



Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

April 2018



Collective Bargaining... Why Do We Negotiate?

Why do we negotiate? The answer may seem obvious to many; however, some longtime and many members – new to our profession – appropriately ask the question. Here's your answer.

We negotiate to guarantee basic rights to job security. This means that every member who is accused of wrongdoing has a contractually guaranteed right to due process and fair play. This includes the right to face accusers, present exculpatory evidence, be heard by a neutral judge, and (most importantly) be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Contrary to popular opinion, law does not guarantee these rights to all school employees. Only the collective bargaining agreement can provide these benefits.

We negotiate to provide financial security. School districts are not required to pay teachers what the state allocates for salaries and “fringe” benefits. No law requires districts to compensate teachers for curriculum work, extended days, or covering classes set by statute. State law does allow additional pay for additional time, responsibilities and it allows a district to pay teachers an incentive to continue employment here. All of these items must be negotiated between the Association and the District.

We negotiate to improve working conditions. State law provides no systematic process for dealing with transfers, class sizes, student discipline, scheduling, layoff/recall, and so on. Only through negotiations do we have a say in these matters. Otherwise, employers could do as they wish, even if it was unfair and arbitrary.

We negotiate to create stability. School boards are not required to listen to employees in any forum other than collective negotiations. While many enlightened boards listen very well, that can change with the next board election. The contract continues on and cannot be altered simply because the board, a superintendent, or principal wants a change. It takes mutual agreement.

We negotiate to have a voice in the future. As professional educators, we have the daunting task of preparing children for a future world. Only through collective negotiations are we guaranteed a voice on how we approach the future in the best way for children. We are the Districts' most valuable resource. We are the essential ingredient in students' educational growth.

Bargaining Begins!

Initial proposals were exchanged between VEA team and the District. A focus group of members will review a general overview of the proposals on April 16th to provide additional input for the VEA team prior to the next session on April 23rd. Additional sessions have been scheduled for April 24, 30, and May 7. If you want to stay in the loop, text @veame to the number 81010 to join!



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. Here are a few items discussed in April:

Clarifying Elementary Conference Expectations:

Conferencing for elementary is “as needed” for student learning; however, teachers may want to meet with parents of new students (not required). Most buildings have notified parents of third graders who are below benchmark and hosted a parents night as well. It would not be required to conference with those parents unless they request a meeting.

Soft Start Kindergarten: The district is looking at the possibility of a soft-start kindergarten for the following school year (2019-20). Any changes would be proposed by December 2018 before the following year calendar is developed. VEA is planning on a survey regarding this possible change. Stay tuned!

HS Graduation Update: The district removed this activity from the TRI plans last year, so unless a staff votes, it does not need to be added back in as a TRI activity. Instead, the district is using graduation as a volunteer duty covered under the provision of staff providing 8 hours or up to 3 activities toward ASB events. If a member has completed those volunteer hours, you should not be required to do graduation duty.

Mind Up – Social Emotional Curriculum: This supplemental K-8 social emotional program is a building choice comprised of about 15 lessons. It can/should go through SBLT as it is a choice program. VEA advocated for training to be provided as none is currently planned by the district. It appears there are several ways to present the program, which should be a consideration of the SBLT.

Other topics included job sharing, substitutes and

para shortages, report card printing, discipline issues, comprehensive school actions, clerk help for Teacher Librarians receiving Eureka materials, etc. See your rep for more details.



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.



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).



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.

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.



SPARKS 2018

Vancouver and Evergreen Education Association members with 0-7 years of experience met for a professional development retreat March 15-17. Engaging conversations revealed many commonalities between districts as well as shared learning opportunities. Topics covered forming community in your classroom, rules of discipline, contract contents, stress management, collaborative learning, differentiation tools, financial planning, legislative impacts, integrating STEM, member benefits, nuts and bolts of bargaining, National Board and certification, and more!

Member Opportunities Worth Checking Out

Enrich your students' learning with a Music & Arts Grant. Apply to receive

\$500.00

for your school's program.

The California Casualty Music & Arts Grant was established to provide support for K-12 public schools negatively impacted by reduced budgets.

California Casualty has partnered with education associations for nearly 70 years. We understand the importance of music and arts education for children.

As a member of one of our partnering education associations, you can apply for a grant award upto \$500 for a music or art need at your school.

Keep the creativity flowing with a music or art grant from us! Apply today!

CalCasMusicArtsGrant.com

10th Annual
TEACHING EQUITY
Conference

STANDING UP FOR JUSTICE!

CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOMS WHERE ALL THRIVE

Need Lodging:
Four Points Sheraton Hotel
22406 Pacific Hwy S, Des Moines
[Reservation Link](#)

Professional Rate:
\$40 Member Online
\$50 At the door
\$150.00 Nonmember
[Registration Link](#)
TeachingEquity.com

Keynote: Georgina Cecilia Pérez
is the author of Unity Framework: Critical Pedagogy Curriculum and serves as a Texas State Board of Education.
Representative for District 1.

Saturday, April 28, 2018
Highline College
Des Moines, WA
8am-4:30pm

High school & college students are free with online registration: tinyurl.com/TE2018

We are a network of cross sector collaborators promoting equity and pathways into education.

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