



Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

December 2023

VEA advocates for students and educators

The association sent the following press release after attempts through Labor Management and School Board communications objecting to the district's projected move to circumvent the IEP teams decisions and push self-contained students at the secondary level into select general education classes. The VEA simultaneously filed a formal grievance with the district on Monday, November 27th. The Columbian newspaper picked up on this story. VEA is calling on members and/or parents who have expressed concerns with this move to write editorials in response to [the Columbian's article](#). **Understanding reluctance to step forward in an administrative unit, the association will assist those wanting to remain anonymous by presenting your dialogue with the community and school board.**

Parents also have the right to a due process hearing regarding any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child or the provision of a FAPE to their child. To request a hearing, parents or the district must submit a due process request to the other party. That request must be kept confidential and if the parent is the filing party, a copy to OSPI's Administrative Resource Services at Old Capital Building P O Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200 or email appeals@k12.wa.us. Required information include student's name, address, school, a description of the problem including related facts, and a proposed resolution to the extent known.

Teachers' Union Challenges Violation of Students' Rights to Stable, Supportive Learning Environments

Vancouver, WA – Today, the Vancouver Education Association (VEA) took action aimed at ensuring Special Education students continue to get the support and stability they need and that they are guaranteed under Federal law. Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) recently revealed plans to push all middle and high school Special Education students into general education classrooms for science and social studies at the start of the second semester on January 30. Many of these students currently receive instruction in a "self-contained" classroom environment as required by their federal Individualized Education Programs.

The union filed a grievance today to challenge this move by VPS which violates the collective bargaining agreement, its own Board's policies, and various state and federal laws.

"There are so many problems with this, it's hard to know where to start," said Jamie Anderson, VEA President. "These students are going to be joining entirely new classes halfway through the year, which is a challenge for any student. General education and special education teachers are scrambling to figure out how to ensure that these students still get the individualized education they are entitled to under federal law and aren't being set up for failure."

Ms. Anderson emailed all VPS School Board Directors last week alerting them to the directive and cautioning that "Unilaterally changing IEPs is not equity for students, staff, or families. Inclusion is important, and worthy of the investment it takes in resources and staffing. Trying to implement it unilaterally, without these supports, or regard for individual student needs, will ultimately cost our students and the district much more." At this time, board members have not responded.

"It's the students who will suffer the most," Ms. Anderson said. "We're optimistic that the School Board will do the right thing, but we are also exploring remedies available under state and federal law in case we need to go there."

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DATE CHANGED!!!

Classroom & School Based Practices that Promote Equitable Student Discipline Systems

December 13

4:30-6:30

District course 9526 is now open!!

Originally anticipated for Dec 5, this course will help members understand the student discipline rules adopted by OSPI. Review resources to support best practice implementation in the classroom including policies and procedures to support student behavior and supporting students through a prevention based framework.

Regional Affinity Group Opportunities

Racial affinity groups are intentional spaces where we can be safe enough to be vulnerable, challenged, and supported as we share our racial inequity experiences. We can then transfer that discussion into actions that allow for growth, healing and individual and collective liberation.

VPS in partnership with ESD 112 and Evergreen Public Schools offers an ongoing forum for investigating and transforming our “individual” and “collective” racial conditioning, while also increasing staff connectedness within our region. Please register through PD Enroller: [Affinity Group Sessions \(2023-24\) \(pdenroller.org\)](http://pdenroller.org)

Working with the Live Wire of Oppression Now offered on January 11th

If you're working to dismantle systems of oppression, you're working with trauma. The more you know about trauma, the more effective, sustainable, and authentic your anti-oppression efforts will be.

VEA has purchased a group ticket for this 90-minute virtual workshop at Roosevelt in the media center. The original date 11/30 was cancelled due to an unforeseen issue with the presenter and is rescheduled for January 11. Food will be provided at 5:45 and the workshop runs from 6:00-7:30 pm with a debrief to follow. We hope you will join us! Please [RSVP](#) /again if you signed up for 11/30.



CRCM Course Offerings



WEA is offering Culturally Responsive Classroom management course offerings as a member benefit. Earn clock hours that count towards certificate requirements. Check out the [Course catalogue](#) for these upcoming courses. Classroom communities on December 7 and 14

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. This offer has been extended through December 11. Get your tickets now!

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.



SPARKS!



Are you a member with 0-10 years of overall teaching experience? SPARKS is a high energy, interactive experience aimed at VEA's newest members. Facilitated by SPARKS graduates, SPARKS provides an opportunity to engage and learn techniques for your classroom, engage with the association, and gain deeper insights on your profession. SPARKS is held at the Best Western Ocean View in Seaside, Oregon March 1-3. Applications will be sent to members in this demographic via the interoffice mail. Please see your building rep or contact VEA for more information.

VEBA Yearly Vote Ready to Certify

The Rep Council will formally certify the results of the VEBA vote at their meeting on Monday, December 4th. The VEA elections committee and Executive Board have validated the election where both initiatives passed by an overwhelming majority. 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 via Zoom on November 7th. Members who were eligible to vote included those who will have accumulated 180 days of sick leave as of January 1, 2024, and/or those who are eligible to retire per the district. Letters and links to ballots were sent to those eligible to vote via home email.

NEA Future of Assessment initiative

Transforming assessment systems to be student-centered requires that educators have the professional autonomy, knowledge, and skills to use a variety of measures to assess student growth accurately. Fulfilling [NEA's principles for the future of assessments](#) will reconceptualize how we assess and secure a more just learning environment for each and every student across our classrooms, districts, and beyond. VEA president Jamie Anderson will be attending a meeting on December 1st to learn more about how our voice can help shape the future. VEA has been asked to identify a local lead. **Contact VEA if you are interested in taking on that role.**

Bargaining Prep is well on its way



VEA leaders are visiting select sites and listening to members in one-on-one conversations to gain insights for the upcoming bargain. All members will have an opportunity to provide input via a comprehensive bargaining survey. Watch for the survey to launch prior to winter break. Constituency group listening sessions will be scheduled in January. Your voice matters!

Stay on the Nice List Letters

VEA would like to assist in sending a personalized greeting to all who celebrate special days in December, and to encourage kids both big and small to stay on the Nice List! You can help by identifying a recipient and up to four ways to encourage these attributes by December 13th on this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M2G6CZP>

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 **2024 VEA Executive Board** begins with open nominations at the January 8th Rep Council meeting. The VEA positions of *2nd VP - Labor Relations, 4th VP – Equity Affairs, Recording Secretary, Intermediate Trustee, Middle School Trustee, *ESA/TOSA Trustee will be filled in this election. (*Pending Rep Council approval 12/4)

Is there a smaller way to get involved?

Yes! 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** (Spokane – April 11-13) and the **NEA Rep Assembly** (July 3-7). in Philadelphia, PA. Expenses are paid by the association. .

Nominations will close at the February 5th Rep Council meeting. Contact cbrown@washingtonea.org for a candidate form.

December is Human Rights Month

(Wikipedia)

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** is an international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that enshrines the rights and freedoms of all human beings. It was accepted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

December 10, the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration, is celebrated annually as World Human Rights Day or International Human Rights Day. The commemoration is observed by individuals, community and religious groups, human rights organizations, parliaments, governments, and the United Nations.

Please consider [this United Nations resource](#) as well as a NEA resource with [11 Children's Books About Human Rights](#) from Lee & Low.

VEA Member Benefits



Dash through all the savings this holiday season with exciting discounts and benefits designed for you and your family! First things first! Every member should do these **THREE** things ASAP:

- 1) Visit www.neamb.com/connect This is the gateway to your Association benefits.
- 2) Click the BLUE "Register Now" link so you'll be recognized to receive special discounts and important benefits information.
- 3) Name your beneficiary for your no-cost, Complimentary Life Insurance: Click the "register Your Beneficiary" button. Don't leave a benefit unclaimed.

Rudolf leads the way to **earning cash back** on all your holiday purchases using the **NEA Discount Marketplace!** In addition to finding deals from your favorite retailers, there are five exclusive member offers each month with even MORE cash back. Check out **Discount Tickets, Travel, Magazine Service, Costco, Auto Buying Program** (new and used vehicles online with \$2000 post-sale benefits), **Easy Pay shopping more than 27, 000 discounted products** buy now pay later no credit check, interest, or fees.

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.



Freedom Foundation Warning



Like the unwanted fruitcake this time of year, we expect to hear from the Freedom Foundation this season in their annual attempt to thwart and weaken our ability to stand up for students and public education. Anti-union factions such as the Freedom Foundation and Choice for Teachers have tried mailers, email, leafletting, and other means to coerce members into dropping their membership. Don't be duped! They lobby to weaken our collective bargaining rights and are funded by out-of-state interests. Contact VEA immediately for follow-up actions by the Association if you receive any communications asking you to change your membership status.

Our collective voice achieves powerful results for our students and ourselves. With a strong, united membership, we have the power to improve and protect our rights and economic security, and to fight for the best interests of our students.



Calendar Waiver MOU

The VEA Executive Board reviewed a nearly final draft of the Calendar Waiver MOU. Following leadership input, the association has received a positive response from the district to our latest proposal. We hope to have this wrapped up and shared with the membership before leaving for winter break.

Unpaid Leave Membership Options

Occasionally members find themselves in an unpaid leave of absence situation. What happens to membership during this time? Once a member falls out of active membership (working your base contract and paying dues), their membership falls into an unpaid "non-member" status as they are no longer "actively working". Upon return to work, your membership renews automatically.

Reserve membership is an option if you would like to retain benefits provided through the NEA (Life insurance, etc) and WEA (Professional development), during this leave period. It does not include liability coverage as you are "not actively working". Reserve dues are paid using the WEA web page and a credit card. There is no local option for reserve membership.

For some special educators who continue working clinical hours and performing TRI duties, liability coverage and VEA assistance may be desired. This is a "somewhat" active role and members may pay dues at the lowest rate (<.25 FTE) to maintain an active class. Dues are paid via check or credit card to VEA for the anticipated months no longer working a base contract.

A recap of the three options while on an unpaid leave:

- 1) Do nothing, pay no dues, and be a non-member with a gap in membership.
- 2) Become a reserve member (WEA and NEA only) to preserve NEA member benefits and access to PD. Join as a reserve member via the WEA website and pay with credit card.
- 3) Contact VEA for the lowest available FTE rate if working TRI duties/clinical hours.

2509 Broadway -- Vancouver, WA 98663 * Phone 360-695-3397 -- FAX 360-694-8337
Jamie Anderson, President * Graham Picklesimer, Executive Director * Cindy Brown, Admin. Assistant
*Sandy Kokko, WEA-Retired Liaison. * www.vancouverea.org * Facebook: Vancouver EA