

# 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](mailto:lori@veaes.ca)

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## **Pro-D App for District Applications**

by: Karine Ng

The online [VSB Pro-D App](#) has recently been launched for the submissions of Temp Supp and Collab Inquiry applications. Pro-D chairs may have been notified of the app's roll-out through their administrators, and those who attended the last Professional Issues Committee meeting were introduced to it as well. By September 2024, email submissions will no longer be accepted, so we encourage members to begin using the app this spring. Your VEAES reps to the Joint District Pro-D Committee have provided feedback to the earlier draft versions of the app throughout this school year, and will continue to do so. If you have any questions or feedback for us to bring to the committee, please attend the next PIC meeting in May. Stay tuned for the meeting date and time!

Reminder: The remaining district committee meeting dates are May 7, June 4 and 18. Applications for next year's Pro-D activities will be reviewed and approved in June.

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## **Program Closures and loss of district classes**

by: Marjorie Dumont

Following up on last week's article identifying the closure of several district classes that support diverse learners, VEAES and VSTA raised the issue at our monthly labour-management meeting, and also met with Senior Management. We are deeply concerned at the loss of options for our students, and the impact on teachers. At those meetings, we learned the following:

That it was Children's Foundation that severed the relationship with VSB for the Alderwood Program, effectively ending the classes there; that the other elementary programs are being reduced but not closed (EXSEL, SELC, CORE, MACC) in part due to the district reporting very low, or zero referrals; that there will not be layoffs, so the staffing for these programs will be redirected within the district; and that the district is willing to review the referral process with the union.

Part of our conversations with the district include the challenges to effective referral when district positions are unfilled – there are schools in Vancouver that have been without a Counselor or Teacher Psychologist for the entire year – and due to the chronic reassignment of Resource Teachers. We have requested greater information about the selection criteria and are planning to follow up with management on these issues.

While the district has assured us that student support being focused on inclusion in classrooms, we will continue to raise concerns about unmet student needs, support for inclusion, and teacher workload. It's important to remember that this is a bargaining year, and it is essential that members prepare to fight for our right to sustainable workload and improved working conditions – especially when it comes to the inclusion of all learners.



## **Reissued 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.

## **Talking with kids about body weight**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Last week on The Current (CBC) had an [interesting segment](#) on research connected to children and exposure to adults talking about body weight.

This news story discussed research demonstrating that the impact on children and youth who hear / have heard adults in their life speak negatively about their own or other people's bodies have a significant negative impact on their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth over the course of their lives, regardless of their own body size. The participants speak about the importance of separating talking about healthy bodies from talking about weight. They also talk about the dangers of moralizing body weight and recommend not talking about people's bodies.

This is a good listen that reflects questions about the current medical model, the way we talk about obesity, and the importance of celebrating health at any size, and celebrating "what our bodies do, and not what they look like".

"The more we talk about weight the more we're driving weight gain and eating disorders... there is lots of research to show that people of a higher weight and feel there is weight bias and stigma avoid health care all together, physicians spend less time with these patients, psychologists attribute more psychopathology to them, and so they avoid health care and there's even some research to suggests that at a biological level, internalized bias increases cortisol levels."

As teachers, part of our work is to talk about healthy living including nutrition, physical activity, illness prevention, and all of these things can be done in ways that do not promote or support fatphobia or reproduce harmful beliefs about body size or weight. Here is a [helpful article](#) if you're curious about learning to recognize the ways that fatphobia and fat shaming can harm our students – and ourselves!

## **Leafleting Update**

by: Karine Ng

We continue to be energized by the uptake of the leafleting efforts in multiple school sites of the VSB Joint Union Group open letter. The feedback from staff reps has been very encouraging – they engaged with parents in conversations off school properties during drop-offs and pick-ups of students. Because members have told us that some parents want to know what next steps they can take to advocate for a just and appropriately funded public education system, we prepared a [list of contact information](#) to be shared with parents who wish to address their concerns directly to the Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer and/or elected officials. For your convenience, we have also created the following QR code that will bring you to the same contact list.



We are happy to send out paper copies of the contact list with the QR code via blue bag. Please email [karine@veaes.ca](mailto:karine@veaes.ca) or [eric@veaes.ca](mailto:eric@veaes.ca) with the number of copies required. Please be reminded that members are not to communicate with parents about advocacy using their VSB webmail or devices, nor during school hours. Let's keep raising our collective voices loudly, but also safely and respectfully!

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## **2024 Annual General Meeting – Local Bargaining Objectives**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Please watch your email tomorrow for information about the upcoming May 14, 2024 VEAES Annual General Meeting. We are eager to get together with members, carry our budget, elect our Executive Committee, consider by-law changes, and discuss our Local Bargaining Objectives! The motions regarding Local Bargaining will be created from survey results in conjunction with the Working and Learning Conditions / Bargaining Committee. The local bargaining survey launches next Thursday, May 2! Remember that when it comes to local bargaining, we work with our secondary partners, so a Vancouver Teachers' Federation (VEAES and VSTA together) meeting is in our future.

The 2024 AGM will be held at Soundhouse, 33 West 8th Ave in Vancouver. While pre-registration is not required, if you are able to RSVP to [hitomi@veaes.ca](mailto:hitomi@veaes.ca) it will help us plan for food and attendance.

## **Workplace Bullying & Harassment Investigations**

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

Another topic raised by the Employer at our monthly labour-management meeting concerns the filing of Bullying & Harassment complaints. The Employer has requested that our members read through the [Administrative Procedure 172 - District Respectful Workplace](#) prior to filing a Bullying & Harassment complaint.

VEAES would also encourage members to read [Administration Procedure 170 - Anti-Racism & Non-Discrimination, AP 170 Appendix A Anti-Racism and Non-Discrimination Response Plan for Administrators, AP 171 Racial Ethno-Cultural and/or Religious Harassment](#) as these Administrative Procedures also intersect with Bullying & Harassment complaints.

Here are the forms for filing a [Bullying and Harassment complaint](#) (you will have to sign on to Sharepoint to view). Please contact the VEAES office for advice on this process.



# TTOC Appreciation Week May 6 - 10

by: Jody Polukoshko

TTOCs are an integral part of the success of our system. Our Colleagues-on-Call enable us to access important parts of our collective agreement (and our Human Rights!).

We can show our appreciation to TTOCs in many ways, but one way we can take their leadership is to use the TTOC created Info Form. This includes information TTOCs have identified as the most important. You can fill it out and leave it in your daybook to simplify your callout procedures and streamline the notes you have to leave when you are absent.

<https://veaes.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/TTOC-info-form-for-classroom-teachers-fillable-form.pdf>

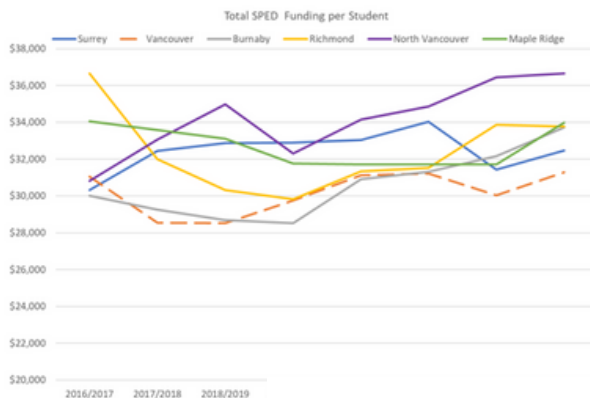


## Parents Advocacy

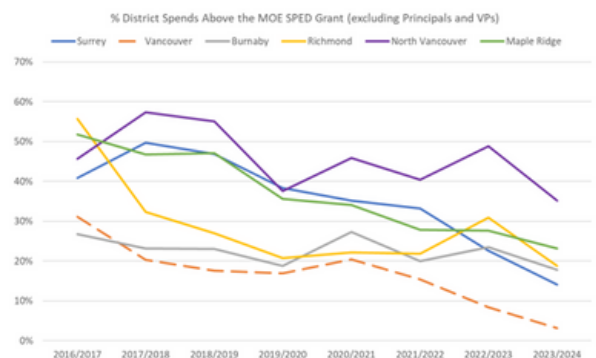
by: Karine Ng

A big shout-out to the parents who presented to the board of trustees in a public delegation meeting on Monday April 22! They took it upon themselves to gather information through Freedom of Information requests, in order to gain a better understanding and to reveal the reality of school-based staffing. In particular, data related to the staffing of EAs and teachers who work with students with disabilities or neurodivergence was shared with trustees. Questions about why the VSB budget's spending on their instruction has been consistently decreasing, and the human rights of students to access equitable educational services were raised loud and clear. Interested members can check out the [link to the presentation](#) and [materials](#) that the parents submitted. They provide excellent content for further advocacy. Below are a couple of excerpts:

VSB spends the least per student on special education compared to nearby districts by as much as \$5,000 per student or \$17 million



Compared to neighbouring districts, VSB spends barely more than the Ministry funding on instruction. Other districts still spend 15% - 35% over the grant, VSB only spends 3%



Thank you to the parents who advocate for adequate services to students. They understand that educators' working conditions are fundamentally tied to students' learning conditions. Together, we are building momentum for the benefit of current and future generations of students!

# Institute for Public Education analysis of the BC education budget

by: Jody Polukoshko

The [Institute for Public Education](#) (IPE/BC) is an organization of educators committed to doing analysis on, and advocacy for, public education in BC. They have released a [report analysing the upcoming BC budget](#). As always, the BCTF submits recommendations to the process, and as always, we're disappointed with the outcome of government's decisions.

IPE/BC published a report on the BC Education budget this year, here are some excerpts:

"As with last year, the budget's primary policy thrust lies with meeting spending commitments that have already been made, along with the steering of new allocations to meet significant growth in student enrolments that is expected to persist for at least the next few years.

"There is \$632 million more for school operations in 2024/25. Most of that will be consumed by preexisting commitments for negotiated wage and salary increases arising out of contract negotiations for teachers and support staff concluded in 2022.

"As is evident, Independent (private) Schools continue to be big winners with new funding up \$72 million or 14.5 per cent to more than \$570 million.

"Special account monies are new funding intended to address early literacy screening and dyslexia initiatives and should be recognized and credited as such. And, as mentioned before, new Capital Spending sees a marked increase as BC scrambles to deal with the impact of rising student enrolments. ... The budgetary approach favoured by the current government centres on an explicit targeting of new monies to a small set of defined needs like contract costs and monies for more students. Yet our schools are complex and expansive institutions that face inflationary pressure affecting not just wages and salaries but benefit costs, and those related to learning materials, utilities, specialized services,

Summary (\$ millions)	2023/24 Revised Est.	2024/24 Estimate	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Public Schools	7,391,494	8,023,617	8,071,422	8,071,322
Independent Schools	498,977	571,217	575,523	575,523
Child Care	827,377	865,255	865,255	865,255
Special Account	30,001	30,001	30,001	30,001
New Capital	864,898	1,046,194	1,362,769	1,343,357

The Institute for Public Education / BC also produced this article on [Teacher Recruitment and Retention](#). You may also find this [Ministerial Task Force report](#) an interesting and relevant read as well.



## **Dyslexia and LD screening K-3**

Excerpted from BCTF Communications

<https://www.peacearchnews.com/news/bc-officially-announces-dyslexia-screening-for-all-grade-k-3-students-7345031>

The Ministry of Education and Child Care has announced a K–12 Literacy and Learning Disabilities Initiative. This initiative is linked to a new investment, announced in Budget 2024, of \$30 million over three years. The Ministry has indicated that this funding will target three key components:

- Early literacy screening for all students K–3.
- Enhanced intervention and outreach programs (K–12).
- Professional development for K–12 teachers and support staff, and information for parents/caregivers.

The Ministry will be engaging with K–12 rightsholders and partner groups over the next few months to inform the creation of a work plan to see a roll out of this initiative for the 2024–25 school year. The BCTF will continue to lobby the Ministry of Education and Child Care to ensure that this initiative respects collective agreements, includes the provision of in-service, and provides meaningful supports for members and their students.

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## **Booking Absences in SFE**

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

At our monthly labour-management meeting this week, the Employer requested that we remind our members to book absences in SFE in a timely manner in order to facilitate coverage. We understand that there are some unexpected absences that may not allow for booking in the night before or early in the morning.

For those who haven't been a TTOC for awhile, the SFE system (formerly known as SEMS) allows for Job Shopping until 6pm, whereby the available jobs are listed and TTOCs can choose their job for the next day. It's worth mentioning that not all jobs are available to all TTOCs at this time, sometimes there are very few jobs available to them, based on their profile of listed experience/qualifications. After 6pm, SFE calls out the jobs that have been unfilled and callouts end at 9pm.

When callouts start, it impacts a TTOC's ability to access job shopping as those jobs aren't available until they have called every TTOC with that area in their SFE profile. Any jobs that are booked after 9pm, or unfilled jobs, get called out starting at 6am, at which point SFE opens up all jobs to all TTOCS in an attempt to get coverage.

TTOCs have been advocating through the SFE Working Group that ALL jobs be made available for Job Shopping, not restricting jobs to their profile. They feel this would a more effective way to fill jobs as many TTOCs have expressed their preference for Job Shopping over callouts, which is the practice in other neighbouring districts.

Friendly reminder to our contract colleagues to update your SFE profile and include your grade level/role. Any pertinent information for the particular absence can be added into the notes section - ie: there's a field trip, special event, spaces where they will be teaching, prep coverage so bring your own materials, etc. This helps the TTOC be prepared for the job and help facilitate a successful day.



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## Dates to Remember

### **Executive Committee Meeting**

April 25th, 2024

@ 4 pm

VEAES Office



**TTOC Appreciation Week**  
May 6-10, 2024

WE   
TTOCs

Thank you TTOCs for all your hard work!

VEAES

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