

VESTA WEEKLY

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

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Teachers' Council Elections

Please check your email (and possibly your junkmail folder) for the link and PIN to vote in the Teachers' Council Elections. Voting is open between March 8 and March 18. Information about candidates is posted on the BC Teachers' Council elections page. Marjorie Dumont is a VESTA member, and is the incumbent running in Vancouver Coastal region. She has the support of the BCTF locals in Coastal Health (Region) and has done a great job representing public school teachers and BCTF members in her previous 2 year term.

If you live in the Fraser region, please consider supporting Jatinder Bir, who is a Surrey Teacher, is endorsed by BCTF locals in the Fraser Valley. Jatinder is also an incumbent, and has represented teachers in the Fraser Valley effectively, ethically and with tenacity.

The Teachers' Council oversees the standards for teachers and other people with a teaching certificate in BC, certification requirement, and oversight of the teacher education programs at the universities in BC that have a B.Ed program. It really matters who gets elected in these roles, please take the time to cast your vote for Marjorie or Jatinder.

RED for BCED

Political Action is ramping up as teachers are still not seeing the safety measures that we need in schools: a stronger mask mandate and a reduction in classroom density.

Surrey teachers have started staging walk-ins to call out the lack of health & safety protocols in schools. Their exposure notices are rising, more classes are isolating, and their added stress of the new variant is increasing. Public Health has stated that the variant is no higher risk of severity of infection, but transmission is quicker. They don't see that easier transmission is increased risk.

The data from Work Safe shows that the education services sector is second only to the health care services sector in the number of compensation claims received by WCB and 82% of teachers' claims for occupational COVID-19 infection have been accepted.

VESTA has just received another order of 500 Red for BCED shirts that we want to get out to members, with sizes ranging from M – 3X. As distribution will prove a bit more difficult this time, we are asking Staff Reps to collect the info and send an email to vanessa@vesta.ca with the number of shirts & sizes.

If you are not connected to a school, or can't connect with your Staff Rep, please fill out the following [survey](#) to get your shirt. TTOCs, we will be providing days where you can pick up your shirts at the VESTA office.

Spring Transfer Important Dates

- **Deadline for vacate card March 15th:** changes to post and fill language regarding vacate card, collapse of B and C etc
- **Increase in time procedure changes (March 31st deadline waived):** In effect now until June 30th, 2022 we have a Letter of Understanding for part-time teachers wishing to increase their FTE. **A part-time teacher wishing to increase their FTE at their current school must:**
 - Notify their administrator for their desired FTE for 2021 September using the Request for Increase/Change in Teaching Time form
 - A copy of the form (with both teacher and administrator signatures) must be sent to HR
 - **There is no deadline date for a teacher to apply for this increase and you need not have been full time in the past.**
 - These requests will be considered if the time is available at the school site and if the increase in time will not cause a surplus

Note: If there are layoffs, no increases in time can be granted except through the posting and fill process. (Article C.20.3.c) (A teacher can always attempt to increase their time through the post and fill process.)

- **March 31st deadline:** leave of one year or longer

Mentorship Funds

\$12 million for teacher mentorship was negotiated in the last round of bargaining, as part of a larger discussion on recruitment and retention. It is a one time only pot of money and we hope to get it into teachers' hands to facilitate collaboration and mentorship as soon as possible.

It is being prorated across the province on a per teacher basis, province-wide, which results in about \$625,000 for VESTA members to access. The application form will be available on the VESTA website by end of day tomorrow.

Criteria is as follows:

Available to all VESTA members including K-12 and AE members, district and itinerant staff and TTOCs

- **funds only be used for TTOC release, either to release contract teachers or, in the case of TTOC applicants, to pay their TTOC daily rate.**
- **That a committee of one IHTO, the Pro-D chair and the TTOC chair accept and review applications at the start of each month using the following criteria:**
 - **that the committee prioritize broad availability of the fund (i.e. more members with fewer days) if possible**
 - **that any member who self-identifies be accepted, with priority given to early career teachers or teachers who have recently begun a different position**
 - **That the following projects be supported:**
 - **Release to observe another teacher's practice**
 - **Collaboration with another teacher**
 - **Voluntary peer mentorship arrangements**

This fund is not just for new teachers, but open to any who feel they could use a bit of support in a new position, or anyone who feels that working with a colleague would support their practice.

The role of the committee is not to accept or reject applications, provided they meet the criteria, but to ensure the broadest access possible. i.e. fewer days for a greater number of members, if greater days requested than available, early career / new role teachers prioritized.



COVID VSB BC Children's Hospital study

A study is underway where VSB is partnering with UBC, Children's Hospital and Vancouver Coastal Health regarding COVID in schools. The study includes a serology test that looks at exposure of staff, compares school district staff who work directly with students and those who do not, and providing those results as quickly as possible to participants. It also includes a virology test that has been offered to some schools for families to participate in when students become symptomatic. The virology rinse and gargle tests will be rolled out to a larger number of schools in the coming weeks.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and the project is supported by VESTA. The researchers are hoping for the greatest participation possible. You can register for the test at <https://www.bcchr.ca/COVIDatschools>

COVID Rapid Response teams

The most recent update to the BC plan includes the creation of Rapid Response Teams. Vancouver has been chosen as the district for Coastal Health region and will be headed by the Health and Safety Department of the VSB.

The mandate for the Rapid Response teams is to provide proactive support for districts in the event of outbreak or closure in the public school system. The team will also report back to the Ministry of Health. The District Health and Safety Committee learned on Monday that the committee could assist in problem-solving if there were issues, and are connected to accessing data and communications.



A Well Deserved Spring Break

Colleagues, this year continues to throw curve balls in our direction. Please take the time to rest over the break and do some of the things that make you happy. Your work in schools is transformative and important and we know that the coming two weeks are a necessary break from what has been a very challenging year. Thank you for all of your commitment to students and public education and we look forward to seeing you in the Spring.

Joanne, Allison, Darren, Jody, Donna





Dates to Remember

TTOC Committee Meeting

March 11, 2021 @ 4 pm
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/91207484918>
Meeting ID: 912 0748 4918
Passcode: 628731
Dial by your location
+1 778 907 2071 Canada

Executive Committee Meeting

March 30, 2021 @ 4 pm
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/99351109947>
Meeting ID: 993 5110 9947
Passcode: 334671
Dial by your location
+1 778 907 2071 Canada

WLC/B Committee Meeting

March 31, 2021 @ 4 pm
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/92584447533>
Meeting ID: 925 8444 7533
Passcode: 586392
Dial by your location
+1 778 907 2071 Canada

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

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