



British Columbia Association of School Psychologists

June 24, 2006

**REPORT TO THE BCASP EXECUTIVE**

**on the RECOMMENDATIONS of the**

**2006 ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

The Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee has consisted of 3 members: Aase McMullin, Emily Gambino Brooks, and Ray Tomusiak (Chair). Through 2006 the Committee has been involved in a review of the BCASP document entitled, ***Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for Members of the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists***. The Committee has also examined other documents pertaining to ethics, standards, conduct, and practice. This has led to deliberations on the need for BCASP to endorse or adopt a number of these documents as a matter of good policy and practice .

BCASP's current ethics document was ratified by the Membership in 1991 after much time and effort had been put into its development by the Ethics Committee of the time. It has been 15 years since ratification of this document and with the passing of time has come a need for re-examination and renewal. Matters pertaining to ethics, standards, conduct, and practice is extremely important in a professional organization such as BCASP which is sanctioned by government to provide certification to its members. Therefore it is fundamental that BCASP regularly review its policies and documentation on such matters.

As is the mandate of the Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee, the Committee has made revisions to BCASP's current *Ethical Guidelines*. A recommendation is made to the BCASP Executive that the draft revisions be communicated to the Membership for input. All feedback received by the Committee from the Membership by an established date in the fall will be considered by the Committee in preparation for a final draft. The final draft will be presented to the Membership for ratification at the 2006 Annual General Meeting in November.

The Committee also recommends to the Executive that a number of other pertinent documents be formally adopted or endorsed by the Membership. Together with the revised *Ethical Guidelines*, these documents will form the new BCASP ethics and practice documentation of value to our members and the clients we serve. This a a 4-tier package of both enforceable and unenforceable principles and standards. The documents are as follows:

1) *A Code of Ethics for the Canadian Association of School Psychologists* (enforceable). Adopted as BCASP's code of ethics.

2) *Standards for Professional Practice for Members of the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists* (enforceable). A revised document previously titled, Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for Members of the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists. BCASP's standards of practice document.

3) *Guidelines for Professional Practice for School Psychologists in Canada* (not enforceable). Adopted as a best practices document for BCASP.

4) *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* (not enforceable). Endorsed as a best practices in assessment document for BCASP.

A summary of the documentation is as follows:

**1) A Code of Ethics for the Canadian Association of School Psychologists**

## Preamble:

This thorough document, painstakingly developed, contains abstract, high level principles and values of ethical behaviour for school psychologists in Canada. The Code of Ethics was developed by CASP and adapted from A Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists of the CPA.

The values and concepts expressed in the document are long-standing: that is, they are meant to stand the test of time. A core ethics document, it serves as a guide to school psychologists in their everyday conduct, assists in the resolution of ethical dilemmas, and is important in the adjudication of ethical complaints.

The Code of Ethics consists of 4 general principles: Respect for the Dignity of Persons; Responsible Caring; Integrity in Relationships; and Responsibility to Society. Each of the core principles contains a lengthy value statement which speaks to the principle. Following this is a list of standards (statements) associated with the principle, as well as key words in margin areas to illustrate the relationship between the specific standard and the values statement.

The document is meant to be enforceable, addressing Sec. 3.3.3. of the BCASP Constitution. As BCASP does not have the resources to develop a document of similar scope, it is recommended by the Committee for adoption. Of added value is the tie-in between BCASP and CASP.

## **2) Standards for Professional Practice for Members of the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists**

### Preamble:

This is a revision of BCASP's current ethical document entitled, *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for Members of the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists*. The name has been changed

to reflect important standards of practice for BCASP members which are meant to be more specific of competent and high quality daily practice, and more reflective of current times. This document is meant to go hand in hand with the more abstract, moral, and enduring *Code of Ethics*, both of which are meant to be enforceable (addressing Sec. 3.3.3. of the BCASP Constitution). This document also fits in with the tiered ethics and practice package which the Committee is recommending which contains mandatory (enforceable) principles and standards, as well as guidelines (which are unenforceable) for “best practices”.

The Committee wishes to acknowledge the fine work, time and effort of the original committee members who developed BCASP’s *Ethical Guidelines*. A renewed respect for this document was shared by the current Committee, and as a result, much of the original document remains intact. The goal was, as much as possible, to make statements clear, specific, current, and relevant, in a coherent framework encompassing acceptable standards of practice.

As with the *Ethical Guidelines*, much was either retained or borrowed from the NASP and CASP. The new document consists of 5 sections: Introduction, Professional Competency, Professional Relationships, Professional Responsibilities, and Professional Practices.

### **3) Guidelines for Professional Practice for School Psychologists in Canada**

#### Preamble:

This document has very recently been developed in Canada by the Canadian Psychological Association with a Canadian perspective on the practice of school psychology. It is a “best practices in school psychology” document which provides direction for excellence in professional school psychology in Canada. It is a valuable document for consumers of school psychology services as well as for practitioners. This document is not meant to be

enforceable, but the Membership should work toward achieving quality service delivery contained therein.

At the present time the draft document of the “Guidelines” has one major apparent problem for BCASP. It uses the term “licensed psychologist” in a manner which implies that all psychologists qualified to work as school psychologists need to be licensed vs. certified. Therefore BCASP appears not to be regarded in the mix of what appears acceptable. Before this document can be approved by BCASP changes in the current document should occur. For example, on page 13, “licensing residency” should be changed to “licensing or certification process”; on page 45, replace “no court will challenge the right of a licensed psychologist...” to “licensed or certified school psychologist”; and, “individuals who are not licensed or qualified to do so ...” remove “licensed or”.

It is recommended by the Committee that should CPA not agree to acceptable changes to the above, then the Membership adopt NASP’s *Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services* (2000) to replace the above as a “best practices” document.

#### **4. Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada**

##### Preamble:

This document was developed by a Joint Advisory Committee of representatives from a variety of professional organizations in Canada. Committee members included members of BCASP and CASP. It was published in 1993. The document consists of a set of sound principles and related guidelines to guide the fair assessment of students. This document is not meant to be enforceable, but rather organizations who endorse the document commit to endeavour to follow the intent and spirit of its principles.

So much of what we do pertains to assessment, therefore it

behoooves BCASP to endorse a document committed to high assessment standards. Part A of the document concerns classroom assessment. Part B is of particular interest to BCASP because it is directed to standardized assessments developed external to the classroom (e.g., psychological assessments or psycho-educational assessments). This document has been endorsed by CASP, CPA, Canadian Teachers' Federation, and others.

Finally, the Committee recommends to the Executive that the members composing the 2007 Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee prepare for the Membership documentation pertaining to *Procedural Guidelines for the Adjudication of Ethical Complaints*. This process was started a several years ago and needs to be renewed. Ratification of this new document would occur at the 2007 Annual General Meeting.

This concludes our report.

Ray Tomusiak  
Chair (signing for)  
The BCASP Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee

## APPENDIX

### DRAFT MOTIONS FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

1. THAT THE MEMBERSHIP ADOPT THE CASP CODE OF ETHICS.
2. THAT THE MEMBERSHIP SANCTION THE ABOVE CODE OF ETHICS AS AN ENFORCEABLE DOCUMENT TO USE AS PER SECTION 3.3.3 OF THE CONSTITUTION.
3. THAT THE MEMBERSHIP RATIFY THE REVISIONS MADE TO THE CURRENT ETHICAL GUIDELINES DOCUMENT AND ACCEPT THE CHANGE OF TITLE TO **STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**.
4. THAT THE MEMBERSHIP SANCTION THE ABOVE STANDARDS DOCUMENT AS AN ENFORCEABLE DOCUMENT AS PER SECTION 3.3.3 OF THE CONSTITUTION.
5. THAT THE MEMBERSHIP ADOPT THE GUIDELINES DOCUMENT.
- 6 THAT THE MEMBERSHIP ENDORSE THE FAIR ASSESSMENT PRACTICES DOCUMENT.

## **DEFINITIONS**

*adopt: (as in "choose") v. : choose and follow; as of theories, ideas, policies, strategies or plans; (as in "accept") v. : take up and practice as one's own*

*endorse (as in "certify") v. : to give an often formal expression of approval and support*

*sanction v. : give authority or permission to act or do something*

*ratify v. : to make something legally valid or operative usually by formal approval or sanctioning*