



TACKBOARD

The monthly newsletter of the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

Welcome back to another school year. As usual the summer has flown by and suddenly the leaves are falling and the skies are grey (but with rain rather than smoke!). Here at the VSTA office, we are in the midst of responding to individual member calls and school union related issues. On the broader horizon, we look forward to the election of a half-time second VP at our September Council meeting, getting ready for Local and Provincial Bargaining, gearing up for the Municipal Election and possibly moving out of our decrepit building by June.

Mark your calendars for Staff Committee Chair training on October 10 – we will be planning and holding this workshop with VASSA – a first for us. Staff Rep training will be happening October 16 and 17. We will also be inviting New(er) Teachers to a workshop on October 11 and this year we will be holding our New Teachers Welcoming event jointly with VESTA on October 15.

Due to the TTOC shortage last year, VSTA came to an agreement with the Board to financially compensate teachers for lost prep-time. Phase 1 was paid out at the end of June, however due to reconciling discrepancies in the data between our records and those of the board, Phase 2 (Apr 3-June 15) will appear on the October 15 pay advice. The Prep-time Compensation Letter of Understanding (LOU) has expired; subsequent lost prep-time will be returned in its contractual form. Thanks very much to Staff Reps who worked hard during the busy start-up week to gather signatures for the phase 2 forms.

We wish all of you an enjoyable Fall season and look forward to meeting the members of the School Union teams (at Council and at our upcoming SURTS).

Katharine, Treena & Terry



World Teachers' Day October 5

Teachers around the province and in more than 100 countries celebrate World Teachers' Day on October 5. World Teachers' Day was proclaimed by UNESCO in 1994 to raise awareness and understanding of the challenges facing teachers every day.

Thank you for your passion, professionalism and dedication to students and public education!

HAPPY WORLD TEACHERS DAY!

Retirement Workshops

2018-19

Workshop 1—NOV 7, FEB 5

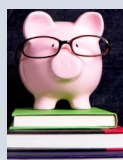
THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN MONEY

Workshop 2—NOV 14, FEB 13, APR 24

THERE'S ALSO THE MONEY

For more info, look for posters in schools or check www.vsta.ca

Co-sponsored by the BC Retired Teachers' Association and VSTA



VSTA SIF 2018-19

As per the decisions made at the 2017 VSTA AGM, fees will be permanently waived for all existing members of the VSTA Salary Indemnity Fund. As per the decisions made at the 2018 VSTA AGM, benefits are now payable to a maximum of 45 days for days of absence due to illness or accident after the expiration of sick leave. To ascertain if you are a member of the VSTA SIF or for any other questions regarding the Fund, please contact Kim at the VSTA office directly at kim@vsta.ca.

Congratulations

Jill Polukoshko,
Eric Hamber teacher,
last year's winner of
the BC School Sports
Coach of the Year 2018.



Craig Brumwell,
Science teacher at
Kitsilano, recipient of the
Prime Minister's Award
for Teaching Excellence
at a special ceremony in
Ottawa last spring.

**ORANGE SHIRT
DAY**

SEPTEMBER 30



**EVERY
CHILD
MATTERS**

Getting Ready for Bargaining

As you are likely aware, our current Collective Agreement expires June 30, 2019. In the interest to ratify a new contract prior to the expiration of the current one, BCTF has extended to BCPSEA our desire to open bargaining by December 1, 2018. To that end, conversations between BCTF and Minister of Finance Carole James in May echoed our need to open early in order to address unresolved and accumulated issues from previous rounds of bargaining. Minister James acknowledged our request as reasonable but stated that the new trustees, who will play a key role at the local table will not be sworn in until December.

In any case, our preparations are well underway. VSTA ratified its objectives in June and they will be debated among others at the BCTF Bargaining Conference October 26 & 27. This conference will set the Objectives and Strategies for the Provincial Table. Katharine Shipley (President VSTA) and Treena Goolieff (Bargaining Chair VSTA) are de facto conference delegates as per BCTF Members' Guide and VSTA is allotted four (4) additional delegates, who will be selected by the VSTA Executive from interested Staff Reps, WLC/B Reps and Executive Members.

We are all hopeful that this round of bargaining will address, among other concerns, our lagging salaries, however, we also must be cognizant that closing the gap cannot be achieved in one round. The time has come to gain ground as we have a provincial government who respects teachers and values quality public education. For the most up to date information on bargaining, check the BCTF Portal.

Email Etiquette in the workplace

Emails have turned into a burden for most of us as we are communicating with colleagues, parents and administrators using this medium. The VSTA office would like to offer some guidance and caution when using email based on some issues we have encountered. While the advice may seem obvious, we invite you to take a moment to reflect on your email practice.



- Include a clear, direct subject line.
- Use your VSB email address for all professional communication with students, parents and colleagues. Use your personal email for Union business and personal communication. The Employer has the right to go through all your emails if they have cause for concern.
- Think twice before hitting 'reply all' especially if parents or administrators are included in the thread.
- Use professional salutations.
- Use exclamation points sparingly. Avoid using ALL CAPS as this suggests that you are shouting.
- Be cautious with humor. Tone does not translate well in emails. What you think is funny may get lost in translation.

- Proofread every message and keep it short. Maybe a face to face conversation is warranted.
- Add the email address last and double-check that you've selected the correct recipient.
- Keep tabs on your tone. Do not send an email if you are angry or frustrated.
- **Nothing is confidential**--so write accordingly. Imagine your email being published in the newspaper with no context -- is there anything that would be cause for concern?

Consider talking to site based colleagues face-to-face and phoning parents for a conversation. It may save time in the long run and can forestall misunderstood communication.

Teacher salaries across Canada: How does BC compare?

Category 5 equivalent maximum salary (as of April 1, 2018)

Province or Territory (City refers to the local agreement)	Salary	Ranking, all	Ranking, provinces
Northwest Territories	\$121,732	1	-----
Nunavut	\$112,430	2	-----
Yukon	\$109,192	3	-----
Alberta (Calgary Public)	\$97,372	4	1
Alberta (Edmonton Public)	\$97,319	5	2
Manitoba (Winnipeg)	\$92,581	6	3
Ontario (London Catholic Elementary-Secondary)	\$92,551	7	4
Ontario (Elementary weighted average)	\$91,315	8	5
Saskatchewan	\$90,076	9	6
Quebec	\$80,572	10	7
New Brunswick	\$80,271	11	8
British Columbia (weighted average)	\$78,757	12	9
Prince Edward Island	\$77,120	13	10
Nova Scotia	\$74,542	14	11
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$70,391	15	12

(BCTF Research; Source: salary data from collective agreements)

VANCOUVER ELECTION

Saturday, October 20, 2018

8:00AM to 8:00PM—Locations (<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/where-to-vote.aspx>)

Early in September, the VSTA Executive passed a motion to endorse nine (9) candidates for the upcoming Trustee School Board Elections. These candidates also have the endorsement of Vancouver District Labour Council (VDLC) and our sister local, Vancouver Elementary Teachers' Association (VESTA).

Historically, municipal voter turn-out is low and candidates can win or lose by only a handful of votes, so teachers have the power to make an impact. Beyond the commitment to get to the polls on October 20th, consider these actions:

- Talk to friends, and family members.
- Share the VSTA poll card via social media.
- Make a campaign contribution to the candidate(s) of your choice.
- Volunteer on a campaign or take a lawn sign.
- Attend the Vancouver District PAC Hosted Trustee Forum at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary, Thursday October 4, 6:30-9:00 pm.
- If you don't live in Vancouver, visit the VSTA.ca website to find a link to see if teachers where you live have endorsed school board candidates.

Vancouver teachers and students benefit when trustees speak up in support of public education. Do your part, get to the polls and support our VSTA list of endorsed candidates.

Our VSTA endorsed candidates are:

✓	REDDY, Jennifer	ONECITY
✓	FRASER, Janet	GREEN
✓	BERCIC, Carrie	ONECITY
✓	GONZALEZ, Estrellita	GREEN
✓	JAAF, Erica	ONECITY
✓	PARROTT, Barb	COPE
✓	LEUNG, Aaron	VISION
✓	WONG, Allan	VISION
✓	ARNOLD, Erin	VISION

ADVANCE VOTING: October 10 to 17

8:00AM to 8:00PM—Vancouver City Hall and
11 additional community centres



Referendum on Electoral Reform

Voting on whether British Columbians should adopt some form of proportional representation will take place October 22-November 30, 2018. The BCTF's position is that it's time for change from the first-past-the-post system, but the Federation has not taken a position in favour of any particular form of proportional representation. Take the opportunity to get informed and cast your ballot on this important issue.

Parents asked to withdraw students from the FSA

This year the government-mandated Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) tests for Grade 4 and 7 students will take place in October and November. As we have for the past several years, teachers are asking parents to request that their children be excused from these tests. The BCTF has long been concerned with the misuse of data from these tests by the Fraser Institute, as well as the time they take away from meaningful teaching and learning. If you are a parent of a child in Grades 4 or 7, please go to the BCTF website to download the form to have them excused from participating.





The Starling Program is an online mental health and wellness tool that is designed specifically for teachers. It helps you assess, monitor, and improve your mental fitness in the privacy of your home. As a member of BC Teachers' Federation, it is available to you and your family members to use anywhere and anytime you want, for free. Starling is and will always be 100% confidential.

If you are feeling stressed, remember that you are not alone. Twenty percent of teachers will experience some type of mental health issue. Over two-thirds of them will not seek help due to stigma and shame.

Starling has improved the lives of thousands of teachers across Canada. We have helped them become more resilient to stress so that they can focus on what they love most – making a positive difference in students' lives.

Starling helps teachers learn about stress, mental fitness exercises, and how to break unhealthy patterns that may lead to anxiety and depression. Starling provides:

- Online training tools and education videos based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Case study videos of a teacher named Virginia
- Evidence based training and tools that are available anytime and anywhere in the world
- An assessment of symptoms and functioning that tracks progress over time
- A five-module preventative mental health program
- A rules engine to provide unique recommendations for each user
- Early intervention programs for anxiety and/or depression
- Additional coverage for family members

As your summer holidays are likely already a distant memory and the rigor and demands of the school year are well underway, we encourage you to take a look at this tool to help you to maintain and improve your mental health (www.starlingminds.com). If you are struggling, please give us a call at the VSTA 604-873-5570.

Back to school teaching resources for teachers

from the Canadian Teachers Federation

We the Educators is an exciting new initiative created by Education International, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and the Alberta Teachers' Association, that invites teachers to join in discussion on the future of public education.

[\[https://wetheeducators.com/we-the-educators-english-4a88a47ab2bb\]](https://wetheeducators.com/we-the-educators-english-4a88a47ab2bb)

Copyright Matters, which provides key questions and answers for teachers, and was produced by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), the Canadian School Boards Association, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

[\[http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/Issues/Copyright.aspx\]](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/Issues/Copyright.aspx)

Copyright Decision Tool, produced by CMEC, is a quick, handy reference to help teachers decide if the fair dealing provision allows the use of print materials, artistic materials, and audio-visual material or whether copyright permission is required.

[\[http://copyrightdecisiontool.ca/DecisionTool/\]](http://copyrightdecisiontool.ca/DecisionTool/)

CTF publications catalogue has resources on a wide range of topics in English and French, available for purchase. The research library has many other publications of interest to teachers available without charge.

[\[https://publications.ctf-fce.ca/en/shop/\]](https://publications.ctf-fce.ca/en/shop/)



Imagineaction has many social justice publications, projects, and resources for teachers and students, as well as funding opportunities and resource persons to assist with school-community social action projects. [\[https://www.imagine-action.ca/default.aspx?lang=EN&set=1\]](https://www.imagine-action.ca/default.aspx?lang=EN&set=1)

from the BCTF

TeachBC – web based collection of BC teachers' lesson & unit plans as well as BCTF lesson & unit resources in English and French [\[https://teachbc.bctf.ca/\]](https://teachbc.bctf.ca/)

Aboriginal Education Teaching Resources – web based resources to assist teachers in incorporating Aboriginal education into their classroom across the curriculum [\[https://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=13404\]](https://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=13404)

Other

Indigenous Knowledge Portal – web based resources from the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society [\[https://fncaringsociety.com/ikp\]](https://fncaringsociety.com/ikp)

MediaSmarts – Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy [\[http://mediasmarts.ca/\]](http://mediasmarts.ca/)

Application Process: Change of Salary Category for Teachers



Teachers are reminded that Human Resources has distributed copies of the document, *Information Regarding Teacher Salary*, including Application for Change of Category for Teachers" to all school sites. Teachers are advised to consult the document to gain an awareness of

the procedure in place and the application form required to get retroactive pay when they apply for a new TQS card for salary change. All applicants must apply through TQS, the Teacher Qualification Service. Go to the TQS website at www.tqs.bc.ca for further information or call TQS at 604-736-5484.