

Have you received a Medisys form?

The Board is asking some members to provide detailed medical info it is not entitled to.

**Gordon
CAMPBELL
wants
YOU
to just
SHUT
UP**



Climate change, health care, public schools, the Olympics, child care, transit, fish farms, affordable housing, run of river private power projects, carbon taxes, raw log exports, resource-dependent communities, public private partnerships, minimum wage, free trade, mental health services, offshore oil drilling, public power, electoral reform, post-secondary education, taxes, clean air, First Nations treaties, public safety, seniors' care, harm reduction, poverty, and more...

You don't care about these issues, do you?

This provincial government seems intent on making the practice of democracy ever more difficult, if not impossible, leading up to the municipal election in November and the May 2009 provincial vote. It has brought in legislation which attempts to undermine free speech and severely restrict what BC citizens can say and do. Unions are speaking out for BC's public services. Go to *Just Shut Up BC* www.justshutupbc.com to learn more about Bill 42 and take action now!

Mid way through last year, a member was contacted by the Board, which was insisting that an Independent Medical Exam was essential in order for her to continue to receive her sick leave benefits.

VESTA has some serious concerns with such requests, which became more frequent throughout the school year. Primarily, we believe that you, along with your Physician (who is a professional, someone with whom you have a privileged relationship, and who is a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons) will make the best decision about your healthcare needs. Within your relationship with your physician or specialist, you are entitled to privacy. Our concerns about the "Medisys" form and the request for additional information centre around the need of the Board for greater and greater amounts of information.

VESTA has filed two grievances that relate to the ability of the Board to determine what constitutes "sufficient medical information", and further, what information the Board is, indeed, entitled to.

The Surrey Teachers' Association has filed and won a recent arbitration that puts limits on the scope and quantity of information that Boards of Education are entitled to. This and other arbitrations clearly state that the employer is entitled to certain kinds of information, but that *there are limits to what kind of information is reasonable, and for what purposes.*

To be clear, the Board is not entitled to information about any diagnoses, symptoms or treatment of its' employees. Many of the questions on the "additional information" form toe the line by not asking directly, but leave large amounts of space that practitioners may fill in without being aware of the implications for their patients.

VESTA advises you to contact Jody Polukoshko (jody@vesta.ca) if you receive a "Medisys" form from the Board.

There is another form that is being distributed to members who are extending a leave entitled: "Medical Certificate Request for Extended Medical Leave". Arbitrations indicate that the Board may ask the questions on this form – but please be sure not to be misled about its' questions. "Yes" or "No" are suitable answers to most of the questions on that form, and should avoid any mention of diagnosis, symptoms, and/or treatment. We also advise you to have a conversation with your doctor about your concerns about such forms.

Sick leave is a benefit in the Collective Agreement. Privacy around your medical conditions or use of the medical system is fundamental to our human rights. We do not believe that members need to "earn" access to either of these rights using these methods. Please contact us if you have questions, concerns, or information on this issue.

**Jody Polukoshko
Grievance Officer /
2nd Vice-President**

*AT YOUR FIRST STAFF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE YEAR,
MAKE SURE TO ESTABLISH YOUR WORKSITE'S ...*

... INTERVIEW COMMITTEE

... PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

... TIME-TABLING AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

... FINANCE COMMITTEE

All of these are provided for under the Staff Committee language in both the K-12 and Adult Educators' collective agreements with the Vancouver Board of Education. Use them! VESTA recommends that your Staff Committee formally elect members to these worksite-based committees. The names should be recorded in the minutes.

LOOKING FOR VESTA REPS ON VBE COMMITTEES

As per Article 11.A. of the VTF/VBE Collective Agreement, the union appoints representatives to committees established by the employer -- and you're invited to participate!

Your Staff Rep will be receiving a notice during the next couple of weeks calling for representatives to a variety of VSB committees: Race Relations, Pride, BCeSIS, Inner City, Learning Services Consultative, Modern Languages, Assessment, Educational and Curriculum Change, and many more.

Members interested in participating need to complete a nomination form provided to Staff Reps. The VESTA Executive Committee will likely appoint representatives to the committees by early October.

INNER CITY SCHOOLS REVIEW

This fall, the VBE will launch a formal review of its services to inner city schools. Stay tuned for ways that you can participate in these discussions.

PREP TIME REMINDER

In May of 2007 the VBE and VTF agreed to a new interpretation of language around preparation time for elementary teachers.

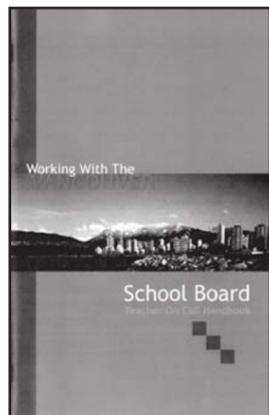
Elementary teachers **are** entitled to have prep time compensated when it has been lost because of statutory holidays or work-related events beyond their control (e.g. professional days, parent/teacher conferences, etc.).

However, where the teacher has lost prep time as a result of his/her own decision (e.g. field trips, concerts, etc.) the teacher is not entitled to compensation.

ARE TOCs RESPONSIBLE FOR MARKING AND LEAVING DAY PLANS?

Absolutely, yes. When a TOC is hired by the Vancouver Board of Education, she/he is given a blue book (image to right) that outlines some of the responsibilities of being a TOC. On page 10 of that book, it states: *"BEFORE LEAVING THE SCHOOL - Unless otherwise indicated, you are expected to correct all work you have assigned as well as leave a day plan for the next day before leaving."* Part of the argument used in 2005 for giving TOCs improved on-scale rights was that they were doing the full scope of a contract teacher's regular work on the days the TOC is fulfilling an on-call assignment. Both the marking the work assigned the day of

the on-call assignment and the leaving of a day plan for the next day are part of a TOC's responsibility.



NEW EDITION OF OUR K-12 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT SOON TO BE IN EVERY MEMBER'S HANDS

After much waiting for details to be worked out between the provincial parties, the VTF and the VBE spent the first half of 2008 working on a full, complete 2006-2011 K-12 Collective Agreement for distribution to all members within the next month or so.

A new, updated edition has not been produced since 1998, and Vancouver teachers have been under a number of terms and conditions of employment that are not reflected in that version. The new 2006-2011 K-12 Collective Agreement includes:

- New local language ratified in the spring of 2007
- New provincial language ratified September 2006
- Current salary grids and allowances
- New language governing TOC pay and on-scale rights from Vince Ready and the 2005 fall strike



- Housekeeping agreed to by provincial and local parties since 2001
- Incorporation of Letters of Understanding, grievances resolves that have significantly changed language, and other items accumulated over the past 15 years.

The important part now is for both parties at the local level – the membership of the Vancouver Teachers' Federation, and the principals and other agents of the Vancouver Board of Education – get to know *and use* the new edition of our Collective Agreement. We look forward to delivering it to you.

KEEP INFORMED ABOUT TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

The VESTA office will be contacting all BCTF members living in Vancouver during the weeks leading up to the trustee elections in November. In the meantime, keep your eye out for media about the election campaigns and opportunities to get involved with VESTA's work around the elections themselves.

What questions do you want VESTA to ask of candidates? What issues are important for your school community? Forward your thoughts to glen@vesta.ca

E-MAIL US:

PRESIDENT
Glen Hansman
glen@vesta.ca

1st VICE-PRESIDENT
Chris Harris
chris@vesta.ca

2nd VICE-PRESIDENT & GRIEVANCE OFFICER
Jody Polukoshko
jody@vesta.ca

3rd VICE-PRESIDENT
Donna Brack
donna@vesta.ca

WORKING & LEARNING CONDITIONS CHAIR:
Jack MacDermot,
jack@vesta.ca

PRO-D CHAIR: Susan Wagner
susan@vesta.ca

HEALTH & SAFETY CHAIR:
Karin Bernauer
karin@vesta.ca

ADULT EDUCATORS SUBLOCAL PRESIDENT
Rob McGowan
rob@vesta.ca



2008/2009 salary grid

Step	Cat 4	Cat 5	Cat 6/PA	Cat 6/M
0	\$ 41,885	\$ 45,991	\$ 49,755	\$ 50,524
1	\$ 43,980	\$ 48,296	\$ 52,284	\$ 53,053
2	\$ 46,076	\$ 50,602	\$ 54,813	\$ 55,582
3	\$ 48,171	\$ 52,907	\$ 57,341	\$ 58,110
4	\$ 50,267	\$ 55,213	\$ 59,870	\$ 60,639
5	\$ 52,362	\$ 57,518	\$ 62,398	\$ 63,167
6	\$ 54,458	\$ 59,824	\$ 64,927	\$ 65,696
7	\$ 56,553	\$ 62,129	\$ 67,455	\$ 68,224
8	\$ 58,649	\$ 64,435	\$ 69,984	\$ 70,753
9		\$ 66,740	\$ 72,512	\$ 73,281
Max after Harmonization 2008	\$ 62,567	\$ 71,117	\$ 76,917	\$ 77,942

VESTA news

Published by the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association, Local 391 of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation

2915 Commercial Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 4C8
Phone: 604-873-8378
Fax: 604-873-2652
www.vesta.ca

Editor & Layout
Glen Hansman

Photographs
Glen Hansman
Jack MacDermot
Val Hamilton
Sylvia Zubke

Proofreaders
Jody Polukoshko
Patricia Gudlaugson

Articles herein reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily the policies of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association. No reprints without permission.
Printed by Broadway Printers



JULIANNE DOCTOR
District Parent Advisory Council Chair 2006/07 and 2007/08

Trustee elections are coming up. For teachers, one of the most frustrating things has been that trustee elections tend to get lost in the race for city hall. Does DPAC identify a similar concern? What conversations do you think should be happening at schools in the fall- at PAC meetings, meet-the-teacher nights, and on other occasions prior to the trustee elections?

DPAC is very concerned that school board elections get buried under the hoopla of city hall elections. It seems to us that the electorate tends to vote a party slate, unlike other areas of the province where trustees run as independents, regardless of political stripe. All too often, we end up with school trustees who don't understand or don't care about the public education system.

What opportunities do you see for parents and teachers to work together during trustee elections? What might some of the common objectives be, from your perspective?

At the district level, DPAC could partner with the teachers' union(s) to host a couple of all-candidates meetings. Perhaps one on the east, and one on the west side of town. It would be interesting to see the commonalities and differences we share. At school, PACs and teachers could have a dialogue on what they think are some of the things affecting their school(s), and how they could use the election to make candidates aware of their issues.

Over the past couple of years, you and your DPAC colleagues have been vocal advocates for children and public education. Has there intentionally been a more pro-active and visible approach? If so, why?

The DPAC executive of the last couple of years have been quite vocal about protecting and advocating for kids and public education. The majority of the members have come to DPAC from an advocate/activist background. I was very involved in SOS in its day. Both my daughter and I were involved in the No Cuts to Kids campaign when she was in grade 4. (I'm so proud). I think it's fair to say that most of us came to DPAC because of our advocacy background. We've always been vocal about the importance of public education, and I certainly hope that it remains a top focus for our organization.

At the school district level, energies at the 2007-2008 school year were dominated by the Educational Facilities Review, the Avison Recommendations, and the seemingly never-ending

commandments (unfunded, of course) handed down from the Ministry. What issues or goings-on in Vancouver schools do you think were given shortshrift as a consequence?

I think we could have used more focus on the ESL issues facing our district. While we did have a sharp focus on it last year, it seems to have dropped off the radar as a result of all the silly busy-work created by both ministry and district. There doesn't seem to be a lot of information coming out about the commitments made last year. And why have we not heard more about the SWIS workers? The emergency preparedness problem still hasn't been fully addressed. It's a good thing that they are finally looking at hiring a person to look after it, but it still needs to be at the top of the list, along with moving on the seismic work. I'm very concerned that we are sending our kids to unsafe buildings to spend a huge portion of their day

What are some of the stumbling blocks you see for Vancouver parents in their advocacy for children and public education?

The corporatization of schools is a huge concern. The public is beginning to look for sponsorship for our schools, rather than demanding that the government do its job and properly fund public education so we don't need to fundraise for what they like to call the "extras", computers, books, basketballs. I call these things the basics. It's imperative that we don't allow our education system to be diminished or devalued by making it a commodity.

Recent court and arbitration rulings have clarified teachers' freedom of expression rights - identifying that teachers not only have the right but also the professional responsibility to communicate concerns about educational issues to parents and the public. Beyond the individual progress of their children, what do you think are the issues parents most want to hear from teachers about?

Parents want to know what the challenges are in their school, and what challenges the teachers are facing. They want their child(ren) to have the best possible experiences and opportunities in education. Parents want to understand the different ways that the child(ren) can be assessed rather than simply using the FSAs. We know that those tests are controversial. What are some of the other ways teachers are assessing students in the classroom?

What are some other thoughts you'd like to share with Vancouver teachers?

Parents are the teachers' allies. We want to help you help our children succeed. Welcome parents into your classroom. Let us be your volunteer army. Vancouver is an extremely diverse city, with many, many different faces and personalities. Try to be respectful of the differences, even if you don't personally agree with them. Join us in advocating for a truly equitable system. Ask parents what they think a public education should look like.



ELEANOR GREGORY
School Board Trustee 2005-2008

Trustee elections are coming up. For teachers, one of the most frustrating things has been that trustee elections tend to get lost in the race for city hall. I would imagine that trustees find this equally frustrating, because good work being done doesn't necessarily get noticed by the public or even in the school community. What conversations do you think should be happening at schools this fall to address this concern?

When I was elected in 2005 as an NPA trustee, I benefited from riding the coat tails of attention paid to the mayoral and council elections, plus the NPA "brand." However, since not all NPA school trustee candidates were elected, something must have given me something of an edge. Part of the edge was the alphabetical placement of my surname among the other names on the ballot. I came in 7 out of 9, just ahead of Trustee Gregson and Trustee Hansen. On an at-large ballot, alphabetical name placement is critical. I think it is time to look at changing the electoral rules, along the lines taken by other political jurisdictions, to require random listing of candidates to take that advantage away from those with surnames in the early part of the alphabet.

I think the other edge I had was some name recognition because of my long involvement in provincial and federal politics as an active volunteer, and also from my exposure as a practicing lawyer. As well, I actively mined all my contacts in politics, law, and anything else I could think of, sent out broadcast email messages asking for support at the polls, and asked all my contacts to do the same on my behalf. Networking through email and the internet will play a much greater role in the 2008 Vancouver election than it did in 2005.

What were some of the situations or limitations you encountered in your role as a trustee that surprised you?

I expected to feel somewhat powerless because public school funding is controlled by the province, so that fact didn't surprise me. What did surprise me was the lack of understanding on the part of the public about the limited financial political clout of school boards.

From the perspective of someone who recently came from outside of the public education system and into an elected role as public school board trustee, has your view of public education and its importance changed?

I never felt like I came from outside of the public school system. I am the product of public elementary and secondary schools in North Carolina, Ontario and British Columbia (Burnaby to be specific). While my son attended private school for grades 5 to 12, and my daughter attended private school for grades 3 to 12, I had always expected them to attend public school. I always felt like a bit of an outsider in my time as a private school parent. Imposter syndrome, perhaps?

What my experience in both systems has taught me is that when things work well in private school, they work really well. However, when the adults in the private school system have difficulties getting along, there isn't the accountability there that there is in the public school system. There are very significant and important checks and balances in the public system that just don't exist in the private school system. Procedures for handling parent or student complaints, expectations about facilitating diversity, the collective force of organized teaching and non-teaching staff, just to name a few things, levels the playing field for everyone and injects fairness and responsibility into the public system.

It appears that trustees are quite often put in a position where they are apologizing for circumstances generated by factors completely out of their control. Has that been your experience? What avenues out there are available for people who want to advocate for improvements for learning conditions and see those changes come to be?

Following up on my comments in response to question #2, all I can say is 'knowledge is power'. Voters need to know about the financial powerlessness of elected school boards. Voters need to insist that all of their elected representatives – municipal, provincial and federal – make public education a priority.

Money spent well on public education is money very well spent. I don't think I need to list the reasons why investing in education makes good financial and social sense.

What are some other thoughts you'd like to share with Vancouver teachers as we go into a new school year?

Thank you for what you do everyday that makes a difference in the lives of the young people you teach. You do have a great job, albeit the many frustrations. I can't think of a better way for someone to learn than to teach, and all of you get to learn every day. And I do love to learn.

The BC Liberal government record on public education

PART ONE OF THREE

Since coming to power in 2001, the BC Liberal government has blatantly attacked the public education system by cutting education funding, reducing services to students, destroying collective bargaining for teachers, increasing support to private schools, demonstrating a bias toward privatization of public school services, removing the right to strike, and imposing terms and conditions of employment. Our chronology of legislation and actions illustrates the impact on services to students and teachers' working conditions.

It's time to take stock and gear up to make change.

2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008

Description and impact of legislation and actions

2001

August 9, 2001 (3rd Reading) Bill 8 – Protection of Parent Volunteers Amendment Act, 2001
Authorizes parents to be volunteers at schools.)

Impact: Undermined collective agreement provisions that differentiated between support staff roles and volunteers. The legislation was used to imply that volunteers were not welcome when in fact teachers encourage parents to be involved in schools. It was an attempt to create division between parents and teachers.

August 16, 2001 (3rd Reading) Bill 18 – Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2001

Makes education an essential service under the Labour Relations Code.
Impact: Limited teachers' bargaining rights. The Liberals did not repeal the law despite a ruling by the International Labour Organization that declared their legislation to be in violation of international labour conventions.

October 3, 2001

Liberals announce they intend to freeze public education funding until 2004.
Impact: Liberals broke their campaign promise to protect education funding. Downloaded significant additional costs onto school boards, thus creating a total funding shortfall of over \$300 million. Resulted in cuts to programs and services for students, closure of 113 public schools, loss of over 2,500 teaching positions, fewer specialist teachers, and introduction of the four day week in some areas.

November 23, 2001

B.C. unions challenge Liberals' labour laws at the International Labour Organization.
Impact: Unions representing teachers, school support workers, health care workers, and nurses in British Columbia filed a formal complaint against the provincial government with the International Labour Organization. The unions asserted that Bills 15 and 18, the laws that imposed the nurses' contract and made education an "essential service," are contrary to Canada's obligations under

international labour standards. In March 2003, the International Labour Organization ruled that six pieces of legislation imposed by the B.C. Liberals violate international agreements. As the United Nations agency responsible for upholding global labour standards, the ILO urged the Campbell government to repeal the law that made education an essential service, and to rewrite five other bills to bring them into accord with our obligations under UN conventions. The B.C. Liberal government dismissed the ruling. Premier Gordon Campbell says he feels "no pressure whatsoever" to bring our province into compliance with an international convention to which we are signatory.

2002

January 27, 2002 (3rd Reading) Bill 27 – Education Services Collective Agreement Act

Provides for the imposition of a collective agreement between the BCTF and BCPSEA and provides for the appointment of a commission to review procedures for collective bargaining in the education sector. (Source: B.C. Legislative Digest)
Impact: Imposed the teachers' collective agreement. After falling behind inflation for the past nine years, teachers' salaries increased by two and a half percent in each of three years. In several amalgamated districts the contract of one local was unilaterally imposed upon the other. It means that collective agreements negotiated by teachers in Fernie, Kimberley, Golden, Creston Kaslo, Keremeos, Princeton, Lake Cowichan, Kitimat, Armstrong Spallumcheen, and Burns Lake have been effectively ripped up by the government.

January 28, 2002 (3rd Reading) Bill 28 – Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act

Gives school districts, colleges and institutes the power to determine class sizes and to set the school calendar.
Impact: Eliminated key provisions that teachers have negotiated over many years. Class size limits were stripped from the collective agreement. Class size limits for primary students have been increased province wide, and have been placed in government policy, not contractual guarantees. Kindergarten class sizes increased from 20 to 22 students, and Grades 1-3 increased from 22 to 24. Government policy on grades 4-12 class sizes are now based on district averages, not firm limits. Guaranteed services to students with special needs and guaranteed support from specialist teachers, such as librarians, counsellors, ESL and learning resource teachers, were removed from the collective agreement and handed over to the discretion of school districts. Resulted in larger class sizes, particularly in intermediate and secondary grades, less support for students with special needs, and fewer teachers. Paved the way for school districts to introduce the four day week, extended spring vacations, and other cuts to the school year.

February 5, 2002

Liberals announce they will not fund the cost of the imposed contract for the second and third years.

Impact: School boards required to pay for teacher salary increases for 2003 and 2003/04. Forced boards to make cuts to public education, including school closures and reduction in teaching positions, less support for students with special needs, fewer specialists. Since September 2002, the size of classes increased and the services provided by specialist teachers such as librarians, counsellors, learning assistance teachers, ESL and others have been cut. At the same time as the number of students in each class increased, support for students with special needs was reduced.

March 1, 2002

Liberals announce a new education funding formula. In previous years, teachers have been included in developing the technical aspects of education funding, but they were left out of the discussion.

Impact: The new formula eliminated protected funding, except for original education, and eliminated the cap on administrative spending. Loaded the accountability from the ministry to local school boards. The Liberals gave school boards the autonomy and control to decide which services and programs to cut. Confidential cabinet briefing document outlined how the new funding formula could insulate government from criticism and hold school boards accountable for the consequences of provincial policies.

March 28, 2002

Select Standing Committee on Education released its report on the mandate, governance, management, and service delivery in the K-12 and secondary systems.

Impact: The report contained a number of recommendations acceptable to teachers, including: further measures to undermine teachers' right to strike and to bargain collectively; establishment of a College of Educators and recommendation that membership in that organization be compulsory for professional educators. Privatization measures in the report provided the Liberals with a blueprint for furthering their attack on the professionalism of teachers and increasing the privatization of educational services.

**April 30, 2002 (3rd Reading)
Bill 17 - Child, Family and Community Service Amendment Act, 2002**

Allows children under protection to be placed in the custody of extended family or other concerned parties. Imposes penalties for contravention of confidentiality provisions.

Impact: The bill reduced protection afforded to children. The previous legislation required anyone with a concern to believe a child is at risk of abuse to promptly report it to the proper authorities. The amendment required anyone with concerns to report only "if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child." The BCTF wrote to the Minister expressing grave concerns that "the impact of the changes is likely to be an increase in the

amount of unreported child abuse," but the government took no heed of the warning.

**May 13, 2002 (3rd Reading)
Bill 34 – School Amendment Act, 2001**

Establishes school planning councils and district parent advisory councils. Enables school boards to conduct entrepreneurial activities. Makes various amendments regarding enrollment, catchment areas, and allocated funding.

Impact: Minister Christy Clark said that the bill would give parents a greater role in school decisionmaking. Bill 34 was tabled in the legislature the same day that Vancouver parents went public with their criticism of the cozy relationship between the B.C. Liberals and the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils. Declared that school board employees cannot serve on the school planning council at their own children's school. Under Bill 34, the minister and the lieutenant governor were granted expanded powers to fire school boards. Allowed school districts to set up school district business companies to facilitate profit making.

August 2002

Rice Report

Coming out of Bill 28 from earlier in the year, government-appointed Eric Rice stripped almost all working and learning conditions from teachers' collective agreements, including all the hard-won class size, class composition, integration, and service ratios for students with special needs.

September 20, 2002

Ministry reneged on special purpose technology grants which totalled \$10 million per year. In 2001-02 the ministry did not make payments for the final 30% of the grants, and did not inform school districts that the payments were cancelled.

Impact: Some school boards had already purchased computers or other technology resources, and were told to cover these expenses out of the per pupil funding. This is another example of the ministry downloading significant costs to school boards which do not have budget funds available. Implication is cuts to programs and services for students.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

WORKING PART-TIME? Figure out your days vs. FTE early in the year!

Are you a part-time K-7 school-based, itinerant, or district teacher at one or more worksite? Then it is important that you are being paid for the time that you work, and that you are working your actual Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). The best thing to do is to figure this out **now**, not later in the school year when there are fewer days left to make adjustments.

The Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) hires and pays each teacher according to a precise FTE, which is also linked to the number of days each employee works. The number of days in a school year varies from one year to the next. For 2008/2009 there are 194 days. *Statutory holidays are not included in this count.* The School Act governs that teachers work a set number of days that make up a school year; therefore, contract teachers do not receive statutory holidays in the same way as other workers do.

In most cases, the calculation is relatively straightforward. This year, a part-time teacher at a school with equal 300 instructional minute days needs only to multiply her/his FTE by 194 to see the total number of days to be worked. Depending on how statutory holidays overlap with a part-time teachers' regular days at a worksite, she/he may **owe time or be owed time.**

For example, if a teacher works 0.2000 FTE at a school with regular length days, that amounts to 38.8 days she/he must work this year (0.2000 FTE *times* 194 total school days = 38.8 days to work). If, for example, the teacher's regular work day is every Monday, that teacher will *owe* days to her/his school or job-share partner because there are only 36 Mondays in the 194 days of this school year. By contrast, if that teacher's regular work day was every Wednesday, she/he would be *owed* days.

At schools on a modified week, where the days are not all equal in length, this will have to be broken down into minutes. For grade 1-7 teachers, there are 1500 minutes in the school week, inclusive of a 15 minute recess and prep. Kindergarten teachers have slightly different instructional minutes, but the same principle applies. (Remember too that each teacher's 90 minutes of prep per week is also prorated by FTE).

Some teachers work part-time in more than one school and have to be vigilant that their FTE works properly. Add in the mix of schools with modified days and you can see the potential for working more than 194 days because of the extra minutes over the course of a year. It may also be that a resource teacher is missing from one site because she/he owes a day at another site, or a job-share partner is working on a day other than the one usually scheduled while the usual partner is working elsewhere.

For these reasons, and because of leaves and other extenuating circumstances, it has always been important to make calculations at the *beginning* of the school year so that a proper schedule based on FTE can be arranged well ahead of time. Job-share partners need to work this out together so both understand and agree to fairness. Non-enrolling teachers have more flexibility, but need to ensure that colleagues know about any adjustments to the "regular" schedule well ahead of time.

Principals and vice-principals were recently given a new spreadsheet to assist in calculating FTE in terms of days to be worked. VESTA and the VBE realize that the practice of adjusting schedules to actual FTE has not been standard practice at all worksites. It is important that schools attend to this matter early in the school year, every school year, from this point forward so that teachers are not being made to work the time they are not being paid for, and so that schools get the full amount of FTE allotted to them.

Many job-share partners and part-time teachers are able to sort out the differential FTE among themselves. Principals and vice-principals are asked to provide assistance in situations where adjusting schedules present some difficulty.

VESTA has a 2008/2009 school-year calendar posted at www.vesta.ca under "Downloads" for you to use in counting out your days.

Good luck!



**Glen Hansman
President**

SmartBoard Inquiry Research Group at David Livingstone

A group of teachers at David Livingstone School, and also one from Strathcona, meet regularly to discuss and question how they are using SmartBoards in the classroom and the effect it has on teaching and learning. Charlie Naylor from the BCTF Research department and UBC professors Gaalen Erickson and Tony Clark also work with this group to help establish and address teacher derived questions about SmartBoards, learning and collaboration. Brenda Lim-Fong, a graduate student, works with the group as well, taking notes and observing lessons taught with SmartBoards.

As a teacher-librarian, I am thrilled to be part of the Inquiry Research group. Collaboration is my main focus, and it is wonderful to be able to share lesson ideas, compare student reactions, listen to teacher concerns, and celebrate successes. Even though meetings are held after school, there is a great deal of enthusiastic discussion as members of this group examine what is happening in their classrooms and why. We aren't technology experts, but we do share what we know, how we do things, and why. Together, we reflect on how this technology can make us better teachers and how it can assist our students. But first, you may ask, what is a SmartBoard?

A SmartBoard is an interactive whiteboard connected to a computer and a projector. Turn on the computer and projector, and images are projected onto a large touch-sensitive screen.

Whatever you would see on your computer monitor, you now see on the large whiteboard. You can move, click, and write on the board with the mouse, keyboard, special pens or by touch. Just imagine your computer screen large enough to be seen throughout an entire room and becoming operational with you standing next to it, touching the screen.

What is the history of SmartBoards at David Livingstone?

In 2002, we applied for a grant from SMARTer Kids Foundation. Livingstone was given two boards for the two Grade 5 teachers. After one year, the boards were to be passed on to the two Grade 6 teachers. The two Grade 5 teachers and eight

selected Grade 5 students were given a week of SmartBoard training.

After the year was up, the Grade 5 teacher didn't want to give up the SmartBoard and instead asked the PAC to help pay for a new one.

In 2005, Livingstone participated in the Appreciative Inquiry. We discovered that students strongly felt that the SmartBoard made a positive difference in their learning. With the money from the 2005 strike savings program, staff voted to buy three more boards. When SmartBoard offered a half-price grant later that year, our school was able to buy six more SmartBoards with the help of PAC. By September, every classroom will have a SmartBoard as well as the library, resource room, music room and staff room.

How did the Inquiry Research group with UBC and BCTF start?

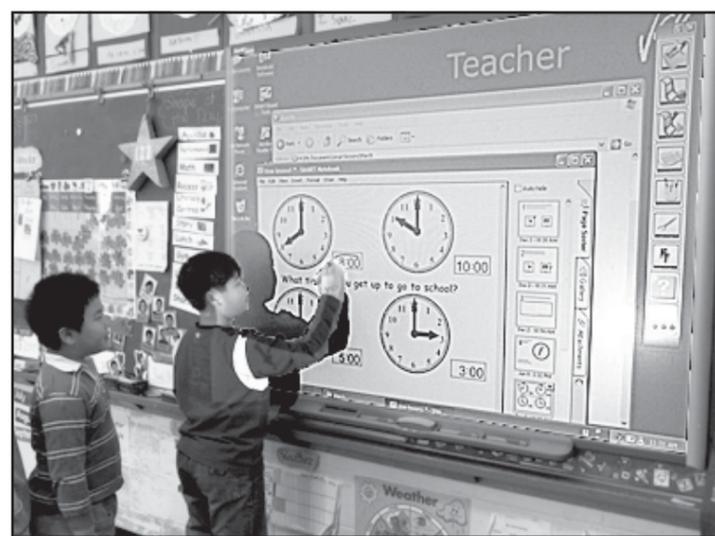
To follow up on the Appreciative Inquiry, the Associate Dean of Education and UBC staff were invited to work with Livingstone staff to investigate the effects of SmartBoards in the classroom. In this Inquiry Group are Classroom teachers, a resource teacher, a teacher-librarian and the principal from Livingstone School as well as two UBC Faculty, one research assistant and a BCTF researcher. This inquiry is supported by the VBE, UBC and the BCTF. We meet approximately once a month to establish and address teacher-derived questions in this Inquiry Group. The group also journals and extends their discussions and reflections on a wiki.

What we have found so far?

- Once a lesson is made, it is easy to copy and modify for a variety of lessons and teachers. Prep time is spent on creating authentic, interactive lessons and searching for good resources, instead of doing a lot of photocopying.
- Assessment can include observation of students interacting with the board, and through their presentations.
- The SmartBoard permits a multimodal approach that allows participants to move beyond language barriers or abstract content by presenting a variety of means including colour, image, sound, spatial and kinesthetic modalities for students to make meaning (Jewitt, Moss & Cardini) For students who are ESL, hard of hearing, require repetition, or just need bells and whistles to keep their attention – the SmartBoard can address these needs. When that teachable moment comes, one can quickly use the Internet to find the image

or the video clip. *Your class doesn't know what a groundhog is?* Google images and you have a picture. *Your class doesn't know what a loon sounds like?* World Book online database has a picture and a sound clip. *Who is Martin Luther King?* Put up a Youtube clip of his famous speech, "I Have a Dream."

- Students exhibit less fear of failure and are willing to take a risk. Like a video game, they seem willing to try and try again until they get the right answer. Even students who are incredibly shy and do not volunteer information or put up their hands will come to the board to do an activity.
- We love how we become the "Teacher on the Side" rather than the Sage on the Stage. Students are looking at the lesson and hoping for a turn at the board. There are fewer comments such as "I like your boots!" (which makes you wonder what that student had been thinking about for the last five minutes!) and there is more time of "Eyes on Board".
- We all need help! Teachers are happy to have students assist when there is a problem, and students enjoy collectively brain storming when there is a problem or how to do a function on the SmartBoard. We refer to it as democratization in the classroom, where we are all learners and need to help each other. We are not experts when it comes to technology and sometimes it takes a community to make technology work!
- Better retention! Students remember the names of people, the dates of events and the issues months after the unit is over. Some students can repeat verbatim the dialogue from the video or clip used to highlight a lesson. After a teacher watched a student's presentation, she could remember clearly how many Nicaraguans could fit into Canada because the student filled a map of Canada with Nicaragua country pieces.
- Students are frequently bored when they watch other students present their posters or reports, and nervous about their own presentations. When a student presents on the SmartBoard, the presentation looks more exciting and professional, and the student feels more secure standing to the side of his or her presentation. Students even model teacher lessons by having an interactive section to their presentation when



students are asked to come up and answer questions.

- Leveling of abilities. Regardless of their ability to wield scissors or crayon, students can create very professional and interesting presentations and reports using the SmartBoard software or other software such as PowerPoint. As a teacher, I can see what students know and not be blinded by what they can't do. Special Needs students can create informative visual reports and share them with the class.
- Collaboration amongst staff. We share our lessons on a Shared drive on our server so we can all access our SmartBoard lessons. We share what we are teaching and we help each other with creating lessons and finding appropriate resources. This really helps break down the walls; we can see what other teachers are teaching and we can expand and interact with staff and students about these units.

The SmartBoard Inquiry Group will continue to meet and discuss teaching practice, SmartBoards, and technology in the coming year. Laurie Cassie, a Grade 7 teacher, also provides SmartBoard assistance one day a week. Monica Fong and Gina Wong, two Primary teachers in our group, taught a SmartBoard workshop at the Summer Institute. We will also be working with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) group to discover more ways in which we can create an equitable classroom for all learners. Sharon Leung, a new teacher at Livingstone will be working with the UDL project and the SmartBoard group.

It has been a powerful professional experience for me to listen to my colleagues discuss their teaching practices. Their thoughtful reflections reinforce the respect I feel for them, and guide my own thoughts to my practice and how to be a better teacher.

Should you have any questions about SmartBoards or would like to see one in action, please come join us at our next Smart Café at Livingstone School.

Sylvia Zubke
Livingstone Elementary School

Next month:
An inquiry group project exploring inclusion and equity issues



Volunteers in your school? Here's how to make sure that it's a positive experience for everyone

Volunteers are healthy components of any school community. For many teachers, the effort to include members of the community or to open the literal and metaphorical door to your classroom can be mutually rewarding. It serves as an opportunity to offer students potential new experiences, to assist teachers in the multitude of tasks they undertake in the course of a day, and it gives participants a glimpse into the workings of public schools.

However, it is important that such inclusion happens in a way that respects the relationship amongst teachers and students, our relationships with each other, and our relationship with non-teaching staff at our schools.

Here are some guidelines to assist in determining appropriate use of volunteers in schools. Many of these points come from the volunteer guidelines posted on the VESTA website under "Download Forms" and the BCTF Members' Guide 3.N. "School Staffing, Teacher Aides, Auxiliaries and Volunteers".

Collective Agreements

The *School Act* states that boards must not use volunteers in a way that may displace an employee. This, and the language in our collective agreement that prohibits contracting out helps to define the role of volunteers in schools. "Contracting out" refers to the work of teachers being done by someone who is not a member of our bargaining unit. An example of this might be using an outside organization to assess children

rather than supporting teachers to do the work.

Likewise, volunteers can not do the work of teachers, secretarial staff, student and school support workers or supervision aides. Each of these groups has their own collective agreement. It is imperative that we protect our Collective Agreement rights by insisting that teachers work be done by teachers, and that we support our non-teaching colleagues in this effort as well. It is also important that schools do not use volunteers to compensate for staffing that has been cut or reduced. For example, if a school library is only open 3 days per week due to lack of funding, it is not appropriate for a school to use volunteers in an attempt to fix this situation. Only adequate funding of schools will create a satisfactory situation for our students. When we attempt to remedy these problems by using volunteers, we are only masking the problems, and distracting from the need for long term solutions.

Volunteers Do

- Complement the work of paid teaching and nonteaching staff
- Work under the direction of a teacher to guide or assist students
- Work with a group teaching them a hobby skill, such as woodworking, sewing, cooking, or calligraphy
- Assist students on field trips
- Organize or assist in PAC activities

Volunteers Don't

- Substitute for paid teaching or non-teaching staff
- Replace personnel who have been laid off or had their hours of work cut
- Assume responsibility for ongoing teaching
- Supervise students

Building Relationships

It is important that volunteers in schools are made to feel welcome, but it is also important that teacher and student safety and privacy are of primary concern. Please ensure that your volunteers are informed about school protocols and procedures.

Because volunteers are often members of your school community, it is also important that they respect the relationships that exist in the school, and participate in maintaining relationships with staff and students.

Congratulations retirees



A good time was had by all at VESTA's retirement dinner in June.

Volunteers Do

- Follow the school's Code of Conduct
- Respect confidentiality and privacy concerns
- Work under the direction of school staff

Volunteers Don't

- Discuss individual students or teachers outside the classroom
- Evaluate students' work

Our Collective Agreement is not a passive document. It requires us to engage with it in order for our rights to be maintained. Each time we ensure that it is enforced, or consider its application to our day-to-day teaching, we make it, and ourselves stronger.

Jody Polukoshko
2nd Vice-President / Grievance Officer

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT REPORT

The **Report from the Inquiry of Best Practice for Students with Challenging Behaviour** was released in June. This report summarizes the findings from extensive consultation across the District, in which many VESTA members participated.

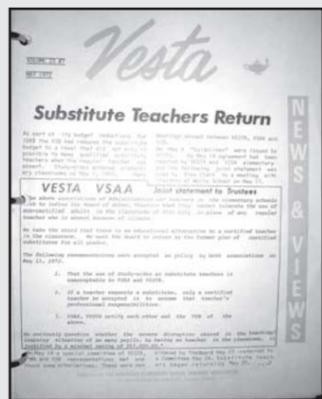
This process was supported by a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the District and the community. The findings were derived from focus groups and interviews, and showed that the strengths identified in the Inquiry process generally had corresponding challenges. The employer has stated that it intends to further review the report, consider its implications, and propose future actions. These will come back to Committee III, and VESTA will respond at that time.

(Please note: this process is not related in any way to the closure and consolidation of some of the district programs this past spring.)

FROM VESTA HISTORY . . .

"Substitute Teachers Return" (VESTA News & Views, May 1972)

"As part of its budget reductions, the VSB had reduced the substitute budget to a level that did not make it possible to have qualified substitute teachers when the regular teacher was absent. Study-aides entered elementary classrooms on May 1, 1972. Many meetings ensued between VESTA, the Vancouver School Administrators' Association (VSSA), and the Vancouver School Board.



By May 11, an agreement had been reached between VESTA and VSSA, and the a joint statement was presented to trustees to a meeting of trustees at Wolfe Elementary School on May 17. By May 18, a special committee of VESTA, VSAA and VSB representatives met and found some alternatives. Substitute teachers began returning May 25.

In doing so, an important principle was reestablished. Both principals and teachers want a qualified teacher in charge of every classroom. Teachers were not against study-aides per se; the latter simply couldn't replace teachers. To do otherwise when there are fully qualified teachers unemployed and available is unacceptable.

If there had been prior discussion between trustees, officials, administrators and teachers before setting the budget priorities, the entire event need not have happened. Consultation and involvement, open and effective, not superficial, is a necessary prerequisite to changes in the schools. VESTA and VSAA worked together in an approach to the Board. This type of cooperation should continue."

Health and Safety start-up tips

At one of your school's first VESTA meetings, ensure that your staff has elected a VESTA Health and Safety rep.

At a VESTA or Staff Committee meeting, the staff should be informed where the Health and Safety log is kept, for staff to record concerns.

The school's Joint Health and Safety committee (an Administrator, a VESTA rep, a CUPE rep and an IUOE rep) should hold monthly meetings and inform the staff of the dates for the year.

If you have any H&S questions, speak to your school's VESTA H&S rep. Any H&S concerns should be recorded in the log for your school's committee to work through.

If the concern is of an immediate nature, speak with the administrator or building engineer immediately and then record it for follow-up.

QUESTIONS?
email karin@vesta.ca

WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT USE YOUR SICK DAYS FOR

Under Articles 6, 10.O., & 10.P, sick leave or illness (SEMS code 10) must only be used for illness, medical/dental/other health appointments (or code 11 for family as above). If teachers use sick days for other purposes such as extra holidays or attending university classes *they are subject to a discipline investigation* under Article 8. F.

The consequences can be a letter of discipline on file, a number of days suspension without pay, as well as an additional investigation by the BC C College of Teachers.

Absences such as extra holidays, special events, classes are likely Personal Leave (SEMS code 20). See 10.AA in our *Collective Agreement* for more details.

The only time VBE regularly denies personal leave is when the days are attached to winter break, spring break, or the end of June. On other occasions a letter is written to VBE Human Resources usually before the leave but sometimes after when something unexpected occurs.

BC PRIDE in Education Conference: Addressing Homophobia in Schools

2008 October 24
8:30am to 3:00pm

Tupper Secondary School
419 East 24th Avenue

This conference will bring together staff, parents and youth from around the province to engage in dialogue on creating school communities that are safe and welcoming for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirited, or transgender (LGBT). Whether your focus is elementary, secondary, or community based you will find exciting opportunities to explore diverse topics from spirituality to media awareness, from gender identity to cyber-safety. A number of sessions will also be presented by and specifically for youth.

Cost: Free for VSB employees and all youth. \$30 for other adults.

For more information, contact Steve Mulligan, VSB Anti-homophobia & Diversity Consultant, (604)713-5180, pride@vsb.bc.ca

DATES TO WATCH OUT FOR

SEPTEMBER 9
Executive Committee
4 p.m. at VESTA

SEPTEMBER 16
General Meeting & Staff Rep Assembly
4 p.m. at Tupper

SEPTEMBER 23
Executive Committee
4 p.m. at VESTA

OCTOBER 7, 8, 9
School Union Rep Training
(Each worksite sends reps for one day)
During school day at Maritime Labour Centre
Details to come

OCTOBER 4
Executive Committee
4 p.m. at VESTA

OCTOBER 21
General Meeting & Staff Rep Assembly
Main topics:
- School board trustee elections
- Election of delegates to BC Federation of labour convention
4 p.m. at Tupper

NOVEMBER 15
Municipal and school board trustee elections



TOC BBQ at VESTA office, 2008 June

VESTA acknowledges the joint traditional territory of the Musqueam, Tsleil Waututh, Squamish, and Sto:lo Nations.

General Meeting & Staff Rep Assembly September 16

TUPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL
CAFETERIA at 4 p.m.

NEW IRPs IN EFFECT

Remember to recycle the old K-7 *Social Studies* and *Personal Planning* IRPs. Both of these have been replaced with the new *Social Studies* and *Health & Career Education* IRPs, respectfully. Both contain Learning Outcomes that were not present in the older versions. The new IRPs can be found on-line, but will have been delivered to your school last year in hardcopy on a 1-per-school basis.

UPDATED ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR VANCOUVER SCHOOLS

The employer will be circulating updated policy and procedures have been developed to coincide with the introduction of the new K-7 *Health & Career Education* IRP as well as new Ministry of Education directions for alternative delivery of curriculum. A statement about the Alternative Delivery Policy, and where it applies and does not apply, can be found on the introductory pages of all new IRPs – including the new *Social Studies* and *Health & Career* IRPs. This change comes out of the settlement between the province and Peter & Murray Corren, whose BC Human Rights complaint challenged exclusions in the curriculum. *Want more information? Refer to page 4-5 of the 2006 October issue of VESTA News, which can be found at www.vesta.ca*

New Members Welcome to Status of Women Committee

The VESTA Status of Women Committee is extending a warm welcome to anyone interested in serving on the committee in the 2008/2009 school year. The committee members have been actively involved in various activities to promote a non-sexist environment at the school level, in the community and internationally.

In the past years we have raised money to support a teacher in Afghanistan for a year and have lent our support to the Stephen Lewis Foundation in Africa. We have hosted a panel discussion on whether prostitution should be legalized in Canada or not and have had various discussions and interactions with those concerned about issues in Bountiful. Plans for the next year include the planning of a conference for Grade 7 girls.

If you are interested in serving on the Status of Women Committee, please join us at our first meeting on **September 22, 4 p.m.** at the VESTA Office.