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The  
PRACTICE  
of TEACHING:  
A handbook for  
new teachers  
and TTOCs



## **BCTF Mission Statement**

The BCTF is a union of professionals that represents and advocates for social, professional, and economic goals of teachers and promotes a quality pluralistic public school system through leadership and advocacy, professional development, and collective bargaining.

Teaching is a planned process based on standards of professional practice which incorporate principles of pedagogy, social responsibility, ethical practice, and collaborative relationships.

*—Adapted from BCTF Policy 31.A.02*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the 41,000 public school teachers across the province, welcome to the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Congratulations on becoming a teacher and a member of our union!

You most likely chose to become a teacher because you know that working with children and youth is a creative, fun, and rewarding experience. Teaching is the most important work in any society; we work with kids to help them develop the knowledge and skills to better understand themselves, and to participate in the world they live in. Through us, they learn the basics and much more. Many teachers are also drawn to the profession because of its crucial role in addressing inequities and discrimination in our society.

The BCTF is one of the most recognizable acronyms in BC—that is because we are not shy about advocating for public education. Our work exists in a political environment where policy and funding decisions are made by cabinet ministers and school trustees who are often far away from what is actually happening in classrooms. That is why, as a union, we work together to advocate publicly for our rights and the quality of our students' education. Being part of a union means that you are not alone!

As a member of the BCTF, you are now part of one of British Columbia's oldest organizations. The Federation was created in 1917 and throughout our rich history we have often described ourselves as a union of professionals. Our membership includes all teachers in the public system, various specialists, and adult education teachers who work in public school districts as well as some speech language pathologists, school psychologists, and associated professionals.

Whether it is within the Federation as a whole, your local teachers' association, or one of our Provincial Specialist Associations, there are many ways you can be involved and access support. We have many programs and services that strengthen professional development, Social Justice, Health and Wellness, International Solidarity, and Teacher Autonomy.

Professionally, we encourage and help each other to enhance our practices and to become better at what we do. We aim for a more just and democratic society by working to eliminate all forms of discrimination, notably sexism, racism, transphobia, and homophobia from our schools. We also work with Aboriginal teachers, students, and communities to further the work of reconciliation and to help mitigate the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. We work tirelessly with other unions and citizens' groups to advocate for strong, stable, and properly funded public education as well as other public services.

That work carries over to the national and international levels as well. We work with other teacher organizations in Canada and abroad through the Canadian Teachers' Federation on issues common to all of us across provincial and national borders.

We are proud of our Federation, not only because of our extensive service to teachers and our ongoing advocacy for public education, but also because of our reputation as a highly democratic and member-driven organization. Remember to look through *The Practice of Teaching: A handbook for new teachers and TTOCs* and become familiar with the work we do, think about participating on a BCTF committee, or a committee of your local teacher union. Join one of the Provincial Specialist Associations. Get involved in your local's decision-making processes and the many events it organizes. Attend the BCTF's annual New Teachers' Conference; it's a great opportunity to learn about issues relevant to early career teachers and meet some of your newest colleagues, too.

At the BCTF, we are also very proud to be an active part of the broader labour movement in BC and across Canada. Through your membership in our union, you are also a member of the BC Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress, with whom we work to improve working conditions for all workers—and for a more fair and just Canada for everyone!

One of the most important things for you to read is your collective agreement. It sets out the salaries, benefits, and working conditions for employees and is agreed to by the union and the employer. This means that both the union and the employer have the responsibility to ensure the language in the agreement is followed. The BCTF has worked hard in successive rounds of collective bargaining to improve the working conditions of new and young teachers, including TTOCs. If you ever have a concern about your working conditions, get a hold of your local association.

I wish you a fulfilling and rewarding career and invite you to become involved in your union and the future of your profession. Together, we can continue as a strong, united voice for all BC teachers, our students, and for public education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Hansman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glen Hansman  
President

**This handbook can also be found on the BCTF website at:**

**[bctf.ca/NewTeachersHandbook/](http://bctf.ca/NewTeachersHandbook/)**

***Pour la version française, Manuel pour le nouveau personnel enseignant et les enseignants suppléants, visitez le site de la FECB à:***

***[bctf.ca/NewTeachersHandbookFR/](http://bctf.ca/NewTeachersHandbookFR/)***

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Distribution: New teachers, teachers teaching on call (TTOCs), local presidents, BCTF Executive Committee, Provincial Specialist Association Council, Professional Issues Advisory Committee, Professional and Social Issues Administrative Staff, Canadian teacher organizations.

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## Introduction

The BC Teachers' Federation offers you assistance, support, and encouragement through its many services, programs, and publications. Your colleagues in the union are willing and eager to help. Ask!

Please call your local teachers' association or the BCTF for information and advice about any professional, personnel, or welfare issue.

Visit the BCTF online at [bctf.ca/contacts.cfm?page=presidents](http://bctf.ca/contacts.cfm?page=presidents) for a list of the BCTF locals.

## Setting the BC context

### The BCTF: A union of professionals with a proud history

The BCTF has a long history of representing teachers, public schools and the profession. Formed in 1917 and soon to be celebrating its 100th Anniversary, the Federation has steadfastly remained a proud union of professionals.

#### **Decade 1: 1916–17 to 1926–27**

Imagine the first Annual General Meeting of the BC Teachers' Federation, held on January 4, 1917 at King Edward High School in Vancouver.

The following objectives were adopted:

- To foster and promote the cause of education.
- To raise the status of the teaching profession.
- To promote the welfare of teachers in BC.

BCTF offices were soon established, in Victoria (1919) and later moved to Vancouver. A publication for members, *The Educator*, was launched, later to become *Teacher* Newsmagazine, as it remains today. Courage, commitment and collective action were hallmarks of the profession in the early days, just as they are now. In Victoria, the first teacher strike in what was then the British Empire took place in 1919, over salaries and resulted in an arbitration process for salary matters. In 1921, New Westminster teachers went on strike when their board refused to implement an arbitration award. But, salaries weren't the only concerns. Throughout this decade, the BCTF worked with government on pensions and tenure issues, and promoted the first major examination of education by the province in 1925.

#### **Decade 2: 1927–28 to 1936–37**

A determination to secure adequate compensation and pensions marked the next decade and continued for decades to come. In 1929, the *Teachers' Pension Act* established years of service and contribution level as the basis for pensions. In addition, that year, Vancouver teachers

achieved a salary scale based on years of certification and experience. The *Public Schools Act of 1937* allowed for either party to demand binding arbitration in salary disputes.

### **Decade 3: 1937–38 to 1946–47**

Collective action won the day. In 1938, continuing contracts were established for teachers. But, in 1939 the Langley School Board refused to implement a salary arbitration award, firing its teachers instead. Ultimately, the strong Langley local backed by the BCTF, had the teachers reinstated and the board fired, instead.

In 1939 and 1940, BCTF created its own Sick Benefit Fund, which later became the Salary Indemnity Fund, adding to the services for members.

The context is always important. In 1943, teachers voted for a provincial strike on salaries, but the BCTF did not act on the vote because the Federal government instituted a wartime wage-control program. Also in 1943, the BCTF joined the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress, later to become the Canadian Labour Congress, after a membership vote.

The Code of Ethics was adopted in 1943 and compulsory membership in the BCTF granted by government in 1947. The BCTF participated in the government's Cameron Commission in 1947, making clear the relationship between teaching the whole child and class size.

### **Decade 4: 1947–48 to 1956–57**

The 1950s saw the end to the discrimination against women in salary scales, with qualifications and years of experience deemed the only two criteria. In 1954–55, Hilda Cryderman from Vernon became the first woman BCTF president.

In 1956 the AGM narrowly turned down a recommendation to join the new Canadian Labour Congress.

In this decade, the BCTF began to actively promote the creation of Provincial Specialist Associations, of which 32 exist and provide support to members, today.

### **Decade 5: 1957–58 to 1966–67**

The year 1961 brought significant advances in teacher pensions with the current basic formula being put in place.

The BCTF launched its International Program in 1961 leading to new connections and new learning with colleagues in other countries. Also in 1961, the BCTF was very actively represented on the government's curriculum committees which shaped elementary and secondary education in BC for the next decade.

During the early 1960s, the BCTF overhauled its own governance structures and established the Working and Learning Conditions program. The "Over 40 Campaign" was launched, aimed at eliminating classes with over 40 students.

### **Decade 6: 1966–67 to 1976–77**

The BCTF has long been a leader in social justice; in the early 1970s, the BCTF established the Status of Women and the antiracism programs to address sexism and racism.

On March 19, 1971, BC teachers participated in their first province-wide withdrawal of services, protesting the government's refusal to improve pensions for retirees. When the government ended compulsory BCTF membership that year, all but 69 of the 22,000 members signed up. Compulsory membership was restored again in 1973.

In the 1972 election, the BCTF launched its first major political action campaign, after the government imposed limits on salary arbitration awards and restricted school districts' ability to raise revenue. In 1974, Surrey teachers held a one-day walkout and went en masse to Victoria in protest over class sizes and, as result, the Federation was able to negotiate a major addition of teachers, to dramatically reduce the pupil/teacher ratio.

### **Decade 7: 1977–78 to 1986–87**

The BCTF really focused on building networks and increasing capacity during this period. It expanded its training programs adding PD Associates, School Staff Rep Training, Internal Mediation, the Program for Quality Teaching, and established the Bargaining Division.

These years are marked by struggle for bargaining rights and fair treatment, and a concerted defense of public education and public services. The BCTF launched a major campaign to expand the scope of bargaining to include all terms and conditions of work and brought a challenge under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. A six-day strike in Terrace in 1981 achieved the inclusion of personnel items in an agreement, and a number of locals were able to secure provisions beyond salary and benefits.

However, the government made major cuts in education funding in 1982 and, in 1983 introduced a package of 26 pieces of legislation that constituted a major assault on the social safety net for working people in BC. Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition were formed, and the BCTF was a key participant. Teachers joined with other unions in protest and played an important role in Operation Solidarity escalating province-wide withdrawal of services.

In 1987, the government passed legislation that removed principals from the teacher bargaining unit, removed statutory BCTF membership, established a College of Teachers, and gave teachers full bargaining rights. That wasn't all in 1987; the government brought in more antiunion legislation and teachers joined the BC Federation of Labour in a one-day general strike.

### **Decade 8: 1987–88 to 1996–1997**

The BCTF began the 1987–88 school year with a major sign up campaign in which 99% of all public school teachers joined the BCTF and all 76 locals chose the "union model." But, the bargaining climate was still very challenging. The government imposed provincial bargaining in 1994, undermining locals' bargaining rights and forcing a more centralized system. To teachers'

credit, when the first round of provincial bargaining (1996) was concluded, it was agreed that locally negotiated terms and conditions would stay in place.

Even in these challenging times, the BCTF continued to expand services to members, creating French Programs and Services, establishing a Research Division and piloting a rehab program which became part of the Salary Indemnity Plan. In addition, the BCTF increased its outreach work, initiating the Coalition for Public Education and conducting a major political action campaign.

The Federation and its members were very involved in the Sullivan Royal Commission on Education and the resulting new student centered primary program.

### **Decade 9: 1997–98 to 2006–07**

Good news first; the Federation established the Health and Safety program (1997), Aboriginal Education program (2000), and the Peer Support program (2000). It developed a Public Education Advocacy Plan and created a province-wide discussion about education through the *Charter for Public Education* and focused public attention on funding cuts in every district through the Caravan Against the Cuts campaign.

In 2001, members took their first provincial strike vote; in January 2002, the government imposed a settlement on teachers, ripping class size, class composition, staffing ratios, and related provisions from the collective agreement and made it illegal to negotiate these items. It was devastating to see so many hard won provisions being stolen from the collective agreements. Teachers held a one-day protest on January 28 that year and have marked the year since that time. Twelve years later, a generation of kids has passed through the system without the class size and special education support they should have had.

In 2005, when the government once again imposed a contract, BC teachers engaged in a two-week strike, deemed illegal by the courts. The resulting settlement broke through government's 0% mandate and, in 2006, a five-year collective agreement with salary improvements was negotiated.

This was also the decade when BCTF members voted to affiliate with the BC Federation of Labour and, when the government dismissed the teacher-elected members of the BC College of Teachers, members withheld their BCCT fees until the government re-established a democratic college.

In 2004–05, the BCTF conducted an extensive campaign to bring the issues in public education to the public during the lead up to the provincial election, focusing on the government's record on school closures, support for students with special needs, and class sizes.

During this decade as well, the BCTF stepped up efforts to oppose the privatization of public education and public services.

### **The next decade is underway: 2007–08 to the present**

The BCTF has continued to expand programs and services for members, supporting Teacher Inquiry projects, creating the Living with Balance program and greatly expanding the use of technology and social media. TeachBC, a professional learning portal, will be in place very soon.

Acting for members, the BCTF has had to be ever more vigilant in protecting teachers' freedom of expression rights, taking up grievances and cases, and encouraging grassroots support. Similarly, the Federation has consistently asserted that teachers, the front-line professionals, need to be respected and included in education policy and curriculum development. The BCTF continues to lobby for the resources, support, and conditions teachers need in order to support every student.

The Federation's court challenge to Bills 27 and 28, the legislation that stripped class size, class composition, staffing ratios, and related clauses from the collective agreement in 2002, resulted in a victory in 2010 as the legislation was declared unconstitutional. The government was given a year to address the situation, however, at the end of the year's time, replaced the unconstitutional legislation with Bill 22, a Bill which further undermined teacher rights.

In 2011–12, with mounting pressures and demands on teachers, members undertook a "Year of joyful teaching," and later, in the face of Bill 22, undertook a three-day strike. Faced with even more contract stripping and forced to work with the government's unilateral appointee, the BCTF was able to both resist concessions and make gains in the process.

At the time of writing, the Federation is back at the bargaining table, striving once again for a fair deal for teachers and better support for students.

The BCTF history is rich with examples of teachers taking action and speaking out in the best interest of students, schools, and communities. Thanks to the contributions that new teachers will be making to their union of professionals, this will continue to be the case.

### ***School Act and Regulations and Ministerial Orders***

The school system is governed by the *School Act and Regulations* and *Ministerial Orders*. The *School Act and Regulations* outlines the roles, responsibilities, and rights of teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Current policy changes are found in the *Ministerial Orders*. For example, the *School Act and Regulations* requires that teachers write report cards for their students while the *Ministerial Orders* detail the specifics about which letter grade can be used and how often the reports must be sent.

**Where to find:** This information is available at your school, at/through the local union office or the school board office, or go to

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/ministerialorders\\_toc.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/ministerialorders_toc.pdf).

## Collective agreement

Your collective agreement is an important source of information, and you should have your own copy. Ask your school staff rep and/or your local president for clarification should you require it. The collective agreement documents your rights, responsibilities, and benefits as an employee.

**Where to find:** Ask your staff rep or local president for a copy, or find it online at [bctf.ca/BargainingAndContracts.aspx](http://bctf.ca/BargainingAndContracts.aspx).

## Glossary of terms

### Integrated resource package (IRP)

An IRP is the official curriculum that all teachers in the province must teach. The IRP format is the same for all subjects. Column one details the “Intended Learning Outcomes,” (ILOs) the only required component of the IRP. As a teacher, you must teach the ILOs. The second column lists a number of “suggested instructional strategies,” the third column offers a variety of “suggested assessment strategies,” and the fourth column offers a number of recommended “learning resources.” Columns two through four are suggestions, only. Using your professional judgment, you may choose to use the ideas or to develop your own. As a teacher, you have the professional autonomy to choose the “how,” “when,” and “where” of the curriculum. Only the “what” is mandated.

Copies of all IRPs can be downloaded at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/welcome.php](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/welcome.php).

The proposed changes in curriculum are currently in draft. The IRPs remain in effect.

### Adaptations

Adaptations retain the learning outcomes of the prescribed curriculum, but they are adapted to accommodate different abilities or learning needs. Adaptations may include adjustments to instruction, assessment, or the amount of time allocated for specific studies to help the student achieve success. Students with adaptations are assessed using the standards for the course or program, and they can receive credit toward a Dogwood Diploma. In today’s inclusive classroom settings, there are many adaptations provided universally.

### Modifications

Modifications to learning outcomes are substantially different from the prescribed curriculum. Modifying involves changing or deleting significant numbers of the learning outcomes in the provincial curriculum so that all students can achieve success. Courses heavily modified at the school level are not counted as credit toward a Dogwood Diploma.

### Individual education plan (IEP)

When students with special needs are unable to meet the learning outcomes of a course and it is necessary to make modifications to the learning outcomes, an individual education plan (IEP) outlining goals and objectives for each student must be developed.

In these cases, the use of letter grades and percentages on reports is inappropriate. Structured, written reports are used to describe how well students have succeeded in meeting the modified goals and objectives of their IEPs.

Letter grades and percentages may be assigned only when students with special needs are able to meet the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum.

### **Assessment/evaluation/reporting**

Teachers gather information and data on student achievement on an ongoing basis (assessment), make judgments about student growth (evaluation), and then share the information with students and parents (through reporting). (see also Student Assessment and Evaluation section, page 50.)

## **Jobs and professional responsibilities**

### **The job search**

Many teachers begin their careers as teachers teaching on call. You can do several things to prepare for this prospect.

- update your résumé
- learn more about job interviews and practice those skills
- find out about teacher supply and demand around the province: enrollment increases, grade and/or subject demand, TTOC shortages
- check online for the latest information:  
[bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=5630](http://bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=5630)  
[bctf.ca/OpportunitiesForMembers.aspx?id=5504](http://bctf.ca/OpportunitiesForMembers.aspx?id=5504)  
[OpportunitiesForMembers.aspx?id=5494](http://OpportunitiesForMembers.aspx?id=5494).

### **Job postings**

School districts use the Make a Future website to advertise teaching positions. There is also an option to be notified when new positions are posted: [www.makeafuture.ca/](http://www.makeafuture.ca/).

### **School districts, superintendents**

Few school districts accept résumés without reference to a specific job posting. Check [makeafuture.ca](http://makeafuture.ca) or the school district website.

The superintendent's list is on the BCTF website: [bctf.ca/contacts.cfm?page=superintendents](http://bctf.ca/contacts.cfm?page=superintendents) or the Ministry of Education website: [www.gov.bc.ca/bced/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/).

## Job interviews

Visit the school district or school homepage prior to the interview to gather as much information as possible.

### What do they ask?

Following are some questions that might be asked in an interview for a teaching position:

- From your observations and experience, what particular instructional strategies appeal to you?
- How do you feel about working in a collaborative setting?
- How do you think you would go about helping a student who is having more difficulty than the other students?
- How might you make use of the school library? The services of a teacher librarian? The learning assistance teacher?
- How would you describe an effective teacher?
- Tell us about a lesson that went really well during your practicum or as a teacher teaching on call.
- Tell us about a student who presented you with a discipline challenge, and describe how you handled it.
- What are some of your priorities in establishing a positive learning environment in your classroom?
- What are some specific evaluation methods that appeal to you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you think are the major educational issues facing schools today?
- What classroom themes might you use?
- What other work and community experiences have you had?
- What professional development activities have you undertaken?
- What protocol do you follow for ongoing discipline problems?
- Why did you decide to become a teacher?
- Why would you like to teach in this district?
- What age group do you think you will be most comfortable with as you begin your teaching? Why?
- How will you include a student with special needs in your classroom?
- How do you use technology in the classroom?

Note: When you are interviewed at a school for a particular position, subject-specific questions are often asked. Be prepared to answer questions in your areas of expertise.

### What should not be asked?

- What are your family plans?
- What are your personal values?

- What are your religious beliefs/affiliation?
- What extra-curricular work will you undertake?

### **What should you ask?**

If invited to ask a question in an interview, try one or two of these:

- What professional development opportunities exist in the district?
- Is there a mentoring program for new teachers to the district?
- Is there an orientation program for new teachers to the district?
- Is a statement of the school/district philosophy (mission statement) available to study?

(If you did not find the information online.)

If you are in an interview for a job in a remote or rural district, you might want to ask questions about: housing, community activities, transportation, district resources, and out-of-district professional development opportunities.

Always have a question ready to ask. Most interviews now provide for this.

# Professional Responsibility and Code of Ethics

As a teacher in the public school system, you are bound by a code of ethics and by professional practice, rights and standards. Details of the professional rights and standards of practice can be found in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, [bctf.ca/MembersGuide](http://bctf.ca/MembersGuide). In all of your dealings with your students, their parents, your colleagues and other school personnel, be guided by the BCTF Code of Ethics.

## BCTF Code of Ethics

*The Code of Ethics states general rules for all members of the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) for maintaining high standards of professional service and conduct toward students, colleagues, and the professional union. Members are advised to contact local union officers or appropriate BCTF staff for advice on how to proceed with issues related to the BCTF Code of Ethics.*

- 1. The member speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity, and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.*
- 2. The member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare. The member follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.*
- 3. A privileged relationship exists between members and students. The member refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.*
- 4. The member is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/guardians the practices employed in discharging the member's professional duties.*
- 5. The member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance. \*It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues.*
- 6. The member acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in her or his professional union.*
- 7. The member adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.*
- 8. The member acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of her or his professional union.*
- 9. The member neither applies for nor accepts a position which is included in a Federation in-dispute declaration.*
- 10. The member, as an individual or as a member of a group of members, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals.*

\*See 31.B.12 of the *Members' Guide to the BCTF* [bctf.ca/MembersGuide](http://bctf.ca/MembersGuide).

## Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of

### Educators in BC <http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/Standardsdevelopment.aspx>

Established by the *British Columbia Teachers Council* ([bcteacherregulation.ca/AboutUs/Council.aspx](http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/AboutUs/Council.aspx)) for individuals who hold a certificate of qualification.

**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 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.





## Beginning your career as a TTOC



# Beginning your career as a TTOC

Many teachers are beginning their careers in British Columbia as teachers teaching on call (TTOCs). As a TTOC, you are a very important component of the school system.

Few explorers have set out to conquer the unknown with more uncertainty than teachers teaching on call. You may be called at a moment's notice regarding your teaching assignment: where you will teach, what you will teach, and whom you will teach. All this can be overwhelming unless you keep in mind that, first and foremost, you are a teacher.

As a professional teacher doing the job of a teacher teaching on call, you are vital to the effective operation of the school system. No school can run without you! Fortunately you are available to take on this often difficult job.

## Who are teachers teaching on call?

TTOCs are certificated and qualified teachers who replace a contract classroom teacher for the purpose of continuing the instructional program, maintaining discipline, and generally promoting the educational welfare of the students.

There are also more blunt descriptions, descriptions that indicate a great deal about how TTOCs and others perceive their role and their importance to the educational process.

### The stereotypes

TTOCs are often viewed as:

- *baby sitters*—implying that they aren't expected to do any "real teaching."
- *expendable*—like lambs to the slaughter, thrown to the lions (the students) as some sort of sacrificial offering.
- *stand-ins*—replacing the "star" performers when they are unable to perform.
- *spare tires*—sitting in the trunk until needed in an emergency.
- *outsiders*—"alien beings" from some strange planet, unable to fit into our world.
- *chameleons*—old lizards with the uncanny ability to alter their appearance. Thus, when encountered, they are usually addressed as "just a sub"—implying that the TTOC has no training or authority in the classroom.

### The reality

- In the classroom, TTOCs are as legally responsible as any other teacher.
- TTOCs are not trainees. They are equal in training to many contract teachers.
- Stress is added to TTOC work by the multitude of unknowns.
- TTOCs are always eager to hone their management skills as discipline can be the biggest challenge of the day.
- TTOCs face daily challenges of implementing another teacher's plan and strategy.

The following information is based on a BCTF Research Department Survey on TTOCs conducted in 2008. A new TTOC working and learning conditions survey will be done in the 2013–14 school year.

### **The “typical” teacher teaching on call in BC today**

- is female—76% of TTOCs are female
- 41% are under 35 years of age, 28% are 55 years or older
- most TTOCs teach in urban (42%) or suburban (28%) districts
- about one-third (30%) of TTOCs teach in rural/remote districts
- 20% of TTOCs are retired
- retired TTOCs are more likely to be male (38%) compared to female (15%)
- 19% of TTOCs have less than one year teaching experience
- about half (49%) of TTOCs have one to three years teaching experience
- 70% work as a TTOC only—23% also work in a term teaching position
- about half (54%) of TTOCs want a permanent teaching position
- on average, TTOCs worked 70 days in 2007–08
- about half (54%) of TTOCs assignments were full-day
- 28% of assignments were four days in a row
- 41% of TTOCs had less work than they would like
- 45% supplemented TTOCs earnings with non-TTOC work
- about one-third (36%) of TTOCs earned less than \$10,000 from TTOCs assignments
- most (79%) TTOCs earned less than \$30,000 from TTOC assignments
- 27% of TTOCs owed student loans with about half of them owing \$20,000 or more.

### **The six most important issues for TTOCs were**

- hiring procedures: TTOCs feel district hiring is unfairly handled
- amount of work
- daily rate and no benefits
- call out fairness
- TTOC status among non-TTOC teachers: TTOCs want more recognition and support from the local teachers’ association and contract teachers
- opportunities to participate in the local.

### **The advantages of being a TTOC**

- You are able to observe a variety of classroom and school environments.
- It’s often the route to a full-time position.
- It “opens the door,” and lets administrators see what you can do.
- On-call teaching provides flexibility in your working schedule.
- On-call teaching is interesting and challenging work, offering the chance to exercise knowledge and creativity.
- On-call teaching provides the opportunity to experiment with different teaching strategies and to become familiar with a variety of resources.
- You get daily professional development.

## Teachers teaching on call: Networking in the local

It is important for you as a TTOC to develop a strong support system to tap into for any number of issues/situations and to offset the potential isolation in your job. Find out who your local president is and who the staff reps in the various schools are. They can answer your questions and concerns immediately and provide necessary assistance. Find out if your local has a TTOC committee; if not, consider starting one. Get involved. Your local president can help.

### Ideas for a local teacher teaching on call committee to pursue

- Set up a local phone answering machine with messages, and update regularly.
- Establish a TTOC phone tree, with a co-ordinator to manage it and initiate messages.
- Have the local association email materials to teachers teaching on call (newsletters, notices, etc.).
- Provide teachers teaching on call with mailboxes or bulletin boards in staff rooms.
- Provide a local teachers teaching on call newsletter or a column in the local association newsletter.
- Set up a local email listserv, Twitter account, or other social media networking system.
- Set up a TTOC link on the local website.
- Write a local newsletter.
- When items like a bargaining survey are distributed, see that all teachers teaching on call members receive a copy.
- Arrange for the local association to set up a board for TTOCs at its office for notices related to professional development and curriculum implementation.
- Provide an orientation session for teachers teaching on call.
- Establish a teachers teaching on call host teacher in each school to welcome teachers teaching on call and provide any current information the local wishes to pass on to teachers teaching on call.
- Encourage school staffs to invite teachers teaching on call to school staff functions.
- Ensure that teachers teaching on call are included in staff representative training.
- Inform teachers teaching on call of PD opportunities and social activities.
- Invite TTOCs to induction ceremonies.
- Encourage the local to provide professional development dollars for TTOC use.
- Plan TTOC socials and resource swapping events.
- Plan TTOC workshops through the BCTF Training Department.

### Sources of support and opportunities for involvement in the BCTF and/or local

- The BCTF has a web page for TTOCs. It is [bctf.ca/TeachersOnCall.aspx?id=5022](http://bctf.ca/TeachersOnCall.aspx?id=5022).
- BCTF meetings—be aware of, and become informed about, the provincial Teachers Teaching On Call Advisory Committee (TTOCAC)
- BCTF website [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca)
- BCTF Social Justice newsmagazine
- BCTF workshops—have your local book through the BCTF PSI Division Training Department
- New teacher and TTOC SURT—have your local book through the BCTF PSI/SURT Training Department

- Local association meetings—volunteer to serve on, or to develop, a local TTOC committee
- *Teacher* newsmagazine
- *BCTF New Teachers’, new TTOCs’, and Student Teachers’ Conference*. Annual conference held in the spring.
- TTOC standing committees at the local level
- BCTF zone meetings
- BCTF Annual General Meeting (AGM).

### **School Act requirements to hire certificated TTOCs**

In British Columbia, the *School Act* requires school boards to hire teachers who:

- hold certificates of qualification
- are members of the Teacher Regulation Branch.

The only exception to this requirement exists when no teacher holding a certificate is available and the assignment is for 20 or fewer consecutive teaching days. In such instances, a non-certificated teacher may be employed.

Section 19 of the School Act covers this requirement. It reads as follows:

#### *Teacher and administrative officer qualifications*

*19. (1) Subject to subsection (2), a board shall not employ a person as a teacher, administrative officer, superintendent of schools, or assistant superintendent of schools unless that person is:*

- (a) a member of the college and holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher, or*
- (b) holds a letter of permission to teach issued under section 25(3) 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.*

## **Your assignment as a teacher teaching on call**

### **Duties and responsibilities**

Arrive well in advance of the first bell. You will need at least 30 minutes when posted to a new situation. Advise the school if you will be late due to a last minute notification of assignment.

### **Upon arriving at the school**

- Check in at the office for information and keys.
- Orient yourself to the building and introduce yourself to staff. If time permits, find the medical room, staff room, gym, and fire exits. Ask for a safe place to store your valuables (purse, wallet).
- Some teachers are able to prepare clear instructions for a TTOC for a planned absence. Others may not, due to an unexpected absence. If the teacher has not provided information

regarding the absentee procedure, check with the office. Ask if there is supervision in the school.

- Locate the teacher's daybook and go over the day's lesson plans.
- Verify the absentee procedure, materials, and seating plan.
- Find the copy machine code, teacher supply room, and supervision schedule.
- Run off any material needed.
- Write your name on the board (and a special message/greeting if you wish).
- Put up any board work assignments.
- If audiovisual material is to be used during a lesson, double check to make sure the necessary equipment has been signed out at the school and that it works.
- Plan your introduction. Check on class opening exercises. If there are uncertainties about directions or you have questions about materials, ask a neighbouring teacher.
- Ask about attending meetings (staff, committee).
- Ask about medical alerts, custody orders, medical orders, safety plans, or anything that might impact health and safety of a student and staff.

## **Teachers teaching on call and health and safety**

The *Workers' Compensation Act* and the occupational health and safety Regulation (OH&SR) are designed to protect workers by preventing workplace injury and disease. Teachers teaching on call are entitled to the full protection of the act and the OH&SR. However, such rights are hollow unless they are fully exercised.

Here are some tips to help you get the most from your health and safety rights:

- When you arrive at a school, ask for the names of the BCTF representatives on the school's joint health and safety committee. If you have any health and safety questions or concerns, speak with one of the representatives.
- Find out who is the designated first aid attendant.
- Ensure that you have been provided with a copy of the school's emergency plan, including routes for evacuation and assembly areas.
- Ask if any of the students in your class have a history of violence. If there is such a student, ask for and become familiar with the student's behaviour plan and a safety plan for teachers and staff.
- Do not leave any food or drink unattended where it could be tampered with.
- If you suffer an injury at work, no matter how minor, advise the principal, vice-principal, or first aid attendant immediately. Fill out a WorkSafeBC Form 6A and make two copies. Keep one copy for yourself, send one to the local union office, and give the original to the principal or vice-principal. Call 1-888-WORKERS to report your incident to WorkSafeBC. See your doctor and be sure to tell the doctor that the injury happened at work.
- If you want advice about your claim, or if you receive a letter from WorkSafeBC denying your claim, immediately contact Sarb Lalli, WCB Advocate, at 1-800-663-9163 local 1890, or 604-871-1890.

- Report any incidents of violence or threats of violence to the principal or vice-principal. If the incident of violence or threat of violence is directed at you, treat the incident in the same way as you treat an injury at work.
- Know that you have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you find yourself in any situation that you believe presents a risk of injury to yourself or any other person, remove students from the risk and advise the principal that you are refusing unsafe work. You should then contact the staff representative or a BCTF health and safety representative for advice and support.
- Ask your local union to arrange for a presentation of the BCTF workshop “Raising Health and Safety Awareness,” which can be presented at TTOC meetings, after school staff meetings, teacher orientation meetings, etc.

If you would like more information, please contact: Mike Wisla, Health and Safety Officer, email [mwisla@bctf.ca](mailto:mwisla@bctf.ca), toll-free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1891), direct 604-871-1891.

### **Health and safety for new and young workers**

With so many issues facing a new or young teacher, one of the last things on your mind is whether your workplace is healthy and will keep you safe. You will be comforted to know that there are processes and people in place if you have any questions or concerns, or are faced with an unhealthy or unsafe situation.

You have four rights according to the *Workers’ Compensation Act*

1. **the right to know** the dangers in the workplace
2. **the right to participate** in workplace health and safety activities
3. **the right to refuse unsafe work**
4. **the right to no discrimination**—you cannot be fired or disciplined for participating in health and safety activities.

The first person to contact whenever you have any health and safety questions is the staff rep at your school who will refer you to the health and safety rep. If you are injured or suffer from an occupational disease or are threatened in a violent incident, you need to:

1. report to the First Aid attendant.
2. report to the administrator and complete the WorkSafeBC 6A form.
3. contact your staff and/or health and safety rep.
4. report to WorkSafeBC via teleclaim at **1-888-WORKERS**.
5. send a copy of any correspondence from WorkSafeBC to the BCTF WCB advocate who will help you through the process.

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation part 3 which deals with rights and responsibilities says that **“An employer must ensure that before a young or new worker begins work in a workplace, the young or new worker is given health and safety orientation and training specific to that young or new worker’s workplace.”** This means that in every new school or class you teach, the employer must orient you to the risks and procedures to mitigate these risks before you start work.

BCTF Health and Safety officer  
Mike Wisla  
604-871-1891  
1-800-663-9163 (ext 1891)

BCTF WCB Advocate  
Sarab Lalli  
604-871-1890  
1-800-663-9163 (ext 1890)

## **Long-term assignments**

Some TTOCs will be offered the opportunity to be employed in longer-term/temporary assignments. If you find yourself in this position, more extensive planning and student reporting is required. (Refer to Student Reporting, page 50.)

Collective agreement provisions can be found in your local agreement available from your local union office. Provisions covering pay and benefits are provincial and can be found at [bctf.ca/bargainingandcontracts.aspx](http://bctf.ca/bargainingandcontracts.aspx).

## **Should there be no lesson plan for the day**

There will be times (rarely, it is hoped) when there is no daybook or lesson plans. Sometimes, the proposed material may be too difficult to cover adequately with no prior preparation, or the plan may be too sketchy to be understood. Here are some suggestions:

- Check with the office; the contract teacher may have phoned in instructions, or asked for you to call her/him for direction.
- Consult with the principal and/or another teacher teaching the same subject.
- Refer to the last completed day in the daybook, if available, and then do a reasonable follow-up to the previous lessons. Student notebooks may be checked if the day book is not available.
- Accumulate a set of your own prepared materials—a “survival kit.” Include math reinforcement worksheets, creative-writing stencils, educational puzzles and games, books to read aloud, art ideas, thinking skills, etc. Materials for the subject and grade levels assigned to you can usually be reproduced quickly at the office.
- Younger students often become disturbed by a departure from the routine. Explain to them that some things will be done differently that day. Ask students for their patience and co-operation.
- A teacher teaching on call’s visit is often enjoyed by the students—they are glad for the break from their normal routine. Capitalize on this by providing activities that have an element of fun.

### **When the students arrive**

- Welcome the students as they enter.
- Introduce yourself to the class.
- Explain to the class that you are the teacher who has been called in, that the contract teacher has left lessons that would normally have been taught, and that you will teach them. Follow lesson plans as closely as you can.

- Don't expect to cover everything. It is better to go for quality rather than quantity. Remember, your pace will be different, as will the students' responses.
- Record absentees and late arrivals. Check the seating plan. If there is no seating plan quickly draw one up. Attempt to match names to faces.
- Try to keep seating arrangements as shown in the seating plan.
- Collect or check any pertinent notes such as absentee notes, permission forms for field trips, etc. If there is a need to collect money, turn it in to the office for safekeeping, with the division number, the student's name, and the amount indicated. If you are giving out supplies such as pencils, notebooks, and erasers, record which students are receiving what items.
- Go over the classroom rules and your expectations (keep them brief—three or four rules) and the consequences (ones you can enforce) you will use for inappropriate behaviour.

If you encountered a difficult situation, don't try to cover up the difficulty. The administration appreciates your directing problems to the office for assistance. That is preferable to leaving behind a note describing a near-disastrous day.

The first few minutes of attending to a class are crucial in clarifying values and setting the stage for the general routine of the day. Getting pupils down to work quickly is one of the best methods of good classroom management. Act upon the first sign of sustained unco-operativeness. Students from Primary to Grade 12 must learn that some behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances. It is important not to make a scene in front of the class, so take a student aside and discuss the matter one on one.

In the secondary schools, attendance (backed up with a head count) must be taken at the beginning of each period or block. If possible, check the class roll call with the school's list of absentees, note any students not on the list who are missing from your class, and report those names to the teacher and the office.

In the primary grades particularly, try to learn names as quickly as possible—use name tags if they are available.

### **Medical situations**

Familiarize yourself with students that you will be responsible for who have medical issues, e.g., those students who you are supervising that use epi-pens, are diabetic, have mental health issues, etc.

Report medical emergencies to the office immediately.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to move a seriously ill or injured student. The class should not be left unattended. Know where your students are at all times. Send a student to the office for assistance.

## **Rules and consequences**

Be aware of already established consequences and procedures. Make children aware of any new classroom rule that you will use for the day. Refer to pages 43–50 for tips on rules, classroom management, and establishing a positive environment.

## **Other responsibilities**

Make sure you know the following procedures prior to starting your day. In a crisis, you will not have the time to familiarize yourself with the procedures.

- Any injuries to yourself or to students or medical emergencies must be reported to the administrator immediately.
- If a student appears to be seriously injured, do not move her or him.
- Students who indicate they are ill and wish to go home during the day must get approval from the office.
- Follow up on any student sent to the office.
- Ensure that you are familiar with any safety plans that have been developed for students.

## **Drills or emergencies**

- Check the drill regulations for the classroom.
- Remember to carry the class list with you during an alarm.
- You are responsible for taking your class outside.
- When outside, account for all students and keep them together.
- Remain outside until the all-clear signal is given.
- Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures.

## **Classroom routines/procedures checklist**

Every school has policies and procedures for the following:

- behaviour during PA announcements
- dismissing the class
- distributing supplies and materials
- fire drills, earthquakes, and emergencies
- format for assignments
- hall movement
- lining up
- lunch
- make-up work
- playground
- putting away supplies and equipment
- roll call, absentees, students who leave early
- tardy students
- washroom routines
- what students do when they are finished.

Try to familiarize yourself as much as possible with these policies and procedures.

## **Reporting to the contract teacher**

### **Reporting absences**

- Leave a dated slip of paper for lates and absences (morning and afternoon).
- Check the roll call with the school's absentee list, at the end of the day.

### **Finishing off your day**

- Allow things to wind down a few minutes early, to tidy up and put things away.
- You may wish to play a game or other fun activity to finish off the day.
- Thank the students for their co-operation—you'll tell their teacher how co-operative they were.

### **Reporting on the day**

- Follow as closely as possible the work planned by the contract teacher.
- Make note of any deviations from or extensions to the regular day plan.
- Indicate in the daybook what work has been completed.
- Mark written work, particularly if it is objective.
- If you feel some marking can't be done because of its complexity or subjectivity, leave it for the teacher with an accompanying note.
- Include any specific items of concern or interest. Include the names of students who were co-operative or unco-operative. Single out students for praise.
- Whenever possible, prepare a daybook for the next day's work, unless directed otherwise by the teacher.
- Include comments or suggestions on following up from the day's work and feedback for the contract teacher on class and individual progress.
- Leave your phone number or email so that the classroom teacher can contact you.
- Keep a copy for your records.

*You and the classroom teacher could use the following form to facilitate communication.*

## TTOC Report to Teacher

TTOC's name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number/email \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In for \_\_\_\_\_

At \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

It was a \_\_\_\_\_

### Work completed

All work was assigned and completed as requested. Any exceptions are noted below:

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Observations/marking \_\_\_\_\_

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Student behaviour \_\_\_\_\_

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Student's name \_\_\_\_\_

Behaviour \_\_\_\_\_

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Action taken \_\_\_\_\_

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Other comments \_\_\_\_\_

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## Tips for success

### Survival kit

Should you need a little more time to read through the teacher's lesson plan, you can engage the students with one of the following activities.

### *Problem-solving activities for teams of students*

These activities should:

- be fun.
- require minimal explanation.
- take between 20–30 minutes to complete.
- be something that the whole class can share briefly when completed.
- challenge and engage students' minds and imagination.

Here are some examples:

### Thinking activities

- think of all the things that come in pairs.
- think of all the things with:
  - buttons
  - handles
  - zippers.
- think of what you could eat if there were only:
  - purple things for dinner
  - yellow things for dinner.
- draw the dashboard of your parent's car.
- think of all the things that are:
  - pointed
  - red and hard
  - cold and soft.
- what are some things to smile about?

### *Discovery activities*

Assign the following questions for discussion and online research if computers are available in the classroom. Advise students that there will be a sharing of creative responses.

Are there two kinds of rainbows?

Where do wood knots come from?

Can a fish drown?

Why are furs warm?

Can seaweed predict the weather?

Why do aging things turn yellow?

Do plants sleep?

Why do stars twinkle?

Does oil calm troubled waters? Why does a glowworm glow?

What do blind people dream about?

Why does an egg harden when it is boiled? What is 24-carat gold?

Why does salt make us thirsty? What is Fool's Gold?

Why does tea run up through a lump of sugar? What is the origin of blue jeans?

Why doesn't the sea freeze? What makes fabric shrink? Why is the sky blue?

What makes the holes in Swiss cheese? Why will a rotten egg float?

### **Ideas for forming groups**

The following ideas will help you divide the class into groups of different sizes. Ideas for random grouping are followed by strategies to form assigned groups with a balance of skills and skill levels.

Ask students to become partners with the first person they see who:

- enjoys the same sport as you do.
- gets up on the same side of the bed as you.
- rolls out of bed on a different side than you do.
- has a birthday in the same month as you.
- has a birthday in a different month than you.
- has a different favorite TV show than you.
- has a different hobby than you.
- has on the same colour socks as you.
- has on different coloured socks from yours.
- has the same favorite colour as you.
- has a different favorite colour than you.
- has the same first vowel in their first name as you.
- has a different first vowel in their first name than you.
- has the same last digit in their home phone number as you.
- has a different last digit in their home phone number than you.
- has the same number of brothers and sisters as you.
- has a different number of brothers and sisters than you.
- has the same number of letters in their first name as you.
- has a different number of letters in their first name than you.
- puts their shoes on in the same order as you.
- puts their shoes on in the opposite order as you.
- was born in a different province than you.
- was born in the same province as you.

### **Ideas for forming pairs**

Have students find the other half of a pair. To prepare, write paired items on slips of paper. To accelerate pairing, one half of the slips should be one colour and the other half a second colour. In other words, part one of a pair is one colour and part two of the same pair is another colour. (Save the slips to use again. You might laminate them.) Have each player draw a slip from the container and find the person with the matching half.

Here are some ideas:

- *Capital and small letters*—A and a, B and b, C and c.
- *Famous couples*—Bert and Ernie, Hansel and Gretel, Simon and Garfunkel.
- *Fairy tales*—Split the title in two: Snow/White, Sleeping/Beauty.
- *Opposites*—Hot and cold, tall and short, quiet and noisy, neat and messy, smooth and rough, easy and difficult, wide and narrow, north and south, morning and evening, big and little, up and down.
- *Pictures and words*—A picture of an apple and the word apple.

### **Dividing into teams randomly**

Counting off

Have players count off by:

- *Arm positions*—Example: For two teams, players count off by alternately raising both arms up high or holding them close to the sides. Arms up high are one team; arms close to the sides, another.
- *Colours*—Example: For three teams, count off with red, white, and blue. Reds are one team; blues, another; and whites, a third. Select familiar groups of colours, such as school colours or province colours, or those in a country's flag.
- *Days of the week*—Example: For seven teams, count off by the days of the week.
- *Exclamations*—Example: For five teams, count off with Oh no!, Ahhh, Wow!, Hmmmm, and Huh?
- *Motions*—Example: For six teams, count off by motions, such as clap hands, snap fingers, pat thighs, wiggle fingers, circle arms, raise elbows.

### **Word groups**

Choose a word with the same number of letters as the number of groups you need. If you need four groups, you could use the word team. (All the letters have to be different.) The class counts off by saying the letters. All the Ts are one group, the Es another, and so on.

You can write the letters or words in large print on separate pieces of paper. As each student says her or his letter, she or he holds up the letter so that the same letters can find one another quickly.

### **Create a calendar**

Divide the class into 12 groups, and have each group create one month of a calendar on a sheet of newsprint. Each group member will write a significant day or event on the group's calendar. Post the months so classmates can add important dates and family celebrations to one another's calendars and share events in their lives.

### **Question box**

Set up a question box, and call it “Dear Funny-Bones,” or another humorous name. Encourage students to write humorous questions and jokes and put them in the box. At various moments during the day, invite a student to read a question from the box and invite the class to answer it.

### **Food favourites**

Students count off with food combinations, such as the ingredients for a great pizza. For example, “sausage,” “pepperoni,” “cheese,” “mushrooms,” and “onions.” All “sausages” then come together as a group. Do the same using ingredients for a favorite ice-cream sundae or for trail mix.

### **Card games**

A number of books are available on educational card games that show how to use a deck of cards as an educational tool through games that develop memory, number skills, visual/spatial concepts, and problem-solving.

### **Creativity and problem-solving**

Students can benefit from problem-solving activities which act as a break from subject-oriented lessons and activities. A number of “mental exercises and warm-ups,” such as brainstorming and synectics, can take up those difficult 15 or 20 minutes of “dead time” at the end of a period.

### **Trivia games**

The huge popularity of Trivial Pursuit and similar games can be exploited easily in the classroom. Regular classroom teachers use homemade trivia games to liven up Friday afternoons and to lessen the agony of reviewing course content.

### **Facts versus opinions**

The following is a variation on a theme used most often by History and English teachers. Students are given a number of sentences and asked to identify which are fact and which are opinion.

Social science and mass media teachers use similar exercises, in which the students examine a short newspaper or magazine article/editorial and separate the facts from the opinions.

**Directions:** If the following statement is fact, circle the **F**. If, on the other hand, the statement is an opinion, an inference, or a judgment, circle the **O**.

- F     O     She goes to church only to show off her new clothes.
- F     O     It was a wonderful car.
- F     O     She really thinks a lot of herself.
- F     O     Jerry was convicted of theft and served two years in prison.
- F     O     Look at that drunken driver.
- F     O     For sale: 1995 two-door Ford Mustang.

- F     O     A man was killed and two teenagers injured in an auto accident.  
F     O     The performance began at 8:30 sharp.  
F     O     He is un-Canadian.

### **Communications**

There are several types of writing assignments including the use of social media. Students can write letters, emails, or a “Tweet,” as an exercise in many different subjects. Specify the length required. Also consider the evaluation to be used.

- *History*—Students write to a world leader they admire (past or present).
- *Geography*—Students write describing another country or region.
- *Languages*—Students write to a pen pal in the language they are studying.
- *Art*—Students write to their favorite artist, asking questions about the artist’s style, subjects, etc.
- *English*—Students write to their parents or to their future child.

### **Using newspapers and magazine articles**

An interesting article from the morning’s newspaper or downloaded from the internet can be put to good use in the classroom, so can a short article from a magazine. Students can analyze, dissect, and criticize the article. They can debate a controversial topic raised by the article. They can write their own letter to the editor in reply to an article.





Beginning  
your career  
as a  
classroom  
teacher

# Beginning your career as a classroom teacher

Making the school year meaningful for you and your students requires advance preparation. Below you will find a checklist to help you get started.

Take advantage of the experience of other staff members. Ask for their help. If you have been partnered with a mentor, make a list of things to ask. Some of the questions may come from the list below.

## Prior to the first day

You will want to prepare your classroom, if possible. This may be an opportunity to meet some colleagues, the support staff, and the administration.

### Ask and read about school policies and procedures

- opening day
- registration
- class lists
- enrollment
- parent information forms
- meet-the-teacher evening
- hospitality fund
- school-wide rules
- school keys and security
- schedules and timetables
- student fees
- petty cash
- staff parking
- student supervision duties
- school arrival and dismissal times
- fire/earthquake drills
- photocopying
- paper and other supplies
- field trips
- student assessment and evaluation
- staff and grade/subject meetings
- library resources for students/teachers
- resources available for Aboriginal programs
- school handbook (policy, procedures)
- school assemblies
- TTOC procedures
- additional student supplies
- student handbook and agenda

- homework
- school calendar including report card dates.

### **Prepare bulletin board areas for display**

- announcements
- calendar and current events
- different subjects
- student work.

### **Prepare your classroom**

- Before starting your first day, review the program of studies, the relevant IRPs, so that you know your materials and how they support the learner expectations.
- Plan the first day in detail—ask an experienced teacher what they do on their first day
- Duplicate materials needed for the first few days.
- Prepare an outline for the first week.
- Prepare the classroom arrangements and seating plan.
- Make signs for the room.
- Put your name outside the classroom door with a class list.
- Make a checklist for forms that need to be returned.
- Organize your daily plan book to include learning outcomes.
- Plan a textbook distribution record.
- Set up learning centres.
- Locate the emergency kit for your classroom.

### **Find out about your students**

- Find out which students have been designated as having special needs and are receiving special educational support, have medical issues, etc.
- Prepare an inventory to find out student interests.
- Review your resources to meet individual needs.
- Meet a counsellor to discuss students with individual or modified learning plans.
- Prepare activities to find out different student interests.

### **Assemble materials**

- classroom supplies
- attendance materials
- textbooks and accompanying materials
- supplementary teaching materials
- appropriate books for reading or reference.

## The first day

- Make your first day a meaningful one for you and the students by being prepared, organized, and welcoming.
- A well-planned first day is crucial. It sets the tone for the remainder of your year.
- Be at the door to welcome your students.
- Begin your first day with a friendly, businesslike manner. Classroom management works well when you provide the framework and then form rules co-operatively with the students. Expectations worded in a positive sense have greater impact than does a list of things not to do.
- Review the school's code of conduct.
- Form rules with the students governing classroom behaviour.

Plan for a memorable and interesting day. Use a game to help you learn students' names. Here are some suggestions to help you remember your students' names:

- In elementary school, have your students form a circle. Pick a letter from the alphabet. Have each student whose name begins with that letter introduce herself/himself and say two things about herself/himself. Make sure to write down the name on a circle chart that you will have prepared beforehand.
- Read through the class list prior to the first day and rehearse names that are difficult for you. Ask each student if they prefer a shortened form of their name: Sam for Samuel or Samantha.
- Ask teachers in the school to help with unfamiliar names.

One of the most powerful tools you have for learning is self-reflection. Self-reflection means looking at, and thinking about, what you do and how you do it. Self-reflection includes asking yourself why you make certain choices over others, what you observe the results to be, and what else you might do. Self-reflection means asking yourself how you're feeling about your work and yourself.

Consider starting a journal or meeting with other new teachers on a regular basis. Write brief notes to yourself each day, and reread them on a regular basis. Take time to talk informally with both new and experienced colleagues.

## Planning

The more grounded you are, the greater will be your successes in the classroom. With thoughtful planning in place, you will be confident in providing quality learning opportunities for your students.

- Get acquainted with the physical layout of your school.
- Familiarize yourself with school/school board policies and handbooks, and with your collective agreement.
- Systematically prepare short- and long-term objectives.
- Share information and resources with other staff members.

## Long-term planning

To carry out your teaching responsibilities, you will need to do long-term planning, following the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education and your employing board. Familiarize yourself with the IRPs. They are the curriculum. Copies can be downloaded at

[bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/welcome.php](http://bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/welcome.php).

Your long-term planning should include:

- the learning outcomes for the course
- the instructional strategies you will use
- the learning resources you will use
- the assessment strategies you will use
- the time to be allocated.

## Short-term planning

Initially, your planning will be very detailed. Design individual lessons as part of the whole unit to increase knowledge, abilities, and skills based on previously learned concepts. This way, you will give your students the learning opportunities they need and avoid gaps and needless repetition.

## Daily planning

Organize and carefully prepare daily lesson plans. They should include the following:

- student learning outcomes
- subject matter
- learning strategies
- assessment and evaluation processes
- materials needed.

Write up the daily plan before you leave school each day and leave it on your desk. In the event that you are away, it will guide a teacher teaching on call.

## Classroom management

“Wondering how to maintain a positive classroom environment with minimal disruption can cause more anxiety for new teachers than any other aspect of their new career. Classroom management focuses on prevention and problem solving rather than on punishment. A secure, inviting classroom, along with purposeful activities and respect for the dignity of everyone, prevents most discipline problems. Your role as teacher is crucial in establishing an effective learning environment. Your objective is to instill inner self-control in students, not merely to exert your control over them. Set the tone of your classroom from the start by being firm and fair, friendly yet professional. When you are more confident of your ability to maintain order, you will be more relaxed and students will perceive you as a person who really cares. Students appreciate an orderly classroom. Without order in your classroom, very little learning will take place. Children are basically good and appropriate behaviour is a purposeful response to a need for power, freedom, love, and fun.” (Glasser)

Discipline and good behaviour are learned, and they must be constantly reinforced. Guide your students to know what to do in all situations rather than punish misdeeds. Help your students understand that with rights come responsibilities.

Encourage your students to be responsible for their learning and behaviour. When students make choices, they learn new skills and gain social awareness from the outcome of those decisions.

### What works

- Involve students in forming rules and consequences.
- Tell students what you expect, provide a model for good behaviour, check for understanding, and allow for practice and follow-up. Don't assume that students know how to act appropriately.
- They need to be taught and coached to manage their behaviour.
- Create a classroom environment that provides structure and support and reinforces positive behaviour. Set your standards high; be clear and realistic in your expectations.

Classroom conflict is more likely to be reduced if you:

- are in the classroom when your students arrive.
- are organized and prepared.
- insist that everyone be treated with respect.
- seek student opinions.
- consider student feelings.
- listen to your students.
- maintain your sense of humour.
- assist students to make appropriate choices.
- teach students decision-making skills.
- encourage students to learn from their mistakes.

- use a quiet, friendly tone of voice.
- build on individual student's strengths.
- provide tasks that enhance the self-esteem of all students.
- have a low-key, consistent, and matter-of-fact manner.
- enforce consistently the consequences adopted by the class.
- move around the classroom.
- use praise and positive reinforcement.

## **What does not work**

Even with the most tact and careful preparation, students will test you. Let them know that while you disapprove of their actions, you still value them. If you are going to show that you are angry, do it because you have decided it is appropriate, not because you are "out of control." You should touch a student only in extreme circumstances such as imminent danger to yourself, other students, or the student in question and file a violent incident report immediately. Be aware of the legal rights and responsibilities of both teachers and students. If you have any concerns or questions, contact your school staff rep.

Discipline problems may arise when a teacher:

- accepts excuses, bargains, or blames.
- acts hastily without knowing the implications of actions.
- offers "bribes/rewards" for behaviour.
- preaches, nags, criticizes, shouts, and threatens.
- punishes as a way to teach appropriate behaviour.
- punishes the whole class for the misdeeds of a few.
- rescues students rather than teaching problem-solving skills.
- uses put-downs, sarcasm, embarrassment, or humiliation.

## **Dealing with power struggles**

Power struggles can be difficult for beginning teachers. When this happens to you, try to:

- ignore the student's attempt to engage you in a power struggle.
- describe to the student, in objective and explicit terms, the unacceptable behaviour.
- give a warning, emphasize the consequence, and then follow through.
- arrange for time out from the classroom.
- consult appropriate school personnel for advice.
- communicate with the parents to discuss a behaviour management plan.

## **School policies and procedures**

Be aware of school policies and procedures for the following:

- roll call, absentees, early dismissals
- tardy students
- bullying, intimidation

- damage to school property
- classroom guests
- putting away supplies and equipment
- dismissing the class
- make-up work
- cheating
- washroom routines
- lining up
- playground
- fire drills, earthquakes, and emergencies
- lunch and lunch time activities
- hall movement
- field trips.

## **Setting standards**

Give thought to setting standards, expectations, consequences, and procedures. Having the students participate in making classroom rules gives them a sense of ownership.

### **Tips for rules**

- keep rules short, precise, and succinct to focus on specific behaviour
- limit yourself to six rules
- post rules with consequences, and send a copy home
- state rules in positive terms whenever possible
- teach rules
- add a new rule if a misbehaviour is repetitive
- when enforcing rules, preserve student dignity.

### **Tips for consequences**

- be logical, clear, and specific
- have a range of alternatives
- use consequences, not punishment
- post consequence with the rule.

## **Guidelines for effective classroom management**

### **Three basics to remember:**

#### *Monitor student behaviour*

Use an “active eye.” See what is going on. Don’t become preoccupied with someone or something and ignore the rest of the class. In terms of discipline and effective teaching, one teacher on her or his feet is worth two in the seat.

#### *Be consistent*

Have the same expectations of all students for appropriate behaviour. Your students should know that you will enforce rules consistently and apply an appropriate consequence. Your goal is to be fair, but that might mean not applying the identical consequence to all students. If one student frequently fails to return homework, you may apply a different consequence than you would to the student who forgets her/his homework for the first time. Knowing that you'll be fair, but not equal, your students should understand that being equal is not always fair. To be consistent, be certain that the consequences you apply are reasonable and appropriate.

Ensure that you have had a thorough classroom discussion on this so that students understand “the fair, but not equal” concept.

#### *Promptly manage inappropriate behaviour*

For effective classroom management know that misbehaviour must be handled immediately or there is risk of a snowballing effect. To provide maximum time for learning and to reduce minor behaviour problems, you can employ strategies that deal with behaviour in the least amount of time, with the least disruption and the least negative feeling.

### **Strategies**

#### *Proximity*

While teaching, move about the room, pausing near potential “trouble spots.” Remaining behind your desk or seated in the front of the class encourages misbehavior in the less visible areas of the room.

#### *Pause*

Continuous teacher talk may give students a noise screen for their own conversations. An occasional pause—just a few seconds of silence—brings an off-task student back in focus.

#### *Asking for a response*

Hearing one's name can be an attention-getter, even if one is not paying attention. Working an off-task student's name into a question can often bring the student back into the lesson. Remembering the student's dignity, say the student's name first in order to allow her/him to hear the question to be answered. The purpose is to get the student back into the lesson, not to embarrass her/him.

#### *Active participation*

Sometimes having the student respond to a question or become involved in an activity can eliminate the undesired behaviour. Asking for a show of hands, having students perform a physical activity, or having each student write a quick answer to a question can make all students accountable for an immediate response.

#### *Avoid lengthy teacher talk*

Plan your lesson with a sequence of instruction, practice, and sharing.

### *Praise desirable behaviour quietly*

Thank a student quietly, and thank the class for getting their books out so quickly. This will often cue a student to her/his attention.

### *Cueing*

Change direction; for example, a group of chatting students may be quieted by announcing an impromptu quiz on the subject at hand.

### *Humour*

When all else fails, you might have to stop instruction to remind the class of appropriate behaviour. Keep it light.

## **Establishing a positive environment**

### **Building students' self-esteem**

Self-esteem is how people feel about themselves. It's their perception of self-worth. Students with positive self-esteem feel good about themselves. If students do not value themselves, they will present themselves to others as negative. Ultimately, one's sense of worth shows up everywhere.

There is a correlation between academic achievement and self-esteem. You can foster self-esteem, and you can make a difference. You can promote a feeling within a child of being lovable and capable. You can create a safe and accepting environment where each child feels free to grow and change.

As you begin to shape a child's self-esteem, you also nurture your own. It is important to consider how classroom organization and routines can build self-esteem.

### **Tips for fostering self-esteem**

- acknowledge positive qualities
- be non-judgmental, and accept students as they are
- demonstrate appropriate ways of releasing anger
- develop skills to help a child feel better about herself/himself
- emphasize what each child knows
- encourage positively; say, "You can succeed."
- give students choices
- inform parents/guardians about student growth
- keep boundaries that allow give and take
- listen reflectively and genuinely give support for growth and change
- participate, facilitate, and share feelings

- provide a safe classroom—minimum risk fosters openness and honesty
- provide acceptance
- teach self-awareness
- provide undivided recognition
- reaffirm a child’s existence with a compliment or an acknowledgment
- respect others’ feelings
- see the uniqueness of each student
- separate the action from the person
- structure opportunities for success
- use humour, but not at the expense of students
- use “I messages” such as “Heather, I hear exciting events in your story.”
- validate feelings.

## Encouraging students

Not all students react to praise the same way. Your objective in using praise is to get students to develop an internal focus of control to improve behaviour and academic achievement. Here are some suggested uses of praise:

- At times, give praise privately to avoid competition, embarrassment, or “teacher’s pet” syndrome.
- Be careful not to compare one student with another: “You have almost caught up to Karen.”
- Don’t minimize a student’s success: “Your math assignment must have been easy, you finished so quickly.”
- Draw the student’s attention to her or his effort and ability: “You learned those 10 addition facts quickly. You must have spent a lot of time practicing.”
- Give praise for desired behaviour, and define the behaviour: “Thank you for picking up the paper. You really helped the class save time.”
- Praise needs to be genuine and matched by your body language.
- Vary your praise, and be creative. Don’t simply say: “great,” “fine,” “wonderful.” Be specific with praise.

## Homework tips

There is a difference between homework and home study. Even though a student may not always have homework, she or he should be encouraged to do home study and to develop study habits.

Some schools have homework policies. Familiarize yourself with these.

### Do

- be aware of the resources that are, or are not, available in students’ homes in order to complete the assignment.
- give feedback and acknowledgment on completion of homework.

- have a homework policy, and communicate it to students and parents/guardians.
- hold students responsible for completion of homework, but be sensitive to outside obligations.
- make sure students know objectives of the assignments.

### **Don't**

- assign homework every night. Check your school policy.
- assign homework just because a parent requests it.
- give 25 problems if 5 will accomplish the objective (more is not always better).
- give homework as punishment.
- make unrealistic demands on students' time.
- use homework as busy work.

## **Teaching strategies and classroom complexity**

In any given day, you may have more than 1,000 personal interactions with students. Each of these complex interactions must be interpreted on the spot. Respond to these immediate needs as you teach, and make the time to later reflect on what you are doing and planning to do. Teaching is helping young people meet the learning outcomes of the curriculum.

Teachers need to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies that become second nature. By having many teaching strategies, you can continually monitor the class and make adjustments during the busy and complex task of teaching, and the busy and complex process of learning.

Vary your teaching strategies. The process of learning is as important as what is being learned. Teacher talk or lecture has its place in instructional strategies, but there are other effective strategies that engage students.

Remember the principles of learning:

- Learning requires the active participation of the student.
- People learn in a variety of ways and at different rates.
- Learning is both an individual and a group process.

Teaching strategies can be grouped into five broad categories:

- *Direct instruction*—The teacher imparts knowledge or demonstrates a skill.
- *Experiential learning*—The students experience and feel; they are actively involved.
- *Independent study*—The students interact more with the content than with the teacher or other classmates.
- *Indirect instruction*—The teacher sets up strategies, but does not teach directly; the students make meaning for themselves.
- *Interactive instruction*—The students interact with one another and the information; the teacher is the facilitator.

When choosing which type of teaching strategy, consider the nature of the topic, the resources available, and the age, maturity, learning styles, and gender of the students, as well as your teaching style. Your lessons will be more successful if you structure opportunities for students to be involved and to apply the content and skills they have learned.

Learning together promotes co-operation, interaction, individual and group accountability, and development of group skills. There are various approaches to grouping students for learning activities:

- *Group inquiry*—Have groups of two to six students work together using inquiry, discussion, co-operative planning, and execution.
- *Jigsaw*—Have individuals within the group learn parts of the material, discuss it with like members from other groups, and then teach their own group.
- *Teams, games*—Have team members assist one another to master materials or skills in order for the team to compete against other teams.

Experiment with a variety of teaching strategies. Select these while recognizing the different learning styles and multiple intelligences of your students. Remember that a strategy may work well with one group and be less successful with another.

Reflect on your teaching. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What made it work well or not?
- What connections were made to other learning or real life?
- Were all the intended outcomes met?
- What were the best resources?
- What were methods of grouping for instruction for different lessons?
- Did I address the different learning styles of my students?
- If I did this again, what things would I change?

Teaching is challenging and exciting work. Recognize your successes, analyze your failures, and build on them. Discuss ideas with colleagues and share your questions and experiences. Remember, you are a life-long learner, too!

## **Student assessment and evaluation**

*Teachers must assess, evaluate, and report student progress in relation to the learning outcomes in the prescribed curriculum.*

*Teachers have professional autonomy in deciding what methods to use to assess student work in their classrooms—observation, tests, portfolios, checklists, written assignments, projects, etc.*

*The purpose of classroom assessment is to support learning. Teachers assess student learning—describing what the student knows and is able to do—and uses this information to adjust instruction for individual students, small groups of students or the whole class, and to plan further instruction. Assessment that provides descriptive feedback is more effective than assessment that provides evaluative feedback (right or wrong, a mark). Descriptive feedback focuses on:*

- *what students have or have not achieved, including improvements to earlier work.*
- *explanations to a student that they are right or wrong and why in a timely fashion.*
- *specific ways in which the work could be improved.*
- *inviting the student to suggest ways they can improve.*

—Bangert-Downs et al, 1991; Crooks, 2001;  
Tunstall and Gipps, 1996

*Assessment that is focused on supporting students' learning is often called assessment for learning, as opposed to assessment that is focused on determining what students know.*

*Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there.*

—UK Assessment Reform Group, 2002

*We know, from research, that effective assessment for learning can improve student achievement substantially, and that improved classroom assessment helps low achievers the most.*

—Black and William, 1998, U.K. Assessment Reform Group

Teachers are also required to evaluate student progress—make judgments about students' learning in relation to learning outcomes in the curriculum, and/or IEP goals—and to report their evaluation to parents.

Evaluations of student progress, whether anecdotal or in the form of percentages or letter grades, must be in relation to the learning outcomes in the curriculum. Evaluations of student behaviour, including work habits, attitude, and effort, and information about attendance must be reported separately; they are not part of the students' marks for a course.

Teachers, especially beginning teachers or teachers teaching unfamiliar subjects and grade levels, often worry that their "A" will not be another teacher's "A." The learning outcomes spell out what students are required to know and be able to do, but not what is "good enough" at a particular grade level. The ministry has developed performance standards for reading, writing, numeracy and social responsibility: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf\\_stands](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands).

## **Tips for assessment and evaluation**

- Plan your student assessment tasks and evaluation criteria when you plan for instruction. Make sure that the task and criteria are consistent with the learning outcomes in the curriculum for the course and grade.
- Allow students some choice in the topic of an assignment or the method of presentation.

Students will demonstrate their learning better if they enjoy the task.

- Provide students with evaluative criteria and exemplars of various levels of performance. Students need to know how their work will be judged in order to do their best, or have students create evaluation rubrics.
- In order to establish reliability, use a variety of assessment strategies; e.g., short written assignments, teacher observations, conferences with students, quizzes, student self-assessment, tests, and performance tasks.
- Give students feedback in the form of descriptive feedback, rather than in the form of a check mark, number, or letter grade.
- Never use marks as a threat, punishment, or classroom management tool.
- Use the results of student assessment and evaluation to plan for further instruction. Provide focused instruction on areas of weakness. Use areas of strength to scaffold the next concept to be taught.

## **Record keeping**

- Record keeping can be in the form of an anecdotal file in addition to, or instead of, a mark book.
- Have students keep a portfolio of their work so that they can demonstrate their learning and progress to parents.

For a new teacher, making judgments about student progress may seem a bit overwhelming, but with organization and a good plan for evaluation, you will be able to give your students quality information about their progress.

## **BC performance standards**

Performance standards have been developed for Reading, Writing, and Social Responsibility K–10, and Numeracy K–8.

The performance standards include rating scales that describe the following performance levels of specific grade levels in detail:

- not yet within expectations
- meets expectations (minimal level)
- fully meets expectations
- exceeds expectations.

They also include Quick Scales, a short version of the rating scale for daily use/quick reference, and sample tasks with illustrations of student work at all four levels, along with teacher comments.

The standards focus exclusively on *performance assessment* where students are asked to apply the skills and concepts they have learned to complete complex, realistic tasks. The standards include both evaluative statements (e.g., not yet within expectations), and assessment criteria (e.g., supports and elaborates ideas, makes comparisons); they support a criterion-referenced approach to evaluation.

The performance standards are available on the Ministry of Education website [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf\\_stands/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/). Supplementary materials, such as additional tasks, with two samples of student work and a worksheet for planning instruction or intervention, developing criteria with students, elaborating or tailoring criteria for special purposes, outlining assessment tasks, recording observations, and guiding discussions, are also available on the website.

The purpose of reporting on student progress is to communicate to students and parents/guardians how well students are progressing in relation to the learning outcomes in the curriculum of the course or subject they are taking. Teachers gather evidence of what students are able to do in each course, evaluate students' progress, and report that to parents/guardians and students. The process of assessing, evaluating, and reporting student progress enables you to monitor student learning and identify what action, if any, is needed to help students succeed.

There are many ways to inform students and their parents/guardians of progress in school. It is important to have communication with the students and parents/guardians long before the first report card goes home. Document any communications with parents/guardians.

Provincial policy requires that teachers report to parents/guardians both formally (on report cards) and informally. Methods for reporting information include:

- notes sent home
- parent-teacher conferences
- interim reports
- student-parent-teacher or student-led conferences
- teacher-student conferences
- telephone calls (or emails) home, reporting outstanding performance as well as concerns.

## **Official reporting policy in BC**

Teachers are required to do three formal reports and two informal reports to parents each year. The requirements for these reports are set out in the ministry policies but the format of the report card is set by the local school board.

The relevant ministry policies can be found in two ministerial orders, the *Student Progress Report Order* and the *Provincial Letter Grades Order*, available on the ministry website at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e.htm).

## Learning resources

Learning resources are generally understood to be texts, videos, software, and other materials that assist students to meet the expectations for learning defined by provincial or local curricula.

Before a learning resource is used in a classroom, it must be evaluated to ensure that criteria are met such as curriculum match, social considerations, and age or developmental appropriateness. This evaluation may take place at the inter-provincial, provincial, district, or classroom level.

The Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC) is an association of BC public school districts and independent schools working together on the evaluation, selection, acquisition and deployment of learning resources including software, textbooks, novels, videos, reference databases, video streaming, and professional resources. The work of evaluating and recommending resources depends on teams of teachers appointed by the BCTF. The evaluation criteria for provincially approved learning resources can be found in *Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources*: [bced.gov.bc.ca/irp\\_resources/](http://bced.gov.bc.ca/irp_resources/). A subset of the learning resources, made up of those with the greatest degree of curriculum fit, is designated as the Grade Collection. The grade collections for all IRPs can be found on the ministry website at: [bced.gov.bc.ca/irp\\_resources/lr/resource/gradcoll.htm](http://bced.gov.bc.ca/irp_resources/lr/resource/gradcoll.htm).

The ministry makes continual changes to recommended resource lists. Teachers with print copies of IRPs are advised to consult the electronic copies of the IRPs on the ministry website, [bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp\\_eia.htm](http://bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp_eia.htm) for up-to-date lists of provincially-recommended learning resources.

The ministry does not evaluate individual story books and plays, as they believe “decisions related to these types of materials are best made by educators at the local level to permit consideration of local priorities, as well as individual and classroom needs.”

School boards are required to have criteria and processes in place for the selection and evaluation of learning resources that are not provincially recommended. Guidelines and suggestions for school district criteria and processes may also be found in *Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources*.

Teachers often use learning resources that have not been evaluated and recommended at the provincial or district levels. Some are resources such as newspapers or periodicals that teachers use to support current events or “teachable moments.” Some are learning resources that

teachers have purchased with their own money. Some are learning resources that are provided free of charge by the BCTF, its PSAs, community organizations, or educational organizations. These learning resources are evaluated for suitability by individual classroom teachers. Teachers should consider using the criteria found in *Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources*.

The suitability of learning resources can be challenged. Challenges regarding provincially-recommended resources that are not resolved at the school or district level, are dealt with at the provincial level. School districts are required to have parallel processes in place to deal with challenges of learning resources evaluated and selected by the school district or individual classroom teachers.



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## Communication with parents/ guardians

## Communicating with parents/guardians

Developing a strong home-teacher partnership is important. Your relationship with parents/guardians can be critical for your teaching success. Be sensitive to different family configurations. You and the parents/guardians share a common goal: to help students achieve their fullest potential. The parent-teacher-student conference is an excellent way for parents/guardians to be involved in the education of their children. In enlisting the assistance of parents/guardians, your approach will have a lot to do with the level of co-operation you might receive. Very few parents/guardians object to a teacher approaching them with an idea that might help their child if the idea shows the teacher's commitment to the success of that child.

Please note that you, the classroom teacher, have every right to comment on and report to parents and administrators, your concerns with respect to class size, class composition and the learning conditions of the students.

### Meet-the-teacher night

The first informal introduction to parents/guardians will usually be a meet-the-teacher activity. This is a time to introduce yourself and your curriculum.

- *About parents/guardians*—You will want to talk to colleagues to find out what parents/guardians expect from the session.
- *About you*—As a new teacher, many parents/guardians will be coming to “check you out.”
- Be prepared to instill confidence regarding your instructional abilities and your interest in their child. Communicate your relevant experiences. Let your enthusiasm show!
- *All about your classroom management*—Explain the learning outcomes. Highlight some of the activities planned. Discuss the classroom code of behaviour and your expectations.
- *Your presentation*—Be well prepared for the session by making an outline of points to address. Some of the following may help: handouts of curriculum, grading procedures, homework criteria, code of behaviour. Dress professionally.
- *Working together*—Identify how home and school can work together. Inform parents/guardians of when, where, and how you can be reached, and discuss how parents/guardians can best support their child's learning. Inform parents how they can be involved.
- *Cautionary notes:*
  1. Don't let one parent monopolize the discussion or sidetrack you. Suggest that a personal appointment at another time would be welcome.
  2. When informing parents of your availability, set clear guidelines. Remember you cannot work 24/7.

Once you have opened the doors of communication with parents/guardians, you are on the road to developing a trusting relationship. Use several ongoing means of communication such as phone calls, email, newsletters, progress reports, notes, “happygrams,” and conferences (informal and formal).

## Communication checklist for conferencing

The best communication climate is a comfortable one; if you are relaxed, parents/guardians usually will relax, too. There are many communication techniques that will lead to a successful conference. You may wish to use some of the following:

### Before the conference

- Be aware of school procedure on parent-teacher conferences.
- Before your meeting with parents/guardians, review the school history of the student.
- Complete a data page on each student's strengths (emotional, social, physical, intellectual).
- Be well prepared: use the student portfolio and other work to substantiate your evaluation.
- Ensure privacy as much as possible. Hold the conference in a private area.
- Arrange informal seating around a table displaying the student's work.
- Post appointments outside the door, and keep to the schedule; invite parents/guardians needing additional conference time to come at a later date.
- Have chairs available outside the classroom.
- If the conference is part of the regular reporting period, send home a newsletter describing your programs and some of the topics being studied.
- If the students are not included in the conference, meet with them beforehand so that they are aware of what will be discussed.
- Prepare a conference form for record keeping to keep the discussion focused and to be an aid for future conferences and for follow-up.
- Successful conferences deal with only a few issues because of time constraints; make sure to cover your points but allow equal time to cover parental concerns.

### During the conference

- Greet the parents/guardians at the door.
- Introduce yourself with a friendly voice; keep opening comments to a minimum to allow for more discussion time.
- Be clear and concise in your comments; be an attentive listener.
- Keep the parents/guardians involved by encouraging them to share pertinent information with you.
- When you discuss a problem with parents/guardians, be truthful, sincere, and objective; they will respect your integrity.

Use the following stems to keep the conversation positive and focused on the student:

- How might I, at the school, and you, at home, work together to help (student) be successful in (subject area)?
- When thinking about (student)'s behavior, what are the things that we most want to focus on?
- Here are some examples of (student)'s behavior in class. Can you tell me if some of these things are also noticeable outside of school?
- Here are some things that I have noticed about (student)'s interaction with other students.

- How might we use these examples of behavior that we have observed to set up a program to help (student) change the unacceptable behavior?
- As (student)'s parent, what would you like to see in place to help her/him modify her/his behavior?
- What are some of the reasons that would lead (student) to act this way?
- No matter how many problems a student has, find some positive things to report. Mention some at the beginning of the conference and some at the close off.
- With the parents/guardians' help, develop some goals or an action plan for the next learning period.

### **Concluding the conference**

- Check that the parents/guardians have a clear understanding of what was discussed.
- Highlight the conclusions and the agreed-upon actions.
- Set another date for another interview if one is needed.
- Write a few key points down on paper for the parent to take home. It often helps to ensure communication with the other parent who may not have been able to attend.
- End as you began—on a positive note.
- Thank the parents/guardians, and walk them to the door.
- Summarize the points covered, and add them to your files.

### **After the conference**

- If agreed to, send/give the parents/guardians a progress report.
- Keep a brief record of all communications with parents.
- Keep your principal informed if this has been a challenging parent/teacher conference.

### **Ways to communicate regularly with parents/guardians**

- Keep file cards for each child, noting the positive things that have happened; then send home a couple of "happygrams" during the term using the information.
- Make phone calls or send an email about the good things the child has accomplished.

## **Sample conference formats**

### **1. Regularly scheduled conference**

#### ***Introduction***

State the agreed-upon purpose of the conference. Share something positive about the child. Provide an update on past concerns, if necessary.

#### ***Academic achievement***

Discuss academic strengths/weaknesses. Present documentation. Seek parental input and reaction to information. Discuss one academic goal.

#### ***Social interaction and behaviour***

Discuss social strengths/weaknesses and behaviour. Present specific examples.

Seek parental input and reaction.  
Discuss a behaviour/social goal, if necessary.

***Other issues***

Invite parent to discuss other issues. Provide additional information.

***Closure***

Review agreed-upon goals. Plan for follow up.  
Close on a positive note.

**2. Problem-solving conference format**

***Introduction***

State the purpose of the conference. Update the situation.

***Description of the problem***

Describe the problem and supporting documentation.  
Describe what has been done to date.  
Allow the parent time to react to the problem.

***Problem-solving***

Seek parent input and suggestions. Discuss possible solutions.  
Develop an action plan for improvement. Identify specific actions.

***Closure***

Plan for follow-up.  
Close on a positive note.

Additional sources of information on assessment are available from the Ministry of Education:

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom\\_assessment/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom_assessment/)  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf\\_stands/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/).

## **Students with special needs**

One of the challenges teachers continue to deal with is how to meet the diverse needs of students in today's classrooms.

The BCTF supports the principles of equity and opportunity for all learners, and the concept of inclusion, while recognizing that inclusion may not be appropriate for all students some, or all, of the time.

Careful planning is necessary for a student with special needs to be placed appropriately, and with the required resources available. The assessment of a student with special needs must be an ongoing process of consultation between the teacher or teachers, the parents, the administrative officer, paraprofessional personnel, and the student (where applicable).

Most likely you will have one or more students with special needs in your class(es). You should expect to be consulted in planning for this student.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be prepared for each student with a designated category of special needs. The IEP documents the resources, goals/objectives, and strategies that are needed to help the student meet her/his full potential. The IEP is usually jointly written by the school-based team (SBT). Be clear about the resources and the help you will need in order to provide a successful experience for the child, and review progress at regular intervals. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure that the IEP program is followed.

Ask your staff rep for specific integration policies and procedures. Other sources of assistance are school-based resource teachers (learning assistance, special education teachers), district resource staff, consultants, your administrative officer, and community resource people.

Often district workshops and/or in-service funds are available for classroom teachers to support them in this area.

## Resources

### **BCTF Teaching to Diversity web project**

This website [bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=10564](http://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=10564) is designed to provide access to information, resources, and contacts for teachers and all those who support the needs of learners in the BC public school system.

The focus is on information relevant to meeting the needs of students who receive Special Education, Learning Assistance or ELL services but who are for the most part included in mainstream classrooms.

We strongly recommend beginning teachers and teachers teaching on call visit this website, especially the resource inventory.

### **Ministry of Education publications**

Through the Ministry of Education, there are a variety of resource materials to help classroom teachers understand and work with students who have special needs. They are as follows:

#### **Accessibility/Equipment/Facilities**

##### [Guidelines](#)

- [Access to School Facilities](#):
- Access to Equipment

- [Auditory Training Equipment](#) (ATE)
- [Cochlear Implantation Support](#)
- [Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired](#) (PRCVI)
- Braille Instructional Program (PRCVI)
- Special Education Technology-BC (SET-BC)
- Provincial Outreach Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- In-School Support for Special Needs Students

### **Acquired brain injury**

- [Teaching Students with Acquired Brain Injury](#) (PDF, 560 KB)
- [Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health Impairments Instruction Support Planning Process](#) (PDF, 75KB)
- [Brochure: Teaching Kids with Concussion—A Guide for Classroom Teachers](#) (PDF, 1.4MB)  
[Card 1](#) (JPG, 348KB) [Card 2](#) (JPG, 335KB)

### **Adaptations and modifications**

- [A Guide to Adaptations and Modifications](#) (PDF, 137KB)
- [Guide concernant les adaptations et les modifications](#) (PDF, 65KB)

### **Adjudications/Grade 12 exams**

- [Handbook of Procedures—Guidelines](#) (PDF, 1.79MB)

### **Assistive computer technology**

- Website: [SET-BC](#)

### **Attention deficit**

- [Teaching Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder](#)

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

### Guidelines

- [Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

### Resource guides

- [Autism Spectrum Disorder Instructional Support Planning Process](#) (PDF, 77KB)
- [Teaching Students with Autism](#) (PDF, 1.56MB)
- [Provincial Outreach for Autism and Related Disorders](#) (ASD)
- [Trouble du spectre de l'autisme, outil de planification du soutien pédagogique](#) (PDF 341 KB)

## Behaviour

### [Guidelines—Special needs categories](#)

### Resource guides

- [Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences](#)
- [Enseigner aux élèves ayant des difficultés d'apprentissage et de comportement](#) (PDF, 1.01MB)
- [Behaviour Intervention/Mental Illness Instructional Support Planning Process](#) (PDF, 54KB)
- [Intervention comportementale/santé mentale, outil de planification du soutien pédagogique](#) (PDF 319KB)

## Child abuse prevention

- Ministry of Children and Family Development—[Protecting Children](#)
- [The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect, for Service Providers](#) (PDF, 802KB)
- [Responding to Child Welfare Concerns, Your Role in Knowing When and What to Report](#) (PDF, 205KB)

## Children and youth in care

Ministry of Education/Ministry of Children and Family Development

- [Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross-Ministry Guidelines](#) (PDF, 286KB)
- [Planification Pédagogique Conjointe et Soutien pour les Enfants et les Jeunes pris en Charge : Lignes Directrices Interministérielles](#) (PDF, 822KB)
- [Extension Activity—Mapping Current and Future Practices](#) (PDF, 32KB)
- [Introduction to Joint Guidelines PowerPoint Presentation](#) (PPT, 937KB)
- [Useful Tips for Youth and Young Adults; A Guide to Independent Living](#) (PDF, 3.66MB)

## Deaf/Hard hearing—Auditory Training Equipment (ATE)

### Guidelines

- [Special Considerations for Individual Planning—Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#)
- [Accessible School Facilities Planning & Access to Equipment](#)
- [Provincial Education Review Committee for Deaf Students Brochure](#) (PDF, 112KB)
- [Checklist for School Districts](#) (PDF, 33KB)

- [Terms of Reference](#) (PDF, 29KB)

Resource Guide

- [Students with Hearing Loss](#)

### **Dependent/Multiple needs**

Guidelines

[Special Needs Categories \(see section E.6 Physically Dependent\)](#)

### **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**

Resource Guide

- [Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects](#)

Other

- [Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder](#)

### **Gifted**

Guidelines

- [Special Considerations for Individual Planning—Students Who are Gifted](#)

Resource guide

- [Gifted Education](#)

### **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

Guidelines

- [IEP Planning for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Ministerial Order - Individual Education Plan](#) (PDF 32KB)

Resource guides

- [Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning - A BC School Superintendents' publication](#) (PDF 272KB)

### **Intellectual disabilities**

Guidelines

- [Students with Intellectual Disabilities \(see Section E.2\)](#)

Resource Guides

- [Students With Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- [Intellectual Disabilities Instructional Support Planning Process](#) (PDF, 255KB)
- [Déficiences intellectuelles, outil de planification du soutien pédagogique](#) (PDF, 65KB)

### **Inter-Ministry protocols**

Guidelines

- [Policy](#)

- [Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools](#) (PDF, 20MB)

## **Learning disabilities**

### Guidelines

- [Special Considerations for Individual Planning - Students with Learning Disabilities](#)

### Resource Guides

- [Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities: A Guide for Teachers](#) (PDF, 917KB)
- [Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences](#)
- [Learning Disabilities Instructional Support Planning Process](#) (PDF, 48KB)
- [Troubles d'apprentissage, outil de planification du soutien pédagogique](#) (PDF 277KB)

## **Mental health**

### Resource guides

- [Teaching Students with Mental Health Disorders](#)—Volume 1—Eating Disorders (PDF, 192KB)
- [Enseigner aux élèves ayant des troubles mentaux](#)—Volume 1—Troubles de l'alimentation (PDF, 425KB)
- [Teaching Students with Mental Health Disorders](#)—Volume 2—Depression (PDF, 224KB)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development—[Preventing Youth Suicide](#)
- <http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/617/schools-as-a-setting-for-promoting-positive-mental-health-better-practices-and-perspectives-2nd-ed> (PDF, 2.28MB)

## **Occupational/Physiotherapy**

### Guidelines

- [Special Considerations: Services—Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy](#)

## **Physical disabilities/Chronic health**

### Guidelines

- [See Section E.8 Special Considerations for Individual Planning—Students with Physical Disabilities or chronic Health Impairments](#)
- [Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health Impairments Instruction Support Planning Process](#) (PDF, 75KB)
- [Déficiences physiques/problèmes de santé chroniques, outil de planification du soutien pédagogique](#) (PDF 319KB)

## **Provincial resource programs**

### Guidelines

- [Provincial Resource Programs](#)

## Sexual health

### Resource Guides

- [Responding to Children's Problem Sexual Behaviour in Elementary Schools](#) (PDF, 545KB)
- [Comportements sexuels inconvenants chez les élèves de l'élémentaire](#) (PDF, 5.64MB)

## Special education

### Guidelines

- [Special Needs Student Ministerial Order](#) (PDF, 16 KB)
- [Special Education resource documents](#)

## Other

- [School Act—Ministerial Orders](#)
- [British Columbia District Student Services Review Inquiry Process](#) (PDF, 407KB)

## Speech language pathology

### Guidelines

- [Special Considerations: Services—Speech-Language pathology \(See Section D.4\)](#)

## Students with diverse learning needs

### Guidelines and Resources

- [Awareness of Students with Diverse Learning Needs](#)—Volume 1
- [Awareness of Students with Diverse Learning Needs](#)—Volume 2 (PDF, 928KB)
- [Sensibilisation aux besoins divers en matière d'apprentissage](#)—Volumes 1 et 2 (PDF, 1.01MB)
- [Diversity Framework](#) (PDF, 671KB)
- [Diversité dans les écoles de la Colombie-Britannique : Document-cadre](#) (RB0172) (PDF, 342KB)

## Teachers' assistants

### Report

[Roles and Responsibilities—Teachers' Assistants \(see page 10\)](#)

## Transition planning

### Guidelines

- [Work Experience/Job Training \(see Section G.24\)](#)

### Inter-ministerial protocol

- [Cross Ministry Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Special Needs](#) (PDF, 3.8MB)

### Resource guide

- [Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs](#) (PDF, 688KB)

## Visual

### Guidelines

- [\*Special Consideration for Individual Planning—Students with Visual Impairment \(Section E.9\)\*](#)
- [\*La Déficience Visuelle\*](#) (PDF, 155KB)
- [\*Procedures For Accessing services\*](#)—Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI)

### Resource Guides

- [\*Braille Correspondence Course Section \(see H.2\)\*](#)
- [\*Students With Visual Impairments\*](#)
- [\*Framework for Independent Travel\*](#)—A Resource for Orientation and Mobility Instruction (PDF, 968KB)
- [\*Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired\*](#)

Many of these documents can be found online at:

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sped\\_res\\_docs.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/sped_res_docs.htm).

## Ministry of Education special education services

- [\*Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies Procedures and Guidelines\*](#) (September 2013)
- [\*Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework\*](#) (updated 2008)

### Policy framework

The Ministry of Education Special Education policy framework articulates the principle of inclusion. Inclusion supports equitable access to learning, achievement, and the pursuit of excellence—for all students—in all aspects of their educational programs.

### Rationale

The *School Act* articulates the purpose of the British Columbia school system: to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic, and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

To achieve this purpose, the school system must strive to ensure that differences among learners do not impede their participation in school, their mastery of learning outcomes, or their ability to become contributing members of society.

The school system is expected to promote values expressed in the *Constitution Act*, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Official Languages Act*, the *Multiculturalism Act*, the *BC Human Rights Code*, the *Employment Equity Act* and the *School Act*, respecting the rights of all individuals in accordance with the law.

The school system therefore strives to create and maintain conditions that foster success for all students and that promote fair and equitable treatment for all.

## Legislation/regulations

[Special needs Students Order M150/89:](#)

2. (1) A board must ensure that a principal, vice principal or director of instruction offers to consult with a parent of a student with special needs regarding the placement of that student in an educational program.

(2) A board must provide a student with special needs with an educational program in a classroom where that student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise.

[Individual Education Plan Order M638/95:](#) sets out the requirements for school boards to design and implement individual education plans for students with special needs

[Student Progress Report Order M191/94:](#) describes reporting requirements for students who have special needs.

## Additional definitions

Student with special needs: a student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioral nature, has a learning disability or has exceptional gifts or talents.

**Individual education plan (IEP):** an individual education plan designed for a student that includes one or more of the following:

- learning outcomes that are different from, or in addition to, expected learning outcomes set out in the applicable educational program guide,
- a list of support services,
- a list of adapted materials, instruction, or assessment methods.

**Educational program guide:** a document specified as an educational program guide in Ministerial Order 333/99, the Educational Program Guide Order ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m333-99.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/e/m333-99.pdf)).

## Funding special needs policy

### Policy statement

Students with special needs may require additional support and accommodations to enable them to access and participate in educational programs. The basic allocation, a standard amount of money provided per school age student enrolled in a school district, includes funds to support the learning needs of students who are identified as having learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, students requiring moderate behaviour supports and students who are gifted. Additional supplementary funding recognizes the additional cost of providing programs for students with special needs in the following categories: dependent handicapped, deaf/blind, moderate to profound intellectual disabled, physically disabled/chronic health impaired,

visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, autism spectrum disorder, and intensive behaviour interventions/serious mental illness.

### **Rationale**

In order to provide an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners, additional support may be required by means of additional staff, specialized learning materials, physical accommodations or equipment, and assessments to enable them to meet their educational and social needs.

### **Legislation/Regulations**

Section 106.3 (5) of the *School Act* provides the legal authority for special needs funding. See also Ministerial Order M150/89, the Special Needs Students Order.

### **Levels and categories:**

<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
Dependent handicapped (A) Deaf/Blind (B)	Moderate to profound Intellectual disabilities (C) Physically disabled or chronic health impairment (D) Visually impairment (E) Deaf or hard of hearing impairment (F) Autism Spectrum Disorder (G)	Intensive behaviour Interventions or serious mental illness (H)

The basic allocation provided for all students includes funds to support students with other special needs, including students with Mild Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Moderate Behaviour Support/Mental Illness, and students who are gifted. The Basic Allocation also includes funds to support Boards of Education in providing learning assistance, speech-language pathology services, hospital homebound services, and assessment services. A student with special needs may also be eligible to receive funding for Aboriginal Education or English as a Second Language if the requirements of these programs are also met. Students with special needs may be enrolled in Distributed Electronic Learning (DEL) programs. To qualify for funding, Boards of Education must adhere to program requirements and procedures as outlined in [Requirements and Guidelines for Students with Special Needs Taking and Distributed Learning Program.](#)

### **Policy**

#### **Placement**

- A. A school board must ensure that a principal offers to consult with a parent of a child who has special needs regarding the student's placement in an educational program.
- B. A school board must provide a student who has special needs with an educational program in a classroom where the student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise.

## Planning

- A. A school board must ensure that an IEP is designed for a student with special needs as soon as practical after the board identifies the student as having special needs, unless
- the student requires little or no adaptations to materials, instruction or assessment methods.
  - the expected learning outcomes have not been modified.
  - the student requires 25 or fewer hours of remedial instruction by someone other than the classroom teacher, in a school year.
- B. A school board must ensure that the IEP is reviewed at least once each school year, and where necessary, is revised or cancelled.
- C. A school board must offer the parent of the student, and where appropriate the student, the opportunity to be consulted about the preparation of the IEP.  
*Note: The School Act [section 7(2)] requires a parent of a student to consult with the student's teacher or an administrative officer about the student's educational program, when requested to do so.*
- D. A school board must offer each student who has special needs learning activities in accordance with the IEP designed for that student.

## Reporting

Student progress reports for students with special needs should be provided on the same schedule as used for all students in the school. When necessary, additional informal reporting may include other procedures such as daily logs.

Where a student with special needs is expected to achieve or surpass the learning outcomes, performance scales, letter grades and regular reporting procedures will be used to indicate progress. Where it is determined that a student with special needs is not capable of achieving the learning outcomes of provincial or board/authority authorized curriculum, and substantial course or program modification is necessary, specific individual goals and objectives will be established for the student in his or her IEP. Performance scales, letter grades, and structured written comments may be used to report the level of the student's success in achieving these modified goals and objectives. It may not be appropriate to provide letter grades to all students with special needs. Considering the potential impact on the student, whether or not to use letter grades should be made in consultation with the school-based team.

Where a professional support person other than the classroom teacher is responsible for providing some portion of the student's educational program (e.g., speech pathologist, orientation, and mobility instructors), those persons should provide written reports on the student's progress for inclusion with the report of the classroom teacher.

Grades on reports to parents should identify whether courses have been modified, although adaptations (e.g., oral exam) need not be identified. With written consent, such information should be communicated to post-secondary institutions or community agencies providing adult

services in a manner consistent with legislation affecting freedom of information and protection of privacy.

Reference: [Ministerial Order 191/94, the Student Progress Report Order](#)

### **Procedures**

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement. An IEP must have one or more of the following:

- the goals or outcomes set for that student for that school year where they are different from the learning outcomes set out in an applicable educational program guide
- a list of the support services required to achieve goals established for the student
- a list of the adaptations to educational materials, instructional strategies or assessment methods.

An IEP should also include the following:

- the present levels of educational performance of the student
- the setting where the educational program is to be provided
- the names of all personnel who will be providing the educational program and the support services for the student during the school year
- the period of time and process for review of the IEP
- evidence of evaluation or review, which could include revisions made to the plan and the tracking of achievement in relation to goals
- plans for the next transition point in the student's education (including transitions beyond school completion).

### **References**

[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity\\_framework.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf)

[Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#) (September 2013)

[Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs: A Resource Guide to Support Teachers](#) (2009)

[Parents' Guide to Individual Education Planning](#)

### **Contact**

If you have any questions relating to this policy, please contact the Diversity and Equity Unit at [EDUC.DiversityandEquity@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.DiversityandEquity@gov.bc.ca).

## Special Education References

[\*Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines\*](#)

[Every Principal's Guide to Special Education in British Columbia](#)

[\*Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teacher Assistants: A BCTF/CUPE Joint Paper\*](#)

## Useful websites for additional information and resources

[\*Special Education resource documents from the Ministry. Includes instructional planning tools for ASD, PDCH, Behaviour\*](#)

[\*Teaching to Diversity website\*](#). Of particular note, the Resource Inventory page

[\*Provincial Outreach Program for Autism Spectrum Disorders\*](#)

[\*Provincial Integration Support Program\*](#)

[\*Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder\*](#)

[\*Special Education Technology—BC\*](#)

[\*CEC New Teachers Blog: Reality 101 for New Teachers—Resources, information and current issues discussions\*](#)

[\*Center for Applied Special Technology. Includes UDL resources and Lesson builders\*](#)

## Working with education (teacher) assistants

Although all decisions related to designing, supervising, and assessing educational programs for students are your responsibility, the education assistant is an important partner on the educational team, providing support to students with special needs. Invite the education assistant to sit in on any conferences that are pertinent. Hold meetings for sharing information and decision-making.

When the roles are defined and clarified, the education assistant can then decide how to approach the assigned responsibilities. For students to receive maximum benefit, you will need to build a climate of trust and give encouragement and support to the education assistant.

Key points to remember:

- An education assistant must always work under the direction of a teacher or the principal.
- The teacher's role is to manage the classroom.
- Teachers must fulfill their responsibility for diagnosing learning needs, for selecting and implementing appropriate educational programs, and for assessing educational results.
- The assistant's role is to carry out the work that has been planned and developed by the teacher, either with an individual student or a small group.

The BCTF and CUPE BC have published a joint paper entitled, *Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teacher Assistants*. A copy is available in your school or online at [bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/InclusiveEd/RolesandResponsibilitiesTeachersTAs.pdf](http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Issues/InclusiveEd/RolesandResponsibilitiesTeachersTAs.pdf)

If you have any questions or concerns about working with education assistants, contact your staff rep and/or your local president.

## Preparing for a Teacher Teaching on Call (TTOC)

Most schools have developed a policy handbook for TTOCs. If your school does not have one, the following information may be useful.

To ensure that a quality education program continues in your absence, advanced preparation for a TTOC is important. Such planning will help to maintain a consistent routine in a safe and caring environment. Students should be aware of your expectations for behaviour when a TTOC is in charge of the class. The TTOC is an important part of the education system, and provides for meaningful and authentic teaching and learning opportunities in your absence.

Prepare an information folder for the TTOC, which should include the following:

- class list with phone numbers
- class rules, expectations, and responsibilities
- seating plan
- classroom routines
- daily and weekly timetable, showing bell times
- homework assignments and policy
- information about students with special needs, including health needs
- map of the school, including the fire exits
- name of the teaching assistant and assignment of work
- names of some students who could be of help
- names of administrators who deal with discipline matters
- notes on procedures such as taking attendance, opening exercises
- notes on procedures such as student becoming ill during class
- supervision schedule and guidelines
- up-to-date daily plan book
- supplementary material the TTOC could use.

It is not always possible to anticipate everything that a TTOC will need, so it is helpful to indicate the names of teachers and/or education assistants who may be able to provide assistance.

See the following form.

## **Specific classroom information for your TTOC**

### **1. My buddy teachers are:**

### **2. Class rules/routines:**

washroom/break procedures/drinking fountain:

bells and class times:

homeroom and opening procedures/entering classroom:

free-time activities:

recess/lunch time procedures:

quiet signal:

other signal:

pets and plants:

acceptable rewards:

Signal for getting student attention is:  
All students should STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN.

attendance taking:

collecting completed assignments:

correspondence from home:

dismissal:

distributing books, supplies:

failure to bring materials:

library:

pencil sharpener:

tardiness:

what to do when finished with work:

**3. Discipline procedures:**

**4. Students:**

helpful students:

special-program students:

students who need extra attention:

how to assist ill students:

students with health or behaviour concerns:

**5. Emergency and evacuation procedures:**

**6. Other:**

a. additional notes

b. duty dates, times and responsibilities

Grade/Year:

Phone number:

Email:

# Parent involvement in schools

## The context

BCTF members agree, and research overwhelmingly concludes, that when parents/guardians participate in their child's education, children tend to be more successful learners. That is why teachers endorse policies that promote a positive relationship between the home and the school.

Parents/guardians have always been involved with schools and teachers by coming to PAC meetings, sitting on school committees, or dropping in before and after school. Most have, at one time or another over the years, accompanied a class on a field trip, made cookies for bake sales, talked to a class about their career, or promoted "dry grad" parties.

The 1989 *School Act* gave new powers to parents. Parents in each school could establish Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) to "advise the board and the principal and staff of the school... respecting any matter relating to the school...."

This provides an opportunity in which parents and teachers can speak frankly, confidently, and respectfully about their concerns and opinions.

In the spring of 2002, legislation was introduced creating School Planning Councils in every school. Teachers do not involve themselves with the School Planning Councils. At its 2006 AGM, BCTF delegates voted to withdraw teacher participation from School Planning Councils effective September 2006. Teachers cited concern for the government's accountability agenda which relies on randomly focused standardized testing as the main vehicle for determining the effectiveness of our schools.

## BCTF policy on parent involvement in schools

Detailed policy information is in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF* (ask your staff rep for a copy), or online: [bctf.ca/membersguide](http://bctf.ca/membersguide).

Key points to remember:

- The BCTF believes in working co-operatively with the Ministry of Education and the BC School Trustees Association, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, community agencies, and other groups interested in education.
- The goals and directions of the school system should be determined by interaction of students, parents, and teachers at the local level through a process that would involve examination of present and future needs of our young people.
- Teacher locals are encouraged to establish regular communications with their District Parent Advisory Councils.

- Each school staff should consult with the students of the school, the parents of the students, and other members of the community, with a view to formulating school policy regarding the effective and orderly operation of the school.
- The BCTF supports the concept of parent and student involvement in educational decision making.
- All the educational partners continue to support and encourage meaningful student, parent, and community involvement in schools.

## Working with volunteers

Volunteers bring special talents to our schools.

### The context

For generations, parents/guardians, grandparents, university students, neighbours, young, and old, have volunteered in our public schools. Volunteers come to school to talk to students about their jobs, listen to children read, help coach school teams, sew or paint backdrops, or help out on field trips.

At the same time as services in public schools have expanded so has employment of people to provide them. In various situations, conflict arose regarding the roles ascribed to employees and to volunteers. At the BCTF Annual General Meeting of 1986, teachers adopted a policy that welcomes and defines appropriate roles for volunteers in schools.

People volunteer for a variety of personal reasons. We recognize, however, that a volunteer's first commitment may not be to the school, and that career or family commitments may prevent her/him from helping on the day or time planned.

We do not expect volunteers to be familiar with all the employer's rules and policies that guide us in our work. Volunteers complement the work of paid teaching and non-teaching staff; they do not substitute for it.

In recent years we have all noticed fewer services in our schools. Many elementary and secondary schools have lost staff, caretaker hours have been cut back, band programs have been cancelled, and fewer education assistants are available to help with students with special needs.

Volunteers have sometimes been asked to replace employees who have had their hours reduced, have been laid off, or were never hired for needed positions. Often volunteers do not know that the work they have been asked to do is part of regular duties of absent employees. Sweeping the hallway, providing regular assistance for a student with special needs, providing withdrawal remedial programs, and driving school buses are all jobs done by paid staff. Volunteers should not be asked to evaluate students' work, nor should they implement

programs with groups of students. That is the job of a teacher. Parents/guardians, some of whom are school volunteers, deserve to feel confident that their child is being taught, assessed, and evaluated by a teacher.

Volunteers bring special talents to our schools. In the best scenarios, volunteers and the public schools benefit equally from the relationship. Volunteers continue to enrich the lives of the children in their communities, and volunteering brings them closer to their neighbours and their neighbourhood.

## **BCTF policy on volunteers in schools**

Detailed policy information is in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, or online: [bctf.ca/membersguide](http://bctf.ca/membersguide).

Key points to remember:

- Volunteer participation in schools will be encouraged and will be related to educational programs where volunteers can bring their special talents to schools.
- Volunteers will be used on a by-need, special occasion basis in the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities of the school.
- Teachers will respect the provisions of any collective agreements between boards and non-teaching employees regarding the use of volunteers in the schools.
- In the absence of any such provisions in collective agreements, teachers will be guided by the following principles:
  - a. *Policies regarding the use of volunteers should be developed at the district level and with agreement from the school board, teachers, and non-teaching employee unions.*
  - b. *Implementation of policies on use of volunteers should be monitored by a committee with representatives from the school board, the teachers, and non-teaching employee unions.*
  - c. *Districts should develop, through such monitoring committees, mechanisms for:*
    1. *ensuring school adherence to policies,*
    2. *resolving conflicts that may arise between teaching or non-teaching staff and volunteers.*
  - d. *Volunteer participation in schools should complement the work of paid teaching and non-teaching staff and should not substitute for it.*
  - e. *Volunteers should not be used in schools to replace teachers, teacher aides, or other school personnel who have been laid off or had their hours of work cut.*
  - f. *Volunteer participation in schools should not be a substitute for adequate staffing by professional and non-teaching support personnel.*

Knowledge of this policy by volunteers in schools can prevent conflict. If you have questions or concerns about a particular situation, ask your staff representative or call your local teachers' union office.





Wellness—  
taking care  
of yourself

wellness



## **Wellness—taking care of yourself**

Wellness depends on our lifestyle and on how we cope with physical, mental, and emotional demands. Good wellness habits formed in our initial years of teaching are an investment for our career.

First-year teachers are going through a transition from student to professional teacher. Transitional phases are sometimes difficult and painful. You may be away from family and long-time friends for the first time. You may be aware that your expectations and your capacity differ. You may also be overwhelmed by your workload and, therefore, work late into the night, on weekends, and at lunch and recesses, to the point where your health and wellness may suffer.

You are facing the challenge that all new teachers face striking a healthy balance.

### **Personal life and work life**

Your work may consume you. There is so much to do and learn. Personal life may suffer in the early years of teaching. Exercise is forgotten, and there is little time to meet new friends let alone join them for activities outside school. Taking time to relax every day and to exercise relieves stress and makes your transition easier. Exercise and seeing friends will maintain your energy.

You may have a variety of emotions as you begin your teaching career. It is important to stay connected with what's really going on. Experience it fully, and act accordingly. Everyone has a first year. Recognize your emotions. Express them appropriately. Do not blurt out emotional responses to students. Your mentor, staff rep, or local president can provide helpful support. Ask for assistance.

### **Perfectionism and survival**

To have the perfect lesson and the perfect class, where all students are working to their potential all the time, is impossible. Realize that there are students in your classroom with so many personal and home problems that no matter how your lessons are planned or what you do, they are unable to focus on the work at hand. Do not take that personally. It does not mean you are not being a good teacher. Look for the help of colleagues when you need support or ideas.

A teacher needs to contain the demands and set priorities. It takes too much energy to be perfect all the time. No one else expects a beginning teacher to be perfect. Surviving the early years depends on letting go of thinking you have to do it all, all the time, all alone.

## Asking for help versus doing it all yourself

You are a trained teacher with new ideas and information. Situations or concerns may come up that you do not know how to handle. Ask others, and ask early. It is not a sign of incompetence to ask questions. Other people have experience in areas that you may not have. Asking early may save a lot of grief and a lot of time. Ask any of the following for help/advice: colleagues, mentor, staff rep, local president, other new teachers, school counsellor, and PSAs.

## Saying “yes” and saying “no”

It is all right to say no to too many extra-curricular activities or assignments. Beginning teachers often think they have to do everything that is asked of them and do it well. There are only so many hours in a day, and you have only so much energy. If something is too much for you, say so. It doesn't help anyone for you to be so stretched that you cannot do anything well or you are not getting the sleep you need. If you cannot figure out how to get into balance, get support from friends and staff members.

For more information, check with your staff rep or local president, and seek out information about employee-assistance programs, BCTF wellness workshops or mentoring/collegial support programs.

## Building a support system

As you begin teaching, develop a support system you can tap into for any number of issues/situations. Further in this handbook is a discussion of who might form your support system; however, the best model is that of “teachers helping teachers.”

Do you know:

- Who your staff rep is?
- Who your local president is?
- Which teachers on your staff teach the same grade level or the same subject?
- Is there is a formal mentoring program in your district? How do you become a participant?
- What specific provisions in the collective agreement benefit you as a new member?
- Which Provincial Specialist Associations (PSAs) would support your teaching assignment?
- Teachers who participate in local induction programs will receive a free membership in the PSA of their choice for one year ([bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx](http://bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx)).

## Aboriginal teachers

The BCTF supports Aboriginal teachers and students through the following:

- [Aboriginal Education Association](#) (AEA)
- Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee
- The BCTF Aboriginal education assistant director will assist you in finding information regarding Aboriginal education in areas such as locating resources, connecting with

resource teachers, etc. For more information, please go to the Aboriginal Education website [bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx](http://bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx).

## **French as a first or working language teachers**

The BCTF supports French as a first or working language (FFWL) teachers and students through the following:

- L'Association provinciale des professeurs d'immersion et du programme francophone (APPIPIC) ([bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx](http://bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx))
- Le Syndicat des enseignantes et enseignants du programme francophone (SEPF) (<http://www.sepfc.com/SEPF/Accueil.html>)
- Le Comité consultatif des programmes et services en français/French programs and services Advisory Committee ([bctf.ca/francais.aspx?id=4576](http://bctf.ca/francais.aspx?id=4576))
- Le Bureau des programmes et services en français. The assistant director will assist members in finding information regarding French language education in areas such as training, locating resources, professional development, activities for students, etc. For more information, go to the français web page [bctf.ca/Francais.aspx](http://bctf.ca/Francais.aspx).

## Fill in the blanks

My local president is \_\_\_\_\_

The local's phone number is \_\_\_\_\_

The first report cards are due \_\_\_\_\_

For help, I could ask \_\_\_\_\_

I have 35 kids in my class. I need to \_\_\_\_\_

I teach a split class. \_\_\_\_\_ can help me with the organization and delivery of curriculum.

I'm entitled to \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of prep time a week.

My staff rep is \_\_\_\_\_

My PD rep is \_\_\_\_\_

The BCTF website is [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca).

An electronic mailing list for new teachers is: bctf-beginteach

Local \_\_\_\_\_

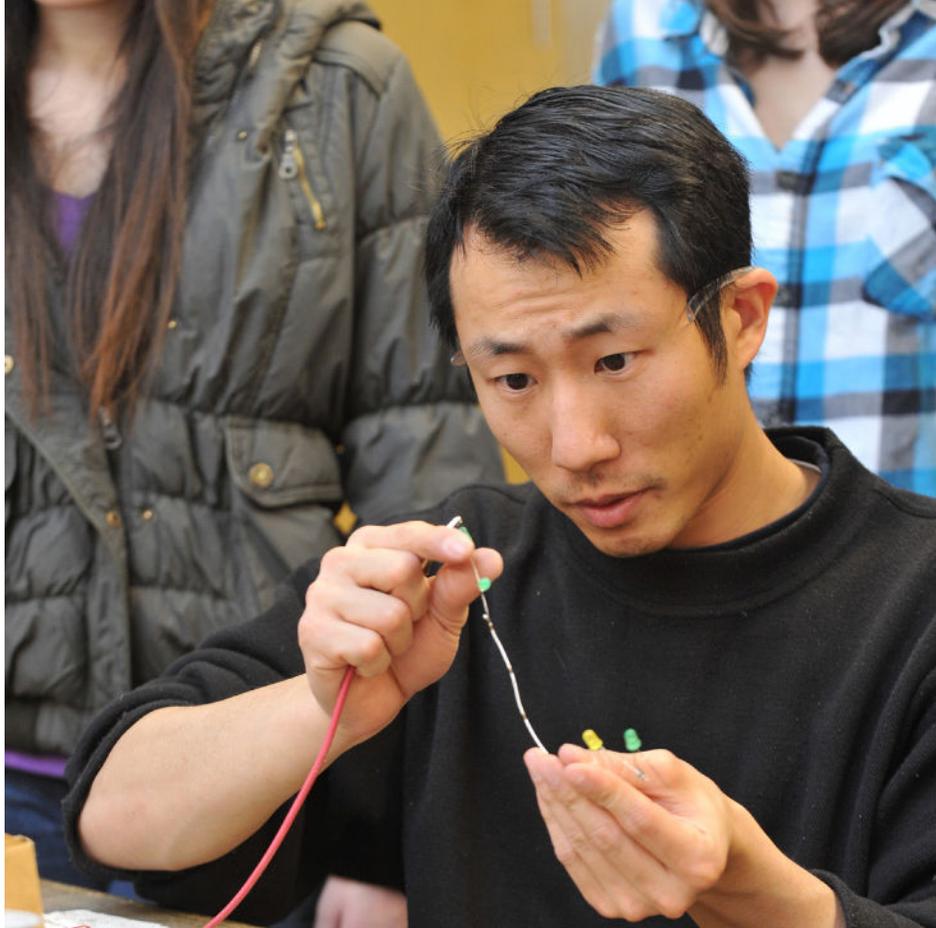
A teacher mentor or helpful colleague is \_\_\_\_\_

I will take care of myself and have fun by \_\_\_\_\_

I can access funds for my PD this year by \_\_\_\_\_

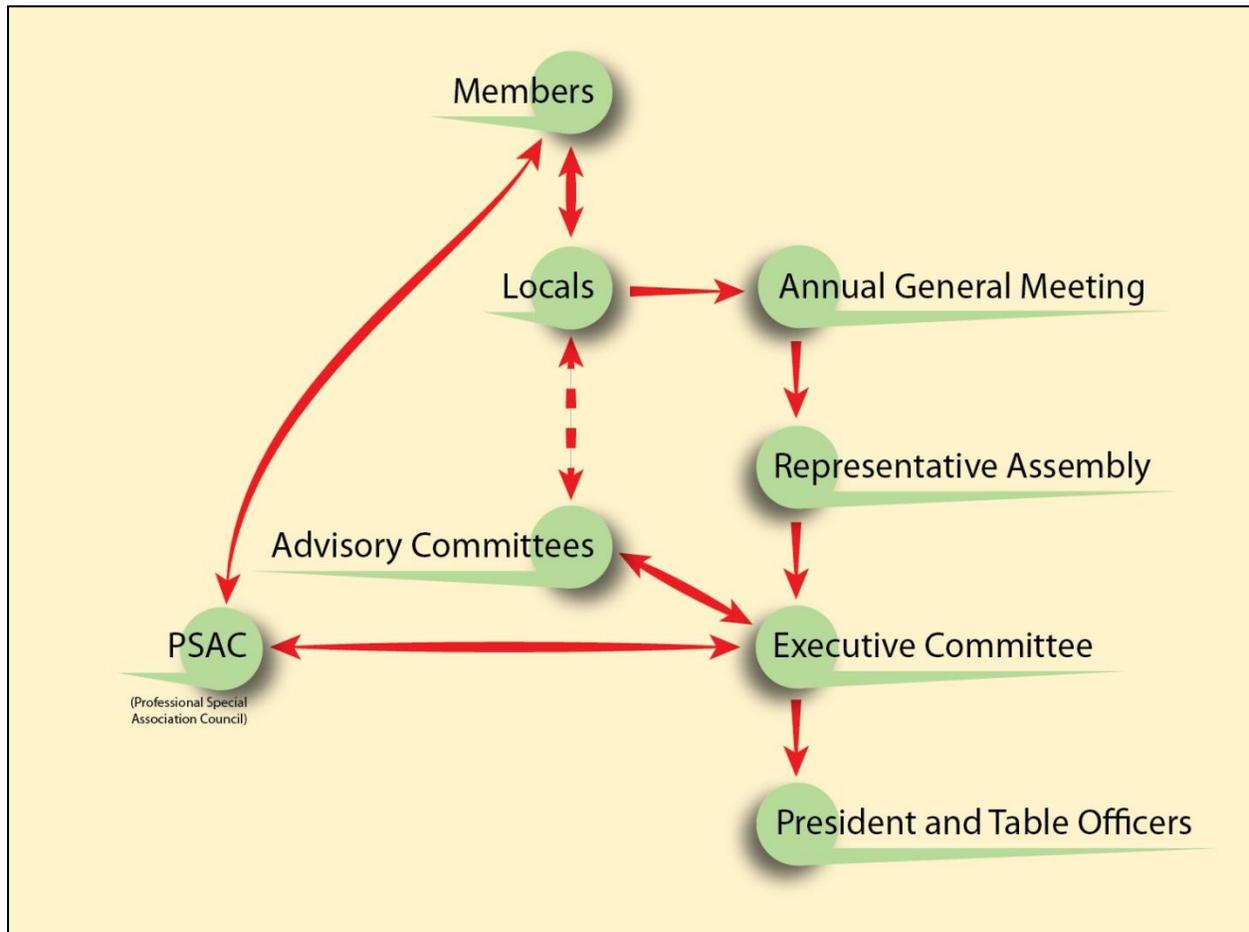
Remember that teaching is both a demanding and a very rewarding profession. Take care of yourself, and enjoy being part of a profession that truly does make a difference.





How the  
BC Teachers'  
Federation  
helps

## How the BC Teachers' Federation helps



### Structure, decision-making, and services

#### Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM is the sovereign decision-making body of the Federation. It is made up of Local Representatives (see RA below), one or more delegates elected by each local on a per-capita basis and the members of the BCTF Executive Committee, totaling approximately 680 voting participants. The AGM meets for 3.5 days during Spring Break and decides the BCTF priorities, policies and procedures, elects the Executive Committee, and sets the fees for the coming year.

#### Representative Assembly (RA)

The RA regularly meets three times a year to advise the Executive Committee (EC), receive reports and adopt a detailed budget based on the fee set by the AGM. The RA is made up of approximately 120 voting Local Representatives, plus the Local Presidents and the BCTF Executive Committee.

### **Executive Committee (EC)**

The Executive Committee is made up of 11 active members elected at the AGM. It is responsible for the business of the Federation, between RA and AGM meetings and has other specific duties assigned. The EC has one or two regularly scheduled meetings per month, with the exception of July.

### **Full-Time Table Officers (FTTOs)**

The president, first vice-president, and second vice-president are released full time from their teaching duties to represent the 41,000 members on a day-to-day basis. The president is responsible for the general supervision of all matters and affairs of the Federation and is the official spokesperson for the BCTF.

### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director works with the FTTOs and advises the Executive Committee, Representative Assembly, and Annual General Meeting, and is responsible for assigning duties and directing the work of the Federation's administrative, support and excluded staff.

### **Locals**

Locals represent teachers in each school district in the province with each local having its own elected president and executive committee, constitution and procedures. Each is a local of the BCTF but has a high degree of autonomy on local matters.

**Advisory committees**—are made up of active members formally appointed by the Executive Committee. They provide advice to the BCTF Executive Committee, play a leadership role within the Federation, and, in a number of cases, provide support to local contacts.

- Committee for Action on Social Justice—CASJ
  - CASJ action groups
    - antipoverty
    - antiracism
    - environmental justice
    - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ)
    - peace and global education
    - status of women.
- Professional Issues Advisory Committee—PIAC
- Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee—AEAC
- Adult Education Advisory Committee—AEAC
- Advisory Committee on French Programs and Services—ACFPS
- Provincial Specialist Association Council—PSAC
- Teachers Teaching on Call Advisory Committee—TTOCAC
- Pensions Committee—PC
- Finance Committee—FC
- Income Security Committee—ISC
- *Teacher* Newsmagazine Advisory Board
- Health and Safety Advisory Committee—HSAC
- Working and Learning Conditions/Bargaining Advisory Committee—WLC/BAC

- WR Long International Solidarity Committee.

### **Organizational divisions within the BCTF**

The BCTF offices and programs are organized into divisions and departments to provide effective services to members.

**Field Service Division (FSD)**—supports locals in bargaining, contract implementation and defence of member rights, assists locals with Federation campaigns and province-wide actions, advances the broad range of Federation services and programs in professional, health and safety, social justice, communications and outreach, etc., with local members and leadership.

**Legal Services Department**—has overall responsibility for Federation legal matters, including court cases on a range of matters, constitutional challenges, grievances/arbitrations, legal-aid provisions and teacher regulation matters.

**Professional and Social Issues Division (PSID)**—has responsibility for a wide range of professional matters such as curriculum, education policy, professional development, teacher education, teacher inquiry, mentorship and peer support. Co-ordinates the Provincial Specialist Associations (PSAs), the Social Justice Program, Aboriginal Education Program, French Programs and Services, programs for teachers teaching on call, for teachers new to teaching and for adult educators, organizes leadership training—Summer Conference, Federation Leadership Institute, and Facilitators’ Institute Training. The Training Department which is a component of PSID, offers an extensive teacher workshop program. Administers the Code of Ethics and co-ordinates the work of the Internal Mediation Service.

**Communications and Campaigns Division (CCD)**—has responsibility for BCTF campaigns, and internal and external communications, using both traditional and social media communication tools. Handles outreach to education partner groups, community groups and other unions. Co-ordinates political action, lobbying and advocacy initiatives. Co-ordinates production, mailing, and graphics.

**Research and Technology Division (RT)**—undertakes the Federation’s research projects and works jointly with other institutions on research projects. Co-ordinates information services and the website. Develops, implements, and supports the Federation’s technology systems and tools. Co-ordinates the BCTF international programs. Deals with education funding issues.

**Income Security Division**—has responsibility for the Salary Indemnity Plan, Health and Wellness Program (rehabilitation) and the Living with Balance (preventative) program. Co-ordinates the pensions program, provides information for members and fulfills the Federation’s obligations related to the Teacher Pension Plan. Co-ordinates the BCTF Health and Safety program for members and handles Workers’ Compensation appeals for members.

**Finance and Administrative Services**—has overall responsibility for the care of the Federation’s resources, including the dues, investments, funds, property, etc. Administers the budget and

handles the accounting functions. Maintains membership records, handles reception, and the care and maintenance of the BCTF offices.

**Human Resources Department**—deals with all of the Federation’s obligations as an employer and handles the staff recruitment and training, salary/benefits, personnel, collective agreement and other labour relations issues related to this role. Handles the Federation’s privacy obligations and other organizational requirements.

## Provincial Specialist Associations (PSAs)

PSAs foster professional development through a variety of means and provide members with:

- teaching/learning materials
- information on new teaching methods
- support for new teachers
- a network via local chapters
- a collective voice to help shape BCTF direction and influence curriculum policies
- specialty publications—journals and newsletters
- support for exemplary practice.

PSAs host for members:

- annual general meetings
- annual conferences
- local or regional conferences.

If you are being inducted into the BCTF and your local, you are eligible as a new teacher or new TTOC to receive a free year’s membership in one PSA.

### PSAs within the BCTF [bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx](http://bctf.ca/PSAs.aspx)

ABCDE	Association of BC Drama Educators
AEA	Aboriginal Education Association
AEGTCCBC	Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in BC
APPIPC	Association provinciale des professeurs d’immersion et du programme francophone
BCAEA	BC Alternate Education Association
BCATA	BC Art Teachers’ Association
BCAMT	BC Association of Mathematics Teachers
BCATML	BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages
BCBEA	BC Business Education Association
BCCA	BC Culinary Arts Provincial Specialist Association
BCCLPSA	BC Co-operative Learning Provincial Specialist Association
BCDEA	BC Dance Educators’ Association
BCEDLPSA	BC Educators for Distributed Learning
BCMEA	BC Music Educators’ Association

BCPTA	BC Primary Teachers' Association
BCRTA	BC Rural and Small Schools Teachers' Association
BCSCA	BC School Counsellors' Association
BCScTA	BC Science Teachers' Association
BCSSTA	BC Social Studies Teachers' Association
BCTEA	BC Technology Education Association
BCTELA	BC Teachers of English Language Arts
BCTLA	BC Teacher-Librarians' Association
CUEBC	Computer-Using Educators of British Columbia
EAR	Educators Against Racism
ESLPSA	English as a Second Language Provincial Specialist Association
EEPSA	Environmental Educators' Provincial Specialist Association
LATA	Learning Assistance Teachers' Association
PAGE	BC Teachers for Peace and Global Education
PEBC	Physical Education British Columbia
PITA	Provincial Intermediate Teachers' Association
SEA	Special Education Association
THESA	Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association

You may join as many PSAs as you wish. For a PSA online application, go to [bctf.ca/JoinaPSA](http://bctf.ca/JoinaPSA).

### **Professional and Social issues workshops**

Workshops on a variety of topics are designed and delivered in English and French by BCTF facilitators. See your school PD representative or visit [bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx#workshops](http://bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx#workshops)

### **How your BCTF local helps [bctf.ca/localwebsites.aspx](http://bctf.ca/localwebsites.aspx)**

Your BCTF local is a source of support and information on professional, contractual, and personnel matters. Find out who your school staff representative(s) are and what services are available through your local. Locate and read the collective agreement ([bctf.ca/myBCTF/content.aspx?id=23113](http://bctf.ca/myBCTF/content.aspx?id=23113)) and other material to find out how you can take part in your professional organization. Information regarding local funding for PD and in-service activities is available through your local. Talk to your local PD rep. Information regarding health and safety concerns is available through your local and your Health and Safety school representative.

### **staying safe at work**

No matter how minor an injury might seem, it is important to document it with your employer. For example, a paper cut can lead to a secondary infection and a twinge in your back from lifting textbooks may be indicative of a more serious injury.

The procedure for reporting an injury is:

1. Inform an administrative officer of this injury or disease that you feel is work related. Make sure the information is documented. WCB requires that you report your injury as soon as practical, don't delay.
2. Make sure the appropriate person has filled in the first aid log at the worksite. Always get the log filled in no matter how minor the injury, as it may develop into something more serious.
3. File a Workers' Report of Injury or Occupational Disease to Employer. This is WCB Form 6A. The employer is required to file a Form 7 within three days of receiving the report from the member.
4. At the same time you file the report to your employer, file an Application for Compensation and Report of Injury or Occupational Disease, Form 6 to WCB. If you are not sure about the questions seek help.
5. Always copy Form 6A and Form 6 for the local union office. Always ask for help for the WCB claim's process.
6. Always report your injury or occupational disease to your doctor and request that the doctor file a Physicians First Report, Form 8 to WCB.
7. A WCB officer should contact the worker after they have received Form 6.
8. WorkSafeBC regulations require that each worksite must have a joint health and safety committee.

All new and young workers are required by law to be given site specific occupational health and safety training. During the new and young workers' training, teachers should be instructed on emergency procedures, including evacuation and lockdown; instruction on known hazards and risks; and instruction on hazard reporting. If you have not received this training, contact your staff rep or local president.

All teachers in British Columbia are covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act* and have four basic health and safety rights: the right to know, the right to participate, the right to refuse unsafe work, and the right to no discrimination. These rights are essential in a safe work environment.

#### The right to know

Teachers have the right to know what hazards are present in a workplace. Hazards can be physical (from slippery floor to missing guards on equipment) to psychological (including factors leading to stress or violence). **The right to know is of a higher order than the student privacy rights.** If a student is a violent risk to a school employee, everyone involved with that student has the right to know the risk that is posed. The right to know also includes access to health and safety information such as inspections and orders written by WCB on a workplace.

#### The right to participate

Teachers have the right to participate in the activities of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee. Participating in training as well as investigations and inspections of the worksite is also included in this right.

### The right to no discrimination

The right to no discrimination, also called the right to no retaliation, protects the teacher from being disciplined from exercising their basic health and safety rights.

To go along with health and safety training and rights, all teachers have a duty to work safely, report hazards, and conduct their work in a way which does not create a risk to themselves or others.

### **How the collective agreement helps**

The BCTF is a dynamic union of professionals that has been shaped by its members for over 100 years. New teachers are celebrated and welcomed into the union (the BCTF and your local) usually at a general meeting or induction ceremony, although some locals hold a social event. You will receive materials that help you to know your rights, the Code of Ethics, and more. A great perk (limited to attendees) is a free membership to a PSA (Provincial Specialist Association) which can save you up to \$80 and link you to a community of engaged, progressive professionals.

### **Orientation**

There is so much to learn when you start out—every school district is a little different. New teachers are encouraged to attend the orientation session, usually presented jointly by the district and the union, where you can become familiar with people, places, and processes that you are likely to need to know about.

### **Discrimination in the workplace**

All public school teachers in the province are covered by the collective agreement between BCPSEA and the BCTF at the provincial level, and between their school district and their local at the local level. Every BCTF member's collective agreement contains an article that refers to the employer's obligation to ensure a non-sexist working environment. Likewise, nearly every collective agreement contains a provision that states that no employee shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or family status. A few go a step further by specifically mentioning gender identity.

This language was negotiated by BCTF locals on behalf of their members so that teachers could be themselves in their workplaces without being subjected to sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism or other forms of discrimination. For example, Aboriginal teachers shouldn't need to hide their heritage, or put up with racist remarks. LGBTQ teachers should expect to be safely "out" at work, acknowledge their families and loved ones without fear of reprisals or discrimination. Likewise with women, people of colour, and other equity-seeking groups.

The *BC Human Rights Code* also protects public school teachers from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sex, race, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. Gender identity

is also “read” into the code (though having it specifically listed would be an important step at a future date).

If you have a question about your collective agreement’s non-discrimination clause, contact your local office.

## Others who can help

### Colleagues, colleagues, colleagues

**Mentors**—Many locals, in partnership with the school district, have formal mentoring programs in which new teachers are matched with experienced teachers.

If there is no formal process, develop your own network of mentors by tapping into the knowledge and expertise of experienced teachers in your school or in your district.

Meet with other new teachers and develop a support system. Ask your local for assistance in organizing a meeting.

**Resource/special education/learning assistance teacher**—She or he works with other teachers who have students with special needs in their classrooms. The resource teacher can help you design appropriate activities. In some cases, the resource teachers also operate programs that may take students with special needs out of their regular classrooms for part of the day or week. A resource teacher can be an important part of your support system. Find an early opportunity to meet to discuss how you can best work together to benefit the student.

**Teacher-librarian**—A teacher-librarian does more than look after the collection of library materials. She or he can assist you in co-operative planning and help you design research-based projects and information-retrieval programs. Familiarize yourself with policies about using the resource centre, but also take advantage of the teacher-librarian’s ability to help you develop resource-based learning strategies to enhance instruction. Your teacher-librarian may also assist you in ordering student and teacher resource materials.

**School counsellor**—Your school counsellor can help you overcome many obstacles. Find out if there are any ongoing concerns in your class from previous years. The counsellor can be invaluable when meeting with parents, and she or he is often a good source for strategies when dealing with difficult students. Your students are your responsibility, and the counsellor is there as a support, not a disciplinarian. Ask how to make referrals.

**School administrator**—The principal and the vice-principal are important staff in your support network. Don’t wait for them to ask how things are going—let them know. If it’s comfortable for you, invite the administrators into your classroom. Show an interest in their work so that you can gain a broader understanding of school operations.

**Custodial staff**—A good working relationship with the school custodian will make life much easier for you. Ask the principal about the caretaker’s responsibilities. Introduce yourself, and discuss ways you can work together to keep your classroom a pleasant place for you and your students.

**School secretary**—The school secretary is an important link between you and the administration, and she or he is often the first contact parents have with the school. Learn about the secretary’s responsibilities and what services might be available to you. Requests made of you by the school secretary are frequently for information required by the principal. Respond promptly.

**Educational psychologists, speech therapists, and itinerant teachers**—Your school district may employ or have access to educational psychologists, speech therapists, and itinerant teachers. You will need to know about students with whom they have been working and about referral procedures. Talk to members of the school-based team (SBT), the resource teacher, and/or counsellors.

**Aboriginal support workers**—Aboriginal family support workers and Aboriginal home-school co-ordinators. These staff members can assist with home-school and communication issues. They are also a rich resource for information on Aboriginal education issues.

**Settlement workers in school (SWIS)**—Multicultural home-school co-ordinators can assist you with communication, including language, and an understanding of cultural issues.

**School Staff Committee**—The staff committee is a shared decision-making process in which a variety of members of the school community collaborate, where appropriate, in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction, and ensuring implementation. Those individuals responsible for the implementation of a decision at the school level are actively and legitimately involved in making the decision. Staff committees will vary from site to site. Talk to your staff rep for more information.

**School Planning Council**—If an administrator, superintendent, or other district official asks you or your school colleagues to participate in a School Planning Council (SPC), please inform them we are not participating and then contact your local president. SPCs were created in 2002–03 as part of the Ministry of Education’s achievement and accountability agenda and in 2006, BCTF AGM delegates voted to withdraw from participating in these councils.

## **Professional development (PD)**

The purpose of professional development is to enhance student learning through socially responsible quality teaching. Teacher professional development is continuous, career long, and

includes experiences that provide teachers with learning opportunities through programs, services and activities designed to enable members, individually or collectively, to enhance professional practice. As a professional you have a responsibility to keep abreast of new developments in education and to take part in ongoing professional development.

As teachers, we need professional development because change is affecting all of us, our families, our work, and our communities. Change is a highly personal experience. It may involve new materials, new behaviours and practices, or new beliefs and understandings. Change in behaviours and beliefs are interactive. Change in practice frequently precedes change in beliefs and understandings.

People's attitudes to change differ. Responses to change might include the following:

- "This does not affect me because..."
- "How will this affect me or my students?"
- "Will I ever get it all organized?"
- "Who will help me?"
- "What are other people doing?"
- "I know something that will work even better!"

Think about accepting and addressing our diverse individual concerns and pooling our strengths to support each other as we make changes. As active learners, teachers use PD days and other PD opportunities to keep on top of changes that affect their work with students (new curriculum, new technology, new ideas about teaching and learning, and different community needs). Skilled, enthusiastic teachers are key to maintaining the quality of education.

Your local professional development chair is an invaluable resource as you balance a demanding new career with the need to be an active learner. You can access many professional development activities that are organized at various levels and times throughout the year. At the local level, professional development is governed by the collective agreement and local union policies. Throughout the province, there are a variety of methods by which local members are served. Central to all local union provisions is the recognition that the professional autonomy of members allows them to plan appropriate PD and to pursue their professional growth. All locals have a PD fund that you may access to attend conferences and participate in other professional development activities. The school may offer PD days on topics that come from the classroom experience of learning and teaching. Teachers decide individually and together the issues to address. They attend workshops and conferences, participate in mentoring programs, pursue self-directed professional development, and undertake other activities designed to enhance teaching and learning. Professional development is self-directed by teachers and includes classroom visits, co-operative planning, peer coaching, reading journals, action research, and study groups.

Teacher inquiry is an increasingly popular form of professional development. Inquiry is a form of professional development that promotes deep, relevant, personal learning within a community of teaching professionals. Teacher inquiry supports teacher growth through reflection, collaborative conversation, and investigation into teaching practice. Action research

groups, study groups, book study circles, conversation models, and dialogue on student work are examples of teacher inquiry. Collaborative teacher inquiry into a current teaching and learning question or dilemma underpins all models. The BCTF initiative, “Program for Quality Teaching: Teacher Inquiry,” provides groups of teachers with release time and facilitation to conduct an inquiry project. You can access information on inquiry through the BCTF website: [bctf.ca/teacherinquiry](http://bctf.ca/teacherinquiry).

Teachers are in control of their own professional development. They are in the best position to decide what they need in order to enhance their practice. School or district administrators should not be directing teachers’ choices for professional development. These types of administrator-directed activities should be provided through the use of district funds and release time, not the professional development time and funds that are provided through the local collective agreement. School and district activities would be classified as “in-service.”

The BCTF has developed workshops specifically designed by teachers, and facilitated by teacher facilitators. Contact your local PD chair if you are interested in attending one of these workshops [bctf.ca/professionaldevelopment.aspx#workshops](http://bctf.ca/professionaldevelopment.aspx#workshops). **PSAs** are an excellent source of professional development. You may join one or more provincial specialist association, take part in the PD activities organized by them, and receive their publications <http://bctf.ca/psas.aspx>.

### **New Teachers’ Conference**

Since 1997, the BCTF has been hosting an annual New Teachers’ Conference. The two-day conference is a professional development opportunity designed specifically for teachers and teachers teaching on call in their first five (5) years of teaching. Student teachers are also invited. This conference is based on the core principle of effective professional development with experienced classroom teachers teaching colleagues what they know.

Be sure to contact your school PD representative and the local PD chairperson for further information about the range of PD opportunities available to you. A number of PD brochures and leaflets are also available. (See section on resources, pages 96–98.) The BCTF has a PD calendar online to inform members about conference opportunities: [bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/ProD/PD-Calendar.cfm](http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/ProD/PD-Calendar.cfm).

### **In-service training**

In-service training is a little different from professional development, and the BCTF always differentiates between the two. When your district is bringing in a new math program, for example, it is in the employer's interest to train all the teachers so the effort is co-ordinated. Such training is in-service and should be provided by the employer. It should be held during your working hours, and it should not require the use of your professional development funding or time.

Professional development goes deeper; it refers to the learning you choose to help you grow as a person, a teacher, a professional. As in all other professions, PD should be teacher-directed and should be chosen thoughtfully with your professional needs and goals in mind.

If you are asked to attend an event and you are unsure if it is in-service, contact your local president to discuss the situation.

Professional development activities	In-service activities
<p>Professional development assumes teaching is a profession with a focus on the development of expertise and is characterized by personal involvement of teachers and immediate relevance to the classroom. It is initiated by teachers rather than by outside sources and can be informal and take a variety of forms.</p> <p>One-shot in-service workshops are not adequate. Professional development should be rooted in practice, research-based, collaborative, long-term, aimed at instructional improvement and is more effective in changing the classroom practices of teachers when a cohort or collective of teachers from a school department or grade are involved as a unit.</p> <p>Staff development should be voluntary rather than required.</p> <p>Professional development goals should emerge from the needs of the teachers. Teachers need to have a say in what to learn and in the learning process in order to be motivated and committed to learn.</p>	<p>In-service has a long history in education but is not always regarded with enthusiasm by teachers.</p> <p>In-service often is more for satisfying legal or managerial requirements and less for professional growth.</p> <p>In-service is often mandatory, formal, planned and scheduled by administration.</p> <p>In-service has been characterized as a “tell, sell and practice” format and a “sit and get” method where information presented by experts is not associated with changes in teacher practice.</p>

Adapted from *Not Another In-Service*. Amelia A. Jenkins, Jodi Yoshimura. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Vol 42, No. 5, pp. 36–43. 2010.

### **Mentorship**

Many school districts in British Columbia offer mentorship programs to support teachers new to the profession. These programs are invaluable for new teachers in providing collegial sharing and support, collaborative planning, non-evaluative observation and feedback. Mentorship at its best offers personalized support through a confidential trusting relationship and provides release days for mentoring partners or groups to meet together to work on the mentee’s identified goals and questions. Engaging in mentoring early in a teacher’s career has proven to build confidence for new teachers and accelerate the learning process. Mentoring relationships can also affirm the skills and capacities new teachers bring to the classroom, and provide time

and opportunity to observe in the classrooms of colleagues. Be sure to inquire if a mentoring program is offered in the district to which you are applying, or have been hired.

**BCTF Declaration of Continuing Education**—states the BCTF’s belief in the importance of professional development in the lives of teachers, and represents the collective professional opinion of members of the BCTF. It is based on values and principles that reflect a democratic perspective on public education and is intended to provide a provincial standard of continuing-education principles.

1. *It is the responsibility of the individual teacher to make a continuing effort to develop professionally.*
2. *Participation by teachers in professional development should be on a voluntary basis.*
3. *An effective needs assessment process should be the starting point of professional development. Planners of professional development should work as colleagues with the users in identification of needs, the planning of training, and the continuing tailoring of the activities to fit the members’ needs.*
4. *Professional development activities should include the growth of competence, collegiality, influence, social, personal development and health.*
5. *Effective professional development requires a commitment of adequate resources, time, and organizational support.*
6. *The individual teacher should be given the opportunity and the time to pursue her or his professional development objectives.*
7. *The organization and delivery of PD programs are most effectively achieved at the school staff level or with other intact groups.*
8. *Effective professional development activities incorporate presentation and discussion, demonstration or modeling, and practice with feedback.*
9. *Collegial support, on-site coaching, and ongoing support should be available to the individual teacher to allow for adequate internalization or behaviour change.*
10. *The idea of teachers teaching teachers should be promoted in the provision of professional development programs.*
11. *Professional development programs should incorporate a wide repertoire of teaching approaches, and no one professional development program should be viewed as a universal panacea for the improvement of instruction.*

Ongoing teacher learning is an essential component of teacher professionalism. Teaching is a dynamic process responsive to constant change within our local communities and within the greater demographic, social, cultural and technological shifts within our society. Professional development opportunities provide different ways teachers can work both individually and collectively to make sense of their work within the dynamics of change and consider new research on teaching and learning.

## Have you signed up on to MyBCTF?

Our members-only secure portal is online at *mybctf.ca*

### What's in it for me?

- timely bargaining updates
- interactive tools, including secure member-only discussion groups
- update your personal information
- easy registration for conferences
- information, articles, videos
- BCTF Advantage Program

### Sign on is easy!

1. At [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca), click on “**BCTF members only.**”
2. At BCTF member portal, click “**first time here?**”
3. Enter BCTF six-digit member number (if known) or name, district number, and district employee number.
4. Choose a password (and remember it).
5. If you have a problem, call 604-871-2119 or 1-800-663-9163, local 2119, or email [portal@bctf.ca](mailto:portal@bctf.ca).

## Evaluation of teachers

As a new teacher you will be required to engage in an evaluation process or, in a few districts, a professional growth plan. The process and procedure is outlined in the collective agreement between your school board and your local association.

Check your local collective agreement for the process and procedures that have been established in your local. Also, some aspects regarding the practice of supervision of learning may cross into, or conflict with, contractual language on evaluation. If you have any questions or concerns, ask your staff representative and/or your local president. This could be most important in your professional career. Do check if you are not sure.

TTOCs should ask the local president about TTOC evaluation procedures.

## Discipline

Also included in your collective agreement is a discipline process to be followed by the employer if they believe you have acted in a manner deserving of discipline. At all times throughout this process you have the right to union representation. There is a union representative at each workplace to assist with concerns. In any case, the local president should always be notified immediately.

### **If you are contacted by an administrative officer, the RCMP, Family Services, or the BC Teacher Regulation Branch regarding allegations against you:**

- **do not** consent to, or participate in, an interview that could be, or is, disciplinary without a union representative.
- **do not** make a statement to anyone regarding allegations or charges; instead say, "I am willing to co-operate, but I am unable to do so until I can contact the local or the BCTF."

Call the local or the BCTF toll-free at 1-800-663-9163, or 604-871-2283 (ask for legal counsel).

If you require emergency BCTF legal assistance, BCTF legal counsel can be found on the BCTF website. The link is [bctf.ca/contactus.aspx?id=13032](http://bctf.ca/contactus.aspx?id=13032).

## Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB)

The Teacher Regulation Branch, created under the *Teachers' Act*, is the professional regulatory body for teachers in BC. The branch establishes standards for the education of teachers, issues teaching certificates, conducts certificate reviews and, where necessary, suspends or cancels certificates. School districts are required to report disciplinary actions to the TRB. If you have any concerns about the TRB please contact your local president.

The BCTF provides legal advice and financial support to members who are being investigated by the branch. Your local president can advise you on how to receive this help.

For further information:  
Teacher Regulation Branch  
2025 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1Z6  
Phone: 604-731-8170  
Toll-free: 1-800-555-3684  
Fax: 604-731-9142  
TRB website: [www.bcteacherregulation.ca](http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca)

If you have any questions related to the TRB, please contact the Professional and Social Issues Division at 604-871-1849.

### **Taking care of your teaching certificate**

#### **1. Payment of fees to TRB**

Your teaching certificate will be cancelled if you do not pay your fees to TRB. Once your teaching certificate is cancelled for non-payment, it is expensive and time consuming to have it reinstated. If you do not have recent teaching experience, you may have to upgrade your teaching qualifications. To avoid this situation:

- pay your annual fee well before the due date. (Check with your school district to determine if the fee was deducted and paid—usually in May.)
- ensure that you continue to pay your fees even when you are not working due to shortage of work, illness, maternity or parental leave, retirement from a prior assignment, or any other reason
- check to ensure that your payment has been processed. You can do this by calling the TRB at 604-731-8170, or toll-free at 1-800-555-3684 (within North America), or check online at <http://bcteacherregulation.ca/certificateservices/findateacher.aspx>.

If you feel that your certificate was cancelled in a manner that was unfair, contact your local president for assistance.

#### **2. Reports to the TRB about your conduct or competency**

If you receive any correspondence from the TRB indicating that there has been a complaint, a report to the branch about you, or you are facing criminal charges, obtain legal assistance immediately from the BCTF. Your local president can help you with this. Written requests for legal aid can be mailed directly to the BCTF legal department, or faxed to 604-871-2288.

Do not make any statement or respond to questions from the TRB about your conduct prior to receiving legal assistance. Keep copies of all correspondence you receive from the TRB and provide them to your local president or BCTF staff.

Facing allegations before a professional body is inherently stressful, even where those allegations are inaccurate or minor. Remember that you are not alone. Your colleagues, your local, and the BCTF will assist you in responding to TRB proceedings.

## Teacher Qualification Service (TQS)

The Teacher Qualification Service was established in 1969 by the BCTF and the BC School Trustees' Association. The purpose of the TQS is to serve as a neutral and independent body to deal with the issue of relating teacher salaries to their level of training. The TQS issues a TQS card indicating a category which reflects the teacher's level of training. Teachers wishing to upgrade their salary category must apply to the TQS. If you have any concerns about your salary category please contact your local president.

For further information:  
Teacher Qualification Service  
106-1525 West 8th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1T5  
Phone: 604-736-5484  
Fax: 604-736-6591  
website: [tqs.bc.ca](http://tqs.bc.ca)

## Resources

### BCTF website

- [bctf.ca](http://bctf.ca)—Provides up-to-date information on BCTF policy, news, bargaining, teaching resources, research, links to other teacher organizations, links to other educational sites, and much, more, including the New Teachers' home page: [bctf.ca/NewTeachers.aspx](http://bctf.ca/NewTeachers.aspx).
- Online Resource Centre: [bctf.ca/teachingresources.aspx?id=8336/Journals.html](http://bctf.ca/teachingresources.aspx?id=8336/Journals.html)—Provides links to teaching materials, web resources covering educational issues, and electronic journals for professional research.
- Social Justice teaching resources: [bctf.ca/socialjustice.aspx?id=18432](http://bctf.ca/socialjustice.aspx?id=18432).

### BCTF online email lists

- *bctf-beginteach*—A list to facilitate discussion among and between beginning teachers and experienced teachers.
- *TTOC-contacts*—A closed list for local TTOC representatives.
- *bctf-diversity*—A forum for educators working with students with a diversity of needs in their classrooms. The forum encourages questions, comments, information, and resource sharing related to the inclusion of these students.
- *bctf-e-alert*—A list to alert members to new information on the BCTF web site.

- *bctf-edtech-issues*—An open list for exchange of information about technological issues, concerns with curriculum, implementation, professional development, assessment, and related issues around information and communications technologies.
- *bctf-edtech-news*—A weekly report on issues regarding teachers and education technology which might have an impact on BCTF members with regard to implementation of information and communications technology.
- *bctf-enfrancais*—A discussion list, open to all educators interested in the field of French education.
- *bctf-indigenous*—Gives teachers involved in indigenous education a place to ask questions, share ideas, and build a community.
- *bctf-pd-issues*—An information forum for professional issues including curriculum implementation, assessment, and related BCTF initiatives.
- *bctf-research*—Announcements about BCTF research projects, summaries of BCTF research reports, and education/labour research URLs and resources.
- *bctf-socialjustice*—A vehicle for the sharing of information, ideas, and activities on social justice issues. The scope is broad and includes women’s issues, racism, poverty, homophobia, violence, the social effects of globalization, especially the aspects of these issues which affect children, schools, and teachers.
- *bctf-socialjustice12*—An information-sharing forum for teachers teaching SJ12.
- *bctf-ttoc*—An open list for new teachers, TTOCs, and mentors to join.
- *ttocac*—A closed list for the Teachers Teaching on Call Advisory Committee.

**To subscribe to a BCTF email list:**

Go to [BCTF.ca](http://BCTF.ca). At top right-hand side of page, select email lists and click on this. Select the listserve you wish to join. Enter your email address.

**BCTF publications**

For a complete list of BCTF publications (current news, briefs and position papers, catalogues, magazines, journals, maps, and research reports) visit the BCTF website at: [bctf.ca/publications.aspx](http://bctf.ca/publications.aspx).

- *PD Calendar*—A list of conferences offered by PSAs and other professional groups. It is available in print in the Teacher newsmagazine and online. [www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/ProD/PD-Calendar.cfm](http://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/ProD/PD-Calendar.cfm)
- *Social Justice* newsletter—Articles about social justice issues relevant to teachers.
- *Teacher* newsmagazine—Articles of interest to teachers. It is distributed to all teachers in their schools and is available online. [bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx](http://bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx)
- *BCTF Services Handbook*—Contains information about professional and social issues programs and services. It is available online: [bctf.ca/BCTF-MemberServices.aspx](http://bctf.ca/BCTF-MemberServices.aspx)
- *BCTF e-alert*—To know what’s new on the web, sign up to e-alert: [bctf.ca/signup](http://bctf.ca/signup)
- *Various brochures*—Published throughout the year as needed on a variety of issues, such as **Why No School Today?**, which gives answers to common questions about professional development days.

## Local publications

Ask your staff rep and/or your local president about the following publications:

- local bulletins
- local newsletters
- school newsletters.

## Membership

1. Active members: All teachers employed in a public school district in BC are active members of the BCTF, have full rights to vote and hold office, and to representation. Also included as active members are all exchange teachers coming to BC from another country or province and associated professionals employed in a school district to provide professional services to students and/or teachers, who are covered by the collective agreement and who sign up.
2. Associate members: Students enrolled in programs of study in university/college programs leading to certification as teachers, associated professionals who are employed in a school district to provide professional services to students and/or teachers, and members of the B.C. Early Childhood Educators' Association. They are not covered by a local's collective agreement and must apply to the Federation for membership. May not vote or hold office.

Associate membership entitles the member to:

- receive the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*, on request.
- receive the *Teacher Newsmagazine*, or equivalent.
- join provincial specialist associations on payment of the PSA membership fee.
- participate in BCTF PD activities, as appropriate.
- participate in the BCTF/Seaboard Voluntary Group Life Insurance Plan, the BCTF/North American Group Life Insurance Plan, and the BCTF/Royal Trust Group Registered Retirement Savings Plan where school board payroll deduction is available, and subject to eligibility conditions under the terms of those plans.

An associate member is not eligible to vote or hold office in the BC Teachers' Federation. The fee is \$100.

[BCTF Associate Membership application form.](#) 

3. Affiliate members: The BCTF has entered into affiliation with the education student society executive committees of the public universities and university-colleges of BC according to the terms agreed to by both parties. Must apply to the Federation and do not have voting rights.

## Notes and quotes

*Questions . . .*

*Ideas . . .*

*Reflections . . .*

*Notes . . .*

*Contacts . . .*

*Actions . . .*

*Follow-up . . .*



## Reflections/Notes

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

—Margaret Meade

## Reflections/Notes

*A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.*

—Author unknown



British Columbia Teachers' Federation  
100–550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2  
604-871-2283, 1-800-663-9163  
*bctf.ca*

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