

Vernon Teachers' Association

VOICES

Volume 80

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Office: 542-0456

www.vernonta.com



"In Flanders Fields,
the poppies blow
Between the crosses,
row on row,
That mark our place;
and in the sky
The larks, still bravely
singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the
guns below."

John McCrae

John Diefenbaker

"I am a Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, or free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind."

Pierre Trudeau

"Our hopes are high. Our faith in the people is great. Our courage is strong. And our dreams for this beautiful country will never die."

Lester Pearson

"Whether we live together in confidence and cohesion; with more faith and pride in ourselves and less self-doubt and hesitation; strong in the conviction that the destiny of Canada is to unite, not divide; sharing in cooperation, not in separation or in conflict; respecting our past and welcoming our future."



Reflections.....

Dear Colleagues:

Doesn't it seem to be busier every year? In the hectic pace of life and work, I hope that you have been able to find some joy in your school, classroom, students and colleagues. I also hope that you are finding ways to be well, and to feel fulfilled as a professional.

In support of that professional satisfaction and personal wellness, the VTA has been working hard behind the scenes. Your VTA Executive took some time on a Saturday in September to talk about what our priorities are for the upcoming year. The conversation focused on meeting the needs of our colleagues through union supports, as well as finding ways to ensure that each individual member finds a way to connect to their union.

When we are stressed or tired or uncertain, we can count on the supports of our union. Sometimes that means that another colleague tells you about the Health & Wellness program or BCTF Mediation, or talks to you about the rights we have when we need to take a leave of absence. Sometimes it is merely a quick call or email to the union office. You would be surprised how many times people have said that they feel so much better knowing their options, and having someone there to talk it through. Truly one of the best parts of my job, as your local president, is to provide you with support when things get hard.

Sometimes you have a great idea. One that you're excited about developing, or even sharing with your colleagues. Sometimes you have a wish. One that you would like to examine for possibilities. Our Professional Development and Inquiry and mentorship work is there to support all these new directions.

Sometimes it's a gripe. Sometimes a problem. Maybe you will step forward on your school's Occupational Health and Safety committee. Maybe you will join the conversation (and committee) to set local and provincial bargaining objectives. Maybe you will be a voice on a District Assessment committee, or District Educational Change committee, or even a District Climate/ Wellness committee.

The great thing about your union is that you can find a way to be involved. When I've talked to teachers around the province, who have become involved in their local (or provincial) union activities, it's always fun to hear what exactly brought them to a meeting, or committee. The reasons are as varied as our membership.

I hope you will consider finding a way, this year, to step in and share your thoughts. In support and solidarity,

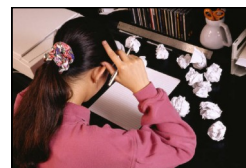
In solidarity,

Lisa

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change world.
Indeed it is the only thing that ever has. —Margaret Mead

Know your Collective Agreement

PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE (Article G.26)



Reminder that applications for full or part year paid

Educational Leave must be received **prior to January 1, 2018** for leave in the 2014/2015 school year. The Director of Instruction or Designate submits the applications to the Joint Committee for recommendations to the Board. The Board will notify teachers of acceptance or rejection of their application by April 30, 2014. Teachers granted leave under this section undertake to return and to stay in the service of the Board for not less than the full-time equivalent of two school years.

Forms are available from Lynn Jamieson (ljamiesdon@sd22.bc.ca) or Malcolm Reid (mhreid@sd22.bc.ca) at the Board Office (250-542-3361)

Living with Balance

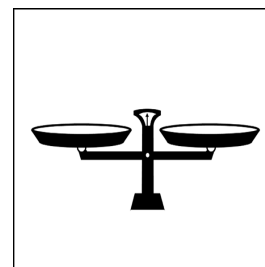
A Six-Week Group Program for Teachers

Thursdays — January 18, & 25, February 1, 15, 22 & Wednesday February 28

Pre-registration is Required, Minimum no. of Registrants Required to Run the Program

We are now taking registrations for another series of workshops, 'Living with Balance' This six-week group program will provide opportunities for:

- education, self-evaluation, and examining the importance of maintaining life-style balance.
- discussing the importance of nutrition; exercise; sleep.
- managing symptoms of low mood, anxiety, and stress; boundaries and managing conflict.
- learning strategies that increase awareness of factors that contribute to fluctuations in mood as well as methods to manage them.
- reviewing proven techniques used to improve self-esteem and self-confidence, and manage stress and low moods.
- defining what work-life balance means to each of us and what happens when our roles collide, having good boundaries is often attributed to having clear values.
- discussing how to be intentional, creative and assertive when you need to be.
- learning the importance of social connections and community in building long-term wellness, understanding that social isolation is a significant health risk factor.



To register and for more information, please visit the link at www.bctf.ca



Your PD Funds

PLEASE BE REMINDED that if you **change schools** you **MUST** contact your previous PD Rep and ensure that the balance of your available PD funds are transferred to your new school ASAP. It is your responsibility to ensure that your funds ‘travel’ with you. As well, be sure of your school’s PD Fund Policies to ensure that monies aren’t lost due to non-use/time expirations. Know where your money is and what amount you have access to!!

Also, please be reminded that if you are a TTOC and DO NOT have access to school PD funds , there are OCTAV PD funds available every year and the Application and Criteria Outline for these funds can be downloaded from the VTA website, or by contacting the VTA office and asking Alana to fax or email the forms to you. OCTAV PD funds are paid out twice a year, usually just before Christmas and mid-June.

YOUR 2017 — 2018 VTA EXECUTIVE

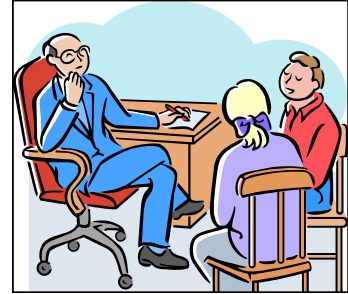
President	Lisa LaBoucane
First Vice President	Barry Dorval
Second Vice President	Cori Huizer
Secretary	Andrew Affleck
Treasurer	Chris Brandle
Local Association Representative	Kevin Bader
Bargaining Chair	Barry Dorval
Professional Development Chair	Robyn Ladner
Social Justice Rep	Sue Ghattas
Public Relations/Communications	Vacant
OH & S Chair	Craig Leverman
Local Aboriginal Education Contact	Paul Boyd
OCTAV	Vacant
Members at Large (3)	Ryan Aujla
	Sandy Klein
	Vacant

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

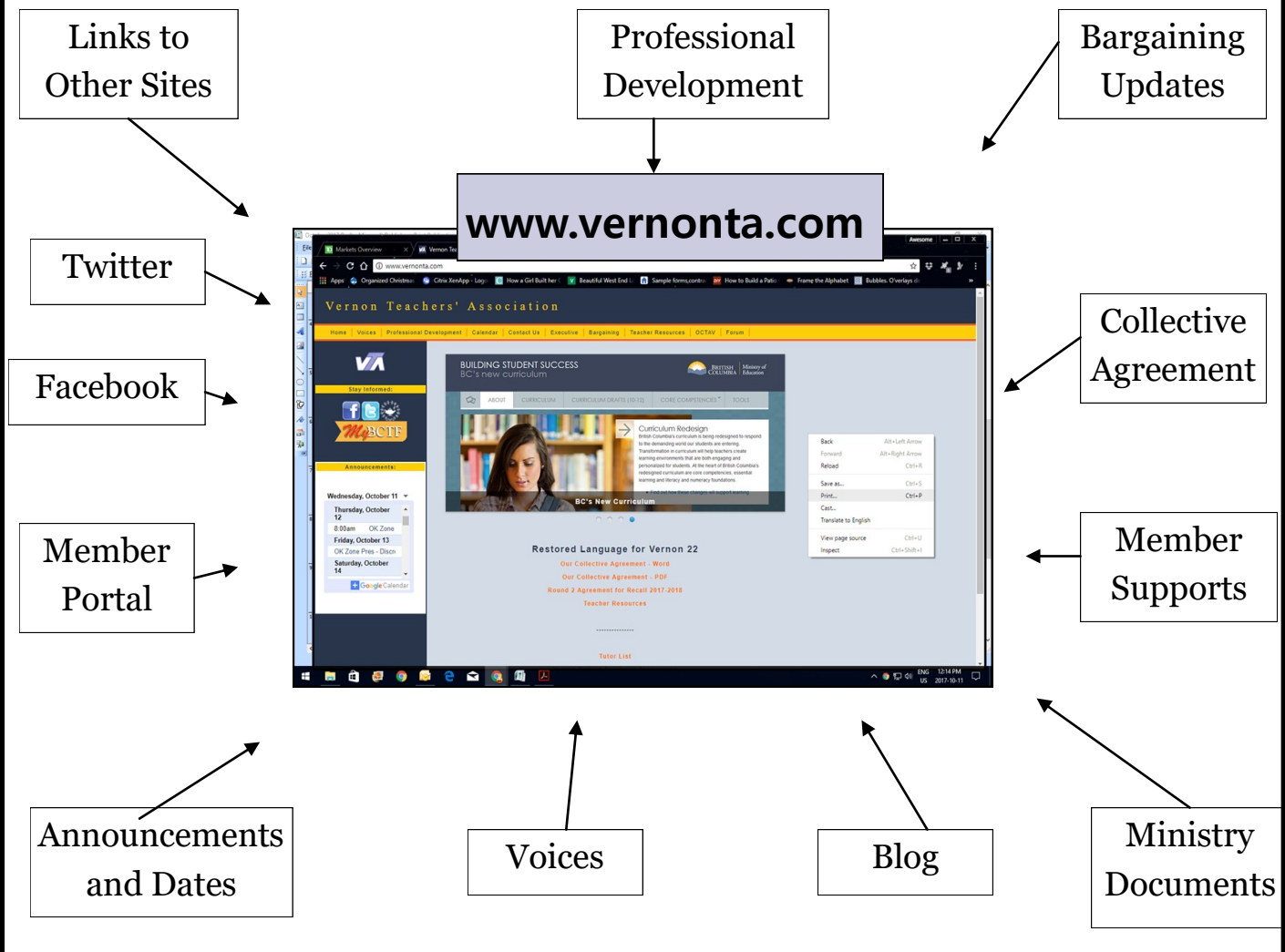
The Board provides an Employee Assistance Plan and pays 85% of the cost of this plan. You will find your contribution itemized on your pay statement as 'EAP – Regular'. They provide a wide range of expert services to help with life, work and everything in between.

Lifeworks Online login.lifeworks.com (User Name: Set this up Password: healthy)

Have a question, or need some support? Call 1-800-855-0590 at any time of the day or week.



Are you "in the know"? Member communication is always important, particularly during another year with so much going on. In addition to your school's Staff Rep, the VTA communicates with members in several ways such as "eblasts" (emailing each member), general meetings, and through our website. Of course, communication is a two-way street. How will you ensure you are part of our conversations this school year?





UPCOMING PENSION SEMINARS

Seminar: Making the Most of Your Pension

Date: February 27, 2018

Time: 6:00 — 8:00 PM

Location: Ramada Hotel — Kelowna

Seminar: Approaching Retirement

Date: November 27, 2017

Time: 6:00 — 8:00 PM

Location: Vernon Lodge

Date: February 28, 2018

Time: 5:00 — 7:00 PM

Location: Ramada Hotel - Kelowna

Date: April 10, 2018

Time: 6:00 — 8:00 PM

Location: Vernon Lodge



To register for one of these seminars go to the Teachers' Pension Plan website www.pensionsbc.ca

- Click on 'Resources'
- Click on 'Pension Information Seminars'
- Click on 'Learn More & Register'
- Click on 'Register Manually with a Paper Form (3rd option)'



Please note a number of seminars in various cities are already FULL so if you intend to attend one of these sessions please register ASAP as space is limited.

Going Forward with Bargaining.....

Greetings colleagues. My name is Barry Dorval, and I was recently elected to take over the Bargaining Chair position on the Vernon Teachers' Association Executive. With the restoration of our old class size and composition language and the pending expiration of our current contract in June of 2019, this year is sure to be a very interesting time to be involved in this work, so I am looking forward to the challenge.

A lot of excellent work has already been done by Rhiannon Johnson (our former Bargaining Chair), our president Lisa, and other members of the executive to ensure that teachers' working conditions and our students' learning conditions are being protected. This will continue to be both my priority and the priority of our executive as we work to have our restored language rigorously implemented.

While we work diligently to get our restored language in place, it is also critical that we start now to focus on our next round of bargaining. June 2019 may seem like a long time into the future, but there is much to be done before then. We need to begin now to assess our current position; what is working well and what isn't. We also need to think about what we want in the next round of bargaining, both locally and provincially. In the coming months you can expect to hear a lot more about this so please pay attention. We want every member to feel that their voice is being heard in bargaining.

Finally, if we are to be successful, we will also need a smaller, more focussed group of teachers who are willing to work with me on a bargaining committee. Together we will do more of the detailed work to gather information and opinions and then to prepare for and engage in local bargaining. If you have an interest in this area, I would love to hear from you. **Please contact me at bargainingvta@shaw.ca** with your questions or nominations. We will be electing members to our bargaining committee at the November Staff Rep Assembly, so don't put it off!



Your Pay and Benefits Statement

With the start of a new year, and all the changes that come with it, it's a good time to verify the pay and benefit items listed on your pay cheque.

Check your pay against the grid in our Collective Agreement found on the VTA website, ensure your deductions correspond to your family situation, i.e. has a child that was no longer on your benefit plan returned to school and should now be covered under your Extended Health and Dental Plan, did you get married over the summer and rather than single coverage for BC Medical Plan you now have 2-Person coverage?

If you have any questions regarding your pay and benefits deductions please don't hesitate to contact the payroll department or phone the VTA. We will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Ask Your Staff Rep

One responsibility of your Staff Rep is to be a site-based contact for your questions and/or concerns. Please remember that all questions are welcome, encouraged, and kept confidential. And one of four things will happen:

1. Your Rep will know the answer and, in turn, so will you!
2. Your Rep will consult our Collective Agreement, Code of Ethics, etc. *with* you to find the answer!
3. Your Rep will consult Lisa (the President) and get back to you.
4. Your Rep will *refer* you to the most appropriate contact.

Either way, we build our capacity and professionalism — we want well-informed colleagues!

Frequently Asked Questions of Staff Reps:

- ◆ "What leave am I supposed to take?"
- ◆ "Am I filling this out correctly?"
- ◆ "Can I do self-directed?"
- ◆ "Do I *really* need to _____?"
- ◆ "Should you be at this meeting with me?"
- ◆ "Should I agree to this?"
- ◆ "Do you have a minute?"
- ◆ "I'm frustrated with something (or someone). Can I ask your advice?"
- ◆ "What should I do about this?"
- ◆ "I just heard _____. Is this true?"
- ◆ "Is this 'allowed?'"
- ◆ "Where can I find _____?"



YOUR VTA REPRESENTATIVES FOR 2017–2018			
Alternate Prog	Glen Stiven	JW Inglis	Renee Clark
Alexis Park	Heather Gordon-Hall	Kal	Heather Malcolm
Beairsto	Jane Wright, Anni Lavigne	Kidston	Charlene O'Brien, Samantha Moore
Charles Bloom	Steve Skultety	Lavington	Deb Vandesande
BX	Shay Best	Mission Hill	Joyanne Drinkwater
Cherryville	Alisha Hoy	OK Landing	Holly Fischer, Maureen McLachlan
Clarence Fulton	Laurie MacLeod	WL Seaton	Kathy Johnson, Barry Dorval
Coldstream	Penny Fleming, Pam Sophonow	Silver Star	Gord McGrath
Ellison	Kevin Bader	VSS	Mark Bendall, Nichole Knight, Teresa Bigsby
Harwood	Andrew Taylor, Donna Smedley	Board Office	Leah Clark
Hillview	Jodi Johnson, Megan Lee	OCTAV	Cori Huizer, Jason Paas



Annual VTA Executive Retreat.....a Vision for the 2017-2018 School Year

At the beginning of every school year, the VTA Executive gets together for a half day on the weekend to discuss the vision we have for the upcoming school year. Last year was my first opportunity to join the Executive in this brainstorming event and it was inspiring! As this year is a continuation of last year's vision, let me back up for a moment to briefly share with you what came out of that discussion.

We wanted every member to feel welcomed, respected and valued. After a thoughtful discussion at last year's retreat, we decided that our focus would be on *teachers' professionalism and teachers' voice*. To that end, we encouraged more informative TTOC folders so our newest members felt welcomed and prepared to face the day. We encouraged schools to select a "Buddy" teacher that a new staff member or a TTOC could ask those small but very important questions like "where do I find ...?" We talked about recognizing and including the voices of our colleagues, and making sure information and opportunities were communicated to all members. We advocated strongly for teachers' voices to be heard on committees and in conversations throughout the year. We feel, as an Executive, that great strides were made but our work is not done!

This year, we want to continue to welcome new teachers and TTOCs, support our colleagues in their work, and find ways to value member time, yet disseminate information effectively. It is important we engage in the information and supports coming from our union, or know how to access it. We want to make sure those people who are on your "school union team" (staff committee chairs, staff reps, Pro D chairs, OHS chairs, Social Justice contacts) have the training to feel confident in their roles and valued for their service. We also want to have more opportunity for mentorship and learning available for teachers who would like to delve deeper into their own meaningful topics. We encourage each of you to take a moment to fill in surveys from the VTA as they come so we, the executive, can make sure we are following the direction the members want.

Overall, the VTA wants each member to have their professional voice heard, be informed, feel welcomed and their time valued. This is no small feat! We have made great strides last year and look forward to exploring this vision further this year!

Have a wonderful year!

Sandy Klein
VTA Member at Large

Occupational Health & Safety



Winter will be here and that will bring slippery conditions.

Slips, trips and falls are the most common injuries to employees of the District. Please protect yourself by having proper footwear during this dangerous time of the year.

Here is a summary of the research on winter footwear. Please note that none of the products rated higher than one snowflake out of a possible three.

The best solution, if you are headed out to supervise a playground or have to navigate potentially ice conditions, purchase ice cleats that you can slip on to the bottom of your footwear. There are a number of brands available. A quick Google search for ice cleats will give you a wide range of prices and retailers who carry them.

Last, please report icy conditions around your worksite. Do not wait until you or one of your co-workers gets injured. Be pro-active and safe this winter.

“The researchers tested 98 pairs of boots, in the categories of safety and casual footwear, available in Canada. But only 8 percent of these—three pairs of safety boots and five pairs of casual boots—met the minimum criteria to be considered top picks.

These eight pairs all received a ranking of one "snowflake" out of a possible three, meaning that their MAAs were between 7 and 10 degrees. (Ontario's accessibility guidelines specify that curb ramps have a slope of 7 degrees at most.) None of the boots tested received more than one snowflake.

Women's shoes were particularly underrepresented on the top picks lists. In the casual category, only the Sperry Powder Valley Vibram Arctic Grip Boot (\$180) received a snowflake, with a score of 9. In the safety category, only the Marks Dakota CTCP Transitional Boot (only available in Canada) made the cut, with a score of 8.



Men had a few more high-ranking options, including styles from Caterpillar, Sperry, and Wind River, and Marks. The full list of boots tested, and their scores, is available at ratemytreads.com.

Two specific technologies stood out among all the boots that were tested: Green Diamond and Vibram's Arctic Grip. Shoes outfitted with these proprietary outsoles have special materials designed to provide better traction on wet ice, the researchers say, which may reduce the risk of slips and falls.”

Craig Leverman, VTA OH&S Chair



Salary Indemnity Fund

Are you 65 or eligible for an unreduced pension?

You may be able to save approximately 1.2% of your salary.

Why?

Because you are no longer entitled to long-term benefits under the salary Indemnity Plan (SIP) when you attain an of the following milestones:

- 35 years of contributory service, with a minimum age of 55
- Age 61, if you reach “Factor 90” before age 61
- “Factor 90” if you are between 61 and 65 years old
- Age 65



It is up to you to apply to withdraw from long-term disability.

Ensure that in the event of serious illness or accident you have sufficient accumulated sick leave, which, when combined with 120 days of benefits from SIP short-term will protect your salary to the end of the month in which you reach one of the milestones mentioned above.

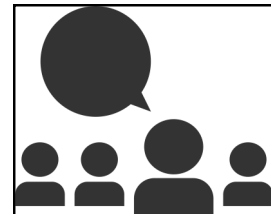
To obtain an application, go to tinyurl.com/7qrrnxx or call the BCTF Income Security Division at 604-871-1921

VTa GENERAL MEETING

Monday - November 20, 2017 - VSS Theatre - 4:00 PM

Draft Agenda

- ◆ Update on Implementation of Restored Language
- ◆ Bargaining Committee Nominations
- ◆ Provincial Bargaining Timelines
- ◆ Draw Prize



Hope to see you there!

TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM

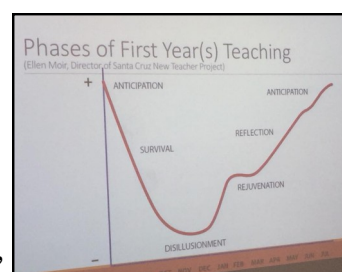


Your Mentoring Team: Barb Carey (Cherryville), Jill McDonald (Kal), Andrea Melnyk (VSS), Mary Niedballa (VSS), Maija Daughtry (VSS), Derry-Ann Cooper (Kal), Robyn Ladner (Silver Star), Sheila Monroe (OKL), Diana Ward (Seaton), Krista Lahey (Silver Star), Ali Thomposn (Silver Star). Steven Wilson (Silver Star), Andrew Hough (Silver Star).

SD 22 and the VTA have redesigned our mentorship program!! The Teacher Mentoring Program was launched in September and we now have a strong and dedicated group of trained mentors ready to support our new and new to role colleagues.

Mentoring is a process where teacher colleagues share their experience, knowledge, and skills for personal and professional growth. Mentoring relationships are non-evaluative and offer personalized support to new teachers and for teachers who have transitioned into new assignments.

This program provides the opportunity for colleagues to form strong professional relationships with mentors and each other. Release time is provided for collaboration, observation, and sharing among mentors and their mentees over shared goals.



If you are a new or new to role teacher, we know you are busy, we know you are dedicated, we also know you are not alone - we are here to support and learn with you.

If you are interested please contact either Joe Rogers (Superintendent, SD22) jrogers@sd22.bc.ca or Robyn Ladner (PD Chair, VTA) prodchair@shaw.ca

Robyn Ladner
Professional Development Chairperson
prodchair@shaw.ca