



British Columbia Teachers' Federation

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Directions for the BC College of Teachers

A brief to the
BC College of Teachers
from
the British Columbia Teachers' Federation

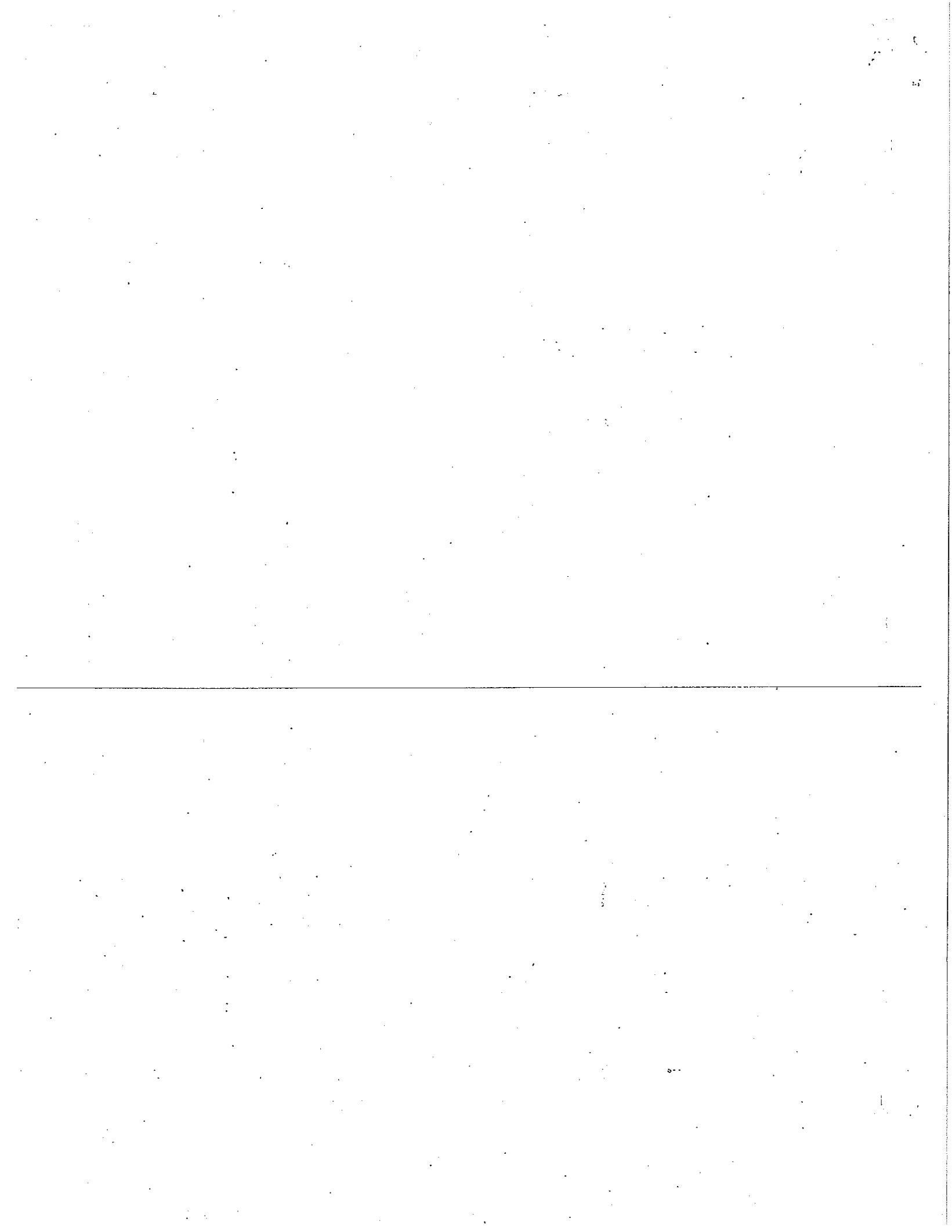
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President

Executive Director

A Union of Professionals





B.C. Teachers' Federation submission to the BC College of Teachers

www.bctf.ca/publications/briefs/CollegeDirections.html

PREAMBLE

The B.C. Teachers' Federation is the union of professionals that represents the 42,000 teachers in the public education system in British Columbia. The Federation is committed to success for every student in a strong and stable public education system.

The B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF) thanks the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) Council for the opportunity to make this presentation today. The purpose of this submission is to provide the BCCT Council with advice from the BCTF on matters of concern to the members of the BCTF.

The vast majority of the members of the BC College of Teachers are members of the B.C. Teachers' Federation. The by-laws, policies, and decisions of the BCCT have a significant impact on teachers. Since the BCTF represents a large majority of the members of the college, we believe that it is very important for the BCCT to give considerable attention to advice of the BCTF on matters related to the college.

ABOUT THE BCTF

Teachers in B.C. are part of two great traditions: the teaching profession and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. The BCTF is 42,000 teachers, working together to achieve goals adopted by its founders more than 87 years ago: to promote the cause of public education, to raise the status of the teaching profession, and to promote the welfare of teachers.

Since 1917, B.C. teachers have had a proud tradition of service to our profession, to public education, and to our communities through the BCTF. Over the decades, teachers dedicated themselves to improving the quality of public education province-wide, whether in one-room rural schools or large inner-city schools.

The BCTF is a strong and successful organization because of its members who volunteer their time and talents. Through the professional programs and services of the BCTF, B.C. teachers:

- support their colleagues professionally by providing teaching resources, supporting professional development, and planning and encouraging a variety of approaches to professional learning that are teacher-centred.
- exemplify collegial support by willingly sharing their ideas. Teachers' curriculum-support materials are available at cost through the BCTF's Lesson Aids Service.

- participate in the 33 provincial specialist associations of the BCTF that provide professional development, research, publications, and peer support.
- utilize programs and support for teachers new to the profession: the annual BCTF New Teachers' Conference, mentoring programs, *New Teacher Handbook*, workshops, e-mail lists, and other initiatives.
- serve as workshop leaders (BCTF PD associates) to offer numerous workshops to school staffs on educational issues, teaching and learning strategies, professional development, and social justice.
- offer collegial support through the BCTF Peer Support Program, Program for Quality Teaching, Internal Mediation Service, teacher action research, and other support services.
- organize conferences, facilitate workshops, and participate in research projects.
- serve as teacher representatives on district and provincial committees dealing with education policy, curriculum, and other professional issues.

More than 10% of the \$20 million budget of the BCTF is dedicated to professional development programs and services.

A DEMOCRATIC COLLEGE

All professional bodies in B.C. operate under a governance structure that consists of elected and appointed members. In the main, most professional bodies in the province have governing boards that have at least two-thirds of the members of their governing board elected by their members.

~~To have the confidence of its members, a professional body must be respected by its members. We believe that only practitioners can truly understand the nature and demands of any profession. We acknowledge that the college must have regard for the public interest when making its decisions. However, the public interest should also take into account the interests of the members of the college.~~

Recommendation 1—Review of by-laws and policies

That the BCCT Council review all by-laws and policies adopted by the politically appointed council.

During their term of office, the politically appointed BCCT Council reviewed every college by-law and policy. To have legitimacy in the eyes of teacher members, the by-laws and policies of the college must be reviewed and adopted by the democratically elected BCCT Council.

Recommendation 2—*Teaching Profession Act*

- That the BCCT Council indicate its support for the teaching profession by joining with the Retired Teachers' Association and the BCTF in strongly opposing the new provisions of the *Teaching Profession Act* that merge BCCT membership and teacher certification.**

- b. That the registrar, in consultation with independent legal counsel, prepare a report for the next council meeting that identifies the actions that would need to be taken to stop the implementation of the provisions of the *Teaching Profession Act* that merge college membership and certification, including advice regarding legislation and BCCT by-laws and policies.

Recent legislative amendments to the *Teaching Profession Act* have combined BCCT membership and certification, meaning that in order to hold a certificate to practise, one must be a member of the college. The case being advanced by the BCCT is that until this legislation was passed in May 2004, teaching was the only profession in B.C. in which practitioners could hold a certificate to practise without being a member of a professional body. While that may be the case with the other professions, B.C. is now the only jurisdiction in the world that requires teachers to maintain membership in a professional college in order to hold a teaching certificate. Unless comparisons about professional frameworks are made with the teaching profession in other jurisdictions, especially in Canada, they are invalid. In our view, the requirement that a teacher must be a member of the BCCT in order to teach in B.C. is a sufficient requirement.

The change in legislation merging certification and college membership was requested by the politically appointed BCCT Council, without consultation with college members or education partner groups. It is our view that the legislative change was a brazen attempt by the politically appointed BCCT Council and the provincial government to neutralize the BCTF and to bring more funds into the BCCT coffers. The change was requested by the appointed BCCT Council by a simple motion at a council meeting. To date, the BCCT has never made public any written brief or submission to government regarding this sweeping and flawed legislative proposal.

The politically appointed BCCT Council did not consider the implications of the legislative change on the teaching profession. Not surprising, the change in legislation has been roundly criticized by members of the educational community. The teaching profession has reacted in anger to the legislation.

The BCTF has called on the minister of education to amend the *Teaching Profession Act* to once again separate certification and college membership. We ask the BCCT Council to join us in requesting this legislative change.

Recommendation 3—Council committees

That when electing members to council committees, the BCCT Council ensure that elected councillors make up the majority.

The majority of members on the BCCT Council are elected councillors. This majority status should also be reflected on all council committees.

Recommendation 4—Elected councillors

That the BCCT Council demonstrate support for its members by requesting that the minister of education amend the *Teaching Profession Act* to ensure that at least two-thirds of the councillors are elected by members.

The recent changes to the *Teaching Profession Act* provided for 12 members of the BCCT Council to be elected by members of the college. While this composition is an improvement over the previous legislation, it falls far short of the 15 elected councillors who were represented on the college council prior to Bill 51. The BCTF requests the BCCT Council to join with the BCTF in requesting that the legislation be amended to provide for at least two-thirds of the council be elected.

MAKING THE WORK OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

Recommendation 5—College council procedures

That the BCCT Council establish and maintain a policy of openness and accessibility in college operations and procedures by:

- a. Making all BCCT Council and council committee meetings open to members and the public.
 - b. Publishing the agenda and support materials for BCCT Council and committee meetings on the BCCT web site at least one week in advance of meetings.
 - c. Ensuring that meetings be in-private or in-committee only if they are for personnel, discipline, property transactions, and other appropriate matters. The council should not use in-private meetings to plan strategy for dealing with controversial issues that should be debated in public.
 - d. Establishing a process for members of the college to participate in debates at BCCT Council and committee meetings (with voice, but no vote).
 - e. Providing funding for councillors to attend provincial, zonal, and local meetings of partner organizations and members for the purpose of reporting on college business.
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Open and transparent governance of the college council is critical for membership support. Our recommendations contain specific proposals for making the operations of the council more open and transparent.

COLLEGE BUDGET MATTERS

Recommendation 6—Per diem and expense policy

That the BCCT Council revert to the honoraria and per diem expense policy for councillors that was in place prior to August 2003.

The college council operated for more than 13 years with stable and conservative per diem and expense policies. Without consulting members, the politically appointed BCCT Council increased per diem and expense rates. During the term of the interim council, more than \$246,000 was paid to the 19 politically appointed councillors. This unwarranted expenditure of member dues is unacceptable and unnecessary. The BCTF requests the democratically appointed council to adopt the per diem and expense policies that were in place prior to the appointment of the interim BCCT Council.

Recommendation 7—Expenses for appointed councillors

That the BCCT Council request that the provincial government pay the per diem rate expenses for appointed councillors.

Prior to the appointment of the interim BCCT Council, the provincial government paid the per diem costs of appointed councillors. This is consistent with the payment of provincial government appointees serving on various boards and agencies. Without consultation with members, or change in college policy, the former chairperson of the interim council negotiated a change in policy directly with the provincial government. The BCCT registrar has confirmed that there is no official record of this change in financial arrangements. This type of backroom negotiation does nothing to increase member confidence in the work of the college. The BCTF believes that it is imperative that the per diem and other expenses of the appointed councillors be paid by government.

Recommendation 8—BCCT publications

That the BCCT Council discontinue the *Connected* magazine and replace it with a publication similar to the previous college publications, *For the Record* or *Professional Focus*.

The politically appointed BCCT Council established the *CONNECTED* magazine during the 2003–04 school year. It replaced the *Professional Focus* newsletter that was instituted by the appointed college during 2003. Prior to 2003, the BCCT published the *For the Record* newsletter. The *CONNECTED* magazine is a radical departure from previous publications of the college. It was modelled on the Ontario College of Teachers magazine.

In establishing *CONNECTED*, the appointed council claimed that the new BCCT magazine would not cost any more to mail than the *For the Record* publication that was in existence from 1987 to 2003. In addition, the appointed council claimed that with advertising revenue, the magazine would be published on a cost-neutral basis. To date, we have seen no written evidence that cost savings have materialized from advertising revenue or savings in mailing costs.

For many members *CONNECTED* is more than a cost issue; it is a symbol. The BCCT magazine symbolizes and serves to remind members of the provocative attitude of the politically appointed college. Much of the content of the glossy publication does not deal with the mandate of the college. Most of the content in the magazine is more appropriate for publications of the other provincial partner organizations. Teachers have also told us they are offended by the nature and size of the advertising in the publication. This advertising is inappropriate in the most visible publication of the BCCT. No such advertising is found in publications of the Registered Nurses Association of B.C., the Law Society, or the College of Physicians and Surgeons. We question the appropriateness of publishing discipline case summaries in a magazine next to advertisements promoting cottage wineries. Teachers support a return to the previous format of the four-to-eight-page *Report to Members* or *Professional Focus* for communicating to members and others about college business.

PRIVACY AND FAIRNESS

Recommendation 9—Privacy issues

- a. That the BCCT Council change the BCCT application form to delete the sections that require applicants to pledge allegiance to the college and to sign the statement of professional commitment that may waive rights to personal privacy.
- b. That the BCCT Council ensure that any information provided about members be consistent with the freedom-of-information and protection-of-privacy legislation.

Without consultation with members, the politically appointed BCCT Council changed the BCCT application form. The revised form is offensive to teachers. It requires members to pledge allegiance to the college and to sign a statement of professional commitment. The revised form symbolizes the provocative approach that characterized the politically appointed college. It is imperative that the college council review the new application form and other information requirements to ensure that any information provided about members is consistent with freedom-of-information and protection-of-privacy legislation.

PERSON COMPLAINT PROCESS

Recommendation 10—Improving the person complaints process

That the BCCT Council adopt the following practices to address concerns regarding the person complaint process:

a. Local resolution

Where appropriate, the college will continue to encourage complainants to resolve their concerns at a local level prior to accepting a written complaint.

b. Screening complaints

In determining whether to refer a complaint to PISC, the registrar will consider all relevant factors and may decline to refer complaints that:

- i. do not raise allegations that, if proven, would constitute professional misconduct or conduct unbecoming a member of the profession.
- ii. lack sufficient particulars to allow for a proper response.
- iii. are currently before the college by means of another complaint or a report.
- iv. have been adequately dealt with in another process or are otherwise resolved.
- v. are more appropriately dealt with in another process.
- vi. are frivolous, vexatious, or an abuse of process.
- vii. do not disclose conduct serious enough to warrant further action.
- viii. are submitted after a period of unwarranted delay.
- ix. are filed by a complainant who has no direct knowledge or interest in the subject of the complaint.
- x. disclose no reasonable prospect that the allegations could be proven.

c. Expedited screening to reduce delay

Where it is apparent at the initial stages of the intake process that the complaint should not be referred to PISC, the registrar will screen the complaint on an

expedited basis. This screening may occur prior to intake-level investigations or information gathering.

d. Notice to the respondent

The respondent will be provided with notice of the complaint, including all the information provided by the complainant. The respondent will be provided a reasonable opportunity to provide information in reply to the complaint, unless the registrar has determined on an expedited basis, not to refer the complaint to PISC.

e. Confidentiality of complaints

Complaints received by the college are confidential and should be disclosed only to the respondent and not to third parties, except as necessary for investigation purposes or as necessary to address a serious risk to students. The decision to disclose information regarding a risk to students must be made on a case-by-case basis by the registrar or PISC.

All correspondence between the respondent and the college is confidential and will not be disclosed to the complainant or third parties.

f. Communications regarding complaints

Any notice of complaint will include a statement that the college has made no determination on the merit of the complaint and a list of the criteria that the registrar will use to review the complaint.

Any correspondence between the college and the respondent's employer will be copied to the respondent.

Our recommendations regarding the person-complaints process were submitted to the BCCT Council under separate cover in a document titled 'PERSONS'

COMPLAINTS—Revised Submission to the British Columbia College of Teachers (the "College") from the British Columbia Teachers' Federation ("BCTF")—November 19, 2004.

The submission was based on our comments at a BCCT-sponsored consultation session on the person-complaints process with the education partner groups on October 26, 2004.

We understand that the college must have regard for the public interest when processing person complaints. However, we believe that it must also have regard for its members' interests by ensuring that it has a fair and rational process for dealing with complaints. We are proposing changes that are in the public interest as well as the interest of the college, BCTF members, and public education in general.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline proceedings absorb an enormous amount of resources for the college, as well as for the BCTF and other advocacy organizations.

Discipline proceedings are extremely stressful for the members involved. Such stress has a negative effect on members' health, their personal and professional relationships, and on their ability to carry out their teaching duties effectively. Members' colleagues are often

concerned and demoralized by college discipline proceedings, especially when well-respected teachers are subjected to lengthy proceedings on minor allegations.

Efficient and fair procedures are essential in order to ensure that discipline proceedings are carried out in a manner consistent with the interests of the educational system as a whole.

We recommend changes with the following goals in mind:

- Fairness to members of the profession and to the public.
- Efficient use of college resources. Needless duplication of local proceedings should be avoided. Minor matters should be resolved informally where possible. Many serious matters can be, and are currently, resolved through agreement. Agreements should be sought as early as possible in the process in order to reduce costs.
- Minimizing delay. It is very important to members that discipline matters be resolved as promptly as possible.
- Ensuring that college discipline proceedings are effective in maintaining and improving standards of professional conduct. Only a minority of college cases involve deliberate blameworthy misconduct. Many other college cases involve situations where, due to workplace pressures, stress, health problems, inexperience, or poor judgment, a member has behaved in a manner which is regrettable. Such behaviour is not going to be prevented through stressful procedures and harsh penalties. A collaborative and rehabilitative approach is more likely to succeed in ensuring high standards of conduct for the profession. This type of approach also allows the college to recognize and support positive efforts to address problems at the local level.

Recommendation 11—Reporting of discipline by boards

That the BCCT revert to the college procedures that were in place prior to May 2001, that required boards to only report to the college, discipline decisions that they had imposed themselves, and to make it clear to school boards that they are not required to report to the college, minor disciplinary actions, including verbal reprimands, directed against college members.

The college discipline process is very expensive and time consuming and should be utilized for matters that cannot be adequately dealt with at a local level. There is a great deal of duplication of effort between the college and boards on matters that are very minor.

The existing interpretation of Section 16(1) of the *School Act* by the college is imposing unacceptable and entirely unnecessary burdens on both school boards and the college itself in generating, exchanging, and managing numerous reports and files. We are also concerned that this burden is in turn affecting the willingness of boards to impose appropriate discipline in minor matters. Additionally, our members do not want to have every minor infraction reported to the college and perpetually enshrined in a file there.

We are concerned about the college interpretation of Section 16(1) of the *School Act*, which provides that:

If a board dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a member of the College....it must

(a) *without delay, report the dismissal, suspension or other disciplinary action to the council of the college, giving reasons....*

The question is whether every act of an administrative officer is an act of the board for the purposes of this section. When a board, after a hearing, decides to dismiss or suspend a teacher, there is no doubt that that discipline is imposed by the board, and must be reported to the college. When a vice-principal verbally reprimands a teacher for being five minutes late, there is ample room to doubt that the *School Act* requires a full report to the college. The *School Act* carefully distinguishes between acts of the board, and acts of its officials. It is our view that Section 16(1) does not require boards to report discipline other than discipline imposed by the boards themselves.

At a BCCT-sponsored meeting of the education partner groups in 2001, there was general agreement that Section 16(1) did not require the reporting of minor discipline matters to the college.

Recommendation 12—Costs

That the BCCT reverse its policy on seeking costs from members for discipline cases where an adverse finding is made and that it have a general review of its by-laws and policies on costs.

- The threat of costs can intimidate members into making admissions in order to avoid a hearing when, in fact, they may have a legitimate defence.
- The policy limits the hearing panel's discretion with respect to awarding costs.
- The member has no control over the college's costs.
- There is no reciprocal provision for members to be compensated for costs when they have "won" in whole or in part.

Recommendation 13—Publication and members records

That the BCCT suspend publication of disciplinary cases until such time as it has developed appropriate standards governing the publication of teachers' disciplinary cases and the retention of members' records. These could include:

- a. **how long discipline matters will be published and recorded on a member's college record and what process members may use to have their records cleared; and**
- b. **developing fair and rational criteria for establishing when the disciplined teacher's name should be published.**

There are currently no procedures for clearing a member's record; yet in most cases it is counter-productive to have the record continue to affect the member's reputation and employment prospects years after it has been imposed.

The BCCT needs to strike a careful balance between the member's right to privacy and the public interest. Teachers are primarily employees and therefore subject to multiple levels of discipline, and the public has more than one level of authority with its interest in mind. The publication of a teacher's name may have adverse consequences for the education system as it may make the teacher the subject of ridicule by students and colleagues, which sets road blocks for the teacher's re-entry into the workplace. In many

cases, publishing the teacher's name is simply an indirect way of increasing the penalty to that member and serves no legitimate public interest.

Recommendation 14—Appointment of hearing panels

That the BCCT return to the chair ~~of the discipline council~~ the responsibility for appointing discipline panels.

There is no authority under the *Teaching Profession Act* to delegate council's powers of appointment and delegation to the registrar. Section 23(1)(o) of the act allows for delegation of these powers to the chair of the council only.

Appointment by the registrar may also give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias as a result of the involvement of the registrar in discipline cases prior to the hearing stage.

That involvement includes carrying out the following duties under the by-laws:

- Referring reports and complaints to the PISC (by-laws 6.B.01, 6.B.01.1, 6.B.02, 6.B.03, 6.B.04, and 6.B.05). Under these by-laws, the registrar has a duty to review all incoming reports, complaints, and allegations.
- Retaining legal counsel to represent the college when there is a direction to issue a citation (by-law 6.D.01).
- Signing citations issued at the direction of the PISC, when PISC is acting unanimously (by-law 6.E.01).
- Exercising discretion regarding whether to disclose the nature of the citation and its status to the public [by-law 6.E.06 (a)].
- Informing the complainants, the board, or the authority of the issuance of the citation [by-law 6.E.06 (b)].
- Serving a member who is suspended pending a hearing with notice of the suspension, advising the member of their rights, and issuing notification as required by the act (by-law 6.F.03).
- Receiving notice of applications to rescind or vary pre-hearing suspensions (by-law 6.F.04).
- Setting the date, time, and place for a hearing where not set through agreement by college counsel and the respondent (by-law 6.H.01).

Aside from the specific requirements of the by-laws, the registrar may have greater involvement in additional aspects of discipline cases. The registrar and her staff work closely with the counsel retained to prosecute each case.

Recommendation 15—Rescinding citations

That the BCCT amend by-laws 6.E.01(b) and 6.E.02(b) so that either party may ask PISC to reconsider its citation and establish criteria that will support such reconsideration. These may include:

- a. new information that may affect the citation
- b. matters contained in the citation that are not supported by the information available, and
- c. evidence that suggests the matter would be handled more appropriately in an informal way.

It is simply unfair that the member should be at the mercy of the prosecutor in seeking such reconsideration.

Recommendation 16—Discipline by council

That by-law 6.N.01, and related by-laws be amended to ensure that council has an opportunity to review the decisions of the discipline hearing panels with respect to penalty, publication, and costs.

In November 2003, by-laws were amended to fully delegate the authority of council to discipline members to hearing subcommittees. Previously, hearing subcommittees only exercised this authority with the consent of the member, and otherwise made recommendations to council on penalty, publication, and costs.

The new by-laws eliminate any opportunity for the council to correct mistakes made by hearing subcommittees. In the past, the council has declined to follow the recommendations of hearing subcommittees in a variety of cases. In our opinion having the ability to conduct what amounts to an internal review will reduce the number of appeals to the courts. Removing any opportunity for council to review hearing panel decisions is likely to result in more judicial appeals and greater expenditures on legal costs.

Recommendation 17—Guidelines for disclosure

That the college develop guidelines for the disclosure of information regarding outstanding disciplinary matters.

Information regarding allegations before the college are currently disclosed in response to inquiries from other jurisdictions and from potential employers. Others who inquire may be advised that there is a matter pending in relation to the member. This disclosure may occur prior to any initial assessment of whether the allegations have any merit. Changes are necessary in order to ensure fairness for members and compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

BCCT STANDARDS

Recommendation 18

That the BCCT Council initiate a consultation process for reviewing the *Standards of the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in B.C. with teachers*.

The BCCT *Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators of B.C.* were adopted without any consultation with teachers. The standards should be reviewed to ensure that the views of all partners are included. By reviewing the standards, the council will be ensuring that the standards have been discussed and considered by all members of the college.

Recommendation 19

That the BCCT Council meet with the Association of B.C. Deans of Education (ABCDE) to discuss amendments to the *Letter of Understanding on Teacher*

Education between the ABCDE and the BCCT so that teacher education institutions, rather than the BCCT, take responsibility for developing criteria for members for BCCT standards.

Last year, the BCCT Interim Council and the Association of B.C. Deans of Education (ABCDE) signed a letter of understanding regarding the standards and teacher education program development.

Now that the democratic college council is in place, we believe that the Letter of Understanding should be reviewed to ensure that it still accurately reflects the views of both parties. It is our view that the BCCT should establish the standards and that each teacher-education institution should establish its own criteria/indicators within the BCCT standards framework.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/CONTINUING EDUCATION

Recommendation 20—Continuing education policy

That the BCCT Council adopt the following policy regarding professional development/continuing education: The college affirms that professional development is an ongoing process. The college recommends that teacher organizations and others currently providing professional development services to B.C. teachers continue to do so.

For more than 15 years, the BCCT Council acknowledged the important role of the BCTF and other organizations in providing professional development/continuing education programs and services for teachers throughout the province. For these many years, the BCCT recognized that because of the ongoing commitment of B.C. teachers to career-long professional development, there was no need for the college to establish any system of teacher professional development/continuing education.

Since June 1987, the BCCT *By-laws and Policy* booklet contained the following statement on professional development: *The college affirms that professional development is an ongoing process. The college recommends that teacher organizations and others currently providing professional development services to B.C. teachers continue to do so.* During the 2003–04 school year, and without consultation or discussion with the teaching profession, the interim BCCT Council eliminated the statement from the BCCT *By-laws and Policy* booklet.

Quality teaching and learning are facilitated by teachers who are themselves lifelong learners. Throughout their careers, teachers in B.C. participate in a variety of professional development/continuing education activities. Teachers regularly update their skills and knowledge by participating in formal and informal professional development activities. Effective teacher professional development/continuing education enhances student learning, strengthens teaching practice, and recognizes different needs of teachers at different stages of their careers. As active learners, teachers engage in professional development/continuing education to keep on top of changes that affect their work with students. Skilled, enthusiastic teachers are key to maintaining the quality of education.

B.C. teachers have a long history of participating in professional development activities that enhance student learning. Teachers are strongly committed to career-long professional learning. Most B.C. teachers hold undergraduate degrees and a large number hold graduate degrees.

Teachers in B.C. have been supported in their work through the ongoing and consistent professional development/continuing education from the B.C. Teachers' Federation, provincial specialist associations (PSAs) of the BCTF, and BCTF locals. Professional development/continuing education for teachers is most effective when it is directed by teachers themselves. Teacher-directed professional development/continuing education needs to be supported with funding and resources as determined through collective bargaining. Additional in-service education support for the implementation of provincial and/or district programs and curricula should also be available through school districts and the ministry. Universities, colleges, education partner groups, and other organizations also offer professional development and in-service education opportunities in the province.

Annually, every teacher in B.C. participates in a minimum of five days of professional development/continuing education activities on non-instructional days. On those days, teachers are working—developing their skills to enhance student learning. The five non-instructional days (aka PD days) do not shorten the school year. The days were added to the school calendar in 1972 at the request of the teaching profession. Topics for PD days come from the classroom experience of learning and teaching. Teachers decide individually and together the issues to address on those days. They attend workshops and conferences, participate in mentoring programs, pursue self-directed professional development, and undertake many other activities to enhance teaching and learning. They take their new skills back to their classrooms. PD days allow individual teachers, teams of teachers, or whole school staffs to address current issues. PD days are generally held throughout the year so teachers can reflect on and deal with the emerging issues in their schools.

Teachers also participate in the annual implementation training (a sixth non-instructional day) that is organized by school districts for the purpose of implementing provincial and/or district programs.

In addition to the six non-instructional days, teachers spend many hours attending in-service and university programs, taking evening classes and weekend workshops, reading professional journals, and attending summer school. Teachers are using self-directed professional development plans, PD logs, PD portfolios, and other practical strategies as tools for professional learning. Annually, teachers in B.C. participate in a wide variety of formal and informal professional learning activities to enhance student learning.

Teacher professional development/continuing education opportunities in B.C. are provided through:

- workshops, conferences, action research, and other professional programs and services offered through the Professional and Social Issues Division of the B.C. Teachers' Federation (see BCTF PD Online: www.bctf.ca/pdonline).
- conferences, networks, and publications of the 33 PSAs of the BCTF.
- workshops, conferences, action research, networks and publications co-ordinated by professional development committees in all locals of the BCTF.
- informal discussions with colleagues related to teaching and learning.
- professional development/continuing education, in-service, and professional learning offerings of universities, colleges, school districts, the ministry, and other agencies.

In 2001, the Ontario College of Teachers introduced the mandatory Professional Learning Program (PLP). To meet the Ontario recertification requirements (PLP), all college members were expected to complete 14 courses in a five-year period, seven were compulsory. Every course would have a written test or assessment. If a college member failed to comply with the requirements, the college could suspend, then cancel the member's teaching certificate. Teachers were expected to pay for the courses and to take them on their own time. The Ontario program was managed and administered through the burgeoning bureaucracy of the college of teachers.

The PLP created chaos and upheaval in that province. The teachers of Ontario successfully boycotted the program and convinced the opposition Liberal Party to campaign on a platform of eliminating the PLP. When the new Liberal government was elected, it directed the Ontario College of Teachers to eliminate the PLP. The BCCT can learn many lessons from examining the negative impact of the hugely flawed and punitive PLP that was imposed on the teachers of Ontario by the Ontario College of Teachers with support from the Mike Harris Conservative Government.

The BCTF has prepared a background paper on professional development/continuing education in B.C. The paper will be forwarded to the BCCT Council under separate cover.

COLLEGE EVENTS

Recommendation 21

That in order to organize a BC College of Teachers forum that is meaningful and relevant to the members and education partners groups, the BCCT establish a program advisory committee consisting of representatives from B.C. School Superintendents Association, B.C. Principals and Vice-principals Association, B.C. School Trustees' Association, B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Council, Association of B.C. Deans of Education, B.C. Teachers' Federation, and members of the BCCT Council.

For more than a decade, the BCCT sponsored an annual forum on education issues. The forum participants included teachers, administrators, university faculty, parents, and others in the educational community. An advisory committee of education partners provided advice on the programs for the forums. This approach to planning produced BCCT events that were practical, relevant, and timely. Now is a good time for the BCCT

to return to a collaborative approach to program planning by re-establishing the collaborative forum format.

Recommendation 22

That the BCCT Council delete Policy P1.L.01 College-Sponsored Conferences. (P1.L.01—Former College Council members will be invited to register for College-Sponsored conferences at no charge.)

One of the final acts of the politically appointed council was the adoption of the policy P1.L.01. This policy statement encumbers the current council with the obligation to pay the conference costs of all former college councillors. Since the inception of the BCCT, more than 150 councillors have been on the BCCT Council. This policy statement places an onerous and unreasonable expectation on the current council. If former councillors want to attend BCCT conferences and events, they should pay along with all other attendees.

COLLEGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Recommendation 23

That the BCCT registrar consult with the education partner groups and with college members to discuss issues and concerns arising from the 2004 BCCT elections and that a report with recommendations for improving the 2005 BCCT Council elections be prepared for the January 2005 BCCT Council meeting.

During the 2004 college council election, a number of concerns were identified by members. Some problems that were identified include incorrect addresses, ballots mailed to members in the wrong zone, the inability of members to speak with college staff re election concerns, censoring of information in candidate biography statements, inadequate timelines for election, inaccurate BCCT database of member addresses, ballots not mailed to members who returned previous college correspondence with "return to sender."

A consultation session with education partner groups could quickly identify problems during the 2004 council election. It is critical that such problems not occur during the 2005 council elections.

Recommendation 24

That the BCCT Council amend By-law 3.A.03 as follows: *The representatives of each zone shall be elected by a secret ballot of members of the college having their places of employment by a board in that zone or, if not employed by a board, having their principal residences in that zone.*

Since the inception of the college, all elections for councillors have been held in accordance with conditions in the recommendation above. Without notice or consultation, the politically appointed council changed this by-law. Members should be able to vote for councillors in the zone where they are employed. This ensures that members of the council are voting for members with whom they are familiar.

MATTERS AFFECTING FRENCH-SPEAKING TEACHERS

Recommendation 25

That the BCCT develop a plan for translating appropriate college documents into French.

Many members of the college are employed in French Immersion or Programme Francophone schools. Their principle language of communication and instruction is French. It is important that appropriate college documents are available in both French and English.

Recommendation 26

That BCCT records be modified to recognize French-speaking teachers by surname first.

Legal documents for teachers educated in Quebec are issued with the surname first. The first and other names are listed following the surname. It is our assessment that hundreds of teachers from Quebec have the first name Joseph or Marie. For our French-speaking members, this is a sensitive issue. As a matter of respect for the French culture, we request the BCCT to acknowledge the difference in Quebec practices by adjusting their records accordingly.

Recommendation 27

That the BCCT amend relevant by-laws and policies to fully recognize the graduation credentials of teachers who have graduated from teacher education institutions in Quebec.

Many teachers from Quebec are frustrated by the BCCT certification requirements that do not fully recognize the qualifications from various teacher education institutions in Quebec. In order to accommodate the shortage of French-speaking teachers in the province, to promote the recruitment and retention of French-speaking members, and to acknowledge the value of Canadian educational institutions, the BCCT is requested to modify relevant by-laws and policies to fully recognize the graduation credentials of teachers who have graduated from teacher education institutions in Quebec.

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Distribution: Executive Committee, Local Presidents, Local Representatives, College Advisory Committee, Professional Issues Advisory Committee, PSA Council, Minister of Education, Deputy Minister of Education, Education Partner Groups, Administrative Staff

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