

VEAES WEEKLY

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



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March 12 General Meeting – VEAES CUPE 15 Solidarity

by: Karine Ng

We are excited to extend the invitation to CUPE 15 members to join us for the first portion of the General Meeting on March 12. Bring a support worker colleague with you! They may have received the invitation via CUPE 15 channels, but if they haven't heard about it, please invite them to come along with you. This is a solidarity-building exercise for teachers and support workers from across all the work sites to come together and envision a better school system for students, and to come up with concrete actionable tasks to raise our voices in ways that don't jeopardize our job security.

Please note that the solidarity activity will be planned as one of the first agenda items on the GM agenda, so that CUPE 15 members can leave right after, and the meeting will continue with VEAES members only. For scheduling purposes, you can let your CUPE 15 colleagues know that we don't anticipate the activity to go later than 5pm.

We as frontline workers know best how severely our students' learning conditions have eroded over recent years. Let's channel our frustrations into collective care and action! Come one, come all!

BCTF Annual General Meeting

by: Jody Polukoshko

Thank you again to the 30 members who will be representing VEAES at the BCTF Annual General Meeting this spring break. The AGM is an excellent opportunity to meet and build solidarity with members from across the province.

You can read the agenda, resolutions and recommendations on the BCTF website – your delegates will be voting on our BCTF membership fee, the Salary Indemnity Plan, Bargaining, Social Justice, Indigenous Education, Political Action and Education Policy, and much more.

Please consider attending the April Staff Rep Assembly where your Local Reps will report out on key decisions made at the 2024 AGM.

Thank you to:

Natasha Burditt, Samuel Couture, Chloe McKnight, Cathleen With, Bernadette Milton, Sarah Adams, Lyndsay Campbell, Greg Canning, Jenna Carpenter-Boesch, Alexandra de Montigny, Marjorie Dumont, Christian Hendren, Sylvia Jackson, Jessie Janzen, Andrea Joseph, Nurit Katz, Jane-Ann Kay, Kyle Kirkwood, Rob McGowan, Kevin McPherson, Ariella Menashy, Jody Polukoshko, Eric Proulx, Jaqueline Sabouniha, Jennifer Sebastian, Louise Seto, Khaled Shawwash, Sarah Steele, Darren Tereposky, Marcus Zheng, Leslie Roosa, and Leslie MacKenzie.

VSB Employee Morale Survey

by: Eric Proulx

Your participation in an upcoming survey will help shape public discourse about public education in Vancouver

As a result of motions passed this year at the Staff Rep Assembly, VEAES in-house staff have issued a [Joint Union Press Release](#). With the addition of failure to fill data that VEAES members have reported since October (1,600 reports so far!), the release of the letter made waves and media coverage took place on [Global News](#), as well as the [CBC](#). In response to our Joint Union Press Release, the District Parent Advisory Committee has also issued two separate statements in support ([here](#) and [here](#)), arguing that parents have noticed the same issues as teachers are reporting.

Our media campaign is not yet over and further press-releases are coming out soon. However, in order to connect the dots between the impacts of the failure to fill crisis on teachers and its effects on employee morale, all the VSB unions will be issuing a VSB Employee Morale Survey before Spring Break.

The VSB Morale Survey is an anonymous survey where teachers can feel confident that they can raise their voices and concerns, without their names being attached to feedback. The survey is intended to gather demographic information and includes open ended questions so teachers can share as much or as little as they would like about what they either enjoy about working at the VSB, or what they would like to see improved.

In order for this data to be meaningful, VEAES is hoping that the largest number of teachers possible will participate. We will be discussing the survey and its roll-out at the upcoming March 12th Staff Rep Assembly. Please reach out to your staff rep to host a VEAES meeting at your site to collectively fill out the survey, as well as learn more about VEAES' efforts to bring public awareness to VSB working and learning conditions. Once you complete the survey, go down the hall and make sure your colleagues have completed it too!

Ask your local teacher librarian!

by: Chloe McKnight

Looking for a new idea for a read aloud or book club novel? Curious how to access online ebook and audio book collections, district databases and subscriptions like National Film Board of Canada and Live It earth? Teacher librarians are excited to connect and share ideas.

Collaboration time in teacher librarian's schedules can be used to team teach and help to cover cross-curricular content and foster literacy. Flexible time can be a huge asset in supporting students with unique learning needs. Unfortunately not all schools have Flex Time included in the teacher librarian's schedule, but this is something that can be advocated for during spring staffing using the staff committee structure.

This week I loved reading Moon's Ramadan with classes and hearing students share their family traditions and excitement about the upcoming celebrations.



Teacher Council Elections

by: Jody Polukoshko

"Our Professional Standards belong to us, and they should both inspire the next generation of educators as well as protect the venerated position that teachers hold in the wider society" - Jelana Bighorn

The election is now open until March 20, 2024. Don't put it off! It only takes a minute and is online and open to all certificate holders. Emails were sent yesterday from the BC Ministry of Education.

You need to know your Certificate number (starting with an L) and use the PIN in the invite email.

Every three years, teachers elect representatives to the BC Teachers' Council. The Teachers' Council has impact on our work in many ways, including overseeing university teacher education programs, member certification, disciplines, and reviewing Teacher Professional Standards.

For the last three years, Vancouver Coastal has been so well served by Marjorie Dumont, C'tan, VEAES VP, who oversaw the review of the UBC Teacher Education Program and facilitated the addition of Professional Standard 9 on Indigenization / Reconciliation. Marjorie's term is up and we thank her for her work, insight, and courage working with Ministry and partner groups for a stronger public education.

VEAES has endorsed Jelana Bighorn, a Vancouver Secondary Teacher and Member at Large on the BCTF Executive Committee, for Vancouver Coastal Zone. Following the BCTF's extensive process, Jelana has also been endorsed by the BCTF, along with Shane Prasad, the president of the Burnaby Teachers' Association for Fraser Zone.

Vote for the region where you live:

The election zones correspond with the [five regional health authorities](#), and certificate holders can only vote in the zone where they live. Most VEAES members will vote in either Vancouver Coastal or Fraser Zones.

The elections will be held in March 2024, with voting open March 6-20, 2024. Voting is online and open to all certificate holders. Please watch your email (including your junk folder) for an invitation from BC Teachers' Council, which will be sent on February 22. Candidate profiles and information will be posted on the [elections page](#) in late February.

In order to ensure you are able to participate, the BCTF recommends that members ensure their contact information, especially your email address, are up to date in [Your Account](#), which is accessed using your BCeID login. Call 604-660-2355 If you need help logging in to your BCeID account.

Professional Fatigue, Wellness, and the United Nations Report

by: Jody Polukoshko

Colleagues, the struggle is real. We are facing such incredible pressure in our work due to increasing expectations from admin and parents, at the same time that we are juggling the challenges of undersupported students and frequent reassignment due to failures to fill.

It can sometimes feel like a professional failing, or inadequacy when we aren't able to address all of the needs of our students and communities, guilt when we can't connect with our families in the way we would like. In reality, the concerns are systemic and deeply rooted in the ways that our provincial and local governments prioritize spending and support.

In late February, the [United Nations Secretary-General released a report](#) from the Panel on the Teaching Profession, which undertook a global analysis of the conditions leading to the teacher shortage. This perspective allows for some high level recommendations that are good information and confirmation of our experiences. Of course, Vancouver teachers have a front row seat to this crisis, and not one of us isn't aware of the causes and impacts of the teacher shortage, however, this document may help you feel seen. It did for me.

The panel made 59 recommendations that span a number of areas, but Recommendation 8 in particular, echoes our calls to government for decades: "long-term funding for well-qualified and well-supported teachers is an investment in the quality and sustainability of education systems". To quote the [EI summary of the document](#), "this means ensuring competitive, fair, and professional salaries, in line with those of other professions with similar educational requirements. It also means good working conditions for our education workforce, including our support personnel colleagues. Teachers need manageable workloads and student-teacher ratios that allow for quality teaching and learning to happen... a clear call to make sure that educational working environments are inclusive, safe, and non-discriminatory for teachers. Teachers must be protected against all forms of violence, discrimination and harassment."

The Summary at the end of the full document groups recommendations into the categories **Humanity, Dignity, Equity, diversity and inclusion, Quality, Innovation and leadership, and Sustainability**. It's worth a read, my friends, and hearing our work understood through these lenses is balm for the soul.

Please also remember that the BCTF provides resources and support for members experiencing challenges connected to your work life.

The [BCTF's Health and Wellness program](#) is a free, confidential service for teachers that is paid for by the BCTF. Once referred to the program, the BCTF will pair you with an Occupational Therapist who will work with you to support your wellness goals. You can read more about it at the link above and refer yourself.

[Starling Minds](#) is an online mental health and wellness program that uses the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. If this modality makes sense to you, and your concerns are connected to stress, anxiety, and/or depression, Starling Minds is again, free and confidential and funded by the BCTF. You can complete it at your own pace and in the comfort of your own home. BCTF member reviews of this program are overwhelmingly positive, and it is very well accessed.

International Women's Day

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

March 8th is International Women's Day and at VEAES we would like to wish everyone a wonderful day and thank you for all the work you do, paid and unpaid, that contributes to our society in so many ways. Teachers are predominantly women, and even more so at the elementary level. We hope you take some time to celebrate yourself, the women in your life and women across the globe.

This year, the International Trade Union Confederation has called for a focus on Women's Rights for Inclusive Democracy this IWD and calls us to connect equality at work to the creation of inclusive societies and strong democracies.

IWD also asks us to imagine a gender equal world, a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, including our fight for a gender equity that is inclusive of 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying people, Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour. Bringing together different perspectives, lived experiences, voices, ideas, and strategies, through inclusion and diversity in our movement, increases our ability to represent the needs and interests of all workers and grows our strength in pushing for positive change for an equitable future for all.

Victories led by women in the labour movement in the last five years include: federal pay equity legislation, movement toward a national child care system, paid intimate partner violence leave for almost all workers across the country and most recently, pharmacare plans covering contraception, federal support for a new international labour standard on violence and harassment at work.

If you are not a member already, you might want to consider joining [the Anti-Oppressive Educators' Collective, the AOEC](#), a BCTF PSA, who work throughout the year to break down bias and reflect on bringing anti-oppression into teaching and into our hearts and minds. They have an amazing conference scheduled for April 27th, 2024 with keynote speaker [Angela Sterritt](#). Tickets are going fast, so register soon.





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Dates to Remember

General Meeting/ Staff Rep Assembly

March 12, 2024

@ 4 pm

Tupper Secondary - Cafeteria



Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, April 8th, 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.