

VESTA WEEKLY

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

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Volunteer Opportunity: Represent VESTA on a VSB Advisory Committee!

Each fall, VESTA can appoint new representatives to a multitude of VSB Advisory Committees. Reps on these committees represent the entire membership along with parents, other unions, and employee stakeholder groups. Participation on these committees requires appointment by the Executive Committee and the completion of the VESTA training session to be held on September 23rd at 4pm or September 24 at 3:45 PM. Please complete the [VESTA CV form](#) and email to amy@vesta.ca who will forward a package with information about training registration.

Committees seeking representation are:

Active Transportation, Diversity, Education Change, Education Leave, Health and Safety, ICT, Indigenous Education, Professional Development, School Calendar, Special Education, Sustainability, Teacher Salary Placement.



National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

2021 sees the first instance of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. The intention of this new statutory “holiday” is to spend time to listen, learn, and reflect – to do the work of truth and reconciliation. Teachers have, for years, highlighted learning and professional development around decolonization, historical study and understanding about the legacy of residential schools and their impact on Indigenous communities, families, and the current educational system.

We encourage members to consider spending time ahead of the National Day to review the 94 Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. To date, the Canadian government, despite publicly embracing the report, has implemented only 6 of the recommendations.

Each of us has a role to play in unlearning racism against Indigenous People, but it's not just an individual practice or learning. We need to go further, to consider our resources, our use of language, the ways that we understand and support students, and to find more inclusive practices that challenge the institutional racism in all of our structures.

This new awareness could well be the catalyst for real, fundamental change. Teachers with Indigenous students have the opportunity to provide transformative change, not just in the Indigenous students, but in the entire student body and the families of the student body. The ripple effect will eventually reach out into the community and beyond.

You can find [an excellent resource led by students highlighting the relevance of the 94 calls to action on youth here](#) – it includes short video clips that can be used to raise the voices of Indigenous youth and to spark discussion and educate on the leadership of Indigenous communities in Canada.

There are two excellent resources produced by the BCTF and available free on the BCTF website: [Project of Heart](#) and [Gladys We Never Knew](#).

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation also has five days of upcoming virtual programming for teachers of grade 5-12 on their [Truth and Reconciliation Week 2021](#) website.

Wearing of Orange Shirts, not just on Orange Shirt day, can be a good reminder that the we don't need a designated day to wear our orange shirts, but if you are purchasing one, please remember to support Indigenous-owned businesses or non-profit organizations.



September Anti-Racism Inservice Day

All VSB Staff participated in Board developed and delivered Anti-Racism training on September 7 this year. As with the previous Indigenous Focus Day, VESTA is seeking input from members to provide feedback to the district. The topic is on the agenda for the September 21 Staff Rep Assembly, so please either forward your feedback through your Staff Reps or you can email jody@vesta.ca with your comments.

Bargaining Update

by Greg Canning, VESTA WLCB Chair

As you may recall we began preparations for this round of bargaining in the spring last year. A survey was developed and sent out to members in April. The data was collated, and input was provided by the VESTA standing committees, Executive and the membership at a General Meeting to help set our objectives for local bargaining. We developed a list of priorities that will guide the VESTA delegates attending the Bargaining Conference this fall. These priorities, for Provincial Bargaining, have been forwarded to the BCTF along with every other local from around the province. The BCTF Executive will review all the priorities from locals, look for trends across the province and make recommendations to the Bargaining Conference. At the conference delegates from all locals will debate and make amendments to these recommendations and potentially add new ones. It is at the completion of the Bargaining Conference that provincial objectives will be set and shared with members.

There will be a significant change to local bargaining in this round of negotiations. Normally both provincial and local bargaining happen at the same time, usually beginning in March before our contract expires at the end of June. Having both tables running at the same time has always proven to be a challenge but most importantly the local table never had a proper dispute resolution mechanism other than to send items to the provincial table. The sheer volume of local matters going to the provincial table made solving these differences virtually impossible. In this round local bargaining the table will open November 1 and conclude by the end of February. Most importantly, however, is that a special facilitator will be appointed to help locals and boards should they come to an impasse on specific bargaining matters. Should an impasse occur there is now a process to have the matter resolved which has clear timelines to help move matters forward. In addition to this, members of local bargaining teams and school district teams will receive a joint bargaining training session with representatives from both the BCTF and BCPSEA (British Columbia Public School Employer's Association). The joint training session will help ensure that both sides are bargaining with the same understanding. We see these changes as positive and look forward to a fruitful round of negotiations with the Board.

Bargaining Update

by Greg Canning, VESTA WLCB Chair

We will be working with our VSTA colleagues to bring our objectives and their objectives to a VTF General Meeting for approval from both locals. Although we are separate locals, we bargain changes to the collective agreement as the VTF (Vancouver Teachers' Federation). Please keep an eye out for future updates and we strongly encourage all teachers to attend General Meetings this year.

Key Health and Safety Notes

by Danielle Durant, VESTA Health and Safety Chair

This year, the VSB Safety Plan has been replaced with a VSB Communicable Disease Prevention Plan. You can find that document [here](#) on the VSB website.

Key features to note are as follows:

- General cleaning: 1x/day (at night). Cleaning & disinfecting: 1x/day (frequently touched surfaces only; desks & tables to be cleaned and disinfected 1x/day.)
- Merv13 filters installed in all the ventilation systems that can take it.
- Face shields are not a replacement for masks. Masks must be worn with face shields.
- Current VSB provided plexiglass can stay in place, however, VSB is not currently adding plexi. Masks must be worn with plexiglass.
- SLPs and staff working with deaf & hard of hearing students will receive masks with a mouth window. These are to be distributed in the coming weeks through Learning Services and are not available to the general staff.
- VSB space rentals will start up again in October.
- Staff room occupancy limits: need to be able to spread out; no set limit. Depends on the furniture (chairs, tables, couches, etc) and the use/set-up of the room. Reduce the number of people who are all in there at once and that people spread out. Occupancy limits (Set by fire department) are for gyms and rental spaces.
- Singing should be avoided for K-3 at this time as these students are not required to wear masks.
- PHE- K-12 staff and 4-12 students are required to wear masks during PHE indoor low-intensity classes. Shared equipment can be used provided it is cleaned and disinfected once a day.
- Overnight field trips are not permitted at this time. Staff must ensure that field trip volunteers providing student supervision are trained in and strictly adhere to the COVID-19 and communicable disease prevention requirements.
- Hot lunch will be boxed meals and delivered to classrooms.
- Water fountains are available.
- Drills: no cohorts or distancing required; will be outdoors
- Flu shots: VSB will run staff clinics at all sites (like last year). Some student covid vaccination clinics will be organized for some sites.



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Federal Election, September 20

by Vanessa Lefebvre, VESTA Political Action Chair

In case you missed it, the Federal election is coming up this Monday, September 20th. This campaign falls at a very busy time for us all, so here are some links to the party platforms to help inform your vote on issues like Climate Change, Housing, Corporate taxes, etc:

[NDP](#)

[Green Party](#)

[Liberal Party](#)

[Conservative Party](#)

Please ensure that no meetings are scheduled for that day so that all members are able to get to the polls.



Dates to Remember

Staff Rep Assembly

September 21st at 4:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8244827656)

[8244827656](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8244827656)

Meeting ID: 882 4482 7656

Passcode: 071981

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

