

VEAES WEEKLY

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



VEAES Member Portal

To access the portal, go to the [VEAES website](#). On the menu, scroll down to [Member Portal Log In](#). When you click on it, there will be a prompt for you to register. After much consideration, we have chosen to use members' VSB employee numbers as the username, as it allows us to verify members. So, you will have to have your VSB employee number ready in order to register for the portal.

Once you are registered and verified, you can access the portal menu, which is located on the left sidebar, under Member Portal. We encourage all members to sign up. If you have any issues with your registration, please email lori@veaes.ca

Table of CONTENTS

Pro-D Updates-Page 2

VEAES Elects 6 Delegates to the BCTF Bargaining Conference-Page 3

Celebrate May Day at the Maritime Labour Centre (May 1st, 5:30PM-9:30PM, 111 Victoria Drive)-Page 3

Leafletting Efforts: VEAES Members Share Joint Union Letter with Parents in their School Community-Page 4

Relinquishing a Part-time Continuing Contract – Deadline April 30th-Page 4

District Program Closures-Page 5

Teacher Council Election-Page 5

Updated VEAES Member Morale Survey-Page 5

VSB Budget-Page 6

Local Bargaining Survey-Page 6

BIPOC Affinity Group Gathering-Page 7

Missed Preparation Time-Page 7

Save the Date!-Page 8

Pro-D Updates

by: Karine Ng

Joint Pro-D Planning Sessions

School-based Pro-D chairs and administrators are invited to attend a half-day (am or pm) Joint Pro-D planning session some time in the month of May. The purpose of this event is to allow each school's Pro-D team to spend dedicated time to plan what school-based Pro-D looks like for the next school year. If the team wishes to have an additional member from the school's Pro-D committee to attend, their release time can be funded by accessing the school-based Pro-D account 8114. The district has informed us that there are three options are to attend:

1. at the school,
2. at the Ed Center, or '
3. at the secondary school in their Family of Schools. The secondary administrator responsible for Pro-D are asked to survey their Families of Schools administrators to determine if there is interest.

VEAES has concerns about this information being shared by the districts with principals before the Joint District Pro-D Committee has had a chance to formally approve it. We also have general concerns about the lack of record keeping and formal decision-making mechanism at the Joint District Pro-D Committee meetings. Seasoned Pro-D chairs may recall that this is a contractual committee where decisions are to be made jointly between the committee members, composed of 4 managers and 4 union reps (VSTA and VEAES combined). Historically, decisions were arrived at based on a consensus model.

At the meeting on April 7, VEAES reps recall discussing possible dates and the format of the planning day, but no formal process occurred to finalize decisions. We heard that a more concrete plan would be presented at the next meeting on May 7, to be reviewed and approved by the committee. Additionally, those who choose to attend the planning session at their school or as a family of schools will not be able to benefit from the presence of district and union reps. This is a departure from the past practice of a jointly-facilitated planning day, where participants can be informed of their rights and responsibilities, be given the chance to ask clarifying questions in the presence of union reps and management, and dialogue with other school teams to enhance collaboration. The board-proposed decentered approach is concerning, as it diminishes the opportunity for dialogue to arrive at a common understanding between principals and Pro-D chairs.

The above update was presented at this week's Staff Rep Assembly, where staff reps voted unanimously in favour of the following motion:

That VEAES

- Engage with VSB regarding necessary suggestions as to how to make joint VEAES/VSB committee meetings more collaborative & effective, and;
- Push for a special off-timetable VEAES/VSB Pro-D Committee meeting, to happen as soon as possible, in order to facilitate a more collaborative upcoming Pro-D Planning Day.

VEAES reps will be following up on this with the committee, and will provide updates in the coming days.

continued on next page

Pro-D Updates

Collaborative Inquiry and Temporary Supplemental Funds

We heard loud and clear from Pro-D chairs and members that they wish to see release time to be permitted again via the Collaborative Inquiry Funds, to support grassroots, members-driven collaboration between colleagues at and across school sites. Since the inception of the Temporary Supplemental Fund in 2019, there has been a huge decrease in applications to Collaborative Inquiry. Instead, the trend has been a massive increase in Temporary Supplemental applications, which require that applicants attend events that are planned, organized and/or facilitated, often by external bodies. Additionally, Temporary Supplemental was ever meant to be a temporary measure for members to access the funds when the staffing scarcity that began in 2018 precipitated the halting of release time via Collaborative Inquiry.

Your VEAES reps have been and will continue to follow members' direction to advocate for the reinstatement of Collaborative Inquiry release time, and the end of the Temporary Supplemental Fund. Below is the reference to the motion that was passed at the Oct 17, 2023 General Meeting:

THAT school Professional Development Funds not be used to fund summer professional development, and

- a. VEAES continue to assert that Pro-D days take place between the book ends of the school year
- b. That VEAES pressure the board to reinstate release time for Collaborative Inquiry projects.

VEAES Elects 6 Delegates to the BCTF Bargaining Conference

by: Eric Proulx

VEAES would like to thank all members who put their names forward as delegates to the upcoming BCTF Bargaining Conference on May 22nd and 23rd. Our team will proudly bring forward VEAES' bargaining objectives, as adopted at the February 13th General Meeting.

Those elected at the April 16th General Meeting are the following:

- Natasha Burditt (Seymour)
- Marjorie Dumont (In House Table Officer)
- Alexander Graham (U Hill)
- Vanessa Lefebvre (In House Table Officer)
- Bernadette Milton (χπεύ)
- Jennifer Sebastian (χπεύ)

Also attending by BCTF policy are VEAES President and Working and Learning Conditions / Bargaining Committee Chair, Jody Polukoshko and Greg Canning.

Celebrate May Day at the Maritime Labour Centre (May 1st, 5:30PM-9:30PM, 111 Victoria Drive)

by: Eric Proulx

The Vancouver and District Labour Council, of which VEAES is an affiliate is hosting a celebration for International Worker's Day at the Maritime Labour Centre auditorium. It is free to enter and will be a great opportunity for any interested VEAES members to connect with other workers in the larger labour movement, have some great food, hear speakers and live music.

Leafletting Efforts: VEAES Members Share Joint Union Letter with Parents in their School Community

by: Eric Proulx

VEAES members have been taking action! More than 30 schools have participated in leafletting efforts, where the open letter written by our [VSB Joint Union Group](#) (VEAES, VSTA, CUPE15, CUPE 407, IUOE 963) was shared with parents outside of school hours and school grounds to help parents understand the current state of staffing at the VSB. Members have reported great responses from the parent community and many concerned parents have been asking what they can do to help advocate for better working and learning conditions. VEAES will be putting together a list of email addresses where parents can express their concerns, including VSB Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer, VSB School Trustees, BC Provincial Education and Finance Ministers, and Vancouver area MLAs. VEAES members cannot urge parents to write such a message, but can share this list in case they are inspired to do so. Staff reps, please email the VEAES office to request copies of these lists that can then be sent to your sites.

If you are reading this, and are feeling motivated to join in on this collective action, hold a VEAES meeting at your site to discuss the effort inspiring others to join in on the fun! Please reach out to the VEAES office and we will send copies of our Joint Union letter as well as advice on how to take part in this action without fear of reprisal.

Keep it up, VEAES members, our message is getting out there!

Relinquishing a Part-time Continuing Contract - Deadline April 30th

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

If you hold a part-time continuing contract (anything less than 1.0FTE), and you would like to go back to being a TTOC, there is an ability to relinquish your continuing contract for the following September. You need to already be on the TTOC list to be eligible and **the deadline to notify the Employer is April 30th**. You can email your notification to EmployeeServices@vsb.bc.ca with the subject line: Relinquishing Part-Time Continuing Contract. The details can be found in [the LOU on pg 200 of the Collective Agreement](#).

Unfortunately, if you have converted from a temporary to continuing contract at 1.0FTE, you are not eligible under this LOU. Currently, the Employer's position is that you would have to resign from the district to relinquish your 1.0FTE Continuing Contract and then apply back to the VSB, through Make-A-Future, to get on the TTOC list. As you can imagine, the Union has serious concerns about this, as there is no guarantee you will be hired back.

In order to avoid an involuntary conversion to a continuing contract, you should email EmployeeServices@vsb.bc.ca before you accept/roll into a temporary contract to get your number of aggregate days and ask them how many days under a temporary contract would activate conversion to a continuing contract.

TTOC conversion is a hot topic across the province and VEAES has submitted this objective to the BCTF Bargaining Conference as we see this as a retention issue. We are hopeful that there is enough support across the province to get this objective passed at that meeting and will update members once the provincial objectives have been set.

District Program Closures

by: Jody Polukoshko

The Board has notified VEAES that they intend to close many district programs including an EXSEL, a SELC, a CORE Autism Program, 2 Alderwood programs, MACC and Gifted Outreach Seminar programs, and four other Secondary programs. Prior to receiving notice of the closure and surplusing of teachers, VEAES was not consulted nor notified that such consideration was underway at the District.

For years, we have been advocating for more, not fewer district programs to support our most precarious learners and to respond to the specific needs of some students. The reason given was low enrolment, but we know that the barriers to completing the referral process have increased and become more challenging with the shortage of Counsellors and Teacher Psychologists. We know wait lists are long and that student needs often go unassessed in early years, despite the efforts of VEAES members.

We are working with our colleagues at VSTA to raise this important issue with the District, and to insist that the systemic challenges teachers face in accessing supports for diverse learners be addressed. Closing programs is not the way to achieve equity in education!

Teacher Council Election

by: Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

The Teacher Council elections closed on March 20, 2024. Congratulations to all successful candidates in the five regions of the province. The results can be found on the [elections page](#). We are pleased to announce that you have elected Jelana Bighorn, a Vancouver Secondary Teacher, for the Vancouver Coastal Zone. The gifts that Jelana brings aligns well with the Teacher Council's commitment to decolonization and reconciliation. On behalf of VEAES, we wish Jelana all the best in her journey with the council in the next three years.

Updated VEAES Member Morale Survey

by: Eric Proulx

As was communicated via email, we recalled our VEAES Member Morale Survey as it was an incomplete draft that omitted key membership groups, as well as used language that was not representative of our positions as an organization.

VEAES has taken a second look at the survey at the Executive Committee and has created a new and final draft for distribution. No question is mandatory, and no demographic information tied to specific members' responses will ever be shared with the employer. For those who completed the first version of the survey, there is no need to repeat the longform question #14: "If you could speak directly to the VSB's senior management, superintendent and school trustees, what would you say to help them understand the current state of employee morale in the district?". We have saved the responses to this question only, so there is no need to retype your answer.

Once you have completed the survey, please speak to your colleagues down the hall and make sure they have responded too! Having as many members as possible respond makes the resulting data more representative, meaningful and powerful. Data collected will be used in further advocacy, as well as our joint union media strategy.

VSB Budget

by: Jody Polukoshko

Last night, Marjorie Dumont and Karine Ng presented at the Budget Stakeholders Committee Meeting on behalf of VEAES members. You can watch their presentation on the VSB livestream along with the presentations of our colleagues, VSTA, IUOE, CUPE, and parents.

The following were the priorities we took to the meeting after review of policy, and decisions at VEAES General Meetings.

- Transparency on the savings from Failures to Fill and allocation of those savings to provide direct services to students
- Need for fully-staffed schools, including district programs, itinerant and specialist teachers, Area Counsellors, School Psychologists, and Speech Language Pathologists.
- Comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy, including employment equity for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis teachers.
- Replacement of Resources Teachers from the first day of absence to ensure that students receive services
- Funding for Adult Education facilities
- Dedicated funds for fine arts instruction at each worksite, subject to staff committee direction
- Elimination of vacation payouts for senior board executives
- Prioritize spending for providing direct support to students rather than continuing to increase VSB management positions
- Increased transparency in budgeting process: meaningful consultation with stakeholders and the public.

To the greatest degree in recent memory, VSB Stakeholders are united in acknowledging that services to students are far below the necessary levels, and that the support structures, including our restored language, are not functioning as expected, in part, due to the recruitment and retention issues.

The provincial budget's nominal increase in per student funding will not fix the workload issues in Vancouver schools, but the Vancouver School Board can make political decisions about what and where they allocate their funding.

Senior Management has been receiving salary increases that are not released to the public, and our investigation shows that many managers are receiving expensive vacation payouts. The decreased transparency and communication from the Board makes it hard to stomach decreases in service to our vulnerable students at the same time that we continue to see announcements of increased district managers and principals.

Local Bargaining Survey

by: Jody Polukoshko

Watch for your chance to respond about local bargaining priorities in the near future, brought to you by the VEAES Working and Learning Conditions / Bargaining Committee!

BIPOC Affinity Group Gathering

by: Madalene Wong, SJ&S Co-Chair



The Social Justice and Solidarity Committee was thrilled to host a BIPOC Affinity Group Gathering last week in the VEAES office. It was a wonderful afternoon filled with positivity and vulnerability. Thank you to those who joined us in celebrating each other and sharing your wonderful ideas about what this group can be! We look forward to continuing to engage in these conversations in the many gatherings to come. Keep an eye out for our next meeting date in upcoming VEAES weekly emails.

Missed Preparation Time

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

One of the gains from the last round of bargaining was an increase of 10 minutes to our weekly prep time. The newly negotiated language in Article D.4. is as follows: *Effective July 1, 2023, preparation time for full-time elementary teachers will increase from 110 to 120 minutes per week, according to the terms outlined in their local collective agreement.*

Our preparation time is per week. It is the responsibility of admin to schedule prep time and if it is missed, then they are responsible to create a make up prep schedule, communicate that schedule with staff, and book a TTOC to deliver prep coverage within a week.

We are hearing from sites that weekly prep time is being missed and when make up preps are scheduled, the TTOC is being pulled to cover a Failure to Fill. The efforts to reschedule this lost prep time have not been effective at some sites, resulting in a total loss of prep time for that week.

We are meeting with senior management on Tuesday next week, so if your site is dealing with continued loss of prep time, please email Vanessa@veaes.ca, so we can provide management with a list of sites who are owed prep time and give them the opportunity to remedy the situation.

At your site, we need you to keep track of the lost prep time, so when they bring in a TTOC to remedy the situation, everyone is getting their allotted prep time. If this is not being tracked collectively, then hold a VEAES meeting to organize at your site to help facilitate this process.



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



Save the Date!

Our beloved Lori Liang, VEAES Administrative Staff member, is retiring at the end of this month. She has been the face of VEAES for 24 years and we think few members have not had the pleasure of interacting with her on the phones or at the front of our office. We'll be hosting a send off and appreciation event for Lori on Thursday May 30th at the VEAES Office. Please join us to help celebrate Lori's support and care for our organization and our members.

Dates to Remember

Social Justice & Solidarity Committee Meeting

April 23rd, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office



Executive Committee Meeting **Thursday, April 25th, 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.