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ON THE COVER  Debbie Leighton-Stephens – district principal of Aboriginal education in the Prince Rupert school district
PHOTOGRAPHY  Hamid Attie
WELCOME TO LEARN MAGAZINE

learn replaces TC, the magazine of the former BC College of Teachers. With the transition of the College to the new Teacher Regulation Branch comes an improved and more informative publication. learn is intended to support and honour the professionalism of teachers, assist in the continued improvement of your practice and inform you about education issues in British Columbia. We know that you have busy lives in and out of your workplace, so our focus is to bring you content that contributes to your important role as an educator.
We also want to give you an opportunity to suggest ideas or topics of interest that you would like to see featured in the magazine. And we invite you to tell us about an educator whom you think we should profile in an upcoming issue. We know many of you are achieving great things through innovative practices in schools across the province, and we look forward to showcasing and celebrating your success in these pages.

Another way you can engage with your colleagues and share ideas and insights is to participate in the ongoing dialogue around BC’s Education Plan. Introduced in the fall of 2011, the plan sets out a vision for ensuring our education system and, most importantly, our students, keep pace with a changing world.

All education partners need to consider delivering education in new and innovative ways that take into account the unique needs and interests of BC children. While our students will continue to learn and grow under the leadership of first-rate educators, we must also continually seek new tools to better prepare students for the future. Many of you are already leading the way on that path. In this issue you’ll find a special insert with more information on how you can join the many teachers already participating in the conversation on BC’s Education Plan.

In addition, every issue of the magazine will report on discipline decisions that provide critical information about professional conduct. Because we all want to keep children safe, it is important that we publish the decisions to ensure the accountability of those involved and convey the standards expected of certificate holders.

All certificate holders will receive a copy of learn in the mail. If you would prefer to read the magazine on our website, you can sign up to receive an email notifying you when the next issue is available online. To choose this option, enter the certificate holders area at www.bcteacherregulation.ca and edit your profile, indicating that you would like to receive an email notification rather than a printed copy of the magazine.

We look forward to receiving your comments on learn magazine and its content. Let us know what you would like to read about by emailing us your suggestions at trb.magazine@gov.bc.ca. We hope you enjoy, learn from and find inspiration in this and future issues. And we hope this publication becomes another way to share in a meaningful, constructive conversation about teaching and learning in British Columbia.

I have been using Facebook in one of my classes for several years and have not experienced the issues implied in the article. Clearly, I do not use my personal Facebook account for this activity. Instead, I created a completely separate Facebook account that contains no personal information and no “friends” outside of my classroom. Students are added by request only and then deleted once they no longer belong to the class. The Facebook group is closed and I am the sole administrator. The settings are checked and re-checked regularly to ensure privacy.

I have not had any issues with using Facebook in this way. It has provided students with meaningful dialogue about course topics and even allows them to demonstrate the application of their learning outside the classroom. I would recommend Facebook rather than blogging, where, from what I have seen, there is one speaker and many listeners...sounds like many classrooms of yore.

SANDRA MILNE | LADYSMITH
THE MANDATE OF THE TEACHER REGULATION BRANCH

The Teacher Regulation Branch is a part of the Ministry of Education. Its mandate is to regulate educators and is empowered through the Teachers Act to ensure that educators who work with students in BC classrooms are competent and suitable for the important role they play in society.

KEEP IN TOUCH

learn and other communications of the Branch are the means by which the Branch informs its certificate holders about professional regulation in BC. Certificate holders are responsible for reading these communications to ensure they are aware of current standards and other professional matters.

To subscribe to learn via email, simply edit your profile in the certificate holders area at www.bcteacherregulation.ca.

Readers’ questions and comments about learn are welcome and may be submitted to trb.magazine@gov.bc.ca.

learn’s EDITORIAL POLICY

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Just over 10 percent of students in BC’s schools are Aboriginal, and the number is growing. Yet in 2009-2010, the six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students was only 51 percent. Student satisfaction studies show that Aboriginal students are less likely to feel safe at school, more likely to be bullied and four times as likely to be in a special education program as their non-Aboriginal counterparts. While extremely troubling, this data plays a crucial role in helping teachers, schools and districts recognize the issues, plan initiatives and measure the results of their efforts.

But as Debbie Jeffrey, the executive director of the First Nations Education Steering Committee, says, “repeatedly weighing the cow won’t fatten it – we have to pay attention to the data and act on it.” There is clearly a need for doing everything we can – sooner rather than later – to create supportive learning environments that engage and inspire Aboriginal students and increase student success. This includes, says Jeffrey, “supporting teachers to better meet the needs of Aboriginal learners, both pre-service and in-service.”

The low graduation rates of Aboriginal students are not new. The issue has concerned educators for decades, with various initiatives bringing about gradual improvement in several key indicators. Jeffrey points out that there are areas where First Nations learners thrive and succeed and that learning more about these success stories can help drive change province-wide.

A HOLISTIC AND DISTRICT-WIDE APPROACH TO ABORIGINAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

One such pocket of success is Prince Rupert, where the school district recently saw the six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students increase by nine percent over the prior year. The completion rate is still low, yet the district is pleased to be moving in the right direction. Other measures show that the 1200 Aboriginal learners are on par or catching up to their peers at every level, from kindergarten through grade 12.

There has been a long-term district-wide effort to support Aboriginal learners, who make up 59 percent of students. “I believe the most critical factor is our emphasis on making personal connections with the kids,” says Debbie Leighton-Stephens, district principal of Aboriginal education. “You really need that foundation of trust. Kids need to know, feel and see that they are welcome in the classroom.”
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Welcoming students into the classroom takes many forms. The district has developed numerous resources for all grades, ensuring that First Nations culture is reflected in the curriculum and resources used each day in the classrooms. Cross-curricular theme units are designed to make science, math, social studies and English more relevant to Aboriginal learners, and teachers are dedicated to integrating Aboriginal content in all subjects in all grades. Leighton-Stephens also praises the value of province-wide courses such as BC First Nations Studies 12 and English 10/11/12 First Peoples in helping to maintain the interest of students in high school, a particularly vulnerable period for many students.

Language is one of the most important ways to weave First Nations culture and perspectives into the classroom. The Sm’algyax language is offered from K-12 in the majority of schools in the district, taught by a team of 12 teachers to more than 600 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. “When students know that where they come from is valued,” says Leighton-Stephens, “it becomes much easier for them to establish those bonds of trust that are so essential for learning.”

Initiatives and interventions for early learners are also making a difference, ensuring that students start school with a strong foundation for learning. The Prince Rupert school district has four StrongStart programs, and it has established many popular early literacy initiatives that build partnerships between home and school, including PALS, POPS and the Summer Read and Play Program. These programs reflect a holistic view of each student that also includes his or her family, community and history. It all adds up.

**A “STRONGSTART” PROGRAM FOR NEW TEACHERS**

The concerted efforts of Prince Rupert teachers and education leaders are paying off. But what can be done to replicate this and other pockets of success province-wide? One of the most important initiatives, says Jeffrey, has been emphasized in “report after report, decade after decade: better equip teachers to meet the needs of First Nations learners.”

Indeed, in 1999, the BC Task Force on Aboriginal Education pointed out that “Any strategy to produce fundamental change in the public school system to improve the success of Aboriginal students must be based on teacher awareness and commitment to the change.” →→
While professional development offers opportunities to increase teacher awareness, over the past few years education leaders have recognized that a more far-reaching impact could come by changing the course requirements for teacher education programs. After extensive consultation between the First Nations Education Steering Committee and other BC education partner groups, the BC College of Teachers passed a policy in 2011 requiring that all graduates of the province’s teacher education programs complete mandatory coursework in First Nations studies.

Starting in September 2012, all teachers graduating from BC’s teacher education programs must complete three credits in First Nations pedagogy and issues related to the historical and current context of First Nations, Inuit and Metis learners. The requirement will make it more likely that new teachers understand both the complex issues faced by First Nations students and the many strengths they bring to their learning. As well, it is hoped that teachers will be able to confront the biases that they may bring into the classroom and to integrate Aboriginal culture and perspectives in a respectful and culturally appropriate way.

Jeffrey says that First Nations educators and leaders “have the opportunity to engage with education partners to transform the education system, as real change happens in the classroom first” and they are hopeful that this will be a springboard for consistently improving the quality of instruction and bringing about tangible results in Aboriginal student achievement. “This new process is an excellent example of what can be achieved working in partnership with First Nations,” says Jeffrey. “The staff at the BC College of Teachers [now the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education] showed remarkable respect and recognition for First Nations, and they worked...”

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**NEW CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the mandatory three credits in First Nations studies, as of September 2012, students in BC’s teacher education programs must complete three credits in special education, including diagnosis, planning for instruction, and assessment and evaluation. These new requirements will help teachers meet the needs of all students in our classrooms.
“Partnerships between the university, language communities and accrediting bodies ensure students receive the support they need to learn their traditional languages.”

Other initiatives include a new Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization at the University of Victoria that was developed by Lorna Williams, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Knowledge and Learning. The degree is designed to be delivered in First Nations communities around the province and to build capacity to keep First Nations languages flourishing while preparing students to become teachers of the language.

Williams praises the collegial nature of the endeavour, stating, “Partnerships between the university, language communities and accrediting bodies ensure students receive the support they need to learn their traditional languages. These partnerships help maintain the connections between languages and the land and the people, while giving students access to a wide range of resources to keep their languages alive and thriving.”

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“A concussion is a brain injury that disrupts the normal functioning of the brain,” says Robyn Littleford. “The tricky thing is that because you can’t see the injury, people don’t always take the steps needed to ensure a complete recovery.”

Littleford is the department head of the GF Strong School Program, a provincial resource program operated by the Vancouver School Board to meet the needs of adolescents with brain injuries. She admits that while the public is much more aware of the risk and seriousness of concussions, we still don’t appreciate the complexity of the recovery process.

What we do know, however, is that students who have had a concussion often have a long and slow journey to wellness. “If someone breaks a leg, we don’t expect them to resume their physical activities the next day. Yet when a child has a concussion, we might tell them to take a day or two off, and then encourage them to get back to school. But going back to school can be way too much. It will simply overload the brain and impede recovery.”

Littleford asks teachers to be aware of both the cognitive and physical effects of a concussion. Students who’ve had a concussion exhibit a wide range of symptoms, including memory issues, difficulties in concentrating, slower information processing, and having a hard time understanding concepts or expressing ideas. On the physical side, someone with constant headaches and fatigue is not in any state to be learning well. Increased sensitivity to noise and lights also makes most classrooms a challenge.

“One of the biggest mistakes educators, parents and students make is believing that the student can catch up on any missed work and keep up with new work. It’s just impossible for students recovering from a concussion to achieve this. If a student with a concussion is pushed too quickly, you can be sure that their decrease in academic achievement will be fast and furious.”

If a child has had a concussion, parents need to inform the teachers and school as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made. Teachers may need to offer a reduced schedule, cut back on the number of assignments, adjust expectations and make other modifications to meet the student’s physical and academic limitations. Ongoing communication with the student, parents...
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and any other support workers to monitor progress will help ensure that the student’s workload is appropriate.

Littleford advocates a slow return to school, with students remaining symptom free at each new level of intensity or workload until they are ultimately operating at full capacity again. “Students will need downtime. They will need to sleep and to limit distractions. Recovery times are different for each person, but pushing too soon simply overworks the brain’s processing ability and will delay recovery.”

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Resources for Teachers

There are many sources of information for teachers, including a brochure developed by Littleford called “Teaching Kids with Concussion: A Guide for Classroom Teachers” available at http://brainstreams.ca/sites/default/files/GFStrong-VSB-concussion%20brochure_6.pdf. This brochure lists numerous provincial organizations and websites that can help teachers understand the effects of a concussion and how they can support students dealing with a brain injury.
A NEW MODEL FOR TEACHER REGULATION
Government is now responsible for certifying teachers and the new British Columbia Teachers’ Council is responsible for determining the qualifications that are required to teach in BC and for setting standards of conduct and competency.

A NEW MODEL FOR TEACHER REGULATION
The beginning of the new year brought changes to the way the teaching profession is regulated in the province. On January 9, 2012, the Teachers Act came into force, creating a new model for certifying, regulating and disciplining teachers.

The new legislation dissolved the BC College of Teachers and transferred its responsibilities to the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education. Government is now responsible for certifying teachers and the new Teachers’ Council is responsible for determining the qualifications that are required to teach in BC and for setting standards of conduct and competency. The Discipline and Professional Conduct Board will be responsible for disciplining teachers who fail to meet these standards.

THE TEACHERS’ COUNCIL
A 15-member BC Teachers’ Council will set standards in the areas of teacher education, certification, conduct and competence. The Council will be made up of a mix of elected and appointed certificate holders: three appointed by the Minister of Education based on nominations from the BCTF, five practising teachers elected from regions across the province and seven appointed by the Minister from nominees of various education partners, including the BC Principals’ and Vice Principals’ Association, the BC School Trustees Association, the BC School Superintendents Association, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Federation of Independent School Associations, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, and the Association of BC Deans of Education. A non-voting senior Ministry of Education representative will also sit on this Council.

The two primary functions of the Teachers’ Council are to set standards for teacher certification, conduct and competence; and to approve teacher education programs for certification purposes. All members of the Council are bound by oath to represent the interests of the public over the interests of teachers or other stakeholders in the education system.

Elections are being held in March for the five elected positions, and the new Council will be announced shortly thereafter.

DISCIPLINARY AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BOARD
Under the new legislation, discipline issues will be addressed by the Disciplinary and Professional Conduct Board. Nine members of the Teachers’ Council will be appointed by the Minister to serve on the Board, with four of these members chosen from the councillors nominated by the BCTF or elected by teachers. The Board will serve as a pool from which members will be chosen to sit on hearing panels regarding discipline and fitness cases.
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The Commissioner, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, will review and investigate all reports concerning fitness, conduct and competency and decide what action to take.

For example, the Commissioner can decide to take no action, request an investigation, call a hearing or seek a consent resolution agreement.

In those cases where the Commissioner believes a discipline hearing is required, he or she will appoint three persons to sit on a hearing panel. Only one BCTF representative will be selected to sit on a panel, and the Commissioner may appoint panelists who are not members of the Board. Except in very specific circumstances, discipline hearings will be open to the public.

THE ONLINE REGISTRY WILL INCLUDE ALL TEACHERS

The Teacher Regulation Branch will continue to maintain both the online registry of certificate holders and the employers’ list. The publicly accessible online registry can be used to search teachers by name to see if they hold a certificate and whether they have been subject to any discipline. The employers’ list, which can only be accessed by employers, can be used to search teachers by name and view a record of where they have taught in BC, as well as whether they have been subject to any discipline. The Teacher Regulation Branch will issue all BC certificates of qualification, including those restricted to teaching in independent schools. Both the online registry and the employers’ list will include all certificate holders as well as persons teaching on a letter of permission.

HOW HAS THE TEACHERS ACT AFFECTED BC’S TEACHERS?

As a teacher in BC, you will likely notice a few changes. However, the requirement to hold
a teaching certificate or letter of permission in order to teach in the province’s public, independent and First Nations schools has not changed.

The Teachers Act certifies practising teachers for employment purposes. This means that all retired or inactive teachers who previously held a non-practising certificate were required to upgrade their certificate to practising status by early January if they wished to maintain their certification.

The professional standards that guide the work of teachers – the Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC – will continue to apply. The new Teachers’ Council will be responsible for maintaining, revising and updating these standards.

Finally, the annual fee for 2012-2013 has been reduced from $120 to $80 per year. If you are a certificate holder employed in a public school district or independent school authority in BC, this fee will be automatically deducted from your annual salary. A certificate holder working as a teacher-on-call for more than one district or authority will need to designate which district or authority will make the deduction.

RESTORING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN BC EDUCATION

The new Act and regulatory structures were created in direct response to concerns raised by former BC College of Teachers council members who were supported by education sector partner organizations. These concerns were confirmed by the Fact Finder appointed by the Minister of Education to investigate the BC College of Teachers and described in A College Divided: Report of the Fact Finder on the BC College of Teachers. By establishing a new Teachers’ Council and a more transparent and responsive disciplinary process, the new legislation seeks to restore the public’s confidence in the integrity of the profession.

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Between now and the 2015-2016 school year, all Grade 6 students in Québec will be required to take an intensive English language course. More specifically, half of their school year will be devoted to learning the language of Shakespeare. In a context of openness to the world, it goes without saying that knowledge of a second language is a major asset.

This thrilling project poses a challenge, however, with respect to the recruitment of qualified teachers. Québec schools will need more teachers to offer this new intensive English program, in addition to courses in English as a second language, which are given from the first year of elementary school through to the end of secondary school.

If you hold a teaching licence from another Canadian province or territory, you could become a member of our team of teachers of English as a second language. To join, you will be required to meet certain conditions and to write a language examination. You can understand, of course, that Québec’s school boards must ensure that their ESL teachers are proficient in French so that they can communicate, orally and in writing, with parents as well as their colleagues.

You may also be asked to enroll in a training program for teachers of English as a second language. This microprogram, which comprises five courses, is funded by the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec (MELS).

For more information, please visit the MELS Web site at www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/dftps/.
Click first on the “Autorisation d’enseigner” tab, then on “Pour les titulaires d’une autorisation d’enseigner délivrée au Canada, à l’extérieur du Québec.” Finally, click on the “English” tab. You can then download an information document entitled Terms and Conditions for Obtaining a Québec Teaching Permit - For holders of a teaching licence issued in Canada, but outside Québec.

RESTORING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN BC EDUCATION

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These are just some of the defining features of Wildflower School, a multi-aged program of four classes at Nelson’s Central School that will be expanded next year by an additional class in Nelson and a new class in Creston.

“The direction we’re heading as a province with the Education Plan isn’t about changing students,” says Jeff Jones, superintendent of the Kootenay Lake school district. “It’s about creating the learning environments that allow students to be challenged academically at a level that’s appropriate for them and that supports them to develop their talents and skills. Wildflower is just one example of how a group of people have come together to create such an environment.”
What started as a program operating out of a church basement is now an established and extremely popular school within a school. At the Central Education Centre in Nelson, three classes of six- to twelve-year-olds and one class of twelve- to fifteen-year-olds collaborate with teachers and parents to plan their educational program.

“Parents are part of the educational program planning,” explains Jones. “They are co-partners in the program and they must commit to working within the classroom alongside the teacher on a regular basis. They also have to oversee a portion of the program by home-schooling their child one day a week.”

Personalized learning is at the heart of Wildflower’s approach, with each student basically following their own Individual Education Plan. Assessment for learning is ongoing and continuous, with teachers and parents constantly tweaking the program and activities for each student as needed. With an emphasis on continuous progress rather than meeting grade-specific learning outcomes, Wildflower report cards are also different from the norm. They do not include a letter grade (although parents can request to see the grade if they wish), and they focus on formative rather than summative assessments.

At Wildflower, learning is not confined to the classroom. Students are encouraged to grapple with real-world problems and issues, and to see themselves as productive and participating citizens. “Students recently made borscht and sandwiches for a local outreach program,” says Jones. “It’s not just making a meal or participating in...”
service activities – it’s students using their inquiry and critical-thinking skills to really understand their local community and to find avenues for making a difference."

Jones emphasizes that many of the elements of Wildflower that are seen as progressive are already being used by teachers across the district and province. “The desire to create inquiry-based personalized learning environments for students is not new, and most teachers work hard to create opportunities that are unique to their students’ skills, interests and abilities. The Wildflower program creates a very specific learning environment to pursue this goal, in an interesting and unique collaboration with parents, students and the community at large.”

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**CLOSE UP**

*Location:* Nelson  
*Number of classes:* 4  
*Age range:* 6-15  
*News:* One class to be added in Nelson and another in Creston in September 2012.

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LIFE IN THE END ZONE

Wally Buono knows a thing or two about coaching and teaching. The former head coach of the BC Lions has the distinction of leading five teams to Grey Cup wins and holding the CFL record for the greatest number of coaching wins ever: 254 over the course of his remarkable 30-year career.

Results like these only happen when the person at the top knows what it takes to bring out the best in each member of the team.

“Contrary to common perception,” he says, “football is not just a game of brute force. It’s very cerebral, involving the construction of countless plays and requiring players to have incredible levels of communication, awareness and analysis. As a coach, to make it all work, you need to recognize that not everyone learns the same way. You need to diversify the way you teach each player to line up with how that player learns best. Some need a classroom environment, others work best with visual feedback, and some need lots of verbal instruction. And then there’s the repetition on the field where it all comes together.”

Buono’s thoughts on teaching and coaching have evolved over his professional life, but they are built on his undergraduate studies and early career. With a Bachelor of Arts degree in physical education, he worked as a permanent substitute teacher in the off-season during his early professional football career with the Montreal Alouettes.

The former head coach of the BC Lions led five teams to Grey Cup wins and holds the CFL record for the greatest number of coaching wins ever: 254 over the course of his remarkable 30-year career. He is a four-time winner of the CFL Coach of the Year award.
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The perspective of a natural teacher comes through when he reflects on his record-making achievements in football. He acknowledges that the easy thing is to just measure the number of wins, but that ultimately this is just a number. “On the football field, an individual doesn’t win the game – it’s a shared process. The real legacy you hope to leave behind is your effect on others. Have you helped people grow as individuals and players? Have you inspired them to achieve their goals? These are the important questions.”

From his own personal experience, Buono credits the Jesuit teachers at his high school for being role models and for challenging students to live up to high standards. He also speaks fondly of his peewee football coach, Al Phaneuf, who was a significant early influence. “At a certain age, I could have got involved in sports or trouble. My coach took an interest, giving a group of us a shared direction and a purpose. And he gave us his time. As a young kid, it was very important for me to get involved in sports – it was something I felt good about, having that sense of belonging.”

His success on the field led to a football scholarship at Idaho State University, 10 seasons as a player with the Montreal Alouettes and an illustrious coaching career in Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver. “Who knows where I would have ended up without that early influence of my peewee coach,” he says.

Continuing in their father’s footsteps, two of Buono’s daughters are both teachers. “Teaching is an incredibly important profession, one that doesn’t get the respect it deserves given the far-reaching influence that teachers have on our young people.”
After a courageous solo bicycle trek of 40,000 kilometres around the world, crossing six continents and cycling through more than 30 countries, Vancouver teacher Michael Schratter is finally home. When he set out on his “Ride Don’t Hide” journey on August 1, 2010, all he had was a bike, a knapsack and a determination to live out a dream to create awareness and help empower people who, like himself, have experienced mental health challenges. Taking off a year-and-a-half from his job as a grade five teacher at David Oppenheimer Elementary School, Michael used his own funds to finance the journey so that all funds raised could be donated to the Canadian Mental Health Association’s child and youth mental health programs. Throughout his expedition, Michael documented a mind-boggling array of experiences on his blog – from encountering giant beetles in Slovenia, behemoth wasps in Argentina and stinky durians in Malaysia, to drinking cobra blood vodka in Vietnam. He then proposed to his girlfriend in Hong Kong. For more information about his global expedition, visit www.ridedonthide.com.

BC EDUCATOR COMPLETES GLOBAL EXPEDITION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

ANNUAL FEE FOR 2012-2013

To retain a valid BC Ministry of Education certificate, certificate holders must pay the annual fee of $80 by May 31, 2012. For most educators, this fee will be automatically deducted from their earnings and remitted to the Teacher Regulation Branch by their board of education or independent school authority. However, if you are not currently employed by a board of education or independent school authority, you will need to pay this fee yourself to retain your certificate. Teachers-on-call who are working for more than one district or authority will also have to choose which employer will pay the fee on their behalf. For more information on the annual fee and methods of payment, please visit www.bcteacherregulation.ca/CertificateServices/FeeInformation.aspx.
NEW ANIMAL CARE CENTRE AT THE GREATER VANCOUVER ZOO
A new Animal Care Centre at the Greater Vancouver Zoo will improve the quality of care provided to animals on site. The $1 million facility will house a quarantine area for new arrivals, a hospital to treat sick and injured animals and a food preparation area. Slated for completion in July 2012, the 23-room centre will make it easier to meet the needs of the zoo’s animals.

MAKING RESOURCES ACCESSIBLE TO ALL
Funded by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, the Accessible Resource Centre – British Columbia (ARC-BC) provides digital or alternate format materials for students with a perceptual disability such as a visual impairment, physical disability or comprehension disability. ARC-BC collects, produces and distributes K-12 curricular resources to school districts, supporting over 4000 educators and thousands of students. Files are offered in a variety of formats, including those accessed on a computer or other electronic devices such as iPads or Braille Note Takers, as well as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices. If you have a student who you feel may benefit from ARC-BC, visit the website www.arc-bc.org for more information.

BC ORGANIZATION OFFERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO SCHOOLS
The Elements Society is a registered non-profit organization operating in Alberta and British Columbia. It educates, inspires and empowers individuals and communities to conserve energy and water, reduce waste and protect the environment. Destination Conservation, one of the Elements Society’s projects, is a student-driven program that brings environmental education into schools and involves not only students and teachers but administrators, custodians and parents as well. For more information, visit www.elementssociety.ca.

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DISCIPLINE CASE SUMMARIES

We are committed to keeping children safe and maintaining the reputation of educators by making sure certificate holders are competent, ethical and trustworthy. By publishing discipline case summaries, we enhance the transparency of the processes and decisions of the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education. It also ensures accountability for the educators involved in the cases, as well as articulating the standards expected of certificate holders.

The following discipline case summaries are decisions made before the transition from the BC College of Teachers to the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education.

Discipline Hearing Sub-Committee

MICHAEL MATTHEW JAMES BUNYAK admitted to and was found guilty of professional misconduct. Between January 8, 2008 and January 20, 2009, Mr. Bunyak was employed as a teacher-on-call at a secondary school when the incidents took place. He was found to have failed to follow a lesson plan and showed students an inappropriate and unauthorized movie, which relates to car theft, titled Gone in 60 Seconds. Further, Mr. Bunyak admitted that he failed to maintain control over classroom behaviour, referred to students in derogatory terms, mocked a student’s religion and heritage, and was disrespectful and insensitive to a student’s feelings. Mr. Bunyak entered into a Statement of Agreed Facts and Disposition (the “Agreement”) with the College. In the Agreement, Mr. Bunyak agreed that his actions constituted professional misconduct. On December 12, 2011, the Discipline Hearing Sub-Committee (the “Sub-Committee”) accepted the Agreement and ordered that Mr. Bunyak’s certificate of qualification be suspended for 10 weeks. The Sub-Committee declined to award costs against Mr. Bunyak, since the College was not seeking costs due to his lack of cooperation during the hearing. €

DOUGLAS ANGUS GRANT was found guilty of professional misconduct. In June 2005, while employed as a teacher-on-call, Mr. Grant failed to provide adequate supervision and instruction to students in a computer lab class. He also used a school computer for personal purposes while responsible for student instruction. Additionally, Mr. Grant behaved in a confrontational and disrespectful manner toward the school principal and the school district’s director of human resources. On December 13, 2010, the Sub-Committee found Mr. Grant guilty of professional misconduct. On September 1, 2011, the Sub-Committee rendered its decision on penalty, costs and publication. The Sub-Committee unanimously ordered that Mr. Grant be issued a reprimand and that he pay $500 in costs to the College due to his lack of cooperation during the hearing. €

Consent Resolution Agreements

WELDON CHEUNG admitted to professional misconduct and agreed that his conduct was contrary to College Standards 1 and 2. In January 2011, Mr. Cheung was employed as a physical education teacher at a secondary school when, according to a district investigation, he left his PE 11/12 class unsupervised while he had a 40-45 minute conversation with a female student in the hallway outside his class. During this conversation, Mr. Cheung tried to encourage the student not to drop out of his class and, in so doing, he referred to unrelated and inappropriate hypothetical situations, used inappropriate language about the student’s personal relationship with her boyfriend and referred to his own personal life and sexual relationships. On July 28, 2011, the Preliminary Investigation Sub-Committee (“PISC”) approved the Consent Resolution Agreement in which Mr. Cheung agreed that the College would issue him a reprimand and that he would successfully complete the College’s professional boundaries workshop. €

DARYL JAMES HEBDITCH admitted to conduct unbecoming a member of the College. Mr. Hebditch was employed as a secondary school teacher when, in June 2003, two allegations of misconduct arose. The school where Mr. Hebditch taught received a report that he was involved in sexual relationships with two male students. The investigation into the allegations was inconclusive. In October 2006, a new investigation was launched. At this time, one of the students stated during his interview that Mr. Hebditch had frequently
initiated unwanted physical contact. The student also stated that Mr. Hebditch had frequently made comments to him regarding his physical appearance, which made him feel uncomfortable. On March 11, 2011, PISC approved the Consent Resolution Agreement in which Mr. Hebditch agreed not to reapply for a College certificate of qualification for a period of no less than 15 years. Mr. Hebditch’s College certificate of qualification was cancelled on November 1, 2008 for non-payment of fees.

CARTER BRENT MACKAY admitted to conduct unbecoming a member of the College and agreed that his conduct was contrary to College Standard 2. In April 2009, from a position on his property outside of his home, Mr. Mackay used his 22-calibre rifle to shoot a dog in the yard across the street from his home. The dog that Mr. Mackay shot had previously attacked Mr. Mackay’s own elderly dog. Mr. Mackay then fired his rifle twice more, missing the animal but hitting the dog owner’s house. Prior to the arrival of the police, Mr. Mackay told a witness not to say anything to the police. Mr. Mackay paid the veterinary bill for the dog. On March 17, 2010, Mr. Mackay was convicted of careless use of a firearm and wilfully causing unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal, pursuant to sections 86(1) and 445.1(1)(a) of the Criminal Code of Canada respectively. On September 23, 2011, PISC approved the Consent Resolution Agreement in which Mr. Mackay agreed that the College would issue him a reprimand.

RICHARD ALLEN RABEY admitted to professional misconduct and agreed that his conduct was contrary to College Standards 1, 2 and 3. During a grade nine science class, Mr. Rabey used inappropriate language when talking to a student. Specifically, after he gave several students detention and one student questioned the action, Mr. Rabey replied “you should be smart enough to figure that out.” The student persisted and matters escalated so that Mr. Rabey told the student to “shut your mouth” and “shut up.” On July 28, 2011, PISC approved the Consent Resolution Agreement in which Mr. Rabey agreed that the College would issue him a reprimand and that he would complete other conditions.

MICHAEL FREDERICK RYBACHUK admitted to professional misconduct and agreed that his conduct was contrary to College Standard 2. The College was notified that a district investigation found that Mr. Rybachuk had attempted to humiliate and intimidate a colleague and that his behaviour met the definition of harassment. In June 2009, a teacher asked Mr. Rybachuk for his assistance with building a stage for graduation ceremonies. In response, Mr. Rybachuk asked the teacher why she had never requested Mr. Rybachuk’s partner, also a teacher, to act as a teacher-on-call for her class. The teacher was upset by this exchange and discussed the conversation with two staff members in the school office. Two days after the exchange occurred, Mr. Rybachuk hand-delivered a note to the teacher. The note stated that he would make public details of the teacher’s private life. The teacher felt threatened and bullied by the note. On July 28, 2011, PISC approved the Consent Resolution Agreement in which Mr. Rybachuk agreed that the College would issue him a reprimand.

Conduct Review Sub-Ccommittee

GARY NICHOLAS SEMCHUK was employed as an elementary school teacher from 1979 until 2008. He taught as a teacher-on-call and later as a full-time teacher with the school district. In May 2008, Mr. Semchuk was charged under the Criminal Code of Canada with touching for a sexual purpose contrary to section 151 and sexual assault contrary to sections 246.1 and 271(1) respectively. As a result of the charges pertaining to female students, it was determined in August 2010 that Mr. Semchuk presented a risk of sexual abuse to children, pursuant to section 4 of the Criminal Records Review Act. In July 2011, Mr. Semchuk was convicted by the BC Supreme Court of one count of sexual assault for a 1986 offence. In October 2011, the Court imposed a suspended sentence, followed by a two-year probationary period, a 10-year firearm prohibition and a mandatory $100 victim surcharge. Further, the Court ordered that Mr. Semchuk provide a DNA sample, have no contact with specified former students and their families, and no contact with females under the age of 16 except with written parental consent. In addition, the Court ordered that Mr. Semchuk be registered on the sex offender identification registry for 20 years and imposed a publication ban pursuant to section 486.4(2) of the Criminal Code. On December 29, 2011, the Conduct Review Sub-Committee accepted the Statement of Agreed Facts and Disposition wherein Mr. Semchuk agreed to relinquish his teaching certificate and to not reapply for a certificate of qualification in the future.
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Speakers vary by event and are subject to change.

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