

# 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're 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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# **The 2024 Membership Survey is complete and the report released!**

by: Jody Polukoshko

For the second year in a row, the BCTF has conducted a survey of membership to develop a solid analysis of teachers' perspectives around the province and in diverse assignments. Here are the key takeaways, after analysis.

1. Despite some improvements in physical and mental health, teachers continue to face challenges related to well-being.
2. Teachers are expected to do more with less.
3. Teachers continue to perceive gaps in meeting student needs, especially for students with disabilities and diverse needs.
4. Teachers need more people and more time to successfully meet student needs.
5. Teachers encounter concerning levels of workplace discrimination.
6. Better working conditions are linked to lower turnover intention.

Please read the [report on the BCTF website](#) for more detailed analysis of the key results of the survey, and thank you to the over 5000 members who participated. Remember that this and other opportunities to contribute to VEAES and BCTF help inform and shape the upcoming round of bargaining. Here are the key points from one section:

## **Theme 6 - Better working conditions are linked to lower turnover intention.**

Retaining qualified teachers continues to be a critical challenge in many parts of the province. This year's survey responses reinforce the argument that BC's teacher shortage must be analyzed as a crisis in working conditions.

This survey found relationships between turnover intention and four key factors: mental health, happiness in the job, workload, and the ability to exercise professional autonomy. For instance, 90.7% of teachers who felt very happy about their job also indicated they would likely remain. In terms of workload, 88.5% of teachers who reported having a manageable workload said it was likely they would still be teaching in two years. In contrast, only 68.4% of those who strongly disagreed that their workload was manageable indicated they would likely still be teaching in BC public education in two years' time.

Finally, the survey pointed to statistically significant relationships between turnover and professional autonomy. For example, the large majority of teachers who felt they have autonomy over their teaching methods and strategies (82.9%) and how student learning was assessed (84.7%) indicated they would likely be teaching in two years.

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## **TTOC work at the VEAES office**

by: Vanessa Lefebvre

Are you a TTOC? Interested in some union work over the last 2 weeks of school? Do we have a job for you! VEAES is currently doing the work of archiving our bargaining documents and the Executive Committee has passed a motion to provide up to 10 release days to TTOCs to help with this stage of the process. It's a quality control job of verifying the documents that have been scanned. We will set you up at the VEAES office with everything you need to do the work. If you are interested, please contact [Vanessa@veaes.ca](mailto:Vanessa@veaes.ca) for more details.

## **VEAES Union Appreciation Event: Thanks to All Who Make the Union Work!**

by: Eric Proulx

**Save the Date! Wednesday June 19th 4:00pm at the VEAES Office**

VEAES is holding its annual appreciation event on June 19th, 4:00 pm at the VEAES office. If you have done any of the following union work, you are invited!

- Staff Reps
- VEAES members on Executive Committee
- VEAES members serving as reps to VSB committees
- VEAES members on BCTF committees
- VEAES members serving as VEAES committee members

If you have done any of the following union work, you are invited and we ask that you please register using the following link so that we may ensure our food order:

[Here is the link to register](#)

Thank you for all your hard work this year!

## **VEAES retirement dinner**

by: Jody Polukoshko

Let VEAES fete you and your amazing contributions to public education! We are holding our retirement dinner June 24th at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. If you are retiring this year, please consider attending this event and celebrate your own retirement and the retirement of your colleagues. VEAES will be sending out invitations shortly and your RSVP helps us plan a great event.

Retirees may bring a guest, and there will be a short program and an opportunity for retirees, if they choose, to say a few words about their career or the union. The event begins with a no host bar at 6 pm, dinner at 7, presentations to retirees and the evening finishes with a group photo at 9 pm.

The view is incredible, the food is extra special, and it's always good to have some ceremony to mark what is one of the most important decisions of our career. Your work has made such a difference in the world and to our union, and we would be delighted to celebrate this important milestone with you!

We don't want to miss anyone, and sometimes the lists we are working from reflect the May 31 deadline for ERIP, so if you are retiring but submitted your notice after May 31, or there has been an error in the list, we may not have all of the information. If you do not receive an invite by June 17th, please let us know as soon as possible at [lori@veaes.ca](mailto:lori@veaes.ca)

# **BC Provincial Politics Check-In**

by: Eric Proulx

## **Things are Heating Up Ahead of the October 2024 Provincial Election**

This week has seen many developments in BC provincial politics. The BC United Party (formerly BC Liberals) have been steadily losing support, while the BC Conservatives [have been gaining in the polls](#). Only a few months ago, some polls had the BC NDP ahead by 20 points or more, and that lead is rapidly shrinking, especially with the collapse of BC United.

Under the first past the post voting system we use in Canadian elections, two viable conservative parties may have been to the benefit of the BC NDP who could have enjoyed the results of a split conservative vote. Only a year ago, it was theorized the BC NDP would pick up seats previously thought as untouchable as a result of such a phenomenon.

This week however, with BCUP's polling numbers quickly falling, some of its MLAs are jumping ship to the BC Conservatives, hoping to increase their chances of being elected to office. Notably, MLA of Surrey South, Elenore Sturko defected from the BCUP to the Conservatives, which was a shocking move to many, considering she has had previous public disagreements with the party about 2SLGBTQ+ issues, even joining a standing ovation in the BC Legislature when MLAs stood united against anti-SOGI protests which took place in the fall of 2023.

In the context of the BC Conservatives' rise in popularity and electoral chances, VEAES members may be interested as to their policy positions regarding K-12 public education. [Visiting their official website](#) reveals only the two following policy points: that they want to "Support parents' choices" and "Remove ideology from the classroom". In an era of enduring austerity in public education, eroding supports for students and wide-scale teacher shortages, John Rustad and the BC Conservatives think that eliminating SOGI123 policies in schools is the highest priority. In fact, John Rustad has repeatedly and [shamefully compared SOGI123 policies to the harm caused to Indigenous Peoples by Residential Schools](#). Not only do such comments betray shocking historical ignorance, but also compare the promotion of 2SLGBTQ+ rights and safety for students and staff in our schools to the genocidal harm of Residential Schools.

When asked directly about what his solution to Surrey's overcrowded schools and teacher shortage would be, John Rustad stated that [BC Conservatives would work to increase the number of students in each classroom](#). Such a statement reveals a profound ignorance of our collective agreement rights, remedy, as well as the very nature of teaching in the 21st century. In a time where it is a well-established fact that teachers are leaving the profession due to worsening working conditions, the BC Conservatives' proposed solution would only accelerate the crisis.

As we enter into Summer Break, remember that teachers are trusted sources about the reality on the ground for teachers. As you take part in summer activities with family and friends, share with them your concerns about today's working and learning conditions. Through these conversations we can help keep education top of mind for voters and make sure that when October comes, rather than opting for a party who want to deteriorate working conditions and undermine 2SLGBTQ+ safety in our schools, people will go into the polls choosing candidates who value public education, students and improved teacher working conditions.

# **Pay Transparency Report and Survey**

by: Jody Polukoshko

You may have / will be receiving a survey from the district about pay transparency, and we'd like to provide a bit of context and why this is different from a district employment equity survey and/or a survey about your working conditions or accessibility within the district. First of all, it's being mandated by the Provincial government.

The survey about pay transparency is aimed at collecting data on pay as it relates to gender, and identifying differences in pay for certain groups. As we all know, gender isn't necessarily consistent with folks' names, assigned gender at birth, or appearance. The requirement to collect this data recently changed so that data must be based on gender, a much more inclusive metric, in our view, and requires that gender must only be identified "with the permission of the person," and that "no gender changes should happen without the person's authorization". This is good practice, and consistent with our teaching and learning about consent, however, the "categories" of gender in the survey were pre-determined by government and are less than inclusive.

Because it's a requirement for employers to report on gender and pay, and because self-identification is required, it's necessary for employees to self-identify. Unfortunately, the only choices allowed by government are "man, non-binary person, woman, prefer not to answer / unknown". We have provided feedback to the district that this is an incomplete set of choices, and that the data it yields will not address gender as a spectrum or gender fluidity, we understand that they do not have the autonomy to change those categories, despite the fact that these categories are inconsistent with the way the district and the union conceptualize and support gender identity.

The VSB notified the union ahead of time and provided information about this new requirement, and we suggest that members complete the survey, even if it is imperfect in the choices provided, as it could support increased pay equity or even identify some of the observations many of you made in your bargaining survey responses about gender and hierarchy in the district. If you would like to read further about the guidelines that explain the purpose of the Act, you can read about them here (the "[Guidelines](#)").

There are some good points in the guidelines that are good practice in general when it comes to sex and gender, excerpted below.

## Avoiding Assumptions

- Do not assume sex and gender are the same.
- Do not assume you know what gender someone wants in a system based on anything other than asking them.
- Do not assume the gender a person wants to use in one system will be the same in all systems (i.e., do not "harmonize" or try to match data).
- Avoid using honorifics unless the person has specified which title you may use for them (e.g., Ms., Mr., Mx, Dr.).

## Protecting Privacy

- Do not enter gender or sex information into a system without legal authority to do so (i.e., follow FOIPPA).
- Ensure gender and sex data can be easily and immediately updated.
- Only update gender and sex data in systems with the permission of the person. Do not attempt to harmonize or correct gender or sex data without their authorization.
- Plan to address delays and errors that occur as a result of data differences between systems.
- Recognize that updating data across all services and places is a difficult process and can be frustrating and traumatizing to navigate. Support people to find out how and where they can request their gender and sex data be updated.



## **Pro-D Updates: Pro-D Planning day**

by: Karine Ng

The format for this year's Planning Day was changed to offer school-based Pro-D teams the choice to gather at their school sites, Ed Center, or at secondary school of their family of schools. While the vast majority of elementary schools chose the first option, this format is a departure from the past practice of an in-person gathering with other schools' Pro-D teams, as well as the district Pro-D committee members who jointly present the training and answer questions. The purpose of Planning Days are two-fold:

1. To orient administrators and Pro-D chairs regarding their roles and responsibilities, using the Professional Development Handbook
2. To clarify how Pro-D funding works, the division between school-based and district accounts, and communication pathways
3. For school-based Pro-D teams to look ahead and plan Pro-D events for their schools, in collaboration and dialogue with other schools' teams.

Additionally, at the June 4 Joint District Pro-D Committee meeting, VEAES was made aware that the half-day release time for Pro-D chairs to attend the Planning Day is billed to their school-based Pro-D accounts, instead of the district Pro-D account as per past practice. When VEAES reps expressed our surprise and concern about this change, the employer's response was that "it's from the same pot of money anyway". We have serious concerns about the disregard for the joint rights and responsibilities of the Union and the employer to steward and manage Pro-D funds together. As such, VEAES will be investigating this matter in the coming weeks.

VEAES also has concerns about the de-centralized approach to this year's Planning Day. Without being together in real time with other school teams, there is a reduced ability to find out what other schools are doing and to collaborate. There is also not the ability to ask questions and get clarifications in a transparent manner. Working in silos and remotely does not make a more efficient process. The VEAES office has been receiving an increased volume of inquiries about administrative aspects of Pro-D funds and applications. Our position is that in-person training is necessary for clear, transparent, and accountable practice.

Embedded in the Planning Day slide deck is a QR code that links to a survey for members to provide feedback for the change of format. The feedback will be reviewed by the district committee for the purpose of designing future Planning Days, so it is important that Pro-D chairs fill out the survey, which will remain open till the end of June.

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## **Joy as Collective Action—BCTF Anti-Racism Symposium**

(Excerpted from BCTF Communications)

### **Joy as Collective Action—BCTF Anti-Racism Symposium**

The BCTF Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Office will host an anti-racism symposium, titled [Joy as Collective Action](#), in Vancouver, BC, on November 14–16, 2024, at the downtown Coast Coal Harbour Hotel.

At the symposium, delegates can look forward to conversations that centre voice, agency, and action, while engaging with each other through dynamic speakers, workshops, networking opportunities, and creative activities. The goal is to generate an environment for delegates to expand into the spaciousness of anti-oppressive work, walk away with a sense of community, and be equipped with tools to address racism, including self-resourcing.

For more information about this opportunity and to access the expression of interest form, please visit the BCTF website [here](#). The deadline to submit your interest to attend is **Friday, June 14, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.**

## **Opportunities to collaborate on provincial teams**

(Excerpted from BCTF Communications)

### **Updated French proficiency scales**

Following member revisions in May 2023 with the Ministry team, find the updated French proficiency scales for 2023–24 [here](#).

### **BCTF Advisory Committee Postings**

[2SLGBTQIA+ Action Group / Committee for Action on Social Justice](#)

[Peace and Global Education Action Group / Committee for Action on Social Justice](#)

The Committee for Action on Social Justice is comprised of 7 Action Groups where members can focus on their area of passion while connecting for intersectional work with other Action Groups to make recommendations to the BCTF EC and create resources and learning opportunities for members.

[Adult Education Advisory Committee](#)

Adult Educators from around the province work together to raise the profile of Adult Education within the Federation and advocate for improvements to working and learning conditions

[Salary Indemnity Plan Board of Trustees](#)

The BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan has recently created a Board of Trustees to manage that financial responsibility and ensure compliance with regulations. This will be the first board of trustees, experience will be required.

[BCTF Summer Leadership Conference](#)

At the end of August each year, BCTF members come together at UBC to learn, collaborate, and plan for the union and the public education system we desire. There are workshops, speakers, social opportunities, and you get to cosplay university students while staying in the dorms.

[Professional and Social Issues Facilitators](#)

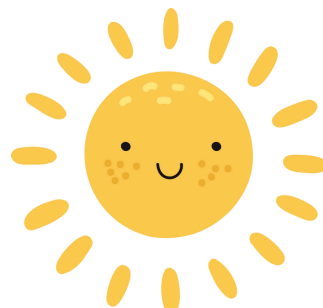
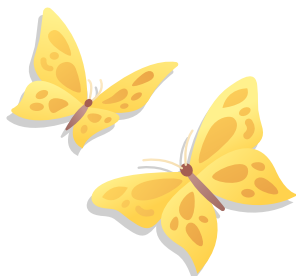
PSID facilitators will receive training and support to facilitate workshops across BC on a number of topics. It's a great way to dig into a topic you're passionate about and meet teachers working in diverse communities.

[French speaking Facilitators for BCTF Workshops](#)

See above, special callout for French-speaking facilitators

You can read more about all of these opportunities here:

<https://www.bctf.ca/whats-happening/news-stories-search?topic=postings-opportunities>





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## **BIPOC Affinity Group: Year-end celebration!**

by: Eric Proulx

**Tuesday, June 11th, 4pm at the VEAES office**

The VEAES Social Justice & Solidarity Committee will be holding a year-end celebration for the VEAES BIPOC Affinity group. Whether you've been to every gathering or if this will be your first one, we invite all our BIPOC members to join us. This gathering will be a casual get together meant for members to continue getting to know one another and discussing what folks want out of this group for the following year. We hope to see you there!

Refreshments will be provided. Please [RSVP with this link](#) so that we can ensure our food order.

### **Dates to Remember**

**Staff Rep Assembly**  
June 10, 2024 @ 4 pm  
@ Tupper Secondary - Cafeteria



**Social Justice & Solidarity  
Committee Meeting**  
June 11, 2024 @ 4 pm  
@ the VEAES Office

**Aboriginal Education  
Committee Meeting**  
June 13th, 2024 @ 4 pm  
@ the VEAES Office

**Professional Issues  
Committee Meeting**  
June 13th, 2024 @ 4 pm  
**Join Zoom Meeting**  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84804344414>  
Meeting ID: 848 0434 4414  
Passcode: 971633  
Dial by your location  
• +1 778 907 2071 Canada

VEAES

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