

VESTA WEEKLY

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



Table of CONTENTS

.....
Educators around the world stand with Ukraine and call for Peace - Page 2
.....

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action #43 and #44 - Page 2
.....

Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ students - Page 3 & 4
.....

Spring Transfer Timelines - Page 5
.....

Joint Labour Council Statement on the Recent Far-Right Convoys - Page 6 & 7
.....

Updates to Health Orders - Page 7
.....

VESTA's Territorial Acknowledgment - Page 8
.....

"Status Quo" budget = no new funding - Page 9
.....

Dates to Remember - Page 10
.....

Educators around the world stand with Ukraine and call for Peace

VESTA and the BCTF join teachers around the world in standing with Ukraine and denouncing the violent and unprovoked invasion by Russia. We send solidarity and strength to Ukrainian colleagues, students, and families, as well as those among us who have loved ones in Ukraine.

Education International General Secretary, stated: "Educators around the world stand with our colleagues, students, and all the people of Ukraine and call for a peaceful resolution to current tensions. We denounce any military intervention in Ukraine and call on the international community to use all diplomatic means to de-escalate the conflict. The lives and futures of millions of innocent people are at stake."

We amplify that solidarity and pronounce our unwavering commitment to our members who now stand in harm's way. Not only is Russian military intervention within Ukrainian borders a clear violation of international law, it will be absolutely catastrophic in terms of the loss of human life. The students, teachers and citizens of Ukraine have the right to a future free of violence and war. The world must stand with them and redouble its efforts to achieve peace in the country and on the continent.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action #43 and #44

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ students

VESTA members have long been working to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff are safe and actively included in all aspects of their school. This is a key area of our equity and inclusion work. The VSB has strong policy to support school staff in ensuring that “all members of this diverse community are welcomed, respected, accepted, and supported in every school and worksite”. The policy is important to know about if you are receiving pushback on honouring a student’s preferred name and pronouns, including during communications with families.

Given the comprehensive policy below, VESTA continues to advocate for the changing of district documents which still provide binary gender markers and heteronormative family structure identifiers. VESTA members voted to advance this complaint with the district with a timeline of December 2021. Current practice is inconsistent with VSB policy and causes harm to students and families.

Key aspects of the VSB policy relating to students include:

7. Gender Identity and Gender Expression

To support the safety, health, and educational needs of students whose real or perceived identity is trans*, staff shall adhere to the following practices:

7.1 Consultation

School staff are encouraged to consult with District staff, to review best practices for supporting trans* students.

7.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

7.2.1 A student’s trans* status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth may constitute confidential personal information that will be kept confidential unless its disclosure is legally required or unless the student or the student’s parent(s)/guardian have given authorization.

7.2.2 In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a trans* student’s legal name or sex, such as for purposes of data collection, school staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such information.

7.2.3 Students’ rights to discuss and express their gender identity and/or gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information to share will be respected.

Continued from Page 3

7.3 Names and Pronouns

Trans* students will be addressed by the names and pronouns they prefer to use.

7.4 Official Records and Student Information

7.4.1 Whenever possible and permitted by law, requests made by a student, or the parent/guardian, to change the student's official record to reflect their preferred name and/or gender identity will be accommodated.

7.4.2 Whenever possible, at the request of a student or of a students' parent(s)/guardian, the student's preferred name and/or gender identity will be included on class lists, timetables, student files, identification cards, etc.

7.4.3 Unless the student or the student's parent/guardian has specified otherwise, communications between school and home shall use a student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth.

7.5 Dress

Students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. This includes students who may dress in a manner that is not consistent with societal expectations of masculinity/femininity.

7.6 Sex-segregated Activities

Schools will reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by sex. In situations where students are segregated by sex, trans* students will have the option to be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity.

[17-Policy17-Sexual-Orientation-and-Gender-Identities.pdf \(vsb.bc.ca\)](#)

Please also note that VSB staff have the right to use their chosen name and preferred pronouns at the worksite, and VESTA is working with the VSB to ensure that VSB software and records are able to reflect their identity. Please contact the VESTA Office if you need support with this.

Spring Transfer Timelines

2022 Spring Transfer timelines have been issued to schools. If you have not received the timeline, please ask your principal.

Key timelines to be aware of include:

MARCH 31 – Notice of intent to return from leave for Sept 2022 deadline

- Deadline for applications for leave of one year or longer

MAY 31 – Spring Transfer Period 1 – Continuing and Temporary Vacancies

JUNE 1 – Notice to members of any surplus

JUNE 14 – Spring Transfer Period 2 – Continuing and Temporary Vacancies

Spring 2022 Timeline

February 15 th – 21 st	Teacher Consultant and Mentor positions posted Note: There are no Consultant or Mentor vacancies for the upcoming year.
February 22 nd onwards	Interviews for Teacher Consultant and Mentor Positions
February 25 th	Process and time deadlines for changes in assignment will be provided in writing to SLP's
March 15 th – before 4:30 pm	Deadline for employees who commit to a transfer (vacate card) as per E.21.12
March 31 st – before 4:30pm	Teachers returning from leave must notify HR, in writing, of intent to return to work for September 2022
March 31 st – before 4:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time teachers wishing to increase their FTE at their current school must notify their principals using Request for Increase/Change in Teaching time for desired FTE for 2022 September; a copy of the form (with both teacher and administrator signatures) MUST be received in HR before 4:30pm on March 31st <p>Please note that for the 2021/2022 year, the Letter of Understanding between the VTF/VSB waiving the timelines of the Collective Agreement ends June 30, 2022, so the deadline of March 31st does not apply before June 30, 2022 (although helpful for ES in determining FTE requested).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important Note! If there are layoffs, employees will not be able to increase their teaching time as per Article C.20.3.c
March 31 st – by 4:30pm	Deadline for applications of leave of one year or longer beginning 2022 September
April 12 th – 18 th	Department Head postings (Secondary) open on OAM
April 18 th onwards	Interviews and offers for Department Head (Secondary) vacancies only
May 31 st - before 4:30 pm	Deadline to submit Retirement letter to HR requesting ERIP (Early Retirement Incentive Plan)
June 1 st (or earlier)	Employees informed in writing of transfer due to surplus; Copies of surplus letters must be submitted to HR
May 31 st - June 6 th	Spring Transfer Period # 1 – All continuing and temporary vacancies
June 7 th onwards	Interviews and offers for <u>continuing positions</u> only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews and offers for temporary positions may only proceed upon approval from HR (may be used for placements)
June 15 th	HR will begin placement of all unassigned continuing contract employees (unassigned Priority Group C employees)
June 14 th – 20 th	Spring Transfer Period # 2 – All continuing and temporary vacancies
June 21 st onwards	Interviews and offers for <u>continuing positions</u> only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews and offers for temporary positions may only proceed upon approval from HR (may be used for placements)
August 16 th – 22 nd	Summer Posting Period
August 23 rd onwards	Interviews and offers for SPP <u>continuing positions</u> only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews and offers for temporary positions may only proceed upon approval from HR (may be used for placements)
September 6 th – 12 th	2022-2023 Posting Period 1

Joint Labour Council Statement on the Recent Far-Right Convoys

Late last month we watched with outrage as the so-called “Freedom Convoy” rolled into Ottawa and established an occupation which continues to this day. The convoy claims to represent “truckers” who seek to overturn vaccine mandate policies. In reality, reports indicate 90% of truckers are fully vaccinated, and continue to do the important work of keeping goods moving throughout Canada and across our borders. No union representing truckers has expressed support for the convoy, nor has any legitimate association representing the trucking industry.

As evidenced in their own postings and words, far-right groups have been behind the organization of this action from the start with the aim of building the size, profile, and resources of their fascist, anti-democratic movement. A substantial portion of the funding and support has origins outside of Canada, particularly amongst far-right groups in the United States. Participants in the convoy have openly displayed racist, oppressive, hate symbols such as Nazi and confederate flags, and have engaged in the racist appropriation of Indigenous culture even after being asked to stop by First Nation groups. They have disrespected and desecrated the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and defaced the Terry Fox statue in Ottawa. They have used violence and harassment against Ottawa residents, even employing harmful noise and other disruptive tactics that are prohibited in war; they have threatened elected representatives and public figures; and stated their intention to overturn our democratically elected government.

We know that much more needs to be done to protect workers and ensure a just recovery for all. We also know that the convoy movement has neither the intent nor the ability to achieve those needed changes. The convoy is, by its origins and in its actions, an expression of white supremacy and an attack on democracy. We reject the intention of the convoy, their organizers and their hateful ideology, and we stand in strong solidarity with the residents of Ottawa, healthcare and frontline workers, truckers actually doing the work to keep us supplied, journalists, and every Jewish community, woman, LGBTQ2AI+ and racialized person who has been subjected to the oppression, violence and harassment of the convoy and its supporters.

Convoy actions were also organized across the country in support of the ongoing occupation of Ottawa. In Metro Vancouver, a convoy travelled across the region with the express aim of establishing a similar occupation in downtown Vancouver. Their efforts were blocked by counter-protests organized by community members, and it is evident that it will be up to our communities to stop them when they try to return. We stand in solidarity with those who have, and will again, act to thwart this aggression.

Continued from Page 6

We join with those opposing the “Freedom Convoy”, their hateful ideology, oppressive rhetoric, and actions, and we demand the same from our elected representatives. We condemn the harmful and opportunistic actions of politicians who have legitimized the convoys and occupations at the expense of the communities they claim to represent.

Vancouver and District Labour Council and New Westminster and District Labour Council.

Updates to Health Orders

Districts have either received or will be receiving additional Rapid Tests for TTOCs and itinerant teachers who did not receive them in the first distribution. The Deputy Minister directed districts to distribute these along with the tests distributed to students.

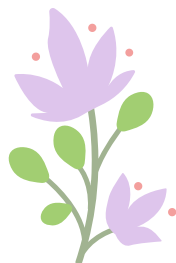
COVID Update from the Deputy Minister’s Bulletin:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220215/special-bulletin---feb-15---remove-dec-addendum.pdf>

Dr. Henry announced planned changes to public health orders over the coming days and weeks focused on resuming various types of activities and events. More information is available at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022HLTH0053-000219>.

BCCDC rescinded its December 2021 public health Addendum for K-12 schools last Friday, along with the Addendum to the Provincial COVID guidelines for K-12. K-12 schools will return to the prevention measures in place prior to the Omicron variant. Impacts on schools will be the return to in person gatherings, no limits on visitors, and spectators at school events. There are no limits on gatherings that involve staff, students, and necessary volunteers; indoor capacity limits at 50% or 50 people (whichever is greater) for events that involve school community beyond staff, students, and volunteers (e.g., parents, general public audience).

You can find links to VESTA Health and Safety documents and advice on the new VESTA website under [advocacy and education](#) and [committees](#).



VESTA's Territorial Acknowledgment

VESTA has a strong commitment to learning and applying the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in our union work, and supporting teachers to implement them in their classrooms. The conversation is not whether or not such work is necessary, it's how we can best investigate the unconscious colonialism in our thinking and practices, and to work hard to change those aspects of our work to create safer spaces for all students and teachers.

A territorial acknowledgment is by no means the only way that we do this, but it is an important one. When we acknowledge and give appreciation for the land upon which we work, we use words like "unceded" and "stolen" to indicate that this land has been stewarded since time immemorial by Indigenous people, and acknowledges the long history before colonization. In British Columbia, different from many other parts of Canada, treaties are not common. Including the words "unceded" and "stolen" in our acknowledgment arose through VESTA's Aboriginal Education Committee and was carried by our Executive Committee. These reflect the acknowledgement that First Nations have never given up their land, regardless of what has been imposed. The phrase "First Nations" acknowledges the relationship directly to Canada, in a Nation to Nation relationship that was undermined by colonialism and legislation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated that reconciliation requires real societal change, and the relationship to land is foundational to that.

Territorial acknowledgments are also a way to commit to and build stronger relationships with local Nations. An acknowledgement is an opportunity for us to research and learn about the Nations on whose territory we work and to share that knowledge with others, similar to the Witnessing protocols we observe at VESTA Staff Rep Assemblies.

Some settlers may feel defensive or angry when they hear phrases like "unceded" or "stolen" territory, or "land back". Understanding that colonialism was based on dividing Aboriginal people from the land is about Aboriginal sovereignty and self-determination, access to resources and space, and its' acknowledgment is a central part of our work towards reconciliation. We suggest that approaching this learning is best done through an understanding of our responsibility as settlers to the land, to First Nations, and to Reconciliation. It's uncomfortable to begin understand our relationship to the colonial project, but an essential step.

<https://davidsuzuki.org/story/land-governance-current-crisis-and-rise-of-land-back/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/docproject/did-i-buy-a-condo-on-stolen-land-how-purchasing-my-first-home-made-me-question-property-rights-1.6007196>

“Status Quo” budget = no new funding

The Government of British Columbia’s Budget 2022 announced today reflects a status quo funding of public education in BC, however, due to high inflation rates, the overall increase of 3.83% in public school funding for K–12 is expected to fall short in maintaining services and staffing of schools.

The most significant expenditure in the budget increase is due to increases to student enrolment, with more than 23,000 additional students expected to enter BC’s public school system over the next three years. Funding for these projected increases is reflected in the budget, but no increase to the per pupil funding.

The second largest expenditure is the transfer of responsibility for childcare to the Ministry of Education. VESTA and the BCTF continue to identify and raise concerns about the Seamless Day pilot that aims to see childcare integrated into schools.

There are a number of concerning omissions from today’s budget announcement by the Minister of Finance, including:

- no plans to address the critical teacher shortage in BC, which disproportionately affects disabled students and learners with diverse needs.
- no meaningful changes to address the systemic underfunding of inclusive education to support equitable access and outcomes for students with disabilities and diverse needs.
- no funding earmarked for resources and training to support reconciliation in schools.
- no dedicated funding for K–12 as part of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery budget, despite the continued costs as BC moves into recovery, particularly around further improvements to ventilation systems.





Joanne Sutherland
President
joanne@vesta.ca

Allison Jambor
Vice President
allison@vesta.ca

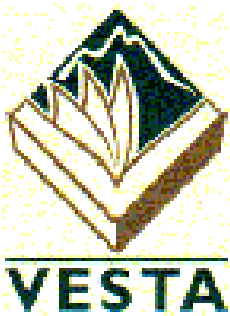
Darren Tereposky
Vice President
darren@vesta.ca

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

Social Justice & Solidarity Committee Meeting

March 1, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84776052882>

Meeting ID: 847 7605 2882

Passcode: 100963

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



WLC/B

Committee Meeting

March 1, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84137777869>

Meeting ID: 841 3777 7869

Passcode: 974416

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



Health & Safety

Committee Meeting

March 3, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84419626146>

Meeting ID: 844 1962 6146

Passcode: 391392

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.