



BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

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Issues Bulletin December 17, 2003

Update on the BC College of Teachers

In May 2003, government amended the Teaching Profession Act which governs the B.C. College of Teachers. Following is updated information of four of the major issues.

Council Composition

The most significant legislative amendment was the change to the composition of the college council from 15 elected members (from BCCT member teachers and administrators) and 5 appointed councillors to 8 elected members and 12 appointed councillors. Government stated that this was to allow some independence by the council and they appointed principals, superintendents, a member of the public, a trustee and parents as well as teachers to the transitional council. (The mandate of the transitional council expires July 31, 2004 and council elections under the new rules are scheduled for April/May 2004.) The BCTF has strongly opposed these changes and accused the government of controlling the council by appointing the majority of council members.

On December 10, 2003, the Minister of Education announced that a legislative amendment would be made in spring 2004, to further amend the make-up of the college council. The Minister proposes to change the composition to 12 elected and 8 appointed councillors. She stressed that her main concern was to have an independent council; independent from government as well as independent from the teachers' union. Prior to changes in the college, all 15 elected councillors were members of the BCTF. In the past, the teacher's union was very involved in the election of council members and in offering direction to those elected. The BCTF also has a written policy of endorsing and financing candidates for election (see Policy 7 of the BCTF Members Guide) and in previous years, BCTF representatives often met with many of the elected reps before and/or after council meetings. The Minister of Education has invited the BCTF to contribute to College independence by staying neutral in future council elections and rescinding their Policy 7.

Standards

The Transitional Council has developed standards (<http://www.bcct.ca/standards.html>) for the education, competence and professional conduct of educators in B.C. Since its inception in 1989, the college had not developed standards. Standards of particular interest to parents include:

- Professional educators value and care for all children.
- Professional educators demonstrate an understanding of the role of parents and the home in the life of learners.
- Professional educators implement effective teaching practices.
- Professional educators understand children's growth and development.

The BCCT is meeting with education partners (including BCCPAC) to discuss the Standards and has invited presentations, comments and suggestions. The standards were developed as one part of the BCCT strategic plan. (http://www.bcct.ca/documents/news_aug22_03Strat.pdf) Parents are encouraged to read the standards and to send their comments to BCCT and BCCPAC.

Person Complaint Process

For many years, BCCPAC and parents were asking that the college respond to concerns brought forward by parents about individual educators. In the past, on a number of occasions, the BCCT told BCCPAC that the college had no obligations to react to any concerns received from non-members (*such as parents*) and in fact would not do so. The legislative changes in May 2003 directed the College to accept complaints from non-members and the college has now developed a "Person Complaint Process". A pamphlet is available from the college and the process is detailed at <http://www.bcct.ca/complaints.html>.

This process enables a parent (or other person) to make a complaint about the conduct of a member of the college (teacher, principal, district staff or superintendent) directly to the college. BCCPAC recognizes that in many cases, it is best to solve issues directly with the individuals involved and urges all parents to make use of their district appeals process. Many DPACs provide assistance through their District Advocacy Projects and in districts that don't have one, parents can ask for assistance from the BCCPAC Advocacy Project. However, on some occasions, parents need to be able to choose to make complaints directly to the college and/or need to be able to pursue an issue with the college in addition to their local processes. The College is meeting with all education partners to review and discuss this process. BCCPAC invites comments from PACs and DPACs as well as comments from individual parents.

College Fees

Under Section 19 of the School Act, public school boards are **only** permitted to hire educators (teachers, principals, district educators, and superintendents) who are members of the college. Educators must pay an annual college membership fee of \$90 which is due by November 30th. Members who have not paid their fees by January 1st, 2004 must apply for reinstatement. This involves a cost of \$190, including a criminal record check. The BCTF has directed its' members to withhold their membership fees from the BCCT and instead to pay them into a BCTF trust fund. The BCTF say that they have received fees for some 24,000 BCTF members. The BCCT says that they have received fees for 30,000 of their members. The college has a total of 54,000 members of which 37,000 are members of the BCTF. As of December 16, 2003, the BCTF continues to encourage members to pay the fees into the trust fund. Some Boards have stated that they will have no legal choice but to dismiss any educators who are no longer members in good standing of the College. The College will provide a list of members in good standing to individual Boards by mid-January.

For further information:

BCCPAC Issues Bulletin May 2003 ([Issues Bulletin index](#))

BCCPAC Resolutions 1997.1 and 1997.2 ([BCCPAC Member Resolutions Index and Tracking](#))

BC College of Teachers www.bcct.ca

BC Teachers Federation www.bctf.bc.ca

BC Public School Employers Association www.bcpsea.bc.ca

Ministry of Education www.gov.bc.ca/bced/

BC School Trustees Association www.bcsta.org

BCCPAC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on BCCT (*to come soon*)