



veaes weekly

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TOPICS WORTH TALKING ABOUT

PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS
WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

FSA Update

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan and Françoise Raunet

We raise our hands in honour and respect to you all for the work you have done to prepare for the anti-FSA Campaign.

This is the second year that the process for sending the withdrawal letters was different from past practice, with the VSB pushing back on our efforts more than ever before. As you are aware, the BC Public Schools Employers' Association (BCPSEA) and BCTF meets annually to review the FSA material and sign a protocol agreement. This agreement outlines the procedures for distributing the letters to parents, and the VSB has a very strict interpretation of the agreement, which is why there were additional steps – such as including specific dates and informing administration before sending the letters home. Overall, the process went well, with only a few challenges along the way. We recognize the additional work this involved and sincerely appreciate your time, effort, and commitment in helping make this year's process a success.

We remain committed to standing against standardized testing. Please remember that the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is not a mandatory part of the BC curriculum, and parents do have the right to withdraw their child from participating in the assessment.

We oppose the FSA for two key reasons: it offers little benefit to students, teachers, or families, and it exacerbates existing inequities. We want to ensure all grade 4 and grade 7 teachers that we stand united with you as we continue with our opposition to the FSA campaign.

If you have not yet distributed withdrawal letters, or if a parent requests another, please direct parents/guardians to BCTF website for the withdrawal form, How to Withdraw your Child from the FSA: bctf.ca/topics/services-information/research-and-education-issues/fsa

Please contact VEAES if administrators are encouraging or pressuring parents to reconsider their decision to withdraw their child from the test. We encourage teachers to share anecdotal accounts of these conversations, including instances where parents who initially chose to opt out ultimately changed their minds and allowed their child to write the assessment. Tracking these experiences will help us better understand how often parents are changing their decisions following these discussions and the extent to which they may be feeling pressured to do so. Your observations and experiences are valuable, and we encourage you to share them with us at marjorie@veaes.ca and francoise@veaes.ca

Welcome to the New VEAES Local Reps

By IHTOs

VEAES is thrilled to welcome the two new VEAES local representatives to the BCTF! Annie Simard and Rachel Upton have been appointed to this crucial role to advocate for VEAES members at BCTF governance meetings; as local reps, they will attend the BCTF Representative Assemblies which are held three times a year, as well as lead the delegation at the 2027 BCTF AGM, and be the voice of VEAES members. The IHTOs extend our deepest gratitude to Annie and Rachel for their commitment in taking on this important work. Congratulations, we look forward to working with you!

Important Pro-D Related Updates

By Khaled Shawwash

Thank you to all who attended last week's SURT! It was a privilege to be able to connect with folx, especially in the Pro-D workshops. There were plenty of great questions/points, and below I have addressed some of the most common ones:

Updated Pro-D Handbook

The updated version of the Pro-D Handbook will be released once it has been finalized, which we are aiming to do at the next Joint District Pro-D meeting. Members will be updated once it is released. In the meantime, you can access the one found on [our website](#).

Use 8114 to plan school-wide pro-d

The school based 8114 account is primarily used to help cover, as mentioned in the Pro-D Handbook, fees/costs associated with school-wide workshops, speakers/presenters, professional resources for the school library catalogue of professional resources, and as a second priority, self-directed pro-d.

One important but much lesser-known use of the fund is for release time to plan school wide professional development. The Handbook states that the 8114 can be used for **release time for planning school-wide professional development. This time can be used by committee members or other teachers that the committee designates for help in planning.** If your school has many left over 8114 funds, pro-d committee members are encouraged to access them to cover the cost of a TTOC(s) to take time to plan for school-wide professional development. For reference, the cost of a TTOC for the 2026-2027 school year is \$451.00 for a full day and \$225.50 for a half day.

Use 8114 for PSA conferences

From the Handbook: On an annual basis, the Joint District Professional Development Committee reviews the balances and makes a decision on the release of the roll over balances from 8114 to fund individual members to attend October PSA day conferences.

This is the case for this year; for members wishing to cover the costs of PSA conference, please connect with your pro-d committee. The committees should access the 8114 to cover these costs.

For all other professional development workshops, conferences, events, etc., please first access your site-based funds (8114 or 8120, depending on the reason) and if you need supplementary funding, you are encouraged to apply for Temporary Supplemental Funds where you can receive up to \$1000 of coverage: [Home page - Online Professional Development Application](#).

Expanding access to 8120

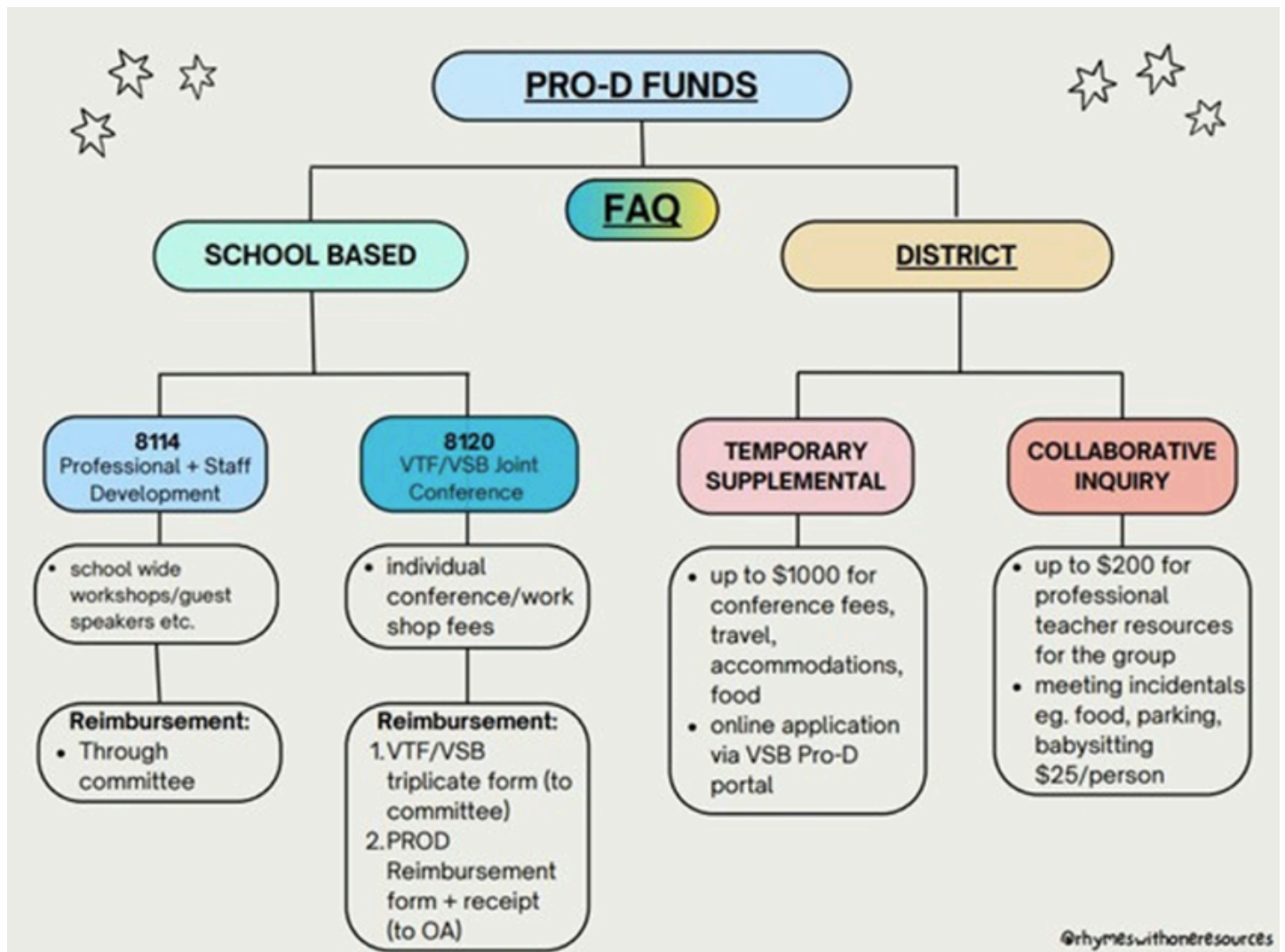
As mentioned in a previous VEAES Weekly, pro-d committees (especially those with large balances) are encouraged to expand access to the 8120 funds, such as by increasing the per member amount/limit; these funds are meant to be used! The Handbook also states that school-based Staff Committees decide each year in September how to establish an application process for equitable (not equal) distribution and that the 8120 is not designed to fund every single member in a year at your site. Administrators, who sit on the committees, have also been encouraged to do so.

Pro-D form is on the way

It was suggested at last week's SURT Pro-D session that a form be created to help members figure out where/how to access funding as it relates to their pro-d needs/situation. Thank you to the member who suggested it! Work has already begun on a form, and it will be reviewed by the VEAES Professional Issues Committee at the end of the month. We will do our best to get it out as soon as possible and will inform you once it is published.

Understanding pro-d funding

The following infographic was spectacularly created two years ago by a member, Thanh Ngo, to help visualize these different avenues of opportunity and access regarding pro-d funding.



BC Montessori Teachers PSA vacancies

Excerpt from BCTF News

The BC Montessori Teachers PSA is looking for members to fill key leadership positions. President, vice-president, and treasurer roles need to be filled. If you are a Montessori teacher and would like to be involved, please reach out to Karen Ngo at psat78@bctf.ca.

The BCTF provides personal support and release time for training for PSA leadership positions. Questions about the supports available to PSA presidents, treasurers, and other leadership roles can be directed to psa-coordinator@bctf.ca.

VEAES Professional Issues Committee 2026-2027 Meeting Dates

By Khaled Shawwash

This is a reminder of the dates that we will be holding the Professional Issues Committee for the 2026-2027 school year. This committee meets approximately once a month to discuss issues related to Pro-D. It makes recommendations to the VEAES EC, helping guide how these issues can/should be addressed. They also guide the IHTOs in taking stances and pushing for certain decisions to be made at the Joint District Pro-D Committee meetings. Any member is welcome to attend, but if you would like to be a voting member, please submit your [application here](#). The dates for the upcoming meetings are below, all taking place at 4 PM:

1. Oct 29 (in-person, VEAES office)
2. November 26 (online)
3. Jan 28 (online)
4. Feb 25 (online)
5. Apr 22 (online)
6. May 27 (online)
7. June 10 (in-person, VEAES office)

If you have questions about Pro-D, please refer to the [Professional Development Handbook](#) (the updated version is coming soon!).

Please contact khaled@veaes.ca if you would like to submit an agenda item or if you have any questions.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you soon!

After-school Pro-D Info Session

By Khaled Shawwash

On Wednesday, October 21st at 3:15 PM, the Joint District Pro D Committee will be hosting an online information session for new Pro D chairs and administrators. Here is the full information: New pro d chairs and Principals/Vice-Principals are invited to join members of the Joint District Pro D Committee for an online session focused on:

- providing an overview of pro d funding
- information on accessing district pro d funds
- suggestions for site-based pro d planning
- question and answer period

This meeting is optional and is intended to provide valuable information to support the good work of pro d committees in schools.

Link to meeting: [Pro D FAQ Optional Session | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

This meeting will be recorded and shared for those who are unable to attend.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee Training

By Danielle Durant, VEAES Rep to VSB H&S Committee

New Member Training

JOHS Committee members who are new to their role, or who are returning after an absence of two or more years, are required to complete new member training within six months of assuming their role.

VSB will be offering new member training on October 21. Please register through the VSB Learns website: [Health & Safety Committee Training - New Members](#)

Advanced Health and Safety Training

Each joint committee member and worker health and safety representative is entitled to eight hours of leave per year to attend occupational health and safety training.

This year, VSB will offer advanced training sessions covering the following topics:

- Violence awareness and de-escalation techniques
- Ergonomics and material handling
- Incident investigations and immediately reportable criteria
- Heat and cold stress

The advanced training sessions will take place on **November 10 and 18, 2026**. Please encourage your Health and Safety Committee members to register for one of these sessions through VSB Learns.

Booking Leave in SFE

When booking an absence in SFE to attend a Health and Safety training session, please use the following absence code: **H&S COMMITTEE TRAIN (166)**

Additional delegates—Women's Institute

Excerpt from BCTF News

The BCTF will be hosting the Women's Institute in Vancouver on January 21–23, 2027, at the Coast Coal Harbour Hotel. This event centers on the experiences of women and welcomes members with equity-deserving gender identities, including cis and trans women, and non-binary and gender non-conforming people who are comfortable in sharing this experience. Additional delegates who, in addition to identifying as a woman, are members of other equity-seeking groups or are in their first five years of teaching are invited to apply to attend. [Click here](#) for more information about the Women's Institute and to apply. The application deadline is November 4, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

Staff Union Representative Training (SURT) 2026

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

October 15 marked the final day of four meaningful and well-attended days of SURT. It was heartening to witness school union rep teams come together in a spirit of learning, sharing, and mutual support. Experienced reps share their knowledge and wisdom, while newer reps strengthened their understanding and confidence in their roles. Together, you engaged in important conversations grounded in our commitment to students' learning, safety, and well-being.

Throughout the training, we heard both heartfelt and difficult stories from reps working tirelessly to support students in the face of inadequate staffing and resources. You are on the front lines every day, witnessing the challenges our students face and the gaps in support that too often prevent them from receiving what they need to be successful. We recognize the emotional weight of this work, and we honour the compassion, courage, and persistence you bring to it. We also saw you lifting one another up, sharing strategies, building connections, and finding strength in our collective voice. By using the structures available to us, including professional development, health and safety, and staff committees, you continue to advocate for yourselves, your colleagues, and the students in your care.



The many new faces joining us this year are a powerful reminder that our union continues to grow, renew itself, and draw strength from the people who make it what it is. As your in-house table officers, we feel a deep sense of gratitude for every member who made the time to attend SURT amid the many demands of work and life. We know that giving up this time is a commitment, and we do not take your presence, your contributions, or your dedication for granted.

In the spirit of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis teachings that emphasize reciprocity, respect, connection, and our responsibilities to one another, we offer our sincere thanks. We honour the knowledge you bring, the experiences you share and the care you extend to your fellow members. Your voices matter, your efforts make a difference, and our collective strength is built through the contributions of each of you. We recognize the vital work you do to support VEAES, your colleagues, and the students you serve.

As we move forward, we are reminded that a canoe journey requires everyone to pull together with shared purpose, respect, and care for one another. There will be challenging waters along the way, but when we work in harmony, support one another, and remain focused on the well-being of our collective, we can move forward with strength and determination. This reminds us that our shared journey depends on each of us, and the responsibility we carry to one another.

Thank you to every rep who attended SURT this year. We are grateful to walk alongside you in this work, to learn from one another, and to continue building a union rooted in solidarity, care and collective responsibility. As your in-house table officers, we honour the time, knowledge, heart, and commitment you bring to VEAES and recognize that our collective strength comes from each of you.

As we continue this journey, may we be guided by our shared commitment to VEAES members, the students, and one another. We see you, we honour you, and we are deeply grateful for all that you do. As we pull together, may we do so with *néćəmat tə šxʷqʷeləwən ct*, meaning one heart, one mind, and one spirit, reflecting the teachings shared by the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples about unity, shared purpose, and our responsibilities to one another.



VEAES reps who attended October 15, 2026 SURT

PSA Day is October 23, 2026

By IHTOs

Time is running out to register for Provincial Specialist Association (PSA) Day conferences. Each PSA is hosting their own conference, bringing together like-minded teachers from across the province. [PSAday.ca](#) has more details about each PSA and the conferences taking place on October 23, 2026. There’s something for everyone at the PSA Day conferences.

Additionally, don’t forget that you have access to both school and district-based Professional Development funds to help cover the costs of participating in these events.

If you have any questions about PSAs or PSA Chapters, inquiries regarding PSAs can be directed to the shared PSA coordination inbox at psa-coordinator@bctf.ca or directly to Jenny Slack, Assistant Director, Professional Specialist Association (PSA) and Adult Education Liaison Professional and Social Issues Division at jslack@bctf.ca.

The PSA Days for the next few years are:

- October 23, 2026
- October 22, 2027
- October 20, 2028

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees

By Bernadette Milton

All workers have basic health and safety rights in the workplace. We have the right to know about workplace hazards and the measures in place to prevent injury, illness, and violence. That's why it's important for VEAES members to know that our Worker Safety Plans should include Violence Prevention as a new component, **as required by WorkSafeBC**. These plans should address all the physical and mental hazards that may exist, and this includes violence in the workplace.

"Violence" means the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a work, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a work, and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that (they are) at risk or injury. – OHSR Regulation 4.27

Here are other rights that all workers (yes, including teachers!) have under the legislation:

1. Right to Know

Workers have the **right to know** about any hazards in the workplace. Employers are responsible for providing proper safety training, information, instruction, and supervision so workers can perform their jobs safely. Knowing the risks and understanding safe work procedures helps prevent injuries and creates a safer workplace for everyone.

2. The Right to Participate

Workers have the right to participate in workplace health and safety. We have a voice through our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) and play an important role in reporting hazards, concerns, and injuries.

Remember, the goal is prevention. Raising concerns before they become a serious problem is much better than responding to an injury that could have been prevented. By working together and speaking up about safety issues, we help create a safer workplace for everyone.

3. The Right to Refuse

Workers have the **right to refuse** unsafe work if they believe it could cause harm to themselves or another person. No one should be expected to put themselves at risk while performing their job duties.

If you identify a situation that may be unsafe, report it to your supervisor immediately and follow the established procedures for refusing unsafe work. Speaking up about safety concerns helps prevent injuries and ensures a safer workplace for everyone.

4. The Right to Be Free from Discrimination

Workers have the **right to be free from discrimination** or retaliation when raising health and safety concerns. No worker should be treated unfairly for reporting unsafe working conditions, reporting an injury, participating in safety activities, or contacting **WorkSafeBC** for assistance.

If you see something unsafe, **report it**. Speaking up about hazards helps prevent injuries and contributes to a safer workplace for everyone. Remember, reporting concerns is a responsible action and supports our shared goal of prevention.

The JOHSC at your school should be co-chaired by a management representative and a worker representative selected from the union groups. This shared leadership helps ensure that both workers

and management have a voice in promoting health and safety in the workplace. This also means that teachers and admin should have equal voice on this committee.

If your JOHSC does not currently have a worker co-chair, this should be addressed as early as possible in the school year. Having both co-chairs in place supports effective collaboration, communication, and a strong focus on workplace safety.

Reporting Injuries and Incidents

Reporting workplace injuries, incidents, and hazards is important because the goal is to prevent injuries to staff and other workers. When concerns are reported, hazards can be identified and addressed before someone is seriously injured.

Completing online reporting forms may take some time, but the information collected on the VSB's online [OurHealth](#) reporting system helps the Vancouver School Board (VSB) identify trends, improve workplace safety, and maintain accurate records. Reporting also creates a paper trail that may be important if a claim needs to be made in the future.

If you are injured at work and miss time from work as a result, contact **WorkSafeBC Teleclaim** at **1-888-WORKERS (1-888-967-5377)** to begin the claims process. Workers have **up to one year from the date of injury** to submit a claim.

Please make sure that you report all workplace injuries to Worksafe in addition to reporting them on OurHealth. The VSB does not automatically forward all reports to Worksafe, so it is important that you file your own claim in order to guarantee that you receive a claim number.

Remember, timely reporting helps protect your health and safety, supports injury prevention efforts, and ensures that the necessary documentation is in place if additional support is needed.

Cast your vote in the municipal elections

Excerpt from BCTF News

Voting in the municipal election on October 17 allows each of us to help shape the direction of public education in our province. You can visit bctf.ca/iTeachiVote to find which school board trustee candidates have been endorsed by your local teachers' association. You can also find candidates for mayor, city council, and school board trustee endorsed by [local labour councils](#).

BCTF Pension Seminar

Excerpt from BCTF News

Learn more about your financial future at the upcoming virtual BCTF Pension Seminar on Thursday, October 29, 2026, from 4:00 to 5:15 p.m. PCT via Zoom. This essential session for BC teachers covers how your pension is calculated, eligibility rules, and the step-by-step retirement application process. Whether you are nearing retirement or just planning ahead, you will gain critical insights into your pension options as well as important retirement considerations. Spaces are limited, so [register](#) online today.

Two elections, two votes: Why both matter for Vancouver schools

By Marjorie Dumont, C'tan

This October, Vancouver residents will vote in two elections, just one week apart—and both will shape the future of public education.

On October 17, we'll elect the school trustees who govern our local school district. Then, on October 24, we'll choose the MLAs and provincial government that set education funding and the broader direction of our public schools.

As teachers, we spend a lot of time telling our students that their voices matter. This month, the same is true for all of us.

And while both votes matter, school board elections have historically struggled to get voters to the polls. People routinely research who deserves their vote for mayor or councillor. Then they reach the school board section of the municipal ballot, realize they don't know a single name, and decide that vote doesn't matter.

That's a mistake.

School trustees make decisions that affect almost every kid and teen in our community. They set financial priorities and district policies, decide which programs get funded or cut, establish policies on inclusion, and determine whether aging schools get the upgrades they need.

In Vancouver, our next school board will face important decisions about things like the future of district programs supporting diverse learners, how to allocate funds to best support students, what to do with VSB sites that are vacant or underused, and much more.

Yet trustee elections receive remarkably little attention. Candidates have limited budgets, media coverage is sparse, and now they have a provincial election to compete with too.

That matters because these elections can be incredibly close. In 2022, the final trustee seat in Delta was decided by 153 votes. In Quesnel, it was 80. Nine races were decided by fewer than 20 votes, including a tie on the Central Coast where the winner was determined by drawing lots.

In Vancouver, only 37.28% of eligible voters cast a ballot in the 2022 municipal elections, which made it easy for the ABC trustees to sweep a majority of the School Board trustee seats. Yet, the municipal government is responsible for the majority of the public services we use every day. It is so important that folks turn up municipally! Your vote really does matter.

So how do you figure out who deserves your vote? Read candidate statements, attend local forums, and look at endorsements from organizations whose values you trust.

If fully funded, safe, and inclusive public schools matter to you, check the recommendations from the Vancouver District Labour Council. Labour councils evaluate candidates on issues including public services, healthy working and learning environments, equity, and investment in public education.

An endorsement shouldn't replace your own judgment. But when you're staring at a list of unfamiliar names, it can be a useful place to start.

Then, one week later, we vote again. The BC Provincial Election, which will elect the MLAs who will oversee public education funding through the Ministry of Education and Child Care, will be held on Saturday, October 24th.

School trustees make important decisions locally, but the provincial government sets education funding and province-wide policy. Decisions made in Victoria shape student services, teacher recruitment and retention, curriculum, school construction, bargaining frameworks, and the overall direction of public education.

Here in Vancouver, provincial decisions are being felt through the “austerity” budgets, the nickel-and-diming over every purchase at the school level, and, most importantly, the significant lack of student supports. For the past 18 years, through both the BC Liberal and BC NDP governments, school districts have not received enough money from the province to fully fund their inclusive education needs. The province only covers about 75.8% of what districts spend on inclusive education, which means that in order to provide the bare-minimum supports students need, School Boards are forced to make cuts elsewhere.

Recent events elsewhere in Canada show why those choices matter. In Alberta, Danielle Smith’s government used the notwithstanding clause to end a teachers’ strike and undermine collective bargaining rights. Other governments in Ontario and Saskatchewan have also invoked the notwithstanding clause in legislation affecting teachers and students.

These examples are a reminder of the risks when governments use extraordinary powers to override rights—and why voters should pay attention to what candidates and parties are proposing for public education, students, and the people who work in our schools.

Public education is one of BC’s greatest shared investments. Strong neighbourhood schools benefit everyone, whether or not you have kids in the system.

Two elections in two weeks asks a little more of voters. Our schools and students are worth the effort.

Misconceptions about FSA and PISA testing

Excerpt from BCTF News

Since its inception, IPE/BC has been opposed to narrow criteria to measure the success of our public schools. We have all seen the Fraser Institute’s school rankings based on the FSA tests and we worry this annual exercise is conducted in the interest of promoting private schools over public. Furthermore, questionable conclusions are drawn in the absence of understanding all the factors that make a public school successful, welcoming, supportive, and inclusive.

The recent release of the PISA results by country and jurisdiction is also being used for similar ends as the FSA. However, we’d like to share an excellent article in The Conversation Canada which puts the issue in perspective, [Standardized tests needed to boost student achievement? Saskatchewan begs to differ.](#)

2026-27



veaes.ca

IMPORTANT DATE

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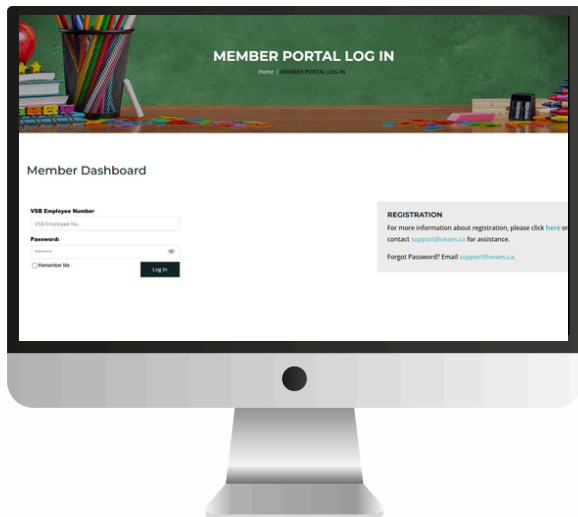
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Rob McGowan
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October 20 | 4:00 pm
EC meeting at the VEAES office

VEAES MEMBER PORTAL



To access the portal, go to the [VEAES website](https://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/           