



## TOPICS WORTH TALKING ABOUT

PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS  
WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

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# International Trans Day of Visibility

**Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

By Kevin McPherson



On the other side of Spring Break, remember that the Trans Day of Visibility arrives quickly on Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. This day highlights the lives, stories, and contributions of transgender people while drawing attention to the discrimination and systemic barriers they continue to face. It is both a celebration of visibility and a reminder of the work that still needs to be done.

In the face of online misinformation and hostility towards the transgender community, we, as educators, have an opportunity to provide accurate information, encourage respectful dialogue, and prepare our students to participate in a society that recognizes and values human diversity and dignity. To that end, you can find links to some teaching resources [here](#) regarding Trans Inclusion (but not the Trans Day of Visibility specifically). If you are looking for policies developed by the VSB and VEAES to support your work, you can find them here with [Policy 17](#) and here with [Administrative Policy 174](#).

Our first days will be busy after the break, but please do not let the Trans Day of Visibility pass by unacknowledged. If you know of any specific resources that you want to share, please email [team@veaes.ca](mailto:team@veaes.ca) and we can include them in the next VEAES weekly.

## Vancouver Official Development Plan Public Hearing

By Françoise Raunet

On Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> I spoke at the City Hall Public Hearing regarding [the proposed City of Vancouver Official Development Plan \(ODP\)](#), which is a land use plan to guide growth and change in our city over the next 30 years and beyond. Here is what I said:

Good evening. My name is Françoise Raunet. I'm a Vancouver resident, a teacher and parent, and a vice-president of the Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators' Society.

First off, I want to acknowledge that, despite my concerns, there is much in the ODP that I support. As a resident of Victoria-Fraserview, I appreciate that my neighbourhood was designated an "area in high need of resources". Having walkable services and real transit options would make a meaningful difference for families like mine. Right now, transit in the southeast is deeply inadequate—the 100 is packed, the 80 barely runs, and there's no connecting north-south bus service past Victoria Drive. A walkable, transit-connected neighbourhood is therefore something I would truly welcome.

That being said, I'm here because I'm extremely concerned about the section of the ODP that would allow the Vancouver School Board the "flexibility it desires" to repurpose or dispose of school lands for non-educational uses. I'm not asking you to scrap the entire plan—just amend this part.

Public lands must remain in public hands. In a city where land is extraordinarily expensive, once we give it up, we will never be able to buy it back. That's why it is imperative that public land be used for public good. And that absolutely includes schools. I notice that amendments to the ODP explicitly require consultation with school boards, and only consideration of consultation with others.

This concerns me. Unfortunately, the VSB does not have a strong track record when it comes to ensuring neighbourhood schools have space for students. Families across the city already struggle to get into their local schools, and added density will only make this worse. Despite 83,000 new homes projected in Vancouver over the next 10 years, the VSB is predicting declining enrolment.

They voted to close Carleton Elementary—right in a Rapid Transit Area that will soon see thousands of new residents. Meanwhile, many families are sent far from home because their local schools are full. This does not inspire confidence in the Board's ability to predict space needs—or to determine which lands might be needed in the future.

Another concern I have is that in the October 2025 ODP draft, housing was explicitly not allowed on existing school sites (except Britannia and King George). But in the January 2026 version, this language was changed to allow the VSB "to dispose of any school site" "if they deem it necessary". That is a dramatic shift, and it suggests pressure from VSB management—without consultation with teachers, staff, or parents.

As a representative of the Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators teachers' union, I can tell you that transparency and meaningful consultation at the VSB are ongoing problems. Decisions are often made without full information being shared with all interested parties. Hearing that the VSB wants to use school lands to "raise capital" raises huge red flags. Education land should not be treated like a revenue-generating asset.

Recent financial decisions also give me pause. The proposed 99-year lease of Fleming Elementary's basketball courts to a developer for only \$11 million is one example—it's an extraordinarily low return for the public. I doubt any taxpayers would feel like the public was getting a good deal at the rate of \$11 million dollars in exchange for 99 years of public land use. Fortunately, the deal collapsed, but the process was opaque\*.

Searching public records has also revealed that the VSB has already applied for rezoning permits for a number of school sites. There is a rezoning application for a subdivision on the school field at Sexsmith Elementary, for example – two apartment towers and two townhouse clusters. They have also applied for a subdivision of the field of the recently-closed Carleton school. I have no way of knowing whether there are more of these development permits out there, since the VSB does not announce it when they apply for them.

Furthermore, the VSB's community engagement processes are often described by

participants as performative. Reports labeled as “final drafts” are shown at meetings, only to have major additions appear later without consultation. Without a trustworthy, transparent process, the VSB cannot realistically assess long-term community needs for school land.

I worry that giving the VSB the ability to rezone school grounds for housing development whenever they feel like it will result in a lot of heartache down the road. We have already lost crucial public land before—like the Burrard Street site where the Wall Centre now stands. If we still owned that land, we could have relieved overcrowding at Elsie Roy, Crosstown, and Roberts today.

Please amend the ODP to make sure that consultation is meaningful, with all interested parties involved and not just school boards alone. Ensure that Vancouver’s school lands remain dedicated to education and the public good. Once they’re gone, they’re gone forever.

Thank you.



*\*Since speaking on Tuesday I have learned that the developer who was assigned the lease—Vittori—appears to no longer be interested in going through with the development. However, they still own the lease and are now looking to sub-let the property, with profits going to Vittori and not the VSB. Not only that, but I was wrong about \$11 million for 99 years... **Vittori is actually only paying \$8.5 million for a 99-year lease!***



## Recharge, Relax, and Shine - It's Your Break!

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

A huge shout-out to all the incredible teachers! Every day, you inspire, guide, and make schools/sites shine. Your dedication and voices truly matter!

With the sacred teaching of the Sabe-humility as our guide, we lead with respect, listen carefully, and lift each other up. That's real strength in action!

Now it's time to kick back, relax, recharge, and enjoy your well-earned break. Have fun—you've earned every moment!

# VSB Special Board Meeting on March 16: Queen Elizabeth Annex Lease Decision

By IHTOs

Late on Thursday, VEAES learned that the Vancouver School Board has scheduled a Special Board Meeting on March 16, 2026 to approve a proposed 99-year lease of Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) to the Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF), the francophone school board. The meeting agenda is publicly available here:

<https://media.vsb.bc.ca/media/Default/medialib/open-special-board-meeting-agenda-2026-mar-16.1d138a87939.pdf>. The decision to close QEA was deeply controversial.

Students, families, and staff were vocal about the disruption to their lives and the anticipated long-term impacts on the community. Many of them felt the board disregarded their concerns throughout the process.

What has added to the frustration is the persistent lack of transparency in how the district handles decisions involving public land. VSB policy requires unanimous approval when disposing of school property. Yet when unanimity hasn't materialized, the board has repeatedly resorted to postponing meetings and returning a short time later to push the decision through anyway (see the [Dec 18<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting re: Carleton School Closure](#) as an example). This pattern has left many wondering whether the policy carries any practical meaning at all. Community members and other stakeholders have been asking why such significant decisions appear to be made, time and time again, with minimal public engagement, limited explanation, and procedural maneuvering that undermines confidence in the process.

As the March 16 meeting approaches, it's clear that the issues raised by the handling of Queen Elizabeth Annex are not isolated. They reflect broader concerns about transparency, accountability, and how major decisions about public assets are made. This fall's municipal elections will shape the future direction of the school district for years to come. Anyone who cares about open governance and responsible stewardship of public education has an important role to play. Staying informed, asking questions, participating in public processes, and engaging in the civic discussions leading up to the election are all meaningful ways to help ensure the next board reflects the values of transparency and accountability that communities expect.

## Collective Agreement Ratified

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

On March 6, 2026, BC Public Schools Employers' Association (BCPSEA) held their ratification vote for the latest Collective Agreement. Members cast their votes decisively, with 99.7% voting in favour, officially confirming a fully ratified agreement.

The upcoming BCTF Spring Zone Meeting will review the changes and their impact on the members in their locals. After spring break, the Federation will provide detailed guidance to locals to ensure everyone benefits from the updated agreement.

# HAPPY SPRING BREAK



## 2025-26

 [veaes.ca](http://veaes.ca)

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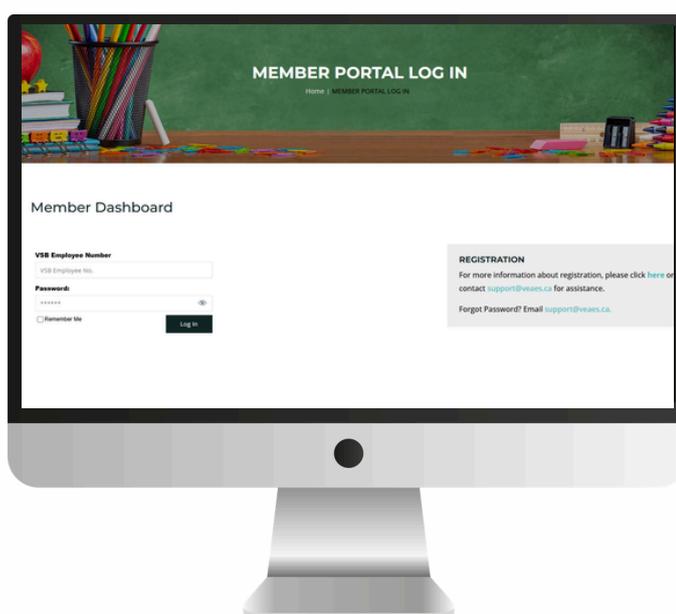
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To access the portal, go to the [VEAES website](http://veaes.ca). From the menu, scroll down and select [Member Portal Log In](#).

When you become a VEAES member, your Member Portal profile is created for you. After careful consideration, we have chosen to use members' VSB employee numbers as the usernames, as this allows us to verify members. You will need your VSB employee number ready in order to login to the portal.

To set your password, click [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact [support@veaes.ca](mailto:support@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.  
Thank you all/ *é·iθamə cən*