

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



**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BRITISH COLUMBIA
GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION PARTNERS
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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 examine the experience of new teachers during the transition through teacher education programs (TEPs) and into the early years of professional teaching. This research brief outlines results and recommendations viewed as most relevant to the British Columbia government and education partners, including the Ministry of Education and Child Care, school districts and school administrators.

RESPONDENTS

Invitations were emailed to all 9,800 teachers who graduated from BC TEPs and were certified to teach in BC from 2015 to 2021. Over 1,300 responded to the survey, though specific questions had varying responses with just over 600 for some of the 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, TEP field experience, the first year of teaching and professional development. Quantitative data for each aspect were generated through sliders allowing respondents to indicate level of agreement with statements. There are also qualitative data generated through invitations to respondents to contribute in open text fields. These attracted over 100,000 words of comments, which contextualized scale responses.

ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics, providing overall measures as well as information by gender, level of qualification, ethnicity, and disability status. Qualitative data were coded to create clusters with shared meaning. These clusters were brought alongside the quantitative data to produce cross-cutting findings. These findings were then collated to produce overall findings and generate recommendations. 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 Educators¹ play in shaping teacher preparation and the transition to employment?**

The 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 the 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.

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.

¹ www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/standards-for-educators/standards-case-studies

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for consideration by education partners are organized under headings representing the survey findings.

Finding 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: Practical steps to reduce teacher workload are identified and implemented.

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

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

Finding 2| New teachers see field experiences as in need of re-structuring

Field experiences were seen as a make-or-break experience, but one which relied 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: The role of mentor teacher would benefit from being professionalised, with clear expectations, quality assurance and benefits

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

Finding 3| 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. New teachers were often seen as experts when they moved into schools despite feeling unprepared to do good work in this area.

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

Finding 4| 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: Pragmatic supports for new teachers, such as materials and resources to equip a classroom, are provided.

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

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

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

Finding 5| 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: A strong and supportive mentorship program is available to every new teacher.

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

Finding 6| 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: 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: The professional development system finds ways to recognise and value peer education and self-directed learning.

Finding 7| 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: Cost of Pro-D is capped or subsidized more systematically, and the particular cost pressures for rural teachers addressed.

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

Finding 8| 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: Education partners consider a means of reaching out to new teachers in rural settings to identify their specific concerns.