

VEAES WEEKLY

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



Table of CONTENTS

Happy Spring Break - Page 2

Parents at Strathcona Elementary Echo Teachers' Concerns Surrounding Staffing at VSB - Page 3

Join the VEAES BIPOC Affinity Group! - Page 3

VEAES Reps on VSB Fine and Performing Arts and Reporting Working Groups - Page 4

AOEC Spring Conference (Saturday April 27) - Unlearning the Colonial - Page 4

Additional day this school year - Page 5

Bargaining Timeline - Page 5

Delegates to May 21-23 Provincial Bargaining Conference - Page 6

Current BCTF opportunities - Page 6

VEAES statement on Gaza - Page 6

BC Teachers' Council - Page 7

Happy Spring Break

by: Jody Polukoshko



Colleagues,

As we lean into the final day or two of school, each of us looking forward to the break, we here at the VEAES Office encourage you to rest during the break, to prioritize your needs and those of your families and loved ones, and to do the things that fill your heart. It can be tempting to use the break to “get ahead” by marking, planning or communicating about your job, but please remember that the increasing workload and demands of our positions are systemic problems that cannot be remedied by steadily increasing our volunteer labour. It’s important to set boundaries that respect our work-life balance and that centre our health and mental health, and sometimes that means stepping fully away from work, and leaving our assignments at the school at the end of the day.

Teachers are notorious for presenteeism and for trying to fix the problems by constantly giving more of ourselves. We know that volunteering will not solve the teacher shortage, our care for our students cannot provide what an underfunded system should be providing, and that the public education system needs sustainable, predictable, needs-based funding now. It’s important to recognize that the feelings of overwhelm and fatigue we are feeling is a collective experience, rooted in inequality.

Let’s commit, this Spring, to locating our struggles in the systemic inequities, instead of turning inward or on each other. Our work is deeply connected to one another, and by sharing our challenges and concerns, we can demystify and collectively own them. Each of us wants the best for our students, and none of us can individually create the conditions that will provide it. It’s only when we stand together that we can make the kind of change that is so needed for our students and ourselves.

Leave any feelings of inadequacy and failure behind on Friday at 3pm. Those aren’t yours to own. You’ve been carrying them too long. This system, this society, needs to step up and do better for our kids and our schools.

Bring with you the fatigue and sadness, but also the joys, relationships, and successes that you’ve had this year. Those are yours. They’re real. You earned them. This break, remember you’re not alone, and that Vancouver parents, support workers, engineers, supervision aides, office admin staff, and the public understand and support you. Teaching is such an important profession, and your contributions are essential. In the meantime, we will continue to lift up teacher’s voices and centre our working conditions and our students’ learning conditions in all of our conversations and communications.

Parents at Strathcona Elementary Echo Teachers' Concerns

Surrounding Staffing at VSB

by: Eric Proulx

Letter Written by Strathcona PAC Results in Media Coverage

VEAES members may have seen in the news the [recent article written by the CBC](#) about the working and learning conditions at Strathcona Elementary. There was also [video coverage](#) of the parent concerns.

On March 6th, Strathcona Elementary's PAC sent a letter to the VSB, sharing a copy with journalists at the CBC as well. Their letter highlights concerns surrounding staffing issues, asking the VSB to immediately address long-term coverage challenges for classroom positions, as well as a chronic lack of support staff which has negatively impacted the inclusion of students with disabilities. Parents have claimed that this lack of adequate staffing have caused many students' learning need to have gone unmet this school year.

To VEAES members across the district, this will be an all too familiar tale. However, something is changing as more public light and attention is being shed on the issue of understaffing at the VSB.

Across the district, VEAES members are organizing the leafletting of our Joint Union Press Release to parents, so that the parent community becomes more aware of VSB working and learning conditions. If VEAES members have made contact with members of their PAC who have expressed similar concerns to the parents at Strathcona, please invite them to join your school site's leafletting efforts. There, they might be encouraged to share the [letters published](#) by the District Parent Advisory Committee! Having the support of the parent community is one of the keys to successful bargaining and improvement of our working and learning conditions! If members have questions regarding how to organize leafletting efforts at their school site, please reach out to karine@veaes.ca or eric@veaes.ca.

Join the VEAES BIPOC Affinity Group!

On behalf of the VEAES Social Justice and Solidarity Committee

April 9th, 4:00 pm at the VEAES office

The VEAES Social Justice & Solidarity Committee is thrilled to extend a warm invitation to all BIPOC members of VEAES to join us for a special gathering of the VEAES BIPOC Affinity Group at our union office.

In the spirit of unity, diversity, and progress, we are coming together to celebrate the invaluable contributions of our BIPOC colleagues in the field of education. This gathering promises to be an uplifting and enriching experience, filled with meaningful discussions, shared insights, and opportunities to foster solidarity within our community.

Let's create a space where every voice is heard, every story is valued, and every dream is supported. There will be plenty of opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together.

To ensure we have enough resources, and snacks for everyone, we kindly ask you to register for the event using this link. We will start the meeting with introductions and ask that you bring an item that has special significance for you for an icebreaker activity.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to be part of something special. Let's come together, learn from each other, and pave the way for a brighter future in education for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you there!

VEAES Reps on VSB Fine and Performing Arts and Reporting Working Groups

by: Darren Tereposky

VEAES is seeking 2 representatives for each of these committees.. A brief Union Rep training session via Zoom is required before being appointed as a rep to these committees (unless you have completed the training within the last two years). Please submit your CV by April 2nd at 4:30 PM, and we will schedule any necessary training later in the week. If you have any questions, please contact darren@veaes.ca.

Fine and Performing Arts Working Group: Four key areas of focus for the 2023-2024 school year include professional learning for enrolling teachers, music resources, partnerships and mentorships and establishing common understandings. The group also is looking at continued supports for music specialists. The first priority area in Fine Arts is focusing on the implementation of the Elementary Music Review, however the group will also work on all areas of arts education.

Reporting Working Group: is to support the continued implementation of the new reporting policy.

AOEC Spring Conference (Saturday April 27) – Unlearning the Colonial: Digging Deeper reposted from the AOEC website

by: Karine Ng

After our inaugural 2019 conference “Unlearning the Colonial”, we’re digging deeper into the learning, unlearning, and reckoning with interlocking systems of oppression in education and our society. To honour five years as Anti-Oppression Educators Collective, we have planned a special spring conference with award-winning Gitxsan journalist and author Angela Sterritt, a powerful lineup of all-day workshops, a mouth-watering catered lunch by Watari, and a spectacular performance by Byrne Creek Secondary student dancers! Don't miss out! [Register](#) now!

When: April 27, 2024, Doors @ 8:30 am

Where: Byrne Creek Secondary (Burnaby)

The poster features a dark green background with a textured, splattered effect. At the top, it reads "AOEC COMEBACK TOUR 2024" in orange. The main title "UNLEARNING THE COLONIAL" is in large, white, hand-drawn letters. Below it, "PART 2: Digging Deeper" is written in a similar style. On the left, "APRIL 27TH, 2024" is written vertically. The central image shows several raised fists in various skin tones against a landscape background. A circular inset on the right shows a portrait of Angela Sterritt, labeled "KEYNOTE SPEAKER". At the bottom, a dark green oval contains the text: "FULL-DAY WORKSHOPS", "STUDENT DANCE PERFORMANCE", "WATARI CATERING", and "VENDORS AND MORE...". To the right of this oval, it says "ANGELA STERRITT" and "BYRNE CREEK SECONDARY, BURNABY" with a location pin icon. The website "WWW.AOEC.CA/EVENTS" is at the bottom with a hand icon.

Additional day this school year

by: Jody Polukoshko

Across Vancouver, teachers are wondering why the inclusion of Good Friday in the second week (School Closure days) of Spring Break has not resulted in an additional day off for Vancouver schools, similar to what was done in Burnaby, New Westminster, and other districts. VEAES has been investigating this since the fall, and your VEAES reps to the Calendar and Education Plan Committee raised this issue at those meetings, but the Vancouver Board has decided not to offer a compensatory day, citing the School Act, and stating that they “don’t have to do what other districts do”.

The School Act requires a minimum number of instructional hours per year, and our Collective Agreement limits the number of hours per week we can work, and the Board does not believe that they are compelled to reduce the number of days in the instructional calendar at this time. While it is true that the number of days in any given school year varies slightly, and we are salaried workers who are not paid daily or hourly, VEAES is investigating the possibility of filing a grievance on this unprecedented decision. In the meantime, VEAES invites the Board to consider the impact on teacher morale in an already challenging year.

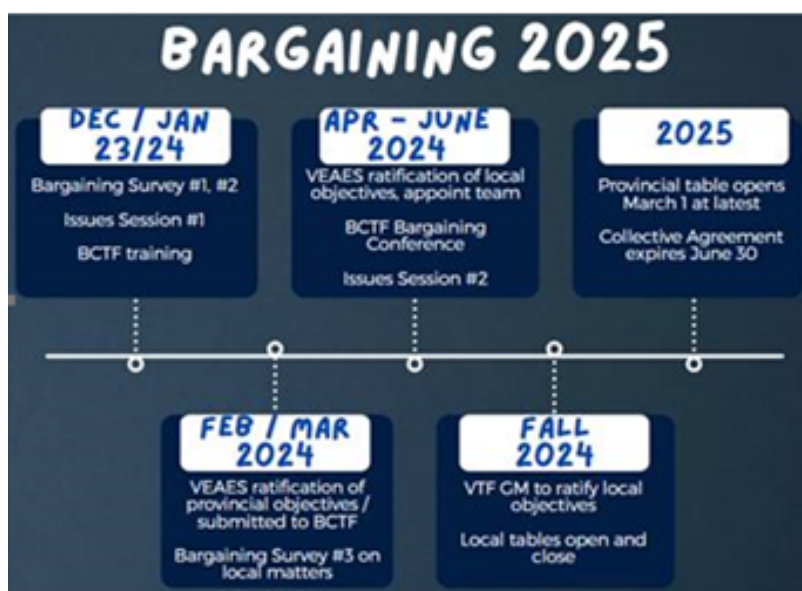
Bargaining Timeline

by: Jody Polukoshko

VEAES recommendations about provincial bargaining objectives, priorities, and strategy, carried by the VEAES February General Meeting have been submitted, and are being reviewed for inclusion at the May 24, 2024 BCTF Bargaining Conference. At that event, reps from around the province will debate recommendations sent by VEAES and the other 60 teacher locals to identify our bargaining priorities for the upcoming round of negotiations. Once those have been set, the VEAES EC will swing into action to provide school visits to all VEAES worksites.

Your Working and Learning Conditions / Bargaining Committee is meeting on April 3 at the VEAES Office at 4pm to create the third bargaining survey, which will focus on local matters. Please join if you have questions, information, or opinions about local bargaining and member consultation.

Please note important upcoming dates from this infographic, and remember – bargaining is a cycle, not an event!



Fun Fact: The BCTF Rep Assembly recently doubled strike pay from \$50 to \$100 per day!

Delegates to May 21-23 Provincial Bargaining Conference

by: Jody Polukoshko

Are you passionate about improving the working and learning conditions of public education in BC? Are you curious about how provincial bargaining works? Do you want to engage with BCTF members from across the province about bargaining objectives? If your answer is "yes" to any of these questions, then you may want to put your name forward to be part of the VEAES delegation to the bargaining conference!

Before each round of provincial bargaining, the BCTF hosts a bargaining conference for delegates from locals across the province to gather, for the purpose of discussing and debating the bargaining objectives that locals have submitted. With input from the members who filled out the survey in January, and the support of the executive and general membership, VEAES submitted a list of provincial bargaining objectives. Delegates appointed by the VEAES executive committee will represent VEAES members by advocating for the objectives we submitted. Interested members can express their interest by filling out this [CV](#). The deadline to submit is April 4.

Current BCTF opportunities

Excerpted from BCTF communications



2SLGBTQIA+ Justice Summit Session

The BCTF is seeking members to participate in the 2SLGBTQIA+ Justice Summit Session on April 26–27, 2024. Participants must be BCTF members and identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. For more information about the summit and to apply, visit the [online posting](#). The deadline to apply is Monday, March 25, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Applications for the Provincial Bargaining Team

The Bargaining Team is responsible for preparing for provincial bargaining, including researching issues, drafting proposals, developing and implementing table strategy, and supporting communications to members and the public. BCTF members are invited to apply by April 8, 2024. The Provincial Bargaining Team will be appointed by the BCTF Executive Committee. For more information about the role, responsibilities, and application instructions, visit the [online posting](#).

VEAES statement on Gaza

by: Jody Polukoshko

This week's VEAES Staff Rep Assembly carried a motion that VEAES issue a public statement calling for a ceasefire, condemning the starvation and indiscriminate bombing, especially of children and schools, calling for compliance with the International Court of Justice ruling, urging Canada to end complicity and push for democratic negotiations to achieve a just and lasting peace.

In issuing this statement, VEAES will be standing alongside the International Trade Union Confederation, the Canadian Labour Congress, the BC Federation of Labour, the BCTF, and dozens of provincial and federal unions. This motion arose from the floor and is consistent with positions of the International Court of Justice, Amnesty International, the United Nations and provides VEAES the opportunity to respond to requests for solidarity on the above matters.

The timelines require that the statement be published this month and we will forward it in the VEAES Weekly in the first week back after Spring Break.

BC Teachers' Council

Excerpted from BCTF communications

The BC Teachers' Council is responsible for reviewing and approving teacher education programs in BC and setting standards for applicants and educators in the province. [The election for council members](#) is open until 4:30 p.m. PST on March 20, 2024. You should have received an email from both the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, and from the election platform, Simply Voting Inc., with voting instructions. **Be sure to check your junk and spam folders** if you did not receive these emails.

BCTF members can vote for their chosen candidate in the zone they live in. The BC Teachers' Council election zones match the five [regional health authorities](#) in the province. Please note that you must vote for a candidate in **the zone you live in**, even if you work in a different zone. The BCTF has an endorsed candidate running in each BC Teachers' Council zone.

The BCTF endorsed candidate for Vancouver Coastal Zone is Jelana Bighorn. Her biography and candidate statement is on the [BCTF website](#) and [the election website](#), and is attached to this email as a pdf. The BCTF-endorsed candidate for each election zone is:

- Fraser Zone/Region: **Shanee Prasad**
- Interior Zone/Region: **Danielle Neer**
- Vancouver Coastal Zone/Region: **Jelana Bighorn**
- Vancouver Island Zone/Region: **Carol Arnold**

[To cast your vote](#), you need your BC teaching certificate number (beginning with either the letter "L" or "J") and the personal identification number (PIN) that was emailed to you by Simply Voting, along with the voting instructions. You can also vote by phone by dialing 1-877-384-3246. You will be prompted to enter your BC certificate number and PIN.

If you do not know your certificate number, please call [Service BC](#) using one of the following numbers: Vancouver at 604-660-2421, or toll-free at 1-800-663-7867.

If you have not received information or your ballot is for an incorrect zone, please log in to [Your Account](#) to ensure that your contact information is current. If you need help logging in to Your Account or linking your BCeID, please call 604-660-2355 in Vancouver or toll-free at 1-888-356-2741.

Once you have updated your contact information, OR if your contact information is correct but your ballot is for the incorrect zone, please email BCTC.Elections@gov.bc.ca ASAP so the Ministry can have Simply Voting resend the ballot to the current zone where they live.

If you have any questions about the election process, please email the Ministry of Education and Child Care at BCTC.Elections@gov.bc.ca.



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



Dates to Remember

Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining Committee Meeting

April 3rd, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office



Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, April 8th, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office



VEAES BIPOC Affinity Group

April 9th, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office



TTOC Comittee Meeting

April 10, 2024

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82333454618>

Meeting ID: 823 3345 4618

Passcode: 587249

Dial by your location

• +1 778 907 2071 Canada



Aboriginal Ed Committee Meeting

Monday, April 11th, 2024

@ 4 pm
VEAES Office

VEAES

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