Employers List: Tracking Certificate Holders’ Employment

Recent cases of incompetence or misconduct by certificate holders highlight practices that allow teachers to move from district to district without employers becoming aware of problems. One case in particular is illustrative. A teacher-on-call in one Lower Mainland district was not renewed on the TOC list for reasons related to competence and conduct. This person was not reported to the College. Subsequently, the person applied to and was hired by another Lower Mainland district. The new employee did not disclose that s/he was employed previously and the new employer did not have an opportunity to discover the problems that had occurred in the previous district. The new employee went on to cause considerable damage to a school, which had the potential to injure or even kill students and others.

The government responded to calls from various quarters to close the loopholes that allowed such a case to happen. One of the actions by government was to create an Employers List through the BC College of Teachers (College). The Employers List is intended to provide employment history for certificate holders and to allow prospective employers to search the site when they are checking applications prior to hiring a certificate holder.

How the Employers List Works

By October 15 of each year, all boards of education and authorities must provide the College with a list of all employees who are members of the College and who were employed in the previous and current school years. For this year, you must provide the College with all those College member employees who were employed by you in 2007-2008 as well as all those who are employed as of September 30, 2008. Because the legislation only allows for College members to be reported, there is no requirement to report any employees who are employed on a Letter of Permission.

Boards of education and authorities have been provided with passwords so that they may upload lists to the College’s secure site. These lists are maintained in a password-protected section of the website, available only to potential employers – boards of education, authorities and bands as defined in the Indian Act (Canada). Beginning this September, potential employers may access the lists to confirm the employment history of a prospective employee. As only potential employers have access to the full employment history, the employer must enter the certificate number of the potential employee in order to access this information.

The information in the Employers List is only a snapshot as of October 1 of each year. Anyone hired after that date will not appear on the Employers List until the next October. Note, too, that this is not a comprehensive history of employment for College members as we have only been collecting the information for the last two years.

The Employers List is one way to verify that an applicant’s job history is as they have reported. It is up to the potential employer to investigate any discrepancies in the employment history of an applicant. If an applicant has misrepresented his or her employment, this might be a breach of the Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia and the Superintendent or authority may, under the School Act or Independent School Act, be required to report this possible breach to the College.

Added Benefits

As part of the service to boards of education and authorities, the College will provide each with a list of variances when the employee lists are uploaded. This information will be available by September 2008 for lists uploaded last year. The College will compare the employers lists with its database and inform the employer if there are any employees who do not appear in our database or who do appear but have certificates that are invalid or ineligible. If we do not have the same name in our database, it may simply mean that the employee is using another name and has not officially informed the College or the employer of the change. It could also mean a data input error occurred. It could, of course, mean that the employee does not have a certificate and this is a serious matter. Those employees with non-practising, invalid or ineligible status should not be employed, and this matter is also serious, especially if the invalidity is due to disciplinary action. By providing this feedback, the employers and the College can work together to confirm the certification of employees.

First Nations Schools Employers

The Teaching Profession Act is provincial legislation which cannot compel First Nations schools to upload lists of their employees who are College certificate holders. As the First Nations schools in BC employ College certificate holders, the College is working with the First Nations Schools Association to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that would provide for First Nations schools to both upload lists of their College certified employees as well as to examine lists as potential employers. We hope to have such an agreement in place by the end of the year.