

# VEAES WEEKLY

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



## Table of CONTENTS

**VSBS Wellness Updates - Page 2**

**TRC Call to Action #49- Page 2**

**Executive Committee Anti-Oppression Training- Page 3**

**Upcoming School Union Rep Training (SURT) - Page 3**

**Day Plans - Page 3**

**Kindergarten Survey - Page 4**

**New Member to Health & Safety Committee - Page 4**

**Welcome to VEAES - Page 4**

**FESL (Framework for Enhancing Student Learning ) Working Group - Page 5**

**BCTF Systemic Review of Racism Dialogue Series- Page 5**

**BIPOC Affinity Group Gathering - Page 6**

## **VSB Wellness Updates**

The Employer has assured VEAES that members should no longer be told by their EFAP (Employee and Family Assistance Program) that they are only entitled to an X number of sessions. While the program is not meant to provide long-term counselling, and members may be referred out due to their higher needs, the new contract signed between the VSB and LifeWorks in June 2022 is clear that practitioners are not to limit sessions pre-emptively to a specific number.

Members who experience otherwise can provide feedback by emailing [wellness@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:wellness@vsb.bc.ca) directly.

The decline in members' usage of the EFAP program since 2020 has not recovered fully. If you need some confidential support, you can call 1-844-880-9137. Members are encouraged to visit the [VSB Employee Wellness Sharepoint site](#) (you must be logged in to the VSB account in order to access this link) to access information on available opportunities, including upcoming Pro-D workshops on Feb 17, Nutrition month, EFAP workshops, webinars, and other events. In particular, each work site can access up to \$1000 per year to launch a [Healthy Wellness Initiative](#). Members can visit the Sharepoint site and email [wellness@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:wellness@vsb.bc.ca) for more information.

## **TRC Call to Action #49**

At this month's General Meeting, we looked at Call to Action 49, which states: *"We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius."*

The Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius is how Canada stripped Indigenous People and Nations of their sovereignty rights. In response to this Call to Action, there were statements made by different religious organizations denouncing these doctrines, yet the Pope of the Catholic Church has yet to make that statement, which many find is crucial in moving forward with this Call. Here are some resources we've found to help understand this issue if you want to learn more:

<http://courseware.acadiau.ca/trctalk/call-to-action-49/>

<https://www.indigenouswatchdog.org/cta/call-to-action-49/>

[https://nationalpost.com/news/doctrine-of-discovery\\_](https://nationalpost.com/news/doctrine-of-discovery_)

## **Executive Committee Anti-Oppression Training**

At Tuesday's meeting, VEAES' Executive Committee (EC) undertook some anti-oppression training facilitated by Natasha Tony, who has worked with labour unions, social justice organizations, governments, and corporations. We discussed white supremacy culture, cognitive biases, inclusive leadership principles, and racial equity for organizations. It was a full 4 hours of learning, sharing, and unpacking that allowed us to look inward and connect us as a community of people who are working to make our organization more inclusive and equitable.

[Natasha Tony](#) has curated [an amazing bank of anti-oppression resources](#) that she has graciously allowed us to share with you all. Please take a moment to peruse this library of inspiring & informative videos, podcasts, audiobooks, and articles to further your own learning. There is a wide variety of topics covered and some really good Canadian content.

### **Upcoming School Union Rep Training (SURT)**

As part of our annual training and support for VEAES Staff Reps, we will be conducting our usual School Union Rep Training on February 1st and 2nd. A message was sent out to Staff Reps on January 16th.

Due to availability of TTOCs and space at the VEAES office, we are unable to accommodate switches in days. Consistent with our work on member engagement and union renewal, please invite an early career teacher or another member at your worksite to attend if you are unable to make it. If you haven't yet registered, please RSVP to [andrea@veaes.ca](mailto:andrea@veaes.ca)

## **Day Plans**

We've had some questions lately about the responsibility to leave day plans for a teacher covering an absence. This has been particularly difficult for those sites where there is an unfilled vacancy. This means that there can be different teachers working in the classroom from one day to the next. In order to support each other, as colleagues and professionals, please take the time to provide some notes and a plan for the following day when you are covering a class.

We acknowledge that this is difficult when non-enrolling teachers are being redirected to cover these classes, as they already have their duties that need to be fulfilled. And we know that sometimes there is more than one non-enrolling teacher covering a class in one day. If this is something that is an ongoing issue at your school site, please contact the VEAES office so that we can work to find some solutions.

## **Kindergarten Survey**

This is a reminder that the Working and Learning Conditions and Bargaining (WLCB) Committee has created a survey for Kindergarten teachers regarding their working conditions, gradual entry, and student readiness. **We encourage all Kindergarten teachers to fill out the survey [here](#).** The survey will be closed on Monday, January 30th.

The WLCB Committee will be looking at the data collected at their next meeting on Wednesday, February 15th, 4pm at the VEAES office (2915 Commercial Drive). **We invite Kindergarten teachers to come to the meeting and be a part of the discussion.** If you have any questions, please contact the WLCB Committee Chair, Kate Zisman, [kate@veaes.ca](mailto:kate@veaes.ca).

## **New Member to Health & Safety Committee**

Are you a new member to your Joint Occupational Health & Safety Ctte (JOHS)? If so, the employer is required by WorkSafe BC to provide one day of mandatory training for all new members of your site-based committee. While the first session is today, they do have another session running on Tuesday, January 31st. You can find the info on the [Pro-D site](#). Spots are filling up, so register soon!

We would also like to highlight the [BCTF's Health & Safety handbook](#) that is a great resource for members to learn more about their Health & Safety rights in their workplace.

## **Welcome to VEAES**

We held a new member welcome on Wednesday at the VEAES office. It was great to meet new members and hear about their experiences as early career teachers. We talked about being a part of a union, their rights as workers, and introduced them to our Collective Agreement.

We want to thank the members of our EC who came out to help welcome our members. Shout out to VEAES members who encouraged our new members to attend, and a big THANK YOU to our new members who came out to learn more about their union! We hope to see you more of you at future events.

This is a reminder that all members are welcome at VEAES Standing Committee meetings and we encourage you to find a committee that resonates with you:

Working and Learning Conditions and Bargaining, TTOC, Health & Safety, Aboriginal Education, Professional Issues, Social Justice and Solidarity, and Communications. We always welcome new voices at the table, who are able to share their perspectives & experiences, which helps up become a stronger as a collective. Check out the [VEAES website](#) for more info on these committees.



## **FESL (Framework for Enhancing Student Learning.) Working Group**

The FESL Working Group is a stakeholder and VSB staff working group convened to serve in an advisory capacity on matters relating to the implementation /reporting of the [District's FESL](#). As a stakeholder, VEAES has a seat at this table. If you are interested in representing VEAES on this working group, please fill in the following [CV](#).

The working group will meet (online/TEAMS) between March and June, with the first meeting on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, from 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm.

Followed by:

Wednesday, March 29, 3:30 – 5:30 pm - SEL

Wednesday, April 19, 3:30 – 5:30 pm – Literacy + Numeracy

Wednesday, May 10, 3:30 – 5:30 pm - Indigenous Learners

Wednesday, May 24, 3:30 – 5:30 pm - Data General

Thursday, June 22, 3:30 – 5:30 pm – Report Overview

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## **BCTF Systemic Review of Racism Dialogue Series**

The BCTF has a longstanding commitment to work toward creating an equitable and anti-racist union where all members' voices are included and valued. In working to uphold this commitment, the newly created BCTF Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Office (ARAOO) will be conducting a systemic review of racism within the Federation. This review is designed to be an organizational self-assessment with the aim of identifying current gaps and opportunities for improvement moving forward.

The [dialogue sessions](#) included in this review are an opportunity for the BCTF to collaborate with all members, including specific sessions for members who are Aboriginal or Indigenous, Black, and people of colour, on necessary systemic changes to make our union more inclusive and accessible. All members are invited to join a dialogue session and share their experience, expertise, and ideas for dismantling systemic racism within the BCTF.

At this time, there are eight dialogue sessions scheduled to take place on select Fridays in February, March, and April. It is important that all interested members have an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas, so additional sessions may be added in the coming weeks.

You can complete your [expression of interest](#) to participate in a dialogue session [here](#). To learn more about the work of the BCTF ARAOO, and to read additional details about the dialogue sessions, visit the systemic review of racism project [webpage](#).

Meaningful, systemic change that addresses barriers to participation and experiences of racism is imperative in achieving racial justice in union spaces and strengthening our union.

## **BIPOC Affinity Group Gathering**

This is an open invitation for members who self-identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour to gather on Monday January 30 at the VEAES office, 4-6pm.

We will enact decolonization and indigenization by beginning with a circle and learning how to weave. Gifting, reciprocity and relationships are key to the cultures of the host nations. Attending members can expect to connect, share stories, and relax in the therapeutic tactile activity. Food will be provided, so please RSVP [karine@veaes.ca](mailto:karine@veaes.ca) or [marjorie@veaes.ca](mailto:marjorie@veaes.ca)

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## **Dates to Remember**

### **Professional Issues**

#### **Committee Meeting**

Monday, January 30th at 3:30 pm

#### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82176848299>

Meeting ID: 821 7684 8299

Passcode: 854045

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

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### **Social Justice & Solidarity**

#### **Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, January 31st at 4:00 pm

#### **VEAES Office**

2915 Commercial Drive

Vancouver, BC V5N 4C8

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### **Executive**

#### **Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, February 7th at 4:00pm

#### **VEAES Office**

2915 Commercial Drive

Vancouver, BC V5N 4C8

VEAES

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