

SEPTEMBER 2026



Whether you're returning to VPS or joining us for the first time, thank you for the dedication, care, and expertise you bring to our students and school communities each day.

As I begin my final year serving as VEA President, I have been reflecting on what I've learned along the way – **our union is strongest when we show up for one another and stand together.** This work is not always easy. There are challenges, setbacks, and difficult days. But the work we do matters and it is worth it.

I look forward to working alongside you this year. **Stay connected, get involved, and take care of one another.**

Wishing you a successful school year!

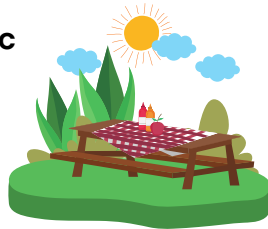
In Solidarity, Jamie Anderson, *VEA President*

CELEBRATE LABOR

Labor Day honors the contributions of working people and the labor movement's fight for fair wages, safe working conditions, and workers' rights.

SWWCLC Labor Day Picnic

Monday, September 7
10:30am – 3:30pm
Haydu Park – Kalama



Join other local union members and their families for a free picnic featuring food, drinks, raffle prizes, and kids' activities.

Sponsored by the SW Washington Central Labor Council and Wahkiakum Central Labor Council.

STRENGTHENING OUR UNION

Earlier this August, the VEA Executive Board gathered for its annual retreat to reflect on the challenges and successes of the past year and prepare for the work ahead. Board members spent time discussing organizational goals, identifying priorities for the coming year, and developing strategies to **strengthen member advocacy, build meaningful communication channels, and make sure our members see themselves in the work VEA is doing.**

THIS YEAR, WE NEED YOU

Our union is strongest when members are connected, informed, and involved.



REP ELECTIONS

Please make sure your building has held elections for your VEA reps before the September 14 Rep Council meeting. We want to make sure every building has representation!

Need to contact the VEA office?

Email: vea@washingtonea.org
Office Phone: 360-695-3397

Jamie Anderson, President: janderson@washingtonea.org, 360-836-1790
Graham Picklesimer, Executive Director: gpicklesimer@washingtonea.org, 564-219-2216
Jennifer Chipman, Administrative Assistant: jchipman@washingtonea.org, 360-947-6754

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

VPS SPECIAL CALENDAR DAYS

October 9: TRI Professional Learning Day for all staff (paid in December)

November 11: Veterans Day Holiday

November 23–27: Thanksgiving Holiday

December 21–January 1: Winter Break

January 18: MLK Jr. Day

January 25: Semester Break (snow make-up day #3)

February 5: In-service Professional Development Day (*contract workday*)

March 19: Snow make-up day #1

April 30: Snow make-up day #2

June 10 & 11: Two-hour early release

VEA Leadership Meetings

VEA governance meetings are open to all members; only elected representatives may vote. Rep Council meetings begin at 5:00 p.m., with September, October, February, and June meetings held in person (location TBD). All others are via Zoom.

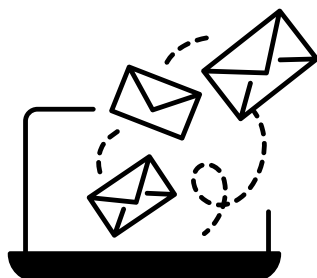
Executive Board meetings are held in person at the West Park Community Room and begin at 5:00 p.m.

Not receiving VEA emails?

Feeling out of the loop? Make sure your personal email address is up to date with us and check your spam or junk folder. VEA switched to the NEA/WEA email platform last year and that means if you opt out of a WEA or NEA email, you are also opting out of emails from VEA.

If you didn't opt out and you're still not receiving emails from VEA, please contact us so we can make sure your information is correct and we can keep you connected.

If you **meant** to opt out of WEA emails (but not VEA), make sure you click the **"Local News"** box to stay connected to news from the VEA.



VPS PD Course Payment Practices – NEW!

Over the summer, VPS transitioned the clock hour management system to pdEnroller, managed through ESD 112. This means new procedures for getting paid!

In-district PD: Make sure you sign in and then fill out this [Google form](#) for payment from your Individual PD funds (\$1,250).

Out-of-District PD: You need to get [approval](#) from your supervisor first, then submit the approval form as an attachment in the reimbursement form.

Submit supporting documents (PDF of receipts and course completion certification) to prodev@vansd.org **after** you have completed the activity.

TRI PL Days: Educators who attended District Directed Courses during the week of August 17th–21st do **not** need to submit a payment request through the Google form. Payment will automatically be processed in the October payroll cycle.

Retirement Planning Resources

Whether retirement is a few years away or just around the corner, now is a great time to start planning. This fall, the WEA–Retired team will again offer a series of Zoom sessions covering key retirement topics. Registration information will be available later in September.



New to Washington? New employees must choose a retirement plan within their first 90 (calendar) days of employment.

Free consultations are available with Sandy Kokko, WEA–Retired liaison, or Cassie Johnson, CFP, to help you understand your options and make an informed decision.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Class size & Caseload Review (10.4I)

September is considered a balancing month to give the district time to adjust student assignments and staffing based on actual student enrollment. If your class size or caseload is still over the contractual limit on **October 1**, you become eligible for overload pay based on the contract provisions.

Class sizes/case loads recorded on the 10th day of school (and count day of each month thereafter) will be made available to SBLT co-chair(s) and VEA building representative(s) at each site.

In the event overload is recorded, building admin will meet with the SBLT co-chairs(s) and VEA building rep(s) to discuss potential strategies for mitigating overload. The decision rests with the District.



Elementary Class Size (10.5D & 10.5E)

Our contract sets base and maximum class sizes triggers for overload:

- **Kindergarten:** 20 / 22
- **Grades 1–3:** 22 / 24
- **Grades 4–5:** 25 / 27 (*new this year)

Teachers receive **\$6 per student per day** when their class exceeds the base size. If a class exceeds the maximum, the district should create a new section when practical. Until then, **teachers receive an additional \$9 per student per day** for each student over the maximum.

Combination Classrooms

Combination classes (such as 1/2, 2/3, 3/4, or 4/5) are intended to help address class-size overloads and should be avoided whenever possible.

Combination classes must also be at **least 3 students below the class-size limit for the lower grade.**

Secondary Class Size (10.6B)

Middle School

- **General classes:** 28 students (7 periods) or 29 (6 periods).
- **If a teacher has 2+ classes over 30,** students above 30 count as overload.
- **PE:** 33 average
- **Music ensembles:** 35

High School / VSAA / iTech

- **General classes:** 30 students average.
- Every effort should be made to avoid classes over 32.
- **If a teacher has 2+ classes over 32,** students above 32 count as overload.
- **PE and music ensembles:** 38 average

A safety Review is required when a HS Science/iTech lab exceeds 31, Middle school PE exceeds 33, or High school PE exceeds 38. The review includes the administrator, teacher, and VEA building representative.

Questions about your contract?

Visit the VEA website (www.vancouverea.org) for the **full contract**,
Contact your **Building Rep**, or
The VEA office is available to help answer questions

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Special Education Caseloads & Overload (10.12A & 10.12G)

- ISEP: 10 students
- **Separate Day School (JTC):** 10 students
- **Life Skills (K-5):** 10 students
- **Life Skills (6-12):** 12 students
- **IAC (6-12):** 15 students
- **ICSP:** 12 students
- **GATE:** 15 students
- **Special Education Preschool:** 18 students; 10 students max per session
- **Inclusive Preschool:** 18 students (per session)
- **Teachers of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing:** 20 students
- **Community Preschool:** 18 students
- **Learning Support (K-5):** 18 students
- **Learning support (6-12):** 26 students

Program Name	Overload Relief 1	Overload Relief 2
Learning Support (Elementary)	19	23
Learning Support (Secondary)	27	31
Life Skills K-5	11	12
Life Skills 6-12	13	14
Intensive Academic Centers	16	17
Integrated Social Emotional Program K-12	11	12
Integrated Communication and Sensory Program K-12	13	14
Separate Day School K-12	11	12
GATE/Transition Skills 18-22	16	18
Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	21	23
Special Education Preschool	19	21
Inclusive Preschool	19	21
Community Preschool	19	21

Changes made during 2025-26 Interim Bargain; ratified by VEA members, pending approval from the VPS School Board at their September meeting

	Release Time*	Stipend
Relief Level 1 (PK-12)	1 Day/Month	\$250 a month
Relief Level 2 (PK-12)	2 Days/Month	\$500 a month

*At the option of the Special Education teacher, release time may be instead replaced with a supplemental contract at the substitute rate of pay for the appropriate number of days.

ESA Caseloads & Overload (10.13A & 10.13B)

ESA Minimum Staffing Ratios

School Counselor: 1 : 300

School Nurses: 1 : 900

School Psychologists: 1 : 750

Physical Therapists: 1 : 4500

ESA Caseload per FTE

Speech Language Pathologist: 45

Occupational Therapist: 46

School Counselors

School Counselors who case manage more than 30, 504 plans will receive supplemental payment of two hours at their per diem for each 504 plan managed, in excess of 30. Caseloads are prorated according to a counselor's FTE.

Position	Overload Relief 1	Overload Relief 2*
Speech and Language Pathologist	46	50
Occupational Therapist	47	51
Position	Relief 1	Relief 2
School Psychologists	751:1 – 800:1	801:1 – 850:1
Physical Therapists	4501:1 – 5000:1	5001:1 – 5500:1
School Nurses	901:1 – 1000:1	1001:1 – 1100:1

Overload Remedy for ESAs

	Release Time*	Stipend
Relief Level 1	1 Day/Month	\$250 a month
Relief Level 2	2 Days/Month	\$500 a month

*At the option of the ESA, release time may be instead replaced with a supplemental contract at the substitute rate of pay for the appropriate number of days.

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KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Safe & Supportive Learning Environments (10.21A&B)

The District is responsible for supporting educators in maintaining safe and supportive learning environments and addressing harassment, intimidation, bullying, and hate speech. Students have the right to a safe learning environment and staff have the right to a safe working environment, timely communication, and involvement in student reentry planning.



- Every school will have a student discipline process that clearly outlines staff and administrator responsibilities, and administrators must provide annual training on those procedures **during the August PL days or at a staff meeting the first month of school.**
- When you submit a discipline referral, you must document interventions and parent/guardian communication. Administrators must **provide an outcome within 3 school days or explain any delay.**
- Students may be **temporarily excluded** from class when allowed by district policy and state law. Except in emergencies, classroom interventions must occur before an exclusion.
- **Before a student returns** from a classroom exclusion, the teacher and administrator will discuss a reentry plan, and the teacher will be invited to participate in any reentry meeting.
- When a student **poses a potential threat of violence or harm**, administrators must share information with staff who have a legitimate need to know.
- A **safety designee must be identified** whenever the principal is out of the building.

District-Directed Relocation (7.12A-C)

Please be aware of the following contract articles for time and compensation when reassignments and moves are directed by the District:

Article 7.12A: Relocation to *another building or site*; up to 16 hours paid at per diem.

Article 7.12B: Relocation to *another classroom/space within the same building or site*; up to 8 hours paid at per diem.

Article 7.12C: Relocation to a *new grade level or content area after the start of the school year*; at least two (2) days to prepare without students, in addition to the above compensation.



Family Contact, Conferencing, & Communication (12.16A.i.)

The first hour of the two-hour early release on Monday is for educator-directed family contact, conferencing, and communication time.

Other family conferencing falls under the educator-directed TRI duties in Article 12.2A.

There are different conferencing requirements for elementary and secondary. Conferencing requirements are outlined in VPS School Board Procedure 242OP.



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Contact your **Building Rep.** or

The VEA office is available to help answer questions

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

NEA Attorney Referral Program

NEA members, their spouses, and dependent children are eligible for two free 30-minute consultations each year with a participating attorney for personal (non-employment) legal matters. These consultations can help you determine whether additional legal services are needed. NEA members receive a 30% discount on fees for many services, including real estate, wills and estates, family law, consumer protection, and traffic violations.

Members must provide proof of NEA membership at their initial visit. [A list of participating attorneys is available on the VEA website under Member Benefits.](#)

Policy & Power

WEA-PAC members attended the annual Val Ogden Dinner on August 22, hosted by the Clark County Democrats. The evening offered an opportunity to connect with community leaders, advocates, and local and state-elected officials who are all committed to public education and supporting labor.

Thank you to everyone who attended and represented VEA at this meaningful event.

2025-26 Interim Bargain Wrap-up

VEA members ratified the 2025-26 bargaining agreements, bringing the Interim Bargain to a close. The agreements now await approval by the VPS School Board at its September meeting.



Thank you to the members who participated throughout the process, from survey to ratification. As we head into a major bargaining year, continued member participation and engagement will be critical.

To review the proposal language, summary of agreements, updated 2026-27 salary schedule, or general member meeting slide, you can use this link: [2026-27 Ratification folder](#)

WEA NAKIA Academy Opportunity

WEA is excited to announce that the NAKIA Academy is returning this fall—and it's bigger than ever. With space to add 200+ more WA educators to the already nearly 1000-member community.

This year's academy offers a transformative experience focused on coaching, mentoring, equity, and leadership development.

What's New This Year?

- **Indigenous Cohort:** For the first time, Nakia will center Indigenous educators in a dedicated cohort designed to honor, elevate, and support their leadership journeys.
- **Counselor Cohort:** Exclusively for school counselors, this track focuses on mentoring, relational leadership, and culturally responsive practices tailored to their unique roles.

Program Highlights

- 8 Hybrid sessions over 4–5 months
- at least 1 session in person at WEA HQ
- 24 equity clock hours
- Authentic coaching practice, leadership development, reflection time, and community celebration
- Optional Observation & Feedback PD for deeper mentoring and leadership growth

*Participants are required to attend as close to ALL sessions to be deemed complete for clock hours and receive stipend if applicable.

Applications are open now and close on Thursday, September 10, 2026.

Interested members should apply early—spots fill quickly. This is more than professional development; it's a movement to build equity driven, community-rooted leadership across our schools.

Here's the link: [WEA NAKIA Academy application](#)

VEA is planning to host a local cohort for educators of color (certificated and ESAs) later this year, facilitated by a VEA NAKIA graduate.

More info to come!

MEET YOUR VEA: EXECUTIVE BOARD



Jamie Anderson – VEA President

I'm Jamie. I have been involved in VEA since I began with VPS in 2017 and have served as Building Rep, bargaining chair, and now I am finishing my final year as your VEA President. One of the things I've appreciated most about being in this role, is getting to know members across buildings, learning the various job roles VEA represents, and the member advocacy work I get to do.

Outside of VEA, I'm a wife and mom (to a VPS 5th grader). I love reading, being in the sunshine, morning walks with my dog, random trivia, cooking, and baking.

I've learned a lot from hearing what people are experiencing in their schools and classrooms, and those conversations are a big part of what keeps me connected to why this work matters. You can reach me at janderson@washingtonea.org.

Brit Behrendt – 2nd VP of Labor Relations

I am Brit, an occupational therapist in my 3rd year at VPS, but have over 12 years of experience working as an OT in multiple school districts.

I have served in a variety of roles within unions and most recently as a rep and bargaining team member with VEA. I am passionate about equity, and value the role the union advocacy plays in creating the best possible learning environment for students and sustainable working conditions for educators.

I consider myself a strong problem solver and look forward to utilizing my skills during collaborative labor management discussions. During my term, I also hope to build a strong Contract Action Team (CAT). I can be contacted at VEALaborRelationsVP@gmail.com.



Sam Wilkes – 3rd VP of Member Engagement

I am your 3rd VP in charge of member engagement. This is my 12th year teaching elementary in VPS and my third year on the VEA executive board.

I'm in this role to try and help as many members feel connected with their union and to help connect non-members with the union. I'm hoping that during this major bargaining year VEA and its members can be unified and stand together.

You can contact me at VEAMemberEngagementVP@gmail.com.

Wendi Moose – 4th VP of Equity Affairs

Hello! I'm Wendi, the new 4th VP in charge of Equity for VEA.

I have been in the District for 25 years. I started as a substitute teacher, but finally got my own classroom at Discovery Middle School in 2018. Once I got my own classroom, I signed up to be a union rep because I come from a union-loving family!

Equity is important to me because I believe the future is inclusive. I've always fought for those without my privilege. This year, I hope to start by having a listening session to gather information from members that can inform how we move forward. I would also like to restart the VEA Equity Committee to work on the issues discussed in the listening session.

Members can feel free to reach me at VEAEquity@gmail.com.



READY TO TAKE YOUR TEACHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Join the VEA National Board Cohort!

You don't have to navigate National
Board Certification alone

Ready to learn more?

Click [HERE](#) for more info OR
scan the QR code to sign up



What you'll get:

- 👥 A supportive cohort of fellow educators
- 📅 Regular cohort meetings and structured support
- 💬 Time to ask questions, share ideas, and get feedback
- 📚 Resources and guidance for navigating the certification process
- 🎯 Accountability to help you keep moving forward
- 💰 Information about available financial support and incentives

Cohort sessions start in SEPTEMBER

*There is a minimum participant requirement for VEA to run a cohort – you can sign up [HERE!](#)

LABOR DAY PICNIC 2026



FOOD - RAFFLES - FUN FOR KIDS

THE COWLITZ WAHIAKUM CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL
AND THE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON LABOR COUNCIL
INVITE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY TO JOIN US AT THE
LABOR DAY PICNIC OF SW WASHINGTON!

Celebrate Labor Day with our community
and your labor siblings!

MONDAY
07
SEPTEMBER

HAYDU PARK
10:30 AM - 3:30 PM
253 KALAMA RIVER RD, KALAMA, WA



Nakia Academy is designed to keep
newer educators of color in the field
through mentorship and leadership
development.

- ✓ Mentorship from experienced educators of color
- ✓ Leadership development through authentic practice
- ✓ Support rooted in authentic relationships
- ✓ Building community in a safe learning environment