

Teacher and Support Worker Morale Connected to Workload and Supports, VSB Must Do Better

Vancouver, BC - May 13, 2024

CUPE15: Support Staff

IUOE: Building Engineers, Custodians, Playground Supervisors, Cafeteria Workers

VEAES: Elementary and Adult Educators

VSTA: Secondary School Teachers

The unions representing workers at the Vancouver School Board (VSB) are sounding the alarm, as a recent survey, conducted jointly by unions representing over 7,000 VSB workers reveals alarming trends among its workforce. Concerningly, a significant portion of employees have expressed intentions to leave the district within the next five years, citing dissatisfaction with working conditions and a lack of appreciation. Among Educators (Elementary and Adult Educators, and Secondary Teachers), almost one-third (33%) affirm plans to depart, with roughly equal numbers uncertain of their plans. 20% of CUPE15 workers intend on leaving.



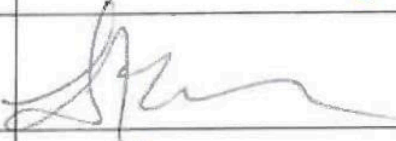

Of the respondents, 204 teachers and 49 support workers are poised to depart within 5 years. The unions have surveyed representative sample sizes of their members, and if the data is extrapolated, thousands of workers across all union groups will leave the VSB in search of better working conditions. Only 25% of departing Secondary Teachers attribute their exit to retirement. The majority, 60%, plan to seek employment in other districts.

Key findings from the survey indicate that a staggering 75% of Vancouver teachers feel undervalued and unrecognized by their employer. The sentiment is echoed among 86% of CUPE15 members and 31% of IUOE members. Only a marginal percentage (14%) of Secondary Teachers and CUPE15 support staff report feeling somewhat or very appreciated, with this figure plummeting to 6% for Elementary Teachers. Contrasting with other union groups, 41% of IUOE members report feeling somewhat or very appreciated. This difference appears to be connected to supports received by custodial staff during the COVID-19 years.

The impact of these sentiments on mental health and stress levels is profound. An overwhelming majority, comprising 92% of Secondary teachers, 80% of Elementary teachers, and 70% of CUPE15 workers, report their working conditions having a negative impact on their well-being and their continued ability to do their jobs. Conversely, while 44% of IUOE members find their working conditions positively impacting their mental health and stress, only 3% of teachers and 1% of support workers report such benefits.

A reduction in available supports for increasingly complex classrooms and individual student needs, as well as increased workloads has led to 62% of VEAES and 92% of VSTA members reporting an increase in stress levels compared to the previous year. Similarly, 60% of CUPE15 staff indicate a heightened workload impact.

Educators and support staff are ready and willing to do the job. The unions representing VSB workers are concerned that needed supports are being removed from student facing staff and along with wide-spread staffing shortages, this is seriously impacting workers' ability to deliver students with the educational experience they deserve.

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cc. VSB Trustees (via email)