

May 2023

VEAES NEWS

Elect your 2023-2024
Executive Committee

Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators' Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 @ 4 pm

Van Dusen Botanical Garden
Peggy Gunn Woodland
Hall A & B
5251 Oak St. Vancouver

Social to follow the AGM
Please RSVP to hitomi@veaes.ca



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AGM AGENDA

VEAES gives thanks and recognizes that this meeting takes place on the stolen, unceded joint territory of the x̣ẉṃə̣θ̣ḳẉə̣ỵəṃ (Musqueam), Səlilwətał (Tseil Waututh), and Ṣḳẉx̣ẉụ́7̣mesh (Squamish) Nations.

Truth and Reconciliation – Call to Action

1. Adoption of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes – May 17, 2022

3. VEAES's President Report

4. VEAES Bylaw Changes

5. Budget

6. Election of Executive Committee & Alternate Local Reps for 2023/2024

7. Honourary Life Membership

8. Recognition of Executive Committee Members

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jody Polukoshko

VEAES President



Colleagues,

I'm so proud to be writing to you as the President of the Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators Association. This union has always been a place where many of us feel belonging, connection, a sense of safety, and a supportive community. Over the years that I have been in and out of this local office, it has become increasingly essential that this union continues to be driven and directed by members. It's also become clear that our diverse identities need to be woven integrally into the way we organize. We are members with disabilities, Indigenous members, parenting members, members of Colour, menopausal members, members who care for elder parents, queer and transgender members, members experiencing income and housing insecurity, and newcomer members, among a myriad other identities. Each of these identities must be part of our relationship with our employer and our colleagues. Each of these identities is also connected to our collective agreement rights, must be protected, and are an integral component of how we organize.

We are at a crucial crossroads in the global labour movement. We have seen the strong and united efforts of our colleagues in the United States pushing back against right wing legislation, austerity funding, and the rise of white supremacy. These efforts can only be successful when the members of organizations are in dialogue, building not just capacity, but a sense of unity, and a shared vision. I want to be clear – this does not mean we have to agree all the time on all matters – healthy debate and disagreement are what makes us strong!

The kind of unity that is, in my view, the most important part of union organizing, is the understanding of the union as belonging to the members. VEAES has never aspired to be a service-provision union, where experts solve problems for members. Instead, we believe members' experiences, creativity, and initiative hold the solutions to the challenges we face. We strive towards a transformational union, one which changes our workplace and the world for the better. Just like those old "I am the BCTF" buttons from 2005, the members are VEAES. And it's more important than ever that members take ownership and responsibility for our work in the world.

Not all members will participate or contribute in the same way, but there are so many ways to shape the direction of your union. Joining a committee that speaks to your passion may be accessible, but participating in task forces, sharing your opinion with your staff rep, helping to convey information, reaching out to struggling colleagues with support, decolonizing in your classroom and your school, being a mentor, reading emails, developing relationships with families, connecting your work to your working conditions ... these are all important contributions to a strong and sustainable union.

In the lead up to the next round of bargaining, it's more important than ever that we build strong communications and connections with one another and our allies and potential allies. Our success at future bargaining tables will only ever be due to our commitment and solidarity. We know that the existing working and learning conditions, including class size and composition, non-enrolling ratios, are insufficient, and teachers desperately need respite. There's an old saying among bargainers, "You don't get what you want – you get what you bargain" and this speaks to the fact that strong collective language is the only defense against untenable working conditions and protection of our rights.

As we continue to move through the COVID era, please consider the central role of your union in improving, enforcing, and defending your rights, and your place within that union. The union belongs to you. You are VEAES.

In solidarity,

Jody

Supporting Financial Documents

Proposed Budget for VEAES, 2023-2024, Recommended by VEAES EC

This year and last year have provided an opportunity for VEAES to look deeply into our financial stewardship and to make decisions not only on the months ahead, but for the future. There are a number of factors that impact our decisions about budgeting, and the past few years have presented challenges to predictability in that our costs and estimates are variable. This is, in part, due to COVID recovery and a return to in-person meetings and planning for uncertainty, the purchase of our new building, which creates pressure in the immediate future, but relief in the long term for our organization, as well as the global increase in costs and services experienced by all member-serving organizations.

You'll see in the budget below that the VEAES Finance Committee is recommending a budget that will cover expenses related to the purchase of the Yukon building and sale of the Commercial Drive building, increases in costs of supplies, food, and meeting spaces, prioritizing member support and engagement, without recommending an increase in our local fee. It's key to remember when you review this document that the Year to Date information reflects the fact that many of the BCTF grants that support our operation are claimed later in the year, that the VSB invoices us for expenses and release days throughout the year, and that many expenses have yet to be received by the organization – while they help us to predict future expenses, they rarely tell the whole story.

This budget is largely status quo in terms of overall allocations, but the way it is represented has been revamped. This budget is streamlined in ways that we hope create greater transparency and access for members and VEAES Staff. The key ways this budget is different are highlighted on the first page, but include: consolidation of similar and related line items, improved ability to predict and save for expenses that are irregular in nature, and budgeting that incorporates BCTF grants.

As with most budgets like ours, the largest component is salary and benefits, which include your elected Table Officers as well as our four office staff members. While the desire was to increase the number of In House officers to help support and coordinate the work of the union, the decision was to maintain the status quo at 5.4 FTE. As you know, over the three year term of our current Collective Agreement, there are annual increases to the salary grid, and this impacts the cost of releasing full time officers, union reps, and TTOC costs. However, it also increases our overall revenues, as we receive dues generated by a percentage rate (VEAES' is 0.88%) of member salary. Please note that when we budget for In House Table Officers, we do so without knowing who will be elected to these positions, so those salaries are calculated at the top of the grid, as well as including what is traditionally the employer's share of the benefits and pension contributions.

The Societies Act requires that we circulate information connected to our audit and budget 14 days ahead of the Annual General Meeting. To this end, we are providing the paper copy of this budget to each member through inter-school mail, circulating it through our one-per-member email list, and hosting the documents on our website.

We are asking for your support to ensure this information is widely distributed. This budget belongs to members and it is your dues that fund this organization. We hope to see you at the VEAES Annual General Meeting and look forward to your engagement on this important matter!

VEAES Finance Committee

Glen Hansman, Marjorie Dumont, Jody Polukoshko, Hitomi Maruyama-Prasad

[To view the Proposed Budget for VEAES, 2023-2024, Recommended by VEAES EC online, click here](#)

Motions to the VEAES AGM

Executive Committee Motions to the VEAES AGM May 16, 2023

Bylaw II - MEMBERSHIP

1 (a) Active Members: All BCTF members in elementary schools, and adult education centres in Vancouver. Active members also include BCTF members working in district positions, itinerant positions, Provincial Resource Programs, and secondary schools. Only Active Members shall be entitled to vote and to hold office. All BCTF members working in Vancouver adult education centres are also members of the VEAES Adult Educators' Sublocal.

Supporting statement

This by-law amendment addresses the errors of omission in the current by-law, that only makes reference to elementary schools, district positions, and Adult Educators. We know that there are VEAES members who work in PR, itinerant, and secondary schools, and this amendment better allows VEAES to represent members in these roles, as well as ensuring clarity for new members and our partner groups.

Bylaw III - OFFICERS & EC - COMPOSITION

1 (b) The Table Officers of the Society shall be a President, the Vice-President(s), a Secretary-Treasurer, Local ~~Association~~ Representatives to the BCTF, and the Immediate Past President. The Adult Education President shall be considered to be a VEAES Vice President. For clarity, no person shall hold more than one of these roles.

Supporting statement

This by-law amendment simply changes the language to reflect the current BCTF policy and procedures. The reference in by-law and III 1(d) refer to obsolete language and this makes our by-laws consistent across local and provincial unions.

Bylaw III - OFFICERS & EC - COMPOSITION

1 (d) The Executive Committee may appoint an alternate or alternates for Local ~~Association~~ Representatives. For clarity, no person holding a role listed in (b) above shall be appointed as alternate.

Supporting statement

See above

Bylaw III - OFFICERS & EC - DUTIES

2 (a) The President shall be the presiding Table Officer of the Society and ~~Chairperson~~ of the Executive Committee. The President shall be a member ex officio of all Standing Committees and of all Sections of the Society. At the Annual General Meeting, the President shall report on the activities of the Society for the preceding year. The President shall conduct and have charge of the correspondence, both internal and external, of the Society, and shall issue notices of meetings. No notice of the activities of the Society shall be binding and official unless issued over the President's signature.

Supporting statement

The President does not chair the Executive Committee, and hasn't, for about 20 years. The current practice is to build capacity and train various EC members in chairing and to rotate that work among EC members throughout and across years. This amendment makes it consistent with current practice and does not change other aspects of the role of the President.

Motions to the VEAES AGM

Executive Committee Motions to the VEAES AGM May 16, 2023

Bylaw III – OFFICERS & EC – POWERS

3 (b) Whenever any vacancy shall occur in the Executive Committee or any office of the Society by death, resignation, acceptance of a full time position outside of the local, suspension or expulsion from the Federation or otherwise, the vacancy shall be filled by an Executive Committee appointment until the next Annual General Meeting. If any member of the Executive Committee shall, without reasonable excuse, be absent from three consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall declare the office vacated. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to fill such vacancies. If any member of the Executive Committee applies for a job in management, the Executive Committee will declare the office vacated. The Executive Committee will be empowered to fill such vacancies.

Supporting statement

This amendment should be read with the proposed amendment to Bylaw III 7. The effort here is to ensure that all EC members and officers of the union are currently working and an active member of the bargaining unit. The majority of the former Bylaw III -7 has been imported here for clarity, as this bylaw speaks to requirement to participate and absences, as well as the process to fill any vacancies created by EC members taking positions outside of the bargaining unit or lack of consistent attendance at meetings. This is to ensure fair and informed membership on the Executive Committee and to the BCTF.

Bylaw III – OFFICERS & EC – TERM OF OFFICE

5 (a) The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a term of one year and shall take office on the first day of August of each year, ~~but the term of office of all Table Officers shall continue until successors are elected.~~

Supporting statement

This bylaw amendment is consistent with other VEAES by-laws and policies, including the proposed new bylaw III 5(b) that sets term limits for elected officers. The existing by-law seems contrary to the spirit of union renewal and sustainability, and there is already a process for filling vacant EC positions in our by-laws.

NEW Bylaw III – OFFICERS & EC – TERM OF OFFICE

5 (b) The aforementioned is subject to the following: No VEAES member shall occupy any combination of full time release positions for more than six (6) consecutive years; and, no VEAES member shall occupy the position of President for more than three (3) consecutive years.

Supporting statement

This new bylaw creates term limits for In House Table Officers. This reflects the current practice that has been observed for many years, however, we have yet to put it into our bylaws. This new bylaw will create clear parameters that anticipate elected members holding a variety of roles within the organization, but ensuring that plans for union sustainability and renewal are front of mind. It also ensures that teachers working in the VEAES office have recent teaching experience and helps keep our union connected to the classroom. The goal is also to ensure sustainable turnover of elected officers such that mentorship and support can be ensured.

Motions to the VEAES AGM

Executive Committee Motions to the VEAES AGM May 16, 2023

Bylaw III – OFFICERS & EC – MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE

~~7 If any member of the Executive Committee shall, resign from office, or without reasonable excuse, be absent from three consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee, or be suspended or expelled from the Federation, the Executive Committee shall declare the office vacated. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to fill such vacancies.~~

Should any member of the Executive Committee take a leave of absence which precludes them from working for the Vancouver School Board, they shall be deemed to be ineligible to hold office.

Supporting statement

Read with the amendments to bylaw III 3(b), this connects the two by-laws to clarify that members on leave or no longer working for the VSB cannot hold Executive Office.

By-law IX – AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

The Society may in General Meeting assembled amend or alter the Constitution and Bylaws providing that notice of such meeting shall be given fourteen (14) days in advance and shall clearly state the amendment(s) of the Constitution and Bylaws which is/are to be considered. The majority required to amend the Constitution or any Bylaw shall be a ~~three-fourths~~ two-thirds majority of the Active Members present and voting at such a meeting.

Supporting statement

This change, which would result in a lower threshold for constitutional change would make VEAES consistent with the BCTF, who made this same change at the 2023 Annual General Meeting on the advice of legal counsel. This brings us into better compliance with the Societies Act and will allow VEAES clarity and consistency in addressing necessary changes to bylaws and our constitution.

2023–2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINEES

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THIS YEAR'S NOMINEES](#)