

# VESTA WEEKLY

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

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## **Pay Dates for Winter Break 2021**

The end of the year always results in pay date vagaries and this year is no exception! Contract teachers will be paid on the predictable schedule of December 15 and 17th, then not again until January 14.

For TTOCs, pay will be deposited on the 15th and then again on the 22nd of December.

A reminder that there is a 12 month pay option for employees that can be found at article B.8 of the [Collective Agreement](#) whereby the board prorates your salary so that you receive equal payments throughout the school year, including through the summer.



## General Meeting Witnessing

At this week's General Meeting, VESTA incorporated the protocol of Witnessing, from the Musqueam Squamish and Tseil-Waututh people as a ceremonial way of incorporating accountability into events.

While we are all witnesses to the work of VESTA and the work of reconciliation, Witnesses are called as keepers of history, and it is through witnessing that our work will be validated and provided lawfulness.

Witnesses are asked to store and care for the history they witness, and most importantly, to share with their own people when they return to their schools and home. Our meeting had 4 Witnesses, Natasha from the North, Karine from the East, Chloe from the South and Alexandra from the West. They received blankets and bandanas so that they can speak with a kind heart and mind, and to protect them from negative energies.

Together we heard about Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action #62 and the Witnesses, and Marjorie Dumont and Kayli connected us to their learnings on this Call to Action including the following:

- The importance of relating our learning to family and history, ancestors and past experiences in order not to repeat it.
- As the older generation, it's our responsibility to consider seven generations when we teach youth
- It's important to learn Indigenous culture and language, and to do so in schools.
- We can give kids tools to understand what Canada has done and what is still happening.
- We can't carry out this work as educators if we are not educated and it's our work to educate ourselves, which includes reading the TRC and UNDRIP in their entirety to connect back to local and global Indigenous solidarity.
- This Call to Action can be put on the agenda of staff committee and think about how staff can work on this. We can work on solidarity between settler and indigenous staff.
- It's important to teach about indigenous brilliance and success as much as you teach about indigenous struggle. Students have to understand the truth and history but also have to be uplifted. There has to be hope and feelings of powerfulness
- We sometimes forget to ask students what they want to learn. What can we do make things better for indigenous students, because it makes things better for all students.

This will be a standing item on our General Meetings as part of our effort to decolonize our practice as a union, to include the TRC calls to action in meaningful and concrete ways, to show respect to the Nations on whose unceded territory we work, and to honour Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

## **AGM Delegates**

The BCTF AGM is a riotous, exciting experience whereby delegates from around the province meet together to determine priorities, positions and policy for the BCTF, along with electing the BCTF Executive Committee. VESTA will be appointing members to attend the 2022 AGM at the January General Meeting. [Application forms are available on the VESTA website.](#)

If you've never been, talk to an experienced VESTA member who will regale you with the joys and disappointments of arguing strongly held positions with colleagues around the province and working together to develop a better world, and a stronger defense of working and learning conditions.

VESTA provides release time and training for delegates, and if elected, you'll be one of about 30 VESTA Members speaking on behalf of VESTA members on matters such as Aboriginal Education, Bargaining, Public Policy, Health and Safety, Social Justice and much more.

The BCTF AGM is held during Spring break and if held in-person, hotel accommodations and per diem expenses will be covered by the BCTF, including childcare programming.

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## **VESTA Press Releases**

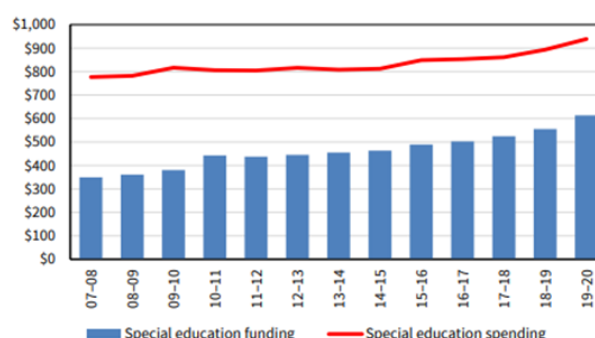
In response to member concerns and motions brought by Staff Reps to our General Meeting, VESTA has issued two press releases in recent weeks.

The first, issued on November 23, 2021 urges the Vancouver School Board to revisit their decision not to proceed with a vaccine mandate for employees. VESTA took a position in support of the vaccine mandate, and instead of open, transparent debate with stakeholders and the public, the decision was made not to proceed, despite their stated desire to implement layers of protection to keep staff and students safe. [You can read it here](#) on the VESTA Website

The second, issued on December 3, 2021, was issued jointly with CUPE 15 and the Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association. It spoke to our shared concern with the underfunding of Vancouver schools, and the impact of funding and staffing shortages on inclusion, teacher workload and student learning.

You can read it [here on the VESTA website](#). It calls on the Ministry of Education to adequately fund public education, and the Vancouver School Board to do better on the provision of appropriate staffing and supports.

**Figure 9: Special education spending vs funding by school year, inflation-adjusted millions of dollars**





## Local Bargaining Update

After 4 sessions at the local table, this week's session resulted in sign off on three local matters that represent some improvements for members in terms of the clarity and accessibility of the collective agreement provisions. Make sure that you attend upcoming meetings to hear in-committee updates on progress at local bargaining, and to ensure that your feedback and input becomes part of the process.



Your VTF bargaining team hard at work: Marjorie Dumont, Karine Ng, Greg Canning, John Silver, Carmen Schaedeli, Kathryn Walks, Vanessa Lefebvre, Jesse Taylor and me, Jody Polukoshko

We continue to discuss equity, access to information, TTOC rights, staff meetings, teacher input to the Board, and many other important matters. While yesterday's session was the last of the calendar year, we'll be back at the table in the second week of January, representing VESTA members proudly and fiercely. Remember that any matters resolved at the table will be subject to membership ratification, and that local bargaining will be followed by the opening of the Provincial table, the preparation for which is already underway.



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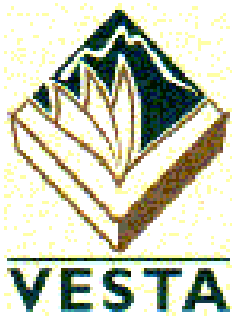
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## Dates to Remember

### Executive Committee Meeting

December 14, 2021 @ 4:00 PM

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88237084739>

Meeting ID: 882 3708 4739

Passcode: 982068

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.