



# TACKBOARD

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

## Message from the office

### BARGAINING

On November 1<sup>st</sup> the BCTF met with the mediator and was provided with his report and recommendations on our negotiations with the Government and BCPSEA. The release of the mediator's report corresponded with the November Rep Assembly (RA) which allowed for a wider body of our membership (Local Representatives, of which VSTA has three) to respond to the report quickly. By now, the membership is aware that the RA rejected the recommendations and that the BCTF has requested further Bargaining dates. Members are encouraged to log into the BCTF portal to read the BCTF bargaining team's submission to the mediator, their response to BCPSEA's submission, the mediator's report, as well as recommendations from the RA.

We continue to apply political pressure, along with VESTA, by meeting with NDP MLAs and writing VSB Trustees (yet again). BC public school students continue to be underfunded – more than \$1800 below the national average – and our beginning teachers start at \$50,000 a year – nearly the lowest teaching salary in Canada. A teacher shortage prevails throughout BC; small wonder considering working and learning conditions. We are also seeing increased enrolment at private schools, which are significantly subsidized by the Provincial government and boast of their small class sizes in their marketing campaigns. In terms of funding, Cabinet will be examining a proposed new public school funding model which has emerged from the Funding Model Review discussions. This has been a controversial process: it has included very little representation from the BCTF and it is based on the premise that there will be no new funding – just a reshuffling of existing funding. A particularly controversial aspect of the proposed model is that funding for Special Needs students will be based on population data averages for how frequently different types of learning difficulties manifest in a given region. It is unclear to us at this point how this prevalence notion of funding students with Special Needs will play out. With Special Needs funding no longer determined by the number of students diagnosed with learning problems that create a need for that funding, an important incentive for these assessments will be removed. This amounts to an end-run around the Supreme Court decision which restored class size and composition language to our Collective Agreement. Without a means to determine class composition, this language is meaningless. We should be permitted to bargain changes – not have the language effectively extinguished by a Ministerial Order regarding the funding formula.



Katharine, Terry & Treena  
Halloween 2019

see MESSAGE, back cover

## Remedy 2017-2018

If you still have Remedy owing from 2017-2018, please check with your Staff Rep to see how much is left. Teachers have used Remedy for Pro-D, field trips, classroom supplies, bringing in guest teachers, etc.

The VSTA would like to get these monies spent on classroom resources or Pro-D **by June 2020**.

**Please submit all your receipts at once to make accounting easier for us.**



The VSB Trustees passed the following motion: The VSB supports participation in the Climate Strike on November 29 and in subsequent Climate Strikes including incorporating educational programming as appropriate, for example field trips, in-school actions of classroom discussions, considering ways for staff to voluntarily support/participate, consulting with union locals as necessary, and excusing absence of any student with a signed permission note from their parent or guardian as per usual procedures.

Teachers who wish to attend can apply for personal leave without pay. Email [leaves@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:leaves@vsb.bc.ca).



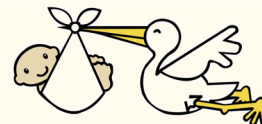
## When Booking an Absence on SFE

- Please take a moment to check "**your classification**" as this is not always up-to-date. The office staff can provide you with a form to update your classification.
- Whenever possible, please include the specific classes that will be taught in the "substitute instructions" box as well as where your day plan will be located.
- If you do not already have a TTOC folder on your desk or in your letter box, consider making one that includes class lists with designations and please include a note as to where to find IEPs and any safety plans.

The TTOCs coming into your classes appreciate all of the information you are able to provide.

## Parent Leave Info Request

**Attention parents!** We would be very interested in hearing from you if:



- You took 18 month parental leave and wanted to return to your previous school but were denied the opportunity to do so or...
- You would have preferred 18 month parental leave but chose 12 months in order to retain your right to return to your school.

(We would also be interested in hearing from prospective parents for whom the right to return to their current school is a factor in deciding the length of their parental leave.)

Please call Terry at the VSTA office or email [terry@vsta.ca](mailto:terry@vsta.ca).

## Ad Hoc Teacher of Colour Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 19, 4-5 pm at the VSTA office



### Terms of Reference

The Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association Ad Hoc Teacher of Colour Committee is created to provide an opportunity for teachers of colour to discuss their life experiences, ideas, and concerns as educators, and to work towards concrete actions designed to raise awareness, and to bring cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity assets to make the VSTA stronger through diversity and inclusion.

Objectives may include:

- Reviewing member survey on Equity
- Reviewing existing VSTA policies and structures concerning teachers from the perspective of members of colour, and propose changes to ensure the needs of educators of colour are met;
- Identifying the needs of members of colour within the VSTA
- Strengthening the VSTA with more robust involvement by members

Please RSVP to [mo@vsta.ca](mailto:mo@vsta.ca) by November 12<sup>th</sup>.

## Welcome CARL JANZE!

Carl was elected  
as Technology  
Chair at the  
October Council  
meeting.



## November 6 General Meeting Update

One hundred and thirty-two VSTA members came out to debate three constitutional and by-law changes, as well as to receive an update on bargaining from Teri Mooring. The recommendation to change the requirements for quorum was passed. That means that now, if the required quorum of 70 people is not met when the meeting is set to begin, the meeting will reconvene after a 10 minute recess and the members present at the reconvened meeting shall constitute quorum.

The meeting also carried recommendations in regards to equity seeking groups. Our AGM in May will see the first elections for two newly designated member-at-large seats on the Executive Committee – one for a teacher of colour and one for a 2SLGBTQ+ teacher. We look forward to further diversifying our Executive Committee both in people and in viewpoints, and engaging with members who come to the table ready to take action!



Lorena Duran—VESTA/VSTA New Teachers Induction  
October 28, 2019 at the Italian Cultural Centre

# The Future of Public Education

## A Focussed Discussion of Five Topics

Hosted by Dr. Jason Ellis (UBC) and the VSTA

Please join us for a series of five discussions about the future of public education in the District, region, and Province.



Dr. Ellis is an Associate Professor in UBC's Department of Educational Studies. His research interests include Children and youth, Disability studies, Educational Administration, History of Education, Policy, Political economy of education, Social and Cultural Foundations of Education, and Urban studies.

The five topics selected for this series are:

The Future of	Date	Time	Location	Registration deadline
<b>SOGI education</b>	December 4	4:00 – 6:30	VSTA Office	Nov 28
<b>Choice programs in secondary schools</b>	December 12	4:00 – 6:30	VSTA Office	Dec 5
<b>Public money for private schools</b>	January 20 (Pro-D Day)	9:30 – 12:00	to be confirmed	Jan 13
<b>Inclusion</b>	February 14 (Pro-D Day)	9:30 – 12:00	to be confirmed	Feb 7
<b>Teacher education</b>	April 6	4:00 – 6:30	VSTA Office	Mar 30

Sessions will be held at the VSTA/VESTA offices at 2915 Commercial Drive and at another location to be confirmed. Each session will be approximately 2.5 hours in length and a light meal will be provided. Brief readings will be prepared and distributed in advance of the sessions. The main request of participants is that they be willing to participate in small group discussions.

Enrollment is limited to 24 participants per session. To register, please email [mo@vsta.ca](mailto:mo@vsta.ca) and indicate which sessions you would like to attend.



# Leadership-Environment-Action- First People's Principles of Learning

*A Collaborative Approach to Building Place Based, Environmentally Conscious Learning in BC Schools*

About 5 years ago a group of teachers at Lord Byng Secondary School launched an inquiry group that considered the question of how to create more outdoor learning experiences for students. The changes in the BC curriculum, including a mandate to bring more Indigenous content and perspective into classrooms created an opportunity for our Inquiry Group to design something unique. The LEAF project is the result of that effort.



We envision a graduation certificate that will be granted to students who have demonstrated significant learning in the areas of leadership and community development with a focus on the environment and local places. That learning will include an action project, mentored by an educator, that fulfills the Capstone requirement. The First People's Principles of Learning, embedded in our new curriculum, are the foundation of the LEAF program design. Students should be able to draw a distinct connection between their Capstone action project and at least one element of the First People's Principles of Learning.

The LEAF program will deliver the new BC curriculum by connecting it to the local environment, and more widely, to global issues. The program will be taught by a cohort of educators who will facilitate experiential and inquiry-based learning projects that are designed to enhance and develop student leadership skills. Global issues will be approached through a local lens, and students will be empowered to implement action projects in their homes, schools,

and local communities. By connecting curricular content to natural environments and global issues, students will receive a rich multi-modal education utilizing both indoor and outdoor classroom spaces. Upon successful completion of the program we envision students engaged in meaningful action projects in their communities.

We are currently in the process of developing the criteria for establishing how any course would satisfy the requirements for LEAF. Much of what is proposed in LEAF is already being done in classrooms through the District. What is missing, and what the LEAF certificate program offers, is a way to bring these disparate learning opportunities together into a meaningful and recognized framework. We hope that the LEAF Certificate project will help teachers deliver the new curriculum in a holistic, interdisciplinary and meaningful way.



*"The inter-connectedness of the biosphere (and our place within it), and the simple opportunity to spend time in, and surrounded by nature is a wider scope for educational opportunities than environmental problems. This approach also serves our learners by allowing them to experience, discover, and reflect upon their identities, their place, and their understandings."*

*VSB Environmental Sustainability Plan 2018-05-28, Page 3*

#### **The Lord Byng LEAF Inquiry Team**

Lori York, Matt Barski, Shelby Calman, Kirsten Rusko,  
Alain Raoul, Malorie Pendree, Kim Chong-Ping,  
Simon Collins, Scott McKeen



# Prevalence Funding Model for Special Education

*BC Ministry of Education has proposed a Funding Model Review for public education.  
This review includes a Prevalence Funding Model for special education.*

As you are likely aware, the Ministry of Education began a process to examine the funding model for K-12 Education in BC in 2017. A panel was appointed to undertake this review and notably, the BCTF the was **not** invited to be part of it. A report with 22 recommendations was issued, but so far, none of them have been implemented. Furthermore, at no point during the consultation process did the ministry release a concrete model that illustrated in detail any of the proposed changes as to how it would implement the above recommendations. It is our understanding that Cabinet will be reviewing the recommendations this month.

## Prevalence Funding

Of central concern raised by the BCTF with the ministry's proposed funding model is the move to a "prevalence funding model" for inclusive education. The basic premise of prevalence funding is that school districts are provided a pot of money to support inclusive education, but that the funding is totally delinked to the designations of students. The BCTF has raised a number of concerns:

1. The first concern is the adequacy of funding. The new model leaves unquestioned the sufficiency of funding - the model proposes to change how an inadequate funding pot is distributed.
2. A prevalence-based funding model could lead to a decline in formal student assessments especially for those students who cannot afford private assessment. The lack of assessments may eventually lead to lowering of the societal prevalence of a designation, in turn decreasing funding based on the diminishing prevalence of a designation. As funding in this model is not driven by designation but rather by a statistical prevalence - there is less need for parents to ensure their children have a designation.

Help **stop** the **prevalence model**  
for special education **funding**!



To see the full BCTF Research report – see <https://tinyurl.com/BCTF-Report>

3. These funds would not only cover inclusive education but also English Language Learning, pre-K preparedness and supports for vulnerable students. This demand leads to competition for funding and creates further need for advocacy by parents and teachers, in turn exacerbating inequities between students.

Finally, the current prevalence funding proposal would distribute funds to districts in part (50%) based on anonymized Ministry of Health data for BC students. It is unclear, however, how health data would capture large categories of need such as learning disabilities or intensive behaviour - needs typically only assessed within the education system rather than by the medical system. This change will likely leave many of our students unsupported as they will be overlooked as their designation does not originate within the health system.

The BCTF calls on the ministry to immediately put on-hold the Funding Model Review and Prevalence Funding for inclusive education and to present a concrete model for any proposed changes in order to give stakeholders a genuine opportunity to offer feedback. Ultimately, within the discussion to change the funding model there must be space to discuss systemic underfunding - **our students and public schools deserve better.**



**O**n October 24, members of the Executive Committee answered the call to support the UNITE HERE Local 40 hotel workers who have been on strike for nearly 50 days. Local 40 workers are disproportionately women of colour, immigrants, and First Nations. While they have achieved settlements that include significant wage increases and improved working conditions with most, they have been unable to achieve a settlement with the Hotel Georgia and the Belmont. [www.uniteherelocal40.org](http://www.uniteherelocal40.org)

MESSAGE, from front cover

## SECONDARY EDUCATION VISION

Against the backdrop of bargaining uncertainty and chronic underfunding is the current state of the vision for Secondary education. Or the lack thereof. The Ministry of Education is completely focussed on data – data from FSAs, data from Numeracy and Literacy exams, graduation rate data and so on. This is no surprise given that the Assistant Deputy Minister is a former staffer of the Fraser Institute. Electives teachers know only too well that students on partial timetables mean the demise of once robust electives programs and core academic teachers tell us that students are pushed online if there aren't a "minimum" number of students enrolled. That said, Vancouver Secondary teachers themselves have dreams and vision for what a meaningful Secondary program could like. For example, teachers at Byng through Collaborative Inquiry have envisioned LEAF (Leadership/Environment/Action/First People's Principles of Learning) and teachers at John Oliver have promoted courses in bundles leading to post-secondary options. The missing link is a commitment from our Board and the Ministry to support these grassroots initiatives and articulate a vision for secondary education in BC. To engage more teachers in thinking about the bigger picture of education, the VSTA is organizing a Pro-D inquiry series entitled "The Future of Public Education: A Focussed Discussion of Five Topics". Hosted by Dr. Jason Ellis of UBC's Department of Educational Studies, these discussions are intended to generate ideas about what secondary education might - or should - look like in the future. We would very much value your attendance at these sessions – please see the announcement in this Tackboard.

In solidarity,

*Katharine, Treena & Jerry*

## SCHOOL UNION REP TRAINING

October at the Holiday Inn Vancouver Centre



### Ed May Social Responsibility Grants

The Ed May Social Responsibility Education Fund promotes socially responsible teaching in inclusive, safe, and healthy schools by providing money to assist teachers in developing and implementing violence-prevention, antiracist, multicultural, gender-equity, global, environmental, or peace resources. Individuals or groups of teachers may apply for up to \$2000.

Application forms **MUST** be signed by your local president. Please make sure you include the evaluation page that incorporates an analysis of your project using the social justice lens.

**Timeline:** Applications must be received by 5:00 pm on November 21, 2019.

For criteria, process and application guidelines, go to <https://tinyurl.com/EdMayGrant>

### White Ribbon Campaign

Week of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

December 2 to December 10

VSTA members will be provided with a white ribbon which they may wear during the week of December 2nd to 6th as a symbol of their opposition to all forms of violence against women.

