



INFORMATION ON A CAREER AS AN EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCHER/ ANALYST IN BC

OVERVIEW

Education policy researchers, consultants and program managers undertake research, produce reports, and administer elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education policies and programs. They find, scrutinize, and draw conclusions from data and have both qualitative and quantitative research skills. From their research they create materials and other resources for program delivery and coordinate information for statistical analysis.

Education policy researchers/analysts evaluate curriculum and services, recommend improvements, determine the cost and effectiveness of educational policies, produce reports and delivery presentations. Education policy analysts measure the success or failure of existing policies and model how proposed policies will affect students, teachers, budgets, and districts. They also look at challenges faced by schools, districts, or regions and design actionable policy-based solutions. They identify issues affecting student and teacher performance.

Education policy researchers/analysts work for government, school boards, post-secondary educational institutions and research institutes, professional associations, private and public organizations, consulting companies. They may be hired by lobbyists, lawmakers, think tanks or other official institutions to conduct certain types of research focussed on a specific issue. They may be self-employed.

Most educational policy analysts entering the field have served on boards of education in their district. Position titles include education policy adviser/analyst, language assessor, board of education inspector, literacy coach, education policy analyst/officer.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The day-to-day work of education policy analysts can involve everything from conducting research to helping to draft laws. Most policy analysts work in one or more of four areas: collecting information, analyzing potential policies, and making recommendations, evaluating the outcomes of existing policies, and sharing information with the public and government officials.

Prepared February 2021 by BCPLAN Navigator

© 2018-2021 British Columbia's Prior Learning Action Network

This document is protected by applicable Canadian copyright laws and regulations. Except as otherwise provided for under Canadian copyright law, this document and its content may not be reproduced, published, distributed, or otherwise stored, transmitted or converted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.



Responsibilities vary depending on where one works and in what capacity. If the position is with a school district, research involves analyzing issues affecting teachers and students at the local level, like class sizes, diversity in education programs, and educator shortages.

Provincially, the analyst might assess the effectiveness of exams currently used to measure teacher performance or student proficiency, teacher salaries, adult education, job training, graduation rates in certain communities, school size.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum bachelor's degree in education, social sciences, or business administration. Master's degree in education or social sciences may be required. Areas of study such as psychology (arts or sciences) or adult education are acceptable.

Job listings for education policy analysts frequently ask that applicants have qualifications such as:

- A bachelor's degree with two or more years of relevant community work
- A bachelor's degree plus three years of professional experience in policy analysis or program management
- A master's degree or PhD with one to two years of relevant professional experience
- A graduate degree in public policy, economics, business administration, statistics, or a related field

For positions in provincial education ministries, prior experience as a schoolteacher (K-12) and a current teacher's certificate are required.

HOW TO BECOME AN EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCHER/ANALYST

There are two schools of thought as to what makes someone effective as an education policy researcher/analyst. One belief is that working as a teacher before becoming an education policy analyst provides a more thorough understanding of what students and teachers need to succeed. Another belief suggests that aspiring educational policy analysts should work in administrative roles first, so they understand how things like funding and laws impact student achievement and school outcomes.

The reality is that teaching or administrative experience alone won't make someone an effective education policy analyst. Neither will policy analysis experience in another field. Education policy analysts need to understand the complexities of modern education and skills related to research, quantitative analysis, finance, and law.



Education policy analysts need to understand how local education systems function; current education policies and practices outlined by the provincial Ministry of Education; and know fundamental research methods, analysis techniques, and investigative processes commonly used to assess policies related to education.

GETTING STARTED IN THE FIELD

To gain the experience needed to work in this field, aspiring education policy researchers/analysts should:

- Participate in think-tanks related to policy making at the college level
- If studying at a post-secondary institution, participate in student-led organizations
- Volunteer at a non-profit that does work in the education policy arena
- Subscribe to education journals,
- Follow or join professional education organizations
- Stay up to date on the latest trends in pedagogy, educational psychology and other factors that drive policy
- Work or volunteer with school and community leaders or politicians and policy experts

RESOURCES

BC Ministry of Education – www.gov.bc.ca/bced

BC Public School Employers Association (BCPSEA) – www.bcpsea.bc.ca

Make a Future: Careers in BC Education – www.makeafuture.ca

Noodle - <https://www.noodle.com/articles/how-to-become-an-education-policy-analyst>

Teacher Regulation Branch, BC Ministry of Education – www.teacherregulation.gov.bc.ca

Top Education Degrees - <https://www.topeducationdegrees.org/faq/what-is-an-education-policy-analyst/>

WorkBC - <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/4166#about-this-job>



JOB BOARDS

Government of Canada Job Bank (BC, Lower Mainland) -

<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/jobsearch/jobsearch?searchstring=Education+Policy+research&locationstring=Vancouver%2C+BC>

Indeed.ca - <https://ca.indeed.com/Education-Policy-Analyst-jobs-in-British-Columbia>

WorkBC - <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/4166#career-paths-and-resources>