
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2010EDUC0136-001546
Dec. 8, 2010

Ministry of Education

FACT FINDER REPORT RELEASED INTO BC COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

VICTORIA – Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid has set up meetings with education partners to discuss the Fact Finder’s report and next steps for the BC College of Teachers.

“Mr. Avison’s report into the BC College of Teachers raises some serious issues and concerns,” said Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. “In the coming weeks, I will be meeting with our education partners, including the BC Teachers Federation, to review the report and discuss options for going forward.”

The Fact Finder highlighted several areas of concern with the college. Among them he found:

- The college is not regarded as independent and credible as currently structured.
- Evidence that the BCTF has intruded upon the capacity of the college to exercise its mandate, impairing it from being viewed as an independent, self-regulatory body.
- That a proper balance does not exist between the “public interest” and the “interest of members”.
- The college has resisted taking responsibility for competency and professional development for teachers, compared to the standards set by other self-regulating professions.
- Internal conflict within the college has limited its ability to effectively fulfil its duties.
- The council has lost the confidence of the educational community.

The Fact Finder outlines four approaches for revitalizing the professional regulation of teachers in B.C. The first approach, which is not recommended by Avison, is to maintain the status quo and have the college find constructive ways to move forward. The second approach is for government to substantially re-organize the existing college, the third to establish a new Teacher Certification Board and the fourth for the Province to re-assert control over the regulation of the teaching profession by bringing those responsibilities back within the Ministry of Education.

“This report indicates that some changes are needed,” said MacDiarmid. “Maintaining the status quo would not be fair to our students, parents, or teachers, nor would it serve the public interest.”

The request to review the B.C. College of Teachers was made by the majority of the college’s council members, including both elected and appointed members.

This request was also supported by the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, the B.C. School Trustees Association, the Federation of Independent School Associations, the B.C. School Superintendents' Association, and the B.C. Principals' and Vice Principals' Association.

The B.C. College of Teachers was established in 1987 to regulate the teaching profession, which includes setting standards for acquiring and maintaining teacher certification, issuing teaching certificates and disciplining of certified teachers.

The report is available at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct.pdf

Appendices to the report are at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct_app1.pdf

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct_app2.pdf

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct_app3a.pdf

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct_app3b.pdf

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010_factfinder_report_bcct_app4.pdf

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Two backgrounders follow.

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BACKGROUND 1

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TERMS OF REFERENCE – FACT FINDER: BC COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

- a) Whether the College of Teachers is fulfilling its mandate under section 4 of the Teaching Profession Act: “It is the object of the college to establish, having regard to the public interest, standards for the education, professional responsibility and competence of certificate holders and applicants for certificates of qualification and, consistent with that object, to encourage the professional interest of certificate holders in those matters.”
- b) The college’s role and performance respecting teacher pre-service and in-service training and regulation of member competence.
- c) The college’s role and performance of its duties in comparison with other self-regulating professions.
- d) The college’s teacher certification practices in comparison with those of other jurisdictions.
- e) The effectiveness of the college in carrying out its mandate with regard to complaints concerning teacher conduct or competence, including investigation, disciplinary action and public reporting.
- f) The effectiveness of the council of the college in carrying out its mandate to govern and administer the affairs of the college.

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BACKGROUND 2

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DON AVISON - BIOGRAPHY

Don Avison is a lawyer and a former senior public servant.

Avison spent 10 years as president of the University Presidents' Council of British Columbia and its successor organization, the Research Universities Council of B.C. In this role he was closely involved with numerous projects and programs to improve post-secondary education in the province. This included several major access initiatives, the expansion of both medical and engineering programs and a revitalization of provincial support for research and graduate students.

Before taking on the senior leadership role with B.C.'s universities, Avison served as a deputy minister with the Province of British Columbia. This included assignments as deputy minister in Health, Crown Corporations and in Education.

Avison has also had a distinguished legal career. He spent several years with the Attorney General of Canada serving in the Yukon, as counsel with the Criminal Law Branch in Ottawa, as regional director and chief Crown counsel for the Northwest Territories and as the director general of the federal Aboriginal Justice Initiative. In 1994, he was appointed deputy minister of Justice for the NWT.

Avison grew up in British Columbia. He attended Cariboo College (now Thompson Rivers University), graduated from Simon Fraser University with a bachelor of arts in 1977 and received a degree in law from the University of British Columbia in 1980.

Avison also has extensive experience in negotiations. He was a member of the negotiating team responsible for the development of the Canada- USA Extradition Agreement. He was chief negotiator for the Government of the Northwest Territories in the development of all socio-economic, environmental and impact-benefit agreements associated with the approval of diamond mining in the NWT. In 1998-99 he was the chief negotiator for British Columbia with the Social Union Framework Agreement. He was a provincial representative in the development of the Community Charter and was also the chief provincial negotiator in the completion of the Canada/British Columbia/First Nations Agreement on First Nations Education Jurisdiction.

In 2006, Avison received the Thompson Rivers University Distinguished Alumni Award for Public Service. He was recognized by BC Net in 2003 with a Network Builder Award and later in 2009 with a Lifetime Achievement Award. He was given the 2010 Leadership Award by Life Sciences British Columbia. In 2002 he was a recipient of The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

Avison has served on numerous boards and currently sits on the Providence Health Care Board and the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research. He is also the Canadian representative on Pfizer's Developed Economies Advisory Board.

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