



Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

April 2021



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.

Make sure YOU are kept in the loop as bargaining progresses! Does VEA have your current HOME (non-school) email?

Contact [Cindy at VEA](#) if you are not receiving regular email updates and communications.

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



PLACEMENT OF STAFF

Seniority guidelines are not dispositive 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, 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.

Article 7.8E v. *"When the District becomes overstaffed District-wide (More staff than funded for), they may place staff members involuntarily into positions for which they are qualified to meet the urgent needs of the District in an attempt to prevent layoff of staff."*

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). 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)

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, selection for administrative transfer must be by seniority within the required qualifications (e.g., you would not administratively transfer a less senior Spanish teacher if your overstaffing 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 administratively transferred and involuntarily placed within the past two years or a head coach)



Have you checked your personnel file lately?

April is a good time to check the contents of your personnel file BEFORE placement considerations. Article 7.4 states: "To be assured full consideration in obtaining desired placements, an individual is responsible to regularly inspect and update your personnel file by submitting current official transcripts, certificates, credentials, evaluations of experience, and other pertinent documents regarding your qualifications."

Summer Job Postings open on April 21st



Other things happening in May to prepare 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 will soon be drafted for next year. See your building rep if you have specific budget needs to be addressed.

Safety Committee. WAC 296-800-13020 charges us to establish a safety committee at each site that employs 11 or more employees. Members of the Safety committee are to be **employee elected**. Employees selected by the union qualify as employee elected. The term of the employee-elected members must be a maximum of one year (There is no limit to the number of terms a representative can serve). If there is a vacancy, a new member must be elected prior to the next scheduled meeting. Each committee has an elected chairperson. The committee determines how often, when, and where the committee will meet.



Elect your VEA building Reps

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. Terms are two years, and there is no limit to the number of terms a rep can serve.

Building representatives should be elected by the membership and communicated to VEA prior to the first rep council meeting in the fall.



Professional Development Tutorial

Article 12.7 BASIC PD Funds

All members with at least 0.4 FTE receive access to \$1000 of basic professional funds each program year (July 1 to June 30). These funds are in addition to the 8 hours of PD included in your TRI package and the 16 hours of optional PD/supplemental work. The intended use of the annual \$1000 allocation is to assist each employee in professional growth activities such as unique development needs by selection of course work, workshops, conference and/or obtaining training or instruction in a specific instructional skill through merging of your funds with other employee's funds in order to provide for a building staff cooperative workshop.

PD completed by June 30 are submitted by July 10th for payment against the \$1000 basic entitlement and any residual amount. Carry forward requests are complex and confusing. Any unused basic funds intended for an activity next year should be emailed to Nicole Niesz by June 15. This carry forward benefit was intended for summer workshops.

Article 12.11 INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

Each full-time teacher on a provisional or continuing contract may receive the basic allocation of PD funds and is also eligible to be reimbursed an additional \$1500. These are not guaranteed funds and can only be applied for district approved college and university programs and National Board Certification. An exception to the use of residual funds for reimbursement of workshops and conferences may be made for education staff associates who require such professional development in lieu of credit hours for required recertification which cannot be accomplished through university course work.

Residual Fund applications are due ten days prior to the start of the professional development opportunity. Requests involving travel outside Oregon and Washington should be submitted at least twenty days prior. **PD requests for a given school/contract year, must be submitted by June 15.**

Member Benefits

NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program Extended to Family!



GREAT NEWS!! Your siblings, parents, parents-in-law, and adult children can now get auto, renters or home insurance with California Casualty and receive the same great rates as you do as an NEA Member. It is also available for your parents, parent in laws and adult children as well. Please visit our local rep Erica Reich's page at <https://www.readyforquote.com/erica/> or call 1-877-509-1593 to receive a quote.



Use NEA Member Benefits to help fund your summer travel!



[NEA Travel Dollars | NEA Member Benefits \(neamb.com\)](#) \$500 when you enroll and continue to earn more as you travel.

NEA Travel is available to you for **NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE** as part of your NEA membership. Once activated, you can use your travel dollars when the time is right for you. How does it work? Use NEA Travel Dollars to receive extra money off your car rental, hotel, resort, cruise and guided tours. Purchase airfare and receive an additional \$100 travel dollars when you complete the flight. You may also receive a free room upgrade or free meal as well!



The California Casualty's Music and Arts Grant program will award individual members with a \$250 grant for their classroom or program. This is a very popular association member benefit. They plan on awarding approximately 150 grants this year. VEA members at Jefferson MS won one of these grants last year! [Quick Entry Link!](#)



WEA
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EDUCATION
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Sharing the power of knowledge.

WEA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WEA's Special Education Support Center (SESC) and Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) are offering [courses online](#), in real-time, via Zoom, in addition to asynchronous [Canvas courses](#). We have launched our April – June 2021 quarterly Zoom schedule.

Highlights:

- Special PD Event: Universal Design for Learning with Katie Novak, Ed. D.
- New Coaching and Mentoring Series
- New MTSS Series
- New Paraeducator Series
- New Parents' Perspective Course
- New STEM Zoom Courses
- Asynchronous Courses – via Canvas

[Registration is open.](#) Select your event/course in the drop down menu on the top of the registration page. (Asynchronous courses have their own registration links, see Canvas Course flyer.) Clock hours are available. Courses/Clock hours are free. You can access flyers with our current schedule/offerings for both asynchronous and synchronous courses here: <https://bit.ly/WEA-IPP>

WEA-RETIRED SCHOLARSHIPS FUNDRAISER

From its inception in 1987, WEA-Retired had a strong legislative focus. Six years later the pre-retirement seminar program began. And in 1996 WEA-Retired awarded its first two scholarships to WEA active members, \$300 each, “to provide vital support to those seeking to enhance their skills or earn new endorsements.” Over the next twenty-four years the program underwent two structural changes, received an endowment from Laura McVicker, and has awarded \$102,150 to 121 WEA active and student members, including seven VEA members. Today WEA-Retired Scholarships is an independent organization affiliated with WEA-Retired and awards up to ten \$1000 scholarships each year.

Over the years WEA-Retired Scholarships has benefited from tremendous support from the WEA family, classified, certificated, student and retired. Several VEA members have been winners of the cash prize drawing fundraiser. With Covid-19 pandemic the 2020 fundraisers were cancelled when the WEA Representative Assembly and the WEA-Retired Annual Meeting changed to virtual formats. The scholarship board of directors made the decision to reduce the number of scholarships to no more than five for 2021. WEA-Retired made a \$5000 donation so the maximum number of scholarships offered could remain at ten.

With the pandemic continuing its stranglehold, WEA Representative Assembly and WEA-Retired Annual Meeting will once again be virtual formats. That means fundraising in 2021 needs a new look. Two lap quilts have been donated to the organization. “Blocks and triangles” is 41.5 x 41.5 inches; “For the birds” is 51 x 51 inches. For every \$5.00 donation your name will be entered into the drawing for the quilt of your choice. Checks should be made out to WEA-Retired Scholarships and sent to WEA-Retired Scholarships, PO Box 820708, Vancouver WA 98682. The winners’ names will be drawn April 30 and will be announced in Connections, the WEA-Retired newsletter.

“For the Birds”



“Blocks and Trangles”

