

VEAES WEEKLY

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



Table of CONTENTS

February 14th Annual Women's Memorial March - Page 2

Annual BCTF member survey - Page 2

Vancouver Teachers are in the News! - Page 3

VSB Personnel Files and Letters of Discipline - Page 3

Bargaining Survey 1&2 complete! - Page 4

Police in VSB Elementary Schools - Page 4

Pacific Blue Cross Vote - Page 5 & 6

New Teacher SURT / Welcome to VEAES Ceremony: Wednesday, February 28th - Page 6

Vancouver District and Labour Council annual IWD dinner - Page 7

Special Ed Academic blocks for Resource Teachers - Page 7

February 14th Annual Women's Memorial March

by: By Eric Proulx on behalf of the
Social Justice and Solidarity Committee

VEAES has allocated funds to release up to 15 members to participate in the annual Women's Memorial march for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women Girls and 2 Spirit. Priority will be given to teachers who self-identify as Indigenous, First-Nations, Inuit or Metis.



The event typically begins around noon, but VEAES members who are released will be expected to volunteer with setting up the event, unless they are participating in the parts of the event that are closed to the public and intended for Indigenous people and affected families only. Those approved for union release will be sent event protocol and meeting point/contacts for volunteering opportunities.

Please apply by clicking [here](#).

Annual BCTF member survey

by: Jody Polukoshko

The BCTF will be continuing the second wave of their annual BCTF membership survey. The survey hopes to build a representative picture of member experiences and perspectives, including how those change over time. The survey collects key demographic information, and data on teacher well-being and working and learning conditions.

Randomly selected members will be sent an invitation next week from **Viewpoints Research**, the Canadian-owned research and analytics company BCTF hires to conduct the research. They are bound by federal privacy rules, and the Code of Conduct of the Global Market Research Industry Association, and your input is anonymous and confidential. If you are selected, you need to complete the survey by March 1, 2024. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

If you have questions, you can contact the BCTF, who can provide information about the methodology, ethics, and application of the survey to the work of the Federation.

Vancouver Teachers are in the News!

by: Eric Proulx

Your hard work using the VEAES Failure to Fill Tool grabbed headlines!

Teachers watching [Global TV's 6PM news report last Thursday](#) will have seen that the unions representing workers at the VSB; VEAES, VSTA, CUPE 15, IUOE 963 and CUPE 407 [sent an open letter](#) discussing the impacts of the failure to fill crisis on the every-day working and learning conditions at the VSB. There was also a radio interview on CKNW, [listen here at minute 30](#).

This press release and subsequent news story were made possible due to the thousands of teachers who used the VEAES Failure to Fill tool. Teachers may recall that the effort of coordinating a press release and working with our union colleagues began with a motion at our Staff Rep Assembly.

In a follow-up news story, [BC Education Minister, Rachna Singh responded](#), stating that recruitment and retention of teachers will be a provincial priority. Let's hope this remains the case during our next round of collective bargaining!

Following the publication of the press release by union groups, the District Parent Advisory Committee has [issued a press release of their own](#), supporting the case made in our letter.

VSB Personnel Files and Letters of Discipline

by: Darren Tereposky

Teachers have a personnel file that is kept by the District at the Board office. The content of this file is directed by article E.31 in our Collective Agreement. You can contact the Union or Employee Services to make arrangements to view your personnel file on request. The file contains information related to your employment including final reports of Teacher Evaluations done under Article C.22, records of leaves, and any Letters of Discipline (Article C.22.6) that may have been issued. A Letter of Discipline (LOD) can be removed from your personnel file after five years at your request, provided no further disciplinary action has occurred. Letters of Discipline are issued through a confidential process outlined in the Collective Agreement, and those members who receive them are supported by the Union, and notified when they are put in their VSB personnel file. LODs differ from a non-disciplinary Letter of Expectation (LOE) which are given by the principal to a teacher in a meeting held at the school. LOEs are kept in a file at school, and can be removed after 3 years at your request.

Bargaining Survey 1 & 2 complete!

by: Jody Polukoshko

We are so proud to let folks know that we had almost a 300% increase in members completing the VEAES provincial bargaining survey this year! The information you and your colleagues provided is so important in ensuring that the diverse experiences and desires of members are reflected in our bargaining objectives.

Big appreciation too, for the 75 Staff Representatives who attended the VEAES Staff Rep Training last week to spend the day thinking, learning, and talking about bargaining. Those sessions provided so much information about the experiences of teachers across the district, and became part of our analysis, in addition to some great advice and feedback on strategy and member engagement!

Here's where things go from here: The VEAES EC reviewed a summary of the feedback attained through the first and second bargaining surveys, the first issues session, the Staff Rep Training Sessions, and the experiences brought forward at our committees and General Meetings. We have prepared a recommendation to the February 13 General Meeting, and we invite all members to attend in order to provide input and feedback. The motions carried by that General Meeting will be forwarded to the BCTF to be debated at the May Bargaining Conference.

The opportunities to date and the General Meeting provide our representatives the information they need to advocate for the priorities of Vancouver teachers and to create a set of objectives, priorities, and strategy to guide the work of the Bargaining Team.

Later this spring, we will be providing another issues session, School Visits, and a third survey focused on local bargaining objectives. We appreciate your participation and engagement as we get ready for the bargaining table again in Fall 2024 (local) and Spring 2025

Police in VSB Elementary Schools

by: Eric Proulx on behalf of the Social Justice and Solidarity Committee

Please fill out a brief survey if police have visited your school this school year.

The VEAES Social Justice & Social Committee is interested in learning how police have been interacting this year in the VSB's elementary schools. [Please take a moment to fill this form](#) if VPD have in fact visited your school this year. If police have not entered your school this year, there is no need to fill out this form.

Pacific Blue Cross Vote

by: Jody Polukoshko

Reminder! February 27 and 28 are the dates set for our membership vote on whether to retain our local benefits plan or join the provincial benefits plan.

VEAES, VEAES AE, and VSTA will all be voting together on this important decision via Simply Voting, so please ensure that your contact information is up to date at the VEAES office. You can update it by contacting lori@veaes.ca or by completing the member information sheets your Staff Rep will be circulating.

Please see the [updated comparison chart](#) and the powerpoint summary of last year's conversation with [PBC](#) which outlines a lot of relevant information about the process, how we bargain improvements to the plan, and some of the relative strengths between the two plans.

It's important not to simply look at the numbers on the chart to make your decision. There are some significant improvements in the provincial plan from what we have in the local plan, AND, there are many aspects of our local plan that are superior to the provincial plan.

Here are some of the key considerations:

- The [provincial plan](#) uses a pay-direct card, which increases efficiency, but the ["Blue Rx"](#) formulary significantly limits the number of medications that are covered.
- In the [local plan](#), you are covered for medications prescribed by your doctor, without having to comply with an approved list.
- If you are currently on a medication, on the [provincial plan](#), you will be required to try cheaper alternatives
- The [local plan](#) has "unlimited" benefits for some paramedical services. This is subject to PBC's Reasonable and Customary Limits, which can be exceeded with a doctor's note.
- The [provincial plan](#) has dollar amounts for paramedical services that are higher than the local plan in some instances (i.e. Naturopathy), but those dollar limits will not change when providers increase fees, and the limits cannot be exceeded with a doctor's note.
- The [provincial plan](#) has seen improvements in areas where our plan has not, such as vision care, acupuncture, hearing aids, psychology, fertility treatments)
- The [local plan's](#) deductible is \$1000 per family before expenses are reimbursed at 100% reimbursement, the provincial plan is \$1000 per family member before expenses are reimbursed at 100%.

Pacific Blue Cross Vote (*continued*)

Members' preference for local or provincial benefit plan will be deeply personal and connected to their own medical needs. VEAES is not making a recommendation on membership voting, but urge members to consider their current and future medical needs when casting your vote.

If we vote to stay in the **local plan**, nothing changes.

If we vote to join the **provincial plan**, there will be a transition time, and we cannot go back to the local plan at a later date.

Please review the two plans in detail, and be prepared to exercise your vote at the end of this month. You can also ask your staff rep, who was briefed on the plan and process at the February SURT meeting.

New Teacher SURT / Welcome to VEAES Ceremony: Wednesday, February 28th

Teachers within first two years of career are invited! [Click here to register](#)

By Eric Proulx

Are you a teacher new to the profession or the VSB? Are you looking to learn more about how to navigate being a teacher learning to work with your union, administration, Human Resources? Are you interested in learning more about what your provincial union, the BCTF and your local union, VEAES can offer and how they can serve as mechanisms for positive change in the workplace?

This year on Wednesday, February 28th, VEAES is holding its annual Welcome to VEAES Ceremony in tandem with a New Teacher School Union Rep Training (SURT) where all of your questions can be answered! Teachers within their first two years of teaching are invited to join, with a limit of 30 participants. The New Teacher SURT will begin at 9am with a light breakfast and will include lunch. This will be followed at 3pm by a Welcome to VEAES induction and social with some after school snacks being served.

If you are an Early Career Teacher, this union training event will help you learn to navigate the ins and outs of working at the VSB, connect you to the larger union/labour movement and introduce you to the wider world of the BCTF.

Early Career Teachers attending the event will also have access to a free one-year membership to a Provincial Specialist Association, paid for by the BCTF. Wow!

If you work down the hall from an Early Career Teacher, please check in with them to let them know they are invited!

Vancouver District and Labour Council annual IWD dinner

by: Jody Polukoshko

VEAES is an active member of the Vancouver District Labour Council (VDLC) where we work with other local unions in solidarity and support. Our relationship with the VDLC is long and strong, and we are pleased to be able to support the annual fundraiser hosted by their Women and Gender Rights Committee. The theme for this year's event is "Leading the Way: Women Shaping the Future of the Labour Movement"

We will be doing a draw from interested attendees at the Feb 13 General Meeting, and 10 lucky members will enjoy an excellent buffet dinner and a panel of incredible labour activist women.

The event is March 8, 2024 at the Fraserview Hall in South Vancouver (near Fraser and Marine), Dinner at

5:30, Program at 7:00. It's a great chance to learn, meet and mingle with interesting union siblings, and to support the efforts of a united labour movement.



Special Ed Academic blocks for Resource Teachers

by:Vanessa Lefebvre

At this month's Labour Management meeting, we raised the issue about Resource Teachers being directed to create Special Ed Academic blocks in their schedule that align with SSW breaks. Resource Teachers have reported that some of these blocks are scheduled for 15 minutes before and after lunch, so are not meaningful for academic work.

We raised the concern around professional autonomy as some sites have reported that the grouping of students is not based on academic need. We raised the concern around workload, as some sites are reporting that these blocks are including students that are not on the Resource Teacher's caseload. All of these factors are making it challenging for the Resource Teachers to support students in a meaningful way.

The discussion went well and management said that these concerns can be dealt with at the site and suggested that teachers can raise these issues with Admin. They further said that at administrative meetings the direction and guidance being given to administrators is to be collaborative, constructive, and respectful. If you are considering bringing this topic to Admin, please hold a VEAES meeting at your site to discuss the situation and if the collective is in agreement, bring a recommendation through Staff Committee. Using our structures is an important way to ensure voices are heard and allows for documentation of decisions that are being made.



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

General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly

February 13, 2024

to elect additional delegates to the BCTF AGM
Tupper Secondary - Cafeteria

Executive Committee Meeting

February 20, 2024

4 pm
VEAES Office

Social Justice & Solidarity Committee Meeting

February 27, 2024

4 pm

New Teacher SURT / Welcome to VEAES Ceremony

Wednesday, February 28th
Teachers within first two years of career are
invited! [Click here to register](#)

VEAES

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