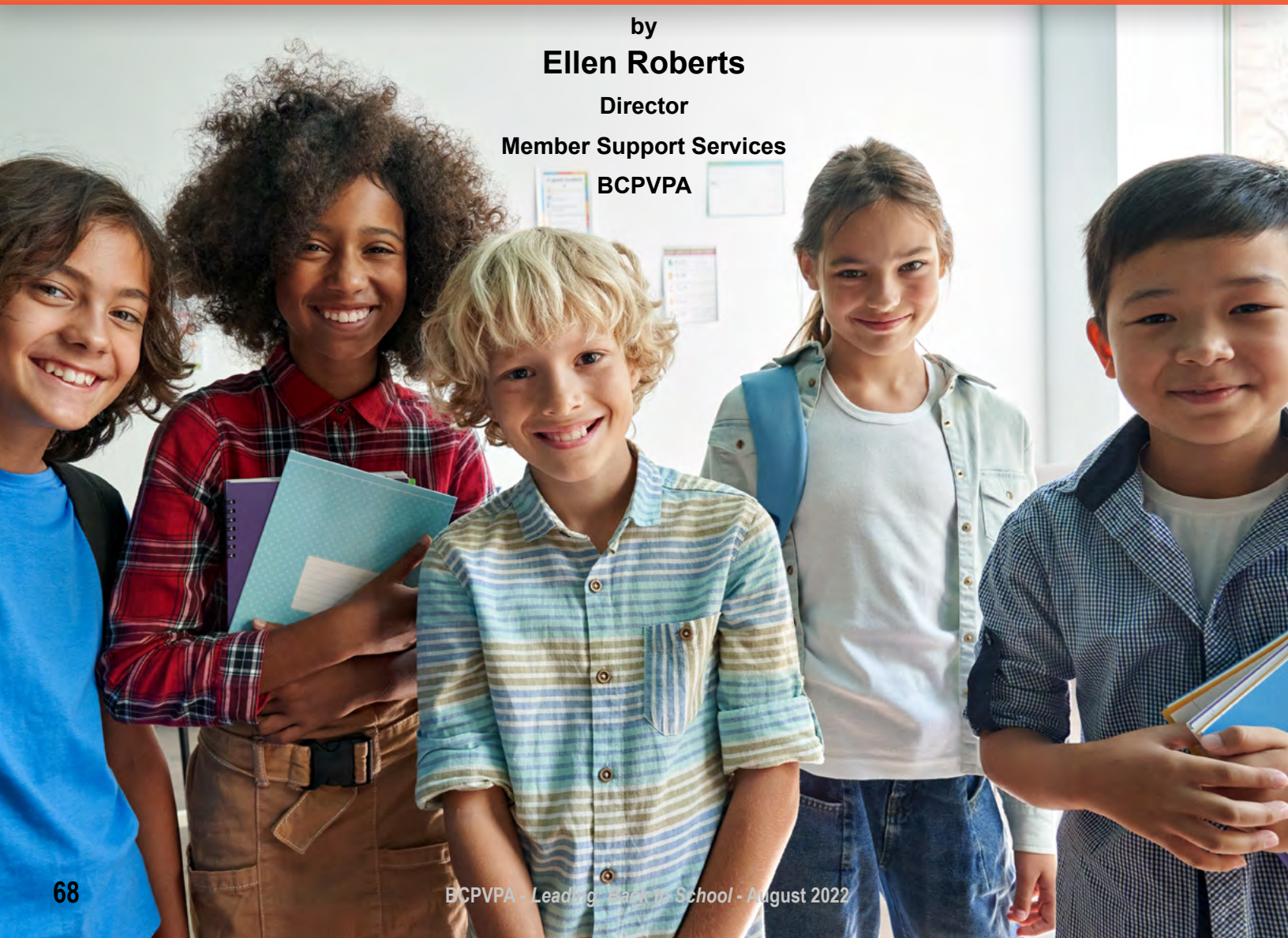


A LENS ON THE "TRB STANDARDS"

This article introduces the "Professional Standards for BC Educators" (TRB Standards) as a lens through which Principals and Vice-Principals can reflect upon and assess their day-to-day interactions and behaviour as a school or district leader. Included with each of the nine Standards are self-reflective questions to assist administrators in examining their practice to ensure these Standards are upheld – not only by themselves, but by all educators they supervise.

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WHAT ARE THE “TRB STANDARDS”?

The “TRB Standards” – the short and not exactly accurate nickname for the “Professional Standards for BC Educators” – are a set of Standards that apply to all teaching certificate holders in British Columbia. This group includes all educators in the K-12 public system as well as the independent, offshore, and First Nations school systems. The Standards were updated in 2019 by the BC Teachers’ Council, and replace the “Standards for the Educations, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC”.

Certificate holders include all teachers, and those who supervise them: Vice-Principals, Principals, Directors of Instruction, Assistant, Associate and Deputy Superintendents, and Superintendents. Educators who come to BC from other jurisdictions and those completing teacher education programs in BC’s universities are also governed by these Standards.

For brevity and clarity in this article, we will reference the “Professional Standards for BC Educators” as the TRB Standards, or the Standards.

The reason we commonly refer to these Standards as the TRB Standards is because the Commissioner of the Teacher Regulation Branch that governs the certification of educators in BC uses the Standards to address potential breaches of the Standards when concerns are raised and subsequently investigated by the TRB. In other words, when an individual submits a concern about a certificate holder to the TRB, the alleged behaviour is judged against the Standards to determine whether or not there has been a breach.

WHY ARE THE TRB STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

Having a set of Standards that all educators both aspire to and are required to uphold ensures that all educators are accountable for their actions, and act in the public interest. While teachers, Principals and

Vice-Principals, and district leaders who belong to the BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) will have their own association standards, the TRB Standards are common to all, and therefore provide opportunities for school and district communities to discuss and reinforce these Standards and what they stand for.

While all educators are bound by the Standards, the higher the level of responsibility of the educator, the higher the expectation of conduct and adherence to the Standards. The Standards should not be an ‘add-on’ to an educator’s work; rather, they should guide the day-to-day work in schools and school districts. Later in this article, suggestions will be made about how the Standards might be incorporated into reflections on daily practice and interactions with others in the workplace.

A LOOK AT THE TRB STANDARDS

The Standards are organized as a statement of expectation of the educator, followed by a description of what the behaviour/conduct of the educator should look like. The statements are difficult to refute; they are the motherhood-and-apple-pie attributes of an effective educator responsible for working with children in our education system. Not every Standard naturally falls into the role of every educator – some are specific to the role of the classroom teacher working directly with students. However, because of the supervisory nature of the role of school leaders, ensuring that teaching staff are adhering to the Standards becomes a core administrative responsibility.

In the following section, each Standard will be introduced with the key language highlighted. Following each Standard are reflective questions that Principals and Vice-Principals may wish to consider in order to bring the Standards to ‘life’ in their daily work.

STANDARD 1

concerns the Duty of Care we owe the students in our schools:

Educators value the success of all students. Educators care for students and act in their best interests.

Looking at the description that accompanies Standard 1, it would be very hard for an educator to argue against any of the statements, yet there are occasions when our members are asked to respond to allegations that stem directly from that they breached this Standard. It is important to look at each sentence and consider its weight:

*Educators have a **privileged position of power and trust**. Educators are responsible for the **physical and emotional safety of students**. Educators respect and value the diversity in their classrooms, schools and communities, inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and other worldviews and perspectives. Educators foster students' **positive personal identity, mental and physical well-being, social and personal responsibility, and intellectual development**. Educators engage students in meaningful participation in their own learning. Educators treat students **equitably with acceptance, dignity and respect**. Educators understand the **importance of confidentiality, and protect student privacy**, unless disclosure is required by law. Educators **do not abuse or exploit** students or minors for personal, sexual, ideological, material or other advantage.*



- As an educator with a privileged position of power and trust, how do you interact with teachers and support staff to give them voice and establish that, regardless of the difference in privilege, they are valued employees whose contributions to the school community matter?
- How do we earn the trust of staff, students, and community? How do we show that we can be trusted?
- When we interact with students, do we ensure their physical and emotional safety?
- Before approving Field Studies, do we ensure compliance with safety requirements and adult-student ratios?
- If issues regarding student safety are brought to our attention, do we follow up with involved staff, inform parents, seek guidance from district personnel if required, and ensure that processes and policies are followed?
- In our direct supervision and discipline of students, do we support our teachers in fostering students' positive personal identity, their well-being, responsibility, and intellectual development?
- Are we aware of our own biases with respect to our students? Do we treat them equitably with acceptance, dignity, and respect?
- Are we careful with documents of a confidential nature? Are we careful to protect student privacy by sharing student information on a need-to-know basis?

STANDARD 2

relates to the certificate holder's conduct:

Educators act ethically and maintain the integrity, credibility and reputation of the profession.

When a school district or member of the public feels an administrator's behaviour or conduct is in question, Standard 2 is often referenced, and the question is asked whether or not the educator's conduct was "unbecoming of a member".

*Educators are **role models**. Educators are **held to a higher standard** and are accountable for their **conduct on duty and off duty**. Educators understand **the law** as it relates to their duties. Educators' individual conduct contributes to **the perception of the profession** as a whole. Educators know and recognize the importance of the Professional Standards for BC Educators.*

Important and inherent in this Standard is the concept that the greater the responsibility you have in your role, the higher you are held to this Standard.



- Are you acting in a way that might cause your employer to question your loyalty or commitment to the school district?
- Could your behaviour in any way be characterized as "unbecoming of a member" in the eyes of the public?
- If anything you said or did appeared on the front page of the newspaper, would it cause you or your employer concern?
- Do you take care during your 'off-work' time to ensure that your actions would always be construed as ethical and professional?
- Are you cautious in your social media interactions and postings, and do you ensure that nothing you say online could be interpreted as jeopardizing the credibility of the profession?



STANDARD 3

speaks to an educator's understanding of children as individuals:

Educators understand and apply knowledge of student growth and development.

*Educators are knowledgeable about **how children and youth develop** as learners and social beings. Educators demonstrate an understanding of **individual learning differences and needs**. Educators recognize the importance and connection of cultural identity, ways of being and **worldviews to student learning**. Educators use this knowledge to inform decisions about curriculum, instruction and assessment. Educators work to create a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment to best meet the diverse needs of students.*



- As a supervisor, are you aware that your staff are correctly implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and purposefully designing instruction to meet the needs of individual learners?
- Are parents in your school confident that you are providing a positive, safe, and inclusive learning environment for their children?
- Do you as a staff consider the heritage and cultural background of your students and your community in planning curriculum? Are cultural identities, ways of being, and worldviews considered?
- If there is a need to discipline a child at school, do you take into consideration their individual circumstances to ensure appropriate consequences?

STANDARD 4

concerns the important role parents and guardians have in the education of children:

Educators value the involvement and support of parents, guardians, families and communities in schools.

*Educators understand, respect and encourage the **participation of families and communities** in student learning and development. Educators consider the **perspectives of parents/guardians** regarding their children. Educators **communicate effectively** and in a timely manner with parents/guardians.*



- Are parents and guardians welcomed into the school community? Are there opportunities for them to engage in the school?
- When programming students or creating IEPs and behaviour plans for students, are parents and guardians included?
- Do you carefully consider the best way to interact with parents, particularly when they have concerns, and do you respond to them in a timely manner?
- *(incorporating Standard 1)* Are you careful, when speaking to parents/guardians, not to speak about other children or families in order to protect their privacy?
- Do you consistently respond to parents in a respectful manner, even during difficult conversations?
- Are you consistent in your approach to, and communication with, parents?

STANDARD 5

relates to educators' skills in planning and executing quality instruction:

Educators implement effective planning, instruction, assessment and reporting practices to create respectful, inclusive environments for student learning and development.

*Educators have the **knowledge and skills** to facilitate learning for students, including learning experiences that reflect individual contexts and local environments. Educators value **collaborative practice**. Educators recognize and understand **the interconnectedness of all aspects of teaching** and learning and employ a variety of **instructional and assessment strategies**. Educators **communicate effectively** in either English or French. Educators know when to seek support for their practice and for students.*

Not all Principals and Vice-Principals teach, so Standards 5 and 6 may not seem relevant on a day-to-day basis, but parents may raise concerns if they feel their child's teacher is not exhibiting some of these important characteristics in their teaching. Remember, though, that as a school leader, you are responsible for the supervision of the teachers who are implementing the curriculum. As such, it is important that you have a good awareness and understanding of it, so that you can coach and mentor when needed.



- Are you engaged in meaningful informal and formal evaluation processes of teachers to ensure quality instruction for students?
- Are teachers open to collaborating with their colleagues around instruction and assessment practices?
- Are teachers effective in their written and verbal communication with students and parents?
- *(incorporating Standard 1)* Are you a trusted support for teachers seeking advice or help in their practice?
- Are you providing regular coaching to teachers who could benefit from it in this area?
- Are you ensuring that you are staying as current as possible so as to best supervise and mentor the teachers you are responsible for?



STANDARD 6

refers to an educator's knowledge of curriculum:

Educators demonstrate a broad knowledge base and an understanding of areas they teach.

Educators **understand the curriculum** and methodologies of areas they teach. Educators teach curricula from **Canadian, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and global perspectives**. Educators build upon **student capacity** for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect. Educators cultivate the **values, beliefs and knowledge of Canada's democratic and inclusive society**.



- Are your teachers competent to teach the grades/courses assigned to them? When assigning teaching loads, do you ensure individuals are qualified in the areas they are assigned?
- Does the curriculum taught by your teachers include Canadian/Indigenous perspectives?
- If not, how are you addressing this in your school?
- Are teachers current in their practice as it relates to curriculum implementation?
- Do you have an awareness of the instruction, assessment, and evaluation that is happening in the classrooms?
- Do you provide the resources and tools necessary for any teachers who might benefit from support in this area?

STANDARD 7

focuses on the professional learning of educators:

Educators engage in professional learning.

Educators engage in **professional learning and reflective practice** to support their professional growth. Educators recognize and meet their **individual professional needs** through various learning opportunities. Educators develop and refine **personal philosophies** of education, teaching and learning that are informed by research, practice and the Professional Standards for BC Educators.



- Do you model engagement in professional learning to your staff? Do you share your Personal Growth Plan (PGP) goals or areas of growth?
- Have you kept current in areas related to your district and school goals?
- Are you supportive of your staff in their professional development pursuits?
- Have you considered using these Standards to help develop a culture of learning with your staff?
- Do you use the BCPVPA Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia as a guide for your professional development?
- Do you ensure that your professional development activities align with your PGP goals?

STANDARD 8

speaks to an educator's responsibility to contribute beyond their specific role:

Educators contribute to the profession.

*Educators honour the profession by **supporting, mentoring or encouraging** other educators and those **preparing to enter the profession**. Educators contribute their expertise in a variety of ways, including **opportunities** offered by schools, districts, school authorities, professional organizations, post-secondary institutions and communities. Educators contribute to a **culture of collegiality**.*



- Do you offer support to your colleagues on a formal or informal basis?
- What are the areas of your practice that are your strengths that others might benefit from knowing more about?
- Do you encourage your staff to sponsor teacher candidates or support staff candidates?
- Do you look for growth opportunities for your staff and encourage them along their journey?
- Do you participate in workshops, committees, or other professional sessions?



STANDARD 9

the newest Standard, acknowledges the importance of incorporating First Nations, Inuit, and Métis values and practices into educators' work:

Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

*Educators critically examine their **own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices** to facilitate change. Educators **value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis**. Educators understand the power of focusing on **connectedness and relationships** to oneself, family, community and the natural world. Educators **integrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldviews and perspectives** into learning environments.*



- How are you examining your biases, attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices to facilitate change in your work and your school? How are you engaging others in this work, and/or encouraging them to do the same?
- Are the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis valued in your school? How is that demonstrated by you? By others?
- How are First Nations, Inuit, and Metis worldviews integrated into classrooms and practices at the school?
- How is this made visible to the school and wider community?
- Do you ensure that all educators in your school are provided with the needed resources and supports?

The Professional Standards for BC Educators, besides setting the bar for expected conduct and accountability, offer educators a tool for self-reflection on their practice and decision-making and professional collaborative conversations with staff and community members. It is the hope that all educators embrace the Standards and ensure that they remain alive and impactful in their practice.

**Reach out to our Member Support Services team
if you have any questions: mssinfo@bcpvpa.bc.ca**