair share of challenges and rewards. On the provincial stage, the Vancouver School Board unanimously passed a motion on September 17 to make a submission to the BC Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. This submission outlines some successes of the district, but of equal importance, and in keeping with the local board's role as stewards of local needs and concerns, the submission details the funding problems the district finds itself in as a result of a decade of provincial funding shortfalls. The VSTA has received many calls from teachers explaining their relief at starting a 'normal' school year but as well incredulous at just how full all classes are. There are many full classes with four or five special needs designated students and some regular enrolling classes with up to ten or eleven. Providing the necessary support for these students while teaching full classes of thirty has

become the new normal for Vancouver Secondary teachers. The addition of Education Fund staffing, although welcome and much needed, is of small consolation in addressing a school system that is staffed so tightly.

This fall, Secondary teachers will be asked to adopt the new provincially mandated student information system, MyEdBC. This transition will occur on October 13 and only student attendance data will move from the pre-October 13 time period. Teachers will need to keep marks data in another format before the transition date of October 13. Although the program, by many accounts, is easy to use, there remain many questions from districts who have adopted it about the ability of the provincial network to service and run the program and the long-term implications of the province collecting data for each student on a day-to-day basis.

As well, teachers across the province will begin engagement with the new BC Curriculum. This year the K-9 Curriculum is in the trial stage with implementation next school year. In 2016-17 the 10-12 Curriculum will be in trial stage with full adoption in 2017-18. It is important that all teachers fully explore the new documents and provide feedback to the Curriculum writing teams through the union and through the Ministry of Education Curriculum website.

Lastly, I am looking forward to working with you all to continue the important work of building and maintaining the strong and important voice of Secondary teachers to defend our vibrant Public Education system.

Cheers,

Rory

Newer Teacher Induction

All new teachers and TTOCS hired from October 2013-September 2015 are invited to the VSTA on October 6th from 4:15-5:15. This is an opportunity to meet colleagues in the field and find out more about teaching supports, professional development, member benefits and opportunities within the VSTA.

Please RSVP to Kim by Wednesday, September 30 at kim@vsta.ca or 604-873-5570. Refreshments and light snacks will be served.



BCTF Pension Plan Consultations

The BCTF is consulting all members of the Teachers' Pension Plan including teachers, principals and superintendents on the future of our pension plan. Please attend the info session on plan design changes.

VANCOUVER SESSION

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

4:00 pm

Tupper Secondary Auditorium

FEDERAL ELECTION

2015

Monday

October 19

8:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Advance Polls

October 9, 10, 11 and 12

8:00 AM to 8:00 PM



Make your *vote* count:

REGISTRATION—make sure you are registered.

Go to Elections Canada at www.elections.ca and make sure you are registered to vote. If for some reason you are not, registration is quick and easy to do online.

Note that there are new ID requirements. The poll card mailed to your home is no longer considered valid ID. You will need documentation that includes a picture and your home address. Check the Elections Canada website for details of acceptable identification.

VOTING—**your** vote counts

General Election Day is Monday, October 19, 2015.

Polls are open from 8am to 8pm. Make a plan for voting day and add it to your personal calendar.

Advance Polls are open on October 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Locations will vary from your local polling station so check for details on poll cards mailed to your home. Poll cards are scheduled to be mailed out by October 1st.

Take Action: Host a Debate

A traditional All-Candidates debate is an exciting and engaging way for students to increase their understanding of the political process and the issues shaping this election. Although efforts to create an event such as a debate does not translate to increased voter turnout today, a debate will likely fuel political discussion at home around the dinner table and hopefully increased voter turnout in the future. Informed students provide an opportunity for students to 'teach' their parents about the voting process and the perspectives of local candidates, in turn getting out the vote.

Organizing an All-Candidates' Debate is not onerous but does require immediate action to select a date and reach out to candidates. **Eric Hamber will be hosting an All-Candidates' Debate for the new riding Vancouver-Granville on Wednesday October 7th, 9-10am in the auditorium.** If you would like to attend (specifically if you are from other Vancouver-Granville schools: Point Grey, Magee or Churchill) please contact me to join us. If you have any questions about our event or creating an All-Candidates' at your own school, contact me at Eric Hamber (604-713-8927) or email (treenagoolieff@gmail.com) or Sylvia at the VSTA office (sylvia@vsta.ca).

Alternatives to a formal debate may be to organize a friendly all-candidates forum, invite the candidates in for a one-on-one visit, email them questions from students, or engage with them through social media. All these ideas and more are laid out in the Student Vote 2015 Campaign Guide.

Why vote in **this** federal election?

In many ways this election is galvanizing the public. A tight race is encouraging Canadians to pay more attention to federal politics and the state of our country than ever before. In an odd twist of fate, the early call for an unprecedented extended election period has had unforeseen consequences. It has challenged all candidates and party leaders to offer more to the voting public. Gone is the opportunity to keep the message short and scripted, wow the public with dramatic (if unsubstantiated) promises and turn the election on a single gaff or sound-bite. Time is on the side of the electorate to ask the hard questions, dig deeper into issues, push for a full costing of platforms and check the validity of claims. The opportunity is here (as evidenced by the debate over Canada's response to the Syrian refugee crisis) to have a deeper discourse on underlying values and the kind of Canada we want to live in. For teachers, it is significant to realize that the reduction in federal health transfer dollars as outlined in the current federal budget will put further stresses on our provincial budget. It is not much of a stretch given our current

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government to realize that the shortfall will come from other areas in the budget such as education funding or other social services. This decision will have direct consequences for schools and classrooms throughout the province. Other issues will affect all Canadians. Proposed financial incentives such as income splitting and increasing TFSA limits are of little use to those struggling to make ends meet (much of the middle class), while increasing the qualifying age for OAS from 65 to 67 and a failure to strengthen the CPP will force many seniors to delay retirement. But larger global issues cannot be ignored. Rather than a conversation on fear and

how to best take care of ourselves, it needs to shift to talk of how to provide a vision of support and hope to members of our own communities and those in the world around us. We need to recover our role as a wealthy nation that takes care of our own (national health care) and responds to world issues with compassion and the expertise built up over decades to support nations struggling with poverty and conflict. Beyond that we need to re-engage with First Nations communities and dramatically alter our approach to addressing climate change.

Some Issues to consider when comparing the platforms and records of parties:

- ✓ **Ethics, politics, and democracy:** the Senate scandals, election rules violations, Contempt of Parliament
- ✓ **Federal Health Accord:** no current federal/provincial health accord, \$35 million in transfer payments to provinces in proposed federal budget
- ✓ **Federal public sector:** unprecedented cuts to environmental research, national libraries and archives, legislative deregulation, thousands of federal civil servant jobs lost
- ✓ **Veterans:** lifetime pensions discontinued, nine regional offices shut
- ✓ **Bill C-377** anti-union legislation related to disclosures
- ✓ **Bill C-51** gives government security agencies far-reaching new powers that threaten privacy and puts free speech at risk ability for all Canadians.
- ✓ **Syrian refugee crisis:** Canada has accepted fewer than 2,500 refugees in two years.
- ✓ **High unemployment and underemployment** for young people and other groups
- ✓ **Cuts to retirement security:** no improvement to CPP benefits but OAS qualification age raised from 65 to 67.



Vote for a government that stands up for Aboriginal Peoples.

Truth and Reconciliation
Missing and Murdered Women
Education
Health

We need leaders who stand up for today's young people, and for the next generation.

Jobs • Child Care
Education • Climate
Public transit & infrastructure



Vote for a government that stands up for all Canadians!

Recognition of Professional Qualifications
Keep Families Together
Expensive Processing Fees
Temporary Foreign Workers
Second-Class Citizens



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. 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.



The BCTF Project of Heart has produced an excellent 36 page resource entitled Project of Heart: Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC. It is accessible through www.bctf.ca/HiddenHistory and contains extensive links to videos, articles, speeches and a rich variety of other resources.

Provincial Specialist Associations

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

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

Many PSAs will be holding conferences this October 23rd.

<https://bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx>

Salary Indemnity Fund Important Reminder

Continuing members of the VSTA SIF are reminded to submit their fee for the 2015-2016 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.

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.

TTOCs: Reminders for a new year

The BCTF has a myriad of resources available to TTOCs. Check out <https://www.bctf.ca/TeachersOnCall.aspx?id=5022> where the latest TTOC alert is available.

*Please remember that there is a **TTOC email listserv** that is available through the BCTF website. There are lots of tips and ideas that are shared through the list, and you are able to connect with other people from around the province. bctf.ca/cgi-bin/maillinglistssub.pl*

***TeachBC.bctf.ca** is a relatively new website that is full of lesson plans for a single day, or a range of days. If you are called out into a subject area that you are not familiar with, please check out the web page for ideas and extra help. You can also upload any of your lesson plans that you wish to share.*

*Don't forget that you are part of the teaching force, and safety/security is part of your job as well. Please remember to ask the principal or secretary for any pressing information you may need to know before starting the day. Also, ensure you have a set of keys for the day to keep yourself and the students safe at all times. **If you are unsure about an issue or situation, contact the VSTA immediately.***