

2023-2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINEES



Jody Polukoshko

President

Colleagues, I am committed to this local and the work of representing members and defending our collective rights. It has never been clearer how important it is to have our rights enshrined in the collective agreement, and this means both improving, enforcing, and defending those rights. VEAES has always been strong in connecting collective bargaining rights to our members' working conditions, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other emergent matters in the coming year.



Karine Ng

Vice-President (10.5 months)

Now, more than ever, is transformative social change needed. What better way to do this important collective work than from within a teachers union? I am honoured and privileged to have been invited into VEAES by welcoming and supportive members. The core principles that guide my work are decolonization, member engagement, and defense for public education. I believe leadership requires equal parts humility, courage, and accountability. With your endorsement, I will strive to make new and deepen existing connections with rank-and-file members, and continue to build relationships with stakeholders such as parents, trustees, and community groups.



Marjorie Dumont

Vice-President (10.5 months)

The protocol of introducing oneself to others is vital to my cultural teachings and so, I share this with you. Dini ze, ts'ake ze, skiy ze, Hadih, So'endzin. Gin Tabi honzoo. C'tan sozi. Sne Wila'at endzin. Sbeb Wah tah ghet endzin. N'iwh Dini ze' cho Na'moks endzin (Male chiefs, female chief, sons and Daughters of the chiefs. Greetings, how are you? Today is a great day. My name is C'tan. My mother's name is chief Wila'at, and my late father's name is chief Wah tah ghet. My house chief's name is Na'moks. I belong to the Tsayu Beaver clan of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation. My roots are also Gitksan.

I would like to acknowledge I am a visitor on the ancestral, unceded and stolen territory of the SkWa-wu7mesh, Saailwata?/Selilwitulh and xwma0kwayam Nations. I am grateful and blessed to live and work on the beautiful land and water that they have been stewards of since time immemorial.

I am humbled and honoured to put my name forward again for Vice-President. It is with great privilege and honour to learn and unlearn from the students, parents and colleagues. The stories of the teachers give me strength and courage to facilitate the change needed for a just system for all. One of my most rewarding roles the past year was to infuse some of the Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing into everything we do in the Union.

My commitment to the teaching profession, and to representing Vancouver elementary teachers is connected to a number of my values. My elders have told me that I am gifted with the ability to pull people together, to listen, and to know when to speak. As a Wet'suwet'en woman, I bring my deep, lived knowledge and experience with Aboriginal Education in BC to inform my perspective. My contributions also reflect VEAES' commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The teacher shortage, the increasing workload of teachers and post-COVID have generated challenges across the district. It has been very difficult navigating through and coming out of the pandemic. So thank you all for all your efforts to keeping each other safe. I ask for your support to continue my work at VEAES because I believe my lenses and approach have made a difference to the lives of teachers and students.

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Darren Tereposky

Vice-President (10.5 months)

I am pleased to put my name forward for Vice-President and to be part of the In-House-Table-Officer and VESTA Executive team. I bring my previous experience doing Union work in-house and 24 years experience in VSB classrooms to advocate for your Collective Agreement rights. In this role, some priorities for next year would include supporting the work of the grievance officer, preparing for the next round of bargaining and building capacity and engagement in the membership. I feel the Union needs to continually advocate for and support members to implement the TRC recommendations in schools, maintain teachers' professional autonomy, improving teachers' health and safety and working conditions, and have adequate staffing and learning resources to support the diverse learners we work with.



Eric Proulx

Vice-President (10 months at 0.4 FTE)

Serving as 0.4 FTE Vice President this year has been among the most valuable and rewarding experiences of my life. I am humbled and thankful for the mentorship and guidance I have received thus far from VEAES members, EC members and IHTOs. If re-elected to this role, I would be honoured to continue the work of serving our membership and fighting for public education. My focuses this year have been member support, building relationships in the political sphere, membership engagement and bringing new voices to the table. Whether it be reaching out to UBC student teachers, welcoming new VEAES members to our organization or carrying out the Union Organizing SURT training offered in February, I have felt so lucky to be able to work for our organization.

I thank VEAES for being considered and would be honoured to continue serving VEAES if elected in the role of 0.4 FTE VP.



Vanessa Lefebvre

Vice-President - Grievance Officer

I have learned so much in my first year in the VEAES office. Hearing from VEAES members about the struggles at your sites and the untenable working conditions has further motivated me to put my name forward for VP - Grievance Officer. I have been doing grievance support work in the VEAES office for the past 5 years and have a good understanding of the grievance process and structures. It is imperative that we protect and enforce our rights that have been fought for by those strong VEAES members who came before us. We have to carry on that fight for those who will come after us.

I am committed to improving equity in our union and our teaching spaces, which requires us to decolonize our structures & practices. It is hard work, it takes time, it can get messy and uncomfortable, and there is a lot of learning to do, but it is the path forward for public education. The road may be windy and we will definitely encounter some roadblocks, but the only way to get there is by working together and I look forward to continuing that work alongside you all.



Natasha Burditt

Local Representative

I have been a member of the VEAES EC since the fall of 2020. I started as a Member at Large as a way to learn more about union structures and how the union supports members. I started co-chairing the meetings in 2021 and have been asked to be part of the Grievance Committee this year. I recognize the importance of making space for all voices and I hope I can continue supporting VEAES in the coming school year. Being an LR this year has allowed me to build my confidence in speaking and advocating for the needs of students and teachers in Vancouver. It has also allowed me to listen and begin to understand the needs of students and teachers elsewhere in the province. I hope that you will consider me for LR again this year.

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Chloë McKnight

Local Representative to the BCTF

I look forward to another opportunity to continue as a local representative on behalf of VEAES. I have enjoyed strengthening connections with locals around the province and representing members' voices at the provincial level, and am committed to furthering this work and building capacity.



Danielle Durant

Health & Safety Chair

Health and safety is an aspect of our work that greatly interests me. Our sector has some significant challenges that need to be addressed. Our working conditions are more challenging than ever and violence in schools is on the rise. I would like to continue to represent VEAES members at both the District Health & Safety and Emergency Management Committees, to continue to share the important issues and challenges our members face on a daily basis. I have learned a lot since I began to participate in these committees since September 2019 and would like to continue learning in this role.



Alexander Graham

Communications Committee Chair

Staying connected, informed, and engaged are essential elements of being a VEAES member. As Communications Committee Chair, the continued promotion and enrichment of connection is the primary concern and focus of the committee moving forward. From making sure that members can access information through VEAES resources, to making sure that the society is connected to members, stakeholders, and the community, I hope to continue the growth and resurgence of the body that exists specifically to consider these issues and ideas. Being in touch with organizing, labour, and the realities of everyday teaching require multiple avenues of communication and engagement, and this committee continues to strive to consider and promote these avenues for all of VEAES membership. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve teachers, the community, and VEAES membership for another year.



Samuel Couture

Local Representative to the BCTF

Through the 2022-2023 school year, I have had the privilege of learning through experience the role of Local Representative to the BCTF. I hope to continue learning through union structures and representing the values of VEAES' educators at the provincial Rep Assemblies and at the BCTF AGM to the best of my abilities.

Madalene Wong

Social Justice & Solidarity Co-Chair

Social Justice has always been a passion of mine. I would love to be able to share my knowledge, collaborate with, and learn from like-minded educators and work to make schools more inclusive and equitable.

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Ramatoulaye Balde

Racialized Member at Large

Being part of the BIPOC community and a visible minority, I hope to bring additional insight and perspectives to the role. Having four children as well who have and are currently going through the school district, I have many lived experiences where I feel I can lend my expertise.

I believe we have a lot of work to do for significant change to be made and I look forward to not only joining the team, but also supporting the rest of the Executive Committee in their roles in any way I can.



Kevin McPherson

TTOC Committee Chair

The Teachers Teaching on Call Committee does important work connecting TTOCs to their union. I hope to do this important work again next year.



Elaine Ong

Social Justice & Solidarity Co-Chair

I would like continue to work with teachers in the capacity of Social Justice Co-chair to ensure inclusivity and equity in our work places.



Japleen Gill

Member at Large

Social Justice has always been a passion of mine. I would love to be able to share my knowledge, collaborate with, and learn from like-minded educators and work to make schools more inclusive and equitable.