



# Candidate Brief

**Director, Labour Relations**

Vancouver School Board | School District 39





# Project Team

For more information on this exciting opportunity, please contact:



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**Location:** Vancouver, British Columbia



# INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Vancouver School Board, School District 39, thank you for considering this important leadership opportunity.

KIRAH Executive Search & Leadership Advisory has been retained by the Vancouver School Board to lead the search for its next Director, Labour Relations.

This Candidate Brief provides an overview of the Vancouver School Board, the leadership mandate, the operating environment, the experience and leadership attributes being sought, compensation and location considerations, and the anticipated search and selection process.

The Director, Labour Relations is a senior leadership appointment within VSB's Employee Services Division. Reporting to the Executive Director, Employee Services, the Director will provide strategic labour relations leadership across one of British Columbia's largest and most complex public education environments.

The successful candidate will bring strong technical labour relations expertise. Just as importantly, this individual will be expected to build trust, strengthen team capability, exercise sound judgement, provide confident executive advice, and help shape the longer-term direction of the Labour Relations portfolio.

This document is intended to provide candidates with meaningful information regarding the opportunity and does not constitute a contractual agreement. Certain details may evolve during the search process, and KIRAH will keep candidates appropriately informed.

Additional information regarding the Vancouver School Board can be found at:  
[www.vsb.bc.ca](http://www.vsb.bc.ca)

We welcome confidential inquiries from qualified leaders who would like to learn more about this opportunity.

KD Khairah  
KIRAH Executive Search & Leadership Advisory

## OVERVIEW - VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD

### About the Vancouver School Board

The Vancouver School Board is one of Canada's largest and most diverse public school systems.

VSb serves more than 50,000 students across approximately 110 schools and programs, supported by more than 7,700 employees who contribute to learning environments where students can thrive academically, socially and personally.

The District serves a highly diverse urban community and is committed to equity, inclusion, accountability and continuous improvement. Its work recognizes the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning and takes place on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

As a large public-sector employer operating within a highly unionized and publicly accountable environment, VSb requires sophisticated labour relations leadership capable of balancing organizational responsibilities, employee and union relationships, legislative obligations, operational realities and broader public-sector considerations.

### MISSION

VSb is focused on creating learning environments where every student can succeed and experience a strong sense of belonging.

#### Its approach emphasizes:

- student-centred decision-making
- equity and inclusion
- evidence-informed practice
- accountability
- relationship-building
- continuous organizational learning
- respect for the diversity and lived experiences of students, families and employees

The District's work is guided by the VSb Education Plan and by its responsibilities as a major public education institution serving the City of Vancouver.

## LEADERSHIP CONTEXT

### **A High-Accountability Environment**

The Director, Labour Relations will operate within a complex, highly visible public-sector environment where labour relations decisions may carry operational, legal, organizational and reputational implications.

Success will require more than technically correct answers. The Director must understand context, exercise judgement, communicate clearly and recognize the broader impact of decisions across the organization.

### **Trust-Based Labour Relations**

VSB places importance on maintaining respectful and constructive working relationships with its union partners.

The successful Director will be expected to represent the employer confidently while maintaining professionalism, responsiveness and credibility through disagreement, bargaining, grievances and other complex labour relations matters.

### **Leadership Through Coaching and Capacity Building**

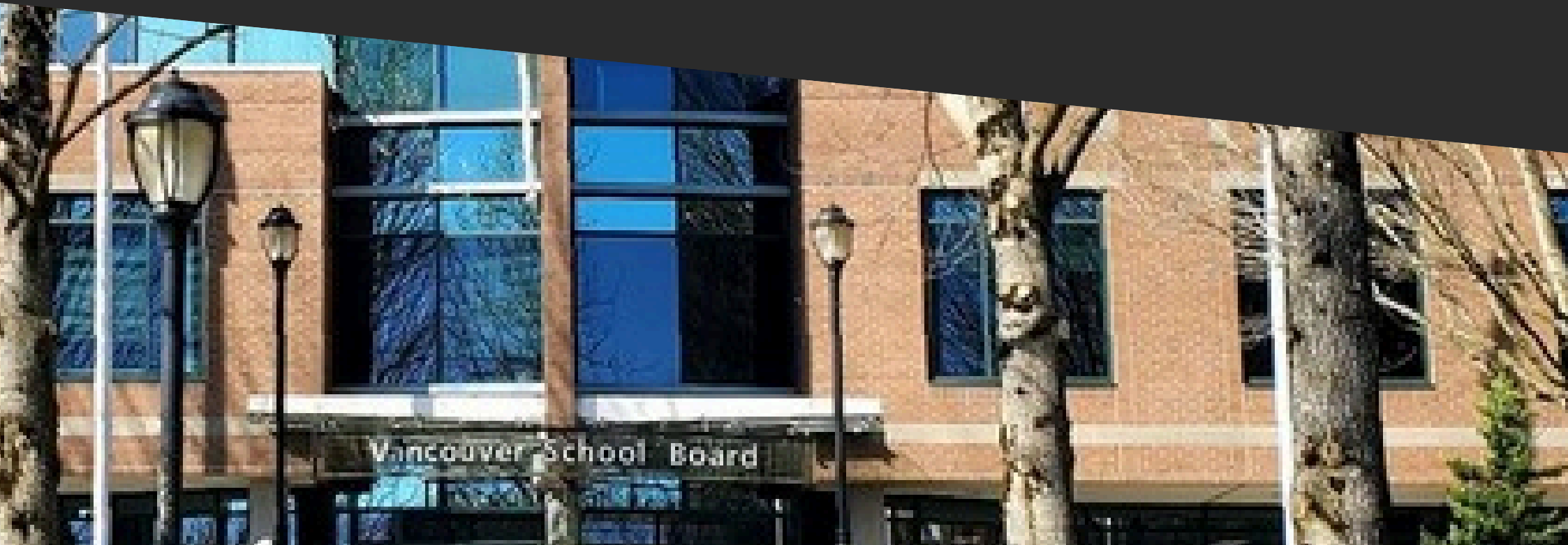
A significant part of the mandate is strengthening the capability of the Labour Relations team.

VSB is seeking a leader who develops people through coaching, mentoring, stretch assignments and meaningful exposure to complex files, bargaining, mediation and arbitration.

### **Change, Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

The incoming Director will be expected to examine existing practices, processes and metrics, strengthen quality and consistency, and help establish a longer-term strategic vision for the Labour Relations portfolio.

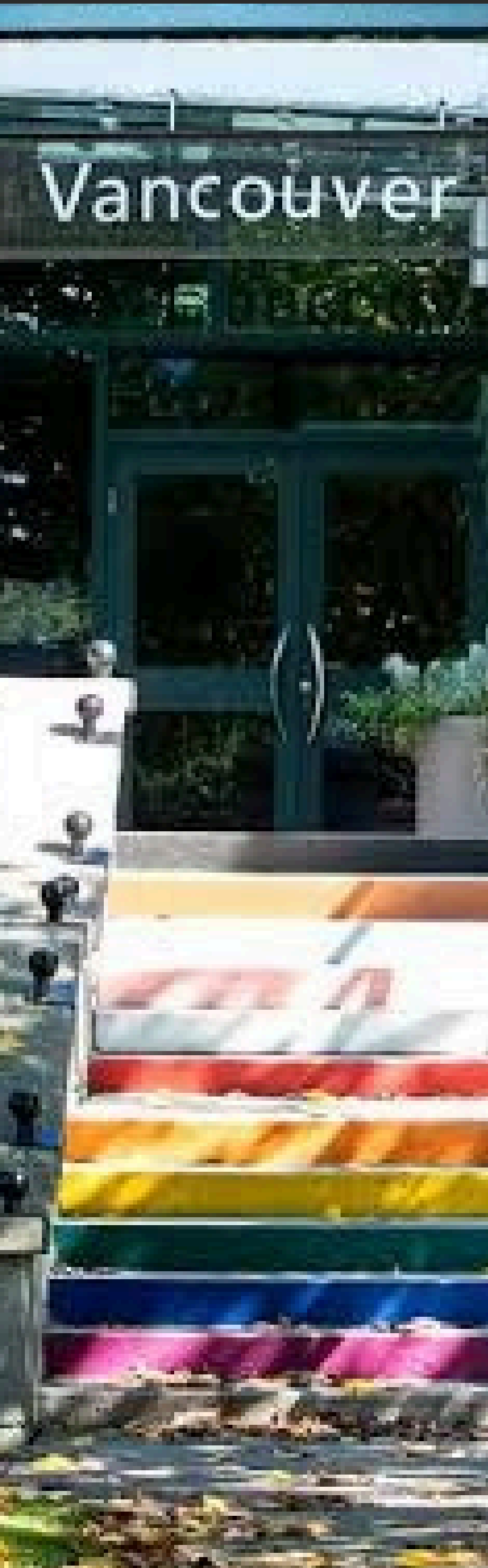
POSITION DESCRIPTION



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| ROLE         | Director, Labour Relations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| REPORTS TO   | Executive Director, Employee Services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| LOCATION     | VSB Education Centre -1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| COMPENSATION | \$177,959 – \$197,732 annually + competitive benefits and paid time off                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| SCOPE        | <p>The Director, Labour Relations is VSB’s senior labour relations leader and a trusted advisor to the Executive Director, Employee Services, District leadership and key internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>The role provides strategic leadership across collective bargaining, collective agreement administration and interpretation, grievances, mediation and arbitration, workplace investigations, employee discipline, human rights matters, legislative compliance, labour-management relationships and leadership development.</p> <p>VSB currently operates within a particularly complex labour relations environment involving 14 collective agreements. The incoming Director will be expected to build familiarity with the major terms, operating implications and recurring issues across these agreements while ensuring consistent and credible labour relations advice throughout the District.</p> <p>This is both a strategic and hands-on leadership role. The Director will be expected to shape the direction of the portfolio while remaining sufficiently close to significant matters to provide confident advice, exercise judgement and support the team through complex files.</p> |



## DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES | 1 of 2



### Strategic Labour Relations Leadership

- Provide strategic advice to the Executive Director, Employee Services and District leadership on significant labour relations matters.
- Establish a clear strategic direction and annual operating priorities for the Labour Relations portfolio.
- Identify emerging labour relations risks, trends and organizational implications.
- Support consistent, practical and defensible labour relations decision-making across the District.
- Provide trusted advice where labour, legal, operational, stakeholder and reputational considerations intersect.
- Maintain appropriate awareness of significant matters while empowering the Manager and Labour Relations team to operate with appropriate autonomy.

### Collective Bargaining & Collective Agreement Administration

- Lead and support employer-side collective bargaining across VSB's unionized environment.
- Contribute to bargaining strategy, preparation, negotiations and implementation.
- Ensure effective interpretation and administration of collective agreements.
- Support implementation and communication of newly negotiated collective agreement provisions.
- Build organizational readiness for future bargaining cycles through early planning, information gathering and capability development.
- Work effectively with external partners, including the BC Public School Employers' Association.

### Complex Labour Relations Matters

- Provide leadership and advice regarding grievances, employee discipline, workplace investigations, bullying and harassment matters, mediation and arbitration.
- Support complex or sensitive employee relations files requiring senior judgement and discretion.
- Provide strategic guidance regarding human rights complaints and legislative compliance.
- Ensure significant matters are appropriately assessed, documented, escalated and resolved.
- Maintain confidence that labour relations advice and documentation meet a high standard of accuracy, professionalism and organizational credibility.



## DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES | 2 of 2

### Union & Stakeholder Relationships

- Build and maintain respectful, constructive and credible relationships with union partners.
- Represent VSB professionally through difficult conversations, negotiations and disputes.
- Maintain a responsive and service-oriented approach to labour relations matters.
- Establish trusted relationships with District leadership, school leaders, Employee Services colleagues, rights holders and other organizational stakeholders.
- Communicate difficult or complex matters with clarity, empathy and appropriate firmness.
- Maintain the ability to say “no” where necessary while explaining the rationale and exploring practical solutions where reasonable.

### Team Leadership, Coaching & Succession

- Provide leadership to the Manager, Labour Relations and broader Labour Relations team.
- Build capability among senior advisors through coaching, mentorship and meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Involve team members appropriately in arbitration, mediation, bargaining and other complex matters to build organizational depth.
- Establish clear expectations for accountability, quality, responsiveness and follow-through.
- Create an environment where employees are trusted with meaningful responsibility while receiving appropriate support and guidance.
- Strengthen succession readiness within the Labour Relations function.

### Operational Excellence & Change Leadership

- Review current Labour Relations practices, processes, reporting mechanisms and performance measures.
- Identify opportunities to improve quality, consistency, efficiency and accountability.
- Establish appropriate operating disciplines across the portfolio.
- Ensure documents and advice issued on behalf of VSB reflect appropriate accuracy, precision and professionalism.
- Champion constructive change and support the team through evolving expectations.
- Balance immediate operational requirements with longer-term strategic planning.
- Develop and implement relevant training and development initiatives for District leadership to strengthen consistent labour relations practices across VSB.

### Executive & Board Communication

- Prepare and deliver reports, presentations and advice to senior leadership and the Board of Trustees as required.
- Translate complex labour relations matters into clear and decision-ready information.
- Keep the Executive Director and senior leadership appropriately informed of significant issues and emerging trends.
- Exercise discretion and sound judgement regarding when matters require senior escalation.



# QUALIFICATIONS

## Professional Experience

### The successful candidate will bring:

- 7-10 years of progressive professional labour relations experience
- significant experience within complex, highly unionized and multi-collective-agreement environments
- demonstrated experience with collective bargaining and employer-side labour strategy
- strong experience with collective agreement administration and interpretation
- demonstrated experience with grievances, mediation, arbitration and workplace investigations
- experience providing senior-level advice on employee discipline, human rights and labour-related risk
- experience working with senior leadership and complex stakeholder groups
- demonstrated leadership of professional labour relations or employee relations teams
- experience coaching, mentoring and developing other professionals

## Education & Professional Credentials

- A relevant post-secondary degree in Human Resources, Labour Relations, Law or a related field
- CPHR designation
- A relevant graduate degree is considered an asset

## Sector Experience

Experience within K–12 publicly funded education is considered an asset but is not the only pathway to consideration.

KIRAH and VSB are also interested in accomplished labour relations leaders from other sophisticated, highly unionized environments where the complexity is comparable.

### Relevant backgrounds may include:

- post-secondary education
- healthcare
- municipal government
- provincial or broader public sector
- Crown corporations
- federally regulated employers
- other large organizations with sophisticated collective bargaining and labour relations environments

LOCATION: VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Director, Labour Relations is based at the VSB Education Centre, 1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia.

VSB’s published position profile identifies the role as currently 100% in-person. The position is fundamentally an onsite leadership role where accessibility, visibility and connection with colleagues, the Labour Relations team and organizational stakeholders are important.

VSB has indicated that there may be reasonable situational flexibility at the Director level where operationally appropriate; however, candidates should approach the opportunity with the expectation that this is an in-person leadership appointment.

Vancouver offers a globally recognized urban environment combining professional opportunity, cultural diversity, natural surroundings and access to the broader Lower Mainland. KIRAH is open to engaging qualified candidates nationally where relocation to Vancouver is realistic.







The successful Director will bring technical depth, but technical capability alone will not determine success.

**VSB is seeking a leader who demonstrates:**

**Trust & Integrity**

The ability to earn confidence quickly and operate with discretion, professionalism and reliability.

**Accountability**

A willingness to take responsibility for decisions, outcomes and the quality of work produced by the function.

**Emotional & Social Intelligence**

The ability to read situations and people, adapt communication appropriately and navigate difficult issues with maturity.

**Compassion & Respect**

A leadership approach grounded in dignity, empathy and fairness while maintaining appropriate employer accountability.

**Political Acumen**

The judgement to understand organizational context, stakeholder sensitivities and the broader implications of labour relations decisions.

**Coaching & Development**

A genuine commitment to building the capability of others rather than retaining all complex work at the senior level.

**Change Leadership**

Comfort reviewing established practices, identifying opportunities for improvement and leading constructive organizational change.



**Resilience & Optimism**

The ability to remain grounded and constructive within a busy, highly scrutinized public-sector environment.

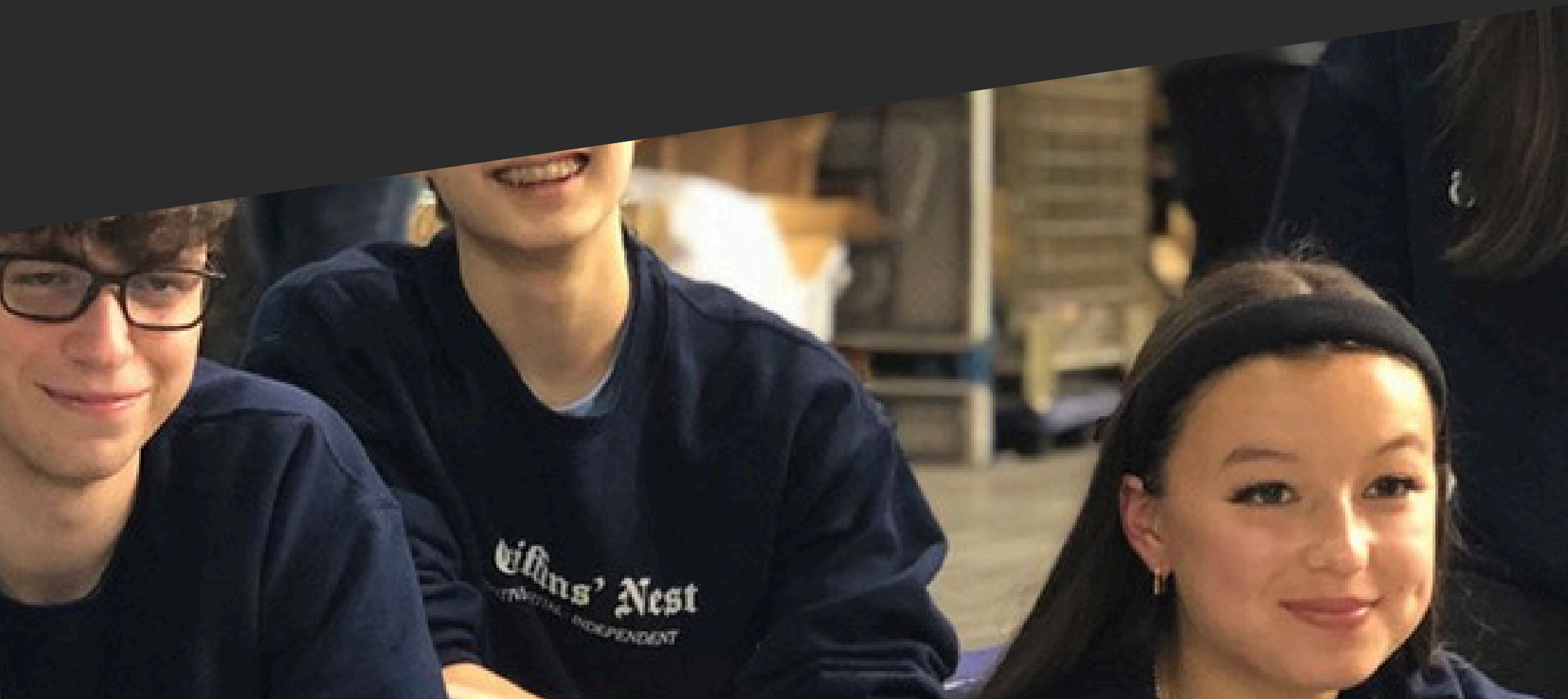
**Strategic Perspective**

The capacity to move beyond immediate files and establish a longer-term vision and operating plan for the Labour Relations portfolio.

**Precision & Professional Standards**

A commitment to high-quality advice, documentation, communication and execution.

## WHY CONSIDER THIS OPPORTUNITY?



For an accomplished labour relations leader, this is an opportunity to influence a significant public institution at an important point in the evolution of its Labour Relations function.

**The successful candidate will have the opportunity to:**

- serve as VSB's senior labour relations leader
- advise executive leadership on complex and consequential issues
- lead within an environment involving 14 collective agreements
- support the implementation and administration of newly negotiated collective agreements
- strengthen the capability and succession depth of the Labour Relations team
- modernize practices, processes and measures
- shape the longer-term strategic direction of the portfolio
- build trusted relationships with unions, District leaders and external partners
- work with an Executive Director who expects significant autonomy and accountability
- contribute to an organization serving more than 50,000 students and supported by more than 7,700 employees

This is not simply an opportunity to administer an established Labour Relations function. It is an opportunity to **strengthen, develop and help shape one.**

# STEPS IN SEARCH PROCESS

## 1. Application & Confidential Expression of Interest

Candidates may apply directly or may be approached confidentially by KIRAH as part of the executive search process.

KIRAH welcomes conversations with qualified leaders who may not be actively seeking a move but are interested in understanding the mandate.

## 2. KIRAH Search Partner Assessment

Candidates progressing through the process will participate in structured discussions with KIRAH.

### Assessment will consider:

- collective bargaining and labour strategy
- labour relations technical depth
- executive judgement and political acuity
- stakeholder credibility
- leadership and coaching capability
- communication
- accountability
- change leadership
- motivation and alignment with the VSB environment

KIRAH will conduct a rigorous assessment before recommending candidates to VSB.

## 3. Presentation to Vancouver School Board

Only candidates KIRAH is prepared to professionally endorse will be presented to VSB.

Recommended candidates will be accompanied by a written KIRAH assessment outlining mandate alignment, strengths, relevant considerations, compensation expectations and Search Partner observations.

Candidates may be presented progressively as the search advances.

## 4. First-Round VSB Interview

The anticipated first stage will include the Executive Director, Employee Services and selected members of VSB's senior management team.

## 5. Final-Round VSB Interview

Final candidates are expected to meet with senior VSB leadership, anticipated to include the Executive Director, Employee Services, the Secretary-Treasurer and the Superintendent.

## 6. References, Final Due Diligence & Appointment

KIRAH will support finalist references, agreed credential or background verification, offer discussions and appointment support through successful conclusion of the search.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

KIRAH Executive Search & Leadership Advisory respects the privacy and confidentiality of all personal information provided by candidates throughout our executive search engagements.

Candidate information is collected and used only for purposes connected with assessing suitability for the opportunity and administering the executive search process.

Information will not be presented to the Vancouver School Board without the candidate's knowledge and appropriate consent.

As the Vancouver School Board is a public body, personal information associated with the recruitment process may also be subject to the requirements of British Columbia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

KIRAH is committed to handling candidate information with discretion, professionalism and appropriate safeguards throughout the search.

By submitting a resume and other relevant information, candidates acknowledge that their information may be used for assessment, reference verification and consideration for the Director, Labour Relations appointment, subject to applicable privacy requirements and appropriate candidate consent.

This Candidate Brief is intended to provide general information regarding the opportunity and does not constitute a contractual agreement. Certain details may be subject to change during the recruitment process.

Questions regarding the search may be directed confidentially to:

KIRAH Executive Search & Leadership Advisory  
[hello@kirahsearch.com](mailto:hello@kirahsearch.com)