

VEA *Action Line*

Vancouver Education Association

January 2025



A New Year – New Opportunities

As we look to a new year with a fresh start, the status quo will only change if we work TOGETHER, to do everything possible to ensure that the change is POSITIVE for our members and the students we serve. More than ever, your participation as a member is imperative. We know you are already working through unraveling threads and asking for “one more thing” may seem insurmountable at times. What we can accomplish as a group of over 1400 members is much more powerful than an individual can accomplish alone.

District Budget Forecast Uncertainties – Now is the time to share your realities. As was communicated in the December Action Line, the legislative funding picture looks pretty dismal with revenue forecasts trending down and the Governor’s proposed budget lacking the supports we need most. It also proposes a pause in the NBCT stipend. VEA is sending a team to Olympia to lobby for funding and express the needs of our members and the students we serve. However, the idea that the legislature will send us a financial lifeboat has no better odds than winning the lottery. In addition, the district’s budget still is not looking super healthy either. We expect the District to reveal their financial recommendations to the School Board in the very near future.

We know the 170 FTE in cuts to the VEA bargaining unit had a huge impact on our reality serving students this year. While many of our members were recalled, our entire bargaining unit took a huge hit; with Secondary impacts hitting especially hard. Overload cost projections for the year are nearing \$3 million. Educators are doing everything they can to dig deeper and serve all students to the best of their abilities – but these working conditions are not sustainable! VEA has ongoing communications with our School Board and we urge individual members to express your realities directly as well. What areas do you see that could be considered for reductions? How did the 2024 budget cuts affect you and the services to students? Are you willing to speak at a School Board meeting? Now is the time!

Self-Care – Employee Assistance

Self- Help Programs, Workplace concerns, Mental Health and Emotional Issues, Counseling services and more are available to you through the Employee Assistance programs. Public education is a tough job and we all need support at times. We all want a safe and productive learning environment for everyone in the school system. Deer Oaks EAP services is the current EAP provider for all employees and their dependents. This benefit covers 6 confidential short-term counseling visits and is at no cost to employees and their families. Contact Deer Oaks at 1-888-993-7650. Their online access is www.deeroakseap.com - password is **vansd**. Resources can also be accessed via iConnectYou app (code: **221967**) or email at eap@deeroaks.com

Collaborative Planning Wednesdays

12.16A

“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.” Any deviation from this plan such as PD offerings shall be at the discretion of the educator with no expectation around content provided during this time.

Semester Break Day - January 27

There is NO change in intent or use of the semester break day on January 27th unless we have a snow event, in which case this day would be utilized as a snow make up day. Elementary staff have this day off. Semester based educators may utilize January 27th to prepare for the new term on or off-site as is appropriate. There should not be any requirements, schedules, or expectations imposed on staff on this day.

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 and experts in the field, SPARKS provides an opportunity to engage and learn techniques for your classroom/field, engage with the association, and gain deeper insights on your profession. SPARKS is held at the Best Western Ocean View in Seaside, Oregon March 7-9. Applications were sent via interoffice mail to members in this demographic. Applications are due to VEA by January 10th.

Please see your building rep or contact VEA for more information.

Administrative Unit Placement Survey

Article 7.4Ciii.

Employees in administrative units will be surveyed each spring to determine the employee’s placement preferences for the upcoming school year. Survey results will be considered by the supervisor of the administrative unit in determining placements for the following year.

Normally, an employee who prefers to remain in their current position assignment should remain in it from year to year unless the needs of students or the District change.

Interrupting and Disrupting Bias Offered on January 11th

Interrupting and Disrupting Bias participants will learn and share various moments of discrimination in the learning and workplace environment, and how they affect students and colleagues within their cultural

identities and create a skillset to intervene. Participants will recognize the presence of similarities and differences within a given setting, collective, or group based on multiple factors including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, age, educational status, religion, geography, primary language, culture, and other characteristics and experiences, and how disrupt the biases related to them. This will provide a more inclusive learning environment through removing barriers and improve greater participation. In skill building interruptions participants learn to build a safe environment for students and staff.

Register at <https://wea-win.org/events/470>

Professional Development Opportunity **VEA**
Washington Education Association

INTERRUPTING & DISRUPTING BIAS

Saturday,
January 11, 2025
9 AM - 12 PM
Umpqua Community Room
303 S. 9th Street
Vancouver, WA 98602

WEA Facilitator:
Randy Paddeck
WEA Equity & Diversity
Coordinator

REGISTER NOW!!

<https://wea-win.org/events/470>

In this training, you will:

- Learn about your own and others' cultural identities, and how discrimination occurs in both learning and workplace environments.
- Practice identifying situations and individuals in the professional setting, whether by calling it or calling out.
- Learn how to create and sustain a safe learning and working environment that respects barriers and fosters a more inclusive setting for students and colleagues.

Open to VEA and WAFD members.
*All members may sign through using their VEA ID number.

Questions? Contact Cindy Brown at the VEA Office (509)686-5397 or c.brown@wash.ngtnea.org



VEA Bylaws Updates Considered

The VEA Blue Book (bylaws and operating rules) committee, Executive Board, and Representative Council are recommending membership adoption of these [bylaws changes](#). The membership vote will take place concurrent with the upcoming leadership elections. Members will vote separately on individual amendments.



The actual language changes are included in the link and QR code above. Rationale behind these proposed amendments include:

Amendment 1 - Eliminate references to "component units" and other provisions that contemplate the possibility of VEA taking on bargaining units in other districts.

Affected Articles

- Article II, Sections 1-4 & 8, Article III, Article IV, Sections 2.A, 3.B, 3.C, Article V, Title & Sections 1-5, 10-11, & 13.E, Article VII, Sections 1, 2, 3.A, 3.C, 4, & 4.B, Article IX, Article XI, Sections 1, 11.B, & 12.A, Article XII, Section 2, Article XIV, Article XVI, Sections 2 & 2.A, Article XVII, Section 1

Rationale: This language is a remnant from a time when the Deaf/Blind schools were part of VEA, they were two "component units" while the unit of VSD employees was the 'main' "component unit." Since the Deaf/Blind schools are no longer with VEA (as of about 2002) and there are no other obvious organizing targets for VEA, this language has outlived its usefulness. Adding a component unit would necessitate various changes to the bylaws anyway; in the very unlikely event this did happen in the future, any necessary provisions could be updated or reinserted.

Amendment 2 - Edit for gender neutrality

Affected Articles

- Article II, Section 4, Article IV, Section 3.E, Article VI, Section 4, Article VII, Sections 3.C, .E, & 4.F, Article VIII, Article XII, Section 3

- Rationale: There are a number of "his/her" references throughout the Bylaws, the purpose is to avoid gendered language.

Amendment 3 - Explicitly refer to WEA and NEA as the state/national affiliates of VEA, Inc.

Affected Articles

- Article II, Section 8, Article IV, Section C.3, Article XIV

Rationale: There are a number of tortured provisions in the Bylaws that refer to WEA and NEA in indirect terms (e.g., "organizations VEA chooses to affiliate with"). It may have once made sense to be non-explicit about this when it was conceivable that VEA would bring on a "component unit" that might reasonably have needed a different state or national affiliate than WEA or NEA. With no need for "component unit" language, these references are obsolete. In addition: the threshold for changing affiliates under the current Article XIV is the same as the threshold for amending the Bylaws themselves (2/3 vote of all members casting ballots), so this change does not make it any more or less difficult to change state/national affiliates.

Amendment 4 - Modernize anti-discrimination language

Affected Articles

- Article IV, Section 2.B

Rationale: There are more protected classes than there were the last time this language was updated. This matches current CBA language (not that it *needs* to, but that language was developed with care, so we're reusing the work here).

Amendment 5 - Editing/removing qualifications for extending or revoking membership that may pose "Duty of Fair Representation" problems

Affected Articles

- Article IV, Sections 2.C.1, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, Article VIII

Rationale: Language that makes failure to follow a "code of ethics" grounds for expulsion from the union is problematic on representational grounds. The union is supposed to defend members from allegations, or at the very least ensure that they receive due process. If an employee is accused of violating the code of ethics and is placed under OSPI investigation as a result,

expelling them from the union would give the appearance of denying them access to WEA Legal Services when they otherwise would have been eligible for it. If an employee is found to have seriously violated the Code of Ethics, they will be sanctioned by OSPI and will likely no longer be eligible to teach anyway. There is simply no need for such provisions. Note: Article VIII retains the ability to remove officers for “malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office” following appropriate due process. These changes would not prevent, for example, a treasurer who steals money from being removed from office.

Amendment 6 - Remove outdated references to administrators as VEA members

Affected Articles

- Article IV, Section 3.G

Rationale: At some point, it seems administrators were able to be VEA members. That is no longer the case.

Amendment 7 – Clarifying state/national affiliate services, dues structure, and limits

Affected Articles

- Article XI, Sections 2-3

Rationale: The current Section 3 language is an unnecessary restatement of VEA’s authority to provide services to members in the absence of an effective state or national affiliation to provide them. This goes without saying. The first purpose of these amendments is to remove this unnecessary verbiage. The second purpose is to clarify the dues structure of VEA and state/national affiliates. Current language is not explicit about who VEA’s state and national affiliates are (see Amendment 3) and consequently is not clear about which dues VEA does and does not control. In practice, VEA does not set dues for WEA and NEA. VEA only controls VEA dues. These amendments make clear how dues are set and which dues are subject to which limits. The intent is to develop a Standing Rule (see Article XVI, Section 2 for the process of adopting/amending Standing Rules) for consideration that more precisely defines exactly what the dues are once the fates of the proposed Bylaw amendments are determined.

Amendment 8 – Removing language governing process of voluntary revocation of membership
Affected Articles

- Article XI, Section 6

Rationale: Following the Supreme Court’s 2018 *Janus* decision, public sector union employees have much broader authority to revoke their union membership. To ensure that local unions don’t run afoul of the legal standards stated and implied in *Janus*, the WEA Legal department has set up a specific process to follow when members seek to revoke their union membership. Current language in Article XI, Section 6 of the Bylaws does not reflect this process, and since the process is no longer governed by VEA, the VEA Bylaws should not attempt to govern it. The proposed amendment would remove Article XI, Section 6 in its entirety. The intent is to develop a Standing Rule for consideration that outlines the process for revocation of membership which could be easily updated if future developments necessitate change.

Amendment 9 - Updating Parliamentary Authority
Affected Articles

- Article XV, Section 1

Rationale: The last parliamentary procedure manual containing Sturgis’s name was published in 2001, its successor is simply known as the *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*.

Get your Game On!

Rip City Rewards – Discount on ALL home games and select events like Disney on Ice at the Rose Quarter this season.

www.rosequarter.com/ripcityrewards **Promo Code: TBVEA.** Please note that the offer may change throughout the year, but the initial deal includes at least a 10% discount on ALL home games this season!

VEA’s 2nd Night at the Blazers This special group night is scheduled for January 30th. Visit: Rosequarter.com/groupnights Promo code: VEA2025. Order deadline is January 27.



Equity Focus - Resources

January is National Braille Literacy Month

The VEA Equity Team encourages you to [learn more about Braille](#) at the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Lesson plans, activity ideas and other resources to help students put in perspective MLK's life, impact on the Civil Rights Movement, and his significance to American culture and history from our [NEA Resources](#).

VEA Leadership Nominations opened at the January 6th Rep Council meeting!

2025 VEA Executive Board. The VEA positions of President, 1st VP, 3rd VP Member Engagement, Treasurer, Primary Trustee, and HS Trustee positions will be filled in this election.

VEA delegates to the WEA Rep Assembly (This one-time event is held in Spokane – April 25-27). VEA covers release, travel, hotel, and meals.

VEA Delegates to the NEA Rep Assembly (This one-time event is held July 3-7 in Portland, OR. Expenses are paid by the association.

Nominations will close at the February 3rd Rep Council meeting. Contact cbrown@washingtonea.org for a candidate form.

The Legislative Session begins Jan 13

Much of our realities in public education are determined legislatively. Thank you to 64% of our members who are already contributing to WEAPAC, our funding source for candidate endorsements and lobbying issues that affect us and the students we serve.

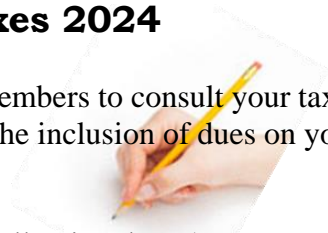
Monthly contributors can sign up or increase payroll deduction with this [WEAPAC E join link](#)



Please consider contributing a one-time WEAPAC donation via credit card, even if you're already a monthly contributor. [Contribute HERE](#)

Dues and Taxes 2024

VEA encourages members to consult your tax professional about the inclusion of dues on your 2024 taxes.



Members paid the following dues (NEA, WEA, VEA) in 2024:

0.76-1.0 FTE	\$1300.72
0.51-0.75 FTE	\$1034.00
0.26-0.50 FTE	\$ 673.80
0.25 or less	\$ 360.80

This figure is calculated using the 2023-24 rate for 8 months (Jan-Aug) and the 2024-25 rate for 4 months (Sept-Dec). If you did not work the full year, or changed FTE during 2024, you can calculate your dues using the monthly figures as follows:

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2023-24</u>
0.76-1.0 FTE	\$112.84	106.17
0.51-0.75 FTE	\$89.58	84.46
0.26-0.50 FTE	\$58.37	55.04
0.25 or less	\$31.20	29.50



**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Check out WEA-WIN for a list of offerings and registration links for WEA courses. Remember VEA negotiated that members may pay themselves to attend all WEA courses with available individual PD funds. Members have access to these events through <https://wea-win.org>



Annual Sick Leave Buyback

Annual Sick Leave Buyback requests are processed by the district in February. In order to participate in the program, you must have a minimum of 480 hours of sick leave accumulated in 2024 and you must submit a request form by January 31, 2025. This is a firm date set by Washington State law. Search VERN for "Application for unused Sick Leave."

Taking Charge of Your Retirement Future

The WEA-Retired seminar team for Vancouver UniServ Council is offering its pre-retirement seminar via Zoom this spring. There will be three sessions covering a variety of topics important to your retirement plans. The sessions are independent of one another so they can be taken in any order. The registration form can be found on the VEA website under [News Flash](#)

WEA Scholarships

WEA-Retired is again offering up to ten (10) \$1000 scholarships to aid WEA members in 1) enhancing skills for their current position, 2) obtaining an endorsement in a new area or 3) attaining or maintaining a teaching certificate. For more information contact Linda McGee at mcgee4748@gmail.com The [application form](#) is due no later than March 7, 2025.



VEA PAINT & SIP
Join us to sip on a tasty beverage as we learn to paint a beautiful winter landscape.

All supplies & instruction provided

1st beverage & snacks hosted by VEA

Limited seats available

For VEA members only (no guests at this event)

14 Acres Winery
2411 NE 244th St
Ridgefield, WA 98642

Friday, January 31

4:30 check-in
5:00 - 7:00 paint

\$20 per ticket
RSVP & pre-payment required to reserve spot (cash, check, Square)

RSVP using link or QR code:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/DSP9RG7

The poster features a central illustration of a winter landscape painting on an easel, surrounded by various colored markers and a QR code. The background is a light blue sky with a green and yellow brushstroke at the top.

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