

# VEAES WEEKLY

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



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## Spring Transfer Timeline / Post and Fill

by: Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

VEAES will be hosting our annual School Union Rep Training (SURT) on Post and Fill on May 1 and 2, 2024. Please watch your email for an invite to register and plan to attend!

The timelines for Spring Transfer this year have been provided to schools, and you can find it [online here](#)

*Important upcoming dates to remember:*

April 30 is the deadline for part-time continuing teachers who are also TTOCs to relinquish their continuing contract if they wish to return wholly to the TTOC list.

May 31 at 4:30PM is the deadline for retirement notice to qualify for the Early Retirement Incentive Plan. June 1 or earlier is when the Board is required to provide surplus letter, if any.

June 4 is when the first round of continuing and temporary vacancies are posted.

June 17 is when placements begin for unassigned continuing employees (Category C teacher).

Other dates and relevant information are included in the full document on the VEAES website [here](#) and available at your school.

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## Salary Increase July 2024

by: Jody Polukoshko

Members will recall that the 2022-2025 Collective Agreement included salary increases that were subject to the Consumer Price Index for the previous year. Yesterday we found out that a 1% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) was recently announced by the Ministry of Finance (PSEC Secretariat) that will apply to all teacher salary grids effective July 1, 2024. A link to the news release can be found [here](#).

**This means there is an overall 3% wage increase (2% plus 1%) for employees effective July 1, 2024.** In addition, there will be an increase of **0.11%** to the top step of each grid, as per the negotiated settlement.

This marks the end of the salary gains from the 2022 round of bargaining. Our Collective Agreement expires in June 2025, and negotiations will begin prior to that. Please continue to read these newsletters, attend General Meetings, and connect with your school-based Union Rep to ensure you are up to date on bargaining related events.



## **BCTF Advisory Committees**

by: Jody Polukoshko

One way that members can contribute to our union is by participating on provincial BCTF Advisory Committees. These committees meet three times a year and facilitate at BCTF Zone Meetings and Summer Conference, as well as advising the BCTF Executive on important issues.

No experience is required to apply to these positions, and they're a great way to learn about what's happening in the provincial context and provide teacher's perspective on important and time sensitive matters.

The BCTF is currently seeking applicants for the Aboriginal Education, Pensions, Health and Safety, Finance, French Programs and Services, Professional Issues, Working and Learning Conditions/ Bargaining Committees, as well as for three Action Groups of the Committee for Action on Social Justice – the Peace and Global Education, Anti-Racism, and Environmental Justice groups.

BCTF provides release time and covers per diem expenses related to attendance. It's a great way to get involved! See the [BCTF website](#) for details and application forms. Deadline is April 22, 2024.

## **Join the VEAES BIPOC Affinity Group!**

By: Eric Proulx on behalf of the 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!

## **United in Solidarity**

by: Christian Hendren

During our March 12th General Meeting, the VEAES community welcomed our support worker allies from CUPE 15 to join us in a meeting of solidarity. Teachers and support workers discussed various ways to work together to build solidarity between our two groups. Several CUPE 15 members from the district expressed their desire to be included and welcomed in classrooms. Support workers are valued members of our classrooms and need to feel appreciated by the classroom teachers. Upon returning to my school, one member of our student support worker community came to my class to thank me for always making her feel welcomed. She expressed that I made her feel welcomed by simply giving her a space of her own in the classroom. Here are some ways that I made her feel appreciated and welcomed in my classroom.

1. I provided her with a desk to store the materials she needs to work with students in the room. I also gave her an adult-sized chair in my Grade 1 classroom.
2. When I spoke with her about this article, she stated, "We don't have a home base... Often, we don't have a place for our things in the classroom." I provided her with a secure spot to put her belongings inside and outside the classroom. We should remember that support workers move from classroom to classroom to provide support for various students. When heading outside, they need access to their coats. If their coat is not in the room, that is another obstacle in supporting the students' needs.
3. I provided her with the respect teachers should give any other educator in the classroom. The students know that she is an educator in the class, and she deserves the respect of an educator. I never question her decisions in front of the students because we are a team.

She also wanted me to convey that she loves seeing the teacher taking an interest in the student she is supporting as it makes her feel valued as a team member and not a babysitter who is watching the student for the teacher. She wants us to remember that she is there, "to facilitate education, not to make a student no longer your problem or to provide classroom management for the teacher." We are in this together, and together, we stand united in solidarity.

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## **PBC vote results**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Just prior to the break, members voted whether or not to remain in the local Extended Health Benefits Plan. The VSTA and VEAES held their votes offset by a couple of weeks, and the results came in just before the break. Members voted 70% to remain in the current plan.

The VTF (VEAES and VSTA together) voted to remain in the local EHB plan. This means that our benefits plan will remain unchanged. **Coles notes on bargaining:** We are currently only able to improve benefits at the provincial table, and the BCTF sets our provincial bargaining objectives at the end of May, 2024. If there are improvements to the provincial plan, we will bring the vote back to membership.



## **Social Media and Device Use in Schools**

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

As educators, the use of technology in our schools has changed dramatically in the last decade, from Smartboards to iPads to the introduction of Bring Your Own Device initiatives from districts. Not only have we seen equity decrease with the increase in technology, we've seen the negative impacts of social media use on our students and the toll it has taken on their health.

The use of devices in our schools is getting harder to manage, with more and more students bringing their devices into the classroom. Monitoring and limiting their usage can be a difficult daily battle for some teachers and is impacting the learning conditions in their classroom. Earlier this year, BC Premier, David Eby, proclaimed that [\*"the province will restrict the use of mobile phones in public school and take a tougher stand against social media giants that serve up addictive content to kids"\*](#). While it is not clear how the government will be enacting this, they did say that the province will be working with school districts to ensure all schools have policies in place by the start of the next school year. The province's press release can be found [here](#).

Some interesting news on this front coming from Ontario with four major school boards having filed lawsuits against some large social media companies, including Snapchat, Facebook (Meta), and TikTok for creating addictive products that are marketed to kids. They are alleging that the platforms [\*"facilitate and promote cyberbullying, harassment, hate speech and misinformation, and have a part in escalating physical violence and conflicts in schools..."\*](#) The damages that the districts are seeking amount to about \$4.5 billion and they are requesting redesign of these products to ensure student safety. While similar lawsuits have been filed in the US, this is the first in Canada.

As always, will keep members updated on any initiatives that our district plans to implement regarding restricting device use and will be seeking member input into those conversations.

## **Universal School Food Program**

Excerpted from BCTF communications

The BC Teachers' Federation is pleased that the federal government is investing \$1 billion in a Universal School Food Program. This is an important step toward ensuring that all students have access to healthy meals at school so they can thrive in class and beyond.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland announced the investment on Monday. The funds are to be distributed by provinces and territories over a five-year period, with \$200 million being allocated each year.

The Federation has long advocated for a national school food program, and the announcement follows more than a decade of work on the topic by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE), most recently in partnership with the Breakfast Club of Canada and the Coalition for Healthy School Food. The success of this campaign demonstrates the power of working with our partners across the country on issues that affect students and families in Canada.

For more information, see the [statement from the CTF/FCE](#).

## **April 8 Eclipse - Board Direction**

by: Jody Polukoshko

The VSB has notified the union that due to concerns about student safety, they will be issuing a directive to all schools, K-12, that during the partial solar eclipse next Monday, April 8, all students will remain inside the school for the duration of the event, and that supervision will be provided, as it falls partially over the recess break (10:43 – 12:20AM)

Teachers are advised to take their regular breaks and supervision staff will be directed by the Administrator. Because some teachers may wish to include the eclipse in their instruction, please reach out to your Administrator if you wish an exemption to this direction.

NASA says: "Except during the brief total phase of a total solar eclipse, when the Moon completely blocks the Sun's bright face, it is not safe to look directly at the Sun without specialized eye protection for solar viewing.

Viewing any part of the bright Sun through a camera lens, binoculars, or a telescope without a special-purpose solar filter secured over the front of the optics will instantly cause severe eye injury.

If you don't have eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer, you can use an indirect viewing method, which does not involve looking directly at the Sun. One way is to use a pinhole projector, which has a small opening (for example, a hole punched in an index card) and projects an image of the Sun onto a nearby surface. With the Sun at your back, you can then safely view the projected image. Do **NOT** look at the Sun through the pinhole!"

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## **Upcoming General Meeting / Truth and Reconciliation**

By Karine Ng

The following call to action was presented in the Truth and Reconciliation Ceremony at the General Meeting on March 12. We raise our hands in honour of the presenter, Alexander Graham, and the members who participated as witnesses: Jane Spencer, Japleen Gill, Greg Canning, Kyle Kirkwood.

### **TRC Call to Action #19**

We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

We thank Maria Teresa Foster in advance for presenting the next call of action at the Special General Meeting on April 16.

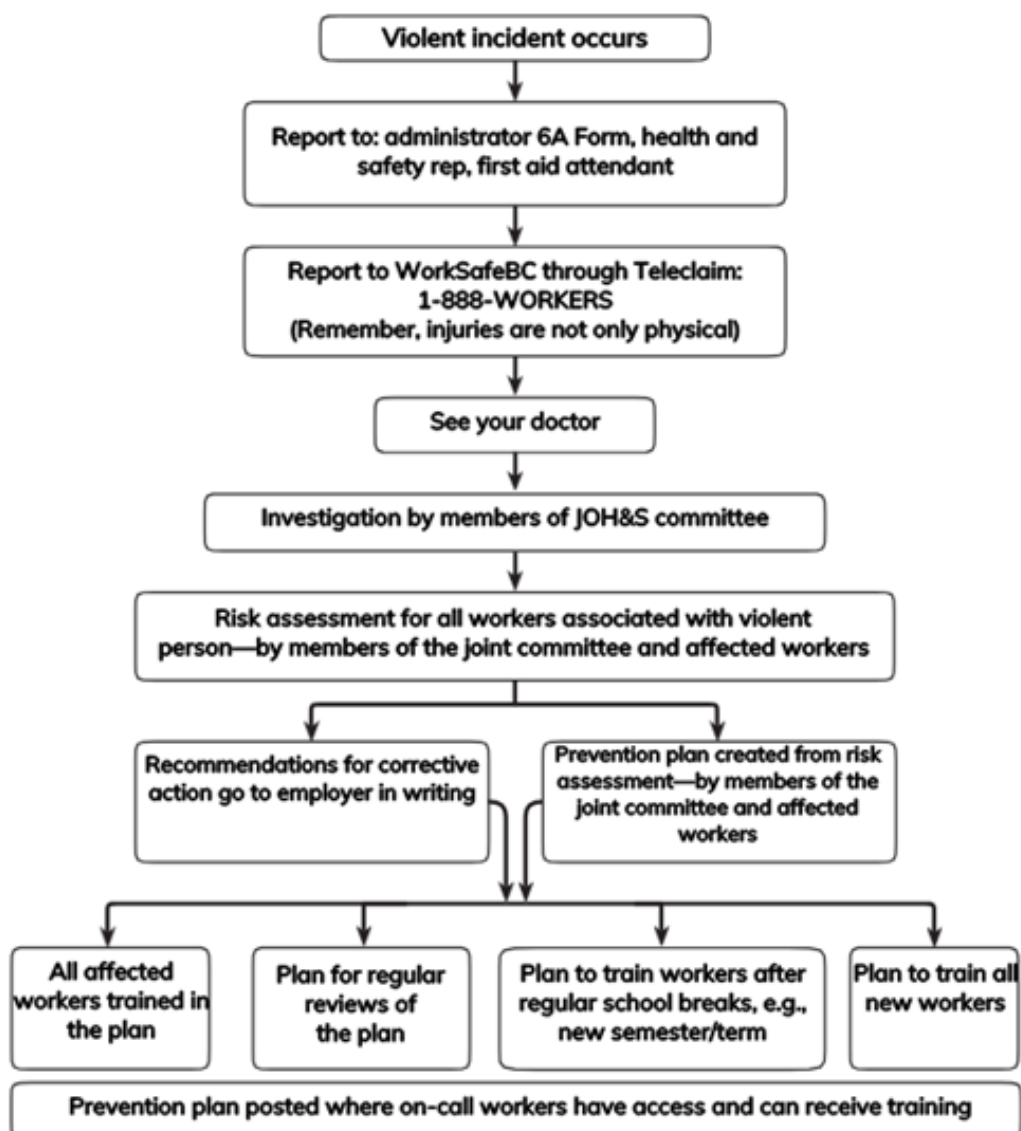
# Reporting Violent Incidents

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

We continue to get questions about the process for reporting violent incidents. If you experience a violent incident in your classroom, whether or not an injury results, this is the flowchart to follow. All violent incidents, near misses, injuries, all begin with the completion of **Incident Report Form**. The form is located on the VSB hub called *Our Health*. To access the forms go to [OurHealth.vsb.bc.ca](http://OurHealth.vsb.bc.ca) Please note the paper copy of the Form 6A is no longer used.

## Violence Prevention

### Violent Incident Reporting Process



**Note:** Our Health reporting form on VSB Hub replaces use of 6A form above

We would also like to take this opportunity to raise our hands in honour and respect to all the Health and Safety reps for all you do to ensure the work place is a safe place for all members.



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## Dates to Remember

### **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**

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.