

212 LEARNING RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Beliefs

The Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC) follows 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.

MESC shall provide all students access to a wide range of learning resources at appropriate levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and presenting different points of view for students.

Definition

Learning Resources shall include books, supplementary reading and information materials, charts, dioramas, filmstrips, flash cards, games, globes, kits, machine readable data files, maps, microfilms, models, motion pictures, regalia, slides, sound recordings, transparencies, video recordings, computer software, and community resource personnel.

Procedures

1. The objective of providing learning resources shall be to provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served, and to provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
2. There shall be provision for systematic selection and review and reconsideration of collections of learning resources.
3. The following criteria shall be used for selecting learning resources:
 - 3.1. Learning Resources shall support, and be consistent with, the general educational goals of the MESC Cree Declaration on Education and the Province of Alberta and with the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses.

- 3.2. Learning resources shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation, physical format and technical quality, and shall have aesthetic, literary, and/or social value.
 - 3.3. Learning resources shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles and social development of the students for whom the resources are selected.
 - 3.4. Learning resources shall have a physical format appropriate for the intended use.
 - 3.5. Scientific resources shall be satisfactory in terms of accuracy, adequacy of treatment, and reading level.
 - 3.6. Learning resources are to be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviors and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens in our society.
 - 3.7. Learning resources shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.
 - 3.8. Any person, group or association whose intent it is to promote discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, nationality or place of origin will not be admitted to schools.
 - 3.9. Learning resources which are biased or prejudiced in content may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives (example: to recognize an ideology and its purpose in a given context or to balance an argument).
 - 3.10. The selection of learning resources on controversial issues shall be directed towards maintaining a balanced collection representing various views.
 - 3.11. Emphasis shall be placed on the selection of Canadian and Indigenous learning resources where appropriate. These shall include learning resources by or about a Canadian and Indigenous person, about a region or event and/or published or produced in Canada.
 - 3.12. Learning resources shall be selected that will widen the boundaries of a student's thinking, that enrich his/her life, gain an awareness of and a broad understanding of society and world situations, and help him/her fulfill his/her recreational and emotional needs.
 - 3.13. Audio-visual learning resources shall be of acceptable technical quality.
 - 3.14. In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, Elders, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.
 - 3.15. Recommendations for purchase may involve Elders, administrators, teachers, students, MESC personnel and community persons, as appropriate.
 - 3.16. Gift resources shall be judged by the criteria outlined in this administrative procedure and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.
 - 3.17. Selection is an ongoing process which will include the removal of resources no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost or worn resources still of educational value
4. The following shall be considered in respect of the reconsideration of learning resources:

- 4.1. Any parent/guardian of a student attending a MESC school, a staff member, or member of the public may formally challenge learning resources used in a school's library on the basis of appropriateness.
 - 4.2. No parent/guardian has the right to determine reading, viewing or listening matter for students other than his/her own children.
 - 4.3. Although it is the learning resources which are questioned, the principles of freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.
 - 4.4. Access to the learning resources shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
 - 4.5. The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the learning resource for its intended educational use.
 - 4.6. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professional involved in the original selection and/or use of the learning resource.
5. Responsibility for the selection and reconsideration of learning resources, other than those materials recommended by Alberta Education, rests ultimately with the Superintendent.
6. Responsibility for Selection of Learning Resources
 - 6.1. The Principal is responsible for all resources used in the instructional process within the school. The authority to coordinate the selection process may be delegated to the teacher librarian or a designated teacher or instructor.
 - 6.2. Teachers or Instructors are responsible for all learning resources used in their classes. Teachers and/or Instructors are to be involved in the selection of learning resources in order to ensure that materials meet curriculum development requirements.
7. Procedures for Reconsideration of Learning Resource
 - 7.1. Request for Informal Reconsideration
 - 7.1.1. The school receiving a complaint regarding a learning resource shall first try to resolve the issue informally:
 - 7.1.1.1. The Principal and/or other appropriate staff shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure and criteria and the qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
 - 7.1.1.2. The Principal and/or other appropriate staff shall review the learning resource. A resource which does not conform to existing selection guidelines will be withdrawn.
 - 7.1.1.3. The Principal and/or other appropriate staff shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the resource.
 - 7.1.1.4. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of this administrative procedure shall be given by the Principal to the party concerned and procedures for reconsideration shall be initiated.

- 7.2. Request for Formal Reconsideration
 - 7.2.1. Preliminary Procedures:
 - 7.2.1.1. All formal objections to learning resources must be made in writing.
 - 7.2.1.2. All formal objections shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the Principal.
 - 7.2.1.3. The request for reconsideration shall be referred by the Principal to a Reconsideration Committee appointed by him/her at the school level for re evaluation of the resource. Resolution of the complaint may result at this level.
 - 7.2.1.4. Should the complaint not be resolved at the school level, then the Superintendent shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
 - 7.2.1.5. Requests for reconsideration of Learning Resources shall then be referred to a Division Reconsideration Committee for re-evaluation of the resource. This Committee may involve additional personnel as appropriate.
 - 7.2.2. MESCC's Reconsideration Committee:
 - 7.2.2.1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource, the Superintendent is responsible for:
 - 7.2.2.1.1. Forming the Division Reconsideration Committee. When appropriate, membership should include:
 - 7.2.2.1.1.1. The Principal of the school
 - 7.2.2.1.1.2. One member of the Learning Services Team
 - 7.2.2.1.1.3. One member of the school teaching staff chosen by the Principal
 - 7.2.2.1.1.4. The librarian of the school
 - 7.2.2.1.1.5. A parent of the school community chosen by the Principal
 - 7.2.2.1.1.6. An Elder
 - 7.2.2.1.2. Establishing a meeting date as soon as possible after the complaint is received.
 - 7.2.2.2. The Principal, as a non-voting member, shall chair the Division Reconsideration Committee.
 - 7.2.2.3. The Division Reconsideration Committee may choose to consult other professionals from the schools or the community with related professional knowledge.
 - 7.2.2.4. The Division Reconsideration Committee shall review the resource in question and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in this administrative procedure.
 - 7.2.2.5. Among the alternatives open to the Committee would be to recommend that the resource be retained for general use by all students, that it be restricted to teacher use or that it be removed from the school.
 - 7.2.3. Resolutions
 - 7.2.3.1. The Division Reconsideration Committee shall proceed within the following guidelines:

- 7.2.3.1.1. Examine the challenged materials;
 - 7.2.3.1.2. Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the materials wherever available;
 - 7.2.3.1.3. Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole, rather than passages or sections taken out of context;
 - 7.2.3.1.4. Discuss the challenged material in the context of the educational program;
 - 7.2.3.1.5. Discuss the challenged item with the individual questioner when appropriate;
 - 7.2.3.1.6. Prepare a written report.
- 7.2.4. The written report shall be discussed with the individual questioner if requested.
- 7.2.5. The written report shall be retained by the Superintendent with copies forwarded to the Principal. A minority report may also be filed.
- 7.2.6. Written reports, once filed, will be confidential and open for examination by appropriate officials only.
- 7.3. The complainant has the right to appeal the decision of the Division Reconsideration Committee to the Superintendent.

Reference

MESC Cree Declaration on Education