

We're already a month into the school year, and I think many of us have reached the point where the back-to-school adrenaline has worn off and the reality of this year is becoming clearer.

We're starting to see the impacts of staffing shortages, reassignments, increased workload, and the difficult financial decisions made across the district. Some of our members are navigating changes they didn't ask for. Some are trying to make programs work with fewer people and fewer resources. Some are just trying to keep their heads above water.

This is why we need a strong union.

Your union continues to work on the individual issues that come through our door, while also pushing back on the bigger issues that affect us all. Sometimes that work is visible. Most of the time, it isn't. Every time we enforce our contract, support a member, raise a concern, or demand accountability, we're making sure our members don't have to face these challenges alone.

October is a good time to get connected. We have a lot of work ahead of us this year, and we're going to need each other to get it done.

In Solidarity, Jamie Anderson, VEA President

FALL INTO ORGANIZING

Being involved in your union doesn't have to mean adding one more thing to your calendar. There are several ways to participate and they don't all require a lot of time or commitment. What matters is staying connected and finding the level of involvement that works for you.

Got 10 minutes? Stay connected.

Read VEA updates. Talk with coworkers about what's happening in your building. Attend a stand-up meeting at your building or site.

Got 60 minutes? Show up.

[Attend a school board meeting](#). Join a training. Stop by a VEA event or member outreach activity.

More time? Get involved and take it further.

[Join a committee](#). Help with organizing. Take on a leadership opportunity. Talk to your building rep. Let us know when something is happening in your building that we need to know about.

HELP BUILD THE VEA CONTRACT ACTION TEAM (CAT)

As we prepare for a full bargain this year, VEA is forming a Contract Action Team (CAT) to help members stay informed, build support in their buildings, and take collective action when contract when it matters.

This is an opportunity for members who want to do a little more to **protect our contract, support their coworkers, and build the bargaining power we need**—without necessarily taking on a formal leadership role.

Interested in helping to build our collective power?

Join the VEA CAT

Sign up and help us build it:
<https://bit.ly/4xLnhZn>



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

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Evaluation – Who, What, & When? (Article 8.4)

Within the first 30 days of the school year (or your date of hire), you should be notified of both your evaluator and your evaluation type.

A few important points:

- Your principal or designated administrator is responsible for your evaluation.
- An associate principal or other designated administrator may conduct your evaluation.
- Program administrators may assist with evaluations for educators in specialized areas.
- Your evaluation system depends on your assignment. Classroom teachers and non-classroom educators providing academically focused instruction use CEL 5D+; other non-classroom educators use the appropriate non-classroom system.



Course Preps & Expanded Assignments (10.6C)

For secondary educators (6–12), the District must make every reasonable effort to keep course preparations and subject fields to a minimum.

A normal assignment is no more than 3 preparations (excluding advocacy/advisory/intervention), and the District should make every reasonable effort to limit assignments to no more than 2 subject fields.

If an involuntary expanded assignment requires more than 3 course preparations in a semester, the educator is entitled to 8 hours of supplemental compensation for each preparation over 3. Course preps across levels (middle and high school) should be counted.

More than 3 preps? Know your rights and check with your building rep.

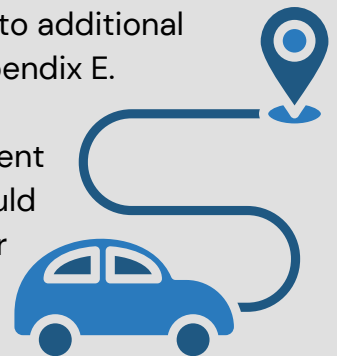
Traveling Employees (10.17)

If you work in two or more buildings, your schedule must include a 30-minute duty-free lunch plus necessary travel time between buildings. Travel time counts toward your overall FTE.

The District should also make every reasonable effort to avoid fractionalized assignments that stretch your workday or create gaps in your schedule.

If you're assigned to three or more buildings, you may also be entitled to additional compensation under Appendix E.

Travel time is an entitlement—not something you should have to squeeze into your prep or lunch.



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

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Policy & Power

WEA is bringing members together across the state to Get Out the Vote on October 17.

Join your fellow educators as we knock on doors and talk with our neighbors about critical issues on the November ballot in our communities.

Help Get Out the Vote by [signing up to volunteer](#). Together, our votes can help decide the future of education in Washington!

Help Shape VEA Communication

We want to make sure VEA information is actually useful—and actually reaches you.

Take **2 minutes** to tell us what you want to hear about, how you want to receive it, and what makes you open (or ignore!) a VEA message.

Your feedback will help shape how we communicate with members this year.

[VEA Communication Survey](#)

Measles Verification: Be Prepared

As measles cases continue to be reported in the region, it's a good idea to make sure you know where your measles immunity records are in case verification is requested.

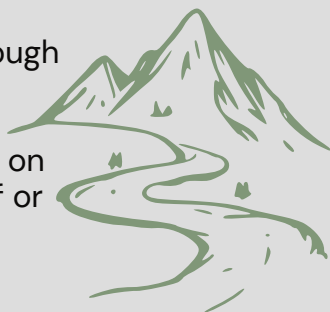
Take a few minutes to check that you have documentation of your MMR vaccination or other acceptable proof of immunity readily available.

Columbia Employee Store Pass

VEA members can take advantage of a [Columbia Employee Store Pass](#) through **October 12**.

It's a great chance to save on Columbia gear for yourself or the family.

Grab your pass and shop before it's gone!



October 9 – TRI PL Day #3

October 9 is a paid 8-hour TRI Professional Learning Day, focused on state, district, and building initiatives, for all certificated staff. The day's agenda must include at least one hour of grade-level/content-area collaboration in PLCs.

With building or program administrator approval, educators may also participate in professional learning outside the District and submit proof of participation afterward for up to 8 hours of TRI pay.

The October TRI day will be paid on your December payroll.

Conference Season Is Here

Fall conferences are still part of the job, but the contract gives educators more control over how and when they are scheduled.

Conferences are an educator-directed TRI activity under Article 12.2A, and an attempt must still be made to conference with families in the fall in accordance with School Board Policy 2420 and applicable Title I requirements.

A few things to keep in mind:

- **You choose the schedule that works for your classroom and families.** Monday early-release family engagement time can be used for conferences, but it is not the only time available.
- **Think beyond one designated schedule.** Educators can develop a schedule that includes times that are responsive to the needs of their classroom families, including afternoon and/or evening options when appropriate.
- **Buildings can use SBLT to problem-solve.** The PLC and family engagement times on Mondays may be "flipped" on a limited basis to create a more consistent conference schedule, but this should be discussed and agreed upon through the SBLT process.
- **Safety matters.** Commonly scheduled afternoon and evening conferences can also provide the benefit of having other staff in the building for support.

MEET YOUR VEA: EXECUTIVE BOARD



Sara Campbell – Primary Trustee

Hi! My name is Sara Campbell and I am serving as the Primary Trustee on our VEA Executive Board. I have been teaching in Vancouver for 20 years, 19 years at Ogden in (mostly) kindergarten and second grade. My heart and passion is with our littlest learners! I am a product of the Vancouver School District, having attended Walnut Grove, Gaiser, and Fort Vancouver. Go Trappers!

I come from multiple generations of union members and leaders and love the solidarity, support, community, and action that comes with being a part of a union. This is my second year on the Executive Board and 6th year as a VEA rep. My goal this year is to continue supporting and assisting primary teachers as issues arise in the buildings and successfully communicate those issues to VEA Leadership when necessary. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.

Erin Pendergast – Middle School Trustee

I am the middle school trustee for VEA. I have been teaching in VPS for 18 years. I started at Franklin and Felida, but have been teaching 8th grade HULA at McLoughlin since 2011.

I am in this trustee role to listen, problem solve, and support fellow middle school teachers. We are a unique group of educators, and our voice in VEA, and district decisions is an important one.

I am hoping that we can become a support for each other, and for our individual staff members. You can contact me at erin.pendergast1@gmail.com.



Lani Steppe – Specialist Trustee

I am the new Specialist Trustee. This is my 18th year as an elementary teacher, 17 of which have been in VPS. My experience here has included teaching K-5 general music, third or fourth grade general education, and currently K-5 visual arts.

Throughout these years, I have enjoyed the benefits of being a VEA member. I am in this role to represent our amazing arts and fitness teachers and to increase visibility and support for our district's LGBTQIA+ educators. Please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns via my union email address: veaspecialisttrustee@gmail.com.

Elaine Fritschie – Recording Secretary

Hi y'all -- I'm Elaine, and it's my first year as Secretary for the Executive Board. I've previously served as Special Ed trustee on the Bargaining team, and I am also a continuing building rep for Lincoln Elementary.

Notes are crucial for informing ever-changing teams of important information, as well as communicating that information out to everyone.

My hope for all VEA members this year is that we stay informed and supportive despite the odds. If needed, I can be reached at VEARecordingSecretary@gmail.com

