

### Employment in BC Public Schools: Letters of Permission

In order for a person to be employed in a BC public school as a teacher, principal, vice principal, director of instruction, superintendent of schools or assistant superintendent of schools, they must hold a BC College of Teachers' (College) certificate of qualification. However, three situations exist in which a person who does not hold a certificate may be employed. An uncertified person may be employed if the person

1. teaches or works less than 20 consecutive days in a position for which a certified teacher is not available
2. teaches only courses which do not lead to high school graduation
3. holds a Letter of Permission (LoP) issued by the College.

An LoP provides the legal authority for a district to hire someone who is uncertified to teach or hold a position for which a certificate is required. An LoP is issued by the College under the following conditions:

1. the district advertises widely for a certified person,
2. the term of the LoP is one year to allow for certified persons to apply for the position at a later date
3. the person is fit and proper to be working with children, and
4. the LoP is for one person and for one specific teaching position in one particular school and is not transferable to other people or positions.

### How to Use Letters of Permission

A board of education is responsible for hiring only certificate holders in relevant positions. When this is not possible, an LoP may be issued by the College. The employee who is working on an LoP is a legal employee with respect to the School Act and the employer, in meeting the requirements of the Act, has ensured due diligence in the hiring. Because of the specific nature of LoPs, the person who is hired on an LoP cannot work in another position than the one that was described on the LoP application. The intent of the LoP is that they only be issued when a certified educator is not available. Each time a new LoP is being contemplated, the employer must show that a qualified certified educator could not be found, even after extensive advertising. This means that any new position and any position currently held by a person on an LoP must have a new job posting that cannot be filled before an LoP can be requested from the College.

Letters of Permission are not intended to be quasi-permanent positions. They are issued for one year and must be renewed through the College and through the posting process every year. It is unfortunate that some LoPs continue for many years on a year-by-year basis but the College believes that fairness to certificate holders and the public interest requires that certified teachers be given the first opportunity to fill these positions. When situations can be addressed through the development of focused teacher education preparation or short-term amendments to the LoP processes, the College is open to these suggestions and has made special arrangements for Chef Instructors and adult educators in this regard.

