



Stronger Together

2013 December 4

Staff Rep Weekly

Please share this important information with all VESTA members

Dates to Remember

*Meetings at VESTA office
4pm unless otherwise
indicated.*

December 6

Day of Remembrance
Violence Against Women

December 9

Staff Rep Workshop—
Freedom of Expression
1–3pm

December 19

Adult Educators'
Executive Committee
10- 12:00pm

Health and Safety



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BC Students Get Top Results in PISA — but...

The results from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment — or PISA — from 2012 were released on December 3. Canada was one of 65 nations that participated in this survey. BC students performed very well, a testament to our members dedication to provide quality learning despite decades of deteriorating public funding.

As an example of changes since 2003, the average estimated international “score in math was 494 in 2012, 14 points lower than in 2003. Canada scored 518, while BC scored 522, 15 points lower than the BC score of 538 in 2003.”

The decline in BC's PISA standing is a direct consequence of the increasing class size, fewer resources, and the reduction in specialist teachers for students with special needs, stated Jim Iker, BC Teachers' Federation president. "Math is a very strong content area, as well as an area with different types of formulas and problem solving," Iker said. "Students would always benefit from extra support."

"When I visit schools, I am always hearing about the desperate need for more resources, smaller class sizes and more access to specialist teachers," said Iker.

Iker also noted that the BCTF prefers the PISA to the province's Foundation Skills Assessment tests because the PISA is based on random sampling and does not provide results to individuals or schools. (Reference:

www.vancouver.sun.com/life/students+among+class+subject+areas+OECD+study/9241417/story.html)

BC Public Sector Unions — New 5-Year Contracts

On December 3, three tentative five-year deals covering 51,000 workers in government, social services, environment, community living, and aboriginal services were announced. These workers are represented by three unions: the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union; the Canadian Union of Public Employees; and the Hospital Employees' Union.

The tentative contracts offer a 5.5% wage increase over 5 years, until expiration in March 2019. In addition, there is an unusual proviso: unionized workers will receive growth-sharing increases that equal half of any percentage point gain in gross domestic growth above the forecasts of the independent Economic Forecast Council.

Darryl Walker, president of the BCGEU stated that "The idea of gain-sharing, or whatever you want to call it, I think, it's relatively positive." The three unions involved are recommending these new contracts to their members for ratification. (Reference: www.bcgeu.ca/node/12909)

Coming Labour Events

Holiday Food Bank Drive until December 13 drop off non-perishable food items at the Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph at Victoria Dr.

Songs of Social Significance by David Rovics, December 14, 7:30pm at Heartwood Café 317 E. Broadway. Tickets \$15, call 604.874.1256