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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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Photographer: Hamid Attie



Dan Miles
Bunka Suginami Canadian
International School in Tokyo, Japan



BRINGING BC EDUCATION TO THE WORLD

Three years after it opened in 1995, Maple Leaf International High School in Dalian, China, was certified as BC's first offshore school with a graduating class of 14 students. Twenty years later, there are 45 BC offshore schools in eight countries, employing more than 775 BC-certified teachers and enrolling almost 12,000 international students.

The growth and popularity of these schools speaks to the strong reputation and high international ranking of BC's education system. "Students around the world have a real desire to learn English in an immersion environment and gain a western-based education," says Brenda Neufeld, director of the Ministry of Education's International Education Branch. "They appreciate the value of our educational approach and are interested in attaining the Dogwood as a pathway to attending post-secondary institutions in BC."

To ensure that the overseas schools that offer BC's K-12 curriculum meet the same standards as schools in BC, the ministry has a rigorous application, certification and ongoing inspection process in place. The schools must teach the BC curriculum in English, hire BC-certified teachers, pay annual fees and be certified each year by BC Ministry of Education inspectors that include current and former superintendents and administrators.



Adrian Conradi at Maple Leaf International High School in Dalian, China



Calligraphy competition Tokyo, Japan

A trailblazer

When Adrian Conradi arrived in Dalian in 1998, he was one of just five BC-certified teachers at Maple Leaf International High School. That year, the first cohort of students to complete their Grade 12 at a BC offshore school graduated from Maple Leaf. (Since that first class of 14 students, the numbers have grown rapidly, and in 2015, the school employed more than 110 BC-certified teachers and had approximately 620 students in Grade 12.) Conradi and his wife Sara spent 12 years teaching in Dalian before returning to Canada in 2010.

“Those were the best years of my professional life,” Conradi says. “Even as an educator just starting out, I was able to teach the subjects I wanted to teach, which is not often the case in districts here at home. The students were very motivated to learn and there were no classroom management issues, so I could focus entirely on teaching. Combined with the Confucian tradition of respect for teachers and formal education in China, it made for a wonderful teaching experience.”

He says that families typically enrol their children in a BC offshore school because they want them to study abroad for post-secondary education. Parents recognize that studying the BC curriculum from BC-certified teachers can significantly help their children get into and succeed at western universities.

“Students in a BC offshore school are much better prepared for a western university education. It’s helpful for them to experience western teaching strategies and expectations, with our emphasis on inquiry-based learning, critical thinking and collaborative learning. Students also like that many universities will waive the requirement

for an English proficiency test if they have graduated with their BC diploma, so that’s an added benefit.”

From Kaslo to Tokyo

Dan Miles had been a principal and vice-principal in the Kootenay Lake school district for 15 years and was ready for an adventure. When he learned about the opportunity to head up BC’s first offshore school in Japan, he put his name forward and was thrilled to get the job.

“I was excited to do something new and to challenge my administrative skills in a different cultural environment,” he says.

After spending many years leading a full contingent of staff and several hundred students at J.V. Humphries Elementary-Secondary School in Kaslo and Jewett Elementary School in Meadow Creek, he now runs Bunka Sugunami Canadian International School in Tokyo which has one other teacher, a secretary and 14 students in Grade 10.

In addition to the administrative duties associated with launching a new school, he teaches several subjects, always with a focus on inquiry-based learning. “This challenged many of our students at the beginning, as they were coming from a system where the teacher is considered the expert. From a cultural point of view, they initially found it very frustrating to be confronted with my open-ended questions and student-centred approach to teaching.”

It’s all part of what happens when you mesh the BC approach with a different education system, he says, and Miles emphasizes that neither approach is right or wrong – they are simply different. He also notes that the cultural learning goes both ways: he is learning as much from his students as they are from him. →→



Andrew Shutsa and his students at the Universal American School in Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Dan Miles congratulates his colleague Mr. K. Saito in front of a gift from the BC Ministry of Education

"I find it fascinating to take off my 'Canadian' glasses and experience the world from a different perspective," he says. "There are diverse ways of understanding the world, and as educators it's very valuable to experience these different viewpoints."

The school will be adding three more teachers next year to meet the growing numbers of students interested in the program.

"It's a whole new approach to education and there is a lot of interest from students who want to attain high-level English skills and complete both the Dogwood and their Japanese high school certificate," says Miles.

"It's made me a better teacher"

Andrew Shutsa has taught at BC offshore schools in Seoul, Korea, and Doha, Qatar, and the elementary school teacher is currently working at the Universal American School in Dubai, where he has taught for the past four years.

"I really believe that teaching abroad has made me a better educator," he says. "Working in an ESL environment hones your skills. You learn to summarize. You're also under a lot of pressure because you're not in your comfort zone. But this pressure can be good, and it reminds you that just as you are taking a risk, so too are the students you are teaching. Their

parents have really taken a leap by putting their children into a very different education system than that offered in their home country."

A need for teachers

As the demand for BC offshore schools continues to grow, so too does the need for more BC-certified educators interested in taking up the challenge of working abroad.

"Teacher recruitment is always a priority," says Brenda Neufeld of the International Education Branch, who says that it's up to the schools to recruit and contract teachers.

Adrian Conradi, who is now a Ministry of Education approved offshore school consultant, helps prospective teachers connect to opportunities overseas. "Most educators aren't aware of offshore schools and what teaching internationally could mean for them professionally. For new graduates, you can gain experience that will benefit you when you return to Canada, including the experience of holding leadership positions at an early stage of your career."

He also emphasizes that you can "live a somewhat luxurious lifestyle" working abroad, even though the salaries on offer are lower than those available in Canada. "For six years my wife and I raised two children on one

teacher's salary, and we were able to go on a one-month tropical holiday every winter. My children have visited Thailand, Burma, Australia, the Philippines and several other countries, and they rode on elephants and camels before they ever saw a Labrador or a poodle."

Conradi cautions that teachers who are interested in moving overseas should consider it carefully. "Living abroad can be difficult and culture shock is real. You need to keep in mind that you are not teaching at a Canadian school. You are teaching a BC program delivered in another country, and that requires considering how you will adapt to the subtle and not so subtle cultural differences that play out every day in and out of class."

Despite these words of caution, Conradi, Miles and Shutsa all agree that working and living abroad has been the experience of a lifetime. It has deepened their professional practice, immersed them in new cultures, connected them to a close community of colleagues and opened new opportunities.

"Deciding to work abroad was the best decision I ever made," says Shutsa. "If you're interested, do the research to find out what's a good fit and then take the plunge." ←

BC offshore schools are located in China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Colombia, Egypt, Qatar and France. Teaching positions at these schools are listed on the Make a Future website (makeafuture.ca).

NEWS + NOTICES FROM THE TRB

2015 INCOME TAX RECEIPTS FOR CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

If you paid your annual practice fee directly to the Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) in 2015, your 2015 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 2015, this amount will show 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 FOR 2016-2017

For certificate holders to retain valid BC Ministry of Education certification, the annual practice fee of \$80 must be paid by May 31, 2016. 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 see bcteacherregulation.ca/CertificateServices/FeelInformation.aspx for more information 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 submit a notice of relinquishment that states you are surrendering your certificate. As your certificate would be cancelled, either action will result in a discontinuation of your privilege to vote in BC Teachers' Council elections, and termination of receipt of TRB correspondence. If you desire 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. For more information on relinquishing your certificate, or on refunds for annual fees paid, please visit bcteacherregulation.ca/CertificateServices/RetirementRelocationReassignment.aspx. ←

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' COUNCIL MEETINGS

The British Columbia Teachers' Council meetings are open to the public and are held at the Teacher Regulation Branch office at 400-2025 West Broadway in Vancouver. 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. To learn more about the Standards for Educators in BC and the mandate, composition and future meetings of the Council, please visit bcteacherregulation.ca/AboutUs/Council.aspx. ←

You can find more information and learn about services for certificate holders at bcteacherregulation.ca.



BUILDING CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT NEWCOMER STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

When team members from Vancouver's District Reception and Placement Centre (DRPC) talk about their work, a common theme is "connections." The more than 58 staff that are part of the DRPC are a strongly connected group dedicated to helping newcomer students and their families connect to school and life in Canada.

Led by District Principal William Wong, this team of administrators, settlement workers, multicultural liaison workers, youth settlement workers, resource teachers, registration staff and volunteers work together as a cohesive force to ensure that each student has the academic, social and community supports in place to help them succeed.

It's not an easy task: over 2,700 students registered at the DRPC last year, coming from 105 different countries and speaking 72 different languages. While most of these students are permanent residents, many are children of parents here in BC on a study or work visa, and others are refugees.



Some students are familiar with the values and expectations of a western education system and others are not. Some speak English fluently; others know no English at all. And some may have received little formal schooling, had their schooling interrupted or have experienced the trauma of war or civil conflict. Thanks to the work of the DRPC and the dedication of classroom teachers, these students will all have the opportunity to successfully integrate into their school and community.

Registration and assessment

In the Vancouver school district, students born outside of Canada must register at the DRPC before they can be enrolled in their neighbourhood school. Knowing that this is often the families' first contact with a North American school system, the DRPC has created a welcoming space for parents and their children. A small activity centre with toys keeps younger children occupied, and staff and volunteers are on hand to answer initial questions and help parents complete the registration forms. This registration process determines if the student is eligible for a publicly funded education¹ and identifies those families and students who might benefit from the support services of settlement workers or multicultural liaison workers.

Once registered, students complete an assessment of their language and math skills, and they are then assigned to their catchment school or specialized district programs.

That's the easier part. What comes next is a process of language acquisition and cultural adjustment, all supported by district staff and a network of community partners. Many support services are directed to the student's family in recognition of the critically important role parents play in their child's success.

Building connections with families

Through the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) employs 20 settlement workers who provide orientation information and support to families.

"School is where many new families experience their first sense of belonging in a new culture," says Cecilia Tagle, who has been a settlement worker for 22 years and has worked with the VSB since 2008. "We invite the parents into the school to meet with us, and we then help them with many different settlement issues."

Settlement workers refer parents to employment and housing services, help them navigate the medical or legal system, refer them to English language classes and connect them to other community-based services. One of a settlement worker's most important roles is to be a friendly link between families, school and the community, helping families make sense of Canadian culture and the BC education system.

"Moving to a new country and culture requires a paradigm shift," explains Jerry Wu, SWIS Manager. "It's a life change that asks you to learn a new set of values and skills."

The VSB has many programs and resources to help parents make that shift. For example, each week when newcomer secondary students are completing their math and English assessments, District Principal William Wong meets with their parents in the room across the hall to explain some of the basics of BC schools.

"There can be a lot of misunderstandings and misconceptions held by parents of high school students," he says. "Many families put a lot of pressure on their kids to graduate at 18 and go on to university, but we let them know that there are other options and that children can be successful in many different ways." →→



Left to right: Jerry Wu, Ann Hunter, William Wong, Jennifer Reddy, Cecilia Tagle

¹ The district's International Education Program provides opportunities for students who are not eligible for publicly funded education (usually because their parents are not living in Canada) to pursue an education in BC. These students are charged a tuition fee.

Similar information sessions are offered several times a week for parents of elementary school children. The district also offers Newcomer Parent Leadership Training, a five-day course that encourages parents to reflect on the philosophical and pedagogical differences between their own education system and that offered in BC. Between 50 and 70 parents take the class each year.

Many resources are also available on the district's website, translated into a dozen or more languages and explaining everything from homework to report cards. It all comes back to the students, says Tagle: "Helping parents understand the school system helps them provide their children with the support they need."

Multicultural Liaison Workers also play an important role in enhancing communication between the school and home.

"Our Multicultural Liaison Workers speak at least nine languages between them, and they are the liaison point for everything to do with school issues," explains Wong. "They are available during parent-teacher conferences or other meetings, and they provide both language and cultural interpretation to families, staff and students."

Building connections with students

From their first day in a new school, students are supported through multiple interconnected services. If they are not fluent in English, they may be enrolled in English Language Learning (ELL) classes – either as pull-out or push-in classes if they are in elementary, or as separate ELL classes at the secondary level. Their multicultural liaison worker can provide academic and skills mentoring, and will encourage the student to make connections with peers within the school or community based on his or her interests.

Secondary students are often a particularly vulnerable group. They face the challenge of making the transition to adulthood while learning a new language, navigating a new culture, negotiating parental expectations and forming new friendships.

Vancouver's Engaged Immigrant Youth Program (EIYP), led by Community Connections and Youth Coordinator Jennifer Reddy, works with over 300 youth across the district's 18 secondary schools. In addition to ongoing activities held over lunch or after school at the majority of Vancouver's high schools, EIYP services also include specialized programs and one-on-one goal-setting to support student

settlement and encourage students to stay in school and develop skills for meaningful employment or further education.

"It's a very experiential, hands-on program," explains Reddy. "Today, for example, students at Windermere Secondary, many of whom recently moved here from the Philippines, are creating art and music to explore some of their shared and individual experiences of starting a new life in Canada."

For students who come to the district with very little schooling or interrupted schooling, there are special programs offered at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary, with staff providing extensive individualized support. Cultural orientation activities, field trips, a literacy program, intensive language instruction and the Empower Program are all offered to help students gain the skills needed to transition into the workplace and continue their education through adult learning opportunities.

Building connections with educators

Educators need support too. Teachers across the district look to Ann Hunter, an ELL Consultant, for additional strategies, professional development, resources and ideas for helping students quickly acquire the language skills they need. Hunter provides assistance to teachers in 110 elementary and secondary schools and she oversees an extensive resource centre with materials that teachers can borrow.

Wong and other DRPC team members also offer cross-cultural competency and sensitivity training to district staff. "These presentations cover cultural differences and parenting styles," says Wong. "We talk about generalizations and stereotypes, and we explore some basic 'do's and don'ts' that can help prevent misunderstandings."

Making a difference

The team at DRPC knows that moving to a new country is the start of a long and not always easy journey, and they certainly know that many factors influencing a child's success are simply beyond their control. Nevertheless, each is committed to working collaboratively with each other, with other district educators and with community organizations to provide students and their families with a web of support. And when they happily share stories of the successes of the students they have worked with over the years, their stories are a very tangible reminder of the power of each educator to make a world of difference in the life of a child. ←

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' COUNCIL NEW TEACHER SURVEY

The BC Teachers' Council, which consists of 16 elected and appointed members, is mandated under the *Teachers Act* 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.

Given that the work of the teaching profession in BC is continually evolving, it is the Council's goal to ensure that teacher education programs are preparing new teachers with the relevant skills and knowledge to be successful in the profession.

In December 2014, a voluntary survey was emailed to 12,060 educators who were certified between 2010 and 2014. By March 2015, over 1,600 responses were received, 1,221 of which were from educators who completed a BC teacher education program.

Through a series of 30 questions, the Council sought information to better understand how prepared newly certified educators feel they are to deal with the realities of teaching in K-12 classrooms in BC. The questions focused on:

- certificate holder demographics,
- teacher education program background,
- employment in the K-12 school system,
- teacher education program content, structure and delivery and
- teacher education program effectiveness.

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide anecdotal responses and comments on a variety of topics, including special education coursework, Aboriginal education, methodologies, information about the realities of teaching and the length of their practicum.

The Council intends to use the data collected to help it carry out its mandate under the *Teachers Act*. ←

LEARN MORE

To read the Executive Summary highlighting the results of the New Teacher Survey, please visit bcteacherregulation.ca/documents/AboutUs/PublicMeetings/Agendas/2016/BCTC_survey_new-teacher_exec-sum_2016.pdf.

British Columbia Teachers' Council Review of the Standards

The BC Teachers' Council is conducting a review of the Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC. To support the review, the Teacher Regulation Branch welcomes feedback from certificate holders, teacher educators, teacher candidates, education partners, students, parents, and the public. Read more about how you can participate at bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsReview.aspx.



Becky Blair
Chair - BC Teachers' Council

OPEN TO LEARNING

BECKY BLAIR CONTINUES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROFESSION SHE LOVES

Becky Blair's love for teaching and being part of the teaching profession explains the "semi" when she describes herself as "semi-retired." Although she retired last June after more than 40 years in the classroom, she continues to contribute to the profession through her work with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and as Chair of the BC Teachers' Council.

Blair is one of the three members of the Council appointed by government under suggestion from the BCTF; other Council members are elected by educators or appointed by the Ministry of Education. One non-voting member represents the Minister, and the remaining members are appointed through nomination from seven other education partner groups. Blair says that the 16 elected and appointed members come to the table using their background and experience, "but are there to represent the public interest in education and not our personal interest or that of the group who has nominated us."

It's what makes the Council so effective, she says. "Everyone has their viewpoint, but we take off our 'organizational hats' to cooperate and look at the issues through others' eyes to make progress on some very important work."

That work currently includes developing a framework for evaluating teacher education programs to ensure that they meet the standards for the profession. Blair says it's an open and transparent process designed to promote dialogue and collaboration between the deans of education and the Council.

The process is also grounded in data – a recently completed survey of new teachers provides what Blair calls a "gold mine of information" that will be woven into the discussion. Other initiatives this year will include beginning a review of the standards.

"Being on Council offers a very different perspective on education from leading a class," says Blair, whose varied and dynamic career began with teaching Grade 4 in Williams Lake.

She then went on to teach in a First Nations night school program, as a special education integration teacher, as a math teacher in high school, in a work experience program and ultimately finished her career in Creston as a teacher in an alternate education program.

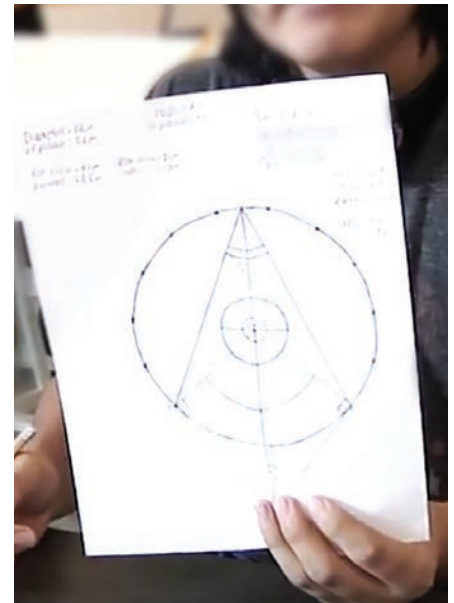
Looking back over this long career in education, she notes that "our models of teaching and our ability to understand the learning process have changed." But, she says, the skills needed to be a good teacher have not. "You need to be a people person who loves working with adults and children, and a big requirement is being a lifelong learner, open to learning from the students and people around you."

Blair's teaching career was balanced by her work with the BCTF, including serving as a local president for nine years as well as a member of the BCTF Executive Committee and on various advisory committees. She continues to work for the BCTF, conducting training sessions.

Whether as teacher, union leader or Council Chair, Blair finds "great joy in working with people and trying to improve the education process."

"These different positions I've held in my career have given me a deeper understanding of the profession. I see how everything is interrelated. There are all these circles of support that extend out from the classroom, and I have been fortunate to be involved in many of those areas." ←

INTEGRATING FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES INTO MATH 9



The new BC curriculum has expanded opportunities for practical, experiential learning and for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives and worldviews, all of which came to life for the students in a Grade 9 math class in Prince George last year.

For the students in Lauren Stelmaschuk's Mechanics of Math 9 class last year, math was a lot more than worksheets, drills and textbooks. Stelmaschuk used a project-based approach that drew on First Nations culture and concepts to better prepare students for Apprenticeship and Workplace Math 10.

"All the projects we did were built around different aspects of First Nations culture across Canada," she says. "For example, after designing and building bentwood boxes to explore concepts of surface area and volume, I invited some elders into the class who spoke about the importance of these boxes within their culture."

In another project, students deepened their understanding of circle geometry by designing and building a model of a pit house. The students then went on a field trip to the University of Northern BC to tour a recently built pit house on campus, where they learned about traditional living arrangements from Aboriginal faculty members. "We sat as a community in the house and listened to stories," says Stelmaschuk, "and the experience brought the pit house and First Nations culture to life in a very tangible way."

Stelmaschuk says that the course was designed to provide support for 20 students identified by teachers and administrators as potentially benefiting from this approach. And although she had high hopes for how the emphasis on hands-on learning might translate into learner engagement, she says she was surprised by just how positive the experience was for her students.

"The engagement was amazing. The questions the students asked were thoughtful and challenging. They often came up with great analogies when explaining concepts to their classmates, and they created beautiful projects that were so much a part of themselves."

Stelmaschuk mentions one student's bentwood box that she found particularly inspiring. "He went through his own family history to better understand the links to his clan and tribe, and then designed a box to show how his family nests together. He represented himself in the interior of the box, then his immediate family, community, tribe and region."

Another notable component of the class was that Stelmaschuk grouped the students into companies and gave them a budget to purchase the supplies required to complete each project. "They had to consult with their classmates to advocate why they should spend money on certain supplies. I found it fascinating to listen to them talk about the pros and cons of different support structures for roofs or the need for extra webbing when building dream catchers."

Stelmaschuk says that teaching this class has changed the way she looks at the curriculum, and that she is now always seeking opportunities to ensure that she finds ways to make concepts "more tangible and connected to something that students already know about or want to know more about." ←

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 questions. Then, read 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

After a parent-teacher evening was organized, a parent left a message for a teacher at the school advising that neither of the parents could attend the meeting because of a scheduling conflict. The parent stated that if the teacher had any concerns about the student, one of the parents could visit the school at another time. Three weeks later, the teacher emailed both parents and made inappropriate comments about the parents' inability to attend the meeting and about the students' academic difficulties. One of the parents subsequently visited the school hoping to discuss the content of the email with the teacher, but she refused to see the parent.

Consider the following questions

- What are the possible implications of what has occurred?
- As the principal of this teacher, what factors would you consider when addressing this situation?
- In your view, have the Standards been breached, and, if so, which ones?
- What consequences, if any, do you think are appropriate?

Factors the Commissioner may consider when evaluating this case

The Commissioner's decision about how to proceed could be based on the answers to the following questions:

- Did the teacher recognize that her behaviour was inappropriate and that it might negatively affect not only the parent-teacher relationship but also the teacher-student relationship?
- Did the teacher make any changes to her behaviour after the incident?
- Did the teacher attempt to make amends or explain her actions to the parents?
- Has the teacher previously been involved in any similar incidents related to her interactions with parents?
- Did the school require the teacher to complete any remedial training or professional development?

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 her 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 this case, the Commissioner may take into account Standard 4 (Educators value the involvement and support of parents, guardians, families and communities in schools).

If the 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; ordering or agreement to remedial training; 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 the BC Teachers' Council and the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee that established these Standards at bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsOverview.aspx.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ADVISORY: PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

By the Honourable Bruce Preston, Commissioner for Teacher Regulation

The increasing use of social media presents both opportunities and dangers for the professional educator. Social media are useful for efficiently communicating information, and also serve to establish, maintain and cement social relationships. It is important for educators to distinguish between these purposes each time they use social media in a student/teacher, parent/teacher or teacher/teacher communication. It is also important for educators to protect their professional reputation at all times, including when they are using social media for their own personal communication activities.

The inappropriate use of social media can result in serious discipline issues for teachers. In a number of cases in the past year, for example, teaching certificates have been jeopardized by teachers inappropriately communicating with students on social media. Furthering friendships with students through social media is dangerous in the extreme. When the communications have sexual content or are sexually suggestive, the almost certain result will be the loss of the teacher's teaching certificate.

Teachers should follow a strict rule when communicating with students, parents and colleagues: when using computers for communication purposes, they should use them only for professional purposes such as communicating information about school-related matters. Communicating through a personal email account or through Facebook posts or personal text messaging accounts should be avoided completely. Taking scrupulous care to maintain the professional nature of the teacher's role is an essential part of the maintenance of professional boundaries. If you hear a colleague say "I view teaching differently: I am my students' friend and they can discuss their problems freely with me," you might point out to them that they are treading on dangerous ground.

Inadvertent use of social media or email can also cause difficulties, as is illustrated by the following four examples recently reported by the Ontario College of Teachers.

Case 1

A school board reported that a student had seen a photograph of a teacher in bed with her partner unclothed from the waist up. A second student reported that pictures of the teacher in sexually suggestive poses appeared on the website of a professional photographer. The teacher explained that she had had a professional photographer take photos of her to celebrate Valentine's Day with her partner. She asked the photographer to post a non-suggestive photo on her Facebook page. The photographer inadvertently posted the entire photo shoot album on his Facebook page.

Case 2

A father complained about photographs of his daughter appearing on a publicly accessible class website when he had given instructions to the school that photographs of his daughter were not to be made public because of kidnapping concerns.

Case 3

A teacher accidentally sent a message to parents that was intended solely for the principal of the school and that commented adversely on the parents' parenting skills.

Case 4

A parent complained about personal, inappropriate sexual messages that appeared on a teacher's Twitter account. The teacher explained that she assumed the Twitter account was private.

These instances illustrate the dangers inherent in the use of social media and Internet postings. New safeguards are necessary, both for schools and for teachers, and teachers must be sure to use appropriate privacy settings on their personal social media accounts to prevent exposing students to inappropriate material, to safeguard private information and to uphold educators' professional reputations. Because their role is intrinsically public, teachers need to be aware that they can often be the subject of interest within the school and surrounding community, especially now with the ever-increasing use of electronic devices and social networking applications. ←

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR TEACHER REGULATION: DISCIPLINE CASE 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 at bteacherregulation.ca/ProfessionalConduct/DisciplineOutcomes.aspx.

The Standards for educators in British Columbia can be found on the last page of this issue of Learn and on the TRB website at bteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsOverview.aspx.

Ensuring that concerns about the competence and conduct of certificate holders are addressed independently, fairly, expeditiously and in the public interest.

Consent Resolution Agreements (CRA)

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Natasha Barisoff

AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standards 1 and 2

DISPOSITION Reprimand

In March 2015, a district reported that Ms. Barisoff called in sick on three days in January 2014 but, while she was on sick leave, she was travelling with her son to and from, and attending, her son's hockey tournament. On June 1, 2015, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Ms. Barisoff agreed to a reprimand. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Dana Michael Muller Barnes

AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1

DISPOSITION Reprimand/Certificate holder will complete a course

In January 2015, a district made a report about Mr. Barnes. On November 19, 2014, he was assigned to a Grade 4/5 class as a teacher on call for approximately one hour while the regular teacher attended a meeting. At one point, the teacher returned to the classroom to advise that her meeting was running over time. She noticed that the class seemed restless, so she suggested that Mr. Barnes end the lesson and take the students outside. Mr. Barnes did not follow her suggestion and became increasingly upset with the class. He lost his temper and raised his voice, which some students perceived as yelling, and then told them that "Grade 2s and 3s listen better than you" and "you are acting like kindergartners." To get one student's attention, Mr. Barnes struck at him with a textbook, which made the student cry. On August 13, 2015, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Barnes agreed to a reprimand and to complete a course on creating a positive learning environment. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER David Elton Ganner**AGREEMENT** Professional Misconduct/Standard 1**DISPOSITION** Reprimand/Certificate holder will complete a course

In November 2013, a district made a report after investigating allegations that Mr. Ganner had engaged in inappropriate physical conduct with male and female Grade 9 students that included patting boys and girls on the back, putting his arms around them, giving girls a brief shoulder/neck massage, and jokingly pretending to choke boys and girls. On March 17, 2014, Mr. Ganner provided the Commissioner with an undertaking not to teach, and on October 6, 2014, Mr. Ganner appeared in court and entered into a 12-month recognizance or peace bond under section 810 of the *Criminal Code* on terms. On July 27, 2015, Mr. Ganner entered into a consent resolution agreement with the Commissioner in which Mr. Ganner agreed to a reprimand and to complete a course on boundaries. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Michael David Howard**AGREEMENT** Professional Misconduct/Standards 1 and 2**DISPOSITION** Reprimand

In January 2015, a district reported that, in early 2011, Mr. Howard used a district account to purchase a mitre saw without authorization or notifying the administration. He purchased the mitre saw for a friend and then repaid the district in four instalments over a three-month period. This conduct amounted to an unsecured interest-free loan from the district to the friend. Between 2012 and 2014, Mr. Howard took a cordless drill and batteries and a vinyl sign maker and related software from the school for his personal use without authorization or notifying the administration. He also took a tile cutter, leaving his own tile cutter that he had brought into the school for students to use. He later returned all of the property. The Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Howard agreed to a reprimand. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Gerard MacIntosh**AGREEMENT** Professional Misconduct/Standard 1**DISPOSITION** Certificate suspended for two months

In May 2014, an independent school reported on events that occurred during the 2013-2014 school year when Mr. MacIntosh, a teacher and the principal, was teaching a Grade 8 class. One event involved a female student who had been diagnosed on the autism spectrum. When she asked for an eraser, Mr. MacIntosh held out a pocket knife and said "here, use this to erase your life," which was extremely upsetting to the student. Another event occurred during a Halloween party for the Grade 7 and 8 classes, when a student asked Mr. MacIntosh if he was going to wear a costume. He replied that he was already in costume and dressed up as a pedophile. Mr. MacIntosh was placed on paid leave and, contrary to instructions he had received, he told some parents that he was on leave because of students in his class, and then told some students that he was on leave because of a particular student. On August 18, 2014, Mr. MacIntosh completed a professional identity and boundaries course. He resigned from the school on December 18, 2014. On September 15, 2015, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. MacIntosh agreed to a two-month suspension of his certificate. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Christopher Daniel Nelson**AGREEMENT** Conduct Unbecoming/Standard 2**DISPOSITION** Former certificate holder will not apply for a teaching certificate or letter of permission

In 2012, the Inspector of Independent Schools made a report regarding Mr. Nelson. On September 5, 2011, Mr. Nelson held a party at his home and, while intoxicated, he attempted to sexually assault a former student. On September 8, 2011, Mr. Nelson reported it to the RCMP. On November 1, 2012, Mr. Nelson's certificate was cancelled for non-payment of fees. Mr. Nelson was charged with one count of sexual assault under section 271(1) of the *Criminal Code*, to which he pleaded guilty, and on June 12, 2013, he was ordered a conditional discharge and 18 months of probation. On September 25, 2015, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Nelson agreed that he will not apply for, nor will the Director of Certification be required to issue to him, a teaching certificate or a letter of permission. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Cameron John Carl Smith

AGREEMENT Conduct Unbecoming/Standard 2

DISPOSITION Reprimand/Certificate holder will complete a course

In November 2014, a district reported that on June 12, 2014, Mr. Smith, in a state of inebriation, left a highly offensive and insulting voicemail message for a district payroll clerk. He later wrote an apology to the clerk. On August 7, 2015, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Mr. Smith agreed to a reprimand and to complete a course on emotional intelligence. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Maria Joanna Domingues Vieira

AGREEMENT Professional Misconduct/Standard 1

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

In April 2013, a district made a report about Ms. Vieira. In 2005-2006, she taught at one school and was a volunteer basketball coach at another school, where she began teaching in 2010 in addition to coaching girls' basketball. During the 2005-2006 school year, Ms. Vieira was the coach for Student A and Student B. She developed a close relationship with both students, which crossed acceptable boundaries. Ms. Vieira took both students on day trips and out for coffee and meals, and invited them to her home, and she would drive the students and other students on the basketball team to and from practices. Ms. Vieira would also hug Student A in a manner that made the student feel uncomfortable. In October 2013, Ms. Vieira resigned from the district. Her certificate was cancelled for non-payment of professional fees on November 1, 2014. On August 27, 2015, the Commissioner executed a consent resolution agreement in which Ms. Vieira agreed that she will not apply for, nor will the Director of Certification be required to issue to her, a teaching certificate or a letter of permission at any time in the future. ←

Hearing Decisions

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Cheryl Ann Gosse

FINDING Professional Misconduct/Standards 1, 3 and 5

DECISION Pending

In November 2014, a hearing panel considered allegations set out in the citation that, during the 2011-2012 school year, Ms. Gosse engaged in inappropriate behaviour towards students in her classroom. On May 28, 2015, the hearing panel issued its findings and determined that Ms. Gosse breached Standards 1, 3 and 5 and that her conduct constituted professional misconduct. Her misconduct included frequently yelling at kindergarten students, inappropriately criticizing their work in earshot of others, discarding students' work, and yelling at and reprimanding a student in an insensitive manner. The hearing panel's decision on penalty and costs is pending. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDER Diana Jyung-Je Greig (nee Keng)

DECISION Hearing Panel dismissed the citation

In December 2011, a citation was issued to Ms. Keng (now known as Diana Jyung-Je Greig) on the basis of allegations about her off-duty conduct. After the citation was issued, there were no further complaints or problems reported in relation to Ms. Keng's execution of her professional duties. The Commissioner was unable to prove the allegations set out in the citation and applied to dismiss the citation by consent of the parties. Ms. Keng consistently denied any wrongdoing in relation to the matters raised in the citation. On August 19, 2015, the hearing panel dismissed the citation and directed publication of the reasons. ←

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 at bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsOverview.aspx.



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