

**British Columbia New Teacher Survey 2021/22**  
**British Columbia Teachers' Council**  
**Vancouver, BC**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The British Columbia New Teacher Survey 2021/22 was conducted by the British Columbia Teachers' Council with support from several branches of the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Association of British Columbia Deans of Education (ABCDE). The data were collected by online survey in late 2021 and early 2022. The primary purpose of the survey was to increase understanding of the experience of new teachers during the transition through teacher education programs (TEPs) and into the early years of work as a professional educator.

## RESPONDENTS

The invitation to participate was emailed to all 9,800 teachers who graduated from BC TEPs and were certified to teach from 2015 to 2021. Just over 1,300 responded to the survey, though specific questions had varying numbers, with around 600 responses for some later questions. The demographics of the respondents fit well with the teaching workforce in the province, with 73% female, 83.3% self-identifying as having some degree of White ethnic identity and 6% self-identifying as having a disability or diverse abilities.

## DATA

A substantial amount of data was collected through the survey, covering professional priorities, working conditions and specific information on the pathway to becoming a professional educator. Four phases were considered: TEP coursework, field experience, the first year of teaching and professional development. There are quantitative data for each aspect of the survey, most often generated through sliders by which respondents could indicate agreement or disagreement with statements. There are also qualitative data for most aspects, generated through invitations to respondents to contribute in open text fields. These attracted over 100,000 words of comments, which proved extremely helpful in contextualising the scale responses from the sliders.

## ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics, providing overall measures as well as specific information by gender, level of qualification, ethnicity, and disability status. Qualitative data was read and every comment was coded to create clusters with shared meaning. These clusters were brought alongside the quantitative data to produce findings for each section of analysis. These findings were then collated to produce overall findings and generate recommendations. As with similar research projects, the recommendations are a good faith effort to suggest ways in which the BC education system can respond responsibly to the findings.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The survey was driven by a small set of research questions.

- **What role do the Professional Standards for BC Educators<sup>1</sup> play in shaping teacher preparation and the transition to employment?**

Professional Standards are well known by recent graduates of BC TEPs and appeared to work well as a way to understand the transition into the work of a professional educator. There is evidence that Professional Standards are helping to increase new teachers' readiness to work with Indigenous learners and communities as well as to advance reconciliation.

- **How is the experience of being a new teacher in BC?**

The experience of being a new teacher is sufficiently negative to support the conclusion that recruitment and retention issues will not be addressed without improving the transition experience. This finding cuts across all categories of respondents.

- **Are certain phases of teacher transition more strongly linked to the Professional Standards?**

New teachers view coursework as making the least valuable contribution to their engagement with the professional standards and generally view the first year of teaching as making the most. The value of coursework is seen as limited by the majority of respondents due to gaps and inappropriate focus.

- **How do different genders, levels and ethnicities of teachers experience these links?**

In terms of gender and level of qualification, male secondary teachers tend to be least satisfied with coursework. First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers give lower scores to coursework and field experience, but the highest scores for the first year of teaching and professional development. Teachers with disabilities and diverse abilities experience coursework as less useful.

<sup>1</sup> [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/standards-for-educators/standards-case-studies](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/standards-for-educators/standards-case-studies)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the detailed analysis contained in the full report, the following recommendations are offered. In each case the heading reflects a summary of findings across the report and recommendations address that summary. It is important to note the survey was not designed to be evaluative of education partners, and these recommendations are presented as suggestions in good faith.

### 1| Working conditions are seen as unsupportive and frustrating

This was the strongest set of findings across the survey, and respondents offered clear examples and suggestions to address the situation.

**Recommendation 1:** Practical steps to reduce teacher workload are identified and implemented.

**Recommendation 2:** Increased attention is given to ensuring necessary student supports are available.

**Recommendation 3:** Mental health supports are made more available to teachers.

### 2| TEP coursework is not seen as fit for purpose

Coursework received little support from respondents and attracted a range of thoughtful suggestions to strengthen it.

**Recommendation 4:** TEPs consider their approach to teaching reading, assessment, and classroom management and investigate ways to strengthen it.

**Recommendation 5:** TEPs continue to develop more integrated ways to teach theory and practical competencies.

**Recommendation 6:** TEPs consider strengthening preparation for the practical aspects of working within schools such as obtaining curricular resources and materials.

### 3| TEP experience varies by gender and level of qualification

Male teacher candidates, especially those studying for secondary education, consistently gave lower responses than other groups.

**Recommendation 7:** Further investigation of the reasons teacher preparation is experienced as less supportive by certain groups of teacher candidates would be valuable.

#### 4| Quality of teaching in TEPs is seen as inconsistent

New teachers, when asked to reflect on coursework, commonly expressed concerns about the way they were themselves taught in TEPs.

**Recommendation 8:** TEPs explore ways to support consistency between teaching philosophy and teaching practice.

**Recommendation 9:** TEPs explore ways to implement more stringent quality assurance practices.

#### 5| Recognising and responding to Indigenous presence is seen as challenging

Teaching around Indigenous education, history, communities, and learners was seen as an “add-on” within TEPs and then new teachers were seen as experts when they moved into schools despite feeling unprepared to do good work in this area.

**Recommendation 10:** TEPs consider how Indigenous presence can be authentically integrated into programs so it is less frequently seen as an extra.

**Recommendation 11:** Established teachers may benefit from substantial, targeted support on Indigenous presence.

#### 6| New teachers see field experiences as in need of re-structuring

Field experiences were seen as a make-or-break experience, but one which relies on the luck of the draw in terms of mentor teacher and host school. There were strong suggestions for ways to develop a more consistent experience.

**Recommendation 12:** The role of mentor teacher would benefit from being professionalised, with clear expectations, quality assurance and benefits.

**Recommendation 13:** TEPs consider restructuring programs to provide more field experience in deliberately varied contexts.

**Recommendation 14:** The concerns of teacher candidates about paying tuition to provide free labour and field experiences are acknowledged and addressed.

## 7| Entering employment is seen as stressful and not well supported

The first years of teaching are seen as thankless, unsatisfying, and exhausting. Respondents were able to provide concrete suggestions to improve this transition.

**Recommendation 15:** TEPs consider strengthening preparation around safety and socio-emotional aspects of teaching, which has high priority for new teachers.

**Recommendation 16:** Pragmatic supports for new teachers, such as materials and resources to equip a classroom, are provided.

**Recommendation 17:** Expectations for new teachers are clear, both in terms of curriculum and time demands beyond the classroom.

**Recommendation 18:** Orientation, both for contract teachers and Teachers Teaching On Call (TTOCs), is strengthened.

**Recommendation 19:** The multiple challenges faced by TTOCs are recognised and addressed by districts and schools.

## 8| First year teachers need access to mentoring and supportive administrators

This comment was sufficiently common and consistent for it to constitute a stand-alone cluster of recommendations.

**Recommendation 20:** A strong and supportive mentorship program is available to every new teacher.

**Recommendation 21:** School administrators recognise the needs of new teachers and find ways to provide opportunities to support their development.

## 9| Professional development is not seen as effective

Professional development is seen as a lost opportunity for new teachers, with no apparent rationale for what is offered and little support from school or district administration.

**Recommendation 22:** There would be a great deal to gain from a coherent and systematic approach to teacher professional development in BC, including protected time and resources.

**Recommendation 23:** The professional development system finds ways to recognise and value peer education and self-directed learning.

## **10| Access to Pro-D is seen as a challenge**

Gaining access to professional development, especially important given the perceived gaps in TEPs, is seen as potentially difficult and expensive.

**Recommendation 24:** Cost of Pro-D is capped or subsidized more systematically, and the particular cost pressures for rural teachers addressed.

**Recommendation 25:** TTOCs have access to professional development as part of employment conditions.

## **11| Further research with rural teachers is needed**

This survey was not able to fully explore differences between new urban and new rural teachers. Experience suggests these differences will be significant and it is important to understand them.

**Recommendation 26:** Education partners consider a means of reaching out to new teachers in rural settings to identify their specific concerns.

## **12| Further research with teachers who identify as having a disability or diverse abilities is needed**

The findings regarding teachers with disabilities and diverse abilities are at a broad level, and it is important to look more carefully at the experience of this group of educators.

**Recommendation 27:** TEPs engage with teachers who identify as having a disability or diverse abilities to understand their experience and address issues arising.

## **13| Further understanding of the experience of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers is necessary**

The lower utility of coursework and field experience for First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers, followed by the higher utility of the first year of teaching and professional development is an important and interesting phenomenon and calls for further understanding. This seems likely to be a product of less appropriate coursework and field experience along with positive professional entry.

**Recommendation 28:** TEPs explore their programs in conjunction with Indigenous representatives to understand more fully how they can better meet the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teacher candidates.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

To learn more about the survey, including details of the respondents and their comments, data, methods and the findings, please see the full report at [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/boards-commissions-tribunals/bctc](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/boards-commissions-tribunals/bctc).