A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH
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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ON THE COVER
Teacher L’Donna Lynds — Intersect School, Prince George
Photographer: Kelly Bergman
Being taunted as you walk to your locker or feeling nervous entering a bathroom. Feeling anxious at the thought of having to play intramural sports on a sex-segregated team. Wondering why people like you are never mentioned in the textbooks and novels you read in class. Not being able to reveal your true self to your family, friends or teachers.

The daily reality for our LGBTQ students can be difficult. They are more likely than other students to feel unsafe at school and have higher rates of depression, suicide ideation and self-harm and lower levels of support from friends and family.

In July 2016, the BC Human Rights Code was amended to add gender identity and expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. To ensure that codes of conduct and anti-bullying policies matched the new legislation, the Ministry of Education required that all districts and independent schools update their policies by December 2016 to include sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

However, while legislation and policies are essential, they alone will not ensure that our students feel safe at school. What’s also needed is a clear set of practices to guide educators in creating more inclusive environments.
Educator summit explores guidelines and best practices

In the fall of 2016, representatives from districts across the province attended a SOGI Education Leadership Summit to explore best practices and, in the words of Scott Beddall, Director of Wellness and Safety at the Ministry of Education, “dig into the SOGI 101 education piece with our schools.” The summit was a collaborative initiative led by the ARC Foundation, BC Teachers’ Federation, Ministry of Education, UBC Faculty of Education and Out in Schools.

More than 140 educators came together to discuss their work in this area and explore the guiding principles that would help districts develop and update their SOGI policies.

Beddall says that the guiding principles address common language, anti-harassment, self-identification, confidentiality and privacy, dress, gender-integrated and inclusive activities, educator training, inclusive learning, facilities, and inclusive extra-curricular activities.

These guiding principles can help educators respond to various scenarios that could negatively impact LGBTQ students if not dealt with inclusively and respectfully. For example, what is an educator’s obligation to respect a student’s privacy if the student is out at school, but not at home or in the community? How should students be allowed to dress at school? Can a student who was born male but identifies as female compete in a girls’ cross-country running meet? And on overnight field trips, should a trans student be placed in a boys’ or a girls’ dorm room?

SOGI Educator Network launches across BC

A pilot project launched in 2016 aimed to provide educators with the knowledge and tools needed to respond to these and other issues impacting LGBTQ students with support and openness. The BC SOGI Educator Network was initially a pilot project in nine school districts to enable educators to meet, share resources, co-design programs and collectively overcome obstacles within and across districts.

Nichelle Penney was the district SOGI lead for the Kamloops/Thompson school district in 2016/17. “One of my key roles was to connect with teachers in each school and develop the resources teachers need to create a welcoming and inclusive classroom culture,” she says.

RBC Foundation donated funds to each participating district to support capacity-building SOGI initiatives and Penney used this money to create primary, intermediary and secondary resource kits that can be used by teachers.

She was also responsible for recruiting a SOGI lead in each school. “These individuals didn’t need to be experts in the area, just willing to learn and be enthusiastic. The SOGI school leads were my main point of contact, and they would then share information with other staff members, both formally and informally.”

Dan Adrian was one of two SOGI district leads in the Burnaby school district, and he agrees that the SOGI school leads were instrumental in championing and promoting the understanding of SOGI in all classrooms. Adrian and his colleague Sarah Larsen created presentations that SOGI school leads then shared with staff members on topics including terminology, pronoun use and Family Day.

“Many educators don’t have the tools and background information to do SOGI justice – to be authentic and confident in what they are teaching,” says Adrian. “This model of district-based SOGI coordinators and SOGI school leads allows us to support educators and increase their capacity.”

Adrian notes that the district SOGI leads came together once a month to talk about successes and challenges. “This is not work that should be done in isolation,” he says. “It’s important to share information and ask questions. I firmly believe that every district needs a coordinator – otherwise, this work just won’t...
happen. If we want to make schools safer places, each district needs to commit to this.”

One school’s experience bringing its SOGI policy to life
Maureen Steltman is proud of how changes to her school’s physical environment, professional development learning and language use have made LGBTQ students (and teachers and parents) feel more welcome. The head of school at Fraser Academy in Vancouver – an independent school geared to children with dyslexia and language-based learning difficulties – Steltman oversaw the development of the school’s SOGI policy in the fall of 2015.

She says that one of the most important pieces of Fraser Academy’s SOGI policy is its commitment to professional development. The school commits to annual professional development to “develop the awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to advocate for the needs of students whose real or perceived identity is LGBTQ+.”

Steltman says that sessions facilitated by local non-profit organizations have been transformative, “opening up whole new levels of conversation.” She also points out that a more SOGI-inclusive school is important for not only students, but teachers and staff too. “One staff member confided their reluctance to working in an environment where they would be gendered through the title of ‘Mr.’ or ‘Ms.’”

The SOGI policy prompted changes to the school’s physical environment, with two single-stall bathrooms now unisex. For the school’s larger multi-stalled boys’ and girls’ washrooms, students use the washroom that aligns with their gender identity.

The revised dress code allows students at the independent school to wear the uniform that matches their gender identity, and other elements of the school’s SOGI policy speak to confidentiality and privacy, access to physical education and sports, and records and student information.

Collaboration is key
The success of the SOGI Educator Network pilot project in 2016/17 led to its expansion province-wide in 2017/18, and 48 of 60 school districts are now part of the network. District representatives came together for a provincial training day in October 2017 and will continue to meet regionally throughout the year.

Beddall says that the work being done on SOGI-inclusive policies and practices is of the utmost importance. “At the end of the day, to thrive and be successful in school, all students need to be comfortable being their authentic selves,” he says. “That’s not possible if they are feeling scared or vulnerable and believe they can’t be who they are for fear of repercussions or bullying. The work being done on this initiative is a wonderful example of a successful collaboration among multiple education partner groups. We are all working together toward the same goal: to create safer environments for our children and youth.”

LEARN MORE
Want to learn more about SOGI? Here are a few online resources:

• **SOGI 1 2 3**: SOGI 1 2 3 shares proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in the areas of policy and procedures, inclusive environments and curriculum resources. The “Pro-D” page on sogieducation.org includes downloadable classroom tools, as well as five-minute Learning Burst videos to spark discussion.

• **TeachBC**: SOGI lesson plans and teaching resources from the BCTF: teachbcdb.bctf.ca (Type “SOGI” into the search bar to get started.)

• **Supporting Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions**: This document outlines best practices and guidance, provides links to example school district policies and procedures, and includes a list of resources.

• **BC Teachers’ Federation**: The BCTF offers a variety of free workshops for teachers that aim to develop skills to interrupt, address and challenge homophobia and transphobia within classrooms and school communities. bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx
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 Peter Froese and Doug Lauson from the Federation of Independent School Associations in British Columbia and Dr. Ralf St. Clair from the Association of BC Deans of Education.

Federation of Independent School Associations in British Columbia

Funded  The Federation of Independent School Associations in British Columbia (FISA BC) was founded in 1966 when 12 independent school leaders came together to work for the education and funding of all independent schools of BC.

Members  FISA BC is a federation of five independent school associations, whose members include 304 schools attended by over 83,000 students, representing 13 percent of school-aged children in BC.

Mission  FISA BC’s mission is to enable parents to exercise the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children and to promote the rightful place and responsibility of independent schools within a democratic and pluralistic society.

Website  fisabc.ca

Phone  604-684-6023

Learn spoke with FISA BC’s executive director Peter Froese and president Doug Lauson.

What does FISA BC do?

FISA BC acts on behalf of its five member associations and their 304 member schools on issues of policy, professional development and funding with the provincial government, which is responsible for regulating independent schools.

What are some of your successes as an organization?

Independent schools are inherently diverse, differing in both religious and educational philosophies. One of our greatest successes has been to bring these diverse schools and perspectives to one table, working together on shared issues for 51 years.

A goal recently achieved has been our success in convincing other educational stakeholders that independent schools can make valuable contributions to the educational landscape of BC. Today, the voice of independent schools is heard in most educational discussions and that voice works collaboratively with the major education stakeholder groups of the province.

How does FISA BC work with other education partner groups?

FISA BC has extremely good working relationships with other education partners and is actively involved in groups that include the Sector Advisory Council, Leadership Development Working Group, Continuing Professional Development Advisory Council, K-12 Coding Initiative Advisory Committee, K-12 Leaders Committee for Mental Health and Well-Being in BC schools, BC Council for International Education and others.
Being at the table ensures that decisions are made for the well-being of all children who attend a BC school. Regulatory and education decisions have as much of an effect on independent schools as they do on schools in the public system.

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

Almost 13 percent of students in BC attend an independent school. As BC residents, these children and their families have the right to receive an education that is at least equal to the standard offered by the public school system. And they have the right to have a voice in the educational system of the province.

FISA BC represents the voice of those people who choose alternative educations for their families, as declared by Article 26(3) of the United Nations Charter: “Parents have the right to decide what education is appropriate for their children.” Exercising this right does not mean sacrificing the right to be involved and heard.

**What do you see as the most significant challenges facing students in our schools? How does FISA BC contribute to positive solutions?**

Our world is challenging and complex. No matter what vocation they choose, our students need to be creative, critical-thinkers and problem-solvers. Our students must be supported to be actively involved in their own learning and empowered to personalize their education and see its relevance to what is happening (or going to happen) in their own lives. This can be very difficult for teenagers, especially in areas or subjects where they do not see relevancy.

The new curriculum will help students navigate these changes. But perhaps equal challenges face teachers who must re-think their established teaching strategies and adapt their practice. FISA BC supports the professional development of independent school teachers, ensuring they have the skills to deliver the new curriculum and are continuing to develop their professional practice.

Anything else you’d like to add?

FISA BC believes in choice – that parents have the right to choose the education they want for their children. In fact, the importance of choice becomes particularly acute if you examine the case of students with learning disabilities. Currently, the only wholly specialized schools providing special needs services to such students are 17 independent schools across the Lower Mainland. There are no equivalent special education schools in the public system.

Parents who send their children to independent schools do pay extra for that choice. The provincial government provides about 80 percent of independent schools with grants equivalent to 50 percent of the operational funding given to public schools, but does not provide any funds to cover capital expenses for land, building or equipment. Tuition costs cover this gap, and if parents are property owners, they also pay taxes that directly fund students in public and independent schools.

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**Association of BC Deans of Education**

**Founded**  The Association of BC Deans of Education (ABCDE) was founded in 2003 for leaders of teacher education programs to work together on areas of mutual interest.

**Members**  ABCDE represents the province’s nine teacher education programs. Its members include the deans, associate deans, chairs and directors responsible for these programs, as well as the Dean of Arts from Yukon College.

**Mission**  ABCDE aims to advance responsive, diverse and courageous educational practice.

**Website**  educ.sfu.ca/abcde

**Phone**  604-224-3889
Learn spoke with Dr. Ralf St. Clair, chair of ABCDE and the dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria.

**What does ABCDE do?**

Our work is guided by our core values of collaboration, advocacy and diversity. As a group, ABCDE strongly believes that teacher education and other forms of educator preparation make a vital contribution to the health of the profession. If candidates are as well prepared as possible to teach in schools, and if they fully understand the profession and its demands, then they will contribute more and stay longer.

**What are some of your successes as an organization?**

We often work through partnerships, looking for areas of common interest. We are very proud to have partnered with the First Nations Education Steering Committee to promote a mandatory course in indigenous education for teacher candidates, and we continue to promote indigenous education as a priority for our province and country.

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

ABCDE works closely on cross-cutting issues with partners including the BC School Superintendents Association, the Principals’ & Vice-Principals’ Association, the BC Teachers’ Federation, and the ministries of education and advanced education among others. One recent example is our work with the BC Teachers’ Council on an accreditation process to ensure the continued quality and relevance of teacher education programs.

We are committed to working collaboratively to maintain the effectiveness of one of the best education systems in the world, and will continue to build strong relationships with those sharing that commitment.

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

As an organization, ABCDE is in an interesting position: we are part of the post-secondary system and we work in partnership with the provincial government and the profession. This gives us a unique overview of teaching and teachers in BC, but it also means we must balance the expectations and needs of many different constituencies.

**How does ABCDE’s work help our K-12 students better respond to the challenges they face?**

The education of teachers and their ongoing professional development are key to ensuring our students have the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to reach their potential. As an organization, we strive to ensure that teachers also have the educational foundation – and opportunities for ongoing learning – to make positive contributions to their students and the education profession throughout their career.

Our current initiatives focus on three main issues. The first is trying to address the ongoing mismatch between the specialization of teacher candidates, the positions districts need to fill and the re-designed curricula’s more interdisciplinary approach. We have lots of potential social studies teacher candidates and many fewer math and science teacher candidates, making it difficult for districts to fill positions. Another pressing example is the difficulty of finding candidates who are proficient in French—and sufficiently confident in their use of the language—to teach in French Immersion and core French settings. Teacher preparation programs have a role to play in ensuring the province has the teachers it needs.

The second issue is the new BC curriculum. ABCDE strongly supports the thinking behind the curriculum and is excited by the possibilities it offers both to students and for increased teacher autonomy. However, any change on this scale requires support, and ABCDE is faced with the challenge of developing programs to prepare candidates for a new model of teacher professionalism and curriculum delivery. This also overlaps with the question of professional development and the collaborative work between teacher preparation programs, the Ministry of Education, the BCTF, school districts and independent schools. ABCDE will be working hard with its partners over the next few years to support BC educators as they adapt to new demands.

The third issue is ensuring that indigenous communities and students, whether urban or in more rural areas, receive the best possible teaching. In many cases, this requires teachers with good knowledge of a local indigenous language, often making it harder to find candidates. A long-term approach to strengthening indigenous education is vital, and ABCDE therefore sees this as a priority for some time to come.

**Anything else you’d like to add?**

The profession of teaching is evolving – this is a time of great excitement and challenge in teacher education in BC.
International Education Week (November 13-17) is an annual, worldwide celebration promoting the benefits of international education and exchange. Learn magazine invites teachers to consider how to promote global and intercultural competencies for all students, best support international students and maximize the benefits of having international students in classrooms.

In the spirit of intercultural learning, we highlight the thoughts of two teachers who have embraced the rewards and challenges when international students walk through the classroom door.

Shannon is an International Education Advocate Teacher with the Surrey School District.

Shannon: “International students provide an intercultural experience. BC students and staff are introduced to other cultural value systems and ways of being, encouraging a more critical, flexible thinker. I became more aware of the assumptions that I made as a teacher. Working with international students helped me become a more sensitive, communicative and inclusive teacher.”

Shannon: “Language acquisition is challenging. It also takes time to adjust to BC’s active learning style. Finally, it can be difficult to be away from one’s home. Students benefit from developing strategies to help them deal positively with homesickness, an inevitable part of living abroad.”

Shannon: “If students arrive at the senior level intending to graduate, they (and their families) need to be aware of the language proficiency required to successfully complete school and enter university. Developing strong support networks is also key. I enjoyed seeing my international students engage in extra-curricular activities at school. The friendships they made were invaluable, giving them the chance to truly experience life in Canada.”

Sara is an English, Social Studies and ELL Teacher with the Greater Victoria School District.

Sara: “International students bring their own cultures and experiences to the classroom, like each student. When international and BC students integrate, both parties benefit. International students provide opportunities to consider how we teach language and writing and how we add different perspectives and voices to class discussions.”

Sara: “International students often struggle to integrate with BC students and face significant language development challenges, balancing the expectations from home with the realities here.”

Sara: “More preparation for what the school experience will be like in BC before they arrive might help. Realistic expectations about the challenges of learning a new language while trying to complete curricular content might also help families, students and teachers. International students’ experiences are often what they make of them. Those who get involved, join teams, and make an effort to make new connections will have more positive experiences.”

International education in BC

• 20,438 international students studied in BC’s K-12 system in 2016/17
• The Ministry offers a Teacher Exchange and Mobility Award to teachers to promote international partnerships and to develop intercultural knowledge and a Student Exchange and Mobility Award to students to foster intercultural skills and knowledge. Google “Province of BC Exchange and Mobility Awards” for more information.

A resource for international students

BCforHighSchool.gov.bc.ca offers comprehensive information in multiple languages about education and life in BC for international students.”
The students in the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) were pretty clear about what they wanted: a pride prom where they could celebrate the end of the year with their partners and friends. Surrey teacher Heather Kelley helped make this dream a reality, and with the collaborative efforts and support of students, fellow educators Colline Coe and Robert Skobla, the district, the Surrey Teacher’s Association and the local community, she organized Surrey’s first pride prom in June 2016 at Guildford Park Secondary School.

“Many queer students say it’s hard to meet other queer youth,” she says. “Or they are frustrated by being unable to invite their partners and friends from other schools to school dances – there are often strict rules around who can attend school events. We were chatting in our GSA meetings about ways to build community, and the students said they wanted a queer prom.”

The catch? The proposed prom date was just two weeks away. Kelley got to work obtaining permission from teachers, principals and district administrators to host a dance open to all secondary students in the Surrey School District, and she reached out to the community for support.

She emailed Long & McQuade to ask for donated sound equipment and contacted a number of other organizations to ask for door prizes and financial donations to cover the costs. A Facebook post she wrote about the event for her friends went viral, and the gifts, donations and well wishes began pouring in.

“We had students who graduated from a Surrey school five years ago showing up with giveaways for the kids. A home economics teacher made and donated 200 cupcakes and queer-friendly businesses donated gifts and prizes – the support was incredible.”

Students created a promo video and shared it with all Surrey secondary schools. They made posters, reached out to their friends and allies, and decorated the gym for the big night.

The dance went off without a hitch, with 120 Surrey students coming together to celebrate and dance in a safe and welcoming place. Kelley says that she found it interesting to witness the shifts in attitude from some of her colleagues, who were certainly not opposed to the dance but wondered aloud why it was needed.

“Many teachers came up to me afterwards and said that in the 15 years they’d volunteered at school dances, this was the first time they’d seen gay couples dancing together, and that they now understood the importance of creating this space for our youth.”

Not surprisingly, the success and popularity of the prom meant that there was interest in holding a similar prom the following year – with 200 students attending the event in June 2017. The momentum also extended beyond the Surrey School District, with at least five other school districts hosting pride proms of their own at the end of the 2016/17 school year.

Kelley offers advice for other districts wanting to hold a pride prom: “The students know what they need and want, and they have the energy and desire to do this. Let them take the reins. Logistically, it’s a big thing to pull off, so make sure you cross every ‘t’ and dot every ‘i’ on any district paperwork. And reach out to the community at large: they are so supportive.”

In the end, it is the response from students that underlines the value of organizing an event like this. Kelley says she has received dozens of emails, thank-you cards and letters from students who attended the dances, as well as from parents voicing their appreciation and support.

“One student came up to me and said, ‘Your prom made me feel like I was worth something for the first time.’”

“You might not think that things like a rainbow sticker on your door or a pride dance are important, but they are. These little actions add up, letting queer students know that they are celebrated and recognized for who they are.”
When a teenager faces mental health challenges, school can easily become an additional source of stress and anxiety. For students at an alternative school in Prince George, however, an innovative and holistic “wraparound care” model is creating a supportive community where they can achieve their personal and academic goals.

L’Donna Lynds is the sole teacher at Intersect School, and you can find her and her 30 students in a classroom located in the basement of the Intersect Youth & Family Services building. Primarily funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Intersect Youth & Family Services provides free counselling support, programs and services to families and youth under the age of 19.
Students must receive a referral from an Intersect counsellor to be eligible to attend the Intersect School program, and they must be between the ages of 13 and 19. They may suffer from depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and other mental health issues, and they’ve usually struggled to succeed in mainstream academic environments.

“The beautiful thing about this program is that it provides wraparound care,” says Lynds. “Students know their counsellor is just upstairs, giving them easy access to their clinicians every day. And it allows us to all work together seamlessly to provide support. So if a student is working towards a specific clinical goal - like increasing peer interaction - I can, with the permission of the student, learn about that goal from the counsellor and write it into the student’s IEP. And we can then create the space for them within our program so they reach that goal. For example, if a student wants to reach out and make a friend, we can facilitate that by pairing them up with another student to cook together in our kitchen.”

Lynds is supported within the school by an educational assistant, a youth care worker and a mental health worker. It’s very much a community atmosphere, with clinicians and staff regularly joining the students for meals on hot lunch days.

“These kinds of interactions give our students opportunities to develop healthy, adult relationships with multiple people – not just their own counsellors, but with the other adults who work here,” she says.

The fact that all students in the program have mental health struggles also minimizes the stigma that is still, unfortunately, linked to these issues. Being part of this community, says Lynds, creates a safe place for students to see that they are not alone. “It creates an equalizing field for our students – suddenly, when they enter the program, the things that used to make them different in mainstream schools now make them alike.”

Students can stay in the program for up to three years. They work through the academic curriculum at their own pace, with Lynds providing one-on-one instruction or leading small groups as needed. Depending on their progress, some may return to a mainstream school to graduate while others will graduate from the Intersect School Program.

“It is so gratifying when students come back to see me after they’ve graduated, telling me about their lives, their jobs, their experience in college or university, or big life events like buying a car or home,” says Lynds.

Lynds is passionate about removing the stigma often associated with mental health. “Everyone is here for the same reason: they want to graduate, even though they’re going through some struggles. There’s a real respect here, and that translates into the way that mental health issues are normalized and we all work to create a safe environment where students can be themselves.”

L’Donna Lynds says the wraparound care model allows students to thrive.
**NEWS + NOTICES FROM THE TRB**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR A CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK**

The *Criminal Records Review Act* requires all individuals working with children and vulnerable adults, including certificate holders, to undergo a criminal record check (CRC) every five years. The Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) facilitates this requirement by collecting your authorization and submitting it to the Criminal Records Review Program of the Ministry of the Attorney General, which conducts the check.

If you are a certificate holder and have not authorized a criminal record check in the last five years through the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools or the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB), you are required to give your authorization for a check by completing a form and submitting it to the TRB. Once you have authorized your check, you may still need to provide your fingerprints. If this is the case, the Criminal Records Review Program will contact you with instructions on how to proceed. Note that there may be wait times for processing authorizations and/or fingerprint submissions. It is therefore important to authorize your check immediately and complete any fingerprinting requirement well in advance of the deadline.

To authorize your check, please visit the TRB website, click on the Certificate Services tab, choose Criminal Record Check in the menu and follow the instructions for submitting your authorization. If you don’t know when your next authorization is due, you can confirm the date by logging in to the Certificate Holders’ Area on the TRB website. A message on the welcome page will provide you with this important information.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS’ COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

The meetings of the British Columbia Teachers’ Council (BCTC) are open to the public and are held at the TRB offices at 400-2025 West Broadway in Vancouver. The BCTC 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. The next BCTC meeting is scheduled for February 8 and 9, 2018. Visit the TRB website to learn more about the Standards for Educators in BC and the mandate, composition and future meetings of the BCTC.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS’ COUNCIL 2018 ELECTIONS**

Elections for the BCTC are held every three years with an election for one BCTC member taking place in each of the five election zones. To be eligible for nomination as a candidate for an election and serve as zone representative, a person must be a resident in that zone, hold a valid BC teaching certificate and be a practising certificate holder. Certificate holders vote in the zones in which they live. The next elections will take place in the spring of 2018, and the call for nominations is now available. Visit the TRB website to learn more about the BCTC elections.

**FIRST COMMISSIONER FOR TEACHER REGULATION CONCLUDES HIS TERM**

The first Commissioner for Teacher Regulation, the Honourable Bruce Preston, concluded his five-year term on November 8, 2017. During his term, he operationalized the new discipline processes under the *Teachers Act* and worked with staff of the TRB to make significant improvements in the quality and efficiency of investigative processes. He also made major strides in reducing delay in the discipline process and facilitated the creation of a remedial education program for certificate holders. A process is underway for the appointment of the next Commissioner. In the meantime, Elena Miller is acting as an interim Commissioner.

You can find services for certificate holders at [bcteacherregulation.ca](http://bcteacherregulation.ca).
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS’ COUNCIL REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Under the Teachers Act, the BC Teachers’ Council (BCTC), which is made up of 16 elected and appointed members, is mandated to:

• set BC teacher education program approval standards,
• determine if programs meet these standards, and
• establish the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct Standards required of applicants and educators in BC.

The Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) provides administrative support to the BCTC as it carries out its mandate.

Since late 2015, the BCTC has been reviewing and revising the Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC (the Professional Standards), which serve to guide the practice of British Columbia’s K-12 educators and to communicate to the public the conduct and competence expected of educators as they carry out their work.

To begin the process and to support the review, in 2015 the BCTC established a five-member committee – the Professional Standards Steering Committee (PSSC). In February 2016, a focus group session was held that brought together 35 individuals representing 19 education-related organizations, as well as a group of students, to discuss how the Professional Standards reflect what educators in BC are expected to embody, the strengths of the current standards and ways to further strengthen these standards. This was followed by an online form posted on the TRB website that asked the same questions and collected feedback from the public, certificate holders and education partners.

The PSSC then looked at the evolution of the Professional Standards, studied professional standards for teachers in other jurisdictions, reviewed the New Teacher Survey data, and examined the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, First Peoples Principles of Learning, and the BC K-12 curriculum revisions. The PSSC also reviewed the feedback gathered at the focus group session and from the online feedback form.

By the fall of 2016, the PSSC had written a revised set of proposed draft Professional Standards and presented them to the full BCTC. The BCTC provided its feedback and the PSSC further revised the proposed draft Professional Standards.

In February 2017, the BCTC reviewed the revisions and approved them to be shared for broad consultation. Another online feedback form was posted showing the revised set of proposed draft Professional Standards, and certificate holders, education partners, teacher education program faculty, teacher candidates, students and the public were invited to participate. A select group of BC education partners were also contacted directly and asked to provide feedback on behalf of their organizations.

The PSSC analyzed the compiled and collated feedback beginning in July 2017 and, with careful consideration of the comments and perspectives received, began refining the proposed draft Professional Standards.

The PSSC presented a statistical breakdown of the resulting feedback to the full BCTC at the October 2017 meeting, and the PSSC is now continuing its work in reviewing the feedback and refining the proposed draft Professional Standards.

The BCTC has also begun its review of the Certification Standards and the Teacher Education Program Approval Standards. More information about these reviews will be available as the BCTC works through the review processes.

LEARN MORE

To read the current Standards for Educators in BC, please visit bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsOverview.aspx.
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. These summaries do not contain all the details of the published outcomes, which may include discipline imposed by the employer. 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

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Petronella Agnes Dunderdale
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Reprimand

This summary is published under section 54(3) of the Teachers Act to protect the identity of a student who was harmed, abused or exploited by the teacher. In 2016, a district made a report about Petronella Agnes Dunderdale under section 16(2) of the School Act. Ms. Dunderdale was the head of a program in which a special needs student was enrolled. The student had a safety plan that teachers and educational assistants (EA) were required to follow. The safety plan noted that the student would occasionally show frustration and aggression towards peers and adults through hitting, pushing or swearing. It also noted that the student would occasionally leave the school when very frustrated. In March 2016, the student swore at Ms. Dunderdale. Ms. Dunderdale directed an EA to film the interaction with a cell phone. Ms. Dunderdale did not have the student’s parents’ permission to film her in this manner. During this interaction, Ms. Dunderdale spoke to the student in an inappropriate and confrontational manner, which was inconsistent with the safety plan, and which caused the student to grow more agitated. Despite the student requesting that filming stop, Ms. Dunderdale did not instruct the EA to cease filming. The student left the room agitated and ended up outside where other staff members had to calm her and bring her back inside. On April 27, 2017, Ms. Dunderdale entered into a consent resolution agreement with the Commissioner in which she agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Gina Adele Fulla
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 2
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In October 2016, a district made a report under section 16 of the School Act about Gina Adele Fulla, who was employed as a high school teacher. When she was not ill, Ms. Fulla booked sick leave on two days in 2015 to take “personal” days and five days in 2016 to attend a
conference for a company for which she works. On March 21, 2017, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Ms. Fulla agreed to a reprimand. 

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Sherri Lee Loewen
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Reprimand/Certificate suspended for two days

In December 2016, a district made a report under section 16 of the School Act about Sherri Lee Loewen. The following events occurred on September 16, 2016, when Ms. Loewen was working as a teacher on call. A student at the school, a six-year-old autistic boy, was having a temper tantrum. The education assistant (EA) assigned to work with him moved him to a storage room containing bookshelves, books, a table and chairs. The EA was called away to attend to another child, leaving the student with Ms. Loewen. After the EA left, Ms. Loewen closed the door, locking the student inside. She opened the door once to ask him if he wanted to play outside, but shut the door when the student yelled at her. While the storage room door had a window, Ms. Loewen did not stay at the window to supervise the student and ensure that he was safe. When the EA returned, she looked through the door window but could not see the student because he was sitting with his back against the door. The door was locked, requiring her to use her key to open it. The student was curled up in a ball crying. When the EA turned around, she discovered that Ms. Loewen had left the room without confirming that the responsibility for caring for the student had been transferred to the EA. On April 27, 2017, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Ms. Loewen agreed to a reprimand and a two-day suspension of her certificate.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Scott Kurtis Naegeli
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standards 1 and 2
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In November 2016, a district made a report under section 16 of the School Act about Scott Kurtis Naegeli. In September 2016, while employed as a technology education teacher, Mr. Naegeli acted inappropriately and created a risk to student safety. In the spring of 2016, pigeons roosted in the covered outdoor compound at the school where students worked on cars. The droppings fell onto the floor and other areas of the compound. Mr. Naegeli informed the school administration and a custodian of the situation, and the custodian told him that she would put in a work order. In September 2016, approximately eight pigeons were roosting in the compound, and their droppings and egg shells covered the compound, as well as the top of a car. Mr. Naegeli spoke with a student in his class who offered to “deal with” the pigeons. Mr. Naegeli initially said “no,” but in a second conversation he told the student to come see him in the morning. The next morning, before school began, the student told Mr. Naegeli he could kill the pigeons. Mr. Naegeli states that he said “no,” but he gave the student a key to the compound. Mr. Naegeli understood that the student was going to “deal with” the pigeons. The student brought a pellet gun to the school and used it in the automotive compound to shoot the pigeons. On April 5, 2017, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Naegeli agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Scott Michael James Romano
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In July 2016, a district made a report under section 16 of the School Act about Scott Michael James Romano, who was employed as a high school teacher when the following events occurred. A Grade 10 student in Mr. Romano’s math class had a learner’s driving permit. Mr. Romano had promised the student that he would allow her to practice driving, using his car, if she performed well on an upcoming test. On February 25, 2016, Mr. Romano left his classroom for approximately 35-40 minutes during instructional time to allow the student to practice parking using his car in the school parking lot. He allowed the student to drive his car as a reward for working hard and obtaining an A on her math test. Mr. Romano was not in the car with the student while she was operating it. Mr. Romano allowed the student to drive his car without the knowledge or permission of her parents or school administrators, and without first determining whether he had insurance coverage in the event damage or injury were incurred while the student was operating his car. On March 21, 2017, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Romano agreed to a reprimand.
CERTIFICATE HOLDER Lawrence Paul Ryan
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 2
DISPOSITION Reprimand

In January 2017, a district made a report under section 16 of the School Act about Lawrence Paul Ryan, who was employed as a high school teacher. On November 25 and 28, 2016, Mr. Ryan called in sick when he was not ill, using those two days to attend to personal matters. On May 17, 2017, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Ryan agreed to a reprimand.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Robert William Stevenson
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Former certificate holder will not apply for a teaching certificate or letter of permission

In June 2015, a district made a report under section 16(6) of the School Act about Robert William Stevenson, who was employed as a high school teacher when the following events occurred. A student, whom Mr. Stevenson knew was in Grade 12, signed up for an account on an adult social networking app in early 2015, shortly after turning 18. Mr. Stevenson also had an account on the app. On January 12, 2015, Mr. Stevenson sent two messages to the student through the app. The student responded with “um hi Mr. Stevinson” [sic]. On January 15, 2015, Mr. Stevenson wrote to the student, who asked whether Mr. Stevenson realized that the student attended the school. Mr. Stevenson said that he did and that he “just took the risk to say hi.” That night, Mr. Stevenson took the lead in a very sexually explicit exchange with the student that included Mr. Stevenson sharing graphic details of his own sexual experiences and confirming that he had initially messaged the student in order to “hookup.” After the student said goodnight, Mr. Stevenson wrote back, giving his phone number and writing “always down to chill hang hookup discreetly.” Mr. Stevenson also provided the student with a link to a restricted access porn site as well as his username and password, encouraging the student to view it. Throughout these exchanges, the student did not respond to Mr. Stevenson’s comments in a similar vein. On January 16, 2015, Mr. Stevenson sent the student a photo of himself shirtless. The student did not respond. Mr. Stevenson sent three more messages. That evening, the student responded, writing that the student was not interested in pursuing any type of relationship with Mr. Stevenson. Mr. Stevenson replied with an apology and acknowledged that his actions were not ethical or professional. Mr. Stevenson’s messages made the student very uncomfortable, particularly since they saw each other frequently at the school. On October 21, 2015, Mr. Stevenson signed an undertaking not to teach, and on November 1, 2016, his certificate was cancelled for non-payment of fees. On March 21, 2017, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Stevenson agreed that he will not apply for, and the Director of Certification will not be required to issue to him, a certificate of qualification, an independent school teaching certificate or a letter of permission for 10 years.

CERTIFICATE HOLDER T-AF-2017
AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION Former certificate holder will not apply for a teaching certificate or letter of permission

This summary is published under section 54(3)(a) of the Teachers Act to protect the identity of a student who was harmed, abused or exploited by the teacher. In 2015, the Commissioner received a report about a teacher from a district under section 16 of the School Act. The teacher provided the Commissioner with an undertaking not to teach in any role or position requiring a teaching certificate or letter of permission. In early 2016, the Commissioner initiated an investigation after being advised that the teacher had been charged under the Criminal Code. In early 2017, the teacher pleaded guilty to one count of sexual exploitation of a young person. The teacher entered into a consent resolution agreement with the Commissioner in which the teacher agreed that he would never apply for, and that the Director of Certification will not be required to issue to him, a certificate of qualification, an independent school teaching certificate or a letter of permission. The teacher’s certificate was cancelled in 2016 for non-payment of fees.
CERTIFICATE HOLDER  T-BE-2017
AGREEMENT  Professional Misconduct/Standard 1
DISPOSITION  Former certificate holder will not apply for a teaching certificate or letter of permission

This summary is published under section 54(3) of the Teachers Act to protect the identity of a student who was harmed, abused or exploited by the teacher. In 2015, the Commissioner received a report about a teacher from a district under section 16 of the School Act. After receiving the district report, the Commissioner asked the teacher to provide an undertaking not to teach, which the teacher provided in 2015. The Commissioner initiated an investigation after learning that the teacher had been charged with one count of sexual exploitation. The teacher had a sexual relationship with a female student at the school. In 2016 the teacher pleaded guilty to one count of sexual exploitation of a young person. The teacher entered into a consent resolution agreement with the Commissioner in which the teacher agreed that he would never apply for, and that the Director of Certification will not be required to issue to him, a certificate of qualification, an independent school teaching certificate or a letter of permission. The teacher’s certificate was cancelled in 2016 for non-payment of fees.

Hearing Decision

CERTIFICATE HOLDER  Robert Darwin Ammon
AGREEMENT  Professional Misconduct/Standards 1, 2 and 4
DISPOSITION  Certificate suspended for five months/Certificate holder to complete a course

A hearing panel considered allegations set out in a citation issued on July 7, 2015, and amended on February 9, 2016. On October 27, 2016, the hearing panel issued its decision and found that Robert Darwin Ammon had engaged in professional misconduct. The panel found that Mr. Ammon had an unprofessional and inappropriately personal relationship with a student. Mr. Ammon communicated with the student about highly personal, emotional and religious topics. He also engaged in extensive, frequent and confidential email communications in which he encouraged the student to talk about the student’s personal issues and emotions, at a time when he knew the student was vulnerable. Mr. Ammon expressed his affection for the student, including telling the student “I love you” in multiple emails, and he expressed his own desire or wish to hear from the student on a regular basis. The email exchange took place outside of school hours, on weekends and late at night. Mr. Ammon gave the student gifts and continued to do so despite requests from the student’s parents to stop. Mr. Ammon failed to inform the student’s parents and school administration of the student’s emotional vulnerability and poor academic performance at a time when it was likely that doing so could have allowed either or both to assist the student. On May 1, 2017, the panel directed the Director of Certification to suspend Mr. Ammon’s teaching certificate for five months and directed that Mr. Ammon refrain from leading extracurricular duties that involve the supervision of students one-on-one until he demonstrates that he has successfully completed a course on boundaries.
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.