

VESTA WEEKLY

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Towards the New Year - Page 1 & 2

Staff Rep Union Leave - Page 2

Perfectionism in context - Page 3

Be a BCTF Decision-maker! - Page 3

Happy Holidays from VESTA - Page 3

Contact Us & Meeting Dates - Page 4



Towards the New Year

Friends and colleagues, it's been a year to remember. While we're still only midway through the school year, the closing of the calendar year is always an important time to both look backwards and forwards. Many of us have been counting down the days for a long time now, and that speaks to the generally untenable working conditions that many of us have been managing. We know this is due to the de-designation of so many of our students, struggles for timely identification of student needs, full and appropriate staffing of schools, the increasing non-teaching demands placed on teachers, and the trauma of supporting our families and students through a years-long pandemic.

We remind you, as always, that your health and wellbeing needs to come first. While we certainly hope that the two weeks ahead will bring opportunities for restorative choices, we know that the challenges are systemic and severe. Our support of the work at the bargaining tables will be necessary as those members fight on our behalf for stronger protections and better working conditions. Similarly, it's important that our school Staff Rep Teams are recognized for the essential, front-line work they are doing, upholding the collective agreement and supporting members in accessing and defending their rights.

Continued from Page 1

Please remember that our collective rights, exercised through our union, are also human rights, workers' rights, and that it is by standing together and raising our voices in the face of injustice, that we can make the greatest change for ourselves and our students. It's tempting, especially in a pandemic, to contemplate individualism, competition and meritocracy, damaging ideologies that make it hard to organize. It's by reaching out to one another, sharing information, strategies, learnings and questions that we can fight back against those forces whose impacts include racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, ageism and other oppressions. We're reminded of this when we consider our decolonizing work and the concept of "truth first, then reconciliation, then justice".

We'd like to close today with a quote from the great educator and author, bell hooks, who passed away this week, and whose loss is being felt keenly around the world:

"The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, and openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom."

Staff Rep Union Leave

Anyone accessing union leave is REQUIRED to submit the monthly form to Hitomi at hitomi@vesta.ca. Without that verification, we cannot square the number and days of union leave, creating a significant workload issue for VESTA Table Officers and Staff. Please remember that the ½ day per month is available for you to use, but that completion and submitting the form are part of the deal. This is true for Staff Reps, Health and Safety Chairs. If you are accessing VESTA's negotiated Mentorship funds, you must use the SFE code in your confirmation email, not the regular union leave code. Thank you for your consideration!



Perfectionism in context

As we draw to a close on another hard year in the classroom and head into a holiday that often includes both joy and stress, it's important to recognize the way that perfectionism plays an insidious role in many of our lives. It generates harmful norms and standards and doesn't acknowledge the important learning role that mistakes offer. It's connected to cultures of individualism and reinforced by the austerity culture we see around us where we're continually expected to do more with less, to make things perfect when we don't have the tools, resources or support. Let's commit to identifying the ways that Perfectionism harms us as teachers, community and family members as part of our wellness and our anti-oppression work!

Be a BCTF Decision-maker!

Bring your passion and your energy to the BCTF Annual General Meeting on Spring Break 2022! While the format for the AGM has not yet been determined, you can be guaranteed that the discussion and debate will be interesting and engaging. The BCTF AGM is where members have the ability to shape the policy and procedural direction of our provincial body takes on matters related to Health and Safety, Curriculum, Working Conditions, Social Justice, Aboriginal Education and much more. Delegates will be elected at the January General Meeting! [Application form here](#)

Happy Holidays from the VESTA office



Joanne, Darren, Marij, Allison, Jody and Rob



Joanne Sutherland
President
joanne@vesta.ca

Allison Jambor
Vice President
allison@vesta.ca

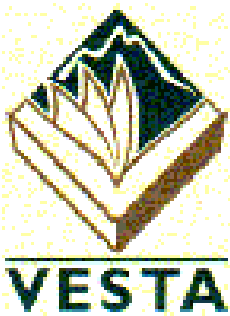
Darren Tereposky
Vice President
darren@vesta.ca

Marjorie Dumont
Vice President
marjorie@vesta.ca

Jody Polukoshko
Vice President
jody@vesta.ca

Rob McGowan
AE President
rob@vesta.ca

Office:
604-873-8378
Fax:
604-873-2652
www.vesta.ca



Dates to Remember

Executive Committee Meeting

January 11, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87113721143>

Meeting ID: 871 1372 1143

Passcode: 189068

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly

January 18, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85306029529>

Meeting ID: 853 0602 9529

Passcode: 391392

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



VESTA

The Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association is the union representing elementary teachers and adult educators working in public schools in Vancouver.