



WEST VANCOUVER Teachers' Association

Vol 46, no 6 Feb/Mar 2024

Notes from your President - Spencer Capier

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. It's hard to believe Spring Break is only ten days away!

I want to apologize for not organizing a WVTA social for this month. The office has been busy; Chantalle and I have each been away at various times participating in union training, and I was out for a week with COVID. We will try to arrange a gathering a bit later in the year.

The BCTF holds its Annual General Meeting at the beginning of Spring Break. Several of our colleagues have volunteered to spend some of their holiday representing West Vancouver teachers at the AGM, and I want to thank them all:

Rozhin Emadi (WVSS)
Matt Glover (RR)
Geoff Hamelin (IP)
Jamie Hicks (TTOC)
Nevena Ivankovic (WVSS)
Heather Johnston (BICS)
Jessica Selzer (RR)
Chantalle Wigley (WVTA VP, IE)

We will spend four days at the Hyatt Regency Vancouver discussing and voting on issues important to teachers in the province.

Other than that, congratulations on getting through another challenging report card season. Enjoy your Spring Break!

In solidarity, Spencer

Applications for Leave of Absence

After each five years of service in the district, a teacher may apply to the Leave of Absence Committee for full-time Personal Leave **for whatever reason they wish**. Full-time Personal Leave will be granted for a period of not more than one year.

A full-time teacher who, **prior to March 15**, requests to teach part-time commencing the following school year, shall be granted their request provided the assignment is "compatible with the organization of the Board." A teacher may request an extension of their part-time assignment for up to three consecutive years.

On recommendation of the Leave of Absence Committee, the Board will grant teachers Educational Leave with no salary for a specified period. The date of return to duty will be clearly stated when the leave is granted. **Please call the WVTA office if you need further clarification or some advice.**

BCTF Teachers' Council Elections

The BC Teachers' Council (BCTC) elections will be held in March 2024. **Voting opens on March 6, 2024, and closes on March 20, 2024**, at 4:30 PST, and voting is open to all certificate holders. The BCTC will send instructions by email, and the voting platform will be online only. Candidate profiles and information can be found on the [elections page](#). **To ensure you can participate in the election, as soon as possible:**

1. Ensure your contact information, **especially your email address**, is up to date in [Your Account](#), which is accessed using your BCeID login.
2. If you need help logging in to Your Account or linking your BCeID, or with your certificate number, please call Services BC at one of the following numbers: Vancouver at 604-660-2355 or toll-free at 1-888-356-2741. There is also a helpful BCeID FAQ [here](#).
3. Ensure that your inbox isn't full so that you can receive election emails.

An email went out to certificate holders on Feb. 22, so please check your email, including your junk folder.

Know the election zone in which you reside:

The election zones correspond with the five [regional health authorities](#), and certificate holders can **only** vote in the **zone where they live**.

One election takes place in each election zone:

- Fraser Zone
- Interior Zone
- Northern Zone
- *Vancouver Coastal Zone
- Vancouver Island Zone.

Know your candidates. Successful candidates will be elected for a three-year term beginning in April 2024.

There are [18 members](#) on the BC Teachers' Council (BCTC):

- Five members are elected by teachers
- Four members are appointed by the minister based on nominations from the BCTF
- Seven members are appointed by the minister from other education partner groups' nominations
- One member is appointed by the First Nations Education Authority
- One non-voting member is appointed to represent the minister

*Of note, WVTA member **Emily Lacock** (PJ) is a candidate in the Vancouver Coastal Zone.

myPITA Spring Conference 2024



Friday, April 26, 2024, Hilton Whistler Resort

Workshops will be relevant, immediately applicable, and many will include hands-on participation plus interaction with other attendees.

Conference details:

- 8 great sessions to choose from
- Lunch time socials, discussion topics, and work likes

Early bird fees until noon, March 26th. This event has a limited number of seats, and it will quickly sell out. Conference information and registration [here](#).

BCTF Statement on Cell Phones in Schools

The BC Teachers' Federation has not received direction from its membership to take a position on whether cell phones in classrooms should be banned provincially. The Federation strongly supports the professional autonomy and rights that members have to do their important work as educators. Teachers, schools, and school districts have a variety of ways to address cell phone use in classrooms and schools, which may involve some or no restrictions.

Cell phones can have both positive and negative impacts on classroom learning. They can be a

distraction, and they can also serve as a helpful resource to support learning if there is equitable access to technology.

Writing a province-wide policy that would be appropriate for everyone everywhere would be a difficult task. However, should the government work on such a policy, it's important to include teachers' voices at the table to ensure that on-the-ground classroom needs and expectations are considered.

All that said, there are much larger issues facing public education than cell phone use. Teachers need adequate resources to ensure no child goes without the support they need. If BC United is sincere in wishing to improve learning conditions, the Federation looks forward to hearing their plan for recruitment and retention strategies to solve the acute staffing shortages in schools.

BCTF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 108th Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation will be held at the Vancouver Hyatt Hotel, March 16-19.

In addition to WVTA President **Spencer Capier**, **Rozhin Emadi** (WVSS), **Matt Glover** (RR), **Geoff Hamelin** (IP), **Jamie Hicks** (TTOC), **Nevena Ivankovic** (WVSS), **Heather Johnston** (BICS), **Jessica Selzer** (RR), and **Chantalle Wigley** (WVTA VP/Ingl. Sec.) will devote a portion of their Spring Break to represent the WVTA. This is an intense four-day affair that immerses one into the heart of what the BCTF is and what it stands for.

Although only delegates and LRs can vote at the AGM, any teacher is welcome to attend, although seating is limited. Come and look for your WVTA delegates at their assigned table.

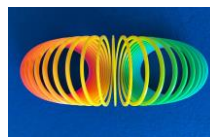
“Understanding your Benefits and Pension Income in Retirement” CPP, OAS and Group Benefits: An Essential Workshop from BCRTF

The important decisions that will determine your retirement lifestyle should not be made at the last minute as you fill out your forms. This seminar will prepare you to confidently make choices that are right for you.

- April 3, 2024, at 7 pm
- May 9, 2024, at 7 pm
- May 29, 2024, at 7 pm

The agenda includes: Teachers' Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and voluntary group benefits. As you will no longer have access to your group benefits from the employer, information will be included about choosing your group benefits (dental, extended health and travel), and show some of the differences between the plans to equip you to select the plan that suits your needs.

All teachers 50+ are encouraged to attend on of BCRTA's Pre-Retirement online (Zoom) workshops. The workshops are free, and you will have access planning materials along with answers to questions you have about your retirement. Register at <http://bcrtf.ca/workshop> .



***Don't forget to
Spring Forward!***

**Daylight Saving Time begins on
Sunday, March 10, 2024, at 2:00 A.M.**