

# Teachers in Elementary & Secondary Schools

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Working as a Teacher – Elementary and Secondary

### *Job Description*

#### **Elementary school and kindergarten teachers, [NOC 2021: 41221/ NOC 2016: 4032]**

Elementary schools in BC mostly include classes from kindergarten to grade 7. Elementary school librarians are included in this unit group.

Working as an **Elementary school and kindergarten teacher** you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Prepare courses for presentation to students according to approved curriculum
- Teach students using a systematic plan of lessons, discussions, audio-visual presentations, and field trips
- Promote student’s physical, mental, behavioural and social development
- Prepare, administer, and correct tests
- Identify student's individual learning needs
- Attend meetings with students, parents, and school officials
- Complete paperwork and report cards
- Participate in staff meetings, educational conferences, and teacher training
- May supervise teachers' aides and student teachers
- May specialize in such areas as special education or second language instruction.

Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

**Secondary school teachers, [NOC 2021: 41220/ NOC 2016: 4031]**

Secondary schools in BC include grades 8 to 12. Secondary school teachers usually specialize in subject areas. Secondary school teachers who are heads of departments and high school librarians are included in this group.

**Secondary school teachers** perform some or all of the following duties:

- Prepare subject material for students according to an approved curriculum
- Motivate students to learn
- Assign and correct homework
- Prepare, administer, and correct tests
- Evaluate progress, determine individual needs of students, and discuss results with parents and school officials
- Participate in staff meetings, educational conferences, and teacher training
- Coach sports, supervise clubs, or take students on field trips
- May supervise student teachers

Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

***Industry Overview***

Aside from a slight drop in demand in 2020, the BC Government estimates that an increasing number of teachers will be needed each year for the next 10 years, increasing to almost 1,900 new teachers in 2028.

Of these positions, 60% will be in Kindergarten and elementary classrooms, while 40% will be in secondary schools. Most of the positions will be for replacing teachers who retire. [Source: BC Teachers' Federation]

Working "on-call" and part-time has become a common starting point for new teaching graduates. The demand for teachers is greatest in northern BC.

**Elementary Teachers:**

In recent years, BC has experienced a number of elementary school closures due to declining student enrolments. There is growing demand for French immersion and Francophone program teachers; most of these teachers secure contracts within their first year of employment.

**Secondary Teachers:**

There is a shortage of trained teachers in some areas of the province (i.e., rural areas), but a surplus of trained teachers in others. Secondary teachers specializing in advanced math, physics, chemistry, French, and French immersion tend to be in higher demand in all areas of BC. There is expected to be an increasing need for teachers in such fields as business education, technology education, home economics, special needs, and ESL.

**Job Outlook in BC, 2019-2029**

**Secondary school teachers**



Chart from WorkBC

## Elementary school teachers

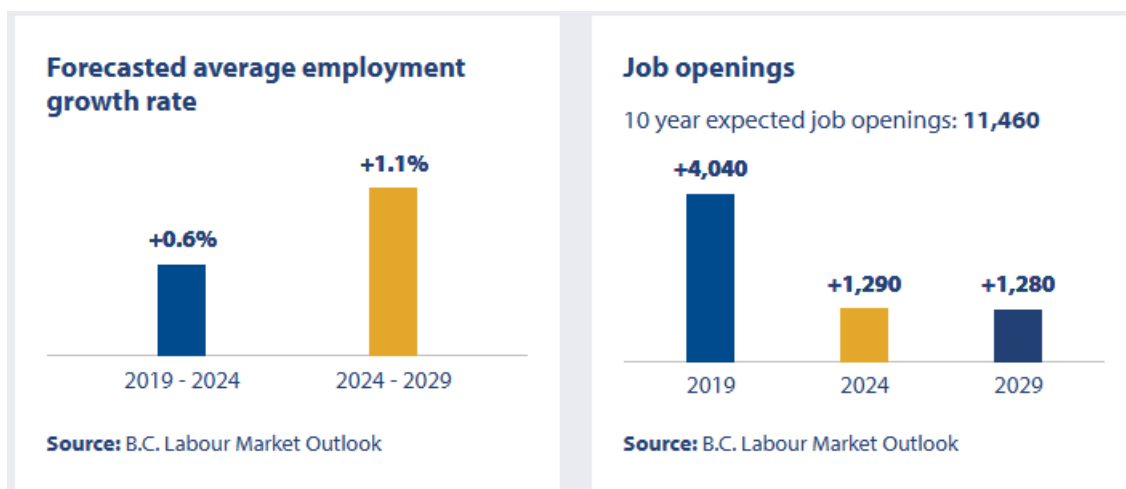


Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC's regions from 2019-2029

Region	Employment in 2019	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island / Coast			
Elementary	5,520	1.2%	2,230
Secondary	3,210	1.3%	1,400
Lower Mainland / Southwest			
Elementary	19,930	0.8%	6,620
Secondary	12,700	0.8%	4,620
Thompson-Okanagan			
Elementary	4,100	1.2%	1,710
Secondary	2,430	1.2%	1,110
Kootenay			
Elementary	1,160	0.2%	340
Secondary	520	0.2%	280
Cariboo			
Elementary	1,120	0.3%	280
Secondary	730	0.3%	200
North Coast & Nechako			
Elementary	930	-1.0%	100
Secondary	500	-1.0%	60
Northeast			
Elementary	770	0.3%	190
Secondary	500	0.3%	80

You can learn more about working as a teacher in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Profiles:** <http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/>
- **BC Teachers' Federation:** <https://bctf.ca/publications.aspx?id=49001>

### ***Types of Employers***

#### **Elementary school and kindergarten teachers work in:**

- public and private schools

#### **Secondary school teachers work in:**

- Public and private high schools
- Community/agricultural colleges,
- Technical institutes and other vocational schools
- Language schools
- Private training establishment/companies
- Community agencies and government

### ***Salary***

The median annual salary for elementary school teachers in BC is \$75,207. The median annual salary for secondary school teachers in BC is \$80,202.

#### ***BC Public Schools – Teacher Salaries and Categories***

In BC teachers' salaries are determined by your academic qualifications and years of experience. The Teacher Qualification Service (TQS, <http://www.tqs.bc.ca/>) evaluates teacher qualifications and assigns a category. The category assigned is based solely on academic qualifications. Years of experience also determine salary; acceptable experience is determined by the individual school district, not the TQS.

- ***Current salary grids for individual school districts are available at:***  
<http://bctf.ca/SalaryAndBenefits.aspx?id=14758>

**Teachers in Elementary & Secondary Schools**  
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Across BC, **elementary school and kindergarten teachers** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	21.63	36.06	51.28
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	21.37	31.79	55.13
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	21.63	36.06	51.28
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	21.63	36.54	51.68
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	23.08	36.55	55.77
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	23.08	36.55	55.77
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	21.15	33.65	46.15
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	22.73	35.71	48.08
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	21.63	33.88	50.00

Source: Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Across BC, **secondary school teachers** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	25.38	38.46	51.28
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	28.85	39.42	51.28
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	25.38	38.46	51.28
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	25.38	38.46	51.48
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	21.85	34.09	50.55
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	21.85	34.09	50.55
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	25.38	38.46	51.28
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	28.34	38.55	50.64
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	24.04	36.32	48.08

Source: Job Bank Canada, wage reports <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>

### ***Working Hours***

Teachers usually work between 8 and 10 hours a day on weekdays, teaching classes, preparing lessons, marking assignments, and attending meetings. They often put in additional hours over the weekend. This can add up to 50 or more hours a week. Most teachers work a 10-month school year. They have two months of time off in July and August, as well as a holiday over the Christmas period and a spring break in March.

## **2. Skills, Education and Experience**

### ***Skills***

- excellent communication skills, and the ability to inspire their students
- flexible, patient, calm and able to empathize with students
- ability to teach students with a variety of learning abilities and needs
- resourceful, creative, and highly organized

### ***Education and Experience***

#### ***Elementary and Kindergarten School Teachers***

- Bachelor's degree / Bachelor's degree in education
- Provincial teaching certificate
- Certification is required to teach English or French as an additional language

Source: NOC <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>

#### ***Secondary Teachers***

- Academic Bachelor's degree
- Bachelor's degree in education
- Provincial teaching certificate
- Certification is required to teach English or French as an additional language

Source: NOC <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>



## **Qualifications**

### **Teaching is a regulated profession in British Columbia**

#### **Licensing Requirements for Teachers**

If you would like to teach in BC's kindergarten to grade 12 public education sector, you must have a certificate of qualification from the Ministry of Education & Training issued through the Teacher Regulation Branch. This certificate also enables you to work in all independent schools and First Nations schools in the province.

- **The BC Ministry of Education & Training**, Teacher Regulation Branch  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12>

To qualify for a certificate, you must meet the following basic requirements:

- a BC grade 12 diploma or its equivalent
- a degree or its equivalent
- at least four years of post-secondary study
- completion of an acceptable teacher education program
- familiarity with the Canadian education system
- English proficiency, or, in the case of teaching French, French proficiency
- recent teaching experience
- a fit and moral character to work with children

More information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/teacher-certification/certificate-types/certificate-of-qualification>

#### ***Internationally Trained and Accredited Teachers***

To teach in BC's kindergarten to grade 12 public education sector, you must apply to the Teacher Regulation Branch for a Ministry of Education & Training teaching certificate.

For more information see:

- **The BC Ministry of Education**, Teacher Regulation Branch  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/teacher-certification>

- **Documents Required for International Credentials**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/teacher-certification/apply/submit-documents/country-specific-documents>

***Familiarity with the Canadian education system*** If you have studied and/or taught in an education system that is significantly different from the education system in Canada, you may be asked to complete a familiarization program which takes about one year to complete. Find out if you need this training by completing your application for a teaching certificate. Your evaluation letter will tell you if you need this training.

***Teacher Qualification Service (TQS)***

If you are planning to work in the B.C. public school system, you also need to apply to the Teacher Qualification Service (TQS) for a category which helps determine your salary level.

- **TQS**

<https://www.tqs.bc.ca/>

### **3. Finding Jobs**

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, electronic sources, and through professional associations.

***Local Newspapers***

You can look at the Vancouver Sun and the Province at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the Vancouver Sun on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in The Province on Sundays.

***Online Job Postings***

- **Apply to Education**

<https://www.applytoeducation.com/>

Postings from 203 Canadian School Boards and 312 Private Employers

- **Education Canada**

<https://www.educationcanada.com/>

- **Indeed.com**

[http://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)

Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards

### ***Professional Associations' Career Resources***

- **Make a Future: Careers in BC Education**

<https://www.makeafuture.ca/>

Joint venture between British Columbia's 60 public boards of education, the BC Ministry of Education and the BC Public School Employers' Association.

- **BC Teachers Federation (BCTF)**

<https://bctf.ca/opportunitiesformembers.aspx?id=5494>

- **Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS)**

<http://www.cais.ca/> Careers: <http://www.cais.ca/page.cfm?p=8>

- **Society of Christian Schools in BC**

<https://scsbc.ca/employment/>

### ***Identifying the Right Position***

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a wide range of different job titles that are relevant.

For ***Elementary school / kindergarten teachers***, look for these and other related job titles (NOC code 4142)

- French immersion teacher – elementary school
- Teacher Librarian, elementary school
- Primary school teacher
- Special education teacher – elementary school
- Supply teacher – elementary school

For ***Secondary school teachers***, look for these and other related job titles (NOC code 4141)

- English teacher, secondary school

- French as a second language teacher, high school
- Adult education teacher, secondary school
- "Subject" teacher, high school
- Department head, secondary school
- High school teacher, special education
- Supply teacher, high school
- Trades / Vocational Instructor - secondary school

### ***Creating a List of Potential Employers***

You can use directories to produce lists of school districts in the Lower Mainland or BC and contact them directly. **NOTE:** School districts may not advertise. New graduates typically start work on a substitute list (i.e. "**Teacher-on-call**"), in part-time positions and/or as maternity leave and sabbatical replacements.

For further information on "**Teachers-on-Call**",

- **BC Teachers Federation**  
<http://bctf.ca/TeachersOnCall.aspx?id=5022>
- **BC Public School Districts contact information**
  - BC Ministry of Education School and District Contacts  
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/Home.do>
  - BC Teachers Federation, Superintendents of School Districts  
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SP.do>
- **BC Independent (Private) School Authorities contact information**  
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/IndSchoolAuthority.do>
- **Surrey Schools Recruitment Info**  
<https://www.surreyschools.ca/careers/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Vancouver School Board Teacher Recruitment Info**  
[https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Employee\\_Services/Employment/Pages/Default.aspx](https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Employee_Services/Employment/Pages/Default.aspx)
- **Reference Canada**  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>  
Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "school district" or "boards of education" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select

the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

**NOTE:** *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

## 4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume (curriculum vitae) and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following pathfinders which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

## 5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

### ***Industry Associations***

Associations for teachers and schools in BC offer information and assistance. Registration and membership fees may be required.

- **British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF)**

<https://www.bctf.ca/>

All public school teachers belong to the BCTF and their local teachers' association.

- **BC Muslim Association**

<https://www.thebcmma.com/>

The largest Muslim organization in the province and operates schools in Richmond and Surrey encompassing grades kindergarten to seven.

- **British Columbia Public School Employers' Association**

<http://bcpsea.bc.ca//>

The BCPSEA is the accredited bargaining agent for all 60 public school boards in the province.

- **Catholic Independent Schools of the Vancouver Archdiocese**

<https://cisva.bc.ca/>

- **Independent Schools Association of British Columbia**

<http://isabc.ca/>

Represents 23 independent schools throughout the province.

- **Khalsa Schools**

<https://khalsaschool.ca/>

Sikh-based elementary and secondary schools in Vancouver and Lower Mainland area.

- **Society of Christian Schools in BC**

<http://scsbc.ca/>

The SCSBC is a network of more than 40 schools from Preschool through Grade 12.

- **Federation of Independent School Associations**

<https://fisabc.ca/>

- **Teacher Qualification Service**

<https://www.tqs.bc.ca/>

Assists teachers and their employing school boards in establishing the qualifications of teachers for salary purposes.

### ***Industry Journals***

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples available at the Central Library:

- **Teacher: Newsmagazine of the BC Teachers' Federation**

Also available online at: <http://bctf.ca/Publications/teachernewsmag.aspx>

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch,  
Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.**

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the  
Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.*