

VEAES WEEKLY

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



Table of CONTENTS

In Memoriam: Rossanne Tanner and Maureen MacDonald - Page 2 & 3

Black History Month - Page 4

SURT - Page 4

BCTF AGM - Page 4

TTOC Access to Technology - Page 5

Health & Safety Training for Committee Members - Page 5

BCTF Group RRSP - Page 8

Extended Health Benefits Voting Timeline & Survey - Page 6, 7 & 8

VEAES Resource Teacher Task Force - Page 8

Dates to Remember - Page 9

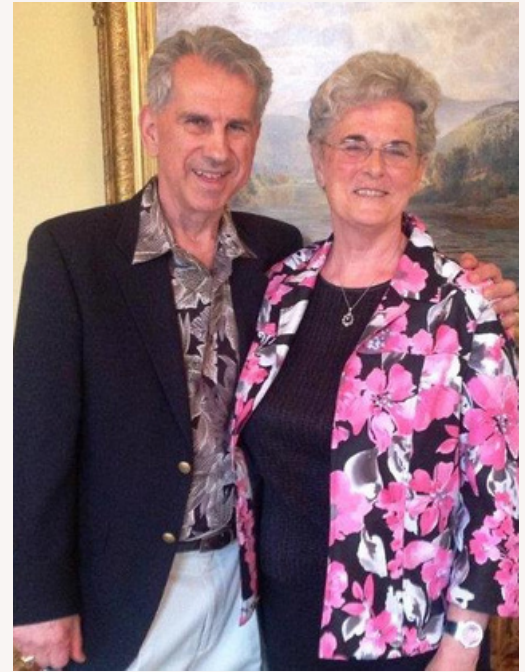
In Memoriam

VEAES members are grieving the loss of two important women who were influential in the historical and current work of the union. We have lost both Rossanne Tanner and Maureen MacDonald this winter, and we know these two touched the lives of so many of our members.

Rossanne Tanner

Rossanne Tanner served as office staff at VESTA / VEAES as Executive Assistant and guided so many of us through our work at the union with her indomitable commitment to the principles and values of VEAES. Rossanne was, for many, the steady face of VEAES in meetings, on the phone, and most importantly, behind the scenes, making sure that our policy and documents reflected the beliefs and positions of VEAES members.

Rossanne, as a long term office staff, also provided important continuity – and was very patient and supportive of new elected officers – a key component of a strong, sustainable union.



Rossanne worked tirelessly to be a lifelong learner, along with those of us who worked with her, learning new technology and applications, and merging them with her traditional skills – She could take notes using formal shorthand stenography or on a keyboard with equal acumen! When Rossanne retired, VEAES honoured her with the first ever non-member VEAES Honourary Life Membership.

Those of us who worked with Rossanne remember her careful attention to detail, deep-rooted professionalism, and continuous efforts to improve VEAES for our members and our students. At the same time, Rossanne was light-hearted, friendly and her relationships were central to her work. She had strong opinions, but was open to new ways of doing things, and was quite adventurous in many ways. One of Rossanne's passions was her study and practice of Ikebana flower arrangement. She often brought her creations to work for her colleagues to enjoy, volunteering to create arrangements for VEAES events. While she understood our strong emotions, and often held them herself, swearing was one thing that Rossanne could not abide, and made her feelings on this matter known to the VEAES Executive Committee.

At Rossanne's retirement party, she spoke of her pride at having contributed to the provision of an excellent public education system, and her feelings of appreciation and support for VEAES members and teachers. VEAES and Rossanne grew together in so many ways over the years. She will be missed greatly.

Continued on Page 3

Maureen MacDonald

Maureen MacDonald was VEAES President from 1985-1988, but her contributions to teachers and public education span decades. Maureen served terms on the BCTF Executive Committee, on BCTF Staff, and in various other roles on the VEAES Executive.

During Maureen's term, members in Vancouver became the Vancouver Teachers' Federation as per the Industrial Relations Council, and she sat on several rounds of local bargaining for VEAES, opposite the Vancouver School Board. Many key provisions were negotiated from her efforts and to this date, she continues to hold the honour of having the most tightly packed and cryptic bargaining notes in the history of the organization.



Prior to VEAES hosting a website, Maureen would read informational messages to the membership, that were recorded on cassette tape, for members to call in and listen to. These recordings included issues the union was working on, the efforts of VEAES committees, and upcoming events and meetings.

Maureen's voice did more than update, her work with other musical BCTF colleagues framed some of the BCTF's most effective and member-focused outreach and mobilization efforts.

Maureen and other VEAES and BCTF members wrote and performed original songs alongside the reliable and timeless staples of union organizing. Her performances continued well into her retirement at BCTF, VEAES and community events. She also had a hand in the creation and publishing of VEAES and BCTF newsletters and magazines.

Maureen's keen eye for Collective Agreement Language and for proofreading continued through into her retirement through her photography. Her artwork has been used by VEAES to appreciate, recognize, and acknowledge the political and relational work that we do in the context of the wider educational and union communities. Her labour and support in municipal politics and the arts community connected her passions and her work in ways that expanded our shared objectives and brought friends together under one banner.

Maureen was more than a union mentor, even though many of us know her through this work. She was also a dedicated teacher, who supported, encouraged and mentored teacher candidates and early career teachers to lifelong careers contributing to public education, as well as sharing the skills she learned teaching, organizing and leading with others. She was generous with her knowledge and reached out to new union leadership and to offer support and camaraderie.

Maureen believed deeply in the lifelong contributions of all educators and attended VEAES and BCTF Annual General Meetings into the 2020s, providing experience, context and guidance each year. Many of us do the work the way we do because of Maureen's support, encouragement, and willingness to share.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month – a time for us to focus on learning more about Black History in Canada, to acknowledge the impacts of racism, and to celebrate the many contributions of Black Canadians in our communities. The Social Justice & Solidarity Committee has curated some resources for you to consider as you plan the month ahead:

[Black History in Canada](#)

[BC Black History](#)

[I Love My Hair \(read aloud\)](#)

[Periodic Table of Canadian Black History](#)

[Black Strathcona](#)

[Secret Vancouver: Return to Hogan's Alley](#)

We look forward to hearing about the work that is happening in schools around Black History Month. If you have any resources or projects you'd like to share, please contact vanessa@veaes.ca.

SURT

A big shout out to our Staff Reps who attended our School Union Rep Training last week @ the VEAES office. We had great discussions about organizing at our sites, preparing for the next round of bargaining, our Collective Agreement, and member engagement. We had a good cross-section of new and experienced Staff Reps who brought in their perspective from primary, intermediate, and non-enrolling roles. We channelled our frustration about our untenable working conditions and strategized on actions we can take at our sites, at our local, and at the BCTF. Check in with your Staff Rep, attend your next site-based VEAES meeting, and stay tuned for ways to engage!

BCTF AGM

There are still some spots left on VEAES' delegation to the BCTF AGM, which is held during Spring Break from March 18-21st. If you are interested in being a delegate, you can submit a [CV](#) or run from the floor at the GM on Tuesday, Feb 14th @ 4pm in the cafeteria at Tupper Secondary. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues from all over the province and discuss important issues that affect us all. The decisions that come out of the AGM direct the work of the BCTF Executive, so it is important that we bring forward the issues from our local. Accommodations, expenses, and childcare are provided. If you have any further questions, contact karine@veaes.ca.

TTOC Access to Technology

With the rollout of the new laptops last year, there are now devices (laptops or tablets) available at each school for TTOC use during the school day. They are usually held at the office, so check with the office staff when you arrive. Depending on the school and the number of TTOCs called in that day, you may need to share a device. Check in with your colleague and your day plan to determine your tech needs for the day. Please email vanessa@veaes.ca if you encounter a school that has no laptops/devices available for TTOCs.

Health & Safety Training for Committee Members

All Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee members (new and continuing) are invited to attend **ONE** of the following ½ day training sessions held in-person at the VSB Education Centre.

February 23, 2023 - 8:30am – 11:30am, VSB Education Centre, Room 180

February 28, 2023 -12:30pm – 3:30pm, VSB Education Centre, Room 180

Topics that will be covered in the above sessions include:

- Fire Safety
- Bloodborne Pathogen Training
- Workplace Violence Environmental Site Risk Assessment

Register on the VSB Pro-D site: <https://prod.vsb.bc.ca/> The training session is located under Health and Safety. **After registering for the training, you will immediately receive a confirmation on your screen and sent to your email account.** If this does not occur, please check that your java scripts are enabled or try registering with another browser. For further assistance, contact prodreg@vsb.bc.ca.

BCTF Group RRSP

One of the benefits of being a BCTF member is the ability to contribute to a group RRSP. All BCTF members have access to group RRSPs. BCTF Group RRSPs have four distinct advantages. First, they allow contributions at source, which is a convenient way to invest. Second, no tax is paid on the monies invested, so there is no waiting period for getting the tax deduction. Third, funds invested earn interest through the year. Finally, the plans available to members offer both a variety of investment options and some funds not regularly available.

March 1, 2023, is the deadline for contributing to an RRSP for the 2022 tax year. Please contact your school district's payroll department, payrollandbenefits@vsb.bc.ca, to learn more about your BCTF Group RRSP.

Extended Health Benefits Voting Timeline & Survey

Please review the information that was sent to all members earlier this week regarding the Extended Health Benefits Plan **vote** that is upcoming.

The [attached document](#) that outlines a few key differences between the [two EHB plans](#) and ensure you are casting an informed vote at the end of this month. The email from VEAES on Tuesday includes links to information on the provincial plan and comparisons to our current plan that will help you ask relevant and informed questions.

How to direct your questions ahead of the EHB plan vote:

If you have questions for Pacific Blue Cross about how the provincial benefits plan works, please submit those using the survey sent out on Tuesday, and plan to attend or watch the virtual information session

For example:

- which medications are covered by Blue Rx and how do I add a medication to the list?
- what happens if you've already been on a medication that is not covered by the provincial plan?
- how long do I have to try out the lower-cost alternatives before receiving my doctor prescribed treatment?
- How does PBC arrive at Reasonable and Customary limits for practitioner fees?

If you have questions for your union or want to discuss the choices with other members, please plan to attend the VTF information session on February 22nd at 4pm at Tupper.

For example:

- How does our current plan work for _____?
- Why is our current / the provincial plan
- Can someone with experience under the provincial plan speak to their experience?
- How and where are benefits negotiated? How can we make a change to the plan(s)?
- Expressing your perspective and/or debate

Continued on Page 7

Extended Health Benefits Voting Timeline & Survey (continued)

If you have an opinion about something that *should* be covered, put Fall 2024 in your calendar, because that is the next opportunity to provide input for the upcoming round of bargaining, where benefits changes are made.

It's important to remember that this vote and the information sessions do not have the ability to provide new benefit coverage or to alter the coverage of either the local or the provincial plans.

Important dates in PBC vote:

Today:

Read and review the communications from Tuesday and participate in the VEAES survey to collect questions for next week's virtual session with Pacific Blue Cross.

This survey <https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/s.aspx?s=a23173f4-1803-46c9-b1e2-5c6055d95521> is open until February 12 but please be aware that questions submitted after end of day, Friday, February 10, may not be provided to Pacific Blue Cross in advance. They will be used to help inform the information provided at the session on Feb 22.

- Given the likelihood of overlap in member concerns, we may collate or combine questions as appropriate.
- Questions that refer to very specific personal or individual medication or medical conditions should be directed to Pacific Blue Cross directly, and will not be asked at this meeting.

February 13, 2023, 4pm, Zoom:

The online meeting on Feb 13th will be recorded and available for later viewing. It is a session where the VTF invited Pacific Blue Cross and the insurer to answer member questions specifically about the provincial plan and to provide information regarding Pacific Blue Cross policy and practice.

This meeting, while hosted by the VTF, is in webinar format to maximize the number of attendees, and therefore will not be a place for discussion or debate. This is an opportunity to hear about the workings of the provincial plan and Pacific Blue Cross as part of your deliberations.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87929397660?pwd=VDhXaE9LV1paeHk4aWFOWmFsSGc1QT09>

Passcode: VTF

Webinar ID: 879 2939 7660

Passcode: 552517

Extended Health Benefits Voting Timeline & Survey (continued)

February 22, 2023, 4pm, Tupper Secondary:

The in-person session at Tupper Secondary will provide an opportunity for members to talk with one another and to ask questions of the union. It will not be a decision-making meeting, but as always, we learn from one another's experiences, perspectives, questions and knowledge.

February 27 7AM - February 28, 7PM, 2023, Simply Voting Electronic Platform

The vote will be conducted virtually on February 27-28. Please ensure your contact information is up to date by emailing lori@veaes.ca

All active members (K-12, Adult Educators, TTOCs, members on leave) should receive a link to vote on Feb 26th at or after 11PM. It will be sent to the email that VEAES has on file for you. You will receive an email with voting instructions on February 24th.

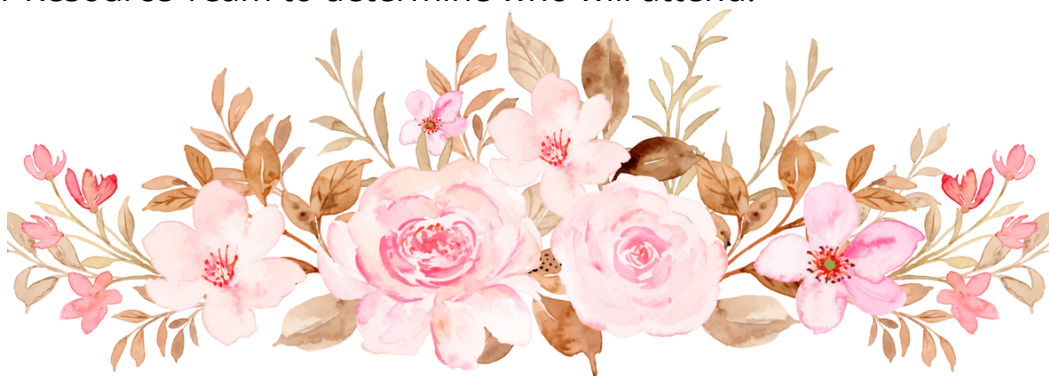
If you have not yet received a voting link and have checked all of your email folders, email lori@veaes.ca

VEAES Resource Teacher Task Force

Efforts to identify, shine a light on, and resolve the workload impacts of the teacher and SSSW shortage and COVID continue, and the VEAES Executive Committee is seeking members currently working in Resource positions to join a Task Force to consider issues related to provision of service and lack of support for vulnerable students. We know that Resource Teachers are at the nexus of many aspects and well placed to comment on workload, service models, reassignment resulting from the employer's failure to fill employee absences.

We will be providing a ½ day of release time with a TTOC for up to one Resource Teacher per school to attend a session at the VEAES Office on the morning of Friday, March 3rd, to discuss the challenges facing Vancouver Schools. There will be opportunities for additional virtual and after school sessions to continue the work of this meeting, but we hope to hear from diverse voices across the city.

Staff Reps will be provided information about this opportunity early next week, and more information will be provided in next week's VEAES Weekly, but please hold conversations among your Resource Team to determine who will attend.





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Dates to Remember

Aboriginal Education Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 9th at 4:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82564937734>

Meeting ID: 825 6493 7734

Passcode: 847553

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

Communications Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 9th at 4:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86910910100>

Meeting ID: 869 1091 0100

Passcode: 005533

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly

Tuesday, February 14th at 4:00pm

@ Tupper Secondary School - Cafeteria
419 E 24th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5V 2A2

Teachers' Teaching On Call Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 @ 4:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85739614325>

Meeting ID: 857 3961 4325

Passcode: 109075

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 @ 4:00 PM

@ VEAES Office

2915 Commercial Drive, Vancouver

VEAES

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