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# You Teach. You Inspire. Now It's Time to Rest

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

As Winter Break arrives, we want to extend our sincere appreciation to every VEAES member for the care, skill, and determination you bring to public education. This has been an exceptionally demanding year, and the weight of increased workload, limited resources, and ongoing uncertainty has been felt across the membership. Still, you continue to create meaningful learning, support students and families, and sustain your school communities with professionalism and heart.

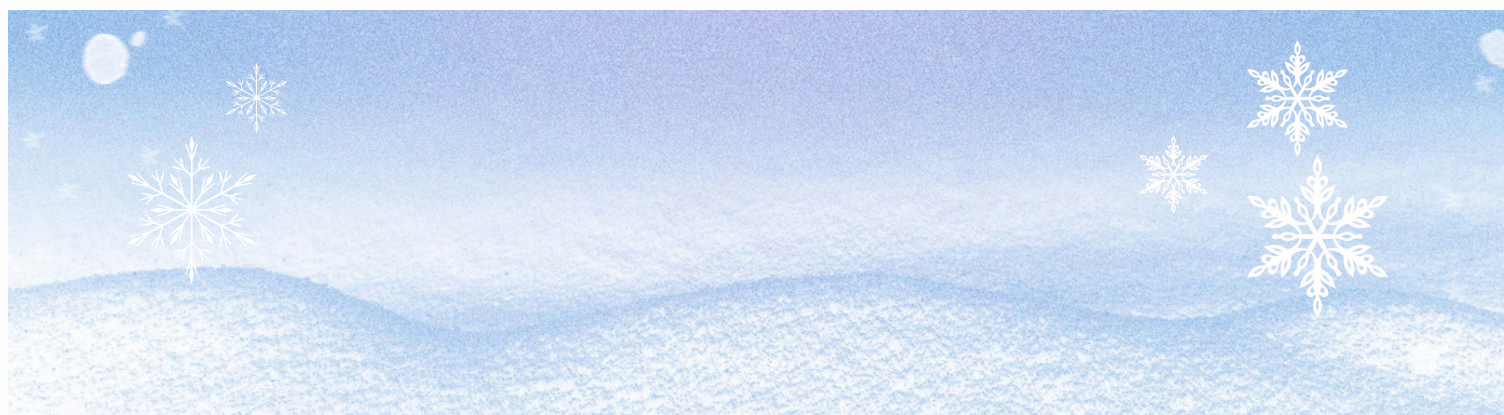
We offer a special thanks to the school union representatives, whose dedication to connecting members with their rights and collective power has been vital. At a time when challenges affect us differently, your ability to balance strong advocacy with empathy and care has made a real difference.

This season invites us to pause and reflect on the power of solidarity. Whether you spend the break with family, in community, or in quiet renewal, we encourage you to lean into connection and collective care. As you find moments to rest and reflect, we encourage members to stay connected to our collective work. Please take time over the break to review the latest bargaining updates on the BCTF website. You can also show your support in meaningful ways-by continuing to wear red, writing a letter to your MLA, or speaking honestly with family and friends about the realities and struggles you are facing in your work. These actions help strengthen our collective voice.

Teaching is transformative work, and advancing justice and equity – especially in difficult conditions- remains central to who we are. Last night's Board of Trustees decision to close the Sir Guy Carleton Elementary School is heartbreaking, and VEAES has been opposed to this closure from the very beginning. While this outcome is deeply disappointing, we know there is still important work ahead as we continue to advocate for the Carleton school community.

As the Winter Solstice marks the longest night of the year, many First Nations teachings remind us that this is a time for rest, reflection, and renewal, and that the days begin to grow longer with the return of the sunlight. We hold this teaching with respect as we look ahead together.

All of us at the VEAES office – Marjorie, Francoise, Vanessa, Xander, Greg, Rob, Hitomi, Andrea, Ashley, and Vicky wish you a safe, restful, and restorative break. We look forward to reconnecting in the new year-stronger together, as always.



# Bondi Beach Hanukkah Tragedy & Rising Antisemitism

By Françoise Raunet



Last weekend's deadly antisemitic attack on a Hanukkah celebration on Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia killed 15 people and injured at least 40 others. The horrific event shocked people around the world, and the tragedy was intensified by the contrast with the celebration of Hanukkah, a festival that brings light and joy in the darkest days. Here in Vancouver, news of the attack shook the Jewish community, which has already been impacted by a rise in antisemitic attacks over the past few years. Local Jewish businesses have been vandalized, Jewish people have been subject to racist and antisemitic slurs, and there was even a firebombing at a synagogue on Oak Street last year. In light of all this hatred, it is more important than ever for teachers to be actively anti-racist to help our students develop a strong sense of social responsibility, justice, and appreciation for the ideas and beliefs of others. To help teachers educate students about antisemitism and other forms of racism, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care has produced [Anti-Racism: A Guide for Teachers](#), in which then-Minister Rachna Singh wrote:

*As British Columbians, we can take pride in the diverse range of cultures in our province. There are more than 200 First Nation communities in B.C. living and working alongside Métis and Inuit people, as well as people from more than 200 different countries or regions. This diverse range of cultures shapes British Columbia's history and enriches our province with a variety of traditions and different ways of seeing the world.*

*While many British Columbians take pride in this diversity, the number of racist incidents taking place across the province has shown there is still much more work to do to create a British Columbia where everyone is treated with kindness, dignity, and respect, regardless of their race or the colour of their skin.*

*Anti-Racism: A Guide for Teachers was developed by IBPoC teachers with lived experiences of racism and discrimination, to help their colleagues learn about and take action on anti-racism education with their students. This guide will give teachers in British Columbia additional tools and strategies to include anti-racism education as part of their teaching practices and to help foster learning, address hatred, and celebrate diversity.*

*I know that talking about racism is uncomfortable and often requires difficult self-reflection and an open mind. Education plays a crucial role in making B.C. a safer, more welcoming, and equitable province for everyone, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or faith. By teaching young people about racism and discrimination, we're empowering future generations to create a better, anti-racist B.C. for everyone.*

*Thank you for having the courage to take this important step and for your ongoing efforts to include anti-racism education as a regular part of your classroom practices.*



# Adult Ed Bargaining Update & Seniority List Reminder

By Rob McGowan

On the Bargaining Front, the Adult Educators bargaining team had a productive meeting back on December 4th. We signed off on a number of issues and made some progress on others. We are hoping that our next session in January will conclude our round this contract window.

Once we conclude, we will initiate the process for having our meeting & vote.

We are a bit held up by the Provincial table, as we don't want to have to reopen the Agreement to add in something that might be pertinent to our contract as well. (Even something simple like the term of the Agreement.) Hopefully, all sides up there can get things sorted out quickly. There were two Provincial bargaining dates this week with more set for January.

As a reminder from earlier this week, please review your spot on the 2025-26 Seniority List. If there's an error, please let me know so the investigation & correction process can be initiated.

On behalf of the VEAES in-house table officers, have a refreshing Winter Break, and we will see you in January 2026 for more fun & games in our merry little education enclave/bunker.

Rob McGowan

AE sub-local President

## Closure of Carleton Elementary

By VEAES IHTOs

Last night's decision by the VSB trustees to close Carleton Elementary was a heartbreaking conclusion for everyone who has been fighting this decision since it was first publicly revealed. VEAES has consistently spoken in opposition to the school's closure at every opportunity. Joyce-Collingwood is a rapidly densifying neighbourhood, with new high-rise construction planned for many sites along Kingsway and surrounding the Skytrain station over the next decade. Despite VSB management's assertions to the contrary, the schools surrounding Carleton do not have the capacity to absorb all the extra students that this will bring into the neighbourhood; in fact, many of them are already feeling enrollment pressures now. The consultation process was a farce. Nearly every speaker at every Board meeting where it was on the agenda spoke against the school's closure, but it was clear from the beginning that the trustees' decision was a foregone conclusion. Almost all of the majority-ABC party school trustees (with the exception of Preeti Faridkot, who bravely broke ranks!)—along with the two Greens—listened to the heartfelt public pleas against closure and yet still voted in favour. Only COPE's Suzie Mah and OneCity's Jennifer Reddy have consistently voiced their concerns over both the stated reasons for the closure and the integrity of the decision-making process. As the employers of the VSB Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer, school trustees' decisions have a direct impact on the working conditions of Vancouver teachers. With the next municipal election scheduled for the fall of 2026, VEAES hopes that members will keep trustees' voting records in mind when choosing the next school board.

## Social Justice Rep SURT



By Social Justice & Solidarity Committee

We are excited to extend an invitation to school-based Social Justice reps for a **SJ rep SURT training taking place from 12:45 pm - 3:15 pm on Thursday, January 15, 2026 at the VEAES office.**

Our goal is to build community and capacity amongst the SJ reps throughout the district. We will be discussing the roles of SJ reps in schools, communications, and objectives, as well as provide an opportunity to help shape our next steps. We're looking forward to fostering connection and having some fun, and we will provide lunch.

There is a maximum number of spots for participants. We are currently inviting those who have not previously attended the SJ Rep SURT. Please email [madalene@veaes.ca](mailto:madalene@veaes.ca) to RSVP.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## BCTF AGM Upcoming: Call for Delegates!

By Kevin McPherson

The BCTF Annual General Meeting delegate deadline is approaching, with the annual event being held **March 14–17, 2026**, at the Hyatt Regency in Vancouver. The BCTF AGM is an excellent opportunity to engage with our federation's policies and direction and to understand how the BCTF functions. At the AGM, teachers gather from across the province, resolutions are debated, and the executive committee (president, vice presidents, and members-at-large) is voted in.

Elections for our delegation will take place at the **January 13 General Meeting**, held at Tupper Secondary School. All related expenses, including hotel accommodation, childcare, and meals, will be covered. If you have questions about attending, please contact any of your IHTOs: [marjorie@veaes.ca](mailto:marjorie@veaes.ca), [francoise@veaes.ca](mailto:francoise@veaes.ca), [greg@veaes.ca](mailto:greg@veaes.ca), or [xander@veaes.ca](mailto:xander@veaes.ca). Interested candidates can fill out this [nomination form](#).

## Gr. 7 & Resource Teachers: Join a VEAES Ad Hoc Committee!

By Françoise Raunet

As mentioned in last week's VEAES weekly, the EC and staff reps recently passed some motions that require ad hoc committees to look into issues surrounding supports for students and the Gr. 7 transition from elementary to secondary school. Meetings will be held during the daytime at the VEAES office, and teachers will be provided with release time to cover the costs of a TTOC. If you are interested in joining one of these committees, please fill out [this CV](#) and send it to [francoise@veaes.ca](mailto:francoise@veaes.ca). Thank you very much to those who have already submitted your CVs!

### Resource Teacher Ad Hoc Committee

This committee will inform us how District procedures and guidelines regarding IEPs, designations, School-Based Team, and other student supports are impacting VEAES members and their students. The members of the committee will also look at the impacts of ministry-mandated testing and reporting requirements, as well as gather information on assessments being requested by administrators and potential impacts on teachers' professional autonomy. WHO? Any VEAES members employed as full- or part-time resource teachers.

### Grade 7 Articulation Ad Hoc Committee

This committee will bring together Gr. 7 teachers and Resource Teachers to gather information about the impacts of the Grade 7 articulation process—as students transition from elementary to secondary school—on teachers' workload and more. The committee will also look at programs and other opportunities for support that are (or aren't) available to students once they move into high school. WHO? Any VEAES members currently teaching Grade 7 and resource teachers who are involved in the Grade 7 articulation program at their schools.

## Who was Vivian Jung?

By Greg Canning

Vivian Jung was the first Chinese-Canadian teacher hired by the Vancouver School Board. In the early 1960s teachers were required to have a lifesaving certificate which were earned at the city's public pool. Vancouver city policy at the time prohibited Chinese-Canadians, and other people of colour, from entering Vancouver's only public pool. In an act of solidarity fellow students and teachers refused to enter the pool. This act of resistance by teachers led to the eventual end of the city's discriminatory policy. Vivian went on to teach at Tecumseh school for 35 years where she became an accomplished coach and well-respected member of the community. To learn a little more about Vivian, and to see some interesting school photos from the 1960s I encourage you to check out the VSB Archives and Heritage website.



Clockwise from top: Image from Chinatown Storytelling Centre (via thewestendjournal.ca), image from legacy.com, image from cbc.ca.

**Vivian Jung – The first teacher of Chinese Descent to work for the Vancouver School Board | VSB Archives & Heritage**



## Pay Dates for Winter Break 2025/26

By Sarah Adams

A reminder that there are adjustments to pay dates in December due to the break. Contract teachers are paid on December 15 and 19th then not again until January 15, 2026. For TTOCs, pay will be deposited on the 19th for work from December 1-15th, and then the next pay will be on January 15, 2026 for work from the December 16th-31st period.

## Health and Wellness Program

By Sarah Adams



We want to highlight an amazing resource available: the **BCTF Health & Wellness Program**. This program is funded through your union dues and is designed to support members who may need help with their health, well-being, or workplace accommodations.

The online referral form is brief and takes only a few minutes to complete. Once submitted, a member of the Health & Wellness team will contact you to review your information, ask a few follow-up questions, and answer any you may have. After that, you'll be connected with a local rehabilitation consultant who will be your main point of contact. They can help arrange accommodations, connect you with supports, and guide you through the process.

For more information, including a helpful FAQ section, please visit the program's webpage. You can apply by calling 1-800-663-9163 or by submitting the online self-referral form through the **Health & Wellness Program** link.

## Helping at VEAES

By Sarah Adams

During the SURT in October, there was discussion about the need for members to temporarily support the VEAES office. Over the past month, I've had the opportunity to help out, and it has been an incredibly informative experience. I truly feel that I'm making a positive difference for our members and contributing where needed.

Although I initially felt some nervousness, everyone in the office has been so friendly and welcoming. This experience has been a crash course in the collective agreement and bargaining, and it has given me a valuable window into the hard work of the IHTO and the entire administrative team at VEAES.



## Staff Meetings

By Sarah Adams

In case you missed it, VEAES and the VSB came to a Local Bargaining agreement in January regarding Staff Meetings. As Staff Meetings are different from Staff Committee Meetings, here is a quick refresher:

- Staff meetings are called by the admin and attendance is mandatory on your working days
- Meetings outside of instructional time should be limited to once a month, except in extenuating circumstances, such as time sensitive matters
- The agenda should be shared, with start and end times, in advance of the meeting and may include learning opportunities (these should not be in conflict with Pro D Days)
- Meetings that are held after school should start no later than 30 minutes after the instructional day
- Meetings before school or at lunch should end 5 minutes before instructional time.



## Schools & Libraries Face Rising Censorship

By Françoise Raunet

Across North America there is a troubling trend; parents and community members are increasingly trying to ban books from public school libraries. Recently the Alberta government imposed sweeping restrictions on the content of “allowed” books, preventing tens of thousands of students from accessing diverse voices and perspectives.

“Such censorship disregards the professional expertise of teachers and teacher-librarians and erodes students’ right to read widely and think critically,” said BCTF President Carole Gordon. “Schools are meant to be places of learning, inquiry, and discovery—not zones of restriction and fear. By silencing literature that explores identity, history, and the human experience, this order risks narrowing students’ horizons and denying them the tools to engage thoughtfully with the world around them.”

“Let's not import Trump-style tactics into our schools,” Gordon said. “Teachers across Canada know from experience that young people benefit when they have access to a wide range of age-appropriate literature that reflects both their own realities and the realities of others. Diversity in school libraries is essential to cultivating empathy, critical thinking, and democratic citizenship.” The British Columbia Teacher-Librarians Association [says](#) “Teacher-Librarians in BC have a responsibility to recognize the diversity within Canada’s pluralistic society and recognize that in any given school community there will be a multitude of lived experiences... to acknowledge and support the dignity of their school community ... regardless of heritage, education, belief, race,

religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical, social or intellectual disability, or income. In particular, the Library Learning Commons (LLC) needs to reflect the recognition of the relevancy of ongoing societal debates including the lived experiences and history of Indigenous peoples and those in the LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, two spirited and others) community. As such, the focus of an LLC collection should not only reflect on its own community but also reflect on a wider perspective where all students can see themselves in some books and see others that are not like them in other books to understand the diversity that is inherent in our Canadian society.”

When it comes to how materials are reviewed locally, [VSB Administrative Procedure 251](#) says “While selection of learning resources involves many people (administrators, teachers, students, community persons, teacher-librarians), the responsibility for co-ordinating the selection of school learning resources and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the Principal.”

The VEAES Executive Committee recently passed a motion to investigate if and how Vancouver elementary teachers are affected by book bans and content censorship (including silent bans). If you have any direct personal experience in this area—whether from parents, administrators, or anyone else—please contact [francoise@veaes.ca](mailto:francoise@veaes.ca) to let VEAES know.

## **A Sad and Important Day of Remembrance**

By Nancy Hawkins

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1989, 14 women, all young, talented students, mostly in Engineering at L'École Polytechnique de Montréal, were brutally shot and killed by a resentful angry young man. For many years now, the Status of Women Committee of VESTA met at the Memorial in Thornton Park to honour the memory of these women whose lives were cut short too soon. We continued to meet long after we were all retired. This year Elaine Ong from the VEAES Social Justice Committee contacted me to see if we could co-ordinate meeting together. We joined each other at the park where there is a circle of benches, each of which is inscribed with one of the victim's names. Despite the horror of this long-ago event, it is a peaceful place, poignantly meaningful, where people can come to mourn but also commit to continue the fight against violent acts towards women. It was an inspiring meeting.

Here's what I wrote subsequently to the women from VEAES: “I want you to know how much all of us retired teachers appreciated sharing this special time with you on Saturday. The memorial tribute to the victims of the Polytechnique was so tragic yet beautiful with the personal biographies of these exceptional women, collected by Elaine, being read out by each of us in turn. Marjorie's warm welcome, so inclusive and hopeful despite the sadness of the moment touched us and connected us all in our common struggle, the roses placed and the candles lit by each bench were lovely and the eagle watching over everything from its perch on the train station across the way was a powerful symbol. We loved meeting with you for coffee after to discuss and share stories. Thank you again for this memorable time, and for all you do for teachers, students and public education. It is so heart-warming to see strong, empowered women carrying on our hard-won successes, and achieving new successes of your own.”

**We are stronger together. Our Solidarity builds a better world.**



Nancy Hawkins – proud Honorary Life Member of VESTA/VEAES

# 12 DAYS OF BARGAINING

## (A Holiday Wish List Carol)

By Françoise Raunet



On the **1<sup>st</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
To all the stuff a classroom really needs

On the **2<sup>nd</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Sixteen kids per class

On the **3<sup>rd</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Functioning devices

On the **4<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Prep time daily

On the **5<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
To five more Pro-Ds!

On the **6<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Newly-printed textbooks

On the **7<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Stop FSAs!

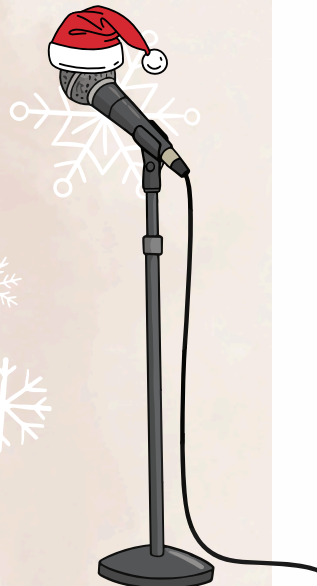
On the **8<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Wage boosts for newbies

On the **9<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Each school gets counsellors

On the **10<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Aides in every classroom

On the **11<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
HVAC systems working

On the **12<sup>th</sup>** day of bargaining, BCPSEA did agree  
Kudos for teachers



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Winter break office closure from Monday, December 22 to Friday, January 2.

Executive Committee Meeting on January 6 at 4:00 pm at the VEAES Office.



A little holiday fun from the VEAES staff!

## 2025-26



## VEAES MEMBER PORTAL

**Marjorie Dumont**  
President

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**Françoise Raunet**  
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**Greg Canning**  
Vice President

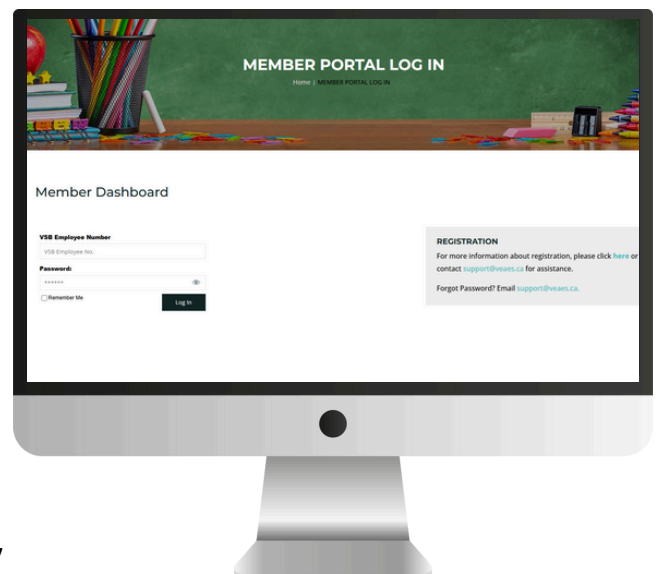
[greg@veaes.ca](mailto:greg@veaes.ca)

**Rob McGowan**  
Adult Ed President

[rob@veaes.ca](mailto:rob@veaes.ca)

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](mailto: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