

VEAES WEEKLY

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



Table of CONTENTS

Truth and Reconciliation Day 2023 - Page 2

The Witness Blanket - Page 2

FSA withdrawal letters - Page 3

School Union Rep Training - Page 3

No Space For Hate - Page 4

Letter to VSB Management and Trustees - Page 5

New Application Process for VEAES Mentorship Grant - Page 6

Climate Action Rally - Page 6

Pro D Updates - Page 7

Truth and Reconciliation Day 2023

As we continue the important work of reconciliation in our country, we need to hear the truths and acknowledge the harm that was inflicted on Indigenous people, the stewards of the lands and water where we now live. The work is done in not only in our schools, but in our homes, and in our communities. While Sept 30th falls on a Saturday this year, we hope that members are working on school-wide events to commemorate this very important day.

Here are some resources for you to consider: [Orange Shirt Activities \(bctf.ca\)](#), [Aboriginal Education \(bctf.ca\)](#), [Free Virtual Educational Program for Grades 1-12 - NCTR](#), [Drawing Wisdom Films For Dialogue - Cool World](#)

Look here for events on September 30th in Lower Mainland: [Truth and Reconciliation Day | Vancouver's Best Places \(vancouverbestplaces.com\)](#)

The Witness Blanket

Learning about residential schools and the experiences of Survivors is essential. It helps non-Indigenous students expand their idea of community to include Indigenous people. As students face truths of residential school Survivors and intergenerational Survivors, they can better understand the genocide perpetrated by Canada against Indigenous peoples.

Teaching about residential schools and the genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada can be difficult for both teachers and students. This resource positions teachers as guides moving alongside students as they learn, empathize and act together. [The Witness Blanket Teacher guide](#) is available in both English and French.

“When teaching about residential schools, we know it is going to be hard. It is going to be uncomfortable. It is heart-work, for ourselves and for our students.” -Marjorie Dumont



FSA withdrawal letters

The Union has given notice to the Superintendent last week that we will be sending home the FSA withdrawal letters in the coming weeks, so the Employer is aware that they are being distributed. As noted in last week's VEAES Weekly, *the new practice for VEAES members is that the info sheets need to be supplied by the VEAES office and not printed at schools*. Though not a requirement, as a courtesy you can let your administrator know when the letters will be going out.

At this week's Staff Rep Assembly, Staff Reps picked up FSA forms, envelopes, and labels for their school. Some opted to have them sent by Blue Bag, which we are working on now at the VEAES office with the first batch being sent out today.

If your school did not have a rep at the meeting, please have a VEAES member from the school contact vanessa@veaes.ca with the number of letters required for your grade 4 & grade 7 students. There are translated versions in Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Tagalog, French, Persian, and Punjabi. Approximate amounts are fine. If you need some more copies or envelopes than what you received, please let us know so we can send more your way.

The FSAs are scheduled to begin on October 8th, so it is important to get those letters out as soon as possible. We have a really high withdrawal rate in our district because of the relationships you have with parents, so they understand that standardized testing is not a measure of student learning and takes away from valuable instructional time in the classroom. You can start having conversations with parents, but *please do not use the Employer's email, the school email list, or Teams platforms to send messages to parents*.

School Union Rep Training

Our fall SURT is right around the corner. This training is for Staff Reps, Staff Committee Chairs, Pro-D Chairs, and Health & Safety Chairs. If you are in one of those roles at your school, please ensure you have registered for your SURT day. Due to the Employer's ongoing recruitment and retention issues, SURT will be delivered on 4 different days (Oct 4,5,11,12) to ensure there is TTOC coverage. For this reason, we are unable to accommodate date changes so check with your Staff Rep for the date for your school.

Union leave does generate a TTOC, so even if you are in a position where you are normally not replaced until the 3rd day, you will/should be replaced. If you cannot make it, this is a great opportunity to send another member from your school to bring the information back to your site. Don't forget to book yourself off in SFE using **Code 141** for that day.

Check with your Staff Rep for registration forms and email completed forms to: andrea@veaes.ca.

No Space For Hate

As you may be aware, there were anti-SOGI rallies being organized all across the country this past week. VEAES & VSTA [issued a joint statement](#) in support of SOGI education in our schools and the important work that we do as educators to create a safe, inclusive environment for all. We called upon the Employer to do the same.

Many counter protests were organized and your VEAES In House team participated to stand in support of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and SOGI education. It was great to meet up with current and retired members, as well as fellow BCTF members, who found our flag and stood in solidarity.



Letter to VSB Management and Trustees

Good morning, Helen, all,

I know you are aware of the deeply anti-trans protests happening around Vancouver, and the impact that these rallies will be having on students, staff, and communities. We are deeply connected to the issue, as educators, and we hope that a similar commitment exists on the part of District Senior Administration.

We issued a statement yesterday with VSTA that does not draw attention or focus to these hate-mongers and those speaking against human rights and the right to self-determination and education for students. The rhetoric of “parental choice” has been weaponized before, and it will continue to be weaponized in the context of the global backlash against 2SLGBTQIA+ and specifically trans communities.

We know that Vancouver has long been a leader in developing policy on inclusion and equity, particularly in 2SLGBTQIA+ matters, and we’d suggest that its actions, not only words that matter in this time. The inclusion of SOGI curriculum in schools is an essential part of students and staff seeing themselves, their families, and their communities represented in schools, and makes a significant difference in folks’ perceptions of safety in our workplaces.

Many other districts have issued statements in support of trans students and staff, affirming their commitment to, and recognition of collective privilege in this discourse. We have had many members, trans and cisgender, non-binary, queer, parents of 2SLGBTQIA+ students, family members reach out and ask why the VSB is not making a statement similar to those issued by Burnaby, Surrey, and others around the province. There are times when policy is required, and times when action and allyship are required, and this is one of those times.

I’d ask you to speak publicly in support of your 2SLGBTQIA+ and trans employees, students and communities, who are looking to you for leadership. These events, and the rise of this kind of hate have an impact on us all. Our shared collective agreement commits to not tolerating any discrimination or harassment.

Please see below for our statement of solidarity.

Jody



Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators and Vancouver Secondary Teachers unions stand firmly and proudly with the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in the face of rising regressive education policy, violence, and anti-trans hate speech in Canada. These attempts to dehumanize our trans colleagues and students are on the rise in our communities, and have a deep impact on the safety in our schools and worksites.

We support and provide SOGI education and curriculum in our schools and workplaces because we believe all students, staff, and families have the right to safe, inclusive schools. Safe and inclusive schools require freedom from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. We are committed to fight the disinformation and hate through teaching, learning, and speaking out when we see harm being done.

Campaigns based in anti-2SLGBTQIA+ or anti-SOGI rhetoric harm staff, students, families, and communities, and the violence and harassment in BC and across Canada require affirmation of our values. We raise our voices alongside our siblings in the labour movement in solidarity, equity, and inclusion. It’s up to all of us to take a stand – An injury to one is an injury to all.

New Application Process for VEAES Mentorship Grant

***Are you a Mentor or Mentee Looking for Collaborative Release Time?
New Form Takes Only Minutes and Significantly Speeds up Approval Process!***

As a result of collective bargaining, VEAES has funds that members can access to organize collaborative mentorship sessions. At the end of the last school year, VEAES created a new form that has made it significantly simpler to apply and manage the approval process, greatly decreasing the time between application and approval. Please do not use any previously used form, and instead click the link below to fill out your application for this year!

[Application for VEAES Mentorship Funds \(office.com\)](https://office.com)

Climate Action Rally

As a union, we love to see collective action as we know that is how we move forward to enact change and create a better world for all. Last Friday, members of your VEAES in house team participated in the Climate Action march that started at City Hall and shut down Cambie Street as thousands of activists marched across the bridge. It was great to connect with members, students, and other allies as we call for action in this climate emergency.



Pro-D Updates

Please be reminded that the VSB has a Sharepoint site where it houses all [Pro-D related information](#) offered by the district, including the Pro-D Handbook, application forms and guidelines of the joint district funds -- Collaborative Inquiry Fund and the Temporary Supplemental Fund -- as well as Pro-D opportunities hosted by the VSB. The forms posted there are now updated to the 2023-2024 school year. You must be logged into your VSB account in order to access the content in the site. For your convenience, VEAES also has them on our [website](#).

Self-Directed Pro-D -- There are many amazing opportunities offered by outside agencies, community groups, museums and galleries. Teachers are professionals, and as such, you have autonomy in deciding which activities to engage in on a Pro-D day. If you choose to participate in activities that are different from those planned by your colleagues, please be sure to fill out the Self-Directed Pro-D Form and submit it to the Pro-D chair at your school at least two weeks in advance.

Collaborative Inquiry Fund -- Deadlines for submitting applications are Sept 22, Nov 3 and Dec 1. VEAES continues to advocate for TTOC release time to be reinstated in order to allow for collaboration between teachers at different work sites to work together.

Temporary Supplemental Fund -- Members can apply for up to \$1000 per school year to fund Pro-D opportunities that require a higher cost, including conference or program fee, travel and accommodation.

Applications to both funds are reviewed by the VSB and the union jointly at monthly meetings. The VSB will communicate approvals to members via email , along with reimbursement information. It is important to receive approval first before spending your money to ensure you will be reimbursed. The VSB is working on an online application and reimbursement system, so stay tuned for more updates.

These updates are only highlights, so we encourage you to approach your Pro-D chairs, read the [Pro-D Handbook](#) and peruse the [Pro-D Sharepoint](#) or [VEAES website](#) for further information.

PIC Chair Vacancy -- The vacancy of the Professional Issues Committee Chair means reduced members' representation before the district, VEAES executive and the BCTF, as well as the pausing of important member-driven dialogues around topics such as the Code of Ethics, professional autonomy, quality of our teaching practice, collaboration and more. If you are interested in stepping into the role, please email karine@veaes.ca. Mentorship will be provided!

We wish you a year full of enriching and fulfilling professional development for yourselves and your school communities!



Jody Polukoshko
President
jody@veaes.ca

Marjorie Dumont
Vice President
marjorie@veaes.ca

Darren Tereposky
Vice President
darren@veaes.ca

Karine Ng
Vice President
karine@veaes.ca

Vanessa Lefebvre
Vice President
vanessa@veaes.ca

Eric Proulx
Vice President
eric@veaes.ca

Rob McGowan
AE President
rob@veaes.ca

Office:
604-873-8378

veaes.ca

Dates to Remember

**Executive
Committee Meeting**
September 26, 2023
@ 4:00 pm

VEAES Office
410 - 2238 Yukon Street, Vancouver

Staff Union Rep Training
October 4, 5, 11, 12 2023
9 am - 3 pm

Croatian Cultural Centre
3250 Commercial Drive



VEAES

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