



## BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

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BC Teachers' Council  
Attention: Rebecca Blair, Chair  
#400 – 2025 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C.  
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Re: Request for Feedback regarding Certification of Red Seal Professionals.

Dear Council,

Thank you for your request for feedback regarding this matter. It is appreciated that you have involved parents through BCCPAC in this process.

We have considered the single difference between the options presented and find both options A and B problematic because of many of the trade-offs and reasons outlined in the Council's letter. We cannot endorse either option as they stand as neither really addresses the goal of this change which is to get sufficient qualified trades teachers, indeed all teachers, before our children. We favour a hybrid of both proposals which follows a middle path designed to get qualified teachers before our children at all times and in all subjects. Our concerns mainly stem from the primary difference between the two proposals put forward. It would seem that how qualified a teacher would be to teach a class is evaluated solely on the path they took to get their certificate of qualification, and not on their demonstrated knowledge, skills, or ability. This seems both inequitable and arbitrary.

The membership of BCCPAC has over the years passed the following resolutions that have bearing on this question.

### **2002.3 Mandatory Teacher Professional Development on Different Learning Styles**

**That** BCCPAC urge all relevant organizations and government, to make it mandatory for all teachers to participate in professional development courses dealing with the latest research on different learning styles of students.

### **2014.21 Requirement to maintain Currency for Teachers**

**That** BCCPAC call on the BC Teachers' Council to require that all teaching certificate holders update and maintain their skills to the standard level expected of newly certified certificate holders.

There are other passed resolutions that call for specific skills to be possessed by teachers such as first aid training and training in teaching special needs students for example. There has been a recurring theme that teachers possess current skills and subject knowledge for the classes they teach. Parents want teachers who both know their subject matter and how to teach it.

At the simplest level to be competent a teacher must meet three key criteria:

1. Have the knowledge and understanding of pedagogy sufficient to teach,
2. have an appropriate level of mastery of the subject matter being taught and
3. have a knowledge and understanding of how to teach the subject matter.

The first requirement is well understood and generally addressed by the current standards. The various accredited teacher education programs offered in B.C., coupled with the standards set by the Council are mostly aimed at having teachers possess a good knowledge of pedagogy. This has been the primary focus of the standards. Unfortunately this focus has caused the other two requirements to be regarded as having lesser importance.

The second requirement of mastery tends to be assumed for many subject areas. Expecting a teacher to keep their knowledge current and at a level of mastery in the wide variety of courses offered in BC school is unrealistic. The trades is only one area where the teacher lacking mastery of the subject would result in a less than optimal learning environment for students. Subjects such as second languages, mathematics, science, music and many others require a certain level of subject knowledge to teach, especially at the more senior levels. Allowing anyone to teach a subject they are not fully conversant will lead to frustration and stress for both the student and the teacher. The student receives a less than satisfactory grounding in the subject which, in some cases, negatively impacts the student's future performance or causes the student to completely disengage from the subject. The sad instance of students dropping subjects entirely because of this is far too common. In trades this lack of grounding can be subsequently dangerous to the student when they join the workforce.

It is challenging for a teacher who knows little of the subject matter to inspire and engage students. Such a teacher by necessity becomes focused on learning the course curriculum themselves in order to teach it and not on the important aspect of how to teach that curriculum. It is unfair to the teacher to require them to cram subject matter before each class as this only adds to an already heavy teaching workload. While the goal of providing each teacher with a fulltime job is on the surface laudable, this goal should not be reached by allowing any teacher to teach a subject they are not already fully conversant with. It is doubtful that all teachers currently get full time contracts anyway, at least initially, if the long TOC waiting lists are anything to judge by. To give anyone a full time job without the necessary qualifications to do that job properly helps neither the students nor the teachers.

The level of subject mastery must be appropriate to the level of the subject being taught and extend to teachers on call. Relying on varying collective agreements or district hiring policy to set these levels has resulted in many of the anecdotal tales heard from parents and students about a teacher who doesn't even understand what they are teaching. This undermines the student's respect of the teacher and further negatively impacts that student's learning. To support all students in every district at the same level these standards for subject mastery must be universal across B.C. They are not matters for district policy or for the bargaining table. These standards for subject mastery must be set by this Council for all teachers regardless of the route they took to become qualified.

The third requirement of knowledge and ability to teach the subject sounds on the surface much like the first, but speaks to the specialized teaching knowledge required for a specific course or subject. Just because someone both knows the subject matter and knows how to teach does not mean they are able to teach that specific subject well. How something is taught is critical. The teacher needs to be familiar with the techniques and strategies that represent good teaching in the subject in question. The synthesis of the subject and teaching that allows a teacher to reach and engage the students more effectively leads to student success. Currently this is generally acquired through on the job experience, collaboration and/or through mentoring. We recommend that this be enhanced for all teachers whenever possible.

Based on the above we suggest the following for certification of all teachers regardless of how they gained entrance to a teacher education program:

- a. That all teachers, regardless of the subject or the route that they used to obtain certification, be required to meet certain levels of subject mastery before undertaking the teaching of any class in that subject. This means that teachers who obtain their Certificate of Qualification through the proposed Red Seal route would be able to teach any course providing they can demonstrate mastery of the subject, and that teachers who have obtained their certificate through the current route would also need to now demonstrate this same mastery for any course they teach.
- b. That the first two requirements we list above regarding a knowledge of pedagogy and a mastery of the subject be met so the learning needs of the student be foremost in assigning teachers to classes.
- c. That all teachers be required to collaborate with their peers and receive guidance from more accomplished teachers to continually meet the third requirement and that evidence of this activity be recorded.
- d. That a through c above be incorporated into the current teaching standards.

The further requirements of:

1. Completion of Grade 12 or equivalent;
2. Red Seal;
3. Five year's work experience or a combination of 5 years or working / teaching the trade area from the date of Red Seal qualification;
4. Completion of 48 credits of a teacher education program and 6 credits of English or French composition or literature;
5. Permanent validity, assuming:
  - a. The qualification is subject to the rules required to maintain a certificate and
  - b. The teacher maintains currency in the subject areas that they teach;

Are acceptable in general and we can support them.

We hope that the above suggestions have been helpful. We look forward to the Council's decision.

Sincerely,

Nicole Makohoniuk  
President, BCCPAC, on behalf of the BCCPAC Board of Directors

Cc: Wilma Clarke, Executive Director of the Ministry of Education Teacher Regulation Branch.  
([Wilma.Clarke@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Wilma.Clarke@gov.bc.ca))