



## When is enough, enough?

The VEA Bargaining Team has made it clear that, during the time of a budget cut, VPS needs to work with the Association to identify ways to honor educator workloads at a time when our members are being asked to do more with even less. Our members need time to do their jobs and it is up to the District to take real action in showing that they value our members as the professionals we know they are.



## What’s been happening so far?

Tentative agreements have been signed which capture mostly editorial updates to several articles. There are several proposals still on the table focused on changes to entire chapters, including updates to: Chapter 1 (General Provisions of Agreement), Chapter 3 (Association Rights, Prerogatives, and Responsibilities), Chapter 5 (Grievance Processing Procedures), Chapter 7 (Professional Placement), Chapter 9 (Employee Rights, Prerogatives, and Responsibilities), and Chapter 10 (General Conditions of Employment including class size) – we are asking for the most substantive changes in Chapter 7 and 10. Proposals related to Salary, TRI responsibilities, PD funds, and Chapter 14 (Layoff, Leave, and Recall) also remain on the table.

## VEA is Bargaining for Equity

Amongst the remaining proposals are several articles to focus on how our contract can (and should) reflect equitable practices for our members and our students. Some of the ways your VEA bargaining team is seeking equity-centered contract improvements include:



- A preamble to anchor the importance of equity in our contract and in education
- Reassignment/retention language
- Requiring that all members have the basic right to a safe, discrimination free workplace
- Class sizes that support **all** learners - with special considerations for those at Title 1 schools
- Recognition that our members’ vastly different job roles have unique workload impacts

If you haven’t already, you should soon receive a “VEA Member Pledge” card (pictured above) from a building rep or equity lead – your decision to sign is a demonstration that our membership is united for a contract that values equity for our members and the students we serve.



## When it rains, it pours - Special Education & ESA Bargaining Priorities

Starting well in advance of this bargaining session – after the end of our last full bargain - VEA has been seeking ways to make improvements to the working conditions of our Special Educator and ESA members. Many of these changes have been incremental and not broadly felt – bargaining is a two-way street, we can ask for the moon and sometimes we only get a pebble. Those pebbles can eventually add up. The job roles in Special Services categories are panoramic in scope and necessitate unique solutions to current and future impacts on our members’ working conditions. Some ways that we are looking to improve the realities of being under the Special Services umbrella include: increased time to do case management duties, time to provide direct services to students, reasonable caseloads, compensation for demands beyond base salary and TRI duties, and clerical support to alleviate the work on member’s plates. Prior to sharing our Special Services proposal with the District team on Tuesday, VEA shared the proposal language with our Special Services

“taskforce” for feedback to make sure we are representing all of our Special Education and ESA member groups at the table.

VEA leadership is just as frustrated as our members that VPS is pushing onward with wholesale changes to the service delivery model for students receiving Special Education services in the middle of an open bargain AND a massive budget crisis. VEA Bargaining Chair, Amy Spofford, asserted at the table that now is not the time to make these drastic changes when the District does not have the funding to support what our educators and students need NOW.

VEA will continue to advocate around the workload impacts related to these changes in order to secure the strongest protections we can for our members and our students. We need **your** help to communicate these concerns to District leadership and our community members – now is the time to stand up and use our collective voice to become loud enough that the District can’t ignore our members’ needs any longer.

## Upcoming Bargaining Dates

May 7, 14, 21, 28

*Remember to wear RED on Tuesdays!*



**VEA Bargaining Team members:** Amy Spofford (chair), Sunny Selders (Intermediate Elementary) Keith Lloyd (Middle School), Charlotte Lartey (Specialist), Andrew Wicklas (High School), Kiera O’Brien (At-Large), Jamie Anderson (President), and Graham Picklesimer (Executive Director).

**VPS Bargaining Team members:** Jeff Fish (Director of HR), Brett Blechschmidt (Chief Operating Officer), Jami Phelps (Director of Special Education), Heath Angelbeck (Principal – Salmon Creek), Allison Watson (Assoc. Principal – Skyview), Jim Gray (Director of High Schools & Safety).

**Make sure VEA has your non-school contact information for sharing bargaining information!** Send any changes to your home email to [cbrown@washingtonea.org](mailto:cbrown@washingtonea.org)

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