



Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association

Dear Colleagues,

On Tuesday June 16th the Staff Rep Assembly passed the following motion regarding the role of police officers in schools in solidarity with the local and global movements raising awareness of the profound and systemic racism faced by Black and Indigenous people and People of Colour:

THAT members bring a motion to Staff Committee that no VPD or RCMP officers be invited to school events and that members no longer plan or attend events where VPD or RCMP officers are invited, until both organizations take clear steps to address the disproportionate repression of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Many teachers have been addressing racism, oppression and inequity in our classrooms and our lives over the years, and while individuals are taking steps to learn about racism and unlearn our conscious or unconscious bias are one part of an anti-racist response, actively working together to address systemic and structural racism is also required.

The motion above begins a conversation about the practice of inviting police to elementary school events. It is meant to be discussed at individual schools with teachers and staff, and then provide advice to your school principal through your school staff committee meeting. While these conversations can be difficult, they are part of the larger movement about how to affect systemic change within organizations, including education and the judicial system. As always, we encourage Staff Reps to hold a VESTA meeting to discuss this motion before bringing it through Staff Committee.

The motion, along with other motions addressing anti-racism in schools, school renaming and motions about equity and inclusion within VESTA were communicated to the Vancouver School Board with a request to meet and discuss the matters with the Trustees and Superintendent. We look forward to productive conversations with our VSTA colleagues and the VBE.

It is always our intention to communicate decisions made through our democratic structures to members as soon as possible. In this case, the motion was released to the

media before it was possible to communicate to members or the employer. We are doing that work now, and are open to discussion on the matter.

We know that there is only a short time left in the school year and there may not be time to hold a VESTA and a Staff Committee meeting prior to the end of June. The motion above requests action from the VPD and RCMP to consider and address issues that our colleagues, students and families are raising and issues upon which they are asking for our support.

Schools have an important role to play in teaching and modeling anti-racism. So do unions. We have our own work to do. By calling on the VPD and RCMP to take these steps, and addressing the issue of police in schools, we continue that work.

We will be posting links and responses to possible questions on the VESTA website as soon as possible.

In Solidarity,
VESTA IHTO's

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