
Standards for the Education, Competence & Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia

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Introduction

The *Teachers Act* establishes a BC Teachers' Council and further provides that the Council create standards for those who hold certificates of qualification issued by the Ministry of Education. Section 10 (1) and (2) of the Act set out the objects of the Teachers' Council.

The mandate of the council is to establish standards for the education of applicants for certificates of qualification, and also establish standards for the conduct and competence of both certificate holders and applicants for certificates of qualification. Specifically, it establishes standards that a person must meet in order to be issued and to maintain a certificate of qualification.

These include standards relating to:

- » Training & qualifications requirements for applicants & certificate holders
- » Competence
- » Conduct

In carrying out its objects, the council must exercise its powers and perform its duties under this Act in the public interest. The intent of the Act is that, in making standards, the Teachers' Council must consider the needs of the public, especially of the students who are the "clients" of teachers, ahead of the interests of certificate holders. This means that the standards for teachers are to be established for the benefit of students, their parents and the society as a whole.



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The Purpose and Meaning of the Standards in Practice

Standards are not detailed descriptors of teaching competency or conduct. They are statements of principle upon which the detail can be built. Standards should be succinct and convey to the reader an overall sense of the work that teachers do (competencies) and the ways in which they behave (conduct).

The Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia (Standards) were adopted in 2008 by the BC College of Teachers and, through the *Teachers Act*, have been continued as the standards for certificate holders until such time as they might be revised by the Teachers' Council. The Standards are intended to honour and advance the work of educators by highlighting the complex and varied nature of educators' work. They articulate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that educators shall possess as well as the responsibilities that accrue to them as certified educators who hold the public trust. In doing so, the Standards contribute to a safe and high-quality learning environment for students and provide a basis for attaining and assessing both competency and conduct. Taken together, the Standards define the attributes and expertise that educators bring to bear for the benefit of children and society.

As a tool for the public good, the Standards are intended to support the goals of our society by helping to support the education of citizens to live productive and fulfilled lives. Educators who embody these Standards must be able

Definitions

ABORIGINAL — includes all Aboriginal peoples, especially First Nations, Inuit & Métis

AUTHORITY —

- a society incorporated under the *Society Act*, or
- a corporation incorporated under the *Business Corporations Act* or a private Act, or
- a person designated, by regulation, as an authority that operates or intends to operate an independent school

to relate intellectually, pedagogically and ethically with children as they teach the specific subjects and curriculum of BC.

Standards are a way of communicating to certificate holders and the public the description of the work of educators – what they know, what they are able to do, and how they comport themselves as they serve the public. The Standards provide the foundation and stability on which educators can grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish the work of educators.

Certificate holders enter into a contract with the public that provides them with a level of autonomy in return for an agreement that the educator will place the interests of the public above individual interests. Educators agree to be accountable to the public, and the Standards serve as a touchstone for this responsibility.

Even the most eminent and competent educators will continue throughout their careers to learn about and build their repertoires in pedagogy and subject area knowledge. Indeed, standards serve both as ideals to which educators aspire and expectations that can be reasonably held.

One critical consideration that often accompanies the development of standards is the question of how they will be used in practice. The practice of education is an ongoing journey of growing understanding and developing skills. The notion that an educator can attain perfection in practice flies in the face of the notion of continual learning and suggests that “meeting” a standard can be relative. The question should not be “Has the Standard been met?” but “To what extent has the Standard been met for the particular context in which the educator is preparing or working?” A deficit in a single standard is not necessarily a fatal flaw that destroys professional competence, though in certain substantive circumstances it may be. A demonstration of competence will, by necessity, be different for a beginning teacher than for a seasoned veteran.

The Standards have the following applications:

- *Establish commonly held standards of practice and conduct that guide teacher education, teaching practice and ongoing professional growth*
- *Communicate to the public the standards that educators hold and*
- *Establish a framework that guides the Teachers’ Council and the Ministry of Education in setting requirements and making decisions related to teacher education programs, certification of applicants, fitness to practice and discipline.*

BOARD — a board of school trustees constituted under the *School Act*

COMMUNITY — all those who live in an area served by a school or school district

COMPETENCE — having the knowledge & skills to carry out the duties of an educator

CONDUCT — the actions or omissions of an educator including such actions or omissions both within and outside of an educator’s professional role

EDUCATOR — a person who holds, has held, or is an applicant for a certificate of qualification from the Ministry of Education



Commitment to the Standards

The Standards should be a positive force for educators that will honour their work and benefit the children and people of BC through supporting student academic success and social development and by developing an informed citizenry. As new educators become certified to teach in BC, they will be required to sign a commitment that their practice will be governed by the ethics and principles as outlined in the Standards. By agreeing to abide by the Standards, an educator makes a commitment to the public in which parents can confidently send their children into an educator’s care.



MINOR — child or youth under the age of 19

PARENT — (in respect of a student or of a child):

- the guardian of the person of the student or child
- the person legally entitled to custody of the student or child
- the person who usually has the care and control of the student or child

STUDENT — a person enrolled in a K-12 educational program provided by a board of education, authority or First Nations School and for whom an educator has responsibility.



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1. Educators value and care for all students and act in their best interests.

Educators are responsible for fostering the emotional, esthetic, intellectual, physical, social and vocational development of students. They are responsible for the emotional and physical safety of students. Educators treat students with respect and dignity. Educators respect the diversity in their classrooms, schools and communities. Educators have a privileged position of power and trust. They respect confidentiality unless disclosure is required by law. Educators do not abuse or exploit students or minors for personal, sexual, ideological, material or other advantage.

2. Educators are role models who act ethically and honestly.

Educators act with integrity, maintaining the dignity and credibility of the profession. They understand that their individual conduct contributes to the perception of the profession as a whole. Educators are accountable for their conduct while on duty, as well as off duty, where that conduct has an effect on the education system. Educators have an understanding of the education system in BC and the law as it relates to their duties.

3. Educators understand and apply knowledge of student growth and development.

Educators are knowledgeable about how children develop as learners and as social beings, and demonstrate an understanding of individual learning differences and special needs. This knowledge is used to assist educators in making decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment and classroom management.

4. Educators value the involvement and support of parents, guardians, families and communities in schools.

Educators understand, respect and support the role of parents and the community in the education of students. Educators communicate effectively and in a timely manner with parents and consider their advice on matters pertaining to their children.

5. Educators implement effective practices in areas of classroom management, planning, instruction, assessment, evaluation and reporting.

Educators have the knowledge and skills to facilitate learning for all students and know when to seek additional support for their practice. Educators thoughtfully consider all aspects of teaching, from planning through reporting, and understand the relationships among them. Educators employ a variety of instructional and assessment strategies.

6. Educators have a broad knowledge base and understand the subject areas they teach.

Educators understand the curricular, conceptual and methodological foundations of education and of the subject areas they teach. Educators must be able to communicate effectively in English or French. Educators teach students to understand relevant curricula in a Canadian, Aboriginal, and global context. Educators convey the values, beliefs and knowledge of our democratic society.

7. Educators engage in career-long learning.

Educators engage in professional development and reflective practice, understanding that a hallmark of professionalism is the concept of professional growth over time. Educators develop and refine personal philosophies of education, teaching and learning that are informed by theory and practice. Educators identify their professional needs and work to meet those needs individually and collaboratively.

8. Educators contribute to the profession.

Educators support, mentor or encourage other educators and those preparing to enter the profession. Educators contribute their expertise to activities offered by their schools, districts, professional organizations, post-secondary institutions or contribute in other ways.