VISIONARY TEACHER INSPIRES AND CHALLENGES STUDENTS

CODE-IFYING THE CURRICULUM

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GET TO KNOW BC'S EDUCATION PARTNERS BCPVPA AND STUDENT VOICE
TEACHER REGULATION BRANCH

The Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB), part of the Ministry of Education, provides operational support to BC’s teaching profession regulatory structure. The regulatory structure includes the Director of Certification, the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation, the BC Teachers’ Council, the Disciplinary and Professional Conduct Board, and the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee.

The regulatory bodies of BC’s teaching profession work within a legislative mandate to ensure that educators in the K-12 school systems in BC meet and maintain the standards of competence and conduct required to provide quality education to students in a safe and nurturing environment and foster public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Learn and other communications of the TRB are the means by which the TRB informs educators who hold BC teaching certificates, and other interested stakeholders, 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.

Learn is produced three times a year and is accessible online at bcteacherregulation.ca. Certificate holders receive an email when each new issue is made available. Readers’ questions and comments about Learn are welcome and may be submitted to trb.magazine@gov.bc.ca.

LEARN’S EDITORIAL POLICY

The TRB welcomes ideas and topics of interest for articles. Please send your suggestions by email to trb.magazine@gov.bc.ca.

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Marilyn Rushton and her guide dog Misty — Vancouver School Board
Photographer: Hamid Attie
CODE-IFYING THE CURRICULUM: BRINGING COMPUTATIONAL THINKING INTO THE CLASSROOM

Starting in September 2018, each student in BC will be required to complete a module of basic coding by the time they finish Grade 9. This module will build on the computational thinking skills introduced in Kindergarten through Grade 5.

“Coding is part of the bigger picture of curriculum transformation,” says Gordon Li, Director of Learning Technology and District Outreach for the Ministry of Education. “We see coding or, more specifically, computational thinking, as a core foundational skill that benefits students in all areas and is part of what makes an educated citizen.”
Coding refers to the writing of specific instructions to get a computer to complete a task, while computational thinking is an approach to problem solving and design that forms the foundation of coding and other applied skills ranging from cooking to woodworking.

Cari Wilson is a Grade 7 teacher and district innovation support teacher in West Vancouver. In her district role, she helps teachers bring computational thinking and coding into their classrooms. Wilson says that even if they are not explicitly aware they are doing so, teachers encourage computational thinking every time they have their students develop a systematic approach to solve a problem.

“Even with our Kindergartners, when we’re trying to help them solve the problem of how they can get dressed for recess as quickly as possible, we’re getting them to use computational thinking,” she says. “They soon realize that certain pieces of clothing need to be put on in a specific order. A jacket needs to go on before mittens; snow pants before snow boots. It’s a simple algorithm, but it’s an algorithm nonetheless.”

Wilson says that it’s relatively easy to introduce computational thinking through initiatives like Hour of Code, a worldwide movement to celebrate computer science that starts with one-hour coding activities. “We’ve shared information with teachers for the past few years about this global campaign to expose students to coding. More teachers have embraced it, and this year, pretty much every teacher in every school in our district did some sort of computational thinking or coding event with their students during the Hour of Code week.”

Other district-wide initiatives include introducing many students in Grades 6 and 7 to Scratch, a visual programming language that presents the basics of coding. As part of a pilot program called Coding Quest (sponsored by The Learning Partnership), the students use Scratch to build simple animations or games to show others what they’ve learned during an inquiry-based unit.

“Schools will choose their best projects and then we’ll bring the students together in late spring at an event at our local library to showcase the games,” explains Wilson. “The students will explain their group’s goals in designing their project, the challenges they faced and the solutions they developed – and people can then play their game.”

Similar coding-related initiatives are in place in districts across BC. At a provincial level, the plan to introduce the coding requirement is meant to build on “effective practices that districts have already initiated and ensure that these experiences are available to all of our students,” says Tim Winkelmans, Executive Director for Custom Programs and Projects at the Ministry of Education.

Sharing best practices in this area is one way to help educators get a sense of what’s possible and learn from what’s working. The Ministry of Education conducted a survey of districts in 2016 to assess their readiness to implement the coding curriculum. The survey identified resource gaps, which led to an implementation strategy that provides funding for teacher training – both for the coding curriculum and related professional development – as well as funding to purchase equipment and resources to support coding instruction.

A train-the-trainer model was chosen to support professional learning. Training sessions were completed in two of the six regions in the fall, with the final four conducted in the spring of 2017.
“Wilson says that even if they are not explicitly aware they are doing so, teachers encourage computational thinking every time they have their students develop a systematic approach to solve a problem.”

“Teachers attend a two-day workshop,” says Winkelmans. “They’ll then go back to their districts, test things out with their colleagues and students and come back for a second round of training to share what worked well and suggest areas where we can provide better support.”

Part of that support includes sharing information and building networks of educators working in this area. Many teachers across the province are active on social media to share information and solicit feedback from their peers.

One such educator is Noelle Pepin, an English Language Learner/Maker teacher at Nusdeh Yoh (House of the Future), the Aboriginal choice elementary school in Prince George. Pepin posts regular updates at @INDIGital_space about the work she does with students to get them designing and making as part of her goal to foster creativity and make the abstract tangible.

Pepin, as a part of a SET-BC project, introduced ASCII code to a class of Grade 3 and 4 students by having them “code” their names using pony beads. Each letter of the alphabet can be represented in ASCII as an eight-digit combination of 0s and 1s. Students chose two colours of beads to represent the 0s and 1s and then used tables to translate their names into ASCII code on beaded necklaces or bracelets.

“They loved it,” she says. “The initial plan was just to do our first names, but they wanted to do their middle names, last names and the school’s name. They wanted to make bracelets for their mothers. And they wanted to skip their next class so they could keep coding.”

Li happened to be visiting Pepin’s class in Prince George during the coding and beading lesson and says he was very taken by the intense focus he witnessed. “The students were creating something they connected with on an immediate level while learning the very foundations of coding.”

The lesson extended into discussions about translation, proofreading and debugging, as well as cross-curricular connections to culture, identity, mathematics and literacy.

For Winkelmans, the upcoming requirement that students complete a module on coding allows for the development of many valuable skills. Students will not only learn about coding, but also how to identify problems, work collaboratively with others and how to deal with failure as part of the design process.

“Coding activities also empower our students with a sense of agency over the technology that is part of our world,” Winkelmans says. “They do not just need to consume the technology; they need to understand how to create and control it.”

Wilson agrees, suggesting that learning the very basics of coding is comparable to learning other life skills. “Computers, machines and robots are an ever-growing part of our life. It’s good to have a basic understanding of how they work. And of course for some students, this might ignite something that will turn into a real passion.”

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**LEARN MORE**

Starting in September 2018, students must complete one coding module between Grades 6 and 9 as part of the Applied Design, Skills and Technologies curriculum. In 2016-2017, the Ministry of Education is supporting the new coding curriculum through $2 million in teacher training, $2 million to help districts purchase equipment and resources, and $2 million to bring the new curriculum to life.

The following online resources are a good place to find more information:

- **Codebc.ca** is a resource developed by BC educators that includes extensive professional development resources, including the full train-the-trainer package
- **@INDIGital_space** is where educators at Nusdeh Yoh, the Aboriginal Choice School located in Prince George, often share examples of hands-on learning activities, including coding
- **@PrincipalGLi** is where Gordon Li shares best practices around the province
- Cari Wilson tweets at @kayakcari and her blog createinnovatecollaborate.com includes many posts on coding
- **Hourofcode.com** has many ideas to get you started organizing an Hour of Code event
OFFSHORE SCHOOL PRACTICUMS OFFER UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

Since 2010, Vancouver Island University (VIU) has offered its teacher education students the opportunity to complete their second practicum experience at one of British Columbia’s 46 certified offshore schools in eight different countries around the world. More than 25 VIU teacher candidates have pursued this option – choosing it as a way to enhance their practical education through new cultural experiences and international perspectives.

In 2016, Aaron Koop completed his second four-week practicum at British Columbia International School Bangkok, teaching social studies and drama to students in Grades 8 through 11. Although Koop intends to work at the elementary level, he thought teaching secondary students would be an excellent opportunity to extend his skills.

“I think I benefited the most in terms of classroom management,” he says. “My students all spoke English as a second language and had varying levels of proficiency, which meant I needed to pay close attention to my own language and consistently offer multiple means of instruction, both verbal and written, but also using pictures for step-by-step instructions.”

Koop also learned to give himself permission to navigate the curriculum to match his students’ pace, making sure they fully mastered the concepts before moving on.

One of Koop’s motivations for pursuing an international experience was his belief that it might give him more direct teaching time than he could typically get in a classroom in BC. His prediction proved true, and he says he soon found himself fully in charge of his Bangkok class.

Marian Riedel, professor, advisor and international experience coordinator in VIU’s faculty of education, says that Koop’s experience is typical of other teacher candidates who have completed a practicum at a BC Offshore School.

“Teacher candidates often find the offshore teaching dynamic is an opportunity to teach in a way that is true to who they are as people and professionals. Many participants say that the international practicum allowed them to practice teaching in an environment that fostered the development of their own unique teaching style.”

Riedel also points out that an international practicum is a great way for educators to step out of their comfort zone. She says that one participant told her that “the BC Offshore School experience in China was a ‘reversal’ of their BC practicum. What was familiar in BC – the daily living context – was suddenly unfamiliar and strange, while the teaching itself became the familiar experience. This allowed participants to better understand that teaching is about meeting unique and diverse learner needs relevant to the context in which they are teaching.”

Carly Whitmore completed an international practicum at a BC-certified school in Wenzhou, China, in the spring of 2012, teaching Social Studies 10 and English 11 to over 100 students.

“My goal was to be a French Immersion teacher,” she says, “and my international practicum taught me a lot about second language learning, even if the second language was English instead of French. I learned to slow down, relax and find different ways to explain myself. I also learned that not everything goes according to plan, and that that is okay. So often as teacher candidates we become obsessed with ‘sticking to the script’ and pass up special teachable moments.”

Whitmore graduated in January 2013 and was hired a month later at École Alberni Elementary as a French Immersion teacher.

Both Whitmore and Koop say they would definitely recommend international practicums to other teacher candidates. “You learn a lot from every practicum,” says Koop, “but working with non-native English learners deepens your practice in many ways and allows you to empathize more with all students.”

The experience also allows student teachers to immerse themselves in another culture. Koop spent a week travelling around Thailand at the end of his practicum, and Whitmore took advantage of her time in China to explore new areas on weekends – launching an obsession with oolong tea that continues to this day.↓

LEARN MORE

British Columbia Offshore Schools are inspected and certified by the BC Ministry of Education. Students registered in the BC Global Education Program at an offshore school receive instruction in English by BC-certified teachers. Graduates from the program receive a BC Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma).

To read more about the BC Offshore School Program, please visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/international-education/offshore-schools.

To find teaching positions at a BC Offshore School, please visit the Make a Future website (makeafuture.ca).

To learn what options are available for a practicum in a BC Offshore School, contact any BC teacher education program (www.bcteacherregulation.ca/TeacherEducation/TeacherEducationOverview.aspx).
NEWS + NOTICES FROM THE TRB

2016 INCOME TAX RECEIPTS FOR CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

If you paid your annual practice fee directly to the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) in 2016, your 2016 tax receipt will be available for you to download and print from the secure Certificate Holders’ Area on the TRB website. If your employer deducted the annual fee from your pay in 2016, this amount will be shown on your T4 slip. In this case, you will not be able to download and print a tax receipt from the Certificate Holders’ Area.

ANNUAL PRACTICE FEE 2017-2018

For certificate holders to retain valid BC Ministry of Education certification, the annual practice fee of $80 must be paid by May 31, 2017. Under the Teachers Act, boards of education and independent school authorities must deduct this fee from the pay of the certificate holders they employ. If you are a certificate holder employed in these systems, you do not need to submit a fee. If you are a certificate holder not employed in one of these systems, please visit the Fee Information section under the Certificate Services tab on the TRB website for details on how to pay the fee.

CONFIRMATION OF ANNUAL PRACTICE FEE PAYMENT FOR CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

Beginning in July, after your annual practice fee has been paid and the TRB has processed it, your Confirmation of Annual Practice Fee Payment will be available for you to view, download and print through the Certificate Holders’ Area on the TRB website. The Confirmation acknowledges that the TRB has received the payment.

RETIRING OR RELINQUISHING YOUR CERTIFICATE

If you are a certificate holder and you are retiring, no longer want to be certified or you are not teaching and do not plan to return to teaching, you may choose to not pay your annual fee and have your certificate cancelled for non-payment of fees. Alternatively, you may choose to submit a notice of relinquishment that states you are surrendering your certificate. Both actions will result in:

- the Director of Certification cancelling your certificate
- you losing your eligibility to vote in BC Teachers’ Council elections, and
- you no longer receiving TRB correspondence.

If you want to cancel your certification but have already paid your annual practice fee for the upcoming year, or if your annual practice fee has been payroll-deducted by your employer, you may be eligible for a refund. Please visit the Retire or Relinquish section under the Certificate Services tab on the TRB website for more information on how to relinquish your certificate or how to get a refund for annual fees paid.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS’ COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ANNUAL REPORT

The meetings of the British Columbia Teachers’ Council are open to the public and are held at the TRB offices at 400-2025 West Broadway in Vancouver. The next Council meeting is scheduled for April 12 and 13, 2017. The Council receives its mandate from the Teachers Act. It is responsible for setting standards for teachers in the areas of teacher education, certification, conduct and competence. Visit the TRB website to learn more about the Standards for Educators in BC and the mandate, composition and future meetings of the Council, and to read its 2015-2016 annual report.

You can find more services for certificate holders on the TRB website at bcteacherregulation.ca.
GET TO KNOW BC’S EDUCATION PARTNERS

BC’s education system is strengthened by the significant contributions of our many education partner groups. In this ongoing feature, we profile BC’s education partners to learn about the work they do to enhance education throughout the province.

In this issue, we spoke with Kevin Reimer, president of the BC Principals’ & Vice-Principals’ Association and Ava Cornell and Jorda Grundy of BC Student Voice.

BC Principals’ & Vice-Principals’ Association

Founded  The BC Principals’ & Vice-Principals’ Association (BCPVPA) is an autonomous professional association founded in 1988 to advocate on behalf of BC’s public school principals and vice-principals.

Members  More than 95 percent of BC public school principals and vice-principals are voluntary members of the organization.

Profile  The organization serves members by supporting effective leadership in education through representation, advocacy and leadership development.

Website  bcpvpa.bc.ca

Phone  1-800-663-0432 or 604-689-3399

Learn spoke with Kevin Reimer, president of BCPVPA.

What does the BCPVPA do?

We’re a voluntary organization that represents public school principals and vice-principals and supports quality leadership in public education. We do this by providing support for employment relationship issues, offering opportunities for professional learning and development, and sharing resources and knowledge.

With our focus on professional learning and development, we ensure our members have access to a full slate of professional learning opportunities, whether they are at the start of their career or well established.

We also publish weekly newsletters and we’ve now produced four books. In late February we launched our latest book, Learning, Knowing, Sharing: Celebrating Successes in K-12 Aboriginal Education in British Columbia (edited by Jo-ann Archibald and Jan Hare), which profiles 22 case studies of districts that have made significant gains for Aboriginal learners.

We’re advocates for our members and we do whatever we can to support them in their work. This includes offering week-long intensive professional learning courses, workshops on specific topics, launching a pilot mentoring program, offering webinars to connect our members in rural communities, and identifying issues where we can advocate for change.

What are some important milestones in the history of BCPVPA?

Our creation in 1988 was significant. Only BC, Ontario and Quebec have an association for principals and vice-principals. In all other...
provinces, principals and vice-principals are part of the teacher’s union, where they do not have the same influence that comes from being part of an autonomous professional association.

**How does your organization work with other education partner groups?**

Organizations can’t operate in silos focused solely on their members. We work alongside other partners to help our education system be as strong as it can be in support of student success.

The BCPVPA has a seat at many different provincial tables. Recently, for example, we instigated a provincial working group to develop a formal leadership strategy within the education system. Along with other education partners, we’re looking at how we can build from a set of common leadership competencies to create a province-wide strategy for leadership programming.

We’re at the table with other partners to discuss Bill 11 and the requirements for continuing professional development legislation. We’re exploring how to make this legislation work for working professionals.

**Why is it important that BCPVPA be involved as a partner in the education system?**

You can’t have great schools without great principals and vice-principals. Much research has shown that investing in principals and vice-principals is second only to investing in classroom teachers as a way of creating conditions for student success.

**What are the most significant challenges facing our students?**

Kids are less engaged than they might have been even 10 years ago. I travel and see innovative practices across the province, but are we engaging all students? There is an increased level of anxiety among youth as they leave the system – we’re living in a time when career, family and life pathways are not as clear as they might once have been. So it’s a challenge: how do we develop our students’ capacity to prepare them for uncertain futures?

The new curriculum is a good start. Focusing on competencies that have been supported by the OECD and the Conference Board of Canada will go a long way to transforming the system in ways that better meet the needs of students and society.

**Anything else you want to add?**

One issue we’re facing in our schools is that the applicant pool for principals and vice-principals is shrinking. Many principals and vice-principals are working extremely hard, their work is highly scrutinized and resources continue to erode – and so our best teacher-leaders may look at the job and think it’s not for them.

We need to make changes both within the system and in our approach to leadership to make these positions more attractive. If we don’t have the best teacher-leaders striving to do this work, our system will be in trouble. These are roles where you have the opportunity to create engaging learning communities for students, teachers and staff. It’s very rewarding to be able to make a difference on so many levels.

**BC Student Voice**

**Founded**  BC Student Voice was launched in 1990 with the assistance of the BC Principals’ and Vice-Principals’ Association and the support of the Ministry of Education.

**Members**  BC Student Voice represents students from across the province. Student representatives meet at the school, district, regional and provincial levels to give voice to student perspectives and issues.

**Profile**  BC Student Voice empowers students to address their needs, interests and concerns by strengthening the links among students and their partners in education.

**Website**  bcpvpa.bc.ca/student-voice
Learn spoke with Ava Cornell, a Grade 12 student at Vernon Secondary School, and Jorda Grundy, a Grade 11 student at Earl Marriott Secondary School in Surrey.

What does BC Student Voice do?
We’re a group of student representatives who work to make sure that the higher powers in the education system have the opportunity to hear student voices and perspectives. Each secondary school might have several students who are part of Student Voice. Each school is then represented by a student at the district level, and then each district picks a number of students to represent the region. There are 13 regions in BC. Each district and region will typically host a conference in the year to get student input on various issues, and twice a year the students who represent each region get together for a province-wide forum where we have the opportunity to share our perspectives with Ministry of Education staff.

Why do students need to be partners in the education system?
This is our education and our future. It can be hard for people who are not part of the daily system to understand what is going on at the school level, in classrooms, for six hours a day. Student Voice allows that to happen.

BC is such a big province, and the issues vary from region to region. For example, students face different bullying problems depending on the region, and some schools don’t offer Chemistry 12 or other course opportunities, which can make things difficult if you want to go on to university. It’s important that teachers, administrators and the Ministry of Education learn more about what students in each area experience and think.

How does BC Student Voice work with other education partner groups?
The Minister of Education usually attends our biannual forums for a few hours, and other Ministry staff are there for the full days. There’s usually a big theme or issue presented at our fall forum, and we then go back to our schools, districts and regions to talk with students about these issues. Then, in the provincial spring forum, we can share these answers with Ministry staff.

Sometimes Student Voice starts a particular discussion, and it’s then up to us to take it to the next level. A conversation about school connectedness might lead to students starting a peer mentoring program or taking action in other ways.

What are the most significant challenges facing students?
Mental health is a huge issue. Many students suffer from low self-esteem, depression and anxiety. We’ve identified this as an issue and so we are doing what we can. At our schools, for example, we can let students know that help is available at school or in the community.

The new curriculum is also a big question mark. Many students are confused, don’t know what’s going on or don’t understand what’s changing and why. But students really care about this and want to know more. €
When she was in her mid-40s, Marilyn Rushton decided to go back to school to attain the credentials she’d need to be a vision teacher. Before that, she’d completed a degree in music, pursued her love of piano doing radio jingles and playing in piano bars, raised children and served as a trustee in the Burnaby School District for nine years.

Her decision to become a vision teacher meant returning to UBC (travelling two hours on the bus each way) to earn her education degree, followed by a master’s degree in special education with a concentration on blindness. She graduated in 2002, did contract work and was then hired by the Vancouver School Board in 2004.

Rushton works with a range of blind, deaf-blind and partially sighted students of all ages – from those following the standard curriculum to those whose vision loss is accompanied by additional complex challenges.
“I’ve been totally blind since birth, and so I’m able to provide braille and technology instruction from the perspective of someone who knows what needs to be explained or what experiences my students need to have – things that a sighted teacher might not consider to the same extent.”

Although technology has evolved considerably in the more than 50 years since Rushton began learning braille as a Grade 1 student, she introduces her students to the language using the same Perkins Braille Writers that she learned on.

“I prefer to start with the basics,” she says, adding that braille instruction is foundational to the development of literacy. She then introduces her students to technology tools, including note takers like Braille Note and Braille Sense that allow individuals to download any text file – or those already in braille format – and read the text one line of braille at a time.

“Historically, you would have had to ask someone to create that text for you, to translate it into braille, at a cost,” she says. “Now you can do it independently.”

Additional support is provided by braille displays for computers, software programs that have a speech interface for standard computer programs, voice-controlled apps and more. Although Rushton lauds all the technology advances, she cautions that this puts a lot of pressure on students to master both the curriculum and the technology.

Over the past few years, Rushton has increasingly worked with students with complex needs who have vision loss, are in wheelchairs and have limited or no movement or language skills. As a result of this experience, she is currently developing a literacy program specifically tailored to these individuals.

The resources she is putting together include objects, raised pictures, concept books and books in braille.

“I’m starting from the lived reality of my students. If you are in a wheelchair, and you can’t see and you can’t ask questions, what do you want to know about or experience?” The resources she is putting together will help her students learn about and more fully engage with the world around them.

Rushton visits two or three schools each day, working one-on-one with students and supporting classroom teachers and education assistants by advising on ways to “build information into everything.” She also reminds educators that “just because a student can’t express themselves doesn’t mean they don’t want to know.”

In addition to the individual support she provides her students, Rushton also runs school-based music programs for those with special needs. “I want them to have a group of friends who they get together with and an environment where they can be the centre of the group. Music provides opportunities to have fun and to celebrate our accomplishments.”

Outside of school, Rushton leads the Tempos, a choir of blind and partially sighted singers, many of whom are former students. She also volunteers with the Maple Leaf Singers, a group of more than 50 singers ranging in age from 18 to 80 who perform across the Lower Mainland.

In recognition of her significant contributions as an educator and her dedication as a volunteer, Rushton was awarded the province’s Medal of Good Citizenship in 2016.

As a teacher and role model for students, Rushton understands both the challenges her students face and their ability to apply themselves to learn and grow.

“The greatest enemy facing our students is low expectations,” she says. “I always say to my students, ‘Even if it’s hard and takes a long time, it won’t always be harder or take longer. And I will be right beside you while you work through it because I’ve done it and I get it.’”

Marilyn Rushton works with a Perkins Braille Writer
Did you know?

**BC STUDENTS ARE WORLD LEADERS IN READING, SCIENCE AND MATH**

BC students lead the world in several education indicators based on recently released data from the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA assessed the performance of 15-year-old students in reading, science and math. Seventy-two countries, all 10 Canadian provinces and 79 BC schools participated in PISA 2015.

- Between 2012 and 2015, BC increased its relative standing in all three areas.
- BC students achieved the highest average score in reading in PISA 2015. No countries performed above BC’s range.
- Ten jurisdictions performed at BC’s range, and 71 jurisdictions performed below.
- In science, only Singapore outperformed BC statistically. Ten jurisdictions, including Canada as a whole, performed in BC’s range, with Alberta statistically tied with BC. Seventy jurisdictions performed below BC’s range.
- In math, five jurisdictions performed above BC statistically, 12 jurisdictions performed at the same level as BC and 64 performed below.

BC also demonstrated high equality in student performance, which is the gap between the highest- and lowest-performing students. This shows BC’s education system is delivering high student achievement in an equitable manner.

You can find more information at [news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016EDUC0265-002592](http://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016EDUC0265-002592).
THINKING ABOUT THE STANDARDS: A CASE STUDY

Exploring a case study can help us better understand how the Standards apply to the practice of teaching and the work and conduct of educators. We encourage you to read the scenario below and reflect on the factors that the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation would consider when deciding how to address the scenario. This case study is based on a compilation of cases and does not reflect a particular case that has come before the Commissioner.

Scenario
A teacher on call had a Grade 3 class for two days. Rather than following the detailed lesson plan left by the classroom teacher, the teacher on call gave the students free time and showed them videos unrelated to the lessons. Students were noisy and disruptive. Some students described the teacher as fun, while others felt the classroom environment was stressful.

When the classroom teacher returned, she learned that the lesson plan had not been followed and that two students had engaged in a brief altercation on the second day, which was not referenced in the teacher on call’s notes.

The district had previously spoken to the teacher on call regarding classroom management issues. Although the teacher had many years of teaching experience, he had been on the teacher-on-call list for several years and had not participated in any professional learning during that time.

Factors the Commissioner would consider when evaluating this case
The Commissioner’s decision about how to proceed could be based on the answers to the following questions:

- After the district spoke to the teacher, did the teacher recognize that his conduct might negatively affect students?
- Did the teacher make any changes to his practice after his meeting with the district?
- Had the teacher previously been involved in similar incidents?
- Did the district require that the teacher complete any remedial training or professional learning? Did the district require the teacher to develop a professional growth plan?

After reviewing the report, the Commissioner may do one of the following:

- take no further action and provide reasons for this decision to the person who made the complaint or report, the teacher and his employer,
- initiate an investigation,
- make or accept a proposal for a consent resolution agreement, or
- issue a citation, which could lead to a hearing.

When considering how to proceed, the Commissioner would examine the certificate holder’s actions to determine if the Standards were breached. Although the Commissioner may take Standard 7 (Educators engage in career-long learning) into account, he may also consider other Standards when considering this case, such as Standard 3 (Educators understand and apply knowledge of student growth and development) and Standard 5 (Educators implement effective practices in areas of classroom management, planning, instruction, assessment, evaluation and reporting).

If a certificate holder is found to have breached the professional standards and the matter is resolved through the consent resolution process or a formal disciplinary hearing, there are several options available, including placing limits or conditions on a certificate; requiring participation in remedial education; issuing a reprimand, suspension or cancellation of a certificate; or banning the issuance of a new certificate for a period of time. –

The Standards for Educators communicate to certificate holders, letter of permission holders and the public a description of the work of educators – what they know, what they are able to do and how they conduct themselves as they serve the public. The Standards provide the foundation and stability on which educators can grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish their work. Read about these Standards, established by the BC Teachers’ Council and the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee, on the TRB website.
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR TEACHER REGULATION: DISCIPLINE OUTCOMES AND CASE SUMMARIES

The Commissioner for Teacher Regulation oversees the process by which reports or complaints about the conduct or competence of certificate holders in both the public and independent school systems are addressed. As the operational arm of the regulatory structure, the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) provides administrative support to the Commissioner.

Together, we are committed to ensuring that all educators are fit and competent for the important role that they play and that students have a safe and nurturing learning environment. By publishing the outcomes of discipline cases, we enhance the transparency of the processes and decisions made with respect to complaints and reports about educators. Publication is also a means of ensuring accountability for the educators involved, as well as articulating the standards expected of all certificate holders.

Discipline outcomes are summarized below and appear in full on the TRB website. The summaries do not contain all the details, which may include discipline imposed by the employer, that are provided in the published outcomes. The Standards for educators in British Columbia can be found on the TRB website and on the last page of this issue of Learn.

Consent Resolution Agreements (CRA)

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Francesco Gabriel Canacari

AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct and Conduct Unbecoming/Standards 1 and 2

DISPOSITION Former certificate holder will not apply for a teaching certificate or letter of permission

In October 2010, Francesco Gabriel Canacari signed an agreement not to teach school-age children until the conclusion of these matters, and on December 21, 2011, the BC College of Teachers issued a citation against him. On August 9, 2013, Mr. Canacari was convicted of being in a house without lawful excuse and with intent to commit an indictable offence, and of engaging in conduct that caused a woman to fear for her safety. The judge also found that Mr. Canacari asked a female student in the class he was teaching to send a text to the woman and then told the student to erase the number and messages. In October 2013, Mr. Canacari was sentenced to jail for two months followed by two years of probation, a concurrent jail sentence of two months, and another consecutive jail sentence of two months followed by two years of probation. He was permitted to serve the sentence in the community subject to conditions. In May 2015, Mr. Canacari pleaded guilty to causing a person to use a forged document and to forgery, and in April 2016, he was sentenced to a conditional sentence with conditions. On July 2, 2015, the Director of Certification cancelled Mr. Canacari’s certificate of qualification. On September 15, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Canacari agreed that he will never apply for, and the Director will be required never to issue to him, a certificate of qualification, an independent school teaching certificate or a letter of permission.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Frederick Dale Gault

AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1

DISPOSITION Reprimand

In March 2016, a district made a report about Frederick Dale Gault under section 16 of the School Act. In 2015, Mr. Gault scheduled his Grade 11 English class to sit an exam on December 15. The school’s “Code Red” safety drill was rescheduled from November 25 to December 15, and teachers were given notice on multiple occasions of the changed date and time. Mr. Gault did not follow district policy during the
Code Red drill when he told his class that they should keep writing their tests when the drill started, and the students worked on their tests rather than taking cover or crouching away from where they could be seen. He also did not follow policy shown by the lower half of the classroom windows not being adequately covered. In addition, when Mr. Gault unlocked the door for a police officer, he did not follow policy stating that the classroom door should not be opened, regardless of who is on the other side. On September 28, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Gault agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Matthew Lucas Jones
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Certificate suspended for one day/Certificate holder to complete a course

In January 2016, a district made a report about Matthew Lucas Jones under section 16(3) of the School Act. The following events occurred in September 2015 when Mr. Jones was employed as a high school teacher. The school had organized a three-day leadership camp to have students engage in leadership activities, plan intramurals and train for sports. The camp, held at a camp facility, involved students in Grades 9 through 12. Mr. Jones was a supervisor at the camp. One challenge required students to eat food items drawn randomly from a jar. While some students protested during the challenge, they were pressured by older students to continue to participate. In another challenge called the Jar of Death, students nominated their peers, who had to reach into a jar and pull out a piece of paper with a task written on it, which they would then be expected to perform in front of the group. It was a form of punishment, and students felt pressured to participate. The tasks included licking a teacher’s foot and chewing on gum that someone else had chewed. Mr. Jones was present during both challenges but failed to intercede or stop the challenges once they were underway. On August 11, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Jones agreed to a one-day suspension of his certificate and to complete a course on boundaries.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Jae Woo Kwon
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In February 2015, a certified BC Offshore School made a report to the Commissioner about Jae Woo Kwon. During the 2014-2015 school year, between October 31 and November 22, 2014, Mr. Kwon engaged in a texting and telephone conversation relationship with a female Grade 12 student in the school. The almost daily text messages were not related to schoolwork, but included personal topics such as the student’s religion and the difficulties Mr. Kwon was having with his girlfriend. Mr. Kwon also bought the student a gift card as a present, took her out twice for dinner and asked her if her older sister was single, suggesting that he might be interested in dating her. This attention made the student feel very uncomfortable. Also during the school year, Mr. Kwon shared information with two female students in Grade 11 about his breakup with his girlfriend. He also told one of the students that she was pretty, which made her feel extremely uncomfortable. On August 29, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Kwon agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Michael Turner Mitro
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Certificate suspended for one day/Certificate holder to complete a course

In January 2016, a district made a report about Michael Turner Mitro under section 16(3) of the School Act. The following events occurred in September 2015 when Mr. Mitro was a high school teacher. The school had organized a three-day leadership camp to have students engage in leadership activities, plan intramurals and train for sports. The camp, held at a camp facility, involved students in Grades 9 through 12. Mr. Mitro was a supervisor at the camp. One challenge required students to eat food items drawn randomly from a jar. While some students protested during the challenge, they were pressured by older students to continue to participate. The students also participated in another challenge called the Jar of Death. For this challenge, students nominated their peers, who had to reach into a jar and pull out a piece of paper with a task written on it, which they would then be expected to perform in front of the group. It was a form of punishment, and students felt pressured to participate. The tasks included licking Mr. Mitro’s foot and chewing on gum that someone else had chewed. Mr. Mitro was present during both challenges but failed to intercede or stop the challenges once they were underway. On August 11, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Mitro agreed to a one-day suspension of his certificate and to complete a course on boundaries.
CERTIFICATE HOLDER Jennifer Jo Robinson
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Certificate suspended for two days/Certificate holder to complete a course

In January 2016, a district made a report under section 16(3) of the School Act about Jennifer Jo Robinson, who was employed as a high school teacher when the following events occurred in September 2015. Ms. Robinson was in charge of organizing, and acted as a supervisor for, the school’s three-day leadership camp, which involved students in Grades 9 through 12. The purpose was to engage in leadership activities, plan intramurals and train for sports. One activity was a food challenge that required students to eat food items drawn randomly from a jar. Ms. Robinson was aware that students would be organizing the challenge and she instructed that the food be edible and not include peanuts. She instructed students who had peanut allergies not to participate in the activity. While some students protested during the challenge, they were pressured by older students to continue to participate. Ms. Robinson was present during the challenge and took no steps to stop it. The students also participated in another challenge called the Jar of Death. Ms. Robinson was told about the challenge in advance but did not review it in any detail or take other steps to ensure that it was appropriate. For this challenge, students nominated their peers, who had to reach into a jar and pull out a piece of paper with a task written on it, which they would then be expected to perform in front of the group. It was a form of punishment, and students felt pressured to participate. The tasks included licking a teacher’s foot and chewing on gum that someone else had chewed. Ms. Robinson was present throughout the challenge but did not attempt to stop it. On August 23, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Ms. Robinson agreed to a two-day suspension of her certificate and to complete a course on boundaries.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Anil Sastry
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 2
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In October 2015, a district made a report about Anil Sastry under section 16(3) of the School Act. In 2015, while employed as a high school teacher, Mr. Sastry was the subject of a district investigation that involved other employees at the school. The district advised Mr. Sastry that, while the investigation was unfolding, he was required to keep all matters relating to the investigation confidential. Mr. Sastry sent a text message to some of his colleagues advising them of the investigation and of the identity of the complainant. One colleague took a screen shot of his text and sent it to the district. The district arranged to meet with Mr. Sastry about a breach of confidentiality and asked him not to discuss the matter with anyone other than his union representative. Mr. Sastry spoke to a colleague and asked whether she had forwarded his text to anyone. He later called her and told her that, if asked by the district, she should say that they had not had any discussions about who provided the screen shot. Subsequently, Mr. Sastry was interviewed by the district about his text message, which he acknowledged sending, but denied having asked anyone whether they had taken a screen shot of it. Mr. Sastry was interviewed again about his text and subsequent communications with colleagues, and he denied calling his colleague, saying that she had called him. On June 23, 2016, the Acting Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Sastry agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Michael Sedlak
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standards 1 and 2
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In May 2014, a district made a report about Michael Sedlak under section 16(6) of the School Act. Between September 2011 and April 2014, Mr. Sedlak interacted unprofessionally with a female student. On a number of occasions, Mr. Sedlak said to the student in front of others, in an attempt to be funny, that the student’s father had tried to run him over with his car. He also came into a room where the student was eating lunch with other students and said words to the effect of “what’s that smell?” followed by “oh, it’s [student’s name]” and, on some occasions, said “Oh no, [student’s name] is here.” Mr. Sedlak also had a “running joke” with the student that resulted in a race towards his chair. On one occasion, the race resulted in the student falling to the floor. Mr. Sedlak did not check to ensure that she was not hurt. In addition, Mr. Sedlak occasionally used his middle finger to push up his glasses or to scratch his nose while he was speaking to or looking directly at a particular student. Students understood Mr. Sedlak’s gesture to convey the usual meaning of the raised middle finger. In October 2015,
the district made another report about Mr. Sedlak. In the 2014-2015 school year, Mr. Sedlak made comments to students to the effect of “I wish I had my taser,” or “there might be a [student name]-shaped hole in the wall.” Mr. Sedlak also brought a fly swatter to class and on occasion held it up in view of students in a way that made some students uncomfortable. Mr. Sedlak stopped using the fly swatter after a parent complained to him. On July 19, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Sedlak agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Cory Ray Steeves
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Reprimand/Certificate holder to complete a course

In December 2015, a district made a report about Cory Ray Steeves under section 16(3) of the School Act. The following events occurred in the fall of 2015 when Mr. Steeves was working as a teacher on call. On September 23, 2015, Mr. Steeves was teaching a Grade 10 English class a lesson on the use of satire in music videos. Two of the five videos he showed were “Big Bad Wolf” by Duck Sauce and “I’m on a Boat” by Lonely Island. When introducing these videos, he told students that they could be offensive to some, and that if anyone wanted to leave they could. One student left the room. One video depicted different people with human heads as their genitalia simulating a variety of activities, while the other video consisted primarily of profanity. Mr. Steeves also showed the second video while teaching a unit on satire to a Grade 12 English class. On June 30, 2016, the Acting Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Steeves agreed to a reprimand and to complete a course on boundaries.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER David Mark Street
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standards 1 and 2
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In May 2015, a district made a report about David Mark Street under section 16(8) of the School Act. Mr. Street began working as a school principal in September 2014. Between November 15, 2014, and March 26, 2015, Mr. Street stole $2,320 from various school accounts. He accessed the funds by using a key to the safe that he had stolen from one of the administrative assistants. He told the RCMP investigator that only three assistants had access to the safe, but that it was often left open, and he discouraged the RCMP from investigating. When one assistant voiced her concerns about the missing money, Mr. Street told her to “keep it quiet” and instructed her not to tell the vice-principal. After another assistant mentioned the missing funds to the vice-principal, Mr. Street raised issues about that assistant’s work performance, and forced her to move out of the general office area. In February 2015, when the assistant superintendent met with Mr. Street to discuss the missing money, Mr. Street told him that only the assistants had access to the safe, which was not true. Prior to that visit, Mr. Street had removed $500 from the safe and placed it in the desk of an assistant, where it was found by the assistant superintendent. The three assistants reported feeling anxious, depressed and stressed as Mr. Street allowed blame and suspicion to be cast upon them. On May 22, 2015, Mr. Street was charged with one count of theft under $5,000. He pleaded guilty and received a 21-month conditional discharge with probation and conditions. He resigned from the district. On August 17, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Street agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Keray Allan Wing
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Reprimand/Former certificate holder will not apply for a teaching certificate or letter of permission

In July 2015, a certificate holder made a report about Keray Allan Wing under section 38 of the Teachers Act. In August 2015, a district also made a report under section 38 of the Teachers Act. In the early 1970s, when Mr. Wing was a secondary school teacher, he had a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old female student. On July 11, 2012, Mr. Wing relinquished his certificate of qualification. On July 19, 2016, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Wing agreed to a reprimand and that he will not apply for, and understands the Director of Certification will not issue to him, a certificate of qualification, an independent school teaching certificate or a letter of permission at any time in the future.
STANDARDS for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia

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 classroom management, 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.

The Standards for Educators communicate to certificate holders, letter of permission holders and the public a description of the work of educators – what they know, what they are able to do and how they conduct themselves as they serve the public. The Standards provide the foundation and stability on which educators can grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish their work. Read about the BC Teachers’ Council and the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee that establish these standards on the TRB website.