



VEAES WEEKLY

TOPICS WORTH
TALKING ABOUT

PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS
WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

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National Indigenous Veterans Day – November 8

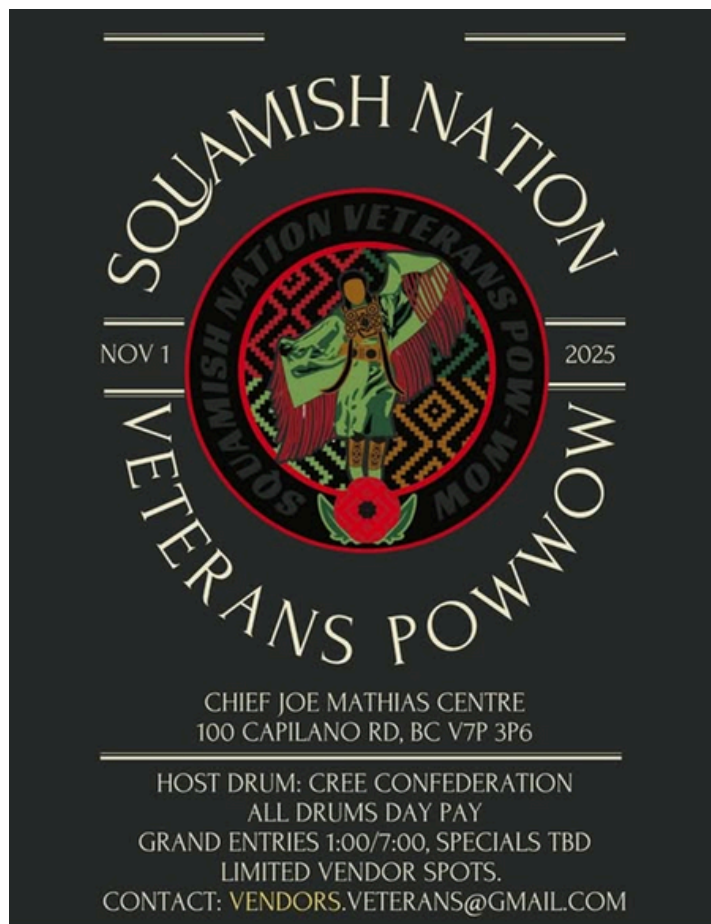
By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

Today we honour the courage, strength, and sacrifice of Indigenous veterans who stood shoulder to shoulder with their comrades in times of war and peace. Guided by the teachings of the Wolf and the Bear, they showed loyalty, bravery, and a deep sense of duty to protect others.

Though many returned home to a country that did not recognize their service or grant them equal rights, their spirit and resilience endure. With gratitude and respect, we remember their contributions and continue to work toward truth, recognition, and healing.

To show your support, please join events like the Squamish Nation Veterans Powwow.

facebook.com/squamishnationyouthpowwow/



Working Conditions

By Greg Canning

Preparation time has always been a key bargaining initiative for the BCTF and its members. Teaching is not a job you can just walk into and do. It requires careful planning and preparation to have things run smoothly. When a teacher misses a prep, and has to have it made up it causes disruptions for the students, the classroom teacher and the resource team. Imagine the workload increase if teachers had not bargained preparation time. When I began teaching in 1994, we had a total of 80 minutes per week. This usually meant two forty-minute blocks per week and if your prep fell on Mondays you were just out of luck. There were no make-up preps in those days but thanks to the union's hard work we changed that and now the weekly prep minutes are guaranteed per week. A full-time teacher now receives a guaranteed 120 minutes per week. That's a 50% increase in prep time since the mid-nineties. Today's classes are much more complex than when I started and increased prep time is something that helps teachers maintain a healthy work-life balance while children receive fun and interesting programming from prep teachers. Again, what's good for teachers is also good for students. I would like to draw your attention to one provision in our Collective Agreement that teacher, especially those new to the profession, may be unaware of.

Article D.4.g.ii

Teachers teaching on call are entitled to the regularly scheduled prep time for the teacher they are replacing.

TTOCs may go weeks before they actually receive a prep depending on the assignments they work. If a contract teacher has a prep scheduled on a day, they are away the TTOC is entitled to it. Preparation time is precious to us all. Let's make sure we protect our bargained provisions for the betterment of the profession and our own well-being.

Letters of Understanding

By Greg Canning and Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

Last year VEAES signed two Letters of Understandings or LOUs. One was to increase the number of rounds in the Spring Transfer Process from 3 to 5 and the other was to move the Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP) from May 31 to March 31. The VEAES in-house table officers wish to extend their thanks to our staff reps for sharing this message with teachers nearing retirement. Everyone was aware of the ERIP date change and those with questions were able to contact me for support.

An LOU is something employers and unions may enter into on a trial basis to see how it works before committing to something long term. Last year's LOUs on the STP and the ERIP date change have now expired and we will now begin the review process to see if this is something we would like to continue. As a refresher for staff reps, we moved from 3 weeks of postings to five beginning in the last week of May and all four weeks in June. Postings went out on the Mondays and closed on Wednesday of the same week. Interviews for the most senior candidates then happened on the Thursday and Friday with jobs being offered Friday evening. The goal was to have everyone knowing what their assignments were before starting summer holidays.

The second LOU was to move the ERIP date from May 31 to March 31. This was also connected to the STP in that most ERIP application were not processed until late May causing many full-time continuing positions not to make it in the first round of postings. By having the earlier ERIP date the goal was to get all of those vacant positions out in the first round so members could have a clear indication as to what was truly available.

VEAES and the Board will begin the review process this fall to determine if this is something we would like to continue with. What we need is feedback from our members about the process last year. We intend to begin these discussions in late November so any feedback before entering these discussions would be helpful. VEAES emailed a survey on October 24, 2025, regarding the two LOUs. We kindly ask that you complete the survey at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your continued dedication and for sharing your valuable input. In Solidarity.

BCTF Virtual Pension Seminar

By BCTF

Tuesday, November 4, from 4:00–5:15 p.m. Pacific Time via Zoom

This seminar is intended to help members learn about how their pension plan works, factors to consider when planning for retirement, and their pension options. The seminar will cover topics such as:

- how pension is calculated eligibility for unreduced pension
- pension options
- the retirement application process
- post-retirement considerations.

If you are planning to attend, please register [here](#).

After registering, you will receive an automatic confirmation email with the Zoom link and details. If you have any additional questions, please contact jmawhinney@bctf.ca.

A Dangerous Precedent in Albertan Education

By Xander Graham

In Alberta, the government is preparing to use one of the most extreme tools in Canadian law, the notwithstanding clause, to force teachers back to work and override their right to strike. It's a move that should alarm educators everywhere, including here in British Columbia.

The notwithstanding clause, contained in Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, allows governments to temporarily override certain fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and association. Invoking it to legislate teachers back to work would strip Alberta educators of their Charter-protected ability to collectively bargain and take job action, rights that are the foundation of fair negotiations in any democratic society.

For teachers in BC, this moment feels uncomfortably familiar. In 2002, our own government unilaterally stripped class size and composition provisions from teachers' contracts: vital protections for students and learning conditions. The BC Teachers' Federation fought that battle for nearly 15 years, taking the case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. In 2016, the Court ruled in teachers' favour, restoring those stripped rights and reaffirming that freedom of association under the Charter protects meaningful collective bargaining.

What Alberta's government is now threatening to do would short-circuit that very process. By invoking the notwithstanding clause, it could prevent teachers from challenging unconstitutional legislation in court, denying them the same path to justice that BC teachers relied on to reclaim their rights.

This isn't just about one province's labour dispute. It's about setting a precedent where governments can silence educators instead of negotiating with them, using the notwithstanding clause as a shield against accountability. If Alberta normalizes this, what's to stop other provinces from doing the same the next time teachers stand up for their students and their profession?

When governments suppress teachers' voices, they also undermine the conditions that make quality education possible. Fair bargaining ensures manageable class sizes, adequate support for diverse learners, and safe, well-resourced schools. Silencing educators doesn't just erode labour rights; it demonstrably harms students and weakens the public education system we all depend on.

This moment calls for solidarity. BC teachers know how long and hard the fight for fair conditions can be, just as we know how powerful we can be when we stand together. What's happening in Alberta is a warning, but it's also a call to action: to support our colleagues, defend our shared rights, and protect the future of public education across Canada.

Solidarity and Joy

By Jody Polukoshko

We watch, from our classrooms, under-supported and overworked, the activism of BCGEU and Air Canada flight attendants singing and dancing on picket lines, insisting that the public see the invisible challenges that workers face. In this case, the endless requirement for unpaid work and the relentlessness of public service without the required supports. This weekend, I made a connection to Ross Gay, Black American, teacher, author, and poet in his book “Inciting Joy”.

On the frontline, the challenges can seem overwhelming at times, the expectations we put on ourselves and those of parents and students can lead to us feeling ideologically or professionally lonely, and our survival strategy leads us to connect over frustrations and disappointments. Gay leads with a charming analogy of a community potluck where everyone brings their sorrows to the table, the power of naming and owning our sorrows and sharing them, cooperating with them, inviting them in, lifting them up. It speaks to the necessity of recognizing and inviting in sorrows instead of pushing down or ignoring them.

He asks: “What happens if joy isn’t separate from pain... What if it’s not only entangled with pain or suffering or sorrow but is what emerges from how we care for each other through those things. What if joy, instead of refuge or relief from heartbreak, is what effloresces from us as we help each other carry our heartbreaks?”

I’m talking here about a joy that doesn’t minimize or push down, or hide, for the sake of perception of competence, the challenges within our profession, but that names it, harnesses it, and mobilizes the sorrow, suffering, and pain and enables us to organize together, not just for our own relief, but for the benefit of public education.

Joy can easily be co-opted into sentimentalism and self-help that can also feed into misplaced meritocracy, bootstrapism, or reproducing privilege. I’ve been sceptical of discourses of joy that don’t embrace collectivism and Gay’s words helped me to draw a map that acknowledges and centres our sorrows and pain, and through recognizing that our experiences are shared, building communities of solidarity, strength, and resistance. His words about joy acknowledge our capitalist and consumer training to see joy as “...the product of organizing our closets... the result of accomplishment or acquisition... which, to reiterate, our consumer culture has us believing it’s a state of being we can buy.”

There are two things that I think are the most destructive within social movements and professional organizations – the tendencies towards individualism and libertarianism, the former seeing ourselves as alone in our struggles or to blame for them, and the latter placing our individual needs over those of the collective.

Gay says “I have a hunch [...] that joy is an ember for or, precursor for wild, and unpredictable, and transgressive, and unboundaried solidarity, and that solidarity might incite further joy, which might incite further solidarity, and on and on. My hunch is that joy, emerging from our common sorrow, [...] might draw us together, it might depolarize us and de-atomize us enough that can consider what in common, we love.”

So this weekend I’m thinking about the ways we can struggle together, to find and express our common sorrows, and to mobilize our unity, reaching out to one another in unselfconscious ways that seek not to minimize or hide our sorrows, but to mobilize them as a tool for solidarity and for joy. Let’s recognize, instead, that the competition and isolation endemic in our profession

separates and isolates us, and it's only through collective action that we become powerful, together.

I'll close with the words of Karen Lewis, another Black American activist and past president of the Chicago Teachers' Union. She famously had three questions she asked herself when making decisions on behalf of teachers, and I invite each of us to consider them when we decide what to do as a union and how to do it: "Does it unite us? Does it build our power? Does it make us stronger?" We are being faced with a manufactured epidemic of austerity and ideological and practical lack of support for the students in our classes. We need to come together through our sorrows to joy and our unity. "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has, and it never will" (Douglass, 1857)

<https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/karen-lewis-ctu-obituary/>

Ross Gay. (2022) Inciting Joy: Essays. First Edition. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

VEAES Committees are still looking for Chairpersons (and members)!

By Françoise Raunet



Two very important VEAES Standing Committees—Working & Learning Conditions/Bargaining and TTOC Committees—are still desperately in need of chairpersons. Chairing a VEAES committee is an excellent way to bring issues that matter to you and your colleagues to the attention of the VEAES Executive Committee. Chairs (with the support of VEAES In-House Table Officers & office staff) set dates & agendas for meetings, share committee recommendations with VEAES EC and implement any EC decisions relating to the committee, help to draft committee motions, and review meeting minutes. There are already a number of teachers who have submitted CVs to be members of the WLC/B committee, but so far it has no chair. Because it is a bargaining year, the work of the WLC/B committee will be especially important this school year. The TTOC committee is another one in dire need of a chairperson, as well as some more committee members. Finally, the Communications Committee has a chair (Karine Ng, karine@veaes.ca) but needs more members. If you are interested in applying to be either a chairperson or a member of any of the VEAES standing committees (WLC/B, TTOC, Pro-D, Communications, Social Justice & Solidarity, Health & Safety) please fill out [this CV application form](#) and email it to francoise@veaes.ca. The VEAES Executive Committee will review the CVs and appoint committee members and chairs at the next few EC meetings. Looking forward to seeing some of you at a meeting in the VEAES office in the near future!

IMPORTANT DATE

2025-26



**Executive Committee
Meeting** on
November 5 at
4:00 pm at the
VEAES Office

**TRICK
OR
TREAT**

VEAES MEMBER PORTAL



Marjorie Dumont
President
marjorie@veaes.ca

Xander Graham
Vice President
xander@veaes.ca

Vanessa Lefebvre
Vice President
vanessa@veaes.ca

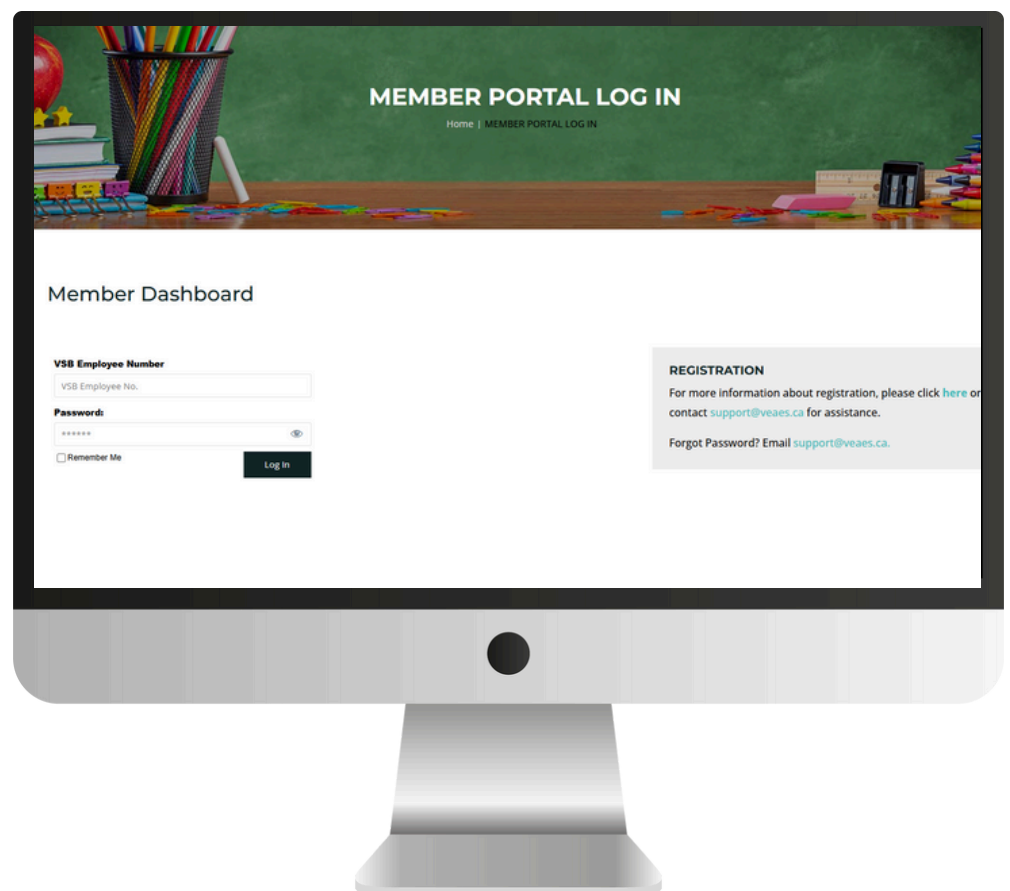
Françoise Raunet
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Greg Canning
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Rob McGowan
Adult Ed President
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To access the portal, go to the VEAES website. On the menu, scroll down to Member Portal Log In. 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 login to the portal.

To receive your temporary password, please email support@veaes.ca. Support staff will send you your temporary password and you can reset it under "My Account" then "Profile Details."



VEAES

The Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators' Society is the union representing elementary teachers and adult educators working in public schools in Vancouver.
Thank you all/ é-iθamə cən