

SCSBC and Its Services

A Guide for Considering Membership



Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia

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Brief History

The Society of Christian Schools in BC (SCSBC) is an organization of Christian school communities that share a Biblical vision for Christian education. Almost all SCSBC member schools are established and operated by local associations. A few member schools are parochial schools operated by churches.

Our first school (Vancouver Christian School) was established in 1949. Today the SCSBC includes 45+ member schools enrolling over 10,000 students in Pre-K- Grade 12, employing 1000+ teachers and support staff. Member schools are located on Vancouver Island, in Greater Vancouver, in the Fraser Valley, in the Okanagan, and along the Yellowhead route from Prince George to Terrace.

In the 1950's, several Christian schools joined to form the Southwest British Columbia League of Christian Schools. This organization became the SCSBC officially established in 1976. SCSBC is also affiliated with Christian Schools International (CSI) and Christian Schools Canada (CSC). SCSBC “*seeks to do collectively what no school could or should do individually.*” The SCSBC office is located on the campus of Trinity Western University, in Langley, BC.

To become an SCSBC member, school societies or churches must agree with a statement of fundamental principles of the Christian faith and Biblical implications for education. In addition, societies or churches must be in compliance with additional requirements as outlined in the section of this guide entitled “Candidacy Status” (page 10).

Representatives of each association elect a nine-member SCSBC Board, which includes a teacher representative chosen by the Christian Teachers’ Association of BC (CTABC) and a principal representative chosen by the Christian Principals’ Association of BC (CPABC). The SCSBC holds a general meeting annually.

The SCSBC currently employs a nine member staff team including an Executive Director, two Directors of Learning (Pre-K –Grade 5) and (Grade 6-12), a Director of Finance and Business Management, consultants in Marketing, Development and Community Relations and International Education. An Administrative Assistant and Communications and Publications Coordinator provide additional support in developing and implementing the programs of the SCSBC.

Each member school is assessed an annual per student fee to pay for SCSBC programs. This fee includes membership and payment of dues to the *Federation of Independent School Associations* (FISA) as well as *Christian Stewardship Services* (CSS). Additional added value services for member schools have been added in the 2008-09 school year. These include:

- Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC)
- EBSCO Bundle (On-line Resource Database Bundle: *World Book, Encyclopedia of BC, etc*)
- Follett’s new web-based program *Destiny Manager*
- *YouthSafe Outdoors: Safety and Risk Management for Offsite Field Trips & Excursions*

The SCSBC serves and advises its member schools. However, the association is a "grass-roots" one; decisions about policies and their implementation are made at the local level. The SCSBC promotes distinctive Christian education in BC by providing the following services to its members.

a. ***Deepening the insight into Christian education among teachers, the supporting community, and society at large.***

The SCSBC publishes a newsletter (The LINK) for staff, board and committee members. It also makes available promotional materials including a booklet on Christian education. Furthermore, its staff members are willing to address various groups on a variety of aspects related to Christian education. The staff is also available to present workshops to local staffs, teacher and principal conventions, and groups of board and education committee members. The teachers' (CTABC) and principals' (CPABC) associations plan regular professional conventions and conferences for their members. They work closely with the SCSBC in developing recommended policies. The SCSBC also solicits moral and financial support for the cause of Christian education in BC.

b. ***Coordinating and evaluating the schools' educational programs and developing curriculum outlines and units.***

The SCSBC has developed a number of handbooks in the areas of Administration, School Emergencies, Teacher Assessment and Evaluation, Financial Stewardship, French, Kindergarten, Learning Assistance and Curriculum Planning, Special Education among others. It has a resource centre that includes an on-line library from which teachers may obtain Christian units for their classrooms, an educational library from which teachers may loan books (including Christian textbooks), and several kits of resource materials, videos and CD's, for staff development and classroom use. The Directors of Learning work with committees and groups of teacher to develop suitable outlines and units for use in Christian school classrooms (pre-school through grade 12).

c. ***Providing advice on organizational and educational matters to school boards and staffs.***

The SCSBC has developed a variety of board policy papers, guidelines, and best practises, at the request of local school boards. These resources are distributed to member schools and are available through our website (password protected for member schools). SCSBC staff are available to give advice to school societies with respect to governance and leadership issues, present school programs, addition of new programs, facilities, financial management, capital campaigns, professional development, teacher qualifications and certification, etc. In conjunction with the staff of a school, SCSBC staff also offer access to school leadership reviews and in-depth evaluations of a school's program and operation. Finally, the SCSBC has a Compensation Committee which publishes an annual recommended salary scale and has a Facilitation, Mediation and Arbitration Committee which can be called on to solve problems that may arise between a board and staff, a board and the principal, or the principal and staff. The SCSBC has also established the 'Office of the SCSBC Ombudsperson' available to parents and students SCSBC schools in the unlikely event that all other local and provincial appeal mechanisms have been unsuccessful.

d. *Assisting local communities in beginning new Christian schools and expanding existing ones.*

The SCSBC has assisted school communities in establishing new schools, new campuses and the addition of grades and programs to existing schools. Advisory support is often requested and provided in matters of school governance, policy development, curriculum and program development, school finances, budgeting, Ministry of Education requirements, public relations, marketing, recruitment and community development initiatives and fundraising.

e. *Monitoring government policies and regulations as they affect Christian schools, representing schools with the government, and advising schools regarding government relations.*

The SCSBC was one of the founding members of the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) in British Columbia. It continues to work closely with FISA in all matters pertaining to government policies, representing our Christian schools with the government on issues involving school evaluation, program and curriculum policies, level of funding, government services, income tax policies, etc. The SCSBC also takes up liaison with the BC College of Teachers. SCSBC staff members have received permission from the College of Teachers to assist in the evaluation of teachers with interim certificates for permanent certification.

f. *Funding new Initiatives to support Digital Learning*

- **Follett's new web-based Library program Destiny Manager**

By October 2008 SCSBC had 29 schools (including our own SCSBC Resource Library) launched on Follett's new web-based library program Destiny Manager. In essence, SCSBC has created the structure for a provincial Christian school library network.

- **Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC)**

SCSBC's ERAC membership is now operational in all of our schools. Schools are beginning to discover the significant financial savings on software and video purchases, textbooks, novels, and other educational resources because of their membership within the SCSBC "district" membership.

- **On-line Database Bundle**

On October 27, 2008 SCSBC was able to announced to schools that it had purchased a one-year subscription to the new ERAC Online Resources Database Bundle that is now provided to all SCSBC schools (staff & students) at no additional cost as another added value of SCSBC membership. This extensive EBSCO collection includes *World Book's* Complete Reference Suite (6 different versions of *World Book*), *Encyclopedia of BC's* entire database, and hundreds of magazines and professional educational journals. Collectively, these databases offer a comprehensive set of on-line resources for students in kindergarten through to post-secondary, as well as their parents. It also provides excellent professional development resources for teachers.

g. *Providing Policy Development regarding Student Safety*

- **YouthSafe Outdoors**

The *YouthSafe Outdoors* program was implemented across the SCSBC district in January 2009. *YouthSafe Outdoors Resource Binders* and accompanying *CD* with hundreds of forms, handouts, etc, can be personalized for local school use.

This resource provides a wealth of comprehensive, research-based resources, training and consultation services to help provide safe education and recreation experiences (off-site activities, outdoor pursuits, sports, aquatics, international travel, and other related endeavors) through solid policy development and governance, administration, trip planning, leadership, instruction and home support.

YSO is a research-based initiative supporting development and distribution of comprehensive, integrated risk management and safety instruction resources for BC schools. YSO resources provide guidelines for policies, procedures and field practices that reflect “*common practice*” in BC schools and other schools in Western Canada.

SCSBC Membership Policy

1. School societies / churches without a school / universities may join the SCSBC as an affiliate member for an annual fee set by the SCSBC Board.
2. School societies operating a school will normally be accepted as a member with 'candidacy' status for an initial two-year period.
3. Application for membership in the SCSBC should be supported by at least one of the following:
 - an interview with representatives of the board of the applicant when the application is being considered by the SCSBC Board,
 - a visit to a board meeting held by the applicant, or
 - an examination by the SCSBC Board and/or its Executive Director of the school society's constitution, objectives, and/or statements dealing with the educational philosophy and practices intended.

The Executive Director will also provide input to the SCSBC Board regarding the application.

4. At the end of the initial two-year candidacy status, societies operating a school that in the opinion of the SCSBC staff or their designate, maintain responsible educational standards will be included in the list of SCSBC schools that belong to the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA). "Responsible educational standards" refers to programs that are explicitly Christian in orientation and involve content and skills on par with those given in the SCSBC Curriculum and other handbooks. At this time societies will also be informed that they are eligible for full membership with the SCSBC provided that they agree with Articles II and III of the SCSBC constitution, operate a school or schools and maintain responsible educational standards.

A society operating a school may wish to retain its candidacy status and if so must inform the SCSBC. Application for full member status may be initiated by the candidate member at a later date. The SCSBC Board may also decide that a school with candidacy status needs additional time to reach responsible educational standards and, therefore, should remain with the candidacy status.

An applicant for candidacy membership status with the SCSBC, who already is a member of FISA, will upon being granted candidacy membership by the SCSBC Board, be included in the FISA listing of SCSBC schools.

5. Notwithstanding the above, the SCSBC Board may waive all or part of the two-year initial candidacy member status where it believes that both the school and the SCSBC would benefit from earlier full-membership status.
6. Any member who wishes to resign from the SCSBC may do so by submitting its resignation in writing to the Board of Directors of the SCSBC. The SCSBC Board may discontinue the membership of societies who violate the basis and objectives of the SCSBC or who continually fail to meet their obligations. An expelled member society may appeal such discontinuance to

an SCSBC general meeting within eighteen months of being informed of such a decision.

7. a. All incorporated Christian school societies / churches / universities in British Columbia are eligible for membership in this society. Societies that have expressed agreement with the constitution of the SCSBC are eligible for voting membership.
 - b. All member societies are obligated to execute and comply with all decisions made at any duly constituted general meeting.
 - c. Any member who wishes to resign from the society may do so by delivering its resignation in writing to the SCSBC Board of Directors.
 - d. Member societies may be expelled, if, in the opinion of the Board of the society such member societies violate the basis and objectives of this society or continually fail to meet their obligations. An expelled member society may appeal to the general meeting within eighteen months after being expelled.
 - e. Member societies who fail to meet their financial obligations shall cease to be considered in good standing.
 - f. The annual meeting shall be held each year in the month of November or at such time and place in accordance with the Societies Act, as the directors decide. The agenda for general meetings shall normally be distributed six weeks prior to the meeting date.
 - g. Other extraordinary general meetings may be called by the Board if and when deemed necessary on a 35-day notice, stating the agenda, distributed to all member societies.
 - h.
 - (1) Notice of a general meeting shall specify the place, the day and the hour of meeting, and, in case of special business, the general nature of that business.
 - (2) The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of a notice by, any of the members entitled to receive notice does not invalidate proceedings at that meeting.
 - i. Special general meetings must be called if 10% of the voting member societies request such in writing, stating the reason. All such requests must be cleared through the President.
 - j. Seven members shall constitute a quorum at a duly convocated meeting.
 - k.
 - (1) A member in good standing present at a meeting of members is entitled to one vote.
 - (2) Voting is by show of hands.
 - (3) Voting by proxy is not permitted.
 - l. Member societies shall present their proposals, advice or reports to the Secretary ten weeks prior to the general meeting. Proposals and resolutions regarding the constitution and
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bylaws must be presented to the board four months prior to the annual general meeting. Urgent matters may be added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, subject to the approval of the delegates present by simple majority.

SCSBC Membership Fees

When first joining the Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia, schools will normally be assigned candidacy member status for the first two years of membership. Those schools with candidacy member status have full access to all SCSBC services, but do not have the right to vote at provincial general meetings.

After two years, schools that fully agree with the statement of basis and principles of the SCSBC and maintain responsible academic and employment standards may apply for voting membership status. The SCSBC functions as a geographical region of Christian Schools International. CSI publishes Christian textbooks and other resource materials and provides Canadian pension and insurance plans for Christian school teachers. Schools holding candidacy member status are encouraged but do not have to join CSI.

The SCSBC as an association belongs to the Federation of Independent School Associations. The FISA serves to protect the independence of our schools, to strengthen the freedom of choice for parents and students, and to improve access to independent schools for all regardless of economic status. The positions and actions of FISA have influenced government policy and led to government grants being made available to independent schools.

The SCSBC also holds membership with Christian Stewardship Services. By virtue of this membership, member schools are entitled to a wide range of financial stewardship and planned giving services.

2009/10 Membership Fees

Annual SCSBC membership fees are based on 2% of the previous year's basic government grant per full time equivalent student. Fees also include membership with Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) – \$4.50/FTE, Christian Stewardship Services (CSS) – \$1.00/FTE, and the Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC).

The annual fee for associations/churches not yet operating a school is \$500.00.

Basis and Principles of the SCSBC

The basis of the Society is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the infallible Word of God as explicated in the Reformed Creedal Standards. On this basis we affirm the following principles for Christian education:

The Bible: That God by His Holy Word reveals Himself; renews man's understanding of God, of man himself, of his fellowman and of the world; directs man in all his relationships and activities; and therefore guides His people, also in the education of His children.

Creation: That in their education children must come to learn that the world, and man's calling in it, can rightly be understood only in their relation to the Triune God, who by His creation, restoration and governance directs all things to the coming of His Kingdom and the glorification of His Name.

Sin: That because of man's sin, which brought upon all mankind the curse of God, alienates him from his Creator, his neighbour and the world; distorts his view of the true meaning and purpose of life; and misdirects human culture and also corrupts the education of children.

Jesus Christ: That through our Saviour, Jesus Christ, there is renewal of our educational enterprise, because He is the Redeemer of, and the Light and the Way for our human life in all its range and variety. Only through Him and the work of His Spirit are we guided in the truth and recommitted to our original calling.

Schools: That the purpose of Christian schools is to educate children for a life of obedience to their calling in this world as image-bearers of God; that this calling is to know God's Word and His Creation, to consecrate the whole human life to God, to love their fellowman, and to be stewards in their God-given cultural task.

Parents: That the responsibility for education rests primarily upon parents to whom children are entrusted by God, and that Christian parents should accept this obligation in view of the covenantal relationship with God, established with believers and their children. They should seek to discharge this obligation through school societies and school boards, which engage the service of Christian teachers in Christian schools.

Teachers: That Christian teachers, both in obedience to God and in cooperation with parents, have a unique pedagogical responsibility while educating the child in school.

Pupils: That Christian schools must take into account the variety of abilities, needs and responsibilities of young persons; that the endowments and calling of young persons as God's image-bearers and their defects and inadequacies as sinners require that such learning goals and such curricula will be selected as will best prepare them to live as obedient Christians; and that only with constant attention to such pedagogical concerns education will be truly Christian.

Community: That because of God's covenant embraces not only parents and their children but also the whole Christian community to which they belong, and because Christian education contributes directly to the advancement of God's Kingdom, it is the obligation not only of parents but also of this

Christian community to establish and maintain Christian schools, to pray for, work for and give generously in their support.

Educational Freedom: That Christian schools organized and administrated in accordance with legitimate standards and provisions for day-schools should be fully recognized in society as free to function according to these principles.

Candidacy Status

School societies applying for membership with the SCSBC may be designated to have “*candidacy status*” as an interim step to associate membership or membership within SCSBC.

Candidacy status implies that a school is seeking membership in SCSBC, but has not yet met all of the basic requirements and standards expected of an SCSBC school. Schools in *candidacy status* pay full membership fees, receive all the services and benefits of membership entitled to member schools (except voting privileges) while they work towards compliance as an associate member.

In addition to a review of the following documents submitted by the applicant,

- *School's Statement of Faith*
- *Constitution and Bylaws*
- *Certificate of Incorporation under the BC Society Act*
- *Recent Audited Financial Statements*
- *Parent and Student Handbooks*

the school must demonstrate compliance with the following:

1. Current Employee Contracts for all employees that include:
 - Compliance with the BC Employment Standards
 - Access to an appropriate Grievance / Appeal process
 - Access to an external Facilitation, Mediation and Arbitration process in the event of a dispute between the employer (School or Church Board) and employee (Staff)
2. An Employee Appeals Policy that reflects the principles of due diligence, procedural fairness and natural justice.
3. A Parent / Student Appeals Policy that reflects the principles of due diligence, procedural fairness and natural justice.
4. A “Community Standard” (lifestyle) policy for all employees, school board, and committee members.
5. Adequate liability coverage for its Directors and Officers.
6. Membership with the Federation of Independent School Associations.
7. Ministry of Education Standards.
8. No current litigation against the School Authority.

Candidacy Status will be reviewed annually up to a maximum of two years.

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