

# VESTA WEEKLY

TOPICS WORTH TALKING ABOUT! PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

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## **Mask mandate in BC Schools**

After months of advocacy, the PHO has responded with a mandate that requires masks to be worn by all staff and students indoors both within and outside of their learning cohort. Students in K-3 are encouraged and should be supported to wear masks at all times as well, although it cannot be required. Staff are required to wear masks even within 2m of one another, unless there is a barrier such as plexiglass or classroom walls. Please watch your email for further updates as the inaccurate information provided by the Ministry earlier this week has caused confusion and uncertainty.

## **Vaccinations for Education workers**

There will be an update from the ministry at next week's provincial steering committee meeting, and roll out of the vaccines will depend on the eligibility of workers in the system, number of vaccines. VESTA has maintained through District Health and Safety that we recommend a roll out similar to the flu vaccine clinics, but we have not received any information or confirmation of the Vancouver plan. Further information will be available next week.



## **Anti-Asian Racism**

Both VESTA and the BCTF have made public statements against the Anti-Asian violence and racism that has been systemic in BC and Vancouver, but has been accelerated by misinformation and racism connected to the pandemic. VESTA has carried a motion seeking bold statements and action from government and the labour movement to end anti-Asian racism. Please find an article from VESTA member Christopher Wee [here on our website](#). Please be advised that the article contains strong language and depictions of lived racism.

## **Red for BCED**

The Ministry of Education has finally implemented a [mask mandate](#) (pg 29). We hope this will help create a culture of mask-wearing in our schools, even our annexes, as it encouraged that masks be worn by K-3 students.

While it is by no means the only item on our list of enhancing safety measures, let's celebrate the hard work it took to get us here. We have been advocating for a stronger mask mandate for months at both the provincial and local levels. VESTA invites our members to wear RED on Friday, April 9th to recognize each other for the ongoing work that we are doing to make our schools safe. If you want to spread some solidarity, tag [@VESTA39](#) on Twitter or send your masked photos to [vanessa@vesta.ca](mailto:vanessa@vesta.ca) so we can include them in a future VESTA Weekly. It is always great to see our members' faces, especially this year.

We've got another batch of RedforBCED shirts available for our members. If you have a contract at a school, check with your Staff Rep if they are putting in an order to [vanessa@vesta.ca](mailto:vanessa@vesta.ca). If you do not have a contract, or are unable to connect with your Staff Rep, please fill in the following [survey](#). Shirts can be picked up at the VESTA office parking lot on Thursday, April 8th from 3-5pm.

## **Filing your taxes for the year 2020**

- Your T4 will look different, as Canada Revenue Agency has required a change to the T4 form in order to simplify the process of reporting income for those who claimed CERB, or any of the Federal emergency or COVID benefits.
- School Supply Tax Credit Form – Teachers can claim tax credit when you spend personal income on school supplies. It is up to 15% of \$1,000 spent, and requires your administrator's signature. You can find additional information on what can be claimed at CRA
- [CRA work from home tax benefit](#) – Teachers working from home for more than 50% over at least 4 weeks can claim a deduction of \$2 per day up to a maximum of \$400 to be deducted for your total income when you file your taxes. You do not need anything to be signed by the VSB. Most teachers will be able to claim this amount for working days between March 30 to May 31 This is not a rebate or refund, but a tax deduction as part of the calculation of your tax return.
- You can access your T4 electronically through the PeopleSoft employee self-service.

## **Climate Justice Webinar on Earth Day**

The Environmental Justice Action Group invites classes to attend a Climate Justice Webinar on April 22 from 10:30–11:30 a.m. The webinar is for Grades 4–12. We will hear from youth activists, and classes will have a chance to take part in discussions. The webinar focuses on Earth Day through an Indigenous lens. Optional pre- and post-webinar activities will be provided. To register, click on the Events tab in the [Member's Portal](#)

## **Labour Climate Forum**

The BCTF, BCGEU, and the Vancouver and District Labour Council are hosting a joint virtual Climate Justice Conference on April 10 from 1:00–5:00 p.m. Meet other trade unionists and discuss strategies and actions we can take to leverage labour's power to solve the climate crisis. The conference features expert keynote speakers including: Jane McAlevey, John Cartwright, and Sleydo' (Molly Wickham). The conference will also include two workshops and a closing panel with youth activists from across BC. Full details and registration information are available on the [conference website](#).



## **LGBTQ2S+ Issues Session**

The BCTF is seeking members to virtually attend a two-day Issues Session for members who identify as LGBTQ2S+ on May 17 and 18, 2021. Participation in all meetings is required for those appointed. The issues session will provide opportunities to strengthen connections and community for BCTF members who identify as LGBTQ2S+, examine current issues for LGBTQ2S+ teachers, and provide recommendations regarding future advocacy, supports, policy and/or programs that could further support LGBTQ2S+ members. For more information and application instructions, visit the [Opportunities for Members](#) page online. The deadline to apply is 4:30 p.m. on April 6, 2021.





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## Issues Session on Racism

BCTF members who identify as First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and persons of colour are invited to apply to participate in the BCTF 2021 Issues Session on Racism. The session will take place virtually on the evening of Thursday, April 29 and all day, Friday, April 30. This issues session will provide opportunities to strengthen connections between the community of BIPOC members, develop proposals for concrete actions to address racism, and draft a professional statement of principles to guide the antiracism work of the BCTF. For more information on the BCTF Issues Session on Racism, see the reports to the BCTF Executive Committee on the [BCTF Equity and Inclusion webpage](#). The posting and application form are available [online](#). The application deadline is Friday, April 9, at 4:45 p.m

## Dates to Remember

### **Communications Committee Meeting**

April 1, 2021 @ 4 pm

#### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/94053028608>

Meeting ID: 940 5302 8608

Passcode: 266769

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

### **Social Justice & Solidarity Committee Meeting**

April 6, 2021 @ 4 pm

#### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/99525710221>

Meeting ID: 995 2571 0221

Passcode: 708293

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



**How EFAP Can Help**  
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