



2026 Interim Bargain Kicks off!



Thank you to the 623 members who took time to complete the bargaining survey! Your bargaining team met on Tuesday to diligently analyze the results and comments to develop our bargaining blueprint in preparation for the start of negotiations with the district next month. The top areas of concern for members who responded to the survey include:

- Student discipline
- Professional placement (transfers, staffing assignments, etc.)
- Staff and student safety

All survey responses and comments provide great background and testimony to member needs and help the bargaining team develop proposals and negotiate for updated contract language.

What’s next?

The bargaining team will meet again later this month to draft initial proposals before beginning negotiations with the district team in early February. Your VEA team will bring 3 proposals and the district team will bring up to 3 proposals as well. These proposals must not have a significant financial impact. As outlined in Article 1.4 of our contract, the two teams will also negotiate salary in this bargain (currently listed in the contract as IPD (“implicit price deflator”) + TBD%).

The Stages of Collective Bargaining

- 1) **Preparation:** Our bargaining team surveys VEA members to help establish the priorities for bargaining. The team then meets to review survey results and begins drafting proposal language.
- 2) **Conducting Negotiations:** The District and VEA bargaining teams meet to exchange proposal language and discuss the rationale of proposals, until both sides reach a “tentative agreement” on all outstanding proposals.
- 3) **Ratification:** Once the VEA bargaining team receives what they determine to be the “last, best offer” they present that language with a “do pass” or “do not pass” recommendation to the VEA Executive Board. The Executive Board agrees to send it to the general membership for a ratification vote with the “do pass” or “do not pass” recommendation and establishes the time/place/format for a general member meeting and presents the tentative agreement language to members for review. Members then vote on the total package, which must pass with a 50%+1 “yes” vote to be ratified.

Because we are limited in the number of proposals we can bring forward, the bargaining team must be strategic in choosing which issues to advance this year. Issues that are not advanced this year will likely be advanced in full book negotiations in spring 2027. It’s also important to remember that just because we ask for something doesn’t mean that the District will agree to our terms. While we don’t always get everything we ask for, every proposal is grounded in advocating for better working and learning conditions. Our membership serves students with very different needs – but those differences are always part of our advocacy.

The bargaining team remains committed to representing all members. When progress is made, we build on it; when it isn’t, we return to the table with stronger data and clearer arguments. By staying united, we continue to push for meaningful improvements for educators and students alike. #BetterTogether

Stay informed!

In addition to bargaining updates periodically sent to your personal email, you can also follow VEA on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

VEA Bargaining Team members

Amy Spofford (Bargaining chair/Special Education), Sunny Selders (Intermediate Elementary) Erin Pendergast (Middle School), Jeni McAnally (High School), Charlotte Lartey (At-Large), Karina Mattson (At-Large/*Specialist), *Shannon McClelland (Primary), *Brit Behrendt (At-Large). Supported by Jamie Anderson (VEA President) and Graham Picklesimer (VEA Executive Director).

*To be confirmed.



Make sure VEA has your non-school contact information for sharing bargaining information! Send any changes to your home email to cbrown@washingtonea.org