



# Action Line

Vancouver Education Association

January 2026

## Happy New Year!



We trust that you experienced a restful break and found some opportunities for self-renewal. As we look to a new year as a fresh start, we know that this year is already headed for the uphill climb. Please note that I did not say it was an impossible climb. Along with our colleagues around the state, we are once again a facing budget shortfall in VPS, estimated at \$20 million. We have received reports that ICE officers are patrolling our school neighborhoods. You care deeply about your students and want them to feel safe at school. Programs and supports that we count on may not be available. The list goes on... You do the hard things every day.

More than ever, your participation as a member is imperative. What we can accomplish as a group of over 1400 members is much more powerful than an individual can accomplish alone.

**Interim Bargaining Survey.** January is crunch time to secure our focus for the interim bargain where each party can propose up to three non-monetary items. Even though the interim bargain does not contain any monetary considerations, improvements to your working conditions or process and procedures can be clarified. Our bargaining survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete and **will close on January 9<sup>th</sup> at noon.**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BKXJNDM> or use the QR code to the right...



This information will shape the topics and direction that our team will take to the bargaining table in February.

The 2026 bargaining team is: Amy Spofford (Special Education), Sunny Selders (Intermediate), Jeni McAnally (High School), Erin Pendergast (Middle School), Charlotte Lartey (at-Large), and Karina Mattson (at-Large). President Jamie Anderson and Director Graham Picklesimer will assist the team at the table. We still seek Primary and Specialist voices.

**Legislative Priorities.** We are not alone in our struggle to finance the preK-12 program in Vancouver. The WEA along other unions and non-profit organizations such as Invest in Washington Now have advocated for a progressive revenue source to address the multi-billion dollar budget gap at the state level. In addition, Federal changes have cut off Medicaid and food assistance for some Washingtonians putting pressure on the state to increase funding to maintain important social safety net programs. The Governor recently released a budget that does not include any new tax sources but does increase revenues by closing a few tax breaks that benefit a small number of larger corporations. He also indicated support for a millionaire's tax if passed by the legislature, and indicated using those resources (not received until 2029) to address affordability issues and bolster K-12 learning experiences.



The legislative session begins on January 12<sup>th</sup>. For members without semester break responsibilities, VEA encourages participation at a rally in Olympia at noon on January 26 and will assist with mileage (per our carpooling policy) and lunch for participants! Sign up here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L7DMXPV>

## PAC – A collective power

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](#)



## Self-Care –Employee Assistance

Don't forget that members are provided free confidential counseling sessions for help with mental and emotional stress, personal/family stresses, job difficulties and burn-out.

Deer Oaks has changed its name to “AllOne Health”. Contact them at 1-888-993-7650 or [www.allonehealth.com/deeroaks](http://www.allonehealth.com/deeroaks)

NEA Member benefits also offers a Mental Health program including webinars for anxiety and a free app “Sanvello” [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com)

## 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 or another emergent crisis, 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.

**NOTE: Make up days will be in the following order: March 13** (power outage make up), **April 24, January 26 and June 15**

**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](http://www.rosequarter.com/ripcityrewards)

**Promo Code: TBVEA.** Please note that the offer may change throughout the year.



**VEA Night at the Blazers** VEA members and their friends and family are invited to a fun night of basketball and entertainment on **March 13, 2026**. Get discounted tickets and early entry to this 7 pm game vs. Utah Jazz. Enjoy NBA basketball and the Celebration of Women's History Night festivities at the Moda Center. Visit: [Rosequarter.com/events/group-tickets](http://Rosequarter.com/events/group-tickets) Promo code: VEA25. Order deadline is February 16.



## Teacher Appreciation Night with the Mariners

May 29, 2026 game vs Arizona Diamondbacks. Get your Teacher appreciation Jerseys (while supplies last) during the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.

<https://www.mlb.com/mariners/tickets/specials/teacher-appreciation>.



## SPARKS!



Members with 0-10 years of experience (and those who applied and were unable to attend last year) received an invitation in their interoffice mail to apply for our SPARKS program.

The experience is FREE! VEA will cover the costs – food – mileage – lodging\* as well as top-notch professional development. SPARKS provides an opportunity to engage with other educators while you develop techniques for engaging with students and colleagues (Yes! This is for ESAs too!), learn more about your Union membership and gain deeper insights on your profession. Lodging\* Contact VEA for consideration for a single room.



Applications are due by January 14th!



\*Contact VEA for single room considerations

## VEA Leadership Nominations opened at the January 5<sup>th</sup> Rep Council meeting!

**2025-26 VEA Executive Board.** The VEA Executive Board positions: 2nd VP Labor Relations, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP Member Engagement, 4<sup>th</sup> VP Equity, Recording Secretary, Special Ed Trustee, and Specialist Educator Trustee.

**VEA delegates to the WEA Rep Assembly** (This one-time event is held in Spokane – April 9-11). VEA covers release, travel, hotel, and meals.

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

**Nominations will close at the February 2<sup>nd</sup> Rep Council meeting.** Contact [cbrown@washingtonea.org](mailto:cbrown@washingtonea.org) for a candidate form. The election will follow.

## Bylaws Proposal

In conjunction with the election of officers in February, members will vote on the following proposal to align terms of VEA officers with Trustees at three years each:

Article VI. **Section 3. The Terms of the Executive Officers** as recommended by the blue book committee and Executive Board. The terms of office of the president, first, second, third, and fourth vice president, secretary, and treasurer shall be ~~two (2) years~~ **three (3) years** beginning on the first Monday in August following their election. Election of the president, first, and third vice presidents, and the treasurer **will begin three-year terms with the election cycle in 2026-27** ~~will occur in odd-numbered years~~. Election of the second and fourth vice presidents and the secretary **will begin three-year terms with the election cycle in 2027-28** ~~will occur in even-numbered years~~. Each executive officer shall remain in office until a successor is elected or until such time as a successor is installed as provided in the Standing Rules. Executive officers will be limited to two (2) successive terms in office.

## January is National Braille Literacy Month

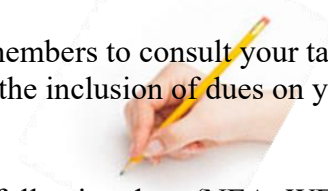
The VEA Equity Team encourages you to [learn more about Braille](#) at the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

## 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](#).

## Dues and Taxes 2025

VEA encourages members to consult your tax professional about the inclusion of dues on your 2025 taxes.



Members paid the following dues (NEA, WEA, VEA) in 2025:

0.76-1.0 FTE	\$1368.72
0.51-0.75 FTE	\$1086.48
0.26-0.50 FTE	\$ 707.76
0.25 or less	\$ 378.04

This figure is calculated using the 2024-25 rate for 8 months (Jan-Aug) and the 2025-26 rate for 4 months (Sept-Dec). If you did not work the full year, or changed FTE during 2025, you can calculate your dues using the monthly figures as follows:

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
0.76-1.0 FTE	\$112.84	116.50
0.51-0.75 FTE	\$89.58	92.46
0.26-0.50 FTE	\$58.37	60.20
0.25 or less	\$31.20	32.11

## Know your Contract 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.

## VPS TPEP and AI Guidelines.

Following an outreach from VEA representatives and members around use of AI in TPEP evaluations, VEA received the following TPEP and AI guidelines as approved by the VPS Cabinet: [TPEP & AI Guidelines](#)

Please note that all parties will be notified that the meeting will be recorded in the invite and verbally at the start of the meeting. AI powered notetakers may NOT be used for evaluations. Administrators should take notes manually using district-approved methods only.

If these guidelines were not followed and you believe your evaluation is not accurate, contact VEA.



### 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 2025 and you must submit a request form by January 31, 2026. This is a firm date set by Washington State law. Search VERN for “Application for unused Sick Leave.” Or in the January newsletter from HR.



### 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>

**Inclusionary Behavior Strategies (Equity)** 6 hrs.  
Jan 20 and 26 4:30-7:30 pm [Register online](#)

**Embedding Social Emotional Skills Across the Preschool Day (Equity)** 6 hours Feb 2 and 4 4:30-7:30 pm [Register online](#)

**Co-teaching as an Inclusive Practice (Equity)** 6 hours Feb 23 and 25 4:30-7:30 pm [Register online](#)

## 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.

The [application form](#) is due no later than March 6, 2026

### Be on the Lookout for the VPS Seniority List

In compliance with Chapter 14 of the VEA contract, HR sends out a listing for member review to ensure that VPS has your complete and accurate qualification and certifications. The seniority list is sent out towards the end of January and will include only those holding continuing and provisional contracts.

Please review all documents that include total number of years of documented service within the state of Washington and number of credits beyond a bachelors' degree. Listings will also include current certifications and endorsement on record with HR. Typically there is also a Q and A document and an invitation to review your file in HR.