

Legislation Overhauling the BC College of Teachers: Bill 12

As many of you may know, Minister Abbott introduced sweeping legislation to address concerns raised by Don Avison's Fact Finder report regarding the BC College of Teachers (BCCT). While much of the details of the legislation had remained unknown and preliminary concerns were raised by BCCPAC regarding the structure of the new council BCCPAC has reviewed the legislation and is comforted that it contains many of the significant changes that parents have been requesting for years.

BCCPAC supports the high degree of transparency and public reporting that has been included in the legislation and believes this transparency will assist in ensuring the work of the teachers regulatory body will be better able to act in the public interest. Bill 12 has passed third reading receiving unanimous support in the house and only awaits royal assent before becoming law.

Bill 12 divides the current functions of the BCCT into three parts.

The licensing and certification of teachers, including the necessary criminal records checks, is returned to the ministry under a Director of Certification.

The body that sets the rules, the new BC Teachers' Council, is comprised of 16 people:

- Five elected members of the teaching profession who must be active in the classroom within the past two years
- Three appointed people nominated by the BCTF
- One appointed person from each of the following seven groups:
 - Federation of Independent Schools Association
 - BC School Trustees
 - BC School Superintendents
 - BC Principals and Vice Principals
 - First Nations Education Steering Committee
 - The Association of BC Deans of Education
 - BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils.
- One appointed non-voting person who reports back to the Minister on a regular basis regarding activities of the Council

The Minister will be receiving regular reports back from the Council and must approve any changes to the regulations governing teacher conduct, competency and qualifications. BCCPAC acknowledges that the Minister is given the power to dismiss any member of the council who violates their oath and appoint a replacement which is a significant improvement.

All existing regulations and standards from the BCCT will be grandfathered to the Council until such time as the new council replaces these regulations and standards which a requirement of the new legislation. BCCPAC feels the focus and changes to standards and regulations provides opportunities for significant improvement and is committed to following these developments to ensure these address concerns raised by parents.

The discipline of teachers is assigned to the Disciplinary and Professional Conduct Board. Overseeing all aspects of the Board is a Commissioner who has wide ranging authority and powers.

- The Commissioner will receive complaints from anyone on conduct or competency including individual parents.
- All complainants will receive reports on the progress and ultimate disposition of the complaint which is an improvement in transparency
- The discipline panels consist of one member of the council and two others appointed by the Commissioner.
- A teacher can be removed immediately from a classroom on order of the Commissioner which is an improvement to the immediate safety of students

BCCPAC has noted that there are changes supportive of improving teacher quality and accountability, through the creation of new standards and disciplinary guidelines.

BCCPAC is committed to continuing to advocate to the Ministry of Education to ensure new regulations and standards address the concerns raised by parents to ensure the best quality teachers in BC classrooms and the safety of students.

We encourage you to keep us informed of your concerns and input regarding Bill 12 to memberviews@bccpac.bc.ca subject line Bill 12

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Our Vision: To improve public education for all students by including and supporting parents