



Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

November 2023

Together we ARE making a difference

VEA is working hard to ensure that contract provisions and agreements are adhered to by all parties. Adaptations to negotiated provisions must follow a process and should be the rarity and not the norm. Recently, MOUs have been issued for sites who voted through the SBLT process to change staff meetings from Wednesday to Monday. As issues arise, clarifying intent behind the language can sometimes feel like slogging through mud. Thank you for your patience as we continue to advocate for you. This month, VEA was able to secure relief for the egregious staffing issues with Learning Support at Columbia River HS. We also negotiated relief and accommodations for the 5th grade strings program this month. VEA has asserted that any change in district business practices such as a ten-day e-sign process should NOT result in non-payment for professional development work. Our shared work continues...



Bargaining Prep: VEA has expressed an interest to the district in starting bargaining as per contract on February 1st. The October Rep Council affirmed the 2023-24 VEA bargaining team (Kiera O'Brien- At-Large, Sunny Selders - Intermediate, Charlotte Lartey - Specialist, Keith Lloyd - MS, Andrew Wicklas - HS, Amy Spofford* - Bargaining Chair - Special Ed, Jamie Anderson, President and Graham Picklesimer, Executive Director). The entire contract is open for negotiations. Your member voice is the guiding force behind all proposals and actions. Watch for opportunities to engage in 1:1 conversations, focus group listening sessions, and a comprehensive survey!

Student Management & Discipline Documents: The 2022 interim bargain (ratified in the spring of 2023) called for a process document that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of educators and principals in the intervention, documentation, and communication (to other staff and/or student family) processes for classroom and building interventions other than suspension and expulsion. Other forms of classroom and building interventions may include but are not limited to classroom exclusions (eg call for assistance to support de-escalation) and subsequent plan(s) for re-entry. These documents were shared with members in the October 19th VEA update. VEA learned that the administrators also received access to documents that weren't the final version. We are working with the district to get the correct version in the hands of administrators.



The VEA continues to share concerns with the district on the lack of clarity on Tier 1, 2, and 3 behaviors included in this document. The agreement also calls for training that will be facilitated by building administrators including a review of the VEA/VPS process document as well as related documents (VPS Student Discipline Code guide, OSPI Behavior menu of Best Practices and Strategies) and processes with their faculty annually.

Access to the VEA/VPS Documents including student management for all levels as well as behavior, student discipline and tiered discipline guides can be found in this google folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XD7Fqhajr03bSpoR_bqv_dQInimGx9gA?usp=sharing

Injured at work?



"Well, it looks like everything is under control."

VEA is hearing from members who are being injured by students during the workday. Stabbed by a pencil. Grabbed in private areas. Bruises left from student bites and fists. Hit by clay missiles. Please document these incidents and resulting injuries with your safety committee and share them with VEA. Stories from the front lines will assist us with ongoing conversations with the district around staff safety. As a statewide issue, WEA is also interested in collecting data in this area.

Union Voice



Your voice is powerful. If you plan to share your realities with the School Board via the public comment portion of an upcoming meeting, please reach out to VEA for support.

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 14th at 5:30 P.M.

Conferences Clarified

There was a lot of confusion around conference expectation this Fall. VEA and the district held a post-action review and have agreed that there should NOT be any rigid expectations to conference within windows of time. Conferences look different at elementary vs secondary. There should be flexibility to meet with families when available and/or with assistance such as translators. There should NOT be hard schedules coming from administration. We recognize the need for safety concerns and honoring SBLT votes for late evening conferences. Communicate

with your administrator when conferences have been completed as well as any expectations to be on site. Conferences are covered under TRI expectations that may be completed on or off site as is reasonably appropriate. The 16 hours cited in the contract cover meetings and phone conferences with parents/guardians all year long and are not restricted to the Fall.

2 Hour Early Release Intent

The first 2-hour early release just occurred and there was a lot of confusion as to the intent of this time. Please note that this early release time is educator-directed collaboration time, though the building Guiding Coalition may choose to meet during that time as well. It should not be principal directed. Administration may still utilize their "60 minutes within an 8-hour workday" on these Wednesday's for a staff meeting (unless there's a MOU in place for them to occur on another day). Staff meetings should end no more than 60 minutes past the end of the student day, or hold the staff meeting after educators utilize the first two hours following the release. Please reach out to VEA if you need additional clarification. Please see the bargained language below.

"A two-hour early release Wednesday shall be scheduled once a quarter. The early release time shall be dedicated to educator-directed collaborative planning. Building-Level Guiding Coalitions may also choose to meet during this time."

Synergy – Proactive Grade Book Look

VEA met with district administration and the IT department leads to communicate the concerns voiced by members around the transition to Synergy. We learned that the district had to either run Skyward and Synergy simultaneously with double entries or cut the strings and go 100% with Synergy. There were more hiccups than anticipated but once the strings were cut, there was no going back. Taking a proactive approach, and with grade buckets opening soon, it is highly recommended to **preview the report card and reach out to your building DLCs or ITs if something doesn't look quite right!** Continue to communicate unresolved concerns with your building/constituency reps and VEA.

Teaching without a union?

Do you ever wonder what it would be like to individually negotiate your pay and working conditions? What would your work life look like without a union? Everything's Better when we're Together!

***Together we realized a substantial increase to base pay and supplemental work is paid at per diem.
2016-17 BA+0 \$35,700 Top pay \$67,288 plus TRI
2023-24 BA+0 \$54,471 Top pay \$102,671 plus TRI***

*Over the past two years we have received a 13.2% increase in salary (7.5 + 5.7%). Together we achieved this raise. We know this is only a start and educators deserve more. **We are Better Together!***

VEBA Yearly Vote Happening Now!

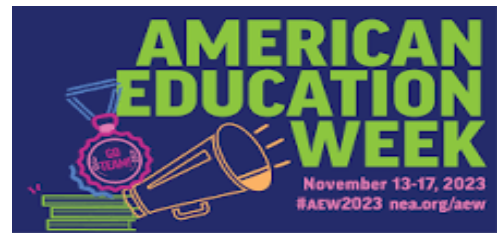
Your contract provides for the conversion of sick/emergency leave days into compensation. VEA members who are eligible to retire at the end of this school year have the opportunity to vote to receive the benefit for their unused sick leave via a VEBA account. Likewise members who have accumulated 180 days (1440 hours) of sick leave can elect to contribute additionally to their VEBA account with a yearly cash out of accumulated sick leave. A link to an electronic vote has been sent to these specific members identified by the district as qualifying for this vote. Votes due by noon on November 8th. An informational Zoom meeting is scheduled for 4:30 pm on November 7th with a VEBA rep to answer questions. Please [Register](#) in advance. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Hero Day - Snowvana Show



Snow is falling on Mt. Hood. The producer at Snowvana recognizes the work of an educator qualifies you for a Hero Day 2-for-1 discount on Sunday, November 5. Bring a

friend and show your District ID at the ticket box. Snowvana will be held at the Portland Expo Center November 3-5. More information can be found at www.snowvana.com



American Education Week Nov 13-17, 2023 is time set aside prior to November Break to celebrate our public school community. Across the country, schools will celebrate excellence in education by hosting daily activities. [The NEA provides ideas for celebrating](#) public education, the families we serve, our ESP staff, our colleagues, and substitute educators.

Get your Game On!

VEA has teamed up with the Portland Trailblazers for member access to games and Rose Quarter shows at the Moda Center at discounted rates.



Rip City Rewards – Use the PROMO code: **TBVEA** at <http://www.rosequarter.com/ripcityrewards> for savings on Trailblazer games and select Moda Center shows.

VEA Night at the Blazers – December 14th 7:00 pm – Trailblazers vs. Utah Jazz. All attendees will be entitled to exclusive savings and there's an exciting opportunity for you to step onto the court and test your skills with a free throw after the game concludes. For these tickets visit <http://www.rosequarter.com/groupnights> and use Promo Code **VEA23**. Note you can order as few as one ticket after registering. It appears at first that you need to order 10 tickets.

Winterhawks Discount Tickets

Back by popular demand, the VEA has teamed up with the Portland Winterhawks for discounted tickets (\$26 or less) all season long with [this link](#). Please see this [flier](#) that also includes a QR code for tickets.



The Winterhawks are hosting a "Kids Day" with 6,000 kiddos from around the area for the 2:00 pm game on January 15th activities, and educational events at that specific game.

NEA Auto/Home Insurance Carrier CHANGE



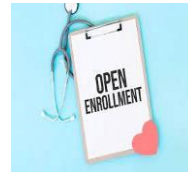
California Casualty is no longer the partner for NEA Auto Home Insurance and will not be renewing policies in Washington upon their respective expiration dates. Insurers will receive an official non-renewal letter in the mail prior to the expiration dates (some have already received the letter and email). NEA Member Benefits has a new partner, Travelers, that it is recommending for insurers' current coverage. To receive a quote, contact Travelers at 1-866-605-6045 or [visit NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program's web page](#) for more information as well as a FAQ.

The Rachel Royston Permanent Scholarship Foundation of Washington State Organization The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

VEA is happy to spread the good news about a scholarship opportunity for women educators available to members as well as non-members of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The Rachel Royston Permanent Scholarship Foundation was established over fifty years ago to grant awards to outstanding women educators for study towards an advanced degree or specialized area. Applicants must be women educators who are bona fide residents of the State of Washington who are pursuing post-baccalaureate degrees or advanced study at a nationally or regionally accredited college or university. The scholarship period is for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. The Rachel Royston Permanent Scholarship Foundation is a private non-profit Charitable Truste 501©(3) registered with the Washington State Secretary of State. Application deadline is Dec. 15, 2023.

An interactive on-line application is available at <http://www.dkgwa.org/royston-scholarship.html>

Open Enrollment – In-person Insurance Fair



Open enrollment for SEBB insurance begins October 30 and ends November 20. Changes to insurance coverage is effective January 1, 2024. Changes are posted on the [SEBB open enrollment website](#).

As a reminder, if you want to participate in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) for the 2024 plan year, you must re-enroll during the open enrollment period.

SEBB will host an in-person benefits fair at Clark College on November 1st from 4:00 – 7:00 pm. A [virtual benefits fair](#) and [webinars](#) are also offered.

November Noteables

November 1 – VEA Grievance Training provided to interested members and the Professional Rights & Responsibilities commission via Zoom.

November 2 – Member Engagement Planning after school at VEA

November 7 – Election Day. VEA announced WEAPAC endorsements for Brigid Taylor for Fire Commissioner and School Board candidates Tracie Barrows, Kyle Sproul, and Kathie Decker. Check out other WEAPAC endorsed candidates with this [personalized voters guide](#).

November 7 – VEBA Explanatory Meeting

November 8 – VEBA Balloting Due

November 8 – Listening Team Training for members participating in 1:1 conversations.

November 14 – VEA Advanced Rep Training

November 14 – NBCT Overview with WEA [Register online](#) (2 hours clock hours available)

November 28 – NBCT Standards and four components, basics on support options with WEA [Register online](#) (2 hours clock hours available)

Dec 5 – NBCT next steps and timelines with WEA [Register online](#) (2 hours clock hours available)



Red Flag Moments

There are moments in the life of an education employee that should cause concern and “raise red flags” before participating in a meeting with a building administrator or supervisor. *Many times school employees will acquiesce to questioning without association representation. That is NOT a wise decision.* The following list of phrases and situations commonly occur. When faced with the situation and phrases listed, members should take it as a silent signal that it is time to find the first available association representative. See the phraseology below:

- ✓ **You may need an association rep when** your administrator says, “I just want to talk to you for a minute.” And then...
 - * You walk into the office and a parent, and your administrator are seated on the same side of the table.
 - * There are two district administrators or even the Superintendent in the office to meet with you and they didn’t tell you what the meeting was about.
- ✓ **You may need an association rep when** an administrator starts getting “hot under the collar” with you and you’re alone.
- ✓ **You may need an association rep when** your administrator says, “I’ve had some parent complaints about you.”
- ✓ **You may need an association rep when** the administrator says, “I have some concerns we need to talk about.”
- ✓ **You may need an association rep when** your administrator says, “There are some rumors in the community about you that we need to discuss.”
- ✓ **You DEFINITELY NEED an association rep when** an administrator says, “Do you want an association/building rep?” ***THE ANSWER IS ALWAYS, “YES!”*** If an administrator is offering representation before

the meeting takes place, the member ***must*** take it as a clue that the meeting may lead to disciplinary action.

- ✓ **You DEFINITELY NEED an association rep when** your administrator uses the following words in the course of a meeting: ***discipline, termination, employment status, or negative evaluation.***
- ✓ Know your Weingarten Rights – An employee’s right to union representation.

What to say if management asks questions that could lead to discipline:

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

#UNIONSTRONG

Need a Rep? Check with your [building/constituency reps](#) first, then contact VEA!! A list of reps can be found on the VEA website (www.vancouverea.org) under the “About Us” tab.



Interested in Politics? WEA PoliSPARKS 2024

Contact VEA if you are a WEAPAC contributor who wants to learn more about political organizing and engagement to protect and strengthen public education and our union. This January 28-29 experience will include basic lobbying training & organizing tips and give you an opportunity to put those new skills into practice. You will interact with Olympia insiders and decision makers including legislators and a representative from OSPI. This is how we make change happen!

Become a WEAPAC contributor (or increase your contribution level – T-shirts and Gym bags are the new swag for upper tier contributions. <https://www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice/wea-pac/join-wea-pac/>

Classroom & School Based Practices that Promote Equitable Student Discipline Systems.

SAVE THE DATE - DEC 5

In this WEA course, participants explore and understand the new student discipline rules adopted by OSPI in July 2018. Participants will review the rationale for the new rules and the requirements the rules place on classroom-level educators. They will also problem-solve and review resources to support best practice implementation in the classroom in order to enhance student learning. Research has identified promising practices that promote equitable student discipline systems. Explore approaches to build systems of prevention and intervention where better outcomes for students can be achieved. Watch for registration information via the VPS PD Portal!

Making the Most of your NEA member benefits!

Welcome to MB; **How Much Can You Save?** Use the piggy bank to calculate how much you could save this year by using NEA MB programs. More info about NEA MB programs available at www.neamb.com/start



NEA Travel Program; Book hotels, cruises, resorts, car rentals, airfare and guided tours. Explore the program and claim your \$500 Travel Dollars. More info about NEA MB programs available at www.neamb.com/start



Sanvello is a new **Mental Health Program** offered through NEA. Sanvello is the #1 app for stress, anxiety and depression. Get supports to improve your mental health with clinically proven techniques based on cognitive behavioral therapy. Check it out www.neamb.com/neamentalhealth



Native American Heritage Month

November is designated as National Native American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. Estimates of the population of the Western Hemisphere prior to the arrival of Europeans range from 8 million to more than 100 million. Cultures were as varied as the stationary Mayas in the Yucatan and the nomadic Plains Indians in North America. We hope you consider highlighting the history, heritage, traditions, and contemporary way of life of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (AI/AN/NH) with students you serve.

- Share the connections our area has to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian heritage, history, and their way of life.
- Invite American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, or a local indigenous group to present about their culture, ancestral homeland, and contemporary way of life.
 - There are 573 federally recognized Indian Nations plus other tribes located throughout the United States who are recognized by their respective state governments.
- Consider connecting this theme with other events in November, including [Veterans Day](#).
- Share history and heritage of native people past and present.
- Consider using some [Honoring Tribal Legacies teachings](#) in your *classrooms*.

Here are some ways to celebrate here locally:

- Visit the [Museum of Natural and Cultural History](#).
- Support Native focused and founded organizations such as the [Native American Youth and family Center](#) (NAYA), and [Eloheh Indigenous Center for Earth Justice](#).

The VEA has established a practice to honor the land of the Chinook and Cowlitz People prior to each of our governance meetings. We are open to suggestions on improvements to this practice.

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