

President's Message

Let me begin by thanking all staff reps and school union team members who were able to attend the VSTA fall School Union Rep. Training on Tuesday, October 20. The day opened with greetings from Glen Hansman, 1st Vice President of the BCTF, bringing messages from the provincial body. Glen spoke about the new curriculum and how the Curriculum Implementation days were bargained. He also referenced the importance of union representatives being directly involved with district management in the planning of how this time is used. Attendees to SURT then participated in a large group workshop for the morning on individual professionalism and the culture of professionalism necessary for successful self-directed Pro-D. It was exciting to hear teachers talking with each other in the workshop and at lunch about their practice as well as engaging with colleagues from their schools about how to keep Pro-D culture vibrant and relevant. In the afternoon, school union teams had the choice of three workshops, all of which received very positive reviews in our feedback indicating that we were successful in offering a selection that reflected the desires that school union

teams have expressed in their communication to us. Of equal or even greater importance than the workshops, was the chance for school union teams to spend time with each other to discuss the health and vigour of their team and approaches to challenges they may face through the year. A happy and healthy school union team leads to a vibrant and professionally engaged teaching staff.

I would be remiss in not mentioning the recent federal election and the somewhat surprising results. Notwithstanding each individual's political stripe, it was encouraging to see the increase in suffrage across the country and healthy engagement in the voting process among VSTA members and their students. Several schools ran Student Vote programs and the VSTA received many entries to our VSTA votes Selfie Contest! The federal election process reminds us of the provincial election which may seem like a long time in the future, but is only eighteen months away. As B.C. teachers have learned all too well and repeatedly since 2002, it is vitally important that we begin our work now to change the provincial government to an iteration that has respect for public education and collective bargaining.

Of immediate and present interest and a topic that all Vancouver teachers should apprise themselves of, are the intense relations that our current school Board of Trustees have in their work in getting the business of the board completed. The current Board is split along political lines, with Vision Vancouver holding four seats, the NPA holding four seats including the chair and the Green Party holding a single seat. This division has predictably become fraught as each issue comes to

TTOCs and the New Contract: **What's in it for You?**

This is a new workshop specifically designed for TTOCs by TTOCs so that TTOCs will become more familiar with their local and provincial collective agreements. The workshop is intended to increase the confidence of TTOC contacts in dealing with collective agreement issues. It is also intended to explore and identify collective agreement rights that are missing from local language and the provincial contract.

**Friday, November 27
1:00-3:00 PM**

VSTA Office
2915 Commercial Drive

**RSVP to Kim (kim@vsta.ca or
604-873-5570) by November 20.**



Rory, Sylvia & Katharine at Fall SURT

the attention of the Board. During the budget setting season of 2015, the provincial government appointed a Special Advisor (Ernst and Young) to the budget setting process of the Vancouver School Board. The School Board will officially respond to the province on the recommendations in the June 8 EY report this fall. The report, although largely a political exercise motivated by the provincial government, contains many disturbing and potentially disruptive recommendations. Chief among them, euphemistically termed "capacity rationalization," are a series of recommendations to close and / or sell at least 19 school and VSB properties. In a highly fractious and contentious debate on

....see **President**, back cover

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LENS

At the centre of the lens are teachers and their learning, both as a collective and as individuals. The term “teachers’ professional development” is used to highlight its use both in thinking about individual PD and PD as a collective endeavor.

The Inner Ring: Key criteria

The inner ring consists of three factors that are necessary for an activity to be considered professional development. If any of the three are not present, then the activity should not be seen as professional development.

a. Relevant

Does this activity help me improve the work I do in my role as a teacher?

Does this activity help the teachers involved improve the work they do as a collective?

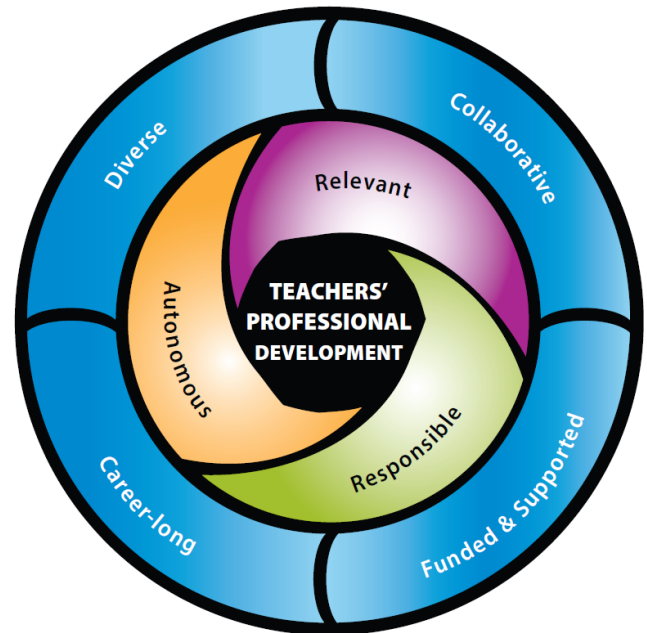
b. Autonomous

Has this activity been voluntarily chosen?

Does this activity jeopardize the autonomy of my colleagues?

c. Responsible

Does this activity meet obligations to colleagues, collective agreements, and our profession?



The Outer Ring: Necessary factors

The factors in the outer ring are critical to the success of teacher-directed professional development as a collective endeavor. In turn, this collective work provides the necessary conditions for all teachers to be able to create their own rich tapestries of appropriate professional learning.

a. Funded and Supported

Teacher-directed professional development must be supported with time, information, respect, and encouragement. Adequate funds for both individual and collective teacher-directed professional development opportunities must be available.

b. Career-long

Appropriate opportunities for teacher-directed professional development span the full range of a teacher’s career.

c. Diverse

Teacher-directed professional development opportunities should span a wide range of topics and learning methods.

d. Collaborative

Teacher-directed professional development is best when teachers work together to plan, to deliver, and to share their professional learning.



Natalia Mayor, Robin Holburn,
Ian MacLeod—Fall SURT

New Curriculum Update

As we are all aware, the Ministry of Education is working on introducing the new K-9 curriculum next year, with this year being a trial year. They are then planning on using 2016-2017 as a trial year for the grade 10-12 curriculum and implementing it for the 2017-2018 school year. There are as of yet many unanswered questions and concerns about the Graduation program. Members are encouraged to continue to provide feedback on the outlined grade 10-12 curriculum as our colleagues working on the curriculum are asking for input. Go to <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/> to read and comment.

The BCTF was successful in negotiating two curriculum implementation days for this year, dates for which the VTF is currently discussing with the Board. We expect these days will be exploratory in nature and teacher driven.

Health and Wellness



is an emerging area of concern for the teaching profession. The CMHA reports that 20% of all Canadians will struggle with mental health at least once in their lifetime. The BCTF reports that 46% of our members on leave are struggling with mental health. Although discussions around mental illness have become more common, there is still stigma attached to the notion that we might be suffering from mental health issues. Even if we ourselves are not facing a mental illness, all of us are, or will be, directly affected by those who do. Teachers in particular would appear to be facing higher than average cases of anxiety and depression, in part due to greater challenges in our working conditions. We have listed supports available to us below:

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)—paid for by the employer. Confidential and voluntary, this program offers short term counselling, resources for parenting and care giving, financial counselling, addictions support and health and wellness support. Phone 24/7 1-800-387-4765. <https://www.workhealthlife.com/>

BCTF Health and Wellness Program—We all pay into the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan (SIP) to provide short and long term disability coverage. Through the Health & Wellness Program, the BCTF assists members who are unable to maintain, or return to, their teaching positions due to a medical illness or disability by funding an early intervention rehabilitation program. This is a voluntary program that can happen by self-referral, referral through the VSTA office, referral by the employer or by the BCTF SIP. <https://www.bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=4788>

Starling Minds—Starling is an online program that provides education and a mental health toolkit to manage stress and prevent depression and/or anxiety. Using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy tools, the online modules help you manage your own depression and/or anxiety as well as your understanding about what is triggering your depression and/or anxiety. This is free and voluntary and has had very positive feedback from teachers who have engaged with it. <https://bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=37000>

The BCTF has developed the following workshop for teachers. It can be requested for your school by your Pro-D chair and is free of charge:

Staying Well at Teaching

Teaching is complex. High public expectations, class composition, educational cutbacks, and increased accountability affect schools, teachers, and students. BCTF surveys identify increased workload and stress as significant concerns for teachers. This workshop helps teachers stay well. Setting boundaries around workload, self care and smart choices, and destressing are key themes. All focus on building shared solutions to both the demands of the work and the isolation of teaching.

Participants will reconnect with colleagues, laugh, and tell stories as they assess their work life balance and explore staying well and creating a healthy workplace. Skilled teacher facilitators will design the session to suit the needs of each school staff.

For further study and exploration, the Mental Health Commission of Canada has created a **Mental Health First Aid** program. See <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/initiatives-and-projects/mental-health-first-aid> for more information.

Teaching Supports

BCTF Peer Support Service—If you have ever hit a tough patch in your teaching career, you may have wondered where to turn to for help and coaching. Who can you call? Where are the resources? When is it safe to admit you could use some colleague support? Who can actually help with the classroom practice questions you have? The Federation has such a service to support teachers with their teaching practice. This Peer Support Service (PSS) is designed to provide direct, individual assistance to active teachers who are experiencing difficulty with their teaching practice, and may be on plans of assistance or personally concerned. <https://bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx?id=36999>

VSB Peer-to-Peer Mentor—Completely confidential and voluntary, VSB teaching colleagues provide support to classroom teachers to assist in any aspect of teaching. <http://blogs.vsb.bc.ca/peertopeer/who-we-are/>

Teaching Resources

The BCTF has a number of resources available to enrich teaching across the curriculum. See Teach BC at <http://teachbc.bctf.ca/> for a searchable database of unit and lesson plans. These are resources created by the BCTF and/or teaching colleagues in BC. You can search by grade level [or](#) subject area. For general resources, see <http://bctf.ca/TeachingResources.aspx> for links to the BCTF lending video collection, IRPs and other relevant sites for teaching in BC.

The Vancouver School Board subscribes to the **Critical Thinking Consortium**, a not-for-profit based in Vancouver. Once you've created your account (for free), you can search by grade level, subject area or skill area for lessons and units across the curriculum. There is a growing collection of resources in French as well. <http://tc2.ca/>

President, from front cover...

the issue, the board passed a motion on October 13, 2015 to not sell school lands. This decision will feature large in the response to the EY report, a process that includes a Committee of the Whole meeting with stakeholder (including VSTA) and public input, on November 10. Issues to do with facilities, particularly as they relate to the finances of the School Board will likely occupy a primary focus for the union over the next few months and into the new year. In the meantime, we wish you a safe, productive and professionally engaged autumn.

All the best,

Rory



Leanne Hagglund & Sara McGarry
Fall SURT, October 2015

BCTF Pension Consultation Survey

Following our pension consultation session on October 14 Vancouver teachers are asked to review the support material available on the BCTF website before completing the on-line survey. The BCTF recently sent an email to all members with a URL link to the survey. In accordance with a motion passed at last year's AGM, the results of this on-line survey will be reviewed by the BCTF Executive with any recommendations to be brought to the 2016 Annual General Meeting. Any change to the pension plan would take effect on January 1, 2018.

To review the materials, go to the members' portal on the BCTF website and click on Pensions. This will take you to a range of on-line materials to help you understand the proposals prior to engaging in the on-line survey.

Support materials include:

- The video and powerpoint content of the Pension Consultation meetings.
- Data Tables for each of the proposal options.
- Video tutorials outlining pension calculations based on the proposal options.

<http://survey.bctf.ca/PensionConsultation2015/pensionconsultationsurvey2015.htm>

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.

SELFIE CONTEST WINNERS

Now that the dust has settled following the Federal Election, we would like to extend our thanks to all those teachers who got involved and put forth the effort to make a difference. As a small token of appreciation we would like to announce the winners of the VSTA Selfie Contest.

Congratulations to
Preet Liddar (UHS/BRIT)
Forman Howes (LB)
Kathryn Best (EH/DT)



Compensation if injured?

If you suffer an occupational injury, report it immediately to your supervisor, usually the vice-principal in charge of health and safety, by completing a **WorkSafeBC Form 6A: "WORKER'S REPORT OF INJURY OR OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE TO EMPLOYER"**.

The injury should also be reported to the site-based Occupational First Aid Attendant prior to leaving the workplace and the first aid book should be completed by the First Aid attendant as per OH&S regulations.

Form 6A is available at the school or on the www.worksafebc.ca website under "Forms". You should make a copy of the Form 6A for yourself and forward one to the VSTA office. Report the occupational injury to your school health and safety representative. If the VSTA is not aware of the injury report, we cannot effectively advocate on your behalf if that becomes necessary.

In addition, you must complete the **WorkSafeBC Form 6: "APPLICATION FOR COMPENSATION AND REPORT OF INJURY OR OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE"**. This is the process by which workers open a claim. Form 6 can be completed online or through Teleclaim. The employer then has 72 hours in which to file their report with WorkSafeBC. There must be an investigation of the incident with subsequent recommendations to prevent further incidences. The role of the employer is to ensure the health and safety of all workers working for the employer and any other workers at the workplace.

WORK SAFE BC

Teleclaim

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday
1-888-WORKERS, 1-888-967-5377
or #5377 Telus, Rogers & Bell Mobility

You can access the Teleclaim system to expedite "action requests" and receive a user ID and password to follow up on claim details.

Members should be aware that once they file a claim they should not speak with the employer about it without first getting advice from a union representative. They should also be aware that any conversation they have with WorkSafeBC is fully documented by the WorkSafeBC officer.

Although the member has up to one year to claim for compensation, any delay in establishing the claim decreases the chance of having it accepted by WorkSafeBC. So, it is important to contact Teleclaim as soon as possible after the incident.

Bullying and Harassment

Teachers have long had access to Collective Agreement Language (Article E.2) that protects their right to work in an environment free from harassment and sexual harassment. This language relates to incidents between VSB employees.

On November 1, 2013 the Workers' Compensation Board required all employers in British Columbia to have policy on Bullying and Harassment policies. This included the opportunity to file a WorkSafeBC claim under bullying and harassment language for incidents for persons other than VSB employees.

The VSB has revised its own policy and developed a form and process for filing a harassment claim that complies with WorkSafeBC requirements for investigation and reporting. Teachers filing a Workplace Bullying and Harassment Claim using the VSB form will be asked if they are filing under WorkSafeBC and the Collective Agreement. The union advises that teachers file under both. This process ensures an investigation and follow-up including communication to the complainant of the findings.

The VSB used the WorkSafeBC definition below in development of this policy.

"Bullying and harassment as defined by WorkSafeBC includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment."

Examples of conduct or comments that might constitute bullying and harassment may include verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings, and spreading malicious rumours.

This policy applies to all employees of the Vancouver Board of Education and is applicable to all interpersonal and electronic comments, actions and behaviour."

Full VSB Harassment in the Workplace policy available at vsb.bc.ca under Policy Manual Section G—Policy GBCBA.

WCB CLAIM PROCESS

