

VESTA WEEKLY

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

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Black History Month

In February, we honour and celebrate the significant contributions of Black people while acknowledging that systemic racism persists. This is an opportunity to create positive and anti-racist change in ourselves, our schools and our communities.

"History is power. History is self-determination. Those who have power to exercise self-determination have power to control the writing and promotion of their history. Therefore, celebrating Black history and Black History Month is more than a perfunctory exercise that acknowledges Black people throughout the African Diaspora and Africa. Teaching, researching, and promoting the history of a globally subordinated and subjugated racial group is an innocuous yet profoundly revolutionary act of self-determination."

- [Wendell Nii Laryea Adjetey](#)

Assistant Professor, Department of History and Classical Studies, McGill University

Resources can be found at the following links, at [TeachBC](#), and at [BC Black History Awareness Society](#).

Talking Circle for BIPOC VESTA members on School Liaison Officers

BIPOC-identifying members of VESTA are invited to participate in a Talking Circle to share your insight into the relationship between police and school practices, and a broader conversation around creating and sustaining safety in Vancouver schools. The Circle will be grounded in Indigenous ceremony and cultural practices and will honour what the participants have to say in a sacred and safe space. Please see attached [poster](#) for more information and to [register](#)."

Opportunity for BIPOC members in VESTA/VSTA

Talking Circles to discuss policing in schools

BIPOC-identifying members of VESTA and VSTA are invited to participate in a Talking Circle to share and discuss your experiences as BIPOC educators working in schools with police.

Grounded in Indigenous ceremony and cultural practices, the Talking Circle, guided by Vanessa Tait will invite your insight into the relationship between police and school practices, and a broader conversation around creating and sustaining safety in Vancouver schools. This is part of a BCTF Research project to understand BIPOC educator perspectives and experiences related to policing in schools.

Options (please select one)

Virtual: February 16, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

Virtual: February 28, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

Half-day LOA will be provided to participants.

To register

If you would like to participate, please register [here](#) by 5:00 p.m. on February 1. You will receive further information upon registering.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Please read prior to attending

About Talking Circles

The Talking Circle is a traditional way of communicating and sharing, which is practiced by Indigenous people here on Turtle Island and is a part of their traditional ceremonies and customs. The talking circle honours what the participants have to say in a sacred and safe space.

To begin the Talking Circle, the lead facilitator begins with a smudge (using sage) and a prayer to begin in a good way. The facilitator will introduce the concept of the Talking Circle and although it is hosted in a virtual space, a sacred item will be carried by the facilitator. The participants are asked if they would like to bring an item with them to the virtual space; they are welcome to as well.

The facilitator will allow space for each participant a time to speak and a time to listen in a respectful way, without interrupting or being interrupted in the virtual circle.

While information shared by participants will be documented and shared for research purposes, no person will be identified in any publicly shared report. All potentially identifiable information will be removed, as per BCTF Research protocols. This gives participants the ability to share their truth and provide insight in a safe and confidential space.

About Vanessa

Born and raised in northern Manitoba, Vanessa Tait (Vee) is proud of her roots as a Two Spirit Cree Woman from O-pipon-na-piwin Cree Nation – South Indian Lake, Manitoba.

Vanessa is deeply rooted in her culture, way of life, and ceremony. She has facilitated community engagement sessions and talking circles, with Indigenous youth, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff, and community members. Vanessa has her Master's in Development Practice: Indigenous Development degree from the University of Winnipeg; and a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from Asper School of Business.

Vanessa participates actively in knowledge exchange and has attended and presented at numerous conferences and community events. She is a trail blazer, and her vision is to ensure that First Nations people achieve self-determination in their communities and be able to tell their own stories. She is a leader in the community and has been instrumental in ensuring Indigenous people and Two Spirit voices are centered and included.



Image source: [BCTF.com](#) / [kshutterstock.com](#)

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January 2022 BCTF

TTOC task force

The VESTA Executive identified that a significant factor for teacher workload is the recurrent failures to fill when teachers are absent, and this is never clearer than when we are in the midst of a COVID wave, such as Omicron. The results of failures to fill teacher absences include lost or delayed prep time, lost or rescheduled resource support, availability of libraries and other learning supports, reorganization of classes and the reassignment of teachers across the school and the district.

In the view of the Executive, this is very closely linked to the callout of TTOCs. Our concern is that before a failure to fill impacts a school community and/or school staff, every available TTOC should be deployed. To support research on VSB practice, the VESTA EC is seeking TTOCs to determine a mechanism for collecting this data and studying the resulting information. We are seeking 5 TTOC VESTA members to work on this project with release time from VESTA. This work can be done virtually.

Please use the [CV form for Task Forces](#) to apply for this opportunity and email to amy@vesta.ca

BC Teachers' Council New Teacher Survey

The BC Teachers' Council is looking to learn more about the experience of educators in their transition from teacher education program into the teaching profession. If you completed your BC Teacher Ed program between 2015 and 2020, please [click on the link](#) and share with your early career colleagues.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Multi-Age Cluster Class Review

Friday, February 4th is the deadline to provide feedback to VESTA on the Board's proposed changes to the Multi-Age Cluster Class program. We are hoping for input from teachers who work in MACC classes, as well as classroom teachers outside of the existing program. You can find information about the proposed changes [here](#). Proposed changes will have an impact on all teachers.

Email your input to joanne@vesta.ca

Petition to Government of Canada on Residential Schools

Please consider signing the petition calling on the Government of Canada to increase efforts to disclose and recover unmarked graves of Indigenous children at Residential School Sites in Canada. This petition was started by and supported by Indigenous teachers in Indigenous communities, and responds to the trauma and mourning faced by many communities as evidence of what has long been known and understood comes to light.

<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Sign/e-3672>

Gong Xi Fa Cai—Happy Lunar New Year (Feb 1, 2022)

VESTA wishes you and your loved ones a happy and prosperous Lunar New Year!

This is the Year of the Tiger!
Click here to learn more.



VESTA Seeking Representatives to VSB Committees

VESTA is seeking members to represent VESTA to the VSB on the following committees:

- Teacher Librarian Working Group
- Diversity Committee
- Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

To apply, please complete and submit the [CV form on the VESTA Website](#) and you will be contacted with more information about the process of representing VESTA and provided with a short training session.

This is an excellent opportunity to contribute on behalf of your 2000 colleagues in ensuring that VESTA's voice is clearly reflected in Board policy and decisions!

BCTF Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

This provincial committee is seeking members for a one year term. The committee advises the BCTF Executive Committee on matters connected to Aboriginal representation in schools, decolonizing union and school practices, supporting Aboriginal learners and teachers, and considering employment equity practices. The deadline is Monday, February 14 and you can find details and the application form [here](#).

Truth and Reconciliation Call To Action #10

10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
- ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
- iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
- iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
- v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
- vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
- vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.



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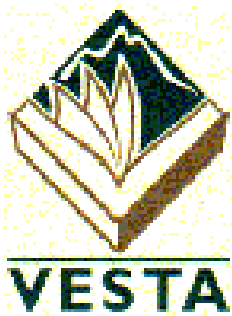
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Dates to Remember

Executive

Committee Meeting

February 8, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81354020197>

Meeting ID: 813 5402 0197

Passcode: 454201

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



Health & Safety

Committee Meeting

February 9, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88143858322>

Meeting ID: 881 4385 8322

Passcode: 093573

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada



General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly

February 15, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83072057110>

Meeting ID: 830 7205 7110

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.