

# VEAES WEEKLY

TOPICS WORTH TALKING ABOUT! PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES



## *Table of* CONTENTS

**Happy Holidays - Page 2**

---

**Registering for the VEAES Website Portal - Page 2**

---

**BCTF Health & Wellness Program - Page 3**

---

**wəkwəʔnəs tə syaqwəm: the sun rising over the horizon - Page 4**

---

**Dec 6th Montreal Massacre Memorial - Page 5**

---

**Upcoming New Teachers' Zoom Gathering - Page 5**

---

**Dates to Remember - Page 6**

---

## Happy Holidays

Colleagues,

This holiday, we here at the VEAES office want to appreciate and respect the work that you do in the name of public education, your students, and your colleagues.

We know that your workload is untenable and that you have been working under increased stress, trying to meet the needs of students with not enough support or resources. Yet, you continue to provide rich learning opportunities, foster community care, and make your schools wonderful places to be. We wish you a restful and enjoyable break and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Here are some words from bell hooks that we hope bring you a feeling of the importance of our work in the context of a challenging world, and the struggle for a better one:

"To live our lives based on the principles of a love ethic (showing care, respect, knowledge, integrity, and the will to cooperate), we have to be courageous... Our fear may not go away, but it will not stand in the way. Those of us who have already chosen to embrace a love ethic, allowing it to govern and inform how we think and act, know that when we let our light shine, we draw to us and are drawn to other bearers of light. We are not alone."

### Registering for the VEAES Website Portal

We are still working on our new website and the next phase is setting up our portal where we can house confidential information for members to access. Finally, a secure spot for our committee meeting minutes and agendas, for your reference.

To access the portal, go to the [VEAES website](#) and on the left sidebar there are menu options. Scroll down to Member Portal Log In. When you click on it, there will be a prompt for you to register. After much consideration, we have chosen to use members' VSB employee numbers as the username, as it allows us to verify members. So, you will have to have your VSB employee number ready in order to register for the portal.

Once you are registered and verified, you can access the portal menu, which is located on the left sidebar, under Member Portal. As we move along with our website development, there will be more information added to the Member Portal, so we encourage all members to sign up. If you have any issues with your registration, please email [lori@veaes.ca](mailto:lori@veaes.ca).

## **BCTF Health & Wellness Program**

We know that everyone is ready for the break. It's been a long haul and we've been hearing from more and more members about the effects of working conditions on their physical and mental health. We know that for every member that calls, there are many more who don't make the call, but are in similar situations. We are told that we need to practice more self-care, put ourselves first, and find a healthy work/life balance – which are great in theory, but really hard to implement when your workload just keeps growing and growing.

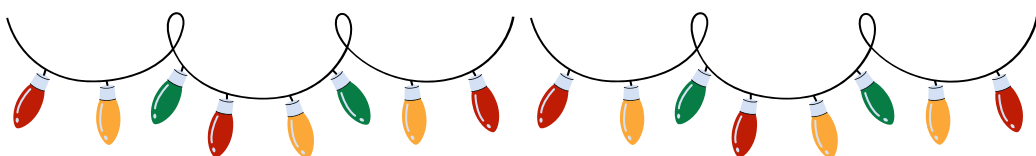
We want to highlight an amazing resource, the [BCTF Health & Wellness Program](#). The program is paid for by your union dues and is accessible to VEAES members. Because it is part of the Income Security Department, there are some barriers for non-contract TTOCs in accessing the program, as they are not eligible to access the Salary Indemnity Fund. As every situation is unique, we encourage those members to fill out the referral form anyway, as there could be some opportunity available to you.

While the program has been used for members on medical leave or receiving a medical accommodation, it can be accessed for so much more. Members don't need to be off work or on disability benefits to participate in the program. A referral can be made on the basis that the member is struggling with a health issue that could result in disability if it is not addressed, or to help members manage their work and wellness in order to remain at work. And after working through the pandemic, we know the effects our mental health has on our overall wellbeing.

You can self-refer or refer another member. The online form is very brief and takes just a minute to fill out. However, sometimes people are so overwhelmed and filling out that form is a barrier. If you are feeling that way, or have a colleague that could use some support, give us a call at the VEAES office, 604-873-8378, and we can make the referral.

After your form has been submitted, you will get a call from someone at Health & Wellness and they go over your submission and ask a few questions as well as answering any of yours. Then you will be contacted by a local rehabilitation consultant who can help set up accommodations, connect you to supports, and be your main contact.

For more information, check out the [webpage](#), where there's a great FAQ section to help guide you. If you have any questions, give the VEAES office a call, 604-873-8378, and we will be happy to assist you.



## wə́kʷaʼnəs tə syaqʷəm: the sun rising over the horizon

wə́kʷaʼnəs tə syaqʷəm is the new name for Begbie Elementary. The school renaming ceremony was held on Friday, December 9th in the new school building. There were members of the Musqueam Council and community present, as well as VSB trustees & senior management, students, staff, and community members.

To open the ceremony, the Musqueam Council called upon the witnesses – Elder Larry Grant, Superintendent Helen MacGregor, and District Principal of Indigenous Education Chas Desjarlais. They were given coins and called on to speak at the end of the ceremony to share what they have witnessed and what they will bring back to their community. And as we know, from our experience with the witness ceremony, that everyone in the room is a witness and so we bring forward this information to you.

Elder Larry Grant addressed the crowd, speaking to [the history of Sir Matthew Begbie](#), known as the Hanging Judge. He addressed Begbie's part in the Chilcotin War of 1864, where members of the Tsilhqot'in Nation were engaged in a battle over construction in their territory. The result of this conflict was the hanging of 6 Tsilhqot'in Chiefs, who came forward to engage in what they were told were peace talks, but were instead seized by colonial militia and put on trial. Elder Larry Grant told the story as he highlighted the importance of acknowledging the truth before there can be reconciliation.

Students then shared their understanding of having this new name gifted to their school community and how it is their responsibility to honour and respect the name. The reverence and thoughtfulness of these students shows how much work was done by their teachers in preparation for the ceremony. The student choir, led by Eartha Ann Hanson, sang a beautiful rendition of the Coast Salish Welcome Song. The VSB then gifted the Musqueam Nation and the school with beautiful paddles carved by Chris Sparrow to signify their connection to each other and how they need to paddle together on this shared journey.

It was such an amazing experience and we look forward to more schools undergoing this process of renaming their schools as we work toward decolonization and commit to the ongoing work of truth and reconciliation.



## Dec 6th Montreal Massacre Memorial

VEAES thanks the members who made it down to the memorial to honour the 14 victims of the Polytechnique Massacre. Gender-based violence is a plague around the world and we stand in solidarity with all those working to build a better world.

In Vancouver, we must make connections between what happened that day in Montreal 1989, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people. Decolonization and continued work towards achieving all recommendations issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is critical if we want such violence to come to an end.



## BCTF Upcoming Zoom Gathering for New Teachers

Teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience are invited to join a Zoom gathering with their new teacher colleagues in the new year. This hour-long virtual gathering will focus on land acknowledgments and give participants an opportunity for discussion in both English and French breakout rooms.

**WHAT:** This free Zoom gathering is an opportunity to connect with new teacher colleagues from across BC on land acknowledgments. Join an open discussion about recognizing and respecting Aboriginal Peoples across time in support of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations.

**WHEN:** 3:30-4:30 pm on Thursday, Jan 17, 2023

**WHO:** Teachers and Teachers Teaching On Call in their first five years of teaching are invited to join. Teacher candidates are also welcome to participate.

**WHERE:** [Click here to register](#) and receive the Zoom link.

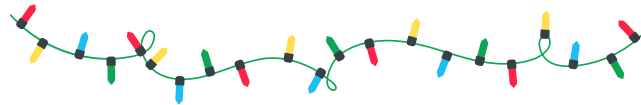
# Dates to Remember

## **Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee Meeting**

January 4, 2023 @ 4:00 PM

### **VEAES Office**

2915 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver, BC V5N 4C8



## **Executive Committee Meeting**

January 10, 2023 @ 4:00 PM

### **VEAES Office**

2915 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver, BC V5N 4C8



Jody Polukoshko  
President

[jody@veaes.ca](mailto:jody@veaes.ca)

Marjorie Dumont  
Vice President

[marjorie@veaes.ca](mailto:marjorie@veaes.ca)

Darren Tereposky  
Vice President

[darren@veaes.ca](mailto:darren@veaes.ca)

Karine Ng  
Vice President

[karine@veaes.ca](mailto:karine@veaes.ca)

Vanessa Lefebvre  
Vice President

[vanessa@veaes.ca](mailto:vanessa@veaes.ca)

Eric Proulx  
Vice President

[eric@veaes.ca](mailto:eric@veaes.ca)

Rob McGowan  
AE President

[rob@veaes.ca](mailto:rob@veaes.ca)

Office:

604-873-8378

[www.vesta.ca](http://www.vesta.ca)



VEAES

The Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators' Society is the union representing elementary teachers and adult educators working in public schools in Vancouver.