

## 4.03 Teacher Qualification Policy

### 1. Purpose

Independent Christian schools in BC have a unique mission driven purpose to nurture and educate students in a pervasively Christian manner. Christian schools need qualified teacher professionals who can educate students through the lens of a distinctly Christian worldview and within a Biblical framework. Teachers who seek employment at an independent Christian school must be grounded in their faith, capable of teaching from a Christian perspective and committed to continuing to advance their own Biblical understanding and teaching skills throughout their career.

### 2. Persons/Area Affected

All teachers of Kootenay Christian Academy.

### 3. Policy

The policy of Kootenay Christian Academy is to ensure that qualified, certified teachers serve in our school. This means that our teachers not only meet BC Teacher Regulation Branch requirements, but also provide evidence of courses of study, work experience and university graduation programs that intentionally equip a teacher to teach from a Christian perspective and model Christian values.

### 4. Definitions

- 4.1. BC Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB): the branch of the Ministry of Education that defines the minimal qualifications required for employment of teachers in BC schools.
- 4.2. Certificates of Qualification: Certificates currently issued by the Teacher Regulation Branch:
  - 4.2.1. Professional Certificate
  - 4.2.2. Basic Certificate
  - 4.2.3. Conditional Certificate: certified to teach, with the expectation that within a given time frame, courses need to be successfully completed to meet certification requirements
  - 4.2.4. Developmental Standard Term Certificate
  - 4.2.5. First Nations Language Teacher Certificate
- 4.3. Independent School Teaching Certificates: The Teacher Regulation Branch also issues the following:
  - 4.3.1. System Restricted Certificate (SYR)
  - 4.3.2. Subject Restricted Certificate (SR)
  - 4.3.3. School Subject Restricted Certificate (SSR)
- 4.4. Letters of Permission: Temporary permission to teach authorized by the Teacher Regulation Branch.

### 5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. The principal is responsible for oversight of teachers. The principal will request, confirm, and file certification documents prior to the issuance of a contract. (These documents are available to Ministry Inspection teams.)

- 5.2. In the case of a Conditional Certificate, it is the responsibility of the teacher and the principal to ensure compliance with the specified conditions.
- 5.3. It is the teacher's responsibility to meet the qualifications and requirements either prior to employment, or within the time frame specified by the school administrator.
- 5.4. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain valid certification while employed by Kootenay Christian Academy.

## **6. Procedures**

- 6.1 Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education Requirements
  - 6.1.1 Funded independent schools (group 1 or 2) in British Columbia are required by the Independent School Act (Schedule section 3d) to hire only certified teachers under the Teachers Act. The BC Ministry of Education's Teacher Certification Branch defines the qualifications required for certification and eligibility to teach in BC classrooms. Applicants are assessed on their academic record and teacher education training, relevant teaching experience, and suitability for working with children.
  - 6.1.2 Administrators are responsible for hiring certified teachers and for validating appropriate teacher certification prior to issuance of a contract.
  - 6.1.3 Different certificate types are issued to applicants based on their qualifications and teacher education training. For example, the TCB may grant a qualified teacher a Certificate of Qualification or an Independent School Teaching Certificate (ISTC) or a First Nations Language Teaching Certificate.
- 6.2 An ISTC may be granted to a qualifying educator with certain restrictions:
  - 6.2.1 System Restricted Certificate to Montessori or Waldorf School (SYR): A non-expiring certificate that restricts to teaching within a B.C. independent Montessori or Waldorf school. The certificate can also be restricted to Kindergarten, depending on the teaching program completed.
  - 6.2.2 A Subject Restricted Certificate (SR): This certificate restricts educators to teach subjects in at least one valid teachable area defined by the Independent School Teaching Certificate Standards Committee that are directly related to their post-secondary studies. This certificate is initially valid for up to 60 months and can be upgraded to a non-expiring certificate if the teacher demonstrates successful teaching experience for at least 1.5 years full time (or equivalent part time). Teacher-on-call experience is not accepted. These certificates are not issued to elementary specialists.

- 6.2.3 School & Subject Restricted Certificate (SSR): This certificate restricts educators to teach only the subjects related to their specialized post-secondary training, unique life skills or practical experience (e.g. religious studies or board authority approved courses) for the independent authority seeking to hire them in specific grades, depending on the applicant's credentials, training and experience. The certificate is initially valid for up to 60 months. It can be upgraded to a non-expiring certificate if the teacher demonstrates successful teaching experience for at least 1.5 years full time (or equivalent part time). Teacher-on-call experience (substitute teaching) is not accepted.
- 6.3 In addition, an independent school may recommend a potential candidate to fill a vacant teaching position. A Letter of Permission allows educators who do not hold a teaching certificate to teach in BC's schools for up to one school year when every effort to find a certified teacher to fill the position has been made. Where a teacher certified in BC or in another Canadian jurisdiction has applied for the position and was not hired, the employer must provide a comprehensive rationale for not hiring the certified teacher.
- 6.3.1 The person holding the Letter of Permission is restricted to teaching the specific subject areas and grade levels indicated in the Letter of Permission.
- 6.3.2 Both the candidate and the district need to apply for a letter of permission through the Teacher Certification Branch.
- 6.3.3 Regardless of the certification or permission granted, each individual teacher is responsible for ensuring that they maintain their teacher certificate in good standing with the Ministry of Education.
- 6.3.4 Each individual teacher is required to adhere to the Professional Standards for BC Educators, including the addition of Standard #9, Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Metis 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 the ways of knowing and believing, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Metis.
- 6.4 Christian Perspectives Training:
- 6.4.1 A first year contracted teacher who meets the requirements for an offer of employment with an Independent Christian school but has not previously completed a broad base of coursework in teaching from a Christian perspective may be asked to complete additional training as a term of their employment. Any requirement should be a written agreement outlining the timeline, expected outcomes and include pre-approval of the program or training by the Administration.

- 6.4.2 Independent Christian schools are defined by their commitment to provide a Christ-centered education; therefore their employees must be committed to educating in accordance with Christian belief and practice. An ongoing personal commitment to their Christian faith and investing in additional training and experience that further equips teachers with the skills necessary to teach within a pervasively Christian environment.
- 6.4.3 SCSBC recommends that School Boards intentionally support Christian Perspective training and Pedagogy opportunities for teachers and staff.
- 6.4.4 1 Ministry of Education requirements to obtain a valid teaching certificate do not ensure that potential Christian school educators have had Christian perspective training and coursework that may be essential for teaching candidates to thrive within a Christian teaching environment.
- 6.4.5 SCSBC recommends that School Boards expect teachers who have not graduated from a recognized faith-based institution to complete additional Christian perspectives training.
- 6.5 Areas of focus include the following:
  - 6.5.1 Biblical worldview or Biblical narrative: areas of study that focus on understanding what is a worldview and why it matters that we have a Christian worldview.
  - 6.5.2 Biblical Literacy – areas of study designed to develop a deepened understanding of the Bible itself.
  - 6.5.3 Curriculum Design – areas of study that enhance understanding of lesson, unit and course design which integrates a Christian worldview into learning outcomes.
  - 6.5.4 Pedagogy – areas of study or training with a focus on how Christian educators design and assess learning in a manner that respects the variety of learning styles in the classroom.
  - 6.5.5 Identity –training designed to help Christian educators understand the importance of identity through Christ and the Biblical understandings of diversity, highlighting the deep truth of God's love to all and for all.
  - 6.5.6 Educational Research and Applications in Christian Education: areas of study that offer a refresher for the experienced teacher to review the latest resources and insights in worldview, Christian studies, student learning and cultural anthropology, such as Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.
  - 6.5.7 Other: areas of study that focus on Biblical hospitality, hope, generosity, belonging, reconciliation, or other relevant themes.
  - 6.5.8 SCSBC recommends that administrators ensure that Christian Perspective training is approved in advance, wherever possible, and that coursework accepted by the school is from a recognized and reputable organization. Any requirement should be a written agreement outlining the timeline, expected outcomes, and include pre-approval of the program or coursework training by the Administration.