

Backgrounder: Teacher Supply and Demand Is There a Teacher Shortage?

A general shortage of teachers refers to a shortage of teachers in all subjects and specialties. Difficult to fill positions refers to shortages of teachers in specific subjects or specialties.

1. What has the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) said about teacher supply and demand?

A recent media report stated that the BCTF indicated, "there's strong evidence the province is beginning to face a serious teacher shortage.... President Jinny Sims says many districts are experiencing a shortage of teachers on call. She says leave applications have been denied thanks to a shortage of so-called TOCs. Sims says some full-time positions in areas such as French, math, science, home economics and special education are impossible to fill."¹

2. Is there a teacher shortage?

There is no general teacher shortage in British Columbia.

BCPSEA conducts a cyclical market analysis — *Labour Market Planning: K-12 Public Education Sector* — that is reviewed and updated bi-annually. Our analysis indicates the declines in student enrolment that are projected to continue will keep pace with the projected retirements of teachers (see tables under 3. and 4. below). So, even during the projected peak retirement years for teachers, the supply of teachers will generally still be sufficient to meet the demand.

Our analysis also indicates that there have historically been shortages of teachers in difficult to fill positions, such as:

- Sciences
- Mathematics
- French Immersion
- Special Education
- Industrial Education
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Counsellors/Psychologists

Shortages of difficult to fill positions are projected to continue. This will require detailed analysis and continuous assessment, as well as specific strategies to address skill shortages.

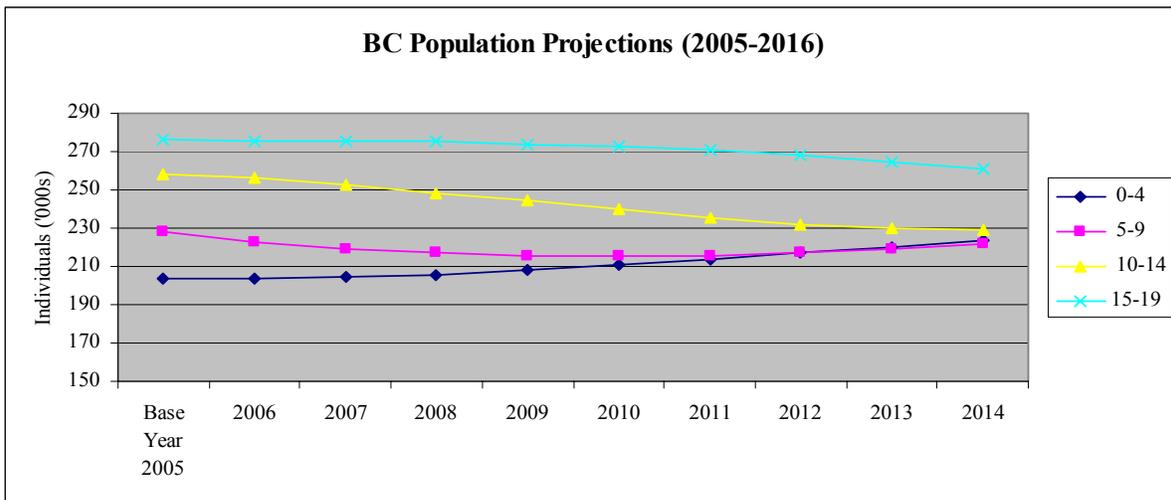
¹ Media report: CKPG Radio, March 7, 2006, 7:00 am

3. **Is there a shortage of Teachers on Call (casual employees called out to assume the duties of absent teachers)?**

Some school districts have recently indicated concern about the supply of Teachers on Call (TOCs). This is a new concern for districts and emerged partway through the current school year. This is primarily attributable to the October 2005 recommendations of Industrial Inquiry Commissioner Vince Ready that provided additional funding of \$20 million to school districts to hire more teachers. Given the time of year that the funds were made available, many districts hired these teachers from their TOC list rather than conducting a broad province-wide recruitment. This had the effect of reducing the number of available TOCs in a given district.

4. **How is the school-aged population expected to fluctuate over the next 10 years?**

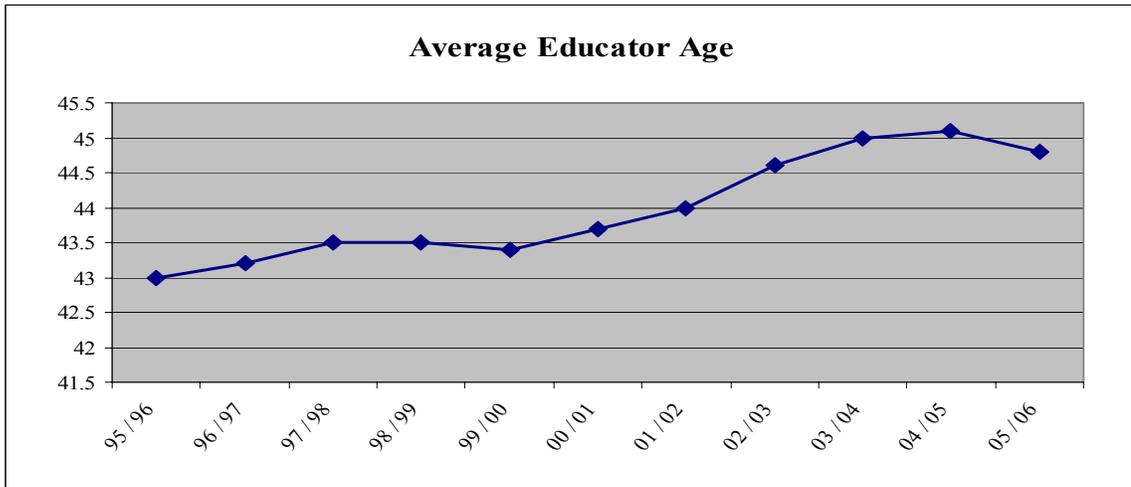
The student-aged population is projected to continue to decline generally across the province for the next several years:



Source: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/project/bctab6.htm>

4. **How will current educator demographics affect the supply of teachers?**

According to the Teachers' Pension Plan, the average retirement age of educators in the BC public school system is 58. We can see from the table below that commencing with the 2005-2006 school year, the average age of educators is declining and is projected to continue to decline, which will result in fewer retirements.



When student enrolment projections are considered along with educator retirement projections, it becomes evident that there is no projected general teacher shortage.

Backgrounder: Teacher Supply and Demand Are Teachers Leaving British Columbia?

1. Are teachers leaving British Columbia?

In order to teach in British Columbia, a teacher is required to have a certificate from the BC College of Teachers. Statistics provided by the BC College of Teachers illustrate the inflow of teachers from other jurisdictions applying for BC teaching certificates, and the outflow of BC teachers seeking certificate verification to be able to teach in other jurisdictions.

Over the past five years, the inflow of teachers from other jurisdictions varied from a low of 500 in 2003 to a high of 681 in 2001. The outflow of teachers varied from a low of 542 from April 2004 to March 2005 to a high of 711 in the 2002-2003 school year.

The statistics show that there is not a substantial outflow of teachers to other jurisdictions and, in fact, the inflow of teachers from other jurisdictions tends to balance the outflow.

BC College of Teachers Statistics

Period	Teacher Inflow	Period	Teacher Outflow
April 2005 – March 2006	571	2005	N/A
April 2004 - March 2005	542	2004	583
2003	606	2003	500
2002/03 school year	711	2002	552
2001/02 school year	691	2001	681

2. Will the Alberta-British Columbia Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement signed on April 28 affect the outflow of teachers from British Columbia?

The BC and Alberta provincial governments recently entered into an agreement to facilitate greater ease of movement of workers, including teachers, between the two provinces. BC teachers have long been able to teach in Alberta with BC certification, and as can be noted from the statistics above, this does not appear to have affected the outflow of teachers from BC.

The Agreement-in-Principle: Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade/Teaching Profession currently enables Alberta teachers to obtain a BC certificate as long as the individual has current teaching experience and meets the College's fitness requirements. However, they are required to fulfill any deficiency in academic or professional preparation during the validity of the BC certificate. The Alberta-British

Columbia Trade, Investment and Mobility Agreement will allow teachers from Alberta to teach in BC without completing further course work.²

3. How many graduates from the education faculties at British Columbia post-secondary institutions seek certification to teach in BC?

Statistics obtained from the BC College of Teachers indicate that in 2005, 99% of graduates from education faculties at BC post-secondary institutions applied for certification to teach in BC.

Certificates issued to graduates of BC teacher education programs are as follows:

2005	1921
2004	1867
2003	1926
2002	1842.

While instructive, these figures are not an indicator of employment. Some graduates obtain their certification and do not immediately seek employment, while others do. Some may become Teachers on Call initially, while others, based on their area of study, may accept temporary or continuing positions. In order to determine the number of graduates who seek employment and become employed, a district by district analysis would be required.

² The BC College of Teachers requires elementary teachers who normally work as generalists to have a breadth of subject area knowledge including 6 credits of English, 6 credits of Canadian Studies, 3 credits of Math, and 3 credits of Laboratory Science. Secondary teachers require more depth of knowledge consisting of 30 credits of senior level course work in a single teaching area or where an individual has two teachable subject areas, 18 credits of senior level course work in each area. These provincial requirements exceed the Alberta requirements, which is why teachers coming to BC from Alberta were required to complete additional course work.