



**Stronger Together**

December 7, 2017

# VESTA Weekly

Topics Worth Talking about! Please read and discuss with your colleagues

## Dates to Remember

Meetings at the VESTA office starts at 4pm unless otherwise indicated.

**Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining (WLC/B) Meeting**  
December 11th

**Staff Rep Assembly/ General Meeting**  
December 12th  
Tupper Secondary  
at 4:00pm

**Executive Committee Meeting**  
December 19th  
VESTA Office



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## Pacific Blue Cross AGM: Shuttle Buses Available!

Planning to go to the Pacific Blue Cross AGM? Jim Iker and the progressive slate need your vote! Put next Wednesday **December 13** in your calendar. Registration begins at 3pm at **the Westin Bayshore** and the meeting will go from 6 to 9pm. There will be **shuttle buses** running non-stop from Waterfront Skytrain Station to the Westin Bayshore Hotel from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. There will also be free parking available at the PNE, with buses transporting voters to the meeting. Following the meeting, voters will be returned to their point of pickup. To arrange transportation, please contact Tina Meadows via email at [tmeadows@cupe.ca](mailto:tmeadows@cupe.ca). Don't forget to bring your PBC card and photo ID to register. Help make Blue Cross a provider we can be proud of again!

## Unfilled Teacher Vacancies in the News

On Saturday November 25, *The Vancouver Sun* ran an article featuring Glen Hansman on the unfilled teacher vacancies that Vancouver is experiencing and the situation around the province. In case you missed it, here is the link. <http://www.canada.com/mobile/iphone/story.html?id=15928546> Glen is well aware of our situation in Vancouver and the article clearly articulates how much the problem has grown. The article also compares job postings in Vancouver to other districts including Surrey, where there are only 5 vacancies. At the November 15 VSB Committee IV meeting it was reported that there were 51 postings rather than the 65 mentioned in the article, but that figure is still 10 times the number in Surrey and at least twice as many as any other district. In an effort to gather more information about the barriers to teaching in Vancouver, VESTA is putting an ad in the Metro Newspaper asking teachers to send a brief description of their situation to [appliedanddenied@vesta.ca](mailto:appliedanddenied@vesta.ca). If you know a teacher who applied but didn't get on the TTOC list or a teaching position in Vancouver, please let them know about our request and email address. We hope that the information will help us work with the VSB to get more teachers hired and ultimately reduce the number of unfilled vacancies.

## Teaching Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) in Schools

Chilliwack trustee Barry Neufeld's and Culture Guard's inflammatory comments regarding the teaching of SOGI in schools as "sex-activism" and "child abuse" have created stress for teachers and students in Chilliwack and across the province. On November 28 in an act of solidarity, VESTA executive members postponed their executive meeting and joined teachers, parents and activists in a pro-SOGI rally at the Chilliwack School Board. If you have questions regarding the teaching of SOGI, the BC government factsheet <https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-in-schools> is a great place to start for succinct, authoritative information including the fact that "As of Dec. 31 2016, all B.C. school districts and independent schools are required to include specific references to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in their anti-bullying policies." This follows from the July 2016 addition of prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity and expression to the BC Human Rights Code. The factsheet also has links to more information about teaching SOGI and the positive impact such teaching can have on the lives of all of our students.

## Remedy

Elementary teachers in the John Oliver and Killarney families of schools who are entitled to remedy (according to the board's interpretations) were sent emails last week. It is very important for teachers from those schools to check their VSB email and respond as soon as possible to the board indicating which form of remedy (prep time, non-enrolling or enrolling classroom support) they would like for the year. The remedy is for October only. If you think you were entitled to remedy, but did not receive an email, check with your staff rep and have the staff rep contact VESTA.

