



Teachers' Pension Plan

The Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees announced plan design changes to modernize the Teachers' Pension Plan and make it more equitable for members.

It's important to be aware of these changes and how they may affect you. Check out the Teachers' Pension Plan website for updates as more information becomes available (<http://tinyurl.com/jduh7v6>).

APPROACHING RETIREMENT WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 2016		
Date	City	Time
1	Vancouver	7:30-9:00 PM
15	N Vancouver	6:00-7:30 PM
21	Burnaby	4:30-6:00 PM
21	Burnaby	7:30-9:00 PM
DECEMBER 2016		
6	Richmond	6:00-7:30 PM
JANUARY 2017		
19	Vancouver	7:30-9:00 PM
26	Coquitlam	7:30-9:00 PM
31	Langley	6:00-7:30 PM
FEBRUARY 2017		
15	Surrey	6:00-7:30 PM
28	Delta	6:00-7:30 PM
MARCH 2017		
4	N Vancouver	12:30-2:00 PM
28	Surrey	6:00-7:30 PM
30	Langley	7:30-9:00 PM
APRIL 2017		
8	Vancouver	12:30-2:00 PM
10	Delta	6:00-7:30 PM
12	Coquitlam	5:00-6:30 PM
12	Coquitlam	7:30-9:00 PM
25	N Vancouver	6:00-7:30 PM
MAY 2017		
9	Burnaby	7:30-9:00 PM
11	Langley	5:00-6:30 PM
11	Langley	7:30-9:00 PM
16	Richmond	7:30-9:00 PM
17	Vancouver	5:00-6:30 PM
17	Vancouver	7:30-9:00 PM

Pre-registration is required.
Visit tpp.pensionsbc.ca

President's Message

As Vancouver Secondary teachers settle in to the routine of the new school year, the political landscape at the Vancouver School Board has been anything but routine. Likely all of us are aware that Christy Clark's provincial government, under the direction of Education Minister Mike Bernier, fired the Vancouver Board of Trustees on October 17 for failing to pass a balanced budget by June 30 of last school year. There are many unanswered questions regarding this move by the Minister. Teachers contacting the VSTA office have been unequivocal in their opinion that this firing was cynical and un-democratic as a majority of the Board had made public their intentions to pass the budget the same evening that they were fired. This budget, with its \$22 million in cuts to students services, was already enacted by senior staff and was well on its way to being fully implemented. Secondary teachers have for fourteen years felt the erosion of our work that provincial underfunding has wrought—this year, for the first time ever, teachers in Vancouver secondary schools have been timetabled with classes that exceed the class size regulation of 30 students maximum for non-exempt classes. As we near the deadline for the employer to provide the VSTA with this class data (Oct. 30), we are preparing to vigorously address this particularly destructive aspect of the budget with the employer.

Despite a last minute venue change, the VSTA, in conjunction with other unionized stakeholders held a very successful rally on Thursday, October 20 on the front lawn of the School Board building, open for all to attend,



Rory Brown and Chloe McKnight,
Rally to Support Fired Trustees, 2016-Oct-20

to give thanks to the fired Trustees who took a brave stand regarding the budget while asking many tough questions in service to the ideal of equitable public education in Vancouver. Please see photos of the rally in this edition of Tackboard.

The VSTA hopes to be able to begin again the work of advocating for and representing teachers in the many different aspects of our engagement with staff at the Board office. There are many important topics and myriad questions that teachers have as the year progresses where the direction taken and the answers given will affect the educational programs we offer to students. It has been exceptionally difficult to provide this service with many of the senior team on leave through the last month, coupled with the remarkable interference subjected on all of us from the provincial government. With the surprise capitulation and then partial reiteration of the 95% capacity utilization requirement for the Board from government, the Long Range Facility Plan and congruent School Closure Process has been thrown into

see **PRESIDENT**, back cover



Public Rally in Protest

On Monday when Minister Bernier fired the Board, VBE unionized stakeholders met immediately and began to plan a rally to protest. Despite a last minute change in venue, Thursday's re-located rally was well attended under surprisingly sunny skies! It was heartening to see so many people out to support our "axed" Board. Amid live music, a cheering crowd and large media presence Vision Trustees Mike Lombardi and Patti Bacchus blasted the Liberal Government for its heavy handed and undemocratic decision to replace our ELECTED trustees with a single surrogate appointee. Once again we see the two faces of a government which claims **publicly** to support education but continues to work **privately** at dismantling it. Green Trustee Janet Fraser also spoke feelingly of her commitment to keep her promise of continued advocacy for Vancouver students.

NDP leader John Horgan, accompanied by five Vancouver NDP MLAs, promised to restore our elected Board immediately if elected on May 9, 2017 and BC Fed President and former Vancouver teacher Irene Lanzinger spoke passionately of her desire to see an anti-poverty plan as well as stable, adequate funding for public education in BC to be put into place. DPAC chair Morgane Oger was unequivocal in her stance that government must do more to support students and parents in a system that is disintegrating before our very eyes. Paul Faoro, CUPE President, wound things up with an energetic denunciation of the erosion of services for students that has been caused by the consistent and chronic underfunding of education which continues needlessly in light of a budget surplus of \$1.9 billion. Energetic student trustee Isabella Preite stepped forward and gave the final word, praising the fired trustees and warning the provincial government she would be voting on May 9!



Past Presidents: Debbie Pawluk, Irene Lanzinger, Jim Gill and Bill Bargeman

October 2016

Joint Statement on Public Education in Vancouver From Former VSB Trustees

We, former trustees of the Vancouver Board of Education, protest the firing of democratically elected Vancouver school trustees and the underfunding of our children's schools.

Vancouver residents voted in 2014 to elect nine Trustees to serve them. Those same Trustees were summarily fired by the Minister of Education on Monday as they were about to vote on a balanced budget for the District.

We are appalled by this action by Premier Clark's government. It comes after years of funding cuts, fruitless and expensive audits of the District, as well as unrealistic and unworkable targets for space utilization, and lack of funding for seismic upgrades. All this caused significant cutbacks in services to children and forced the prospect of closing neighbourhood schools.

Vancouver schools are worth fighting for. We need seismic upgrading, supports for children with special needs, classroom resources, band & strings programs, libraries, counsellors, playgrounds, and more.

The principles of democracy require that the elected board be reinstated immediately. Fairness requires that Vancouver students and their schools be adequately funded. Ethics require that the government stop using seismic upgrading and school closures to put political pressure on our school board.

The Vancouver School Board has a long and proud record of advocating tirelessly for investment in a quality public education system to serve the needs of the 54,000 students in our city. In fact these very Trustees promised to advocate for quality public education and not to close schools. That's what the people of Vancouver elected them to do.

Signed by the following formerly elected Trustees:

Carmela Allevato, 1984-86	Sadie Kuehn, 1986
Chris Allnutt, 1986	Kevin Millsip, 2002-2005
Allen Blakey, 1999-2011	Adrienne Montani, 1999-2005
Jane Bouey, 2002-2005, 2008-2011	Michael O'Neill, 1980-82
Sharon Gregson, 2005-2011	Gary Onstad, 1980-86, 1990-93
Ruth Herman, 1990-93	Philip Rankin, 1980-1988
Noel Herron, 2002-2005	Anne Roberts, 1993-96
Angela Kenyon, 2002-2005	



Excerpts from...
**Axed by Christy Clark:
Patti Bacchus's account
of the final hours of
Vancouver's school board**

Vancouver Observer, Oct 19, 2016

What happens now?

Watch for VSB land sales.

Bernier already set the stage for this with a June letter to the VSB exempting the Kingsgate Mall site (owned by the VSB and leased to the Beedie Group) from section 100 of the BC School Act that says proceeds from capital asset sales can only be used for capital — not for operating costs.

Also, watch for attempts to break collective agreements and contract out services like custodial, cafeterias, grounds work and other facility services. This idea was raised in a 2012 Deloitte Report entitled “BC Ministry of Education and School Districts Service Delivery Transformation.”

The Deloitte report notes “The opportunities for facilities and capital management/delivery represent the largest opportunity areas for the K- 12 sector.”

And by opportunities they mean cost savings. “Increasing the productivity of the current facilities management functions of maintenance and custodial services to industry and provincial productivity benchmarks for similar services presents a significant opportunity.

Achieving productivity consistent with industry benchmarks for facilities management could result in savings from \$60M to \$150M”, the report states, also noting that implementation will require a “willingness by school boards to embrace a new model of service delivery.”

The appointed trustee will have to hold at least some public meetings and parents and stakeholder groups will demand to continue to have a voice. I suspect the government will help the appointed trustee find some funds to restore some services at least for the short term, to make them look good and the fired board look bad. The long term is what scares me most.

The Education Minister has the option to call a by-election and let Vancouver voters decide who they want representing them on their school board. My bet is he won't.”

For entire letter, go to <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/opinion/axed-christy-clark-patti-bacchus-account-final-hours-vancouvers-school-board>

The First Time Victoria Fired the Vancouver School Board

At 8 a.m. on Monday, May 6, 1985, couriers knocked on the doors of all nine Vancouver School Board trustees. They were carrying letters of dismissal signed by then-education minister Jack Heinrich.

Despite warning signs, the letters came as a shock. It was the first time an elected school board had actually been sacked. The Vancouver board, along with many others, had submitted “needs-based” budgets, rather than budgets that would comply with government spending limits — and result in program cuts, fired teachers, and closed schools.

The government accurately assessed public reaction to the board's firing. Education Ministry mandarin Jim Carter predicted to the Association of B.C. School Superintendents (fondly known as Abscess) that there would be protests in the spring over the cuts, a pause over the summer, and then more complaints in September when kids went back to

school and parents faced the impact of the budget cuts.

But by October, Carter said, life would go back to normal.

The end of school boards

The real losers weren't the fired trustees.

The 1985 Vancouver firing marked the end of real, autonomous school boards in the province. School boards had once been government bodies capable of taxing local industry and residential property, and using the money to fund much of their budgets. If they taxed too much, they paid the consequences.

The Bill Bennett SoCreds had deprived them of the industrial tax base in 1981 and, effectively, the residential base a few years later. The province henceforth would assign a budget to each district. The board's job was simply to set some of the spending priorities... and to decide what to cut when the budget wasn't enough.

For the past 30 years, school trustees have had a truly thankless job — unable to make any real educational decisions and too often forced to do Victoria's dirty work.

While per-pupil spending has indeed gone up more than inflation since 1985, so have countless fixed costs, not to mention the costs of computers (rare in 1985 schools) and of meeting new demands on the schools.

Trustees' chief function now is to be advocates for the schools — to tell the public what's going on and why, and to try to put some pressure on the provincial government to improve school support.

It doesn't always work out. That leaves trustees with few options: quit, rubber-stamp each budget as it arrives, or move on to municipal or provincial government.

Excerpts from TheTyee.ca,
17 Oct 2016 | by Crawford Kilian

CTF launches a new teacher resource to open discussion on truth and reconciliation

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) is proud to release a new teacher resource entitled *Truth and Reconciliation: What is it about?*, a classroom discussion booklet developed by CTF and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. The booklet is now available through [CTF's Publications Catalogue](#).

"This booklet aims to support dialogue about residential schools and to explore how they have hurt generations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people," says CTF President Heather Smith. "It is important that students better understand the history of residential schools and how Canadians must work collectively as part of the reconciliation process."

This new resource offers first voice content from students—some Indigenous and non-Indigenous—through words, thoughts, drawings and poems. This creative expression project was conducted as part of CTF's social justice program, [Imagineaction](#).

CTF's Speak Truth to Power Canada is yet another rich educational resource available to teachers that features lesson plans and resources on Truth and Reconciliation. Please visit: <http://sttptcanada.ctf-fce.ca/lessons/wilton-littlechild/>

For more information, read the June 2016 Issue of *Perspectives* magazine on First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education.

Truth and Reconciliation

What is it about?

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.

Criteria:

- 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 and school
- 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.

Timeline: Applications must be received by 5:00 p on November 23, 2016. Decisions will be made by the end of January. Successful applicants receive 50% of the grant to begin their project and the remaining 50% upon receipt of a final report by December 1, 2017 deadline.

For more information, go to <http://www.bctf.ca/SocialJusticeGrants.aspx>.

PRESIDENT, from front cover

turmoil. Navigating and advocating for teachers through this process made up much of our work at the VSTA over the two months -- many questions and vulnerabilities remain. It has been exceedingly challenging but what has come into sharp relief is the requirement that teachers be a driving force in both making public education a central feature of the provincial election process and that we are active in changing the government to one that is supportive of our work.

As always, take care, support your colleagues and enjoy your classes.

Take care,

Rory

In an insightful response to Pete McMartin's [Vancouver Sun](#) article, "This is egalitarian Canada, so why should private schools get public money?" <http://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/pete-mcmartin-this-is-egalitarian-canada-so-why-should-private-schools-get-public-money> retired Vancouver teacher Marcy Toms posted the following:



Marcy Toms

October 22 at 8:26am · 🌐



If Pete McMartin can write it in today's edition of The Sun, why can't BC's current legislative opposition say it and put it in the platform for the May 2017 provincial election? In "This is egalitarian Canada?" McMartin makes the point clearly and without a single, teeny, weeny bit of equivocation. "BC taxpayers should not be paying any part of private school education." He wastes no time on the "dollar this" and "dollar that" or "choice this" and "choice that" distractions that have been going the rounds for ... ever. Nope. He goes straight to the moral heart of the issue: basic tenets of Canadian society, one of which is public education as a cohesive force. We all know what its opposite is: division and balkanization. So, the columnist outflanks the opposition by raising the debate to the philosophical and the moral, where it should have been from the start, way back in 1977. I await with (only slightly) baited breath for some action on this by the NDP. It ought to commit both to ceasing funding for private schools and to overhauling the entire education funding formula. It's the right thing to do.