

# VEA Action Line

September 2010

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## 12 ways your building rep can help you

Building/unit reps are vital communication links between the membership and VEA. They attend monthly rep council meetings, provide representational feedback between the association and the membership, facilitate elections, and much more.

Your rep is your first line of communication if you have questions or concerns related to your contract and to your work situation. Your rep learns about state and local issues, makes decisions regarding VEA's budget, helps set the direction in which the association will go, shares your issues and concerns, and reports back to you. Your rep works to protect your rights under the contract, advocates on your behalf, assists you in resolving conflicts, answers your questions, and gives you support.

Your building rep is a great resource. He/she can:

1. Keep you apprised of the educational issues that are being discussed and implemented in Olympia and Washington, D.C.
2. Help you identify the difference between sick leave and emergency leave.
3. Tell you how many kinds of leaves there are and how to use them.
4. Answer questions about planning time, duty-free lunch time, and on-site job time.
5. Help you understand how personal leave accrues, when you can use it, how to get approval, and when it is cashed out for pay.
6. Explain when you will receive your TRI payments.
7. Explain how to apply and get professional development money, how much you have allotted to you, how you can carry over two years of professional development, and when you can pay yourself with professional development money.
8. Clarify how the [Bauer Bill](#) works to exclude disruptive students from your classroom.
9. Inform you about changes that have occurred in the contract during bargaining.
10. Explain how to know if you qualify for class size overload relief, how to get it, and your options to use it.
11. Help with supplemental contracts.
12. And last but not least, tell you what it means to be a member of your Site Based Leadership Team, otherwise known as SBLT.



Building reps are listed on the [VEA website](#), under the "About Us" tab. The list will be updated as the year progresses

## Executive Board

### President

Ann Giles  
VEA office

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Bradford Williams  
Columbia River

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Carol Sandison  
Columbia River

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President

Fern Tresvan  
VSAA

### 4<sup>th</sup> Vice President

Katy Peppers  
Jason Lee

### Secretary

Leslie Morrison  
GATE

### Treasurer

Linda McGee  
Gaiser

### Primary Trustee

DeeLynn Durgan  
Walnut Grove

### Intermediate Trustee & Bargaining Chair

Patsy Hansen  
Washington

### Middle School Trustee

Russ Pusc  
Gaiser

### High School Trustee

David Tubb  
Hudson's bay

### Specialist Trustee

TBA

### WEA Board Director & WEA-PAC Chair

Lynn Maiorca

## Staff

### Executive Director

Roy Maier

### Administrative Asst.

Bonnie Larson

### Office Asst.

Sandy Kokko

# From the president

## Welcome back

Welcome back to all of you! I hope you had a wonderful break with some good down time to energize you for this coming year. Many issues are facing all of us — class sizes are up, the state budget crisis continues, the debates around teacher quality and test scores continue, and more.

In an effort to foster better communication between VEA and the school board, on September 9 the VEA Executive Board and I sent the following letter to the school board. When we receive a response, we will share it with you.

## Letter to the school board

Dear Members of the Vancouver School Board:

At our recent VEA Executive Board retreat, we thought it would be a good idea to initiate more formal communication with the VSD school board. We hope that we can open up conversations that will strengthen our common mission for the students in Vancouver.



1. Historically, the school board has met at 4 p.m. Have you ever considered meeting at a time when the community and district employees can more easily attend? Many school boards around the state meet in the evening.
2. Has the board considered having more than one public comment opportunity during the meeting? Some school boards offer two. One for general comments and one for items directly related to the agenda. It would be nice to have an opportunity for the public to respond to information after it has been presented.
3. Does the school board hold all discussions in public meetings? In many cases, it seems that the board has already discussed an issue and simply holds a vote at the meeting. It would be refreshing to hear a little bit more discussion and debate before votes are taken.
4. Several VEA members worked hard to help Senator Patty Murray with the Education Jobs Bill. After listening to an August 12 conference call with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, we believe the intent of the bill is to return staff back to classrooms to work with students. There are more students enrolled in the district, yet we have lost 66 VEA positions over the last two years. Do you plan to use the money to restore any of those lost positions?

Thank you in advance for responding to our questions. We look forward to your reply.

## Contract ratification vote

Ballots to accept or reject the recently bargained contract were distributed at the September 14 rep council meeting. The VEA Executive Board recommends that the membership accept the contract. Since this was a mid-term bargaining year, only a few items were negotiated. A summary of the negotiated items is on the [VEA website](#). Bargaining concluded at the end of this past school year, but there was not enough time to ratify the contract before school was out. Building reps will conduct the vote in their location. Ballots are due in the VEA office on Thursday, September 23.

## Bargaining begins again

Although formal negotiations with the district won't begin until after the first of the year, VEA's bargaining team will be meeting well before that to determine the issues that we will take to the table. If you have an issue that you would like the team to consider, you may e-mail the bargaining chair, [Patsy Hansen](#), or VEA's executive director, [Roy Maier](#).

## Are you registered to vote?

The general election is less than two months away and we want to remind everyone to be sure your voter registration is up to date. We've discovered a little secret – a lot of people are not registered voters. It's not that they didn't intend to register – they've just been too busy, they forgot, or they didn't know where to go to register.

You can become a registered voter without a lot of fuss and time. Just go to the [Clark County elections website](#) and follow the easy directions. **To vote in the November election, you must be registered by October 4.**

## Pre-retirement seminar

Whether you are one, three, five, or even ten years from retiring, it is not too early to begin planning for your retirement. Again this year, VEA will host two retirement workshop opportunities: October 8-9 and March 18-19.

The workshops, which are put on by WEA-Retired, run from 6-9 p.m. on Friday and from 8-4 p.m. on Saturday. The workshop is appropriate for employees in all three retirement systems, Plan 1, 2, or 3.

The fee is \$30 for WEA members, \$20 for a spouse, and \$20 for WEA pre-retired members. The fee covers all materials, a snack on Friday evening, and a continental breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

Space is limited. Call the VEA office, 695-3397, or e-mail [Bonnie Larson](#) for a registration form. (The form may also be downloaded from the [VEA website](#).) Registration will be on a first-paid basis.

## Calendar items



- September 14, 2010  
Rep Council
- September 21  
Plan 2 & 3 retirement info  
for new teachers
- September 21  
Executive Board
- September 23  
Contract ratification ballots  
due in VEA office
- September 27  
Plan 2 & 3 retirement info  
for new teachers
- October 5  
Rep Council
- October 8-9  
Pre-retirement seminar
- October 12  
Executive Board
- October 15  
VEA Minority Event
- October 26  
VEA Executive Board

## Do you keep a professional file?

If you haven't already organized a professional file, this would be a good time to start. VEA recommends that you maintain your own records to be able to verify and document any disputes that may arise over your salary, seniority, leaves, evaluations, and other employee-related matters. We suggest that your file include the following:

- Up-to-date transcripts of all course work, including clock hours
- All signed contracts, including extra-duty contracts
- Copies of pre-approved leave forms
- Copies of staff development forms
- All observations, evaluations, and plans of improvement
- All written directives or reprimands
- Anecdotal records of conversations with students, parents, and administrators
- All correspondence (including e-mails) between you and administrators
- All correspondence (including e-mails) between you and parents, including complimentary notes
- Descriptions of any incidents involving students, parents, colleagues, or administrators that could become an issue
- Work/teaching schedules for current and past years
- Commendations, awards, and honors
- Proof of association membership and information on benefit programs
- Current employee and student handbooks

You may want to consider storing this file in a safe place at home.

## Labor-management meetings

Once a month, VEA's president and executive director meet with district administrators to try to solve current problems related to the contract. Check the [VEA website](#), for a recap of this week's labor-management meeting. We will update the site after each meeting, so check back often.

## Sick leave

If you're changing districts within the state of Washington, did you know that you can transfer all your sick leave to your new district? However, you must request this. It won't be done automatically.



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