

# VEAES WEEKLY

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



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## **Registration open for BCTF New Teachers' Conference!**

by: Jody Polukoshko

The BC Teachers' Federation is excited to announce the launch of the BCTF New Teachers' Conference 2024 (NTC): Refracting the Light: AI and Technology in Education. The conferences will take place on January 27 in Vancouver and on May 11 in Prince George. This conference is a place to connect with teachers across British Columbia and further your own teaching practice.



It is designed for teachers in their first five years of teaching, student teachers, TTOCs, and those who are coming back to teaching after moving or being away from the classroom. Participants can register for just one conference or both. Members will be notified of the registration opening on Wednesday, November 22:

Click [HERE](#) to register for the NTC in Vancouver  
Saturday, January 27, 2024  
Coast Coal Harbour Vancouver Hotel



## **Health and Safety – Power Outages**

by: Danielle Durant

At both District H&S and Emergency Management Committee meetings, VEAES representatives have asked the Board to advise staff of the procedures for what to do in the case of a power outage at school. The Board recently shared their advice for administrators on the Emergency Management section on the H&S page on the VSB SharePoint. You can access this and other useful information here: [Employee Services - Power outages guidance for Admins.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

District H&S staff recognize that sites are very different and recommend that each site's JOHS Committee look at the guidance and develop a plan specific to their site. As power outages are more common in this season, we recommend that VEAES reps on their JOHS Committee add this to their next meeting's agenda.

## **Reference Letters**

by: Darren Tereposky

At this time of year, many teachers get requests from parents to write letters of reference for their children who will be going to private school or mini-school the following year. In 2018, our Staff Rep Assembly passed the following policy on this matter which can be found in our VEAES Policy Manual. Please also note that the VSB is clear that letters of reference from teachers are not a requirement for students applying to mini-school.

*From page 84 of the VEAES Policy Manual*

- That teachers do not write letters of reference for students to be included with mini-school applications. 2018 Feb 20 SRA
- That teachers do not write letters of reference for students applying to private school. 2018 Feb 20 SRA

## **Dependent care costs for Staff Reps attending a Staff Rep Assembly**

by: Darren Tereposky

A reminder that VEAES policy 12.E.4 states that Staff Reps can “be reimbursed for any dependent costs that would not otherwise be incurred by the member at a rate of \$15/hour up to a maximum of \$200 per day.” Staff Rep Assemblies often run from 4 to 6 pm. If you are a Staff Rep, and attending the monthly meeting at Tupper requires you to extend your dependent care beyond the usual time, you can apply to be reimbursed for the extra cost. The reimbursement form is [here](#). For accounting purposes, you need to provide the copy of the paid receipt. Please contact [hitomi@veaes.ca](mailto:hitomi@veaes.ca) if you have further questions about suitable formats of documentation. This policy also applies to any VESTA member serving on any committee of the Association, or representing VESTA on any other committee, task force, or working group.

## **Teacher Regulation Branch**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Teachers! When you are working, the VSB automatically pays your Teacher Regulation Branch dues through payroll deduction.

If you change any of your contact information, it's essential that you [update the TRB](#), as any irregularities in your certification can prevent members from working in public schools.

When you are on unpaid leave, and not receiving a paycheque, you need to make the payment yourself. Members who forget to pay their dues while on leave, or do not authorize the 5 year criminal record check can have their certificates cancelled. A cancelled certificate can take weeks to be re-instated, so please avoid this inconvenience and loss of salary by ensuring that you pay your TRB dues when on leave.

## **Board Position on Teaching about Israel / Palestine**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Your local officers have been requesting guidance from the District to support teachers engaging with students on current events, and particularly in discussions on the current humanitarian disaster in Israel and Palestine.

The district has offered the following advice:

*“As professionally trained educators, our teachers appreciate and understand the positive impact and influence they have on student learning and creating safe, inclusive learning environments. Our teachers also understand that in accordance with their professional standards, the curriculum provides many opportunities for educators to demonstrate a broad knowledge base and understanding of areas they teach. In doing so, educators teach the curricula through a global lens and perspective with deep appreciation for the students under their care and supervision. The classroom, as a medium for developing our student’s critical thinking skills, facilitates discussions on real world and current events that can be directly connected to the curriculum being delivered. Teachers teach curriculum through the lens to develop students’ critical thinking, social emotional skills, empathy, inquiry, and analysis.*

*The VSB has provided guidance to school administrators to support teachers and school staff on managing issues that can flow from the delivery of curriculum in our classrooms. By way of supports, teachers are encouraged to seek guidance and direction from their school administration to assist with the delivery of the curriculum as pertains to real current world issues.*

*Supports and resources can also accessed through your union, the BCTF. Curricula resources from the VSB can be accessed via our Sharepoint site at: [Education Resources \(sharepoint.com\)](#).*

*Please be mindful as a teacher to use the appropriate professional judgement and autonomy with sensitivity and through a trauma-informed lens and consideration of impact to the members of your school community.*

*If you have concerns about particular material or content, you can seek support from your school administrator.”*

As teachers, we know that curriculum is only part of what we do in the classroom, and that engaging with the world around us, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning are key parts of our work. It can be a challenge for members to respond to the needs and curiosities of our students, recognizing the importance of engaging meaningfully with the world around them, and considering always, their sensitivities and the relationship to their families, positionality, and current and historical trauma.

***Continued on next page***

## **Board Position on Teaching about Israel / Palestine (continued)**

by: Jody Polukoshko

The following, and the Board's advice above, should guide your decision-making at this time. We know that we don't put our own positionality to the side when we teach, that we embody our beliefs, values, and feelings in the work. Should there be concerns raised about the content or delivery of your lessons or work, please don't hesitate to contact the VEAES office, and we will ensure all members are represented and provided access to information and support.

If the district has concerns about contravention of administrative advice or direction, they may investigate teachers under the provisions of Article C.22.6 of the Collective Agreement. Remember that you have the right to union representation at any meeting with an administrator, even if you need to delay the meeting to ensure you have that representative.

### Professional Autonomy:

Employees shall, consistent with effective educational practice, prescribed, authorized curricula and locally developed programs, have individual professional autonomy in determining the methods of instruction, and the planning and presentation of materials in their professional assignments.

### Professional Standards for BC Educators:

#1 - Educators have a privileged position of power and trust. Educators are responsible for the physical and emotional safety of students. Educators respect and value the diversity in their classrooms, schools and communities. Inclusive of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, and other worldviews and perspectives. Educators foster students' positive personal identity, mental and physical well-being, social and personal responsibility, and intellectual development. Educators engage students in meaningful participation in their own learning. Educators understand the importance of confidentiality, and protect student privacy, unless disclosure is required by law. Educators do not abuse or exploit students or minors for personal, sexual, ideological, material or other advantage.

#6 - Educators understand the curriculum and methodologies of the areas they teach. Educators teach curriculum from Canadian, First Nations, Inuit, Metis and global perspectives. Educators build upon student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect. Educators cultivate the values, beliefs, and knowledge of Canada's democratic and inclusive society.

## **Board Position on Teaching about Israel / Palestine (continued)**

by: Jody Polukoshko

### [VSB Administrative Procedure 251:](#)

#### 2. Responsibility for Selection of Learning Resources

2.1. While selection of learning resources involves many people (administrators, teachers, students, community persons, teacher-librarians), the responsibility for co-ordinating the selection of school learning resources and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the Principal.

#### 3. Criteria for Selection of Learning Resources

3.1. The following criteria will be used as they apply: Vancouver School Board Administrative Procedures Manual

3.1.1. Learning resources shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the province and District and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses;

3.1.2. Learning resources shall meet high standards of quality in accurate content and presentation;

3.1.3. Learning resources shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected;

3.1.4. Learning resources shall have aesthetic, literary, and/or social values;

3.1.5. Learning resources chosen shall be developed by competent authors and producers;

3.1.6. Learning resources shall be designed to help students gain an awareness of our pluralistic society, as well as an understanding of the many important contributions made to our civilization by women and minority and ethnic groups;

3.1.7. Learning resources shall be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviours, and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in our society;

3.1.8. Biased or slanted learning resources may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives; for example, to recognize propaganda and its purpose in a given context or to balance an argument.

3.2. The selection of learning resources on controversial issues will be directed towards maintaining a balanced collection representing various views. Learning resources shall clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analysing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems.

3.3. Emphasis will be placed on the selection of Canadian learning resources where appropriate

## **BCTF Opportunities**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Participating on a provincial committee can be a rewarding and exciting way to engage with your union and delve deeper into your passions. The BCTF is currently seeking applicants for:

- Health and Safety Committee
- Peace and Global Education Action Group (Committee for Action on Social Justice)
- 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Group (Committee for Action on Social Justice)
- Participants for the BCTF Women's Institute

All applications close on December 1, and you can find the application forms and more information [here](#).

Provincial Committees and events come with provision of release time, and usually some additional time outside of school hours, per diem expenses or provision of meals, and the opportunity to work with members from around the province. The role of Advisory Committees is to advise the BCTF Executive Committee, and to help set the direction of the Federation and policy for our provincial work. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn more and make a difference!

## **VEAES Bursary**

by: Jody Polukoshko

The due date for the Bursary for a Child of a VEAES member is quickly approaching! Please view the form [here](#) for information about eligibility. To enter the draw, the student must be currently enrolled in a post secondary institution for this school year, have attended public school up to Grade 12, and have a parent who is a VEAES member. The Bursary is awarded by draw at the December 12, 2023 General Meeting, and if not in attendance, members will be contacted shortly after.

Fun Fact: VEAES also contributes to an annual scholarship at SFU for students in the elementary stream of the Teacher Education Program. Preference will be made for students who are residents of Vancouver. The award is \$1200.



## **BCTF Annual General Meeting Resolutions**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Colleagues, each year over Spring Break, 27 of your VEAES colleagues meet with about 500 other BCTF Members to make decisions about the direction and policy of the BCTF. We meet and debate resolutions from each of the 60 locals around the province, and make important decisions about bargaining, Salary Indemnity, social justice, public policy and political action, our Pension Plan, Health and Safety, and much more.

If there is a position that you feel the BCTF should be considering, or a change needed to the way that the BCTF does its work province-wide, you can submit your recommendations to VEAES using the [form](#) on the website. We will have the form updated to the current year ASAP. Motions can come from members or schools, and will be received by VEAES' Local Reps to the BCTF, who will provide feedback to those submitting prior to the December 12 General Meeting.

### **December 6th National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

Every year on the anniversary of the massacre at Montreal's L'Ecole Polytechnique, we remember and take action. On December 6, 1989, 14 women were murdered in their university classrooms because they were women and because they were studying engineering.

This is a day to think about and take action on Violence against Women and to acknowledge that gender-based violence is a significant barrier to an equitable society. We also acknowledge that Indigenous women and girls, Trans and 2 Spirit People are disproportionately impacted by violence and its relationship to colonization.

VEAES' Social Justice & Solidarity Committee is inviting all members to gather at the VEAES office at 4:30pm for some refreshments and then make our way to the memorial event at Thornton Park.

**Proofreaders / Editors:** Marjorie Dumont, Vanessa Lefebvre, Karine Ng, Jody Polukoshko, Darren Tereposky





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## Dates to Remember

**Professional Issues Committee**  
November 27 @ 4:00 pm  
**Issue Session on Professional Issues**  
**Join Zoom Meeting**  
[Meeting ID: 823 0170 1736](#)

Passcode: 926145  
Dial by your location  
+1 778 907 2071 Canada

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### **Social Justice & Solidarity Committee Meeting**

November 28, 2023  
4 pm  
VEAES Office  
410 - 2238 Yukon Street

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### **December 6th National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**

4:30 pm - meet at the VEAES Office  
410 - 2238 Yukon Street

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### **\*\*\*VEAES Open House\*\*\***

November 30, 2023  
4 -7 pm  
**VEAES Office**  
410 - 2238 Yukon Street

## **VEAES**

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