

Goodbye & Thank You!



After 30 years in the VESTA office, providing support to all the VESTA table officers, executive committee members and the many Vancouver elementary teachers who visited or contacted the office, Rossanne Tanner is retiring. On Friday, June 1 at the University Women's Club, current and past executive committee members,

colleagues, table officers, members of VSB management, and family celebrated Rossanne in honour of her many years of dedicated service and friendship. Speakers all commented on Rossanne's commitment to VESTA which went far beyond just doing her job. She ensured that the association efficiently met the needs of our members, by her improvements to routines and communications. Past presidents, Maureen MacDonald, Pat Gudlaugson, Susan Davis, Barb Parrott and Christina Schut all recognized Rossanne's organizational skills, knowledge of the history and practices of the association, her integrity, ability to take on challenges, and most importantly her ability to train newly elected table officers in their duties. VESTA will find someone to fill Rossanne's position but to all of us she is irreplaceable.

At the VESTA AGM Rossanne was awarded Honorary Membership in recognition of her years of service and importance to VESTA.

Best wishes for a long, healthy and adventurous retirement Rossanne!

Contact Us

2915 Commercial Drive
Vancouver, BC V5N 4C8
Office: 604-873-8378
Fax: 604-873-2652

Chris Harris, President
chris@vesta.ca

Gerry Kent, 1st VP
gerry@vesta.ca

Dan Graves, 2nd VP
dan@vesta.ca

Nancy Hawkins, 3rd VP
nancy@vesta.ca

Sasha Wiley-Shaw
Adult Ed Sub local President
sasha@vesta.ca

Editor: Gerry Kent

Proofreader: Nancy Hawkins

Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express policy of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association. No reprints without permission.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR UPCOMING MEETINGS

June

12 Staff Rep Assembly
21 Appreciation Reception
25 Retirement Dinner
28 TTOC BBQ/Swap Meet
29 Schools Close

September 2012

4 Schools Reopen
10 Anti-Poverty Committee
20 General Meeting/SRA
27 PD Committee

October

2-3 Staff Union Rep Training
8 Thanksgiving
16 General Meeting/SRA
19 Provincial PD Day

Employment Equity

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING between British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA)

The parties recognize that Aboriginal teachers are under-represented in the public education system. The parties are committed to redress the under-representation of Aboriginal teachers and therefore further agree that:

- They will encourage local school board and teacher unions to make application to the Human Rights Tribunal under section 42 of the *Human Rights Code* to obtain approval for a "special program" that would serve to attract and retain Aboriginal teachers.
- The parties will assist local school boards and teacher unions as requested in the application for and implementation of a "special program" consistent with this Letter of Commitment.

BCTF supports an Aboriginal Employment Equity program. In the *Members' Guide to the BCTF* it states:

1.A.13 (b) That the BCTF actively support an employment equity program for the public schools with the aim of achieving a teacher force that is reflective of the ethnic diversity of BC public schools.

The Vancouver Teachers' Federation (VTF) and the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) applied for and received a BC Human Rights exemption, which allow the VTF and the VBE to meet and develop procedures to attract, hire and retain self-identified Aboriginal educators. VESTA is proud of this accomplishment and supports the goal of increasing the numbers of Aboriginal educators in the district, in order to address historical under representation but also to provide role models for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth in our schools. The VTF and VBE continue to work on formalizing the procedures that will be followed in the

Chris, Dan, Gerry, Lori, Nancy,
Olga, Rossanne, Vilma



Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

VESTA news



Volume 38 Issue #6

2012 June

2012–13 VESTA Executive Committee

The following members were elected to the 2012–13 VESTA Executive Committee at our AGM on 2012 May 15

President—Gerry Kent

1st VP—Dan Graves

2nd VP—Heather Allison

3rd VP—Jack MacDermot

Grievance/IHTO Support

Jody Polukoshko

Local Reps to the BCTF

Jack MacDermot

Glenn Vockeroth

Shannon Harris

Donna Brack

Alternate Local Rep

Jody Polukoshko

Members-At-Large

Kelly-Anne Bishop

Jill Barclay

Sundee Sahota

Christine Simister

Cheriee Weichel

Jennifer Wyss

Committee Chairs

Aboriginal—Laura Rudland

Anti-Poverty—Suzanne Salter

Anti-Racism—Mary Chow

Communications—Anna Chudnovsky

Health & Safety—Patti Park

Pride—Heidi Ravenal

Professional Issues—Rod Ratzlaff

Status of Women—Susan Garber

Sustainability—Barbara Hinson

Teachers On Call (Co-chairs)

Melissa Moore

Robyn Wharram

WLC/Bargaining—Chris Harris

Adult Ed Sub-Local

President—Sasha Wiley-Shaw

President's Message

As I move on from being the VESTA president for the last three years, I can look back at what we did as a union that lead to successful outcomes for our members and public education. When teachers work together, have solidarity, and stand as one, we can make positive change.

The VESTA president needs to know that there are 2800 members standing in support when s/he is negotiating with the Board. That's our strength, and when all our members are engaged, informed and active with the issues, we make great democratic decisions that make a difference.

We've had many union activists retire over the last few years, but I have also seen new activists come onto the VESTA executive as well.



Chris Harris, VESTA President 2009—2012 at the VAG rally on March 7.

Also, experienced and new staff reps have helped hold their schools together this year during what was the longest teachers' strike in BC history.

We have been successful in making sure there is renewal in the union and that our members are supported. I step away knowing that we will have great leadership at VESTA during what will be, again, a very challenging school year.

At this point, no one knows what will occur during the summer. We are facing a provincial government that has decided to work against teachers instead of with them. Whatever happens, and as I prepare to work with my colleagues in providing the very best education possible for Vancouver students, I know that we may have to take some action when we come back to work in the Fall. We can't lose our collective voice.

Keep wearing those t-shirts, writing letters to the editor, and talking to neighbours about the importance of public education.

Take care over the break and look out for each other.

In Solidarity,
Chris Harris

"Ce n'est qu'un Au Revoir"



Nancy Hawkins, VESTA Vice President 2010—12

VESTA wishes Nancy a long, fun and healthy retirement.

Letters to the Editor



To Members of the VESTA Executive – Past and Present

I'm retiring this month. As I was emptying out my desk, I found my copy of our contract. Looking through it, I couldn't help but reflect on what this document represents to Vancouver teachers: support for each of us individually through the power of the collective, and hundreds and hundreds of hours of your labour and your brilliance. I am so very grateful for all that I've gained from your activism, your support and your passion for justice for us all.

Thank you.

Corrie Broderick
Dickens

Extra-curricular, volunteering and WCB coverage

It's lunch time and you're holding a friendly teacher-student volleyball game in the gym. Superstar student Spike smashes a volley your way and you dive to cover Nellie at the net. Down you go with a thud and a groan. Oh, oh...this body isn't as agile as it once was!

You suspect you may have cracked a rib and will need to be off for a few



days so you file a WCB claim. Well this is what you need to know cautions Karen Langenmaier in BCTF *Teacher* newsmagazine, Spring 2012.

Activities such as coaching, conducting a school band or taking a group of students on a field trip is generally accepted as part of a teacher's work. **Participating in an event at lunch or after school carries a higher burden of proof. WCB in one case decided that teachers taking part in teacher-student activities at lunch are volunteering and that participation is not part of a teacher's job. Therefore, if a teacher is injured they are not eligible for compensation for the injury.**

Here are some points WCB uses in determining if your claim will be accepted:

- Were the activities part of the job?
- Was the worker instructed or directed by the employer?
- Did the activity take place during normal working hours?
- Was a worker on full salary?
- Was the activity supervised by an employer?
- Was physical activity a requirement of the job?
- Was there an intention to foster good relations with the public or section of the public with which the worker deals?
- Did the activity take place on the employer's premise?

You can strengthen the acceptance of your injury claim by having a written confirmation signed by you and your administrator outlining the details of your extra-curricular activity involvement.

Next year, the VESTA Health and Safety Committee will work on behalf of members to develop such a form.

Until then, have a safe and restful summer!

Patti Park
Chair, VESTA Health & Safety Committee

Bill 22 hurts students and attacks teachers



Bill 22 makes working and learning conditions even worse

- repeals and reintroduces parts of Bills 27/28 that stripped class-size and composition contract language and were ruled unconstitutional by the BC Supreme Court
- wipes out virtually all current class-size and composition limits found in the *School Act* (Bill 33)
- no limits on number of students with special needs in a class
- no limit of numbers of students in Grades 4 to 12
- no consultation with teachers about their classes

- no public accountability for school boards

Bill 22 means no collective bargaining

- legislates net zero, no salary or benefit improvement, or anything that has a cost
- ends free collective bargaining by imposing a government-appointed "mediator" who must operate under a narrow government mandate focused on employer concessions
- the mediator is bound by net zero
- concessions regarding seniority, post and fill, layoff and recall, evaluation and dismissal, control of professional development must be part of the new contract

- makes any strike action an offence subject to heavy fines for members, representatives, and the union
- attacks fundamental Charter right of freedom of association

Bill 22 ignores the BC Supreme Court ruling

- BC Supreme Court Justice Griffin found contract stripping legislation regarding class size and composition was unconstitutional
- Bill 22 repeals Bills 27 and 28 and then legislates them back into effect
- fails to restore minimum service level guarantees for special education, ESL, teacher-librarians, and other learning specialist teachers

Are you retiring in June?

Check List

- Contact the Teachers' Pension Plan at 1-800-665-6770 for a Retirement Application Package. Send the completed application form to the TPP no later than the end of the month in which the pension is to start (preferably at least two months earlier) to ensure prompt pension payment.
- Contact VBE payroll to find out when your current health benefits end to ensure you have continuous coverage until the benefits associated with the Teachers' Pension Plan begin. You may need to purchase extended health and dental plans.
- Consider converting your current group life insurance to an individual life insurance policy.
- Join the BC Retired Teachers' Association (telephone 604-871-2260/2262 or 1-877-683-2243, or go to the website at www.bctf.ca/rta). Contact the BCRTA re: starting/continuing Medoc travel health insurance.
- Apply to the BCTF for Associate Membership.
- Contact the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education to see your options regarding maintaining your BC Teacher's Certificate if you intend to teach after retirement. w.bcteacherregulation.ca
- At age 60, if you are not working, consider applying for your Canada Pension Plan pension. For an application kit, visit the CPP web site at www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/cpp/cpptoc.shtml.
- At age 65, apply for Old Age Security (OAS). For an application kit, visit the OAS web site at wwsdc.gc.ca/en/isp/oas/oastoc.shtml
- Contact the BCTF Income Security Staff if you have questions related to any of the above. Phone: 604-871-1921; toll-free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1921.

Refund Upon Request

The Teacher Regulation Branch, upon request, will be granting refunds of the \$80 annual practice fee which was deducted from paychecks to teachers who indicate an intention to relinquish their teaching certificate by June 30. Retiring teachers who wish to maintain their certificate are not eligible for the refund. Information on applying for the refund can be found at www.trb.gov.bc.ca. For the current year all requests must be made by July 31, 2012.

Teacher Certification — Is this the future in BC?

An article in the *New York Times* (May 6, 2012) details that a number of states in the U.S. are signing up for a national certification process that is being developed by Pearson Education a leading supplier of educational textbooks and digital learning resources. This new process of certification would require student teachers to submit a ten-minute video of their teaching which would account for a significant portion of their certification. Pearson advertises that it is paying scorers \$75 per assessment, with work "available seven days a week" for current or retired licensed teachers or administrators. Student teachers as well pay Pearson \$300 for the privilege. In New York, Pearson will be able to test a teacher's worth from start to finish.

The company currently administers the test students must pass to be admitted to a teaching program and is developing the testing system that will be used to calculate each teacher's annual performance score.

So what are the implications? Sometime, in the future, a multinational publisher of educational materials and teaching tools may determine who is allowed to teach.



Committees and Sections 2012–13 Update

VESTA is pleased that every VESTA Committee has a chairperson in place for 2012-13. We look forward to a productive year as committees are already planning Pro-D activities and conferences. Please make plans now to participate in a VESTA committee next year.

VESTA also has Sections which have been working hard to promote specific goals this year. VESTA will be seeking additional member participation in Sections next year notably the Technology, Learning Assistance teachers, and ESL sections.

Check VESTA website for more information.