

INTRODUCTION

The BC College of Teachers is the professional body for the majority of educators in British Columbia, and is directed through legislation to set standards for the profession. Section 4 of the *Teaching Profession Act* (TPA) articulates this.

It is the object of the College to establish, having regard to the public interest, standards for the education, professional responsibility and competence of its members, persons who hold certificates of qualification and applicants for membership and, consistent with that object, to encourage the professional interest of its members in those matters.

Section 25 of the TPA requires that the College admit only those persons who have met “standards of qualification and fitness” and are of “good moral character.”



The Purpose and Meaning of the Standards in Practice

The *Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia* are intended to honour and advance the profession by highlighting the complex and varied nature of educators' work. They articulate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that professional educators shall possess as well as the responsibilities that accrue to them as professionals 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 professional efficacy. Taken together, the Standards define the professional 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 to relate intellectually, pedagogically and ethically with children as they teach the specific subjects and curriculum of BC.

Standards are a profession's way of communicating to its members and the public the description of the work of professionals – 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 the profession can grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish the profession. Professionals enter into a contract with the public that provides the professionals with a level of autonomy and self-regulation in return for an agreement that the profession will place the interests of the public above individual interests. Professionals agree to be accountable to the public, and the Standards serve as a touchstone for this responsibility.

Even the most eminent and competent professionals 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 a professional 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.

In developing the revised draft Standards, the College assumed that the Standards have the following applications:

- to establish commonly held standards of practice and conduct for the profession that guide teacher education, practice and ongoing professional growth
- to communicate to the public the standards that educators hold
- to establish a regulatory framework that guides the College in decisions related to teacher education programs, certification, fitness to practice and discipline

In developing and revising the Standards, the College considered the following criteria:

- clarity of wording (Are the Standards easily understood by the profession and the public?)
- broad acceptance (Are the Standards generally accepted by the profession and the public?)
- applicability (Are the Standards appropriate for the applications listed above?)

Commitment to the Standards

The College believes that the Standards are a positive force for educator professionalism that will honour the profession and benefit the children and people of BC through supporting student academic success and social development and by developing an informed citizenry. As new professionals become members of the College, they will be asked to sign a commitment that their professional practice will be governed by the ethics and principles as outlined in the Standards document. By agreeing to abide by the Standards, an educator enters into a contract with the public in which parents can confidently send their children into an educator's care.

DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal: includes all Aboriginal peoples, especially First Nations, Inuit and 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.

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 and 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 BC College of Teachers.

Minor: a 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.



BC College
of Teachers

400 – 2025 W. Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 1Z6
Canada

t: 604.731.8170
toll-free: 1.800.555.3684
f: 604.731.9142

www.bcct.ca

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.

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

THIRD EDITION FEBRUARY 2008



BC College
of Teachers