

Candidates for Delegate to the BCTF AGM 2025

VSTA members will be able to elect 16 delegates to the BCTF AGM after the VSTA General Meeting on January 22, 2025.

CANDIDATES

Baldeep Bassi

Mike Collier

Gregory Henderson

Alina Ismaguilova

Carl Janze

Omar Kassis

Irving Lau

Christine McKinnon

Kamey Munsamy

Cassie Naymie

Les Nerling

Ginaya Peters

Kaera Ross

Carmen Schaedeli

John Silver

Stephanie Tsui

Baldeep Bassi

John Oliver | 20.5 yrs teaching exp | Social Studies, English, ELL, Law, History, Social Justice, Psychology, VLN

It would be an honour to once again represent VSTA at the BCTF AGM. I teach Socials Studies, Law and ELL at John Oliver Secondary and currently serve on the VSTA Executive as a Member at Large and was an elected VSTA representative at the 2024 Bargaining Conference. I have also previously served as a Director of the BCTF Assistance Society which aims to help colleagues who are in financial need. In addition to this, I have also served as a SEJ Rep and WLCB represent for J.O. All these valuable experiences taught me that to make a difference, one must engage with the union on each level where I could listen and learn from all the voices within our membership. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in a forum where the concerns of all BCTF teachers will be voiced and to advocate on behalf of VSTA members regarding the concerns we have in a bargaining year.

Mike Collier

Magee | 14 yrs teaching exp | Sped, Humanities, Drama, Admin, Dept Head, Curriculum Coordinator

I look forward to representing everyone.

Gregory Henderson

Thompson | 17 yrs teaching exp | Science and Mathematics

This year I have the privilege of being the chair of the Working/Learning Conditions and Bargaining Committee. Last year, I was the Technology Committee chair and before that a technology representative for my school. I enjoyed the last two AGMs and would be grateful for the opportunity to be part of the delegation representing the views of the VSTA this year. As we begin bargaining, I look forward to supporting motions and policies that ensure we are in the best position to make the meaningful gains that teachers need to see in the workplace.

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Prince of Wales | 4 yrs teaching exp | TTOC, Math, Science and, Mini School coordinator

I attended my first AGM in 2023 with my former local (Delta Teachers Association), when I was in my second year of teaching. I remember listening to Sam Hammond from the Canadian Teachers' Federation say to the 500+ teachers there, "You are in the most important profession in this country, do not hesitate to say that." To be surrounded by so many passionate people in an overworked and underpaid profession was moving, especially as an early career teacher. This experience was so impactful on me that I attended the AGM again in 2024. I remember hearing someone on the executive committee say, "The superintendent should be on the TOC list!" to which everyone cheered. I'd like to continue contributing to the meaningful recommendations that locals put forward to the BCTF. Our workload cannot continue to grow. Attending the 2025 AGM will allow me to continue advocating for the needs of teachers in British Columbia, doing the most good with the least harm for our students.

Carl Janze

VSTA | 27 yrs teaching exp | STEM, ICT, PE, IE, Special Ed, English/ELL

I have been with the VSB since 1995 and served in numerous Union roles at the school, local and provincial level (Pro-D, WLCB, VSTA Tech Chair, BCTF WLC/BAC & AEAC and, since 2022, a VSTA Vice-President) and have been fortunate to attend several BCTF AGMs. Being a part of representational democracy in action is a humbling experience and has shaped the core values that I reflect upon when I am called to act in service to and in the name of our members. I seek your support to represent and speak on behalf of Vancouver Secondary teachers at the BCTF AGM. Thank you for consideration as a candidate.

Omar Kassis

VASS | 23 yrs teaching exp | Cedar Walk, Alternate Education Program for Indigenous youth partnered with VSB and UNYA, Ahousaht

As a former Staff Rep for several years and now a Member-at-Large on the VSTA Executive, I have gained a lot of leadership experience with our union. I talk to members from across the district every week and bring their concerns to Council when appropriate. I was instrumental in drafting our motion to call for a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel in December 2023, and I continue to ensure this delicate and heartbreaking issue is addressed in the appropriate venues. I want to attend the AGM to deepen my knowledge of our union processes and to soak up some nice solidarity vibes!

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Irving Lau

John Oliver | 16 yrs teaching exp | Science, Life Science, A&P, Mathematics, FOM, Planning, Career Prep

I am Irving Lau, with 16 years of experience in public education and a proud product of Vancouver's public schools. Raised in a union household where both my parents were staff reps, I deeply value the role of labour unions. In this time of unprecedented underfunding and the severe needs of our learners, we need strong voices advocating for essential support and better working conditions. As a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, I am committed to highlighting the challenges and fears of queer members, especially amidst increased attacks on SOGI education. I seek your support to be a delegate at the BCTF AGM to fight for a work environment that is truly sustainable for our members. Thank you.

Christine McKinnon

TTOC | 8 yrs teaching exp | English Language Arts, English First Peoples, Core French

It would be an honour to once again represent the VSTA at this year's BCTF AGM. My work as a TTOC Staff Rep at Council, affords me the advantage of hearing concerns from my site-based colleagues from across the district. As a delegate to the 2024 AGM, it was a privilege to work in solidarity with colleagues from across the province to work towards improving our working conditions, as well as improving the learning conditions of our students. The opportunity to collaborate and work collectively to address these challenges with our colleagues, is not one that I take lightly. I want to ensure that the voices of VSTA teachers are heard loud and clear.

Kamey Munsamy

Churchill | 25 yrs teaching exp | K-12.

Solidarity is at the heart of our profession, and the ability to clearly understand the issues that face us as teachers on a daily basis is a guiding factor in how I vote at the AGM. I have been a teacher for 25 years in the K-12 system and a high school teacher for the majority of my career. On a day-to-day basis, I hear from my colleagues about the many demands and strains being placed on them in the workplace in my role as a school-based resource teacher. I am committed to elevating and amplifying the concerns of my teacher colleagues at the AGM in the hope that it brings about impactful positive changes to their benefit and well-being.

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Cassie Naymie

TTOC | 3 yrs teaching exp | TTOC, Secondary, and Summer School

Hello! My name is Cassie Naymie and I am currently serving on VSTA's executive committee as the TTOC chair. I support and inform a wide network of TTOCs and new teachers, and see this opportunity as an extension of that role. In my work I aim to advocate for a system that supports TTOCs and continuing teachers alike as they collaborate towards functional education. I've been a TTOC rep on the WLCB committee, chaired TTOC committee meetings that were welcoming and engaging, and hosted a wonderful TTOC social. It would be an honour to serve my colleagues as a delegate at the BCTF AGM.

Les Nerling

Killarney | 22 yrs teaching exp | Music and Counselling

I feel fortunate to be in a profession that I enjoy (and it's weird to say it is over two decades already). While I find many parts of my work rewarding, my experience also gives me clarity on the issues where we need advocacy and resolutions. As a former Staff Rep and now as a Member at Large on the Executive Committee, I am committed to representing you as my colleagues. My desire is to work together for change that will serve us and our students well. Last year, I attended the BCTF AGM for the first time and it was a worthwhile experience. I would be honoured to represent you again this year. Thank you for your consideration.

Ginaya Peters

Point Grey | 20 yrs teaching exp | French Immersion intermediate, Resource teacher, District Learning Services: DRT, and Gifted Education Secondary Resource Teacher

I am a Member-at-Large on VSTA EC. I am a school-based resource teacher at Point Grey and I previously worked in elementary, VLN, and at Learning Services. I served as a staff rep at VLN, DLS, and at Point Grey and I believe that working together to strengthen our profession for the benefit of teachers is the key role of attending an AGM. As teachers we have shared concerns and together, we can deliver real solutions to benefit teachers and our working environment. My goal in participating in the AGM is to be another voice for our hard working and passionate educators both in our local and at the BCTF. I also have a window into the other side of the teaching equation – I have 2 children currently in the VSB along with one graduate. I am fluent in French and have my Master's in Special Education, which is my professional passion. As an AGM participant, my goal is to ensure that VSTA issues are heard and worked on at the provincial level.

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Kaera Ross

Britannia | 13 yrs teaching exp | English, Flex Humanities, LAC, LSP, Socials, Indigenous Education, Secondary Counselling

My name is Kaera Ross (She/They) and as a gender diverse settler, cross-curricular educator, school counsellor, BCTF SJ Facilitator, and VSTA member of 12 years, I am running as one of your local representatives of the BCTF. Over my time with the VSTA, I have been local SJ Chair, Timetable Committee Chair, and attended Zone Meetings. I take a collaborative counselling approach to working with diverse opinions to reach consensus that ensures all voices are at the table. I am currently a BCTF Social Justice Facilitator, and member of the Gender Diverse Educators of BC Working Group. Working with 2SLGBTQIA+ educators throughout BC, I have seen the great work that can be done by connecting with colleagues across the province to push the employer for better recognition of social justice and human rights through labor solidarity. I would be honored to represent the VSTA as a local delegate in this year's AGM to advocate for our district, and collaborate with others.

Carmen Schaedeli

VSTA | 19 yrs teaching exp | English, ELL

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to serve as a staff rep for several years before joining the Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large, and then as a Local Representative. I have also represented the VSTA as a delegate at the last four AGMs, have served as Vice President for two years and am currently the President of our Association. We work in a challenging and rapidly changing profession which requires strong advocacy at the district and provincial level. The BCTF AGM provides the opportunity to connect with colleagues across the province and strategize for the future of our profession. I look forward to the opportunity to support the delegate team again this year in representing our membership at the AGM.

John Silver

VSTA | 26 yrs teaching exp | Tech Ed

As we move through Local Bargaining this winter, the BCTF will play an important role for BC teachers as we move through the spring into Provincial Bargaining. The BCTF AGM provides us with the opportunity to set the tone for the Federation for the near and distant future. This is an important time for teachers in BC as we move through many changes to our profession. I would be honoured to be a delegate to make these important choices for our profession. I am hopeful that our strength in solidarity will provide us the improvements we need to make our next contract more superior to our current conditions.

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Thompson | 20 yrs teaching exp | Resource, Library, Counselling, ELL, English

My name is Stephanie Tsui and I'm running to be your VSTA delegate for the 2025 BCTF AGM. I have worked as a Secondary School Counsellor for 9 years and as the ELL Department Head for 4 years at David Thompson Secondary. I have served the VSTA membership as a DT Staff Representative for many years and this year on the Executive Committee as a Teacher of Colour Member at Large where my priority is incorporating my belief in building and advocating for a professional community that is supportive of all. My various roles have prepared me to listen, understand, and advocate for the needs of those I serve. This work is based on my belief that when we work together, communicate/listen thoughtfully, and act according to best practice, we are better able to navigate complex systems and difficult situations to arrive at equitable and just processes. As a BCTF AGM Delegate, I will look for opportunities to improve working conditions for teachers and ways to address our district's diverse needs.