



Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

April 2017

A Lesson Learned by Others

Despite having once been the strongest union state in the country, Washington currently maintains a union membership of only 17 percent, 33 percent less than what it had fifty years ago. Though it now ranks second nationwide, Washington has less than a quarter of its population registered as union members.

As someone from a “Right to Work” state, a state in which laws explicitly limit the power of unions, I have seen what happens when workers lose their voice and their influence in the legislature. These experiences have led me to become an active member of the VEA as well as driven me to discuss the importance of membership with as many people as I can. But I have seen something that genuinely concerns me: complacency. Complacency among all people, not just teachers; people who take unions for granted, think they will always be around, believe that they don’t need to do anything because Washington is such a strong union state. However, they don’t seem to realize that for many years we have been teetering on the edge. That over the last fifty years Washington unions have lost almost twice as many members as they have retained.

Back in the nineties, my mother was a teacher in Arizona. She worked from sun up to sun down and I grew up in day care and after school programs. She agonized over her lessons because she loved her students and wanted to make sure that they gained the skills they needed to become successful. Yet her salary was so low, we were still on food stamps. We still could not afford new shoes. We could not afford Christmas for a few years. We did not have air conditioning and when our swamp cooler (it works as well as it sounds) broke, she had to send my older brother on the roof to fix it with gum. In Arizona, her starting pay was around \$18,000 a year, far less than she made in her union job at AT&T of \$38,000 with no degree. When she finally left AZ after 9 years of teaching and having obtained a Master's degree, she was still only making \$28,000 a year. Her salary doubled moving to California, where there was a Union, and we also had much greater benefits.

Today, my sister is also an Arizona teacher. When she was hired, her class sizes were around forty and for one of her classes she had to teach in the hallway landing above the stairs. When she had her son, she realized that it was more expensive to go back to work and pay for childcare than it was to stay at home with her son. She could not afford to return to work for six years. When she did return, classroom conditions and pay had not improved. To compound this, her district required her to teach a full document-based question every month in addition to all of her other content in her classes with 40 plus students. To put that into perspective, this is equivalent to teaching your kids to write monthly research papers while simultaneously teaching them the entire history of the world. Suffice it to say, my sister has since left education.

It is not my intention to monger fear. I simply mean to demonstrate that we face a genuine risk as our State Legislature and new Supreme Court move forward. We must shed our complacency and become active members of our Union. We must encourage others to become active in their unions. Above all, we must work against the fundamental misunderstanding that Unions are bad for the economy.

Rachel Jarnagin

VEA Member and Building Rep at FVHS

#MembershipMatters: 99% of the bargaining unit represented by the VEA are members



GYROSCOPE ADVENTURE

Vancouver and Evergreen Education Association members with 10-20 years of experience met for a professional development retreat at the Olympic Club hotel. Engaging conversations revealed many commonalities between districts as well as shared learning opportunities. Topics covered engaging in courageous conversations, self-assessment, dealing with difficult people, role playing, stress relief, union awareness, and a hot game of *Khoot!* where VEA took the top prize!

Labor Management Report



Each month your VEA President and Executive Director meet with district representatives to solve issues that are brought forward by you, the member, as well as by building representatives through their trustee reports. At each Rep Council meeting, a summary of the discussion at that monthly Labor Management meeting is provided. In April, here is a snapshot of some items that were discussed. See your building rep for more details.

Teacher as Designer: The association received a definition of this work. The VEA is advocating for time to implement this vision.

Device Collection (Secondary). The VEA advocated for Secondary teachers who have expressed a desire to have devices for finals. The VEA also advocated to extend the due date for report cards.

HS Online Math Placements. VEA needs more input from math teachers regarding next steps needed on using Career Cruising platform.

Snow Make Up Days and Part-Time Employees.

The VEA advocated for part-time employees who were not originally scheduled to work on the snow day and these employees will not be required to make up the day. However, if the snow make up day is worked, they will be paid additionally on a supplemental contract.

HS Graduation. HS teachers who volunteer to work graduation will fulfill the 4 hours that would otherwise be worked on June 23 at the end of the day.

Student Supply List. VEA discussed the supply list not changing despite teacher input and some programs like AVID require different supplies. Let your building rep know if you have additional input to consider.

Counselor Ratio (elementary). The district will analyze staffing. Counselors are encouraged to continue the discussion at the monthly meetings.

IAC/SLC Overloads. The district is looking at a plan to alleviate these situations and the plan is to be shared with teachers. VEA advocates strongly that self-contained classes should NOT start in overload on day #1.

Safety Net Suggestions. The district was open to the idea of a safety net "style book" and are looking at efficiencies.

INVOLUNTARY TRANSFER DUE TO BUILDING OVERSTAFFING



During the first week of May, the building principal will meet with Association faculty representatives and/or building staff to review and discuss projected student enrollments and faculty and student deployment plans for the next school year (Article 10.19 CPA pg 87). As staffing numbers start to come in, ideas about which buildings are going to be overstaffed are starting to be realized. What happens if the building is overstaffed? (Article 7.8C CPA pg 49)

1. The principal will review the qualification of the staff currently assigned to the school and tentatively place each staff member into identified positions in the programs while considering personal preferences of each educator. The principal will meet with their SBLT co-chair and VEA building representatives to discuss the program and staffing plans as soon as information is available for discussion purposes, but **not later than the first week in May.**

2. The building principal will ask for volunteers and while employees may be encouraged to volunteer, they are not to be pressured into “volunteering.”

3. If volunteers are not available, excessing must be by seniority within the required qualifications (e.g., you would not excess a less senior Spanish teacher if your excess was in Language Arts unless both employees were equally certified in both areas.) The only other exceptions are protected situations (e.g., an employee who has been excessed and involuntarily placed within the past two years).



PLACEMENT OF STAFF

Seniority guidelines have not been issued for in-building placements. However, building administrators are expected to consider seniority

in making in-building assignments unless there are objective reasons for not doing so. Such reasons will be communicated to the employee and the employee will have the opportunity to respond to the reasons and such responses will be considered.

Upon completion of tentative placement, but before activation of PIR placements by the District, the principal will share information with the faculty on vacancies being released for PIR placement. In-building staff who express interest will be given consideration consistent with this article. This action may require relatively short turnaround (i.e., one to three days) to avoid delaying the PIR process.

Educators who possess the qualification but cannot be placed in their preferred assignment will be given consideration for a preferred assignment should a vacancy become available after completion of the building assignment process and before the beginning of the school year. Placement in such vacancy is dependent upon the ability of the District to otherwise assign all other excess and /or newly hired employees. It is not the District’s intent to displace a currently assigned teacher to place a newly hired teacher unless there are no other reasonable options that would avoid such displacement.

Union Reps are not “them”... they are “Us”

VEA’s governing documents allow for the election of representatives at each worksite based on a ratio of one (1) representative for every 15 members or fraction thereof. Some sites do not currently have full representation.



Representation is enhanced when standing together...

THERE IS ROOM FOR YOU!

Rep training is provided by the VEA. You will be the first to receive important information as well as establish the goals, objectives, policies and procedures, and how the association spends its money, time, and other resources. If you have a desire to be a representative, contact your head representative and the VEA.

The PIR and Endorsements

Teachers on the PIR have been notified that they may/may not be endorsed for the PIR choices they have made. This is caused by many recent changes by the state/OSPI to highly qualified and endorsement qualifications. **ALL TEACHERS NEED TO VISIT THE OSPI WEBSITE AND LOOK AT THE ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR WHAT YOU TEACH.** The district is willing to work with people in these situations to change your PIR choice if you are no longer qualified for the choice you made. Contact VEA if you need individual advocacy.

Elementary Report Card Survey

VEA is currently seeking input from members (elementary) regarding the new report card. Please complete the survey no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday, June 25th. A link to the survey was emailed to all elementary members. Thank you to the 134 members who responded in the first day! Contact VEA if you didn't receive this important email. Participation satisfies #MembershipMatters passbook page 2

Preparing for the Next School Year **NOW!**

There are many preparatory things that happen in May for the following school year...

May 1 – (6.12d) Employees on surplus or otherwise unassigned will be provided a list of all current opening and be given preference by seniority prior to new employment placement.

Site Based Leadership Team: Co-chairs are selected in the spring for the following year. See your building rep for more details.



Building Budgets are currently being drafted for next year. See your building rep if you have specific budget needs to be addressed.

Back at the Table

A Note from the Doctor
by Dr. Rick Wilson

The VEA and VPS agreed to submit three non-monetary openers for bargaining this spring. The three items that VEA will propose to the district are based upon your survey responses from February as well as feedback from a focus group of your peers. Watch for a full report following the first session with the district.

2017 WEA Representative Assembly



VEA delegates to the WEA RA along with your WEA RA board representatives spent three long days in Spokane working on union business for the upcoming year. More details to follow via the *Action Line* and your building rep. Areas discussed included: Immigration and Safe Schools, Diversity, teacher pensions, local engagement with ESSA, potential action in May around the legislature and McCleary, Social Justice, non-profit public banking supporting schools, social media protection for educators, student personal data, substitutes, Special Ed issues, school psychologist contract language, support the march for Science, etc. Many items were debated at length with outcomes to support the work you do and the students we serve.

Professional Development Opportunities

Time is running out to complete your 8 hours of Professional Development that was front-loaded into your paycheck. Failure to complete the obligation will result in a deduction of \$36 per hour from your summer paycheck. VEA has advocated for additional opportunities to complete these hours. The district has responded with the following opportunities that still have available space:

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Below is a list of current courses available for registration that satisfy the 8 hour requirement. None of them have class size limitations, so anyone who is interested can attend. Please review the course description on the PD site to determine further interest. In addition, the district is pursuing one online course to potentially be announced by May 8th.

(Courses 2320 and 2323 have specific content that may not be as broad-based as others)

Course_ID	CourseTitle	StartDate	EndDate
2239	Homeroom for New Users (TWO SESSIONS REQUIRED)	5/23/2017	5/25/2017
2327	10 Things Culturally Responsive Teachers Do (and Why)	5/20/2017	5/20/2017
2238	Homeroom for New Users (TWO SESSIONS REQUIRED)	5/8/2017	5/10/2017
2320	Digital Citizenship for Future Ready Libraries	5/6/2017	5/6/2017
2323	2nd Annual VPS ELL Unconference	5/6/2017	5/6/2017
2344	Culturally Responsive Teaching and Student Centered Learning	4/27/2017	4/27/2017