

Independent School Teacher Conduct & Competence Standards



Ministry of
Education

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Introduction

Pursuant to section 30 of the *Teachers Act*, the Director of Certification may issue an independent school teaching certificate to a person who meets the certification requirements and the independent school teaching certificate standards. These standards apply to holders of system restricted, subject restricted, and school and subject restricted certificates, which account for less than four percent of the total number of BC Ministry of Education certificates issued. As per section 5 of the *Independent School Act*, the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee (ISTCSC) is charged with establishing these standards. It should be noted that independent schools and their communities may have developed particular codes and standards of conduct that serve their particular faith, educational philosophy or community standards. Breach of such local community standards may not be a breach of the standards of conduct and competence for independent school teaching certificate holders.

The Purpose and Meaning of the Standards in Practice

Standards are not detailed descriptors of teaching competency or conduct but are specific statements of principle. Standards should be succinct and convey to the reader an overall sense of the work that educators do (competencies) and the ways in which they behave (conduct).

The Standards are intended to honour and advance the work of educators by highlighting the complex and varied nature of their work. They articulate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that educators shall possess as well as the responsibilities that accrue to them as certificate holders 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 employ for the benefit of children and society.

Educators who embody these Standards must be able to relate intellectually, pedagogically and ethically with children. 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 conduct 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.

The Standards have the following applications:

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

Commitment to the Standards

These standards are intended to be a positive force for independent school 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 these Standards, an educator makes a commitment to the public whereby parents can confidently send their children into an educator's care.

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

COMMUNITY – all those in the local area and those served by the independent school

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 – certified teacher as defined by the *Independent School Act*

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 education program provided by an independent school authority or a band operating an independent 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 social, emotional, intellectual, and vocational development of students. Educators 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 an individual educator's 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 diversity within 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 as primary educators and the role of 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, independent school authorities, professional organizations, post-secondary institutions or contribute in other ways.