

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



**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA
TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS
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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.

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.

This research brief outlines results and recommendations relevant to BC teacher education programs. The survey was not intended as an evaluative tool and this brief is produced in the hope it will be useful to the programs.

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 teacher education programs to consider are organized under headings representing the survey findings.

Finding 1| TEP coursework is not seen as fit for purpose

Respondents saw coursework as less supportive of the professional standards than field experience or the first year of teaching. Courses were also seen as failing to provide critical competencies. Specific weaknesses were identified and attracted thoughtful suggestions to strengthen courses.

Recommendation: TEPs consider their approaches to teaching reading, assessment, and classroom management and investigate ways to strengthen them.

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

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

Finding 2| TEP experience varies by gender and level of qualification

Male teacher candidates, especially those having completed secondary teacher education programs, consistently gave lower responses than other groups.

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

Finding 3| Quality of teaching in TEPs is seen as inconsistent

When asked to reflect on coursework, respondents commonly expressed concerns about how they were themselves taught.

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

Recommendation: TEPs explore ways to implement more stringent quality assurance practices within coursework.

Finding 4| Recognising and responding to Indigenous presence is seen as challenging

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

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

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

Finding 5| 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, accountability, and benefits.

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

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

Finding 6| 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: TEPs consider strengthening preparation around safety and socio-emotional aspects of teaching, which has high priority for new teachers.

Finding 7| 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: TEPs engage with teachers who identify as having a disability or diverse abilities to understand their experience and address issues arising.

Finding 8| 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 with a positive professional transition.

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