



Tackboard

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VSTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Tuesday, May 16, 2017
4pm at Tupper Auditorium**

In anticipation of our upcoming AGM we would like to encourage any and all interested VSTA members to consider nominations for next year's Executive Committee. These hard working members provide union representation at the school, district and provincial level. Check out the "job description" (inside) and see if you, or someone you know, might be a great fit for this upcoming opportunity! The deadline for nominations and candidate statements is April 21. *Nomination forms available from your Staff Rep, the VSTA website, or call the VSTA office to have one sent to you.*

Members will also receive financial reports ended July 31, 2016, vote to approve the Association's operating budget 2017-18, vote to approve Constitutional changes and, perhaps most importantly, elect the VSTA Executive Committee and In-House Table Officers for 2017-18 who will represent Vancouver teachers.

As always door prizes will be presented at the end of the meeting, followed by a social hour in the staffroom. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!



President's Message

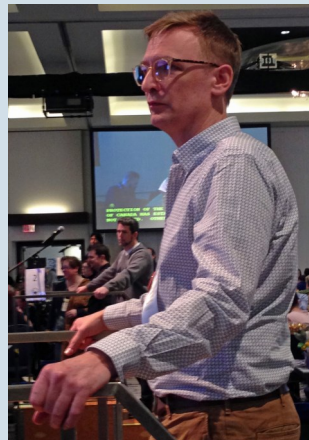
Although Spring Break seems like a distant memory, teachers across Vancouver Secondary Schools are still letting the much needed rest fuel their work in all the many things we undertake. For the VSTA office and in all schools, April and May are filled with the work of the staffing and timetabling season. This momentous year, where our long-fought-for restored contract language comes back into force, will be happy and full of possibility. Timetabling for the last fifteen years has been an exercise in triage; this year the anticipation of schools being places that feel

possible again is palpable. It is vitally important that the changes that come to schools in increased staffing, which will feel somewhat revolutionary, are grounded in collegiality, respectful discourse on the needs of the school and of course, meet the requirements of the contract language. For some schools, particularly those with a high number of students with Special Needs, classes will get much smaller in size and resultantly, new colleagues will come to the school through the Post and Fill process. Through work at the BCTF, the VSTA has come to understand that many locals of the provincial Federation do not have nearly the degree of restored language that we have in Vancouver; our contract provisions that set out Special Education support are some of the best in the province. The work of Staff Reps and the School Union Team will be essential as we provide

advice to principals and vice-principals during the time table build.

Also on the horizon and of the greatest importance to our professional health and fulfillment is of course the provincial election of May 9. This election will set the government that

will sit across the table from us in the next round of contract bargaining. Our political activism, to whatever degree that takes for each of us, will make a difference in the election outcome, and will set a course for our financial and professional health over the next few years. For all ridings in the province, a few votes cast in one direction or another can have a



Rory Brown, BCTF AGM 2017

profound effect on the lives of teachers and students. Each candidate must be held directly accountable to their specific comments on the strategies they carry regarding Public Education — our life's work. The VSTA's Local Election Committee, led by Sara McGarry, Madeline Brewster, Treena Goolieff, Sylvia Metzner and Katharine Shipley have been active with each school's Local Election Contacts to foster the activism of our teacher colleagues to have our voice heard. Please do all you can to make this election one that brings hope to our profession. Register, vote and better yet, pledge to take ten friends with you to the polls!

As always, pace yourself and find the joy of your endeavours in your classroom and at home.

Best, *Rory*

National Day of Mourning, April 28



The **National Day of Mourning** was officially recognized in Parliament in 1991 with the passing of the Mourning Act designating one day a year be set aside to commemorate those workers in Canada who were killed or injured on the job. The BCTF has partnered with the BC Labour Heritage Centre, along with the BC Federation of Labour and WorkSafeBC to develop a Day of Mourning (DOM) Schools project.

At one time canaries were the only safeguard underground miners had against dangers in their workplaces. When the canary died it was time for the workers to evacuate the mine. Our sisters and brothers in CUPE have adopted the canary as the symbol for the Day of Mourning and the canary is recognized around the world.

Day of Mourning BC Schools Project



The **BC Labour Heritage Centre** has developed a set of materials that teachers can use in schools throughout the province to raise the awareness of workplace safety with students (future workers) in our schools.

For a full description of the project, to register your school and to order materials, go to <http://www.labourheritagecentre.ca/> and click on the Day of Mourning: BC Schools link.

BCTF AGM 2017

It was an exciting year to attend the **BCTF AGM** at the Hyatt in beautiful but soggy downtown Vancouver! **Congratulations to our own Rory Brown** and Jody Polukoshko (VESTA) who were elected to serve as Members-at-Large on the BCTF Executive Committee. Also elected were Rae Figursky (Burnaby), Shawn Gough (Vancouver Island North) and Carolyn Pena (North Vancouver). They join current Members-at-Large Carole Gordon (Central Okanagan), Kip Wood (Nanaimo), and Robin Toszczak (Victoria).

Glen Hansman of Vancouver Elementary was re-elected for a second one-year term as President. In addition, First Vice-President Teri Mooring from Quesnel and Second Vice-President Clint Johnston from Chilliwack were also re-elected.

Delegates at the Annual General Meeting carried numerous motions related to recruitment and retention,

privacy of student information, and appropriate use of technology in schools, as well as a statement of principles on protecting rights of transgender students and teachers.

The AGM also carried structural changes to the provincial Executive Committee that will take effect at next year's meeting: designated equity seats have been created for members self-identifying as Aboriginal and as racialized.

The creation of these two Executive Committee spaces came two days before the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. As BC Federation of Labour and former BCTF President Irene Lanzinger said marking this important day, "We need to make space for people of colour in our unions and governing bodies. Through inclusion we can hear the stories of people of colour, and learn from them what strategies to use to tackle racism in our society."

The **BCTF AGM** has always been that event I heard people talk about but never really considered attending. However, having great colleagues and mentors in the VSTA and at work, I was 'persuaded' to attend this year!

It was an eye-opening experience into the inner workings of the BCTF; the voting, campaigning, and discussions were exciting and an experience every teacher should consider at some point in their careers.

Lastly, having had the chance to vote our own Rory Brown into the BCTF executive made me feel proud and glad that I am part of such an open, supportive, and organized BCTF local!

Peter Halim, Eric Hamber



A huge thank you to the dedicated VSTA delegates at the 101st BCTF AGM.

Memorandum of Agreement

What does this mean for BC teachers?

The MOA reinstates all local language, including superior provisions, on class size, class composition, non-enrolling staffing ratios, caseloads, and process and ancillary language. Class size and class composition fact sheets for all locals are also posted on the BCTF website: <https://www.bctf.ca//myBCTF/default.aspx>

The Agreement only restores what was unconstitutionally stripped away in 2002. It does not add any new language that did not previously exist in the various local collective agreements, other than a new process on remedies should the employer be unable to comply with the language. So, what happens in case of non-compliance by districts? The MOA includes an important section on remedies for occasions when the collective agreement language on class size and composition cannot be met. This remedy section is designed to act as a very strong incentive so school districts make their “best efforts” to comply.

Best efforts “SHALL include”:

- A. Re-examining existing school boundaries
- B. Re-examining the utilization of

existing space within a school or across schools that are proximate to one another

- C. Utilizing temporary classrooms
- D. Reorganizing the existing classes within the school to meet any class composition language, where doing so will not result in a reduction in a maximum class size by more than
 - Four students for secondary shop or lab classes where the local class size limits are below 30 and
 - Six students in all other grades

These class size reductions shall not preclude a Superintendent from approving a smaller class.

- E. Renegotiating the terms of existing lease or rental contracts (not likely a factor in Vancouver)
- F. Completing the post-and-fill process for all vacant positions

It is crucial for all of us, particularly teachers in schools, to protect our newly won, hard fought for language and not allow the “It’s too hard” or “It can’t be done” argument to sway our resolve. Now is the time for a different kind of hard work: the kind that will yield positive and visible results in far less than fifteen years!

Remedies for Non-Compliance

Teachers of classes with the restored class size and composition provisions will become eligible to receive a monthly remedy for non-compliance effective Oct 1/17. If there is non-compliance for any portion of a calendar month the remedy will be provided for the entire month. Once the value of the remedy has been calculated, the teacher will determine which of the following remedies will be awarded:

- i. Additional preparation time for the affected teacher
- ii. Additional non-enrolling staffing added to the school specifically to work with the affected teacher’s class
- iii. Additional enrolling staffing to co-teach with the affected teacher
- iv. Other remedies that the local parties agree would be appropriate

You will notice that teachers will no longer be offered “cash for kids” under the new agreement. Of course the goal is to reach full implementation of our restored language so children will have the learning environment and teachers the working conditions which we all know are better for everyone.



The International Day of Pink

April 12th, 2017.

*It's Time to Talk About
Bullying - Homophobia - Transphobia*

April 12, 2017 marks the International Day of Pink. It is a day where communities across the country, and across the world, can unite in celebrating diversity and raising awareness to stop homophobia, transphobia, transmisogyny, and all forms of bullying.

The International Day of Pink was started in Nova Scotia when 2 straight high school students saw a gay student wearing a pink shirt being bullied. The 2 students intervened, but wanted to do more to prevent homophobic & transphobic bullying. They decided to purchase pink shirts, and a few days later got everyone at school to arrive wearing pink, standing in solidarity. The result was that an entire school took a stand and began working together to prevent homophobic & transphobic bullying.

The message was clear: anyone can bully, any can be victimized by bullying, but together we can stop it.



It may be the Year of the Rooster...

But in an effort to make 2017 also the **Year of the Vote**, Vancouver teacher volunteers are hard at work phoning their colleagues to talk about the upcoming election. Our goal is to get out the vote – citizens are not represented when only half of eligible voters cast their ballots as was the case in the last provincial election.

EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN

Local Plan Will Stay



Once again Vancouver teachers have voted to retain our current local Extended Health Benefits Plan. On

March 29th and 30th Vancouver Elementary and Secondary teachers cast 2254 valid ballots. The result was that 71.2% of our membership voted to retain our current local Extended Health Benefits plan. ***This means that our current EHB Plan continues as is.***

As the per motion passed at the VTF General Meeting held on January 14, 2015, we will have a yearly review of the provincial EHB plan by the two Executive Committees (VESTA and VSTA) and a presentation to the membership. A subsequent membership vote to join the provincial extended health care plan will be by secret ballot **each year by June 30.**

VSTA Executive Committee Member Description

This volunteer position is open to any VSTA member. The Executive Committee provides advice to the In-House Table Officers (President/Vice-Presidents) and takes on an active leadership role. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone looking to gain more insight into the workings of their local union and the school board. You may serve as a Local Representative, chair one of the VSTA standing committees (Pro-D, Health & Safety, Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining, Social & Environmental Justice, Technology) or be a Member-at-Large.

We ask for the following commitments: attending three Thursday evening meetings a month, going to one annual weekend retreat (usually the 3rd week of September), willingness to attend the BCTF AGM during Spring Break (starts on a Saturday afternoon and ends on the following Tuesday afternoon), sitting on VSB Advisory Committees as well as attending SURT days during the year.

VSTA In House Table Officer Description (President/Vice-President)

Responsibilities:

- Member services – Collective Agreement information, discipline, Health & Wellness
- Liaising with Board staff – Human Resources, Labour Relations, Senior Management
- Collective Agreement – enforcement and interpretation, grievances and arbitrations
- Liaising with the BCTF – BCTF AGM, BCTF RA, Federation Leadership Institute, Zone Meetings
- Planning SURT & Exec Retreat
- Supporting Staff Reps & Exec members (especially chairs of Standing Committees)
- Creating Executive Committee & Council agenda
- Communications with members
- Managing office staff
- Managing the building

Expectations:

- Office hours (8:30-4:30/9:00-5:00)
- Evening meetings (Executive, Council, Board & Committee meetings)
- Weekend meetings (BCTF Functions & Executive Retreat)

Skill set:

Ability to balance big picture with details, willingness to listen and function well as part of a team, skilled at creating and maintaining professional relationships, good at seeing connections that lead to thinking ahead and predicting, flexibility and taking initiative.



School Visits

For the second time this school year Rory, Katharine and Trish have been out and about visiting schools to talk about our restored language, member engagement and the provincial election. It has been an almost unprecedented year of change for teachers which is culminating in the wonderfully hard work of reacquainting ourselves with our much neglected CA and the prospect of making our voices heard at the ballot box on May 9th. We look forward to connecting with everybody at our **Annual General Meeting Tuesday, May 16th, 4 PM** at the Tupper Auditorium.

MAY 9TH is around the corner

TIME TO MOBILIZE!

ELECTION DAY is a short time away and it is imperative that teachers do what they can to support engagement and understanding of the issues. **As we focus on the wider community and look to engage our teachers**, the VSTA has been working hard to try to ensure that public education is a vote determining issue on May 9th.

- ✓ **All BCTF** members residing within Vancouver will be receiving letters encouraging them to vote and providing them with the names of candidates in their riding.
- ✓ PAC Reps will be sharing information on **how to register to vote** with parents at meetings.
- ✓ **Training opportunities have been** organized to help teachers improve their ability to engage others in conversations about election issues.
- ✓ On April 4, 7, May 2 and 3 evening **phone banks have been organized**. Teachers will be calling teachers to have conversations about public education and to get out the vote.

All teachers are encouraged **to get involved in the Provincial Election by either:**

- **volunteering directly for a candidate** in their local community
- donating money to a candidate or party of their choice
- or at a minimum, take the time to vote and commit to bringing 5 friends or family members along to the polls.

Introducing a new ELECTION RESOURCE "button" on the VSTA website. Click here for information on the issues and other resources to get students and teachers engaged in this Provincial election May 9th.

Vancouver Riding	Candidates
Fairview <i>None</i>	Louise Boutin, GRN Joey Doyle, YPP Gabe Garfinkel, LIB George Heyman, NDP
False Creek <i>None</i>	James Fillipelli, YPP Morgane Oger, NDP Bradley Shende, GRN Sam Sullivan, LIB
Fraserview <i>Killarney Thompson</i>	Suzanne Anton, LIB Harpreet Bajwa, YPP George Chow, NDP Eric Kolotyluk, GRN
Hastings <i>Templeton Van Tech</i>	Shane Simpson, NDP David Wong, GRN Jane Spitz, LIB
Kensington <i>John Oliver Tupper</i>	Kim Chan Logan, LIB Mable Elmore, NDP Simon Rear, GRN
Kingsway <i>Gladstone Windermere</i>	Elisa Calder, GRN Adrian Dix, NDP Brette Mullins, YPP Trang Nguyen, LIB
Langara <i>Churchill Hamber</i>	Janet Fraser, GRN Michael Lee, LIB Surrinder Trehan, YPP James Wang, NDP
Mount Pleasant <i>Britannia</i>	Jerry Kroll, GRN Conny Lin, LIB Melanie Mark, NDP
Point Grey <i>Byng Kitsilano University Hill</i>	David Eby, NDP Amanda Konkin, GRN James Lombardi, LIB David Stall, YPP
Quilchena <i>Magee Point Grey Prince of Wales</i>	Michael Barkusky, GRN Madeline Lalonde, NDP Andrew Wilkinson, LIB
West End <i>King George</i>	Spencer Chandra Herbert, NDP Nigel Elliott, LIB James Marshall, GRN

British Columbia Election 2017 Political Parties

GRN	Green Party	www.bcgreens.ca
LIB	Liberal Party	www.bcliberals.com
NDP	New Democrat Party	www.bcndp.ca
YPP	Your Political Party	www.yourbc.ca

Strengthening our DEMOCRACY

There are a number of actions we can take to **help students understand the importance of civic responsibility and their role within a participatory democracy.**

Establishing the voting habit

1. Increase voter turnout for **StudentVote**.
Consider creating grade wide opportunities to vote within class time. This requires support from Administration. If you have support of staff, students then can be called down to the polling station by grade to vote. All schools are signed up to participate in StudentVote so work to see that more students than ever are given the opportunity to cast a ballot. Use the StudentVote teacher resources. They are excellent, effective and FREE!
2. Recognizing that there will be students that are 18 on or before May 9th, **invite them to register to vote**. Statistics show that if a young person votes at the first opportunity they have, they are very likely to become life-long voters. The invitation to register to vote can be done in a number of ways. Consider using methods that invite all students such as bulletin announcements, presentations to classes, or grade wide assemblies. Student privacy must be respected and it is important that students self identify to register.

Bringing the Issues into your school

Host an **All Candidates Debate or Forum**. This can be a school-wide event or candidates can be brought into your classroom. It is also an excellent opportunity to plan collaborative events with teachers from other secondary schools in your riding or extend an invitation to our elementary school colleagues in your family of schools. Resources for holding such an event can be accessed at the VSTA website (www.vsta.ca).

In 2000-01, spending on K-12 Education made up one-fifth (20%) of total 20% government spending. By 2015-16, spending on K-12 Education compromised less than 12% of BC Government funding.

Source: <http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Publications/FactSheets/EducationFunding.pdf>

PLEDGE to VOTE

In the last provincial election the voter turn out in Vancouver ridings was 53%.

This election will be close. VERY close!

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Sign the VSTA PLEDGE to vote May 9th, 2017

**You can
VOTE EARLY!**
Advance polls
open April 29-30
and May 3-6.



I'm voting for

- ☐ Fully funded public education
- ☐ Seismic upgrades
- ☐ Neighbourhood schools
- ☐ Reinstated elected trustees
- ☐ A poverty reduction plan
- ☐ A fully implemented restored contract
- ☐ Smaller classes
- ☐ Better supports for kids
- ☐ Safe student data
- ☐ Resources for new curriculum
- ☐ A respectful round of bargaining in 2019

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS AN ELECTION ISSUE

VANCOUVER SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION 2915 COMMERCIAL DRIVE VANCOUVER BC V5N 1C8 TEL: 604.272.3570 FAX: 604.272.3316 WWW.VSTA.CA

Government spending on public education as a proportion of total public spending has been consistently in decline since 2000-2001.

Ministry of Education Spending as a Percentage of Government Spending

