

VEAES WEEKLY

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



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British Columbia Teachers' Council Update

by: Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

BCTC 2024 Election

There will be an election in March, 2024 for the BC Teacher Council. Below are the names of the members who have secured the BCTF's endorsement for the 2024 BC Teachers' Council election:

Zonal selection of BCTF-endorsed candidates

- Fraser Zone: Shanee Prasad
- Interior Zone: Danielle Neer
- Northern Zone: Lisa Kishkan
- Vancouver Coastal Zone: Jelana Bighorn
- Vancouver Island Zone: Carol Arnold

Congratulations to the endorsed candidates. We would like to thank all the members who put their names forward. More updates on the election will be provided in January 2024.

New Teachers' Survey

[*Information can be found on website*](#)

Below are some of the quotes from the survey.

The amount of burnout in this profession is alarming and I am concerned for the future of my career. The workload is obviously not sustainable and needs to be addressed by decreasing class sizes, not promoting "self care".

BC's educators are not valued by many. Especially not the government and the school district. We have awful working conditions, we have no help in classroom.

I am one teacher amongst many who has considered leaving the profession due to how little support and funding we have access to in order to effectively teach the mandated curriculum in an engaging and equitable way. From my perspective, the public education system feels like it's in crisis due to the endless demands teachers are burdened with without the respect and salary they deserve, and without the amenities and learning resources students deserve to access.

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BC Teachers' Council Update *(continued)*

The BCTC administers surveys to gather information that supports the ongoing approval process for B.C. teacher education programs and the review of the regulatory standards for the teaching profession.

In 2021, the BCTC launched a survey of newly certified educators trained in B.C. to find out about their experience as they transitioned from their teacher education program into the teaching profession. With the collected data and the findings, the BCTC seeks to guide future changes to the regulatory standards for the teaching profession. The BCTC also offers recommendations for improvements to the education community.

- [New Teacher Survey – Executive Summary, June 2023 \(PDF, 548KB\)](#)
- [New Teacher Survey – Full Report, Result and Recommendations, June 2023 \(PDF, 1.2MB\)](#)
- [New Teacher Survey – Recommendations for the B.C. Government and Education Partners, June 2023 \(PDF, 631KB\)](#)
- [New Teacher Survey – Recommendations for B.C. Teacher Education Programs, June 2023 \(PDF, 401KB\)](#)

On behalf of all VEAES members, we raise our hands in honour and respect to all new teachers in the Vancouver elementary and secondary schools who participated in this survey. The full report is 172 pages however you can read the executive summary that highlights the recommendations. The findings and recommendations from the New Teacher Survey will help in our continued advocacy for improvements to our working conditions which is connected to the learning conditions of the students.

Seniority Lists

by: Darren Tereposky

Your administrator was provided with an updated seniority list as of October 31st 2023. All teachers with a continuing contract at your site should be included on the list. If your administrator has not shared the list, please have your VEAES rep request a copy to post where teachers can verify their seniority. If you have concerns that your seniority is not accurate, contact Employee Services. The next updated list will come out in May 2024 when school organization and spring transfer take place. Seniority is used by the Employer to fill positions for vacant postings when applicants have relatively equal qualifications, for declaring teachers surplus when your site staffing allocation is reduced and for layoffs when overall staffing is being reduced across the district.

School Site Lunchtime Practices Survey Results Shared at Staff Rep Assembly

by: Eric Proulx

It's still complicated... but here are some results and concrete solutions to (some) issues

At the December 12th Staff Rep Assembly, the results of the School Site Lunchtime Practices survey were shared out. Members may recall that the issue came up earlier this year, where several concerns were brought up, regarding lack of cleanliness, rodent infestation, permanent conversion of suitable communal eating spaces, added supervision and loss of instructional time. Practice is varied across the district, and this was apparent when analyzing the data. The following points are some of the results, which are useful to understand what's going on in the district:

- Before the pandemic, schools ate: 53% in the cafeteria, 16% in the classroom and 31% Other, which could include multi-purpose room or gym.
- Today, 58% eat in the classroom, 13% in the lunchroom, 6% in the gym, 3% in the multipurpose room and 20% "mixed practices".
- Today, 54% of students are eating during a scheduled lunch hour, 38% during instructional time and 15% at "other" times,
- The issues most reported as problems were:
 - 59 schools where teachers had concerns about cleanliness
 - 39 schools reported loss of instructional time
 - 38 schools reported rodent infestations
 - 35 schools reported having students eat in class prevented teachers from prepping for the next lesson

The survey revealed having adequate supervision of students eating in classrooms is an ongoing issue. Only 36% of schools reported that supervision aides were supervising students, and others reported that administrators (10%) or student monitors (16%) were providing supervision. While teachers have a supervision free lunch hour, the survey found that about 23% of teachers who prep in their classrooms at lunch were compelled to intervene and manage student behaviour due to issues with student supervision. If lack of supervision at lunch is an issue in your school please report this to your administrator, who is responsible for managing this.

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School Site Lunchtime Practices Survey *(continued)*

We compared the subjective rating of staff happiness surrounding this issue (scale of 1-5) with how the decision of where to eat was made and found that the vast majority of “happy” or “very happy” sites were sites where staff either discussed the issue in a VEAES or Staff Committee meeting. The vast majority of “unhappy” or “very unhappy” sites were ones where the decision was made by the administrator. This is not a scientific analysis, but confirms our pro-union bias that when more people are involved in decision making, more people end up happy with the results!

VEAES spoke to the president of IUOE, (the union representing custodial staff, supervision aides and building engineers) and they shared that when the decision was made for students to eat in the classroom as a result of COVID precautions, the staffing hours they had to accomplish such work had not changed. Therefore, when custodial staff could before spend a smaller amount of time to clean one large consolidated eating area, they now have to clean many different rooms, which is more labour intensive.

As for the rodent infestation issue, VEAES learned that as of October 2022, the BC government banned rat poison due to the poisons entering the food chain and killing large numbers of animals who eat poisoned dead rats (yuck!). The alternatives to rat poison, though less ecologically harmful are also less effective at managing rodents leading to a province-wide situation one could describe as “Ratapalooza”, “Mousetravaganza” or “a great time to be a rodent”.

Regardless, the IUOE president explained that due to the ineffectiveness of current rodent control strategies, limiting food and making the classroom a less attractive environment for rodents is the most effective thing schools can do to limit rodents.

In light of all discussed above, the following concrete suggestions to schools could be discussed at VEAES or Staff Committee meetings:

1. If lack of cleanliness and rodent infestation are important issues at your site, bringing students into one consolidated eating space is the most effective way to address these problems. The IUOE president suggested that even if not all classes were to do so, the more classes who eat together in one space, the easier it is to manage these issues.
2. If supervision or instructional time are the issues, since this decision is made at a site-by-site basis, the issue could be discussed at a VEAES meeting, with the goal of bringing a recommendation to the next Staff Committee meeting.

Failures to Fill and use of Supervision Aides

by: Jody Polukoshko

The prevalence of Failures to fill, or unfilled absences seems to be increasing exponentially as we get deeper into cold and flu season. Please remember that supervision aides are available between recess and lunch to supervise students, but cannot be used to replace missing teaching staff. It's important that we continue to ensure that teachers are working with students during instructional time, which feels increasingly more challenging with the failures to fill.

The following is a joint statement from VEAES and IUOE, who share concerns about the failures to fill and impact on students and staff:

“Supervision Aides’ role is to supervise students, whether inside or outside of the classroom. Teachers should not be booking Supervision Aides for unfilled teacher absences but rather as additional classroom assistance, consistent with the job description for this role.”

Many staff have noted that Resource, Library and Prep teachers are being pulled more frequently than ever in recent weeks and months. We continue to advocate with the Board through all of our mechanisms with Trustees, Management, and Employee Services for increased attention to the need not only to recruit, but also to retain teachers in Vancouver.

Of course, it's never a single issue that needs addressing. Workload, morale, mental and physical health, feeling respected and appreciated at work, and feelings of autonomy are all part of what sustains us in this job, and those considerations must be part of a concrete recruitment and retention plan. In addition, we are working with the district to implement the new and improved anti-sexism provision which includes application to gender identity, and the Indigenous and new Equity-seeking Employment Equity programs.

Colleagues, we are heading into bargaining and this is where we are able to make substantive changes to our working conditions. It's important that we are ready to raise our voices along with members from across the province about untenable working conditions and lack of support for learners.

Please continue to use the VEAES form to report all failures to fill as it increases our ability to do advocacy with all of our partner groups.

Evaluations

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

If you have been given notice by your administrator that you are going to be evaluated, please read about the process and your rights, under [Article C.22 on page 73 of the Collective Agreement](#). There is a lot of information about criteria and the procedure that members should be aware of prior to the start of an evaluation to ensure that the process is followed. Please remember, you have the right to union representation when meeting with the evaluator to discuss the draft report. This can be your Staff rep or another VEAES member of your choice. Your rep can take notes and document what was discussed and help support you through that meeting.

As explained in the [Nov 17th issue of the VEAES Weekly](#), outcomes of teacher evaluations are either “Satisfactory” or “Unsuccessful”. If you have received an unsuccessful evaluation, we really encourage you to contact the VEAES office so we can discuss your options moving forward. There are supports that can be put in place during this time to help you address the Employer’s areas of concern. The sooner the Union is made aware of the situation, the more proactive we can be in providing supports.

BCTF AGM March 16-19, 2024: Call for delegates

by: Jody Polukoshko

A reminder that the BCTF AGM is happening in person this year in Vancouver! It’s a great networking opportunity to meet your colleagues from across the province, to hear and participate in lively debates about issues related to our profession and social justice. VEAES has a number of resolutions that have been submitted for debate that have come through our committee structures and meetings. Please check out the AGM page on the BCTF website for more info, including all resolutions that have been submitted from around the province. We still have room for delegates! Elections will take place at the January 16 General Meeting, held at Tupper Secondary School. All related expenses including hotel accommodation, childcare, and meals will be covered.

If you have questions about attending, please contact any of the Local Reps: samuel@veaes.ca, natasha@veaes.ca, chloe@veaes.ca, bernadette@veaes.ca, or cathleen@veaes.ca. Interested candidates can fill out this [nomination form](#).





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TTOC Social Thursday December 21st @ 4 PM

by: Darren Tereposky for Kevin McPherson (TTOC Committee Chair)

TTOCs, enjoy a beverage and food courtesy of VEAES to celebrate the upcoming winter break! The VEAES TTOC Committee is hosting a social at CRAFT Beer Market at False Creek. Connect with fellow TTOCs and meet members of your TTOC Committee. RSVP to:

kevin@veaes.ca. See announcement above for details and we hope to see you there.



Dates to Remember

Executive Committee Meeting

December 19

4 pm

VEAES Office

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.