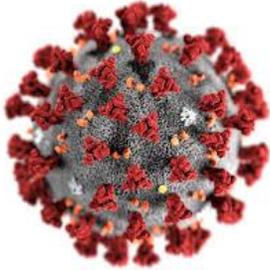




# Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

December 2020



## COVID-19 Impacts

Here we are headed into the 9<sup>th</sup> month of pandemic stress and we are all exhausted. Change. Turmoil. Concern. Restrictions. Safety. Being an educator is already an exhausting profession. We give our all to meeting the needs of our students, families, and many times leave our own well-being for last on the list. How are you filling your emotional cup? Please know that there are resources available to assist you.

### Employee Assistance Program:

Members are provided free confidential counseling sessions with Solutions Employee Assistance program for help with mental and emotional stress, marriage and relationship issues, family and parenting stresses, job difficulties and burn-out. Contact Solutions for an appointment 360-836-8260 or [www.solutionsemployeeassistance.com](http://www.solutionsemployeeassistance.com).

Solutions EAP is located at 3305 Main Street, Suite 201 in Vancouver.

### COVID-19 Financial Impacts

Some of our members are also impacted by COVID-19 such as realizing a reduction in household income.

NEW Social Health Call Center; a Kaiser Permanente Plan Benefit: This call center is open to Kaiser medical plan subscribers as a response to not only the social and emotional well-being of participants but also to address financial impacts of the virus on many households that can affect core needs such as housing, access to nutritious foods, childcare options and more. By helping members locate needed resources, they are eliminating potential barriers that might complicate care delivery and clinical outcomes. This is especially important as we respond to the pandemic. To gain access to these critical resources members can call the new Thrive Local Connections toll free number: 800-443-6328 where agents are available Monday through Friday from 8 am until 5 pm to help members.

Please see this 3+ minute Video explanation <https://vimeo.com/472796782/a1042e6d78>

### COVID-19 Changing Landscape – Call for Updated Member Input

VEA advocacy has been constant throughout the pandemic and responds to member needs as our landscape changes with increases in community spread of the virus well above the state decision tree limits, a return to in-person learning for small groups of students most disadvantaged by the pandemic and distance learning, and lack of directives from Clark County Department of Health. VEA surveyed the membership at the start of the pandemic and again in July in order to provide direction on the initial MOU with the district. We have met with and advocated for small constituency groups this fall. The VEA Executive Board is asking for an update on our broader member perspective to help guide further actions. **Please complete this survey no later than noon on Friday, December 4th.** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GKVRB9V>



### Text VEAINFO to 41411

Bargaining will begin soon. Make sure you are subscribed to the new TextMarks format. This important communication component was very critical to instant communications during our last bargain and labor action. JOIN TODAY!

## NEA Member Benefit

### Get a quote AND a \$25 Gift Card

The NEA Auto, Home & Renters Insurance Program by California Casualty saves members an average of \$423/yr. Each policy includes Educator specific benefits, free ID Theft Protection, Pet Injury Coverage and Exclusive member-only rates. For a limited time, they are offering a **\$25 gift card** for completing an auto quote by [clicking here](#) or visit [www.readyforquote.com/erica](http://www.readyforquote.com/erica)



### VEBA results...

VEBA (Voluntary Employee Benefits Association) is a plan where eligible teachers may convert their unused sick leave days (one-for-four) into a non-taxable account. The funds in the member's account may be accessed to pay out-of-pocket costs for items such as insurance premiums, co-pays, deductibles, medications, and many other health related expenses.

A meeting to explain VEBA was held at the VEA office on November 16th. Members who were eligible to vote included those who will have accumulated 180 days of sick leave as of January 1, 2021, and/or those who are eligible to retire per the district. Letters and ballots were sent to these eligible teachers via home email. Both initiatives were approved with an overwhelming "yes" majority.

## Emergency School Closures

The District will make a reasonable effort to decide as early as possible when schools will be closed or the opening of school will be delayed.



Employees who have students on-site are expected to report to your assigned buildings at their usual starting times or as reasonably near thereto, keeping in mind safety, but no later than thirty minutes prior to the opening of school for students.

When schools are closed early due to inclement weather, on-site staff members shall be permitted to leave as soon as practical after the release of students, and assuring that adequate supervision exists until all students have departed

On the District approved calendar for 2020-2021 we have listed the following inclement weather make-up days: June 17 (TH), 18 (F), 21 (M) and Semester Break, January 29 (F). The make-up days for the first 3 days are also listed in the MOU, June 17, 18 & 21. The district proposed to change the snow make-up days to June 17 & 18 only, and for any other inclement weather beyond 2 days, that we shift to remote learning vs school closures. That way our teachers and students would not have to come back on Monday, June 21, and teachers would not lose their semester break day for high schools.

## Clock Hours:

### Evaluation Required



Once an in-district course is complete, participants have **30 calendar days** from the course end date to submit their online course evaluation/acknowledgement

on the VPS PD site. Washington Administrative Code requires the evaluation must be complete and the participant affirms the hours attended. A reminder is sent to your district email... Do not neglect this task or you will not be able to claim your clock hours. The safest thing is to make sure you complete this information before departing the class via your device or your smart phone.

## Social Networking Caution!

Many of us have Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, or Twitter accounts; others have personal blogs; some use sharing sites such as Delicious, Ping, Digg, or Pandora. While social networking tools allow us to be more connected to friends, family, and colleagues, they also make our private lives more visible to parents, students, and employers. Be smart about what you post on your personal sites, your privacy settings, and who you allow as 'friends' online. Remember that these are only suggestions, and ultimately, you need to make your own decisions about your online presence. It is always a good idea to be intentional about your communications with others, and particularly important to do so when it involves communicating in a public, semi-public, or potentially public medium.



- Be vigilant about your privacy settings. Social networking sites frequently add new features and/or change their privacy policies. Make sure to keep your privacy settings where you want them.
- Always communicate with the idea that whatever you write can be read by your students, their parents, and your administrator, even if you are using privacy settings that allow only friends to view your page.
- Think about what you post on your site, including photos and links --- would you want your students, parents, or administrators to view them? Even if you have your privacy settings very high, there is little on the internet that is truly private, and you do not have control over what other people post about you.
- Consider who you connect with (or "friend") via social media. Be aware of what others post about you. Untag yourself in any photos that you do not want others to see, and/or ask friends to remove them. Remember that – once posted anywhere online - photos may still be "cached" somewhere, so be smart about what photographs you take, pose in, post, share, etc.
- Be aware of your online presence. Google your name from time to time to see what comes up. Notify your administrator and association leader

right away if you find something of concern that could be school-related. Other precautions are to set up a "Google Alert" that will monitor what is being published about you, and to remove your Facebook profile from Google search listings.

- Think carefully about whether or not to 'friend' students on a social networking site, or confirm their friend requests. You may want to establish an up-front policy about this. It is advisable NOT to friend students even if you have children of your own who are friends with these students.
- • Be intentional about personal/professional boundaries. For example, avoid posting photos of students or of student work on your personal pages, even without student names.
- Don't post any negative information about your students, co-workers, or school administrators.
- Update your personal sites on your own time - and especially if you use the sites for any politically-related activity, be sure to also use your own personal computer equipment.

### VPS Social Media Policies

Policy 5810P: [Procedure – Staff Technology Use, Ethics, and Internet Safety](#)

Policy 5253: [Maintaining Professional Staff/Student Boundaries](#)

## Grades: A Teacher's Responsibility

As Trimester based schools are preparing grades for students, please be aware that WAC 180-44-010 (3) states that "**Teachers** shall be responsible for the evaluation of each pupil's educational growth and development and for making periodic reports to parents or guardians and to the designated school administrator."



## Need Extra Money for the Holidays?

Membership gives you the benefit of strength in numbers and a connection with other educators who believe in the promise of public education. Together, we stand strong for our students and for our profession. As a member of VEA, you are also a member of the WEA and NEA. Together we work to represent you at the local, state and national level. Your membership comes with many benefits as well that can save you money or give you peace of mind.

**NEA Marketplace:** Receive cashback on purchases powered by Rakutan. Shop for exclusive deals on everything from clothing and electronics to pet food, tires, cellphones, and more. Learn more at

<https://www.neamb.com/products/nea-discount-marketplace>

**Student Loan Forgiveness:** Visit [www.neamb.com/start](http://www.neamb.com/start) to navigate the resources through your membership and SAVI.

## LOOKING FOR LEADERS



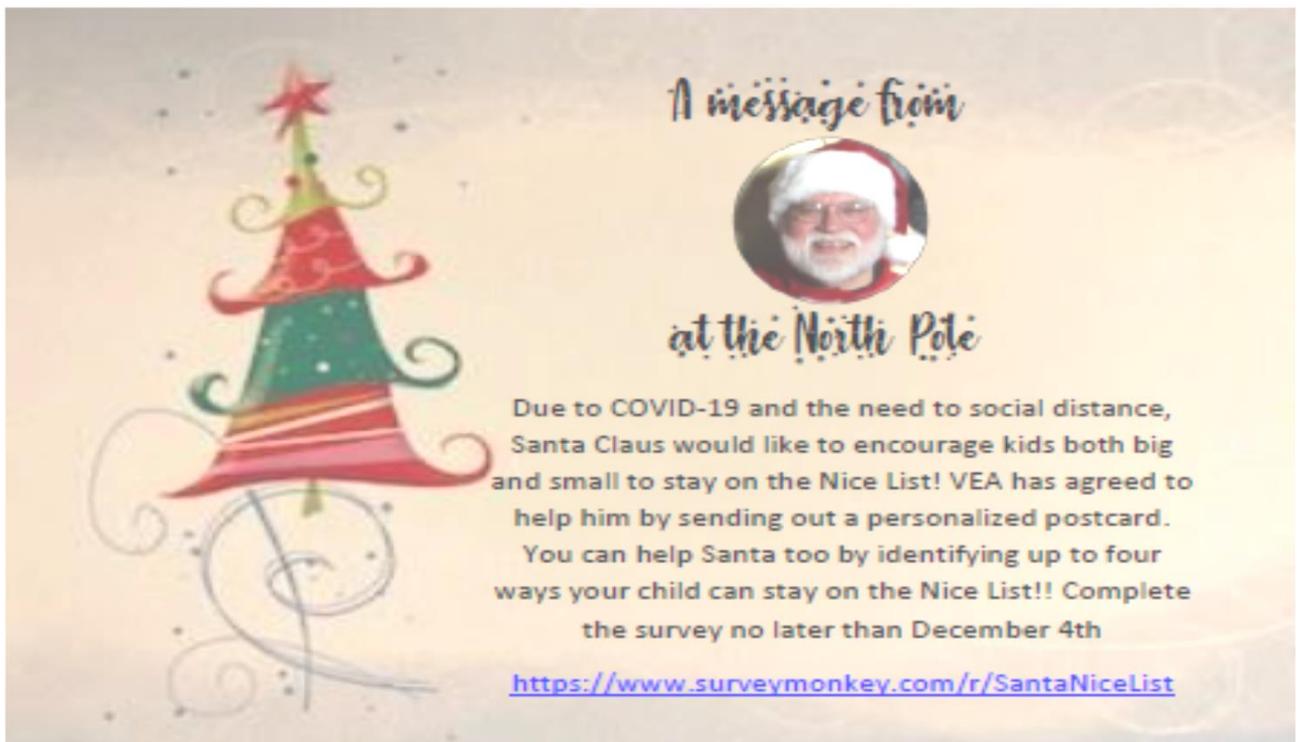
There are many hats to be worn in Association work. The more members wearing those hats, the more effective and strong the association becomes.

The opportunity for members to run for a leadership position on the **2021-22 VEA Executive Board** begins with open nominations at the January 5<sup>th</sup> Rep Council meeting. The VEA positions of President, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP, Treasurer, Intermediate Trustee, and MS Trustee will be filled in this election.

### Is there a smaller way to get involved?

You do not have to be a building rep. You do not have to be on the board. You DO have to be a VEA member and commit to attend and report back to the membership. Nominations also open in January for VEA delegates to the **WEA Rep Assembly** (Virtual – April 15-17) and the **NEA Rep Assembly** (July 2 - 6). in Denver, CO. The WEA RA and/or NEA RA may be switched to a virtual format if it is not safe to convene in person.

**Nominations will close at the February 2<sup>nd</sup> Rep Council meeting. Contact Cindy for a candidate form.**

A festive holiday-themed graphic with a light beige background and falling snow. On the left is a stylized Christmas tree with red, green, and red sections and a red star on top. On the right, a circular portrait of Santa Claus is shown. The text reads: "A message from at the North Pole". Below this, it says: "Due to COVID-19 and the need to social distance, Santa Claus would like to encourage kids both big and small to stay on the Nice List! VEA has agreed to help him by sending out a personalized postcard. You can help Santa too by identifying up to four ways your child can stay on the Nice List!! Complete the survey no later than December 4th". At the bottom, there is a blue hyperlink: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SantaNiceList>.