

VEAES WEEKLY

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



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VEAES In-Office Team Meet with VSB Trustees to Discuss VEAES Member's Issues

by: Eric Proulx

Impacts on Staff and Students due to Staff Shortages Among Top Concerns

Before the winter break, the VEAES in-office team will have met with several VSB school trustees to discuss VEAES member's top concerns this school year. Meetings will be held this week and next with Jennifer Reddy, from OneCity, Janet Fraser and Lois Chan-Pedley from the Green Party, Christopher Richardson, sitting as an independent and ABC Trustee Preeti Faridkot.

First Bargaining Survey coming soon

by: Jody Polukoshko

In an effort to increase member participation in setting bargaining priorities for the upcoming round of both local and provincial bargaining, VEAES will be seeking input three times on bargaining priorities. Our first survey, which we are hoping to have in members' inboxes next week, provides an opportunity to speak broadly about your workplace concerns and priorities – both in relation to your work assignment, and to your positionality. Bargaining is not just about achieving the most popular objectives, it's also about decreasing inequality and identifying areas of stagnation across the collective agreement.

Your input on this survey will help inform future issues sessions and future surveys on specific bargaining objectives for both local and provincial tables. Watch this space – and your inbox – for opportunities to talk about bargaining.

Changing Employee Passwords

by: Jody Polukoshko

Members have raised concerns about the perceived conflict between members being advised to protect their employee numbers, and then also being required to use those same employee numbers on photocopiers in schools. The District advises that they do not believe this is a privacy concern, and do not intend to change the sign in for school photocopiers, as in order to access any confidential information (payroll or Pacific Blue Cross), a password is also required.

Employee's passwords are set by default as their employee number, so we recommend that, if you haven't already, that you can reset your password through the Self-Serve Password Reset Portal.

Marjorie Dumont, VEAES VP, recipient of UBC's Reconciliation and Decolonization Alumni Award

by: Jody Polukoshko with Text from UBC publication

We already know what an important impact Marjorie has had on our organization, our learning, and our relationships to curriculum, land, and reconciliation, and her leadership at the BC Teachers' Council, the BCTF Executive Committee and Staff, and in house at the VEAES office, and it's wonderful to see her work being recognized by UBC as well.

Marjorie will be honoured in a [ceremony this Friday, December 1](#).

"Marjorie Dumont's ancestral name is C'tan of the Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan Nations. She is a distinguished Indigenous educator and leader deeply committed to reconciliation and decolonization.

Marjorie's teaching practice has spanned many settings over her 25-year long career, both on and off reserve, rural and urban, in mainstream as well as Indigenous-focus schools.

Marjorie's dedication shines through her innovative lesson plans and resources, which educates students about Indigenous cultures and histories, and also empower them as agents of justice. Her influence extends beyond the classroom, as she bridges Indigenous and settler communities within the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF), advocating for anti-racism and decolonization. She has also contributed significantly to the BC Teachers Council, lowering barriers for educators from diverse backgrounds.

Notably, Marjorie has played a pivotal role in decolonizing teacher education programs in British Columbia's post-secondary institutions. Her leadership style emphasizes listening, respect, humility, and reciprocity, highlighting the importance of land, language, and culture in identity and belonging.

Marjorie is an exceptional leader-educator, and her profound impact on reconciliation and decolonization efforts in educational institutions has and will continue to serve the community and inspire communities for years to come."



City Hall Motion has Impact on Potential of VSB Public Land Sales

by: Eric Proulx

City Council Makes Land Sales Less Likely?

Members may recall the recent developments at the VSB Board Committee, where the sale of Bruce Elementary's field, as well as the sale of Carleton Elementary were suddenly put on hold by the Board until new student enrollment projections can be made. Members can watch this announcement by [clicking here](#) and jumping to 54:00. The reason cited for this change was the Vancouver city council's motion to allow for higher density construction to take place across the city, a change which will surely impact our student enrollment numbers. Since then, on November 15th, a second motion related to this topic was proposed by ABC city councillor Lenny Zhou. This change targets the neighbourhoods surrounding VSB schools with declining student enrollment with even further densification, allowing new family-oriented construction with the goal of bringing in more students. Members can read more about [these changes here](#).

Regardless, seeing the city council and the board of trustees moving in the direction of valuing and using public lands, instead of looking to sell for one-time cash infusions to the budget, is quite encouraging. Earlier this year, VEAES met with NDP Education Minister, Rachna Singh to discuss our concerns surrounding the VSB moving to sell public lands. She reaffirmed that the provincial government stands firm in its belief that public lands must remain in possession of schoolboards and the Province is interested in expanding public education, not selling off its assets.

VEAES stands firm in its belief that in order to serve future generations of students, the VSB must hold on to and make good use of publicly held land assets and will continue to advocate at all levels to ensure this remains the case.

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.

Commercial Drive Building Sale Completed

by: Jody Polukoshko

We are pleased to announce that the final sale of the VTF building at 2915 Commercial Drive has been completed. Our final selling price was \$7,500,000 and the building was owned 50%/50% between ourselves and the VSTA, with the funds received by both associations. We are grateful to all who participated in the discussions, meetings, purchase of our new office, and sale of our old office.

The VEAES finance committee is hard at work ensuring that all of our expenses are being managed, and the incoming funds will be applied to the running of the organization as follows:

- Payment to the mortgage for the new Yukon Street Building
- Completion of infrastructure at the new site (technology, blinds, furniture) that was delayed while the sale was pending
- Reimbursement of our internal accounts that supported our financial viability during the purchase
- Contribution to the local Host Nations as part of an acknowledgment of our operations and profits being connected to unceded and stolen First Nations land

VEAES has currently almost completed our annual financial audit, and will begin working soon on the budget for the 2024-2025 school year.



Disability Justice / Fighting Ableism

by: Jody Polukoshko

Many of us are learning to recognize the ways that our unconscious bias impacts our relationships with colleagues, students, curriculum, and assessment. Because of our important role in inclusion, it's necessary that we also interrogate our understandings about neurodiverse and disabled students / students with disabilities.

As the BCTF and as VEAES, we have brought forward initiatives to change language from "Special Needs" to "Disabled Student / Student with Disability" and are lobbying government to make similar changes in their use of language.

The two phrases reflect that there are two ways of thinking about language – some disabled people prefer "identity first" language, because of strong identification with that part of themselves. You will see this in the Autism community where members of that community are reclaiming the terminology "Autistic" and "Autistic Person" because they identify their autism to be an inherent and central part of who they are. Still others prefer "person first" language, (i.e. "person with autism") because of a desire to center the individual. The Deaf community is another place where members of that community have worked hard to raise awareness of ASL as a distinct language and culture. The best way to know about someone's identity and preferences is to ask!

The broader Disability Justice movement has worked to change the way that disabilities are represented, to move away from equating disability with social stigma and prejudice. There have been many ways over the years that we have come to recognize the way that our language has made assumptions about, and spoken for, disabled people / people with disabilities. Importantly, it's necessary to also re-evaluate the ways that the names for many disabilities are used as euphemisms, or by non-disabled folks to describe themselves, for instance, when we describe a hearing person who is unwilling to hear or listen as "deaf", or when a neurotypical person describes their attention to detail as "OCD" [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder]. This can be harmful to members of those communities, and perpetuate misinformation or negative stereotypes about disabled people / people with disabilities.

The image displays three BCTF posters. The first poster, titled "Recognize Honour Embrace Celebrate", features a rainbow infinity symbol and lists conditions: AUTISM, ADHD, BRAIN INJURY, TOURETTES, OCD, and LEARNING DISABILITY. The second poster, "The Importance of Addressing ABLEISM", defines ableism and discusses its impact on perception and stigma. The third poster, "Scientists with Disabilities", features Farida Bedwei from Ghana, an engineer with cerebral palsy, and includes the text "KARMZAH" and "OCCUPATION: Engineer DISABILITY: Cerebral Palsy". All posters include the BCTF logo and the text "With Member Teachers' Consent".

You can order these and other BCTF Social Justice posters (free for members) on the BCTF website at: <https://bctf-posters.myshopify.com/>



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Dates to Remember

VEAES Open House

November 30, 2023

4 -7 pm

VEAES Office

410 - 2238 Yukon Street

Executive Committee Meeting

December 5

4 pm

VEAES Office

410 - 2238 Yukon Street

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

4:30 pm - meet at the 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.