



# VEAES WEEKLY



## TOPICS WORTH TALKING ABOUT

PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS  
WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

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# AE AGM & Contract Info Session

By Rob McGowan

Hi all adult education members of VEAES,

I'm pleased to announce that on Tuesday, May 26th, we wrapped up our local bargaining and signed a Memorandum of Agreement to that effect. Now both sides have to go through their own ratification processes in order for the document to become legal.

The framework for AE is fairly straightforward:

- Our Saturday, June 6 AGM will now also have a contract information session, where I will discuss in detail what the team has achieved.
  - I will send out a preliminary summary of that presentation once I've coalesced all the material into a one-page document. That will hopefully be Thursday or Friday.
- Two weeks later, on Saturday, June 20, we will have the ratification vote on that agreement. It will be an electronic ballot.
- If the contract is ratified by the membership, that information will be sent off to BCPSEA.
- Once the VSB signs off on their end, the contract will come into effect backdated to July 1, 2025.
  - The Board was presented with the contract terms at their meeting on May 27th.

I'll talk about salary rates & retro pay at the AGM meeting.

This was a hard-fought process, and I'd like to personally thank each member of the AE Bargaining team—Xander Graham, Vanessa Lefebvre, Keeley Ryan, and Allan Haley—for their collective effort in our achieving this goal.

I look forward to finalizing this process with you, and continuing to drive our division forward.

Local bargaining works!

Thanks,

Rob McGowan,  
President, Adult Education sub-local of VEAES  
Vancouver District #39

# Pride Is Pedagogy: Pride Month & Education

By Xander Graham

Every June, rainbow flags appear in storefronts, corporate logos shift colours, and politicians issue carefully worded statements about inclusion, but Pride did not begin as a branding opportunity. Pride began as resistance and emerged from struggle: from the uprisings at the Stonewall Inn in 1969, from decades of police harassment of queer communities, from trans people fighting criminalization and exclusion, and from grassroots organizing demanding the right not simply to exist, but to live freely and collectively.

Pride Month is not only a celebration, but a curricular responsibility. We know that teaching queer and trans histories is not “adding politics” into the classroom. It is correcting the deliberate absence of people whose lives, labour, art, resistance, and knowledge have too often been erased from public education. Silence is political. Exclusion is political. Curriculum has always reflected decisions about whose stories matter.

As educators, VEAES members have an opportunity to teach beyond tokenism. A single rainbow bulletin board or one lesson in June is not enough. Queer and trans students deserve to see themselves reflected throughout the year, across disciplines, and within the broader story of social movements and liberation. That means asking deeper questions in our classrooms: Who is missing from the historical narratives we teach? How have laws and institutions policed gender and sexuality? How do colonialism and heteropatriarchy intersect? What does solidarity look like in schools and communities today?

We understand that SOGI curricula is not about “indoctrination,” despite what reactionary, bigoted movements claim. It is about creating inclusive classrooms where students can feel safe, seen, and empowered. This matters urgently at a moment when anti-trans rhetoric and policies are escalating across North America. Public education has become a focal point because schools remain one of the few places where young people can encounter ideas that challenge hierarchy, prejudice, and exclusion. Attempts to ban books, censor teachers, police pronouns, or erase SOGI-inclusive education are not isolated debates about curriculum. They are coordinated political projects aimed at narrowing who belongs in public life. Educators know what happens when students feel unseen. We also know what becomes possible when students encounter affirmation, representation, and community.

A truly inclusive curriculum connects struggles together. Queer liberation movements have always intersected with labour organizing, anti-racist movements, disability justice, feminist struggles, and Indigenous resistance to colonial systems of gender regulation. This work is not separate from teaching. It *is* teaching. Public education should not merely prepare students to participate in the world as it is. It should help them to imagine and create a more just one.

Pride Month also reminds us that progress has never been inevitable. Every gain for queer and trans folx was won through organizing, solidarity, and collective action. Schools are part of that struggle too. VEAES members do more than deliver curriculum. We shape the conditions under which young people learn whose lives are valued, whose histories are remembered, and what kinds of futures are possible. This June, remember that Pride is resistance, Pride is solidarity, and Pride is pedagogy.

*Look out for Pride resources in every VEAES Weekly issue during the month of June, and feel free to share any lesson plans, units, or activities that you think would benefit VEAES membership by e-mailing [xander@veaes.ca](mailto:xander@veaes.ca).*

## Applying for Positions in OAM

By VEAES Office

In recent years, VEAES has filed a number of grievances when we feel that the district has not followed the post and fill language in Article E.21. Sometimes, a member with less seniority is the successful candidate over a member with more seniority. Other times, it's a member from a lower category band getting the position over a member that is in a higher category band. As a result of these grievances, we want to offer the following advice to members, which will help make the grievance process move more quickly and will increase the chance of success in a grievance:

- Always save a copy of the job posting, your CV & cover letter. If you just input your information into the OAM fields, we cannot retrieve that information and that has prevented some of our grievances from moving forward.
- Staff Reps or designates – alert the VEAES office ASAP if you feel that the position was not offered to the most senior candidate. The sooner we get the information, the better chance we can resolve it in a more timely manner.
- Interview committees – please request a copy of the questions being asked for each interview & ensure that the same questions are listed for all candidates applying for the same position. We do get the information at the VEAES office, but it is not always sent over in a timely fashion, and there is a lot of data to comb through. We've also had grievances due to the communication from the admin about the FTE of a position not aligning with the FTE that was posted.

Every year, the daily FTE changes due to the school calendar and STAT holidays. We have requested that the District post the FTE of each school day on each posting to prevent any further confusion on the matter.

# What Happened with the Antisemitism Workshop

By Françoise Raunet

Since joining the office at the start of this school year, I have been made aware of the deep harms that have been caused to VEAES members as a result of things said and done at union meetings when the topic of the Israel-Palestine conflict has come up. I myself, in trying to have thoughtful discussions on issues like BDS, have unintentionally said things that have hurt my fellow members—they came across as too apologetic for the actions of either Israel or Palestine. Members have told me of the pain they've felt hearing speakers at VEAES and BCTF meetings accuse each other of being supporters of genocide or terrorism because of their stand on issues close to them. As someone who naturally wants to bring people together, who cares deeply about the importance of the labour movement (especially at this present moment in time), and who believes that we have more in common than we do apart, I rather naively sought to do something to heal the wounds; I therefore rushed ahead with planning an antisemitism workshop without taking the time for meaningful consultation.

Those who know me well know that I have never been one to shy away from a tough conversation. And as a Grade 6 teacher, issues relating to peace and conflict are woven throughout my teaching practice, both because they are in the Grade 6 Socials curriculum and because I've been a life-long peace and anti-war activist, and I believe in teaching from the heart. I believe that what is happening—and what has happened over the past century or so—in Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, Iran and the West Bank is objectively horrific. It is horrific that 1200 innocent Israelis were murdered by Palestinian terrorists on October 7th, 2023 and it is horrific that over 75,000 innocent Palestinians have been murdered by the Israeli military in the 2 ½ years since, along with close to 3000 civilians in southern Lebanon. It is all painful and horrific and, as a non-Jew/non-Palestinian, I struggle to find ways to speak out against it (as I have every armed conflict since young childhood) without being accused of antisemitism or anti-Palestinian racism.

VEAES hosted a workshop on anti-Palestinian racism earlier this year, which I attended and found very informative, and I thought it would be a good idea to host one on antisemitism as well. Knowing that VEAES has passed motions expressing strong opposition to the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, I chose to ask Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) to host it. On their website they make it clear that they don't view criticism of the actions of the state of Israel as a form of antisemitism, and I knew that would be an important factor for EC members when I asked for money to host the workshop. Because of conversations with VEAES members that I have had this year, I knew that some would disagree with the IJV view of antisemitism—some folks do feel that speaking against Israel is a form of antisemitism—however, I broached that with the workshop leaders and they assured me that dissenting viewpoints would be welcome. They felt that as long as people were respectful and didn't try to shout over each other, the workshop would be able to hold space for multiple perspectives in a respectful way. I knew IJV were decidedly on the progressive left-wing end of the political spectrum, but I didn't realize that the organization was viewed so negatively by many Jewish VEAES

members until Tuesday evening, when I started receiving form emails urging us to cancel the workshop. Folks let me know that they didn't feel like IJV represented most Jews, and some told me that, in their opinion, some of their public statements on social media have been incredibly harmful.

The irony of it all is that, after discussing it with VEAES President Marjorie Dumont earlier that afternoon, I had already made the decision to postpone the workshop and had emailed the organizers to let them know. The cost was three times that of the APR one that we hosted earlier this year, there were only 8 people registered and we were a week away, and when I looked at the list of registrants, I saw familiar names—people that I knew were knowledgeable about the issue and already had strong pro-Israel or pro-Palestine opinions—and I wondered whether the educational objective of the event would be compromised by argument. I didn't want to cause further harms, and it didn't seem worth it to spend all the money to bring eight people into the office for what was starting to feel like a personal “heal my union” pet project.

I want to apologize to you all—to the VEAES EC who approved the funds for a workshop that I postponed without consulting them, to the Jewish members who were hurt that I didn't consult more broadly with their community before deciding to host a workshop on antisemitism, to the IJV workshop organizers for their patience and understanding with my disorganized planning, and to all VEAES members who were looking forward to learning how to combat antisemitism in our classrooms and communities. I have not given up on the idea of an educational workshop, but I have learned from my mistake, and I will be taking the time to consult and collaborate more to ensure that it is done in a good way next time.

*Note: I am writing this from my own point of view, and my personal views should not be taken as representative of VEAES as an organization, or of any of the table officers, elected representatives, or any other VEAES members.*

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

By Xander Graham

Save the Date! Wednesday, June 17th, 4:00 pm at the VEAES Office.

VEAES is holding its annual appreciation event on June 17th, 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 the Executive Committee
- VEAES members serving as reps to VSB committees
- VEAES members on BCTF committees
- VEAES members serving as VEAES committee members

[Here is the link to register.](#) Thank you for all your hard work this year!

# Important May 31 Deadline Reminders – Don't Miss Out!

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

As we head into the final stretch of the school year, it's time to double-check a few important deadlines coming up on May 31. Whether you're wrapping up the year or already on leave, make sure these key items are crossed off your list:

## TRB Dues – Action Required

- If you're currently on leave, you must pay your Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) dues of \$95 directly to the TRB. This is essential to maintain your teaching certification and stay in good standing.

## Salary Category Changes – Submit by May 31

- Thinking about a salary category change? To have it retroactively applied to May 1, be sure to: Submit the form from VSB to [humanresources@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:humanresources@vsb.bc.ca) by May 31 and send in your proof from TQS as soon as it becomes available. It does not go automatically to the VSB. These deadlines are firm—missing them could impact your pay or certification. Let's finish the year strong by staying ahead and on track!

## Teacher Evaluations

- All teacher evaluations for the school year must be completed no later than May 31. If you're involved in an evaluation process, now is the time to ensure everything is finalized.

Please be mindful of these May 31 deadline reminders and have a great rest of the school year.

# Statement on the BCTF's recognition of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement

By BCTF

At the BCTF's 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March, elected delegates from the Federation's locals voted in favour of a motion to recognize the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement as a non-violent framework for advancing human rights, peace, and equality in Israel and Palestine. The motion sets in place a framework, as well as concrete actions, to guide the Federation by the movement's core principles. At its heart, this motion seeks to build on longstanding efforts of the BCTF to promote peace and non-violent solutions to global conflict. The text of the motion, that builds on other democratic positions within the Federation, is below.

## 2026 AGM motion on Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign

The motion adopted by the 2026 AGM:

That the Federation:

1. recognize the longstanding international movement of Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) initiated by Palestinian civil society and trade unions, as a non-violent

- framework for advancing human rights, peace, and equality in Israel and Palestine, and publicly announce the commitment of the Federation to being guided by its core principles when considering its own advocacy, purchasing, and investment decisions.
2. support the use of targeted BDS as one set of tools to hold governments and corporations accountable for violations of international law and human rights, consistent with the Federation's purposes of advancing equity, anti-racism, peace, and global solidarity in the face of the harm done to students, teachers, and the education system in the occupied Palestinian territories.
  3. develop and present, no later than the 2027 Annual General Meeting, an ethical procurement and investment review policy that evaluates how Federation funds, purchases, and investments align with the principles of the BDS movement, based on the Federation's own values, policies, and independent judgment.
  4. encourage the Executive to form a committee to review current investments and purchasing practices under this policy and bring recommendations to the Executive Committee and membership.
  5. develop and disseminate workshops and educational materials to support member learning about the global mass movement for BDS strategies and their use in advancing human rights in Palestine and the world.

With the motion now part of the BCTF's governance decisions, the next step is to begin operational planning. This will involve reviewing considerations for implementation, identifying responsibilities and assignments, and outlining how any resulting work will be organized.

### **Social responsibility and the BCTF**

The BC Teachers' Federation has a long and proud history of taking stands in support of social responsibility, justice, equity, and peace. First adopted in 1992 and inspired by similar policy from 1974, the Federation has a sweeping statement on social responsibility that explains why the BCTF, as a union of teachers, takes stances on global and social issues.

"All of us, regardless of subject and grade level, are engaged in introducing our students into an inquiry into human values, experiences and understandings. Respect for persons and peoples, for democratic process, for equality and a deep concern for justice are integral to educating students for citizenship in a democratic society. Social issues strike to the core of what teaching and education are all about.

For example:

- Hungry children cannot concentrate in a classroom.
- Racism undermines self-esteem.
- Sexism limits options.
- Fear of war and violence steals children's hope..."

Our union of teachers is involved in social responsibility because societal issues, conditions, and concerns are inextricably connected with learning, teaching, and schooling. Our commitment to social responsibility and justice calls on us to support sustainable economies and the development of human societies in the direction of democracy, social justice, equality, equity, freedom, peace, and mutual respect.

**IMPORTANT  
DATE** →

**Executive Committee Meeting on June 2 at  
4:00 pm at the VEAES Office**

**2025-26**

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

## **VEAES MEMBER PORTAL**

**Marjorie Dumont  
President**

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

To access the portal, go to the [VEAES website](#). From the menu, scroll down and select [Member Portal Login](#).

**Xander Graham  
Vice President**

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

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.

**Vanessa Lefebvre  
Vice President**

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

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

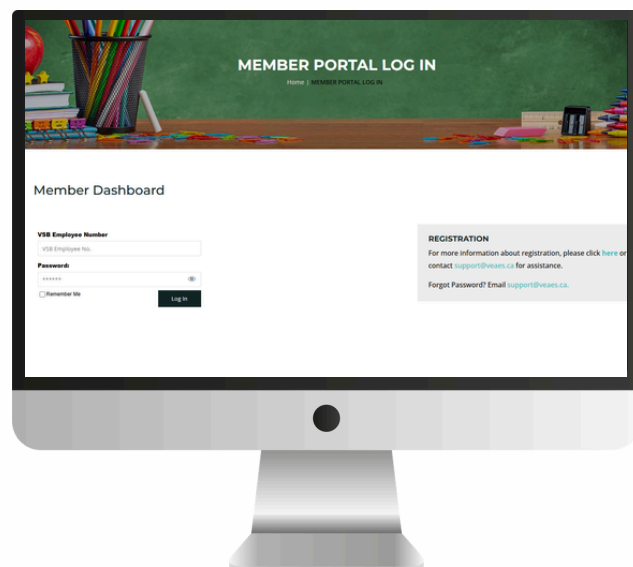
**Françoise Raunet  
Vice President**

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

If you have any questions, please contact [support@veaes.ca](mailto:support@veaes.ca).

**Greg Canning  
Vice President**

[greg@veaes.ca](mailto:greg@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/ ċ·iθamə cən**