

VESTA NEWS

Elect your 2022-2023 Executive Committee

VESTA'S Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, 2022 May 17 @ 4 pm

Van Dusen Botanical Garden
Peggy Gunn Woodland Hall A & B
5251 Oak St. Vancouver

Social to follow the AGM
Please RSVP to hitomi@vesta.ca

VESTA gives thanks and recognizes that we work and meet on the stolen, unceded joint territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), səliwətał (Tsleil Waututh), and Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nations.

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AGENDA

Acknowledgement

VESTA gives thanks and recognizes that this meeting takes place on the stolen, unceded joint territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Səlilwətał (Tseil Waututh), and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) Nations.

- **Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #14**

We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.

ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.

iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.

iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.

v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

- President's Report
- Bylaw Changes - Please refer to the VESTA News for details on the motions
- Budget
- Elections

Presidents MESSAGE



Colleagues,

It is a challenge to consider the year we have had without considering the ongoing impact of the pandemic. As an organization, we have worked hard to ensure that members continue to feel the support and care of their union, both at the local and provincial level.

Jane McAlevey, American labour organizer, says that successful unions help people to see the overlap between the workplace and society. This has been so true this year in the work of public sector workers. Hospital employees, teachers, support workers, paramedics, firefighters, grocery store workers, we hold up our communities, and through the pandemic, we have shown how essential community services are to our mental and social wellness.

As we begin negotiations at the provincial table, we are hopeful that a settlement will be reached prior to June 30, however, early indications are that the provincial government is not making good decisions about acknowledging the importance of public sector workers in times of high inflation. Our provincial organizations are working together to raise the profile of our work and stand together in this round of negotiations. As always, member voices are always the most trusted source of information about public education.

This will be my final term as VESTA President, and I look forward to the adventures ahead of me and I'm so very proud of the solidarity and strength of Vancouver Elementary Teachers. The practices we have put in place here in the local, and that we have advocated for at the BC Teachers' Federation, have started the essential work of reconciliation, anti-oppression, and increasing transparency and democracy.

Our teaching does not happen only in classrooms. We are members of a global community, embedding and connecting with War, Occupation, The epidemic of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, the recovering of Indigenous children's bodies at the sites of former Residential Schools, and the ongoing racism and Nationalism that has become more vitriolic in the context of the global pandemic. Our work continues to become more complex as time goes on. This is never more true than working through a TTOC shortage, where supports for vulnerable students are cancelled, rescheduled, and redirected.

The work that teachers have been asked to do throughout the pandemic is not OK. It's frustrating to understand the ways in which public service continues to be asked to do more with less, to hold up more than our share of the sky, and to patch the holes created by underfunded infrastructure and sufficient social programs.

Our lives and our work provide vital insight to the world we know needs to be created and supported. In the months ahead, we will see the round of public sector bargaining underway and the election of new VSB Trustees. Our active participation in these two events can shape the future of our communities and our worksites. Please find ways to get involved, and to use your voice for change.

In solidarity,

Joanne Sutherland
VESTA President

Motions

to the VESTA AGM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MOTIONS TO THE VESTA AGM 2022 MAY 17

Bylaw Changes

1. That the Executive Committee recommend to the Annual General Meeting that Bylaw 6.4 be amended as follows:

Quorum

A quorum for any General Meeting shall consist of ~~five~~ **three** per centum (~~5-3~~%) of the Active Members of the Association but never less than three persons. In the event that a General Meeting fails through lack of quorum to accomplish the business on the Agenda, the Meeting shall be reconvened after a fifteen (15) minute recess.

The Members present at the reconvened Meeting shall constitute a quorum. When the meeting reconvenes the actual number of members present is to be recorded in the minutes. Preliminary acknowledgements and announcements may take place during the 15 minute recess.

2. That the VESTA Executive Committee recommend to the VESTA AGM that Bylaw 1 be amended as follows:

~~The Vancouver Union of Elementary School Teachers and Adult Educators Association~~ **Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators Society (VEAES)** (hereafter referred to as "the **Society** Union Association") is a local association union of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (hereinafter referred to as "the BCTF") as defined by the Constitution and Bylaws of the BCTF, and accordingly is subject to the Rules, Regulations and Bylaws of the BCTF applicable to a local union association. If any provision contained in the Bylaws of this ~~Association~~ **Society** is in any way at variance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the BCTF, such provision shall be inoperative and of no effect.

That all references to VESTA be changed to **VEAES** ~~VUESTA~~, and all reference to **VEAES** ~~VUESTA~~ as an "Association" be changed to "**Society** Union"

Budget

3. That the Executive Committee make the following recommendations to the 2022 AGM:
 1. That Achieve CPA Chartered Accountants be retained as the auditor for 2022 / 2023.
 2. That the audited financial statements for the years ending in July 2020 and July 2021 be accepted.
 3. That the staffing allocation for the VESTA office in 2022 / 2023 be:
 - President (11 months)
 - Vice-President (11 months)
 - Vice-President / Grievance Officer (10.5 months)
 - Vice-President (10.5 months)
 - Vice-President (10.5 months)
 - Vice-President (10 months at 0.4 FTE)
 - Adult Educators Sub-Local President (up to 0.25 FTE)
 4. That the fee for the contract members be 0.88%.
 5. That the fee for the TTOCs be 0.71%.
 6. That the 2022 / 2023 budget in the amount of \$1,677,050 be adopted.

Executive Committee Nominees

Jody Polukoshko for President



VESTA is a strong union with a strong and active membership. However, we have a lot of work to do in terms of ongoing decolonization, anti-oppression advocacy and activism, and organizing more broadly within and outside of our membership.

Public education is central to communities and our relationships to our colleagues and students makes a difference. When we fight to create union organizing spaces that are transformative, challenge the status quo, and stand behind, not in front of, member voices, we can change the world. I have a lot of union experience, but I think I'll make an effective President because I'm not afraid, and because I view my role in the year ahead as building strength and mobilizing membership, in order to get out of the way for new, strong voices in the years ahead.

Darren Tereposky for Vice President



I am pleased to put my name forward for 2nd Vice-President / Grievance Officer for a third year and to be part of the In-House-Table-Officer and VESTA Executive team. I bring my previous experience doing Union work in-house and 24 years experience in VSB classrooms to advocate for your Collective Agreement rights through the grievance process and other structures available to the Union. Implementing the TRC recommendations in schools, maintaining teachers' professional autonomy, improving teachers' working conditions, and having adequate staffing and learning resources to support the diverse learners we work are some of what motivates me to do union work at VESTA.

Marjorie Dumont for Vice President



The protocol of introducing oneself to others is vital to my Indigenous roots, and so, I share this with you. Dini ze, ts'ake ze, skiy ze, Hadih, So'endzin. Gin Tabi honzoo. C'tan sozi. Sne Wila'at endzin. Sbeb Wah tah ghet endzin. N'iwh Dini ze' cho Na'moks endzin (Male chiefs, female chief, sons and Daughters of the chiefs. Greetings, how are you? Today is a great day. My name is C'tan. My mother's name is chief Wila'at, and my late father's naipe is chief Wah tah ghet. My house chiefs name is Na'moks. I belong to the TsayuBeaver clan of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation. My roots are also Gitksan.

I would like to acknowledge I am a visitor on the ancestral, unceded and stolen territory of the SkWa-wu7mesh, Sailiwata?/Selilwitulh and xwma0kwayam Nations. I am grateful and blessed to live, work and play on the beautiful land and water that they have been stewards of since time immemorial.

I am humbled and honoured to put my name forward again for Vice-President. It is with great privilege and honour that I have experienced and learned so much the past year in the VESTA office. My journey so far has been both incredible and challenging. The stories of the teachers give me strength and courage to facilitate the change needed for the betterment of all. One of my most rewarding roles was as a member of the local bargaining; I was able to experience firsthand the process for making improvements to our collective agreement.

My commitment to the teaching profession, and to representing Vancouver elementary teachers is connected to a number of my values. My elders have told me that I am gifted with the ability to pull people together, to listen, and to know when to speak. As a Wet'suwet'en woman, I bring my deep, lived knowledge and experience with Aboriginal Education in BC to inform my perspective. My contributions also reflect VESTA's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The teacher shortage and the increasing demands of teachers during COVID have generated challenges across the district. It has been very difficult navigating through this pandemic. So thank you all for all your efforts to keeping each other safe. I ask for your support to continue my work at VESTA, because I believe my lenses and approach have made a difference to the lives of teachers and students.

Executive Committee Nominees

Karine Ng for Vice President



Philosophy.

For as long as we operate within a settler colonial state apparatus, our common struggle must be rooted in decolonization and Indigenous struggle. Social justice, informed by an intersectional anti-oppression lens, lies in my philosophical foundation. A union fights not only for workers rights, but for the liberation of all human beings inseparable and within a living world. Union leadership is therefore a role of service, and as such, humility, integrity, transparency and accountability should be its guiding principles.

Practice

Because systemic problems can only be adequately addressed through collective solutions, I endeavour to privilege outcomes that will benefit the common good. Personal connection with members, community care, consciousness-raising, mentoring and instilling a disciplined work ethic are some ways that I have worked to build capacity within grassroots communities. Seeking advice from and consulting with others are how I arrive at most of my decisions.

Praxis

Real change cannot happen without concrete action being taken. Equipped with a moral compass, I strive to adapt to shifting conditions in order to remain current and relevant. I seek to further my practice by engaging in critical discourse with fellow educators and social activists, always with an open mind and ready to be challenged. I continue to draw on them for courage and inspiration effect change by employing suitable tactics and strategies. It is a path of learning that I am honoured to walk in community with like-minded folks.

Vanessa Lefebvre for Vice President



When I rolled up to my first TTOC Committee meeting, I wasn't sure what to expect, but am so grateful I showed up. I found myself surrounded by amazing colleagues who were not only passionate about teaching, but determined to improve our working conditions and making motions to ensure our voices were heard. It was my first union experience and I had been teaching for over a decade. I was hooked. From that moment on, I wanted to do what I could to ensure members know their rights, so that we can continue to do the work we love to do.

As a member of the Executive Committee, I did my first round of school visits to discuss bargaining and learned the most important lesson on being a union rep: listen and hold space for conversations. Sometimes these conversations can be hard, but we need to have them in order to move forward as a collective. I learned so much during those visits, about the complexities of issues and the disparities across the district. I met so many colleagues and now I often find myself in the staffroom; seeing friendly faces and talking about our working conditions, looking something up in the Collective Agreement, giving bargaining updates, letting people know what happened at the last Board meeting or BCTF meeting. These often end in lively discussions that last until the bell rings. VESTA members are a passionate bunch and I am proud to be a part of this progressive union.

This year, I am putting my name forward for Vice President. I value the work that VESTA does to support and represent members and I am ready to take on more of that work. I am committed to the ongoing work of decolonizing both our union and teaching spaces as public education needs to be a place where everyone feels safe and respected. We have a long road ahead, but I am proud of the work VESTA has done, with the employer, the BCTF, and within our own organization to stand up for members, students, families, and communities. I would be honoured to continue that work in this role.

Eric Proulx for Vice President



Through my brief time organizing with VESTA, I have been honoured to work with the dedicated and hardworking teachers that makeup the membership. If elected to the 0.4 VP position, I will dedicate myself to continue the work of outreach and activation of our union membership and mentorship of new voices. VESTA's continued effort towards decolonization of union structures is critical and essential work to which I will wholly dedicated myself. I thank VESTA for consideration and am proud to put my name forward as VP.

Executive Committee Nominees

Glen Hansman for Secretary/Treasurer



It is important that VESTA remain a member-driven organization that continues to play a principled, progressive role within the BCTF and the broader BC labour movement. It is also important that we remain on top of the major issues of concern being brought forward by members in schools, responsive to members' needs, and able to remain advocacy-focussed on a wide range of concerns. In order to do so, we need to make sure that our local remains in a financially stable position, responsibly using the funds raised through dues paid by members. As someone who has had a variety of roles both locally and provincially within our union and associated organizations, I understand the local's responsibilities regarding financial stewardship. This includes reviewing and approving audited financial statements, choosing and working with auditors, and playing lead roles in helping executive committees make difficult financial decisions. At this particular time, the Secretary Treasurer role will also play an important role in what flows from the decisions involving the location of the VESTA office and the building that is currently jointly-owned with the VSTA at 13th and Commercial Drive.

Chloe McKnight for Local Representative to BCTF



I look forward to the opportunity to continue in the role of LR and to continue representing VESTA members' values at the provincial level. I enjoy the opportunity in this role to connect with BCTF members from around the province and build solidarity towards making our Federation an inclusive and accessible space.

Natasha Burditt for Local Representative to BCTF



Over that past two years as member at large I have learned a lot about how much work is done to support VESTA members. When I ran for member at large from the floor in 2020 year I did it because I wanted to learn more about how VESTA works to support its members. I continue to learn so much by attending meetings and I have learned so much through chairing meetings this year and would like to continue learning. I hope to do more in the coming year to support VESTA members. That is why I have put my name forward for the position as LR this year.

Danielle Durant for Health & Safety Chair



Health and safety is an aspect of our work that greatly interests me. I have been a school-based health and safety committee member for approximately five years. I have represented VESTA members at both the District H&S and Emergency Management Committees since September 2019. I have learned a lot since participating in these committees and through the pandemic and would like to continue to support our members in all the important issues that affect both our workplace and our learning community. I would be honoured to continue in this role.

Executive Committee Nominees

Sylvia Jackson for Professional Issues Co-Chair



I would like to continue with union activism in the new role I took on this year as co-chair of the Professional Issues Committee. I have come to appreciate how democratic, reflective and important this organization is and the amazing job it accomplishes in supporting its members.

The Professional Issues Committee has helped members understand their rights when choosing professional development and how to navigate the “system” for a variety of questions that surface. It’s been a learning year for me as well.

Thank you for all your support and I look forward to another year of learning.

Elaine Ong for Social Justice and Solidarity Committee Cochair



I believe that as a female BIPOC member, I can continue to share my lived experiences, especially those within the schools and the district to help our union continue to strive for equality and equity for all members and our students.

Heather Allison for Member at Large



It’s so important for us to work together to make the world a better place, even when it’s one small step at a time. VESTA members are amazing in the way they stand up for the rights of all people. We admit when we have work to do, and find ways to grow as individuals as well as a collective. Being on that journey with you is right where I want to be.

Liam Patterson-Morris for Member at Large



In this role I hope to continue to build my personal capacity to give back to the union which has supported me throughout my life, first as a student in VESTA schools, and now as a new teacher. It will be my objective to provide my service to fellow teachers through this position, with the ultimate aim of increasing member engagement within our union structures.

It has been such a pleasure, and a true education, to spend time with and learn from the current executive. Over the last year I have gone from never having attended a union meeting, to feeling comfortable chairing and taking minutes in these spaces. It is my primary objective to support other teachers to feel welcomed, valued, and supported in their introductions to union work. In the end it is solidarity with one another which holds each of us, and our union up. Growing this solidarity, by growing engagement, is the intention which calls me to offer my work to the membership next year.