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## Registrar's Update

The SPTRB was created for the purpose of establishing and administering the professional certification and standards of conduct and competence of teachers in Saskatchewan. As is common among professional regulatory legislation, *The Registered Teachers Act* requires the SPTRB to, at all times, serve and protect the public and exercise its powers and discharge its duties in the public interest.

While regulatory legislation requires regulatory bodies to operate in the public interest, the legislation does not set out what exactly it means to do so. Many self-regulated professions describe how they operate in the public interest by pledging that the members of their profession shall do no harm.

Echoing the notion of do no harm, British Columbia's Commissioner for Teacher Regulation has stated that the concept of public interest – as it relates to regulatory discipline – has two main elements:

1. Students must be protected from certificate holders who, intentionally or otherwise, inflict physical, emotional or sexual harm on them.
2. Certificate holders cannot conduct themselves – on or off duty – in a way that breaches the [British Columbia] *Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct*.

The Ontario College of Teachers' (OCT) Public Interest Committee has noted that attempting to define the public interest has vexed social scientists for decades. But it has not stopped them from trying. One, emphasizing the "public" aspect, defines public interest as "whatever the majority . . . says it is." Another, stressing the "interest" side, defines it as comprised

of "mutual interests and common concerns, including justice, domestic tranquility, common defence, general welfare and liberty."

Although the term "public interest" provides no operational rule or test, public regulators such as the [Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)] often are faced with juggling conflicting criteria to determine what is best for the broader public that it serves.

The OCT's Public Interest Committee believes any definition of public interest as it applies to educators should emphasize the following elements:

- the protection of public goods from private interests;
- the principle that the state exists to serve individuals;
- an ethical, transparent and consistent process and commitment to the public interest;
- ongoing renegotiation of social responsibilities of the profession for the public good;
- a convergence of professional and public interest.

The SPTRB articulates its commitment to serving the public interest through its mission, vision and values:

### SPTRB Mission

The SPTRB serves the public interest by ensuring registered teachers meet professional standards for certification, conduct and competence.

### SPTRB Vision

In Saskatchewan:

- Registered teachers are qualified, competent and trustworthy;
- The public has confidence in the teaching profession;
- Students achieve their highest learning potential.

## Registrar's Update Cont.

### SPTRB Values

In exercising its powers and discharging its responsibilities, the SPTRB demonstrates: Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, Fairness and Timeliness.

This winter the SPTRB began actualizing another part of its mandate, in the public interest, as the Discipline Committee (DC) held its first hearings. The DC heard five

formal complaints of charges laid against registered teachers by the Professional Conduct Committee. Notices of hearings are posted to the SPTRB website at least two weeks prior to the hearing date. The notices provide the charge(s) that will be heard and the date, time and location of the hearing. Decisions of the DC are posted on the SPTRB website thirty days after the decision is made (if there has been no appeal of

the decision). Please see the Q and A section of this newsletter for further information about the Discipline Committee.

Yours in Education  
**Trevor Smith**  
*Registrar*

## Standards of Conduct Update

The Standards Development Committee was struck in the late fall of 2016 and consists of five registered teachers from across the province. The committee reviewed the responses from the survey that registered teachers and members of the public were invited to complete during the 2016/2017 registration period. The committee was tasked with finding common themes and salient points. In doing so, the committee drafted a proposed set of standards along with positively stated indicators. Currently, the Regulatory Bylaws of the SPTRB only outline conduct that constitutes misconduct:

2.01 Without restricting the generality of section 33 of the Act, the following conduct on the part of a teacher is misconduct:

- (a) conduct which is harmful to the best interest of pupils or affects the ability of a teacher to teach;
- (b) any intentional act or omission designed to humiliate or cause distress or loss of dignity to any person in school or out of school which may include verbal or non-verbal behavior;
- (c) physically abusive conduct which involves the application of physical force which is excessive or inappropriate in the circumstances to any person;
- (d) sexually abusive conduct that violates a person's sexual integrity, whether consensual or not which includes sexual exploitation;
- (e) an act or omission that, in the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by the profession as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional;
- (f) being in violation of a law if the violation is relevant to the teacher's suitability to hold a certificate of qualification or if the violation would reasonably be regarded as placing one or more pupils in danger;
- (g) signing or issuing a document in the teacher's professional capacity that the teacher knows or ought to know contains a false, improper or misleading statement; or
- (h) falsifying a record relating to the teacher's professional responsibilities; providing false information or documents to the registrar or to any other person with respect to the teacher's professional qualifications.

The proposed standards are written in a way that aims to promote and highlight the important work teachers do in a positive and attainable manner. The next stage of the project will include consulting with sector partners, registered teachers and the public for feedback on the proposed standards and indicators. Feedback will be sought from teachers and members of the public through an on-line survey made available during the registration period. Following this, there will be a series of focus groups held throughout the province for further feedback.

### Proposed Standards Survey

You are invited to complete a survey on the proposed Standards of Professional Conduct. This survey is a follow-up to last year's survey in which you were asked to describe behaviours of teachers that demonstrate key principles of professional conduct. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey [here](#). Your feedback is important!



## Registration 2017/2018

The Registration Period for the 2017/2018 school year runs from May 1 - August 31, 2017. All teachers working in a position where a teacher's certificate is required for employment must register with the SPTRB. This includes substitute teachers. You can access the online Registration Renewal application form by signing in to your Educator Portal at [www.sptrb.ca](http://www.sptrb.ca).

The Government of Saskatchewan will be providing operational funding to the SPTRB for the 2017/2018 school year. Consequently, there will be no fee associated with this year's registration process. Once you have completed and submitted your online registration renewal, your registration will be approved within 24 hours. You can verify your registration in two ways.

First, you can check the Public Registry at [www.sptrb.ca](http://www.sptrb.ca) for your name. Also, a Registration Verification card will be available to print from your Educator Portal. Please note the importance of updating your employer when completing your registration so that your employer can verify you are in fact registered.

### Call for Committee Members Professional Conduct Committee and Discipline Committee

If you are interested in an excellent professional learning experience and an opportunity to contribute to your profession, please consider submitting an application to serve on the SPTRB's Professional Conduct Committee or Discipline Committee. For further information about the two committees and application process, visit [www.sptrb.ca](http://www.sptrb.ca) and click on the *Committees* tab.

## Q & A's Discipline Committee

### 1. What is the Discipline Committee and what does it do?

The Discipline Committee or DC is comprised of five individuals, the majority of whom are registered teachers. The members of the DC are drawn from a pool of persons who are appointed by the SPTRB's Board of Directors. The DC conducts hearings to determine whether a registered teacher, whose conduct is the subject of a formal complaint by the Professional Conduct Committee, is guilty of professional misconduct, professional incompetence or both; and to report to the Board on the decision and the order made where the registered teacher is found guilty.

### 2. Who participates in a Discipline Committee hearing?

The complainant, registered teacher, legal counsel and witnesses may be present at the hearing. Evidence is presented by the Professional Conduct Committee and registered teacher for consideration by the DC. The DC makes a final decision following the hearing.

### 3. Can anyone attend a hearing?

Yes, Discipline Committee hearings are open to the public, yet space is limited. All hearings are held at the SPTRB office unless otherwise noted: 204 - 3775 Pasqua Street, Regina.

### 4. What information about a hearing is made public?

Prior to a hearing, a notice of hearing is posted on the SPTRB website notifying the public of the hearing and the charge(s). If the registered teacher is found not guilty, the registrant and complainant are both informed of the decision, and the decision is posted on the SPTRB website. If the registered teachers is found guilty, the DC provides a decision and discipline order. Both the registrant and complainant are notified of the decision. Decisions of the DC may be appealed to the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench. The decision is posted on the SPTRB website and noted on the public registry (following the expiration of the appeal timeline).

## Professional Boundaries

The following was excerpted from *Managing Professional Boundaries*, published by the Teacher Registration Board, Northern Territory, Australia.

We all have a sense of what it means to maintain professional relationships with students but what exactly is meant by professional boundaries?

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship where one person entrusts their welfare and safety to a professional and often in circumstances where a power imbalance might exist.

There is no definitive source on where professional boundaries lie regarding the teacher student relationship. The professional boundary is breached when a teacher misuses the power imbalance in the teacher-student relationship such that the student's welfare is compromised.

Some types of boundary violations include: emotional violations, relationship violations, power violations, financial violations and communication violations.

One factor to consider when identifying a potential boundary violation is whether the teacher/student relationship has shifted to serving the needs of the teacher and not the needs of the student.

Teachers working in small communities face additional challenges in managing professional boundaries. They are more likely to have social relationships with the parents of the children and young people with whom they work through shared interests in social and sporting events or memberships at various communities, clubs or associations.

This means they will have legitimate reasons, on occasions, to attend social events with the children that they teach, to visit their homes or to be visited by them in the company of their parents/caregivers. These social engagements are an important part of community life and a positive contribution to the wellbeing of teachers working in small communities.

The recommendations below may assist teachers to enjoy these social engagements without compromising their professional responsibilities:

- Social contact should be generated via the relationship the teacher has with the parents/guardians of students or via the event organizers;
- Teachers should avoid being alone with their students in these situations;

- Teachers should conduct themselves in a way that will not give others reason to question their fitness/suitability to teach and that will not create discomfort for children in their learning relationships with them;

- Consuming alcohol in these situations may lessen a teacher's capacity to judge when a professional boundary is at risk;

- Teachers should politely avoid discussing matters relating to the workplace and should not discuss students' learning or social progress other than at times specifically set aside for that purpose;

- Any concern a teacher has about whether or not a situation may be compromising or breaching a professional relationship should be discussed with a senior/supervising colleague or their principal and an approved plan of action followed.

For more information visit:  
[http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/40915/Managing-Professional-Boundaries-Guidelines-for-Teachers-pdf](http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/40915/Managing-Professional-Boundaries-Guidelines-for-Teachers-pdf)



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