



VEAES WEEKLY



TOPICS WORTH TALKING ABOUT

PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS
WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

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Memorandum of Agreement Ratification Vote

By Françoise Raunet

BCTF members across the province voted to ratify a new collective agreement from Monday, March 2 to Wednesday, March 4. The VEAES EC stayed late at the office last night to count all the ballots. The total vote result province-wide was 91% in favour. As a result, the MOA passed, and if the Employers' side also votes in favour of it tomorrow, then teachers will have a new Collective Agreement.

As you probably heard, the VEAES EC was recommending a “No” vote, mainly to send a strong message to the government that this contract does next to nothing to address the dire challenges that teachers and schools currently face. Since coming to power in 2017 (with the strong support of many BCTF members) the NDP government has done almost nothing to improve working conditions in our public schools. Cash-strapped school districts province-wide are having to make tough decisions, like cutting back on teacher-librarian time and fine arts programs, while still being unable to support all students with the essentials for learning. This contract—which will bring a grand total of 3 new counsellors and 7 new resource teachers to Vancouver by 2029—does not go far enough to make any meaningful impact. Ten additional minutes of prep time in the 2027-2028 feels like a drop in the bucket compared to the often-overwhelming needs of the average classroom today.

For teachers who may be feeling disheartened and wanting to do more to improve conditions in our public schools, the good news is that there will be School Board elections this Fall. As the employer of the VSB's Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer, the school trustees play a big role in determining the working conditions of Vancouver teachers. They work with VSB senior management to set policy and budget priorities and provide general direction on the operation of all schools in the district. The current Vancouver School Board, made up largely of trustees from the ABC and Green parties, very rarely questions the direction of VSB management. If we want to see real improvements to conditions in Vancouver schools before starting to negotiate a new collective agreement in three years, taking an active role in the municipal parties' school board campaigns would be a good place to start.

Last-Ever Clock Change! Daylight Saving Time – March 8

By Françoise Raunet

In case you missed it, the government announced this week will be the last Daylight Saving Time switch in BC. When we set our clocks one hour ahead this weekend, we will be doing it for the last time ever; from now on, the province will be on permanent Daylight Savings Time. This means that in November 2026, when we would normally be setting our clocks back an hour, we will be two hours behind Eastern Standard Time. In March 2027, we will once again be three hours behind Ontario & Quebec. Then two hours behind in Fall 2027, three hours behind in Spring 2028, etc.

When making the announcement, the NDP government noted that changing the clocks twice a year creates a number of problems, including an increase in car accidents and other negative impacts. They hope that this change will bring more stable and predictable schedules.

Clarification on Criminal Record Check Procedures

By Françoise Raunet

You may know that, in addition to having a Criminal Record Check done when they first apply for a teaching certificate, all teachers in British Columbia are also required to get one every five years to maintain their certification. Most teachers give permission to the Ministry of Education and Child Care to automatically submit their information every five years to the Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP), so you may have never noticed that this was being done on your behalf.

As part of the process, the CRRP occasionally requires teachers to provide fingerprints or further information. This may happen when, for example, a teacher's name is similar to another person's who may have a criminal record. When this additional information is required, the CRRP emails teachers directly. This email could be sent to your personal or your VSB email. If you get an email from the CRRP, it's important to comply with their request within 90 days in order to avoid the accidental suspension of your teaching certificate.

Recently, a large number of teachers throughout the province, including a handful here in Vancouver, were unaware that the CRRP was requesting additional information from them—the emails they received had gone into their junk mail folders and were never seen. As a result, these teachers were surprised to suddenly have their teaching certificates suspended. VEAES worked closely with the Board to get everyone's suspensions lifted within a few days, and we will continue to advocate to ensure that there are no more negative consequences for them from this unfortunate mix-up.

The situation is a good reminder for us that this process exists, and that teachers should be aware of the requirement to maintain a current criminal records check. If you ever receive a notice from the CRRP asking you to take additional steps, it is very important that you do so within 90 days. For more information, visit the Ministry website [here](#).

Reminder about ERIP and Spring Transfer

By Françoise Raunet

VEAES has renewed the Letters of Understanding for the Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP) and the Spring Transfer Process (STP). The ERIP deadline for members aged 55–64 has moved from May 31 to March 31. Principals and staff reps should ensure members are informed of this change.

Applying for the ERIP benefit requires teachers to email humanresources@vsb.bc.ca. In the email the member should state that they are:

1. Submitting a retirement notice for June 30, 2026
2. That they would like to receive ERIP

For further supports you can contact:

TPP: 1-800-665-6770 | tpp.pensionsbc.ca/

TPP Workshops: tpp.pensionsbc.ca/onlinecourses-and-webinars

Allan Lee, BCTF: 604-871-1935 | bctf.ca/topics/services-information/pensions-and-retirement

BCRTA: 604-871-2260 | bcrta.ca/

BCRTA workshops: <https://bcrta.ca/register/#lp-pom-box-123>

Retiring is a significant life decision and something we in the VEAES office take seriously. We are here to support and should anyone have questions or require support please reach out to greg@veaes.ca.

International Women's Day Dinner – Sunday, March 8th

By Françoise Raunet

Just a reminder to all members who were lucky enough to win tickets to the **International Women's Day Dinner** that the dinner will be this Sunday, at 5 pm, at the Fraserview Banquet Hall (8240 Fraser St.). If you are no longer able to attend, please contact the VEAES office ASAP so that someone else can attend in your place hitomi@veaes.ca.

The theme for this year's dinner is "Women Organizing Communities". Panelists include:

- Anjeanette Dawson: Indigenous educator, knowledge keeper, traditional wool weaver, and BCGEU's Indigenous Education Officer
- Alicia Massie: labour organizer, researcher & community activist, and BCFED's Director of Campaigns and Political Action
- Diana Perez: Managing Director of Member Engagement and Growth at UFCW 1518
- Shirley Ram: frontline worker, union activist, and pay equity advocate working in the non-profit and social service sector
- Monivoi Vataiki: union organizer with United Steelworkers, District 3
- Reyna Villasin: labourer and community activist who work sclosely with underpaid and precarious workers, particularly in sectors dominated by women and migrant workers

Proceeds from the dinner are going to go to funding scholarships and future educational events for women in the labour movement.

Reminder Regarding Prep and TTOCs

By Françoise Raunet

This is a friendly reminder that if there is a TTOC in for you on a day when you normally have a prep, that TTOC is entitled to your prep period. Because TTOCs have no other regularly scheduled prep time in the week, this is their only opportunity to access the preparation time that teachers are guaranteed in the Collective Agreement. Depending on the assignments they receive, TTOCs may go weeks without any prep at all.

Article D.4.g.ii of the Collective Agreement reads: Teachers teaching on call are entitled to the regularly scheduled prep time for the teacher they are replacing.

If you are a TTOC and you are told you can't access the regularly-scheduled prep period for the teacher you are replacing, you should first inform the classroom teacher, then the school administrator, and finally you can contact the VEAES office to let us know as well. On a related note, please avoid "swapping" prep times with colleagues in order to ensure that TTOCs who are assigned to your school receive the preparation time they are entitled to.

2025-2026 VEAES Executive Committee – Want to Get More Involved?

By VEAES Office

VEAES is seeking curious, passionate, VEAES members to put their name forward for election to the 2026-2027 VEAES Executive Committee! The VEAES Executive Committee meets biweekly throughout the year to implement VEAES policy, direct the In-House Table Officers, make decisions about the direction of the organization, and provide leadership on our priorities. The EC contains about 20 members who are dedicated to public education and unionism, and they'd love you to be part of how VEAES does our work.

Whether you are interested in continuing your commitment as an existing or returning EC member or someone considering it for the first time, there are a lot of opportunities for participation that support teachers and help keep VEAES relevant, connected to members, and respond to the VSB and broader issues in public education. Training and orientation will be provided to all EC members at an event scheduled to take place in September. All positions on the VEAES Executive Committee are open every year for election.

Please download and complete [the attached EC nomination form](#) if you would like to run for a position on the executive for the 2026-2027 school year. It is important to return the form by April 13th, 2026 in order for your write-up and photo to be included in the VEAES Weekly publication. Elections will take place at the VEAES AGM on Tuesday, May 12th, at Van Dusen Gardens. Members may also run from the floor of the AGM if they decide to do so on the day of the meeting, however it is preferable to get your candidate statement in by the deadline so that it can be sent to all members in advance of the AGM.

The commitment as an EC member is to attend EC meetings that are held twice monthly, as well as the monthly General Meetings and/or Staff Rep Assemblies. These meetings are important for members in an elected role to attend, because they represent membership in a governance role that provides guidance and direction to IHTOs, and in turn, VEAES as an organization. It is therefore paramount that each EC member is informed by listening to staff reps and members at these meetings, in order to fulfill their representational duties.

If you are interested in a committee chair role, there is an additional leadership role and responsibility to chair regular committee meetings throughout the school year. There is flexibility to how the meetings are run, but it is crucial that they be held on a regular basis, for the same representational reasons mentioned above. If you have any questions about a particular position, please reach out to one of the IHTOs.

Ramadan: A Month of Fasting, Reflection, and Spiritual Growth

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan



Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is considered the holiest month in Islam. It begins with the sighting of the new crescent moon and lasts for 29 or 30 days, ending with the next crescent moon, which marks the start of Eid al-Fitr. During Ramadan, Muslims fast each day from dawn to sunset, refraining from food and drink as a way to strengthen self-discipline, increase devotion, and grow closer to God through prayer, reflection, and acts of charity.

On behalf of the IHTOs, we extend our warmest support to all students, teachers, and staff observing Ramadan, wishing you strength, focus, and peace as you fast and participate in this meaningful and spiritual time.

7 Key Ways To Support Students During Ramadan

Excerpt from <https://www.weareteachers.com/support-students-during-ramadan/>

1. Don't force students to out themselves. Reach out to parents and students privately to ask for ways to help or accommodate them throughout the month.

If you have certain after-school activities during the month, accommodate Muslim students. For example, if you are having a movie night, schedule it around sunset so students observing Ramadan can participate. If you reach out to their parents and give them a heads up, they can work something out, or you could possibly move the activity to a time when they would be able to participate.

2. Avoid food-centric class events or activities.

During Ramadan, all adults who are able to are expected to fast from sunrise to sunset. Depending on which age you teach, you may have students participating in fasting in part or in full.

While food may be an element of some classroom activities, consider ways to avoid making it the main event. This goes for celebrations like birthdays, behavior rewards, and learning activities and games. (This policy also benefits students with food allergies.)

Learn more: [A Ramadan Etiquette Guide for Non-Muslims](#)

3. Reduce potentially dangerous physical activity.

Since fasting is an important part of Ramadan, students may be experiencing low blood sugar, weakness, and other symptoms that make physical activity dangerous. Many Muslim students will ask to modify their exercise or to be excused from PE. Others will choose to participate fully in these activities.

Either way, it's important to talk to your principal about the school's policy and have alternative ideas for students who may need them.

Learn more: [Ramadan and Physical Education](#)

4. Offer time and space for prayer.

During Ramadan, Muslims believe that their spiritual efforts are especially important and enhanced. Muslims who do not regularly pray will often do so, and those who do pray more regularly may pray even more during this time. It's important for Muslims to have an appropriate space to pray. Almost anywhere will do, but your students must be able to focus and turn toward Mecca. It can also be helpful to offer some privacy, especially since you may have students who choose not to disclose their faith.

One way to create this type of space would be to periodically offer students "mindfulness time," during which students can pray, meditate, or take a short mental break from what they're doing. You may even find it helpful to offer a chance to take a short walk outside. Taking a break like this is also a helpful classroom management tool, so it may be worth adopting as a year-round practice.

Learn more: [Simple Mindfulness Activities for Kids](#)



5. Create an alternative space during lunch.

While Muslims are supposed to notice their hunger and thirst during Ramadan, sitting in a room where everyone else is eating can be overwhelming, and it's not a required part of the experience. It's about awareness, not suffering. Muslim students will feel included if they have an alternative place to take a break during lunch. The library, with a few games to play or fun books to read, can be a great alternative, as can spending time outside.

"In addition to making sure that students have a quiet place to pray," shares school librarian Amanda D., "I open the library during lunch so students who are fasting don't have to be in the cafeteria and can enjoy time with friends/peers who are also celebrating."

6. Keep an eye out for students who may need additional support.

Muslim students may be experiencing acute senses of loss from missing family members who are no longer with them, mourning for lost homes (especially if they're immigrants), or being made aware of the persecution they face during this time. A key part of Ramadan is breaking the fast each day with friends and family, and the first holiday without a loved one can be especially raw.

Keep an eye out for students who don't seem like themselves. Be prepared to offer support to these students during Ramadan in whatever way you can. It may be worth talking to parents or students about counseling if the month is especially hard on them emotionally.

Learn more: [What Educators Need To Know About Childhood Trauma](#)



7. Teach your class about Ramadan traditions and Islam.

People feel included when the people around them understand their lives. Ramadan is a great opportunity to teach your class about Islam and to build empathy for Muslims. You may offer Muslim students the opportunity to talk about their experiences, take a field trip to a mosque, or do a whole unit about the history of Islam.

For students in elementary school, find ways to incorporate read-alouds about Ramadan. Some examples of stories that can be used are **Lailah's Lunchbox** by Reem Faruqi or **Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns** by Hena Khan. Incorporating a unit on holidays around the world can be a great way to introduce Ramadan. If you're teaching in a place where Muslims are especially persecuted, you might want to do a lesson debunking common myths and misconceptions too. Invite people from the community to come in and discuss their traditions during the holy month of Ramadan to help students build connections to their friends in the classroom or people they may see or know.

IMPORTANT DATE

General Meeting/SRA
at Tupper on **Tuesday, March 10** at **4:00 pm.**

2025-26

 veaes.ca

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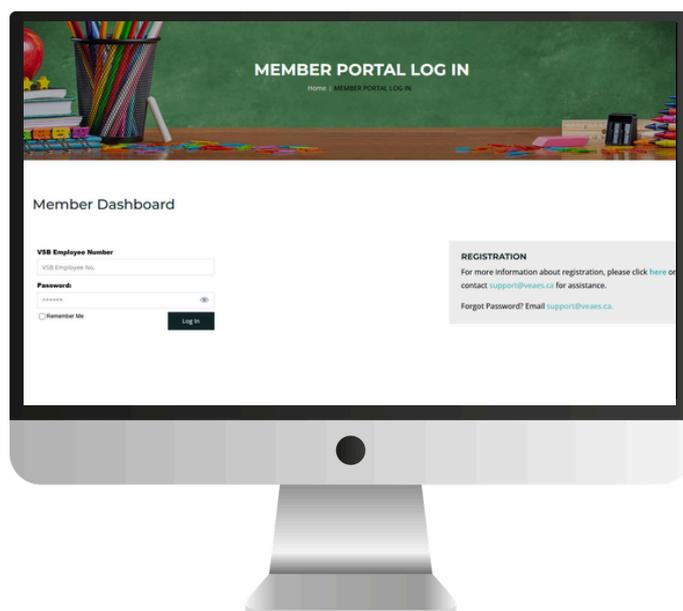
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To access the portal, go to the [VEAES website](http://veaes.ca). From the menu, scroll down and select [Member Portal Log In](#).

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.



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*