



Stronger Together

September 18 2020

VESTA Weekly

Topics Worth Talking about! Please read and discuss with your colleagues

COVID 19 / Ministry and District Restart Plan

VESTA continues to advocate at all levels of the School Board and to liaise with the BCTF on matters of provincial application on your behalf. We understand that teachers have deep concerns about the implementation of the Restart Plan in terms of Health and Safety, Teacher Workload and Equity. We have been meeting regularly with the district to convey our concerns and to seek solutions, met with the Superintendent, and attended and provided feedback through District Standing Committees.

Our shared concerns have not yet been resolved and we know that many of you are expected to begin providing support for transitional option learners with vastly inequitable expectations and lack of clarity.

Progress on this front has been slow and we know that this generates frustration and concern in schools. Please understand that VESTA has consistently been advocating on the following fronts:

- Hiring of additional teachers for remote learning options
- Provision of medical accommodations for vulnerable teachers
- Consistent implementation on health and safety protections
- Provision of personal protective equipment
- Equity of teacher workload and protection of school based supports for students
- Improved communications to schools and parents
- Appropriate and transparent spending of federal grant money to school staffing.

Please make plans to attend the General Meeting and Staff Rep Assembly next Tuesday, September 22. Check your email for the link and agenda. The link can also be found at the bottom of this email.

VESTA will be initiating a member survey next week through Staff Reps to gather additional feedback and identify emergent areas of concern. Make sure you participate and that your voice becomes part of our campaign.

Health and Safety

VESTA will be hosting a ½ day Health and Safety school rep training session on Tuesday, September 29 and will release one Health and Safety Rep per school. School Health and Safety Reps will attend and receive updates and information on the school Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and processes of Refusing Unsafe Work, and the soon to be released health and safety checklist.

Please visit the VESTA website for links to the District and Ministry Health and Safety Plans

Contacting the VESTA Office

A reminder that we are piloting a new approach to supporting members, and that each of your full time representatives will be connected to a “zone” of Vancouver Schools. Please contact the President or Vice President attached to your zone by email.

Jody - Gladstone, Tupper, Windermere, Prince of Wales and University Hill family of schools, please leave your message by email with Jody at jody@vesta.ca

Allison - Thompson, Hamber, Van Tech and Churchill family of schools, please email Allison at allison@vesta.ca

Joanne - Britannia, King George, Point Grey, Templeton family of schools, or for itinerant or district teachers, please email Joanne at joanne@vesta.ca

Darren - Byng, John Oliver, Killarney, Kits and Magee family of schools, please email Darren at darren@vesta.ca

Donna - Adult Education, please email Donna at donna@vesta.ca

We are doing our best to respond to all emails received. Thank you for your patience, as it may take longer than usual to receive a response. Please approach your Staff Reps with concerns or questions prior to contacting the VESTA office, if possible.

In the meantime, one of the best ways we have to communicate quickly and effectively with members is through emails and the VESTA Weekly. Please encourage your colleagues to update their contact information with lori@vesta.ca if they are not receiving VESTA communications, or at www.bctf.ca for BCTF emails. Both are excellent sources of up to date information.

We know everyone is doing their best to manage in challenging situations across the province. We appreciate the efforts to communicate about your working conditions.

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FSA

The Ministry and District have made the determination to proceed with FSA tests despite concerns about student attendance, the drain on school technology and the fundamental meaningfulness of this test, especially in a year where the previous term was not held in-class for most of the province.

The BCTF is updating the parent exclusion forms and they will be available soon on the BCTF portal. Please remember that your Freedom of Expression enables you to talk with parents about your educational concerns, but that communication needs to be given directly to parents. Alternately, union communication can be sent home through students if folded, stapled and addressed to the parents. Advocacy is important, and so is knowing your rights and protecting yourself. Talk to your Staff Rep if you have questions.

VTF Collective Agreement – DID YOU KNOW?

VESTA has very strong Staff Committee language that gives teachers the right to advise the Principal on matters of concern to teachers including: employee assignments, physical requirements, instructional assignment, supply of learning materials, evaluation and reporting, assessing learning conditions, timetabling and organization of the school, utilization of staff, or *any other matter of concern to the members of the school staff*. Staff Committee Meetings are called by members.

BC Federation of Labour Convention

If you or members from your school have an issue that you would like to forward to be debated at the 2021 BC Federation of Labour Convention, please forward your motion to allison@vesta.ca for discussion at the September 22 General Meeting.

Guidelines for Participation at a Staff Rep or General Meeting

- *Use a personal smart phone or computer to access the meeting*
- *VESTA members will need to sign in and identify themselves using their first and last name*
- *The chat function will need to be reserved for getting on the speakers' list, making motions or amendments, and for voting.*
- *It will be important that members use a computer in order to access the chat function. You need not use your microphone or your camera, but we'd like to try to find a universal mechanism for voting. It's important that we are able to verify that the voters are the elected members as we continue in COVID and look towards our decision-making responsibilities.*
- *When we come to a vote, the chair will say "please indicate your vote in the chat box" and wait. VESTA members will either type "in favour" or "opposed" or some other clear indication such as "yes" or "no"*
- *The chair will wait a sufficient time for all members to vote and then announce the result.*

Dates To Remember:

**VESTA General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly
September 22 @4PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87045966325?pwd=dE1tNGxnQW9YeIEeE1SdFgyYW9mUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 4596 6325

Passcode: 373017

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

**TTOC
Committee Meeting**
September 24 @ 4PM

Email!

Joanne Sutherland
President

joanne@vesta.ca

Allison Jambor
1st Vice President

allison@vesta.ca

Darren Tereposky
2nd Vice President

darren@vesta.ca

Jody Polukoshko
3rd Vice President

jody@vesta.ca

Donna Brack
AE President

donna@vesta.ca

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

VESTA

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