



# TACKBOARD

*The monthly newsletter of the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association*

**H**appy New Year from the VSTA office. It may feel like we've been back for weeks already, but we hope you had a restful break and were able to recharge.

We have been intentional this year about connecting with new(er) teachers and supporting our Staff Reps. We have had a number of people new to the Staff Rep role which has been reinvigorating for the VSTA office. Since November, we have held a New Teacher workshop, a New(er) Staff rep workshop, a Pro-D mentoring workshop and an Indigenous Perspectives workshop. We are also excited to see our Social & Environmental Justice Committee organize a full day conference on the theme of core competencies through a Social Justice lens. Additionally, we know that many of our colleagues organize workshops and conferences throughout the year on a variety of curricular areas. Our belief, based on research, is that the best Pro-D is organized **for** teachers **by** teachers. Our VSTA Pro-D Committee members are also working on events for February and beyond at different school sites.

On the political front, we are engaged

in our role as Stakeholders on all five VSB Standing Committees: Management Coordinating Committee (Committee I), Planning & Facilities Committee (Committee II), Education & Student Services Committee (Committee III), Personnel & Staff Services Committee (Committee IV), and Finance & Legal Committee (Committee V). We have made a submission to Committee I about the importance of public stakeholder input as part of a transparent democratic process; we have re-iterated our support for the re-naming of Crosstown Elementary to Alexander Cumyow Elementary to reflect local heritage and history; we have made a presentation to Committee IV regarding our restored language and our concerns about its implementation as well as the Board's current perception of the non-enrolling ratios as being maximums rather than minimums and finally, we are pleased to see that the Employer is asking for Stakeholder input prior to developing proposals for the 2018-2019 Budget.

We continue to hear frustrations regarding prep time recovery. There is certainly a catch-22 aspect to recovering

lost prep time – it requires TTOC coverage which may or may not happen, so that teachers may end up teaching the lesson they prepped for a TTOC. However, despite the possibility that a TTOC may not be available, we encourage you to continue requesting coverage to compensate for your lost prep blocks. This is the best way to minimize the rate at which the number of prep blocks owing to secondary teachers is growing and hopefully, in the near future, start to reduce this number. Data recently supplied by Employee Services indicates that it would require more than 4 full time teachers employed September to June to make up the current deficit of prep blocks owing at the secondary level.

In terms of the elusive thing that is remedy, the Employer is very close to having worked out a system by which people will be able to access it. We hope that teachers who are owed remedy will be receiving a notification by the end of the month for the months of October, November and December. This will further exacerbate the TTOC shortage, but again, we urge people to attempt to access it.



**New Teacher Workshop** Eighteen new teachers joined us at the VSTA office on Thursday, January 18 for our second New Teacher Workshop this school year. BCTF facilitators and teachers Jatinder Bir from Surrey and Gail Chaddock-Costello of the Langley Teachers' Association led the workshop. It was an informative, engaging opportunity for participants to learn, ask questions and connect with the VSTA. The workshop explored a number of topics such as the role and services of the VSTA and BCTF, our Collective Agreement, Health and Safety, BCTF Code of Ethics, and professional issues. It was a fantastic day and the VSTA looks forward to connecting again with new members.

# BARGAINING

Preparation for Bargaining June 30, 2019



Our current Collective Agreement (CA) will expire June 30, 2019, and it is likely this round will be much more positive than the last one. Three key factors contribute to leaving bargaining acrimony in the past. The Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) monumental win in November 2016 on Class Size and Composition, a BC Premier and Minister of Education who have repeatedly stated their desire for a harmonious relationship with teachers and a commitment to reinvest in education, and a functioning School Board at the VSB all point to reprioritizing Public Education and a healthy relationship with teachers in this province.

There is work to do in order to sign off a new CA deal prior the expiration of our current one, and the first step in this process has already occurred. In December, VSTA surveyed our members to learn more about how working conditions have changed with the restored language.

## VSTA RESTORED LANGUAGE SURVEY

Through the qualitative responses, we learned that approximately 33% of respondents experience notable improvements due to the SCC ruling and restored language. Teachers described feeling less stress, having more manageable workloads, being better able to support students, and having better composition and smaller classes. Further, it was noted that although the SCC ruling had not solved all problems, the restored language moved in the right direction.

16% of respondents reported no change and approximately 25% described working conditions actually worse than before. These neutral to negative comments were almost uniformly linked to the lack of TTOCs and the reality that improved class size has been negated by lack of TTOCs.

Teachers reported that the obligation to cover classes during their preps is not only frustrating but

negatively impacts workload and stress level. The lack of TTOCs was reported to limit full participation in Collaborative Inquiry and other Professional Development, and teachers also commented that they felt forced to come to school when they have been sick for fear of impacting their colleagues due to the TTOC shortage.

Approximately 18% of respondents reported varying concerns and numerous issues were raised such as a great need for SSWs, a perceived negative impact to students due to the loss of hand-timetabled or core classes, being a first year teacher and having nothing to compare the current working conditions to, challenges of teaching in multiple classrooms, and general angst experienced at some schools from the re-tumbling of timetables in September and others.

The VSTA Restored Language Survey was the starting point for June 2019. Next will be the BCTF Bargaining Training on February 1-3. Teachers from around the province will be gathering for the first formal preparation for bargaining.

## SPRING 2018

Spring 2018, VSTA teachers will be surveyed again, this time to determine our Provincial and Local Bargaining Objectives.

## JUNE 2018

In June 2018 we will ratify our list and these VSTA Provincial Objectives will be taken by our representatives to be debated at the BCTF Bargaining Conference in October 2018. This body sets the Provincial Bargaining Objectives.

Teachers are encouraged to examine our current Collective Agreement and begin to itemize issues you would like the VSTA to pursue. Reach out and share your concerns with your Staff Reps and WLC/B Reps, and stay tuned for the VSTA Bargaining Objective Survey that will open this Spring!

## General Meeting Report

Our General Meeting on January 23 dealt with two important issues: the election of our delegates to the BCTF AGM and a motion to allocate up to \$325,000 of the Association's reserves for the purposes of proceeding with the building redevelopment project.

### BCTF AGM

In addition to our three Local Reps, we elected seventeen delegates and two alternates to the BCTF AGM to be held during Spring Break from March 17-20.

**A HUGE thank-you** to the dedicated teachers who were willing to put their names forward and volunteer to give up a portion of their Spring Break to attend this important event on our behalf: Emily Bekkering, Michael-Don Borason, Madeline Brewster, Cindy Dudra, Treena Goolieff, Leanne Hagglund, Peter Halim, Preet Lidder, Sylvia Metzner, Duane Mugford, Trish Mugford, Nancy Palejko, Nigel Reedman, Alyssa Reid, Jay Rudolph, John Silver, Terry Stanway, and alternates Rick Appel and Laen Hershler.

**Please drop by if you can!** This year's AGM will be held at the Hyatt Regency. If you are interested in seeing how the issues addressing public education in BC are being addressed at the Federation level – and interested in witnessing a textbook example of how to manage democratic debate in an assembly of over 700 delegates – please drop by and find our table.

### BUILDING MOTION

We passed the following motion in support of continuing with the redevelopment of our building to include retail space, our offices, and residential rental:

*THAT VSTA continue to pursue the rezoning and redevelopment process, including the development permit for the replacement of the VESTA/VSTA building, with a budget of up to \$325,000 for each association.*

VESTA passed a corresponding motion at their January General Meeting. The allocation of these funds will allow us to pursue rezoning and a development permit for our property. Both increase the value of the property should we ultimately decide to sell rather than proceed with redevelopment. If you have any questions or ideas regarding this project, please contact us at the office.

# REMEDY Q&A

## What is remedy?

'Remedy' is the euphemistically designated compensation that we will receive if we teach classes for which either class size or composition or both fail to conform to our restored language.

## How frequently is remedy calculated and allocated?

Remedy is calculated daily and allocated monthly. The allocation is determined by the highest daily remedy calculation for the month.

## How much remedy can I expect to receive?

Remedy comes in multiples of roughly 26 minutes (25.74 min.) per month. Take the number by which your class exceeds the contract class size (adjusted for composition) plus the number of students with special needs in excess of the contract limit and multiply this total by 26.

## How will I know if I qualify to receive

## remedy for any of my classes?

Employee Services will send you an email which identifies the classes in violation, the amount of remedy calculated for each class, and the total for the month. We will be monitoring these calculations.

## What should I do if I suspect that there is an error in my remedy calculation or if I was expecting to receive remedy for a class but didn't receive an email?

Please ask a Staff Rep. If you still have questions, either you or your Staff Rep should immediately contact us at the VSTA office by phone or email.

## What are my choices for accepting remedy?

Your choices are: a) preparation time, b)

non-enrolling staffing (or TTOC time) to help support the affected classes, c) enrolling staffing to help support the affected classes, or d) pooling of remedy with other teachers at your site to accumulate a total sufficient to support choices 'a', 'b', or 'c'.

## Remedy allocations were supposed to start in November for remedy accrued in October. Why is it nearly the end of January and we haven't received anything?

The remedy calculation was designed to apply to the entire province.

Vancouver's restored language, which includes support for students with 'high incidence' learning disabilities (students with 'Q' designations) combined with our size and challenges related to recruitment and retention in an expensive real estate market, have combined to make the remedy calculation and allocation challenging. At the secondary level alone, we are monitoring over 7100 classes daily.

## Restored Language & Timetabling

As we continue to familiarize ourselves with the restored language, we draw your attention to Article 9.A.1/D.20.A-H in regards to timetabling considerations. The language below lays out guiding principles when creating teaching loads. These guiding principles, which take into account working and learning conditions, should be part of any conversation when creating teaching loads at Staff/Timetable Committee. Article 9.A.2 refers to consideration of our new(er) colleagues and their working conditions.



### Restored provision:

Article 9 – Teacher workload (part one – placed before local instructional time / prep time clause, supervision, alteration of timetable)

Location in current CA:  
Article D.20.A-H.

### 9.A. Timetabling Considerations

1. *In timetabling teachers' loads, consideration shall be given to each load with regard to equalizing the teachers' total assignments considering such factors as:*
  - (a) *The number of course preparations.*
  - (b) *The number of subject areas.*
  - (c) *The teaching locations.*
  - (d) *The number of students.*
  - (e) *Other relevant factors.*
2. *In timetabling teachers' loads, special consideration shall be given to the load of beginning teachers to provide an assignment which is not excessive for the beginning teacher in terms of the number of course preparations, the number of subject areas, the teaching location and the number of students.*



## Attendance Management Program

Teachers in Vancouver continue to be subjected to the much-maligned Attendance Management (Support) Program (AMP) by the Employee Services Dept. of the VSB. The program, which targets employees who are at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of their peer group for absences using sick leave, includes both a series of forced and awkward informal conversations at the school level with the principal and intimidating formal conversations with district staff. The VSTA is pursuing all methods at our disposal to push back on this regressive program. It is unfortunate that the VSB continues to move forward with the AMP in this time of a progressive fresh start for the school board. The VSTA's advice remains the same: **At no point should teachers disclose to the employer (neither the principal nor district staff) their diagnosis, prognosis or treatment of any illness.** If an administrator asks a teacher to attend a meeting, the teacher cannot refuse but can take the time to find a mutually agreeable time for the meeting. The VSTA encourages teachers to take a staff rep and not to engage in dialogue with their principal regarding any illness. If a teacher is called to a district-level AMP meeting, the VSTA recommends the teacher contact the VSTA office and one of the in-house table officers will attend the meeting with the teacher.

## Pharmacare

A PLAN FOR EVERYONE

You may have heard of the hope to achieve a Federal Pharmacare Plan. As VSTA members we are also members of the BC Federation of Labour, BCTF, and Vancouver District Labour Council, and as such we are encouraged to take a closer look and participate in the conversation around the plan.

Canada is the only developed country in the world with a universal health care program that doesn't include a universal prescription drug plan. Canada's patchwork prescription drug system is arguably inefficient and expensive and leaves Canadians with wildly varying prescription drug coverage and access. Many are paying different rates for the same medications. Check out the *A Plan for Everyone* site [http://www.aplanforeveryone.ca/why\\_pharmacare](http://www.aplanforeveryone.ca/why_pharmacare) and reach out to your Member of Parliament to share your thoughts.



## BCTF New Teachers' Conference

Strong Union, Caring Schools:  
A Place for Everyone

**March 2-3, 2018**

The registration is NOW OPEN for the BCTF Conference for New Teachers, TTOCs, and Student Teachers. [HTTP://NTC.BCTFBUZZ.CA/](http://NTC.BCTFBUZZ.CA/)

New Teachers, TTOCs take a look at the exciting and dynamic agenda for this year's BCTF New Teacher Conference. Here are a few titles that may interest you: The Secret Path, Sexual Health Education, Classroom Management, Core French Ideas, Safe and Healthy Tips for New Teachers, I'm New to Teaching – Now What?, Health and Wellness.

The Keynote Speakers: Ivan Coyote will address the needs of marginalized youth and Dr. Vera St Denis will share her approach to Anti-racist education.

Teachers can access funds to attend the conference through their school Professional Development Committee. Teachers Teaching on Call may access the limited funds available on a first come first serve basis through the VSTA.



## LIVING WITH BALANCE

Wednesdays 4:00-6:00 pm

**April 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, 9**

The **Living with Balance** program is initiated by the BCTF Health and Wellness Program and developed by the Occupational Rehabilitation Group. Occupational Therapist Megan Lilley will be facilitating the Wednesday evening workshops with 10-15 Vancouver teachers at the VESTA/VSTA Office.

The focus will be on developing tools and skills related to improving one's vitality and resiliency. The holistic approach to wellness will equip teachers to make simple lifestyle changes that will positively affect their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

### Please register in one of these ways:

1. Online at [www.bctf.ca/forms/LWB-registration.aspx](http://www.bctf.ca/forms/LWB-registration.aspx)
2. E-mail your registration to [lwb@bctf.ca](mailto:lwb@bctf.ca)
3. Fax your registration to 604-871-2287

## 28th Annual Women's Memorial March

For missing and murdered women

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2018**

**March: noon from Carnegie (Main and Hastings)**

**Healing Circle: around 2:30 pm at Oppenheimer Park**

**Community Feast to follow at the Japanese Language Hall**

**Facebook: Annual Feb 14th Women's Memorial March—DTES**

