



Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

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October 26, 2026

Senior Management

Vancouver School Board
1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 5K8

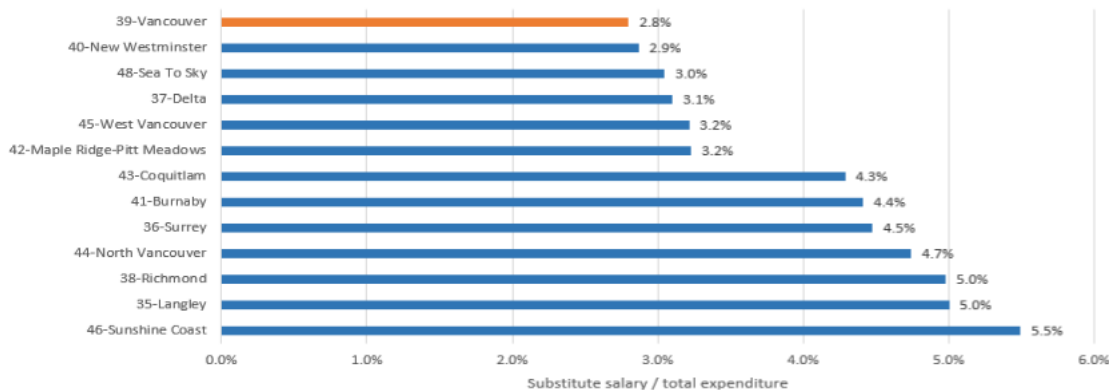
Dear Senior Management:

Subject: Employee Wellness Initiative and Attendance Management Program

The Union strongly opposes the Attendance Management component of the VSB Employee Wellness Initiative and Attendance Management Program. While the VSTA recognizes the Board's financial challenges, we are deeply disappointed that management is seeking cost efficiencies through increased monitoring of teachers and other employees. In our view, this initiative is driven primarily by financial considerations rather than a genuine commitment to employee wellness.

This approach raises a fundamental question: Is the program financially necessary? The VSB already spends significantly less on substitute teachers than comparable districts, calling into question the rationale for seeking further savings through heightened attendance monitoring.

2024/25 share Sub Salary / Total Expenditures, by Metro District



2018-19 to 2024-25 share Sub Salary / Total Expenditures, Average and select Districts*

School year	Average All SD	46-Sun. Coast	36-Surrey	39-Vancouver
1819	3.2%	4.6%	2.8%	2.1%
1920	2.5%	4.0%	2.7%	1.5%
2021	2.8%	4.6%	2.7%	1.9%
2122	3.6%	5.4%	3.9%	2.8%
2223	4.0%	5.9%	4.1%	2.8%
2324	4.0%	6.3%	4.4%	2.8%
2425	4.0%	5.5%	4.5%	2.8%

* largest share Sub Salary to Total Expenditures (SD 46) and largest District (SD 36)

Rather than pursue further savings through measures focused on employee attendance, management should invest in a meaningful wellness initiative that addresses the systemic factors affecting employees' physical and mental well-being, including intensified workloads, inadequate preparation time, and insufficient resources.

Instead, this program calls into question the legitimate use of sick leave—a negotiated entitlement intended to support employee health and recovery. By discouraging employees from accessing sick leave when needed, the program pressures teachers to attend work while unwell, which is fundamentally inconsistent with its stated goal of promoting wellness.

The VSTA is also deeply concerned that the Attendance Management Program undermines established public health principles. Provincial public health guidance continues to emphasize that staff and students should remain home when ill to reduce the spread of communicable diseases—a lesson reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Policies that discourage employees from taking sick leave risk increasing illness transmission in schools, disrupting student learning.

We are further concerned that attendance management meetings with principals may be invasive, intimidating, and disrespectful. Principals are not health care professionals and are not qualified to assess the complex medical, psychological, or personal circumstances affecting an employee's attendance. These meetings risk compromising members' medical confidentiality, privacy, and protections under the collective agreement.

Beyond these privacy concerns, the program's reliance on the Bradford Factor and frequency-based absence tracking is neither neutral nor equitable. It may disproportionately scrutinize members whose legitimate absences are linked to disability, health conditions, caregiving responsibilities, age, gender, or other protected grounds. The VSTA calls for an approach grounded in equity, human rights, accommodation, and genuine support—not surveillance or punishment.

The VSTA will closely monitor the implementation of this program and vigorously defend our members' rights. We will grieve any attendance management meeting that is disciplinary in nature, involves intimidation or discrimination, violates the collective agreement or applicable legislation, or compromises members' rights to confidentiality and fair treatment.

We call on management to suspend the Attendance Management component of this program and work collaboratively with the Union to develop evidence-based initiatives that address the root causes of employee illness and absenteeism. Supporting educator wellness requires meaningful investment in healthy working conditions—not increased surveillance of employees who appropriately use negotiated sick leave. The VSTA remains committed to constructive dialogue on measures that genuinely promote employee well-being and support high-quality learning environments for students.

Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'C. Schaedeli', the middle one is 'Carl Janze', and the one on the right is 'John Silver'.

Carmen Schaedeli, Carl Janze, and John Silver

In-House Table Officers

Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association