

### Adult Educators and BC College of Teachers Certification

There has recently been confusion regarding the need for certain teachers employed by boards of education to hold a valid certificate of qualification from the BC College of Teachers (the College). Adult educators are often employed by boards to teach classes that do not lead to graduation. In those situations, those teachers do not need a BCCT certificate. However, many adult education programs include courses that lead to graduation and, pursuant to section 19 of the *School Act*, teachers of these courses do need a BCCT certificate.

- 19 (1) Subject to subsection (2), a board must not employ a person as a teacher, principal, vice principal, director of instruction, superintendent of schools or assistant superintendent of schools unless that person
  - (a) holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher, or
  - (b) holds a letter of permission to teach issued under section 25 (2) of the Teaching Profession Act.
- (2) A board may employ a person who possesses qualifications approved by the board, but does not meet the requirements of subsection (1), if that person is
  - (a) employed for 20 or fewer consecutive teaching days and teaching a particular class or classes where no teacher holding a certificate of qualification is available, or
  - (b) instructing a general interest course that is not leading to school graduation.

When some boards of education recently discovered that they had employed teachers who did not meet the requirements of the *School Act*, they were concerned that they were in violation of the Act and sought ways to ensure that they could become compliant with it. The College agreed that the districts could, if certain conditions were met, apply for Letters of Permission to employ these teachers without first advertising the positions. In other words, the College waived the requirement for the districts to prove that a certified teacher could not be found for the uncertified adult educator's position, therefore ensuring that the uncertified adult educator could continue to be employed, and the district be in compliance with the *School Act*. The College agreed to this waiver provided that the uncertified adult educator was enrolled in a teacher education program and had been hired prior to the problem being identified.

The College then worked with two teacher education programs, UBC and SFU, to develop and allow for ways to expedite certification for these uncertified adult educators. Both UBC and SFU provide part-time programs that allow the uncertified adult educators to complete course work and practica at the K-12 level as well as the adult level. The programs allow the uncertified adult educators to continue to work until the final semester of their program in which they complete a practicum in a non-adult K-12 classroom.

### Moving Forward

To date, the College is aware of teachers from Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby and Coquitlam who have taken advantage of the College's action plan and are enrolled in a teacher education program that will lead to certification. Many of these teachers will complete the requirements for certification at the end of this year or early next year.

The College does not know how many more uncertified adult educators may be employed contrary to the *School Act*. If other boards of education are employing adult educators in contravention to the *School Act*, the College can work with districts and teacher education programs to ameliorate the impact on these educators, their students and the district.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss the matter further.



Marie E. Crowther, Registrar