

# 435 Education Assistant Allocation

## Beliefs

The Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC) follows the cultural and traditional teachings of the Maskwacis Cree, in particular, Wahkohtowin.

Wahkohtowin is the belief that all things are related and connected, that all of existence has spirit and that living in a good way requires us to maintain good relationships with each other and other aspects of existence. We recognize that respect for mother earth, elders, youth, and the Treaties are paramount to planning ahead and making decisions for future generations.

The MESC believes that all students have access to a quality school experience that is safe and enriched with quality teaching and learning and that It is important to ensure student independence, particularly for those who require more adult support. The MESC also believes that Education Assistants are a valued and integral part of providing a quality education for students and that the contributions that Education Assistants make are varied, specialized, and critical in meeting the diverse needs of our students.

## Procedures

1. When assigning Education Assistants, the principal will ensure the Education Assistants meet the needs of the students and ensure the support they provide will:
  - 1.1. Be non-invasive
  - 1.2. Maximize peer interactions
  - 1.3. Ensure students have access to quality teacher instruction and;
  - 1.4. Provide opportunities to develop independence and self-reliance.
2. Teachers are required to develop a program that meets the needs of all students. This means differentiating instruction and assessment through thoughtful planning is required. The role of the education assistant is not to complete the tasks or duties for which the teacher is professionally responsible, such as diagnosing learning needs, prescribing educational programs and evaluating student progress.

## Priority Allocations

3. Priority allocations must be discussed with the Principal and Director of Students Services prior to moving forward with these allocations.
4. Schools will be allocated Education Assistant support in the following priority areas where:
  - 4.1. Students require one on one support because of the following:
  - 4.2. Health Care needs (the highest priority of support): Includes basic and essential healthcare needs without which a student could not attend school, for example:
    - 4.2.1. G-tube feeding
    - 4.2.2. Seizure response/monitoring
    - 4.2.3. Glucose monitoring and medication management
    - 4.2.4. Daily living aides
  - 4.3. Access Needs: This area of priority includes self-help, behaviour, sensory access, and essential communication needs, the management of which is essential for facilitating student access to the learning environment or to the instructional opportunity, for example:
    - 4.3.1. Self-help access needs may include some feeding and hygiene support, assistance with dressing, or support in learning classroom routines and developing executive functioning. This also may include mobility needs, for the use of walkers, wheelchairs or other assistive mobility devices.
    - 4.3.2. Behaviour access needs may include support with learning replacement behaviours that may be a danger to the student or others or may lead to significant disruptions in the classroom.
    - 4.3.3. Sensory access needs may include support required to access print information as a result of visual impairment, supports required to access direct instruction as a result of hearing loss and support required to assist with sensory regulation.
    - 4.3.4. Communication access needs may include support with developing functional communication skills and the use of augmentative and alternative communication techniques.
    - 4.3.5. Low Incidence access needs may include support for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired and require continuous access to navigate their environment and learn alternative communication methods such as ASL or Braille.

5. The Kisikeyihtamowin, Akameyimowin, and Knowledge & Employability programs are offered at many of the schools depending on the location and student population. These programs can change year to year, therefore the Education Assistant allocations can be altered as well. The number of Education Assistants recommended for these programs will be determined in collaboration with the principal, the Director of Student Services, and People Services.
6. MESC schools have Speech and Language Assistants designated in several schools, particularly those in the early years. Speech and Language Assistants are assigned to schools based on the speech and language caseloads. The extent of the support required for students with speech and language needs is determined in collaboration with the principal, the Director of Student Services, and People Services.

### **Secondary Allocations**

7. It is understood teachers may also require additional adult support to work with specific students, but may also require additional support for the whole class. Age, developmental needs, physical space and safety, and the academic profiles of students can also be a factor when allocating education assistants. Education Assistants may help implement aspects of instructional and behavioral plans, classroom management, student supervision, assist with the personal needs of students, and provide other support as needed. However, student independence must not be compromised nor should the education assistant be assigned any of the teachers' roles and responsibilities unless it is agreed upon with the principal.
8. The following criteria will be used as a guideline when determining Education Assistant assignments and priority will be given from Priorities 1-6, based on the principal's recommendations. Principals will create the daily schedule for Education Assistants and determine the classroom allocation specific to meeting student needs once the Education Assistants are finalized for their school.
9. Once all specialized programming and one-on-one Education Assistants are allocated, the following allocations will be determined based on the priority and recommendation of the principal:

Priority	Allocation	Description
#1	Early Learning (Headstart to Grade 2)	All Headstart to Grade 2 classrooms will receive a full-time Education Assistant unless student enrollment does not warrant additional support.
#2	Nehiyawewin and Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin Classes	Education Assistants who speak Nehiyawewin may be assigned to Nehiyawewin and Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin Classes to help support the language development, resource development, preparation, and overall management of students, especially when instructors are leading those classrooms.
#3	Large class sizes	Classrooms that exceed 25 students and student safety is a concern may receive an Education Assistant. For example, Physical Education classes, Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin classes, significant student needs identified in a classroom, or other reasons not specified.
#4	Combined grades	Any combined grade classrooms may be assigned an Education Assistant depending on the number of students and the academic/emotional profile of that class.
#5	Division 2 and 3 classrooms	Education Assistants may be assigned to these classrooms if the classroom composition suggests that increased management, supervision, and support are required.
#6	Library Assistant	In the case when a school does not have a teacher librarian or a library technician, a school may request to have an Education Assistant support the organization as well as, provide student access to the school library. This is determined by the school principal and when feasible, an Education Assistant can be assigned to oversee the functions in the library.

## **Process of Re-assigning and Requesting Education Assistants**

10. Based on the criteria above, if a school has a surplus or a deficit of Education Assistants they will be reassigned to schools. People Services will collaborate with the Principal and Director of Student Services to determine the Education Assistants who will be reassigned. This will be based on the seniority and specialized skills that may be required for the student(s) or program(s) at the school and all final decisions will be made by People Services.
11. If there are additional Education Assistants required to meet the student, programming, or classroom needs, a recommendation to People Services can be made by the principal. This will occur in October. This recommendation will be reviewed by the executive leadership team and a decision will be made.

### References:

[MESC People Services Handbook for Supervisors](#)

[Teachers and Educational Assistants: Roles and Responsibilities \(Alberta Teachers Association\)](#)