



Tackboard

Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

Volume 31
Number 3
2016-12-12

VSTA GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, January 24

4pm at Tupper Auditorium

AGENDA: ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO BCTF AGM

The BCTF Annual General Meeting is scheduled from Saturday, March 18, to Tuesday, March 21 at the Hyatt Regency in Vancouver. If you are interested in participating, please attend the General Meeting and see your Staff Rep or www.vsta.ca for the delegate nomination form. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor of our general meeting. **All teachers are encouraged to attend to elect delegates to the BCTF.**

Economic Stability Dividend



We received some good news this week on the Economic Stability Dividend. You'll be happy to hear that the 3.3% growth in BC's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2015 will result in a 0.35% wage increase on May 1, 2017. The 3.3% growth exceeded the Economic Forecast Council (EFC) forecast of 2.6%. Under the terms of the Economic Stability Mandate, the wage increase is calculated at 50% of the positive difference between the EFC forecast and the data released by Statistics Canada. Because that difference is 0.7% our members will realize an increase of 0.35%. While not a lot, it does mean that an average teacher earning \$75,000 will receive an increase of \$262.50 in their annual salary starting in May 2017.

Salary grids will be amended to reflect this change and we will work with BCPSEA to verify the grids in the new year.

The news release from the Ministry can be accessed here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/>

President's Message



Trevor Stokes & Rory Brown
Meet the Candidates, 2016-Nov-09

ALMOST THERE! Congratulations on making it through what has been a very interesting if not tumultuous autumn. Along with a good deal of member service and school issues that the VSTA has been engaged in, we are excited by the progress we have made on our goal of increasing member involvement and training. We had a very successful Fall School Union Rep. Training and have offered several other opportunities over the fall for distinct groups of teachers, utilizing grants from the BCTF to fund these endeavors.

The dichotomy of the U.S election results and our Supreme Court win, happening in successive days, galvanized thinking about democracy and the rule of law. Teachers in Vancouver are thrilled to have our language back in the Collective Agreement that guarantees manageable class sizes and support for all students. Discussions between BCPSEA and the BCTF are underway and we remain expectant that the provisions we bargained for through several rounds before 2001 will be in force as soon as reasonably possible – hopefully

immediately. Many of our membership have not worked under the terms that are now restored and it behooves us to read and become familiar with the opportunities for students that this language affords. The VSTA will continue in the new year to familiarize teachers with these restored provisions and we encourage all members to seek out colleagues who worked prior to 2001 to hear about how our school system functioned under these now restored terms! Among many other topics, we look forward to talking to all members in January about the process of integrating the language back into the contract as we undertake a week of school visits.

Teachers in Vancouver welcomed the recent (albeit overdue) news that the new curriculum implementation would be delayed for a year to allow all elements of the graduation program and assessment to be fully defined. The VSTA will continue to carry the voice of teachers forward in this important aspect of our work. It's vital that the school system makes the transition in a smooth and adequately-resourced fashion.

As always, please take care of yourselves over the Holiday season and take the time to enjoy friends and family and get some well-deserved rest. From all of us at the VSTA office, wishing you a happy and healthy break.

Cheers,

Rory

TTOC News



Please join TTOC meetings at the VSTA office from 4 to 5 PM during our 2017 meeting dates:

January 12, March 9, May 11
Refreshments provided

Classroom Teachers

PLEASE NOTE!

TTOCs are of course expected to enter attendance on MyEd BC, but they don't always have access to the technology they need. Please let your TTOC colleague know either through the SFE system, or in your daily lesson plan if there will be access to a classroom computer, or if the TTOCs will need to sign out an iPad at your school office.

It would also be VERY helpful if you could please leave an up-to-date hard copy of attendance for your TTOC colleague. This is an important safety issue – TTOCs need a hard copy if there is a classroom/school emergency. Also, TTOCs want to make sure that they are using preferred names, and gender pronouns when taking attendance and addressing the class. As you know, MyEd BC does not allow TTOCs to have access to preferred names.

We have also heard from TTOCs that classroom teachers sometimes ask them to access the :/S drive. TTOCs do NOT have access to :/S drive – so please post a document on SFE or leave a hard copy if you would like them to photocopy something or have access to it.

Classroom Carol

The story of Classroom Past and Classroom Present

The happy ending of course is Classroom Future as we welcome 2017 and the reinstatement of class size, composition and specialist teacher ratios.

Class size	2002 Vancouver	Present day Number of Students
Kindergarten	20	22
Grade 1	20	24
Grade 2-3	22	24
Grade 4-7	30	30
Grade 8-12	30	30
Technology/shop classes	24	30

Class composition	Class sizes reduced by one student for the first 2 students with special needs and by a further 1 for a third special needs student. No more than 2 students with special needs save for "very exceptional" circumstances.	No requirement; in 2015 there were 16,516 classes with four or more student with special needs and 4,163 classes in the province with seven or more students with special needs.
Specialist teacher rates		
Teacher librarians	1 for 702 students	No requirement
Teacher counsellors	1 for 535 students	No requirement
Learning assistance teachers	1 for 504 students	No requirement
Special education resource teachers	1 for 232 students	No requirement
ESL teacher	1 for 64.7 identified ESL students	No requirement
School psychologists	Unknown	No requirement
Speech language pathologists	Unknown	No requirement

SOURCE: BCTF, Ministry of Education and a report prepared for the VSB in 2014

STUDENT VOTE

How can we engage our students in the political process and elections?

As evinced in the graph to the right, Canadians aged 18-34 have the lowest voting rates in Canada and also the greatest volatility in voting rates if we are to draw conclusions from the last two Federal elections. People more knowledgeable than us on this issue have theories as to why younger Canadians do not vote, but we as teachers have some tools we can use to encourage younger Canadians to vote. One of which is Student Vote. Every Secondary School in Vancouver is registered on Student Vote which means you can run a whole school election. Students can research political platforms and invite candidates to come to the school. See Student Vote - <http://studentvote.ca/> (in English & French) for more information. You may already have a contact person at your school, so be sure to check in with them – or make yourself known to staff if you are that contact person.

Voter Turnout by Age Group – 2011 & 2015 General Elections (adapted from [Statistics Canada](#))

Age Group	2011 (%)	2015 (%)	Turnout Difference
18-24	38.8	57.1	18.3
25-34	45.1	57.4	12.3
35-44	54.5	67.9	7.4
45-54	64.5	66.6	2.1
55-64	71.5	73.7	2.3
65-74	75.1	78.8	3.7
75 and over	60.3	67.4	7.1
Canada	58.5	66.1	7.6

BCFED launches new election campaign



At its convention this week, the BC Federation of Labour launched its new election-focused campaign. Together for BC. The campaign raises concerns about the government's record of putting the interests of insiders ahead of working people and highlights issues around precarious jobs, stagnant wages, rising costs, and attacks on important public services like education and health care. Through this campaign, the BCFED is calling for change and for union

members to get engaged over the next six months leading up to May 9.

The kick off piece of the campaign is a brand new 30-second ad you can view and share with your friends, family, and networks.

It's a strong message for a better BC with a strong economy based on good jobs and good wages as well as investment in key public services like health care, education, affordable childcare, and better support for seniors.

BCFED RESOLUTIONS

Resolution ED:6

THE FEDERATION WILL call on the provincial government to reverse the cuts and restore adequate funding to public education in British Columbia and stop using public funding for private and independent schools.

Other motions of interest passed at the BCFED convention this week are:

Resolution ED: 4

THE FEDERATION WILL call on the provincial government to restore adult education funding, including funding to graduated adults.

Emergency Resolution: 1

THE FEDERATION WILL demand that the provincial government immediately call a by-election to ensure that the citizens of Vancouver have their right to a democratically-elected school board restored; and

THE FEDERATION WILL encourage all affiliates to demand that the provincial government immediately call a by-election to ensure that the citizens of Vancouver have their right to a democratically-elected school board restored.

BCFED convention congratulates BCTF on court win

Hundreds of delegates to the BC Federation of Labour convention rose to their feet in a standing ovation amid thunderous applause for the BCTF's success in our long legal battle to defend collective bargaining rights. The November 10 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada was hailed as a landmark decision of importance to all working people across Canada.

The BCFED's 57th convention took place at the Vancouver Convention Centre throughout this week. The BCTF was represented by more than 80 delegates elected in locals throughout the province. Former BCTF President Irene Lanzinger was acclaimed for a second term as President of the BCFED, as was Secretary-Treasurer Aaron Eckman. Thank you to Irene and Aaron for all of their amazing work on behalf of, and for working people in BC. Congrats also go to out to Burnaby teacher and CASJ chair Shanee Prasad, who was elected Worker of Colour Rep to the BCFED Executive Council.



Sylvia Metzner & Treena Goolieff



Why voting matters and elections resources for students and teachers

Elections Canada has an exhaustive list of resources for teachers and students when it comes to learning about elections and democracy. See <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=yth/lin&document=index&lang=e#yth>.

Here are some responses to the question "Why should I bother voting?" to start the conversation with students, colleagues and the community at large:

- It's a vicious cycle is you don't - politicians tend to target their message to those who vote - the interests and opinions of young Canadians remain overlooked on a national level, creating a disconnect between them and voting.
- Voting is only the beginning of your engagement with democracy. The hard work is in between elections – voting is your voice at the polling booth, but you need to keep engaged to keep politicians accountable.
- Voting carries benefits to those who participate in it. People who vote are associated with a host of positive civic, health and social factors. Among the most studied are that voters are known to be more engaged in other activities like volunteering or contacting their election official. They are more informed about local affairs and a contributor to their neighborhood's "social capital."

Saying Good Bye to Fall as we Slip into Winter



VANCOUVER TEACHERS slip and fall in schools at a higher rate than almost every other district in BC. The results of this are twofold. Firstly, our colleagues are injured and are sometimes left with disabilities or ongoing issues such as severe concussion and permanent soft tissue injury. Secondly, the insurance rates paid by our employer are higher than the norm and that is money we would all rather see spent in our schools. While we assume that most falls occur involving multi-levels, such as stairwells or teachers standing on top of chairs to put up posters and student work when they should be using a ladder, the majority of falls occur on the same level.

There are things we can do to prevent these accidents, both individually and collectively. On the simplest level, we can slow

down and think preventatively – especially in the winter months when our hallways and parking lots are often slippery. We can think about our footwear choices. We can choose to make more trips with fewer things in our arms. We can work with our Health and Safety Committees to identify and remediate challenges related to congestion and stairwell usage. We should also be reporting “near misses”, so that our colleagues do not find themselves victim to the same situation only hours or days later.

Lastly, we should be talking about Health & Safety and accident prevention as a staff and on an individual basis. If you see someone rushing down a hallway floor covered in rainwater with their arms full of books, papers and bags - think prevention and do what you can to remediate the situation before an injury occurs.

Thank you to Brett Gabelman, VSTA Health & Safety Chair, for this information



District Snow-D Day — December 5

Almost three hundred teachers gathered in the Lord Byng auditorium on a snowy Monday morning to enjoy a presentation by Neil Young fan Pasi Sahlberg. Finnish educator, author and scholar, Pasi Sahlberg is renowned for his progressive views on education and is in Vancouver for the Learning Forward – 2016 Annual Conference. Vancouver teachers had a sneak preview thanks to the efforts of many, particularly VSTA district Pro-D Chair, Diane Phillips and Byng Pro-D Chair, Paula Violi. It was an incredible opportunity for teachers, support staff, school and Board administrators to hear him speak and well worth braving the predicted, but nonetheless disruptive, onslaught of winter weather here in Vancouver.

Vancouver teachers Meet and Greet Vancouver MLAs

As part of our political advocacy work, Vancouver teachers met informally with BC MLAs George Heyman, Adrian Dix, Melanie Mark, Shane Simpson and Spencer Chandra Herbert on November 9th to discuss the future of education in our province as we look towards the May 9, 2017 provincial election. Topics covered included private school funding, the new curriculum and its implementation, unfunded expenses borne by our local board and Bill 11 concerns regarding Pro-D autonomy, privacy for students and School Board Governance.

As always, we are hoping for a dynamic Education platform to inspire voters, and perhaps even make Education a top election issue. We also hope all incumbent and hopeful MLAs were watching and taking note as the very next day teachers won our long fought battle at the Supreme Court of Canada. Worth a read is David Chudnovsky's article in the Tyee: <http://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2016/10/28/BC-Education-Promises/>



Janet McCarron, Katharine Shipley, George Heyman, Rob Bordon, Trish Mugford, Henny Coates