

VESTA WEEKLY

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #62 - Page 1

The Power of Language - Page 2

Bargaining Update - Page 2

If you are stranded - Page 3

Day in the life of a TTOC - guest article by Katharina Zaikine - Page 3

VESTA Feedback on Anti-Racism Training Day - Page 4

VESTA policy on Mini-school references - Page 4

Use of Staff Meetings - Page 4



Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #62

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

The Power of Language

As we work together to understand the ways that racism and colonialism have shaped our language and the way we perceive and respond to the world, one of the ongoing projects is identifying and removing language that has racist, ableist or colonialist roots. Teachers well understand the ways that words shape our thinking and our understanding of the world.

It just takes practice to learn to use different wording and eliminate the perpetuation of problematic ideologies and language. It's important to remember that when someone brings these kinds of issues to our attention, that it's an effort to help us do anti-racism or inclusion better, and an appropriate response is "Thank you!" despite the impulse to feel embarrassed or defensive. We are all learning together and can support each other with reminders and encouragement.

The [CBC published an article](#) about just this matter. Please take a look, as it provides some historical and current problematic language and in some cases, suggestions for replacement.

Bargaining Update

The VTF bargaining team continues to represent members with the employer each week at the table. We have concluded two full day and one half-day sessions with the employer and have one session remaining prior to the Winter Break.

Discussions continue to be productive, and as we hone in on the particulars of our proposals and positions, the intensity increases, and we have seen stronger assertions on both sides in recent dates. The team is working cohesively and taking every opportunity to explore all possibilities.

This week, we continued talking about post and fill, part time assignments, layoff and recall, and space and facilities. As always, the VSB representatives rely heavily on BCPSEA direction and advice, and while we are not always in agreement with their position, the VTF is creative and committed to finding new ways to approach matters of importance to the membership.



If you are stranded

If you live in a different municipality than Vancouver, your thoughts have likely turned to concerns about travel, visiting family, and the potential impact on your ability to report to work. The BC government has committed to ensuring that no teacher loses pay because they couldn't get to work due to the recent climate related extreme weather, and is working with the BCTF on this matter.

If you are unable to report to work due to closed highways or severe weather, please book your absence in SFE as "Circumstances beyond an employee's control" and advise your school admin that you are stranded due to weather. Then email the VESTA office, and we will forward your name to the BCTF, who are communicating with government to ensure no loss of pay. While the "Circumstances beyond employee's control" deducts the cost of the TTOC replacement, the expectation is that teachers will be made whole in their salary if the absence was unavoidable due to this inclement weather. It is unclear at this point whether this protection will extend beyond the current crisis.

Day in the life of a TTOC - guest article by Katharina Zaikine

First, I usually try to look for jobs in the evening, but if I can't, I wake up for the 5:30 calls, if you wake up early you can go back to sleep for a more appropriate wakeup time. If they call in the morning, they usually call right away. As a TOC, I really enjoy getting the opportunity to go to all the schools in the district and I don't think I've even been to them all so I'm always having new experiences. I really love to see how they are all different from one another. I think it's great to have exposure to elementary schools, especially since I'm a secondary English teacher. Coming from a secondary teacher perspective, doing prep coverage in an elementary school gives me the opportunity to get familiar particularly with primary grades. It's not a full day but you get an introduction and you can really learn a lot to take with you to future assignments. It's fun to spend time with the younger students as well.

Sometimes I'm hesitant to accept a job if I have no idea what it's about, so even just indicating the grade or subject is nice. I don't need a lot of information, just something to know what to generally expect. My favourite part of the job is that I see how different classrooms are set up, and facilitating the more creative activities with younger grades is also great since it can be such a unique experience compared to what I know from high school.



VESTA Feedback on Anti-Racism Training Day

After consultation with Staff Reps and the Staff Rep Assembly, VESTA has compiled an open letter to VSB Trustees and Senior Management with feedback on the September 7 Anti Racism Training Day. You can read the letter [here](#) on the VESTA website.

VESTA policy on Mini-school references

Just a reminder that VESTA has policy prohibiting the writing of reference letters for students applying for mini-schools or private schools. This is a position that is well known to our colleagues in VSTA and they do not expect letters of reference from VESTA members.

We already write report cards for all students, and these are included in these applications. There is no need for additional reference material to be produced in supporting a student's acceptance at mini-school. Such requests have the potential to significantly increase workload on Grade 7 teachers. While we continue to advocate for the reference form to specify the exclusion of VESTA members on the reference form, it's important in the meantime that we all follow this policy. The policies are copied below for your reference!

That teachers do not write letters of reference for students to be included with mini-school applications. 2018 Feb 20 SRA

That teachers do not write letters of reference for students applying to private school. 2018 Feb 20 SRA

Use of Staff Meetings

We are hearing increasing concerns about the use and scheduling of Staff Meetings. Staff Meetings can be found in the Collective Agreement at Article A.30, and is one of the VTF bargaining objectives. Staff Meetings are mandatory meetings called by the Principal, and are different from the Staff Committee Meeting, which is called and attended by VESTA members only.

Reports of Administrators using meetings to provide training, professional development, breakout discussion groups or other unsolicited training or workshops is a more recent development and we believe those uses are not consistent with the intention of Administrator called Staff Meetings. If you have concerns about the agendas and content, or frequency or scheduling of Administrator Staff Meetings, please [email your In House Table Officer Liaison](#)



Joanne Sutherland
President
joanne@vesta.ca

Allison Jambor
Vice President
allison@vesta.ca

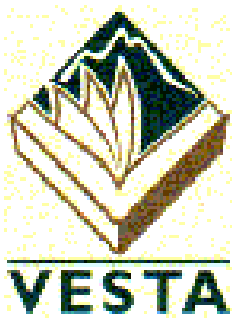
Darren Tereposky
Vice President
darren@vesta.ca

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

Health & Safety Committee Meeting

December 6, 2021 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82211488184>

Meeting ID: 822 1148 8184

Passcode: 016145

Dial by your location

+1 647 558 0588 Canada

General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly

December 7, 2021 @ 4:00 PM

General Meeting to adopt BCTF AGM resolutions.

Staff Rep Assembly to follow.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86569327417>

Meeting ID: 865 6932 7417

Passcode: 391392

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



Starling

Build
Resilient
Minds.

VESTA

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