
BACKGROUND

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Ministry of Economic Development
BC College of Teachers

TEACHERS IN B.C AND ALBERTA AGREE TO LABOUR MOBILITY

Alberta and British Columbia signed the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) in April 2006. It is Canada's most comprehensive internal trade agreement. The TILMA means seamless access for businesses and workers in both provinces to a larger range of opportunities across all sectors including energy, transportation, and agriculture. For example,

- a business registered in one province is deemed registered in the other, if it wants – no residency required, no added administration or cost;
- Alberta and B.C. have further opened bidding on government contracts to suppliers in both provinces; and,
- All certified occupations such a skilled trades-person like a plumber or a welder, or a highly trained professional like a teacher or a nurse, will be able to move to Alberta or B.C. and keep working without having to go through extensive re-certification or re-training.

The TILMA comes fully into effect in April 2009.

What does the Teacher Mobility Agreement mean for teachers in Alberta and B.C.?

Teachers in Alberta and British Columbia will be able to pursue employment in either province, and obtain certification without additional training and examination.

Does this agreement lower standards for teacher certification?

No. The teacher certification authorities in Alberta and British Columbia have agreed to mutually recognize the way each province certifies their teachers. Teachers in B.C. and Alberta are highly skilled professionals as a result of high standards maintained by both provinces and this agreement does not change that.

What do you expect the extent of the in/out migration to be with teachers?

This may not impact a lot of teachers – about 300 a year move in either direction – but for those teachers, this agreement ensures that they will not have to complete additional studies to maintain their teaching certificates

What does this agreement mean for students?

Students will continue to be taught by highly skilled professionals trained in either province.

What does this agreement mean for school districts?

For school districts, this agreement means a larger pool from which to choose candidates for teaching positions.

Were teachers and school authorities involved in the negotiations for this agreement?

The BC College of Teachers undertook an extensive consultation process with all education stakeholders. It was this consultation that shaped the Agreement in regard to key elements of consensus. Similarly, the Federation of Independent Schools was consulted by the independent schools registrar. A similar process occurred in Alberta.

Does the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) already address labour mobility?

Yes, however not all provinces that are signatories to the labour mobility agreements allow workers trained in one province to be able to work in another. Under the AIT some certified workers may still be required to undertake further assessments, training, or other requirements to be able to practice in another province. Under TILMA, B.C. and Alberta have worked together to reconcile differences in standards, so certified workers will not have to undergo additional training or examinations and are able to freely work in both provinces

Yes, but the AIT only allows for mechanisms for accommodating further assessment, training and examination of workers. Alberta and B.C. under the TILMA have committed to addressing any “gaps” in certification by April 2009 so that workers are not faced with these additional requirements.

Can teachers from B.C. and Alberta work in other provinces?

Under the AIT, provinces have been strongly urged to eliminate interprovincial barriers to labour mobility. Currently there is no agreement like the one under the TILMA that provides labour mobility for teachers. Under the TILMA, Alberta and B.C. are taking the lead in Canada with this initiative. The TILMA and the labour mobility agreements that result are proposed as a model for the rest of the country to follow.

Are similar agreements needed for other regulated occupations?

Under the TILMA, Alberta and British Columbia have agreed to reconcile or mutually recognize licensure standards by April 2009. That means workers in regulated trades and professions will be able to pursue opportunities in the other province, in the same occupation, without a delay to recertify, the time and expense of additional training, or a break in earnings.

Along with teachers, negotiations under the TILMA have resulted in labour mobility for other occupations, including acupuncturists; chiropractors; occupational therapists; and, water and waste water operators.

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