

VESTA WEEKLY

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



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Reflections on Solidarity

In this week of International Women's Day, we reflect on one of its' symbols – Bread and Roses. This has roots in the white women's suffrage movement of the early 1900s and was a rallying cry for the successful strike of textile workers, largely immigrant women, in 1912 in Massachusetts.

We're mentioning this today because it has such strong resonance with the conditions teachers find ourselves in. The slogan was intended to identify the fact that women's struggle was for fair wages but also for working conditions, or struggles for dignity and respect.

Feminism today is much different and has different aims than those days, not least in that we strive towards an intersectional feminism that understands that people who identify as women do not always share common experiences despite our gender. Queer and trans women, women of colour, Indigenous women, mothers, unhoused women, immigrant women, women with disabilities, elder women have vastly different experiences, and our struggle needs to always include an awareness that equity needs to be achieved through means that are identified and requested by members of those groups.

Bread and Roses is a way of naming that many of us are fighting for sustenance, safety and survival for ourselves and others, but also that there needs to be beauty, dignity, respect in our lives too. The phrase continues to have resonance as it also has come to symbolize the nature of economic, political and social struggle – and that struggle continues. It's slow, and sometimes tedious, but moving forward is necessary. And while our conceptualizations of the struggle changes and becomes more inclusive, the core components of the struggle remain.

More recently, Chicago teachers have renewed this theme in their efforts to “bargain for the common good”, seeking improvements for students, neighbourhoods and communities at the bargaining table in addition to more traditional gains, such as salary and working conditions. This is because teachers understand that the conditions of our communities are mirrored in our schools, and that schools play a key role in those communities. They name those goals as “justice and equity” and identify that schools are part of the same systems that justify and enforce oppression, and have played a role in colonization, racism, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, white supremacy and racism.



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In recent years, we have seen these concepts reduced to individual wellness, monetary or corporate based, and relying on time and money. We invite VESTA members to consider how connected our struggles for better working conditions and lives are to the struggles of others, and to see the solutions to those struggles as collective and systemic, and cannot be solved by only individual choices or actions. When we begin to see our lives as connected, and our diverse experiences as a strength, we become stronger.

Our daily work in classrooms and resource rooms, offices and libraries, gymnasias and online, makes a difference in the lives of our students, bringing sustenance and dignity, justice and equity. As we approach Spring Break and the conclusion of the second term of the year, and the start of provincial bargaining, we hope that members across VESTA find resonance in this concept for ourselves and one another as well.

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/bread-and-roses-song/>
<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/bread-and-roses-film/>
<https://rethinkingschools.org/>

VTF / VSB Bargaining Complete

The VESTA Executive and General Meetings have reviewed the local bargaining Memorandum of Agreement and are both recommending acceptance of the improvements achieved in this round of local bargaining. These include areas connected to Discrimination, Health and Safety, Layoff and Recall, Personnel Files and more.

The VSB has already ratified the agreement, and more information will be coming soon about the process for VTF ratification.

BCTF / BCPSEA Bargaining begins

The BCTF provincial bargaining team has been hard at work writing language to prepare for the opening of the provincial table. This week, your BCTF Executive Committee met to review the proposed language and give advice to the bargaining team. Please make sure your contact information with VESTA and BCTF is up to date to receive important upcoming information.



Completing 6A Worksafe Forms

Members completing 6A Worksafe forms when experiencing violent incidents please remember to submit to your school-based Administrator, but ALSO, to copy the VESTA Office (marjorie@vesta.ca) and send a copy to hsreports@vsb.bc.ca. This last step is essential in ensuring that 6A form reports become part of the district reports on violent incidents in schools.

Rapid Testing at Home

VESTA had been advised that provincially, additional rapid tests would be distributed along with the student and family kits. The VSB's position is that they have a finite quantity remaining from the "one time" distribution. Admin can request a kit on behalf of staff who didn't receive one and it will be sent to the site via blue bag system on a first come, first served basis.

Did you know?

You can request to review your District Personnel File at the VSB! You simply need to email Human Resources to set up a date. You can be accompanied by a union rep and will be accompanied by a HR employee (Article E.31.2)

If you have a Letter of Discipline in your personnel file, it will be removed upon request after five years, provided no further disciplinary action has occurred. You can also email HR to initiate this process (Article E.31.6)

Collective Agreement Timeline Reminders

March 15 is the deadline to submit your intention to vacate your position.

If you are requesting a Personal Leave without Pay of one year, the deadline for this application is March 31.





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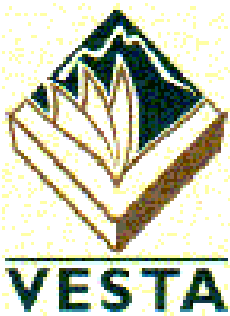
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Dates to Remember

Executive Committee Meeting

March 29, 2022 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84571937271>

Meeting ID: 845 7193 7271

Passcode: 907272

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.