

VEAES WEEKLY

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



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May 5th – National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+

We are called to wear RED on Friday to raise awareness, stand in solidarity and support of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people.

Red Dress Day honours the memories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada. Métis artist Jaime Black helped inspire the red dress movement, where red dresses are hung from windows and trees to represent the pain and loss felt by loved ones and survivor.

On this day, we are encouraged to display empty red dresses in public spaces or wear red dresses to show support for the lives of MMIWG. No more stolen sisters!

Red Dress Day Events and Resources

https://www.bctf.ca/docs/default-source/discovery-pages-documents/red-dress-fact-tip-4-sheets.pdf?sfvrsn=7f7d0a14_2

<https://granvilleisland.com/event/red-dress-day-installation>

<https://www.newwestcity.ca/calendar-of-events/events/7112.php>

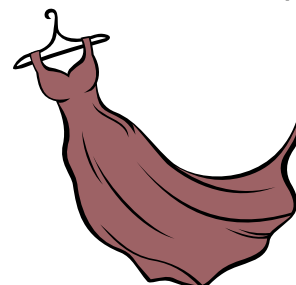
<https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/v2/events?>

[types=6290056256762029001a4fb5](https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/v2/events?types=6290056256762029001a4fb5)

National Inquiry Final Report

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>

In their Final Report: testimony from family members and survivors of violence spoke about a surrounding context marked by multigenerational and intergenerational trauma and marginalization in the form of poverty, insecure housing or homelessness and barriers to education, employment, health care and cultural support.



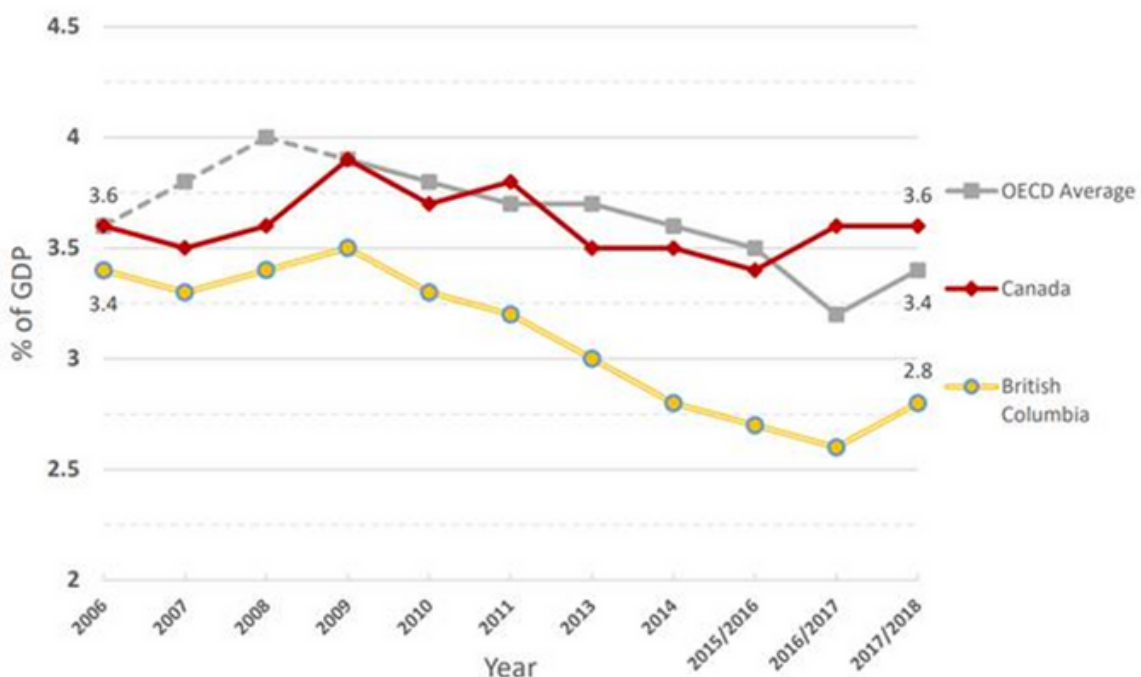
Budget Update

The VSB budget was not passed at the meeting on [meeting on May 1st](#) as Trustees Mah and Reddy did not vote in favour of passing it, as they needed more time and transparency to make their decision. The next meeting will be on May 10th. For a breakdown of that meeting, and how Trustees voted on budget motions, please read the article in [The Tye](#).

Budget season is one of the times when we see and feel, most keenly, the political priorities of our elected officials. For us in schools, the decisions by our Trustees impact the day to day work we undertake in the name of public education. Trustees have a challenging job that sees constraints imposed by the ministry, legislation, and the competing needs of many stakeholder groups. Having said that, we think that there are some things the Trustees could be doing a better job of.

VEAES' unsolicited advice to Trustees:

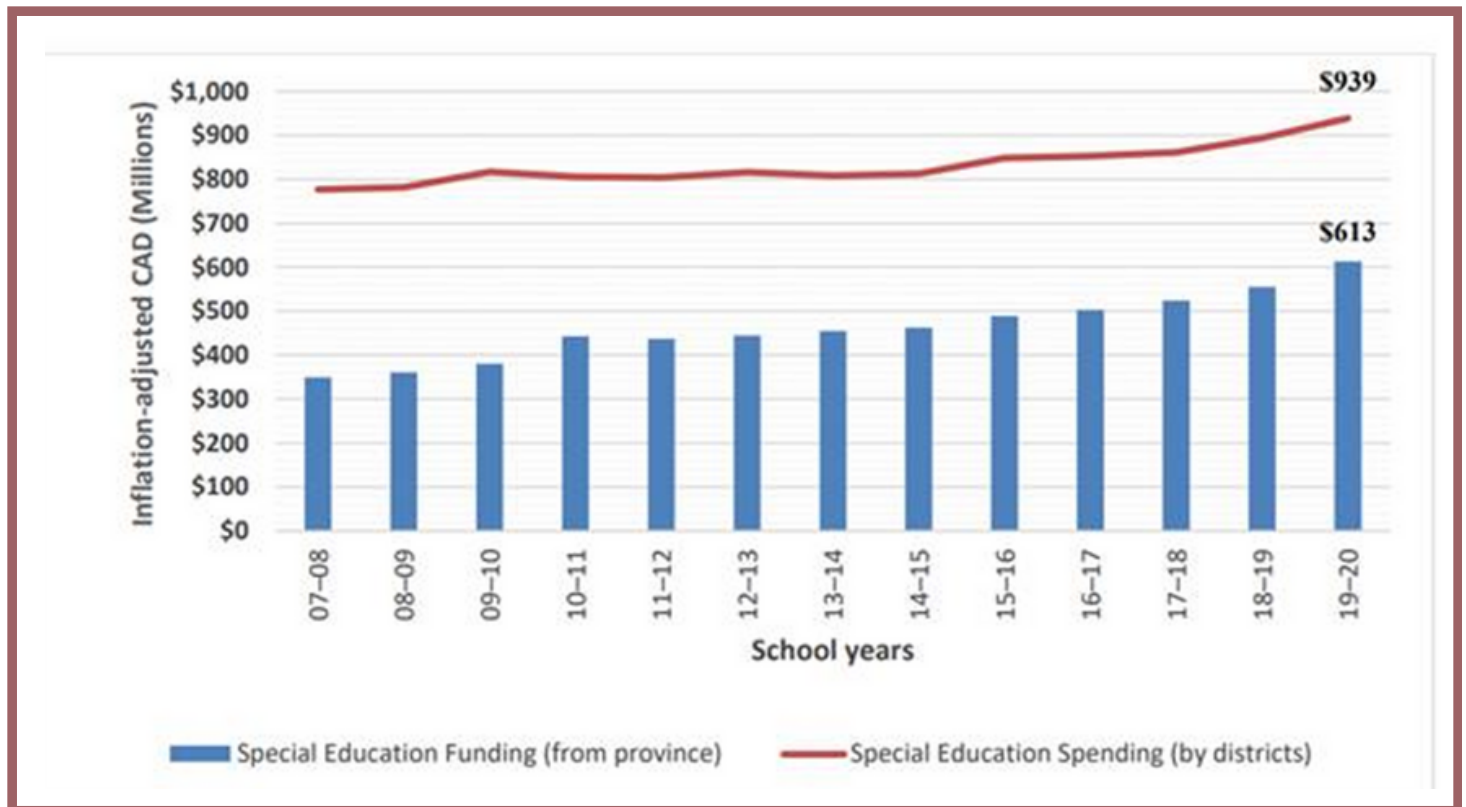
1. Prioritizing student need in all decisions. It's easy for a large organization like the VSB to get mired in all of the work underway at the district. Public Education is the mandate of the Board, and this means K-12 and Adult Education. It means supporting all learners and meeting their needs. We say the best way to do this is by prioritizing front-line workers.
2. Advocating with the Ministry of Education and Childcare. The underfunding of public education is well documented. British Columbia continues to lag significantly behind the rest of Canada. This is not acceptable, and it's time for Trustees to be speaking out and speaking strongly about the need for increased education funding. Small improvements in the per pupil funding, or additional funds are often targeted, and barely cover increased enrollment and inflation. This has to change! Education is one of the most important parts of our community and society, and it's hard to understand why folks who aren't passionate about providing – and fighting for – public education would even run for office.



Budget Update (continued)

3. Ask questions, and insist on the information required to make informed decisions. The VSB is a complicated system and it's really easy for information to be deprioritized or unavailable. Education is a system and each and every decision has implications across our work. Changes in one place will impact another. We know that this is true. A TTOC shortage translates into loss of service for vulnerable students or disabled students / students with disabilities. We urge Trustees to ask questions, to insist on seeing divisional and detailed budgets, and to dig into the work of understanding.

4. Think of students as the centre of the system. We know that districts across the province are consistently spending more on inclusive education than what they are provided in government grants. The shortfall needs to be addressed so that inclusion can be meaningful and responsive to student needs.



5. Resist the pressures of increased meaningless accountability. Whether it's the FSA, the FESL, the School Plans, or constant new reporting orders, many of these tasks translate to significant increases in teacher workload, aren't meaningful for teaching and learning, and take away from the work of public education. Just because there's a new test, or a new requirement, or a new fashion trend in pedagogy, doesn't mean we all have to leap and focus our time and attention on it. Trustees can emphasize and ramp up concerns and stress about these endless fads, or they can support teachers to do the important work that they're doing in classrooms without the distractions and draw on resources and time represented by external evaluations. Let teachers teach!

VEAES Adult Educator Sublocal Annual General Meeting

All Adult Educators are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting on May 6th, 2023 at 4 pm. This meeting reviews the work of the sub local for the proceeding year and elects the Executive Committee for the year ahead.

Adult Ed Annual General Meeting

Time: Saturday, May 6th at 4:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81523462258>

Meeting ID: 815 2346 2258

Passcode: 381990

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

All Adult Educators are also invited to the VEAES AGM on May 16 to hear about the budget and by-law changes for the organization.

We look forward to your participation!

BIPOC Affinity Gathering: Monday May 8, 4-6pm

This month, we will watch a short video excerpt from [Deconstructing Karen](#) followed by a discussion about white supremacy culture. Interested BIPOC members are encouraged to watch the 52-minute video ahead of time, but it is not necessary. We will also start visioning what this group can be by soliciting members' input during the gathering. Please RSVP if you plan to attend by emailing marjorie@veaes.ca or karine@veaes.ca. To ensure proper amount and variety of food options, please indicate your dietary restrictions in your RSVP.

Early Retirement Incentive Plan deadline May 31st

Early Retirement Incentive Plan is a part of our Collective Agreement. The guiding principles for ERIP are in Appendix B (page 202) of the CA. If you are between the ages of 55 and 64, have worked for the VSB for 10 years, and are considering retiring this June, please check out the ERIP Information Package and submit your request to EmployeeServices@vsb.bc.ca prior by May 31st.

Pensions Seminars

The BCTF will be presenting online pension seminars every Wednesday to help members learn about their pension plan, their pension options, and the factors to consider when planning for retirement.

Upcoming seminars:

May 10: Pension options

May 17: Relationship breakdowns

May 24: Injury, disability, and shortened life expectancy

All seminars will take place from 4:30–6:00 p.m. PST, virtually using the following Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87344950598?pwd=YWVqNkVvN25mRDBJTAA4aUJSZ1h3QT09>

Members who cannot attend the live online sessions may watch the recorded pension seminars at their convenience on the BCTF YouTube channel in the Playlists section. Members are encouraged to call Sarb Lalli, Assistant Director of Pensions & Group Benefits, at 604-871-1949 if you have any questions related to the Teachers' Pension Plan, Canada Pension Plan, and/or Old Age Security Benefits.

Advocacy in Action

We want to thank all of our members who participated in and shared our Go Public! Campaign. Because of the pressure that was put on by union groups, parent groups, and concerned community members, the VSB presented a balanced budget on Monday night; one that reflected an enrollment prediction much closer to that of the Ministry of Education and other groups.

While the lack of transparency and questionable budget decisions are concerning, the VSB is still dealing with a pot of money that doesn't respond to the needs of our district. We need to address the chronic lack of funding for Public Education when the provincial government sets their budget in September. THAT is where we need to make lots of noise, so we need to continue to connect with our communities to send the message that *the government needs to prioritize funding that meets the needs of students and not just meeting a ratio*. We need to address the working conditions of front-line workers in education, as we all know those conditions are our students' learning conditions.

Spring Transfer Timeline

The Spring Transfer period is in full swing, with sites receiving their staffing allotment on May 1st. If there has not been a Staff Meeting called by your administrator this week to discuss the staffing allotment, please have your Staff Rep reach out to the VEAES office.

Depending on the staff allotment, there may be some FTE that is generated or some FTE that is lost, putting your site in a surplus situation. This can be a stressful time for members and it is important that we work together to support each other through this time of flux and uncertainty.

This week, Staff Reps gathered to get more training regarding the post and fill process. They will be able to help navigate next steps at your site. While we no longer participate in interviews, Staff Committee oversees the post and fill process and can make recommendations on school organization, class casting, postings, etc.

Please attend your next site-based VEAES meeting as there are important conversations for members to have with each other on different aspects of this process.

VEAES AGM: May 16th 4pm at Van Dusen Gardens

Last week, you should have received an electronic copy of the VEAES News and paper copies were sent to all worksites. If you have not received that document, please contact the VEAES office. In that document you will find the budget for the upcoming year, the motions regarding by-law and constitution changes, and the nominees who put their names forward for the VEAES Executive Committee.

While the date has passed for Executive Committee nominations, members can run from the floor if they wish to put their name forward for any of the positions. There are so many ways to serve your colleagues, and taking a role on the VEAES EC is an excellent way to bring your experience, knowledge, and passions to help create policy, determine new ways to engage members, and to contribute to the fight for fully funded and resourced public education. Teacher voices are at the core of the work of the union, and we are stronger when we organize with a diversity of voices and experiences. We need you!

Please contact your Staff Rep, any current or past member of the Executive Committee, or the VEAES office if you would like information about the role of the Executive Committee, the time commitment, the joys and challenges, and the different roles available. We look forward to seeing members at the meeting so that we can make important decisions for our Society.

If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to hitomi@veaes.ca, as this will help us with logistics, such as ordering food.

VSB Updates its SOGIGE Policy & Administrative Procedure

The VSB's "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression" Policy was updated earlier this week by unanimous vote of the Board of Education. It has almost been 20 years since the VSB's original 2SLGBTQ+ Policy was adopted; that policy was one of the first in the country, and came about after years of advocacy by students, our union, supportive trustees, and parents. It has continued to be updated over the years as terminology has shifted (particularly around trans and non-binary identities), as more protections in the BC Human Rights Code have been adopted by the province, and as 2SLGBTQ+ students and staff have continued to share their experiences in Vancouver schools.

The updated policy is available to read online [here](#), and it sets out the Board's commitment to protection of 2SLGBTQ+ students', families', and employees' rights, including rights related to: confidentiality; self-identification and determination; and, being included, represented, valued, and respected within all areas of the school environment. All of this is consistent with the VSB's obligations under the [BC Human Rights Code](#) and collective agreements.

Accompanying the updated Policy is an updated Administrative Procedure, online [here](#), which applies to every school in Vancouver and gets into specifics about how the VSB's commitments are put into action.

Please note, in particular, 5.6.1 in the Administrative Procedure: "It is up to the student to determine when, and with whom, they choose to share information regarding their sexual orientation and/or gender identity." It is important that we, as teachers, fully respect individual students' autonomy in this regard - and ensure that their wishes are respected and that we do not get ahead of an individual (including in communications with that individual's family or, the case of a grade 7 student, with their future school).

Transphobia and homophobia have not disappeared in our communities, unfortunately, nor have these forms of hate and discrimination disappeared from schools. VEAES continues to be firmly in support of the district's work in this regard, and encourages all VEAES members to review both the [updated Policy](#) as well as the [updated Administrative Procedure](#).

You may want to put these on the agenda of an upcoming Staff Committee meeting to discuss what actions your staff can take over the remainder of this school year and next school year to breathe life into both the Policy and the AP. Some other concrete actions your staff can take in the short term:

VSB Updates its SOGIGE Policy & Administrative Procedure (continued)

- in doing your school's annual review of your Code of Conduct, ensure that each of the prohibited grounds of discrimination listed in [Section 8 of the BC Human Rights Code](#) are included in your school's Code of Conduct. (Please refer to section 6 of [Ministerial Order 276/07](#) for more detail about this requirement.)
- seek input from 2SLGBTQ+ students at your school about their experiences (including a discussion about access to changing spaces and washrooms, as per 10.3 of the [updated Administrative Procedure](#)).
- review how and when gender identifiers are included on documents used at the school (and whether gender identifiers are needed at all on most documents), and review how 2SLGBTQ+ students and families are represented in school communications.
- at Staff Committee (or at Primary or Intermediate meetings), discuss steps you and your colleagues will take to ensure that the health-related content and curricular competencies in the Physical & Health Education curriculum will be delivered in a way that acknowledges 2SLGBTQ+ students' needs and lived realities. There are more and more great print and online resources to support, for example, inclusive and comprehensive practices when it comes to topics like puberty and the reproductive system contained in [PHE 6](#) and [Science 6](#), respectively. The importance of doing this is addressed in 3.2.1 of the [updated Administrative Procedure](#).
- as a staff, discuss ways of respectfully responding if someone tells you that you've misgendered them. Some good advice can be found [here](#). As the BC Human Rights' Tribunal stated in [a recent ruling](#), pronouns are a fundamental part of a person's identity, and using correct pronouns communicates that we see and respect a person for who they are. It's also our legal and professional responsibility to do, as teachers working in public education. Simply saying "I'm sorry for using the wrong pronouns," immediately shifting to the correct pronouns, and then moving on is usually the best way to go (along with ensuring that the mistake doesn't happen again).
- consider participating in professional development activities next school year that address the needs and lived experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ students.

The VTF-VSB Collective Agreement also contains strong non-discrimination language. Please do not hesitate to contact the VEAES office if you have questions about your rights in this regard, or if there is an issue of concern occurring in your workplace.



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Dates to Remember

Adult Educator's Annual General Meeting

May 6th, 2023 @ 4 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81523462258>

Meeting ID: 815 2346 2258

Passcode: 381990

Dial by your location

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Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee Meeting

May 8th, 2023

4 pm @ the VEAES Office

Executive Committee Meeting

May 9, 2023

4 pm @ the VEAES Office

Teachers' Teaching on Call Committee Meeting

May 10th, 2023

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83692927504>

Meeting ID: 836 9292 7504

Passcode: 909854

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

Health & Safety Committee Meeting

May 10th, 2023

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82849386014>

Meeting ID: 828 4938 6014

Passcode: 427698

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

Aboriginal Education Committee Meeting

May 11th, 2023

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86303570789>

Meeting ID: 863 0357 0789

Passcode: 426806

Dial by your location

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VEAES

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