

VEAES WEEKLY

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



Credit: Janine Black, installation at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights

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Red Dress Day

by: Jody Polukoshko

May 5 is the **National Day for Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2 Spirit and Trans people**, also known as **Red Dress Day**. Taking place on the last day of the National Week of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives, this day serves as a necessary reminder of the devastating and ongoing crisis of MMIWG in Canada.

If you're interested in getting involved, check out the [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center's](#) website for a schedule of related events and ways you can join in saying enough is enough. Interested in getting your students involved? The [BCTF website](#) has a variety of relevant lesson plans and resources, such as [Their Voices Will Guide Us](#)—a student and youth engagement guide designed to shine a light on the impacts of colonialism and racism on the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Non-Indigenous people have an important role in recognizing the impact of racialized violence, violence against Indigenous People, and the systemic impact of underserved communities on Women, Girls, 2 Spirit and Trans people. [This article on solidarity and allyship with Indigenous Communities](#) by Amnesty International identifies some of the ways settlers can step up their work in support of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people.

The [231 Calls for Justice](#) included in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls provides context, learning, and opportunities for learning for settlers that prioritizes self-determination, inclusion, and decolonization.

One of the key aspects of the Calls for Justice include ensuring that education include awareness about the MMIWG, 2 Spritit and Trans people, that curriculum and programming be done in partnership with Indigenous peoples, and that teaching include Indigenous history, law, and practices from Indigenous perspectives (Call 11.1)

TTOC Appreciation Week

by: Darren Tereposky

May 6-10th marks TTOC Appreciation Week! Take time to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions that Teachers Teaching On Call make to our Vancouver schools on a daily basis. As we're all aware, the public school system relies heavily on the dedication and availability of TTOCs. Many TTOCs may not always have the opportunity to form personal connections within a school community due to the nature of their work. Whether it's sharing a cup of coffee, having lunch together, or simply engaging in conversation, let's show our gratitude for our Union colleagues working alongside us next week. In addition, your Staff Reps will be putting up posters and a thank-you card this week for you to write a note of appreciation to your TTOC colleagues working in your school.



Local Bargaining Survey

by: Jody Polukoshko

Big appreciation to all members who turned out to complete our two surveys on provincial bargaining in the fall and winter of this school year. In preparation for local bargaining, which will begin in fall 2024, we will be releasing our Local Bargaining survey this coming Friday.

Members will remember that our current bargaining structure is two-tiered, with many items required to be negotiated at the provincial table (salary, benefits, paid leaves, workload etc.) and other matters negotiated locally (post and fill, layoff and recall, contracting out etc.). The local table is important as it's VEAES and VSTA members who meet directly with Vancouver School Board staff to negotiate terms and conditions that impact both sides of the table.

There are many ways you can get involved.

- Check your email and complete the local bargaining survey before May 9, 2024
- Attend the VEAES Working and Learning Conditions / Bargaining meeting on May 9 to review and analyse the results from the survey and draft bargaining objectives
- Come to the VEAES AGM to debate and vote on VEAES' priorities for the local table
- Talk with your colleagues about the challenges you face and the improvements you need!

Next steps will be to hold a VTF (VEAES and VSTA together) General Meeting to ratify our combined objectives and priorities, and for the VEAES Executive to elect our representatives to the local bargaining team.

Your feedback on Provincial bargaining objectives, strategy, and priorities have been distributed to locals across the province along with those from other locals and the BCTF Executive Committee. Your delegation to the BCTF bargaining conference, elected at the April General Meeting, will represent VEAES members on May 24 and 25. Your delegates are: Jody Polukoshko, Greg Canning (Nightingale), Marjorie Dumont, Vanessa Lefebvre, Xander Graham (University Hill), Bernadette Milton (Xpey'), Natasha Burditt (Seymour), and Jennifer Sebastian (Xpey'). Thank you to all members who put their names forward to represent VEAES members at the BCTF!

Job Share Meet and Greet

by: Darren Tereposky

On May 15th from 4-5 PM VEAES will be hosting a meet and greet for teachers, area counsellors, psychologists and SLPs who are interested in finding a potential job share partner for next year. Under our collective agreement language, VEAES members can apply for 1.0 positions as a job share team working full days split either 50/50 or 60/40. When applying for jobs, your seniority will be the average of both members. At the meeting, we will set aside areas for teachers interested in primary/intermediate/counselling etc. It would be helpful if you can register in advance so we can gauge interest to make the event worth your time. Please fill out this form [here](#), and contact darren@veaes.ca if you have any questions.

From Awareness to Action—Anti-Racism in the Union

Excerpted from BCTF Communication

This BCTF course focuses on building awareness about racism and oppression through education and training is central to becoming a more inclusive and equitable organization. As teachers, members know the power of education and were the catalyst behind the creation of the BCTF's anti-racism and anti-oppression learning modules. The learning modules are designed for members to improve their knowledge of anti-racism and anti-oppression and learn more about your agency and voice as we work towards solidarity, equity, and inclusion within the Federation. The design of the training is intentionally segmented so that you can use sections in your school union representative training (SURT), or even in your classroom.

You can register for the course [here](#). If you have any trouble registering, please contact canvasadmin@bctf.ca.

Disclaimer

The BCTF anti-racism training materials are provided for use by BCTF members for individual and group study within the union or as a classroom resource.

Program Closures

by: Marjorie Dumont and Jody Polukoshko

VEAES continues to investigate the VSB's decision to reduce the number of EXSEL, SELC, and CORE programs, as well as the decision to remove VSB programs from Alderwood. As part of this investigation, we are looking into the referral process and barriers to successful referral of students, clarifying the criteria for acceptance into district programs, and ensuring that the reduction of district programs results in increased support for inclusion across the district. We're also looking into the number of tasks that have been downloaded on to Resource Teachers, the impact of failure to fill on referrals to district programs, and the challenges created by Area Counsellor, Speech Language Pathologist, and Teacher Psychologist vacancies.

We note that an invitation was shared this week for the KTEA training over three days in the summer. VEAES' position is that as this is a required assessment, the training needs to be inservice, and provided for members with release time. We have also received confirmation that the district will be providing staffing for summer "clinics" where additional Teacher Psychologist and Speech Language Pathologist time is provided to address waitlists.

Members have reached out to let us know their experiences with accessing district programming, and we will continue to look into this matter and advocate for supports for all students. VEAES and VEAES member support inclusion of all students, and insist that the supports and resources be available so that all students can be successful, and that their unique needs are understood and addressed. We also acknowledge that classes continue to become increasingly complex, and the reduction in supports has had a negative impact on teacher workload and student learning. It's disappointing not to see additional funding in either the provincial or district budget to improve inclusion and working/learning conditions, and this is a matter that will need our active attention in the upcoming round of bargaining.

Letter on Gaza

by: Jody Polukoshko

The March VEAES Staff Rep Assembly carried the following motion:

That VEAES issue a public statement regarding the ongoing war on Gaza by the end of March, which includes:

- Calling for a ceasefire to allow aid into Gaza and to release the hostages;
- Condemning the starvation and indiscriminate bombing of Palestinians and Gaza, especially children and educational facilities;
- Calling for Israel's compliance with the ICJ ruling;
- Urging the Canadian government to end its complicity in the war on Gaza and push for diplomatic negotiations to
- achieve a just and lasting peace.

The VEAES EC approved a statement in response to this motion that was created in the form of a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. You can read the [letter in full on the VEAES website](#)

Thank you to members who have engaged on this topic. We continue to develop our understandings and knowledge, and to work with the Board to create better supports for teachers in addressing international and local current events. You can find our document outlining curricular connections to addressing global conflict and social justice [here](#).

Get to know your Leaves!

by: Jody Polukoshko

VEAES is pleased to release our new document created to support members navigating leaves under the Employment Standards Act and our Collective Agreement. We hope this will assist members to understand the rights and responsibilities of taking paid and unpaid leaves, as well as to clarify processes for application to each of the different leaves.

You'll find the [document on our website](#), which highlights the leaves available to members, eligibility, term, application process, and impact on salary. We hope this will assist members in determining the best leave for their needs, and also to clarify the processes and expectations around accessing leaves through the VSB.

Last chance to participate in the VEAES Morale survey

by: Jody Polukoshko

Thank you to all members who have taken the time to respond to the VEAES member morale survey. The response rate has been very high, and the feedback received to date is very instructive and will help VEAES provide specific feedback to VSB management, trustees, and to support our continued advocacy for increased funding for schools, support for students, and meaningful inclusion.

The survey is open until this Friday. [Click here for a list of contact information](#). Please make sure your voice is part of building our understanding of members in our work and our relationship to the employer. All feedback is confidential and will be aggregated in a way that protects member identity.



TRB dues

by: Jody Polukoshko

You may have noticed that your April 30 paycheque was \$95 less than usual – this is because our employer automatically deducts our annual Teacher Regulation Branch dues and remits it on our behalf, in order to ensure that we remain certified! Our fees have been consistent at \$85 for many years, and this year a \$10 increase was introduced.

IMPORTANT CAVEAT! – If you are on leave and not receiving salary from the VSB, you will need to pay your own certification fee. Failure to pay your annual TRB dues will result in your certificate being cancelled, a process that is onerous and time consuming to reverse.

Check your pay advice. If you do not see the deduction, you'll need to pay it yourself, directly to the TRB. The deadline is May 31.

BEFORE-TAX DEDUCTIONS		
Description	Current	YTD
Teach Regulation Branch Fee	95.00	95.00

Having a cancelled certificate is no joke, and means that you cannot teach, and will be placed on an unpaid leave until you are able to pay and recertification has been completed. Take it from members who have experienced this – it's a terrible and costly error.

Our VEAES Weekly is distributed to active members and members on leave, but if you have a friend on leave, give them a nudge and they'll thank you for it.

Bullying & Harassment Complaints – SOGI AP 174

By Vanessa Lefebvre

In an effort to better understand our rights as workers in this district, we look not only to our [Collective Agreement language](#), but to our district's [Administrative Procedures](#)(AP) and [Board Policies](#).

In terms of last week's article regarding bullying & harassment complaints, we forgot to include [AP 174 – Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression](#). This procedure flows from [Board Policy 17 – Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression](#). Together, they are what guides the district & provide protections as we work to make our schools more inclusive communities.

We know that there has been a rise in anti-SOGI hate in our society that has found its way into our schools. It is important to know what our rights are to ensure the safety of both workers and students and what recourse you have if there is a breach of either Policy 17 or AP 174.

While we hope that issues can be resolved at the site-level, we understand that it is not always possible. You can contact the VEAES office for support and/or advice if you are considering filing a [Bullying & Harassment](#) complaint.

COPE Townhall series: The Schools We Need

by: Jody Polukoshko & Vanessa Lefebvre

COPE Vancouver, one of the municipal political parties that is represented by Suzie Mah on the Vancouver Board of Trustees has launched [a survey](#) that is open now to solicit feedback from the community on issues impacting public education in Vancouver. VEAES provides feedback and input to trustees through our structures, but should you choose to participate, the survey is open until June 30, 2024.

As part of their outreach, COPE will be hosting Townhall meetings, open to the public, to discuss matters such as:

- Adequacy of provincial funding and VSB use of that funding
- Improvement to educational programs
- Better accountability and transparency from the VSB

We invite members to attend the townhalls and talk with community members about your experiences. VEAES Executive Committee members will be in attendance, helping facilitate small table discussions. This is an amazing opportunity to build community with the public and raise the awareness of the need for increased funding in public education, work together to improve the learning conditions of our students as we build the schools we need.

Trustee Mah has been a fierce advocate at the Board table and has been bringing the voices of workers and the public to those meetings. We are so grateful for COPE taking the lead and bringing the public back into these conversations, as the VSB has been restricting public access to these meetings and creating barriers to participation.

The first event will be held on May 28th at the Russian Hall at 600 Campbell Avenue, Vancouver. We hope to see many of you there!!

VEAES AGM May 14 – Tickets to CODEV fundraising dinner

by: Jody Polukoshko

All members welcome! Please join the VEAES Executive Committee and Staff Reps at Soundhouse (33 East 8th Ave) at 4pm to make the decisions that will lead us into the 2024-2025 school year, including budget, electing the VEAES Executive Committee, and voting on our local bargaining objectives for the coming round.

All members are welcome at the AGM, and RSVP is not required, however, if you can email hitomi@veaes.ca if you intend to attend, we can ensure sufficient food and beverages for members in attendance.

Please check your inboxes for the AGM agenda, budget and budget related motions, by-law change motions, and candidates running for next year's Executive Committee. The annual issue of the VEAES News includes the overview page of the proposed budget recommended by the VEAES EC, and you can click on the links to review the audited statements for the 2022-2023 year and the detailed budget information. The VEAES News was sent out on Friday, April 26 to all members. Paper copies will be available at the AGM.

We will be doing a draw for tickets to the CODEV Canada fundraising dinner at the AGM for 10 lucky members to attend the event on June 1, 2024. VEAES is a CODEV partner and works with them to support projects in Honduras (PRICPHMA) and Colombia (FECODE) working and learning together with teachers to create and implement the "Non-sexist and inclusive pedagogy" and "Schools as territories of peace" curricula and collaborations.

Motion Defeated to replace Resource Teachers on 1st Day of

Absence: VSB Board Meeting

by: Eric Proulx

ABC and Green Trustees Vote in Opposition to Longstanding VEAES Priority

At the [April 29th, 2024 VSB Board Meeting](#), several items of importance to VEAES members were brought forward and discussed. The following motion was brought forward by OneCity Trustee, Jennifer Reddy and seconded by COPE Trustee, Suzie Mah:

“That the VSB 2024-2025 budget address student support inequities by replacing absent resource teachers on their first day of absence”.

Voting Record

Party	Trustee	Vote
ABC	Alfred Chien	Opposed
ABC	Preeti Faridkot	Opposed
ABC	Victoria Jung	Opposed
ABC	Joshua Zhang	Opposed
COPE	Suzie Mah	In favour
Green	Lois Chan-Pedley	Opposed
Green	Janet Fraser	Opposed
Independent	Christopher Richardson	Opposed
OneCity	Jennifer Reddy	In favour

VEAES members will know that this is an issue we have brought to the board for many years. Because of the policy that Resource Teachers do not get replaced on their first day of absence, this has increased the likelihood of them being selected to cover for unfilled absences. This policy results in significant savings for the board, as when an absence is unfilled and another teacher covers, no TTOC has been paid that day.

Using the [VEAES Failure to Fill Tool](#), thus far in the school year, VEAES members have reported 1,427 instances where Resource Teachers acted as de-facto TTOCs and resource time for students was lost.

In the midst of a teacher shortage and a hiring and retention shortfall, this means that on a daily basis due to this board policy, students are going without key services they need, deserve and are entitled to.

Furthermore, in the VEAES Morale Survey, many respondents reported they hesitate to, or do not take sick days when ill because they know it is highly likely their absence will not be covered by a TTOC and that as a result, a Resource Teacher colleague will be made to cover for them and the services they would have provided to students will be lost.

Members can listen to the discussion that occurs between [1:07:15-1:26:23](#), if they would like to hear individual Trustee’s opinions on the motion.

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Motion Defeated to replace Resource Teachers on 1st Day of Absence: VSB Board Meeting

Those opposing the motion cited the cost projected by VSB staff of \$1.5 million as too large, and did not believe there was anywhere in the budget this money could be found.

For trustees interested in finding some extra space in the budget to deliver services to students they are legally entitled to, we have a suggestion. Between 2008 and today, upper management costs have increased from \$960,000 in 2008 to \$2,225,565 in 2023, representing an increase of 132%. In the same period of time, student enrolment in our district decreased by 13.5%. Such salary and personnel increases in non-student facing upper-management positions do not get discussed in public board meetings.

When looking to increase the number of management positions, or their salaries and allowances, the question of where we will find the money and what sacrifices will need to be made are never raised. Only when we discuss the cost of services to students, delivered by student-facing staff do we hear how regrettably, no more money is to be found in the budget.

Later in the meeting, a motion was brought forward by independent Trustee, Christopher Richardson and seconded by ABC Trustee, Joshua Zhang reading as the following:

That the Board of Education advocate for increased funding for inclusive education as part of the 2025 Provincial Budget consultation process so that we can better meet the diverse learning needs of our students and foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Thankfully, this motion was passed unanimously, but in doing so, the trustees who voted down Jennifer Reddy's motion to have Resource Teachers replaced on the first day of absence, rejected an opportunity to address the issues of meeting the needs of students today, rather than waiting out for the hope of convincing another branch of government to dedicate more money towards inclusive education.

If politics is the struggle for distribution of resources, then it is by examining where Trustees decide to allocate resources and how they vote on such motions that we understand their priorities.

In their decision to vote down Trustee Reddy's motion, those Trustees showed that those priorities are not with front-line staff.





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Dates to Remember

**Executive
Committee Meeting**
May 7th, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office

**TTOC
Committee Meeting**
May 8th, 2024
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88424619655>
Meeting ID: 884 2461 9655
Passcode: 541716
Dial by your location
+1 778 907 2071 Canada

**Aboriginal Education
Committee Meeting**
May 9th, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office

WLC/B Committee Meeting
May 9th, 2024
@ 4 pm
VEAES Office

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 your 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 your 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

VEAES

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