



1. WHAT IS THE MASKWACÎS EDUCATION SCHOOLS COMMISSION (MESC)?

Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission (MESC) is the locally owned & operated education authority for Ermineskin Cree Nation, Louis Bull Tribe, Montana First Nation, and Samson Cree Nation in Treaty No. 6 Territory. MESC offers Nehiyaw curriculum, by embedding Cree culture, language, and traditions into 9 Maskwacîs schools with emphasis on Wâhkôhtowin, Nehiyawewin, Nehiyaw Pimâtisôwin, and Îyiniw Mâmitonehicikan.

Maskwacîs amalgamated 11 schools from 4 separate authorities to create the Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission (MESC). MESC believes the main step that Canada can take to uphold the spirit and intent of our Treaty right to education is properly funding schools controlled by First Nation communities. As Maskwacîs Cree, we determine how to best implement our Treaty right—and the best way to implement the Treaty right to education is to achieve a high degree of success within our Maskwacîs schools based on community priorities and Maskwacîs Cree beliefs.

2. WHO IS ON THE MESC BOARD?

Dr. Shauna Bruno	Board Chair/Member at Large
Elliot Young	Board Vice Chair/Neyaskweyahk Representative
Chief Wilton Littlechild	Board Governor/Member at Large
Allison Adams-Bull	Board Governor/Kisipatnahk Representative
Debra Omeasoo-Strongman	Board Governor/Akamihk Representative
Ilene Cardinal-Nepoose	Board Governor/Nipisihkopahk Representative
Chief Desmond Bull	Board Governor/Kisipatinahk Ex-Officio
Councilor Chase McDougall	Board Governor/Akamihk Ex-Officio
Councilor Mario Swampy	Board Governor/Nipisihkopahk Ex-Officio
Chief Randy Ermieskin	Board Governor/Neyaskweyahk Ex-Officio

3. WHAT IS DIFFERENT BETWEEN MESC AND OTHER FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION AUTHORITIES?

MESC is unique because of the Maskwacîs Funding Model. The Maskwacîs Funding Model establishes predictable, sustainable and stable funding that will meet the needs of the students and no longer follows INAC funding policy. The Federal agreement recognizes that MESC is governed by the Maskwacîs Education Law and recognizes and protects our inherent and Treaty rights.



4. WHAT IS THE MASKWACÎS FUNDING MODEL AND HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM EXISTING INDIAN AFFAIRS FUNDING FORMULAS?

The new funding formula is called the Maskwacîs Funding Model. This new funding model has moved away from the INAC funding policy (Band-operated school funding formula and proposal-driven grants) to a more predictable, sustainable and stable funding model. Previously, 65% of the funds Maskwacîs schools received was secured from year-to-year. The other 35% of those funds was proposal-driven grants and was not guaranteed from year-to-year.

The Maskwacîs Funding model secures 100% of the funds to operate Maskwacîs schools. This funding model is unique to Maskwacîs and it increases our total funding and protects against decreases in funding. MESC is able to allocate funds to priority areas as they determine.

5. WHAT ABOUT HEAD START AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION?

The Maskwacîs Cree Education Agreement currently focuses solely on K-12 education programming in Maskwacîs. The Pigeon Lake head start program is also managed by MESC.

Post-secondary education is acknowledged in the Agreement as a discussion that needs to take place in the future. Any inquiries regarding post secondary education can be directed to Each Nations Post Secondary Coordinator.

6. WHAT ABOUT FUNDING FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING SCHOOL OFF-RESERVE?

The following are general funding criteria:

1. Students residing on reserve and who attend provincial schools.
2. MESC does not receive funding for students who reside off reserve or land owned by the band which is not designated as reserve status.
3. Fees for discretionary items that have been approved by MESC and WRPS/WCPS/STAR beforehand.

Funded ancillary supplies paid directly to school districts:

- Outfit for physical education (shorts and t-shirt)
- Textbook rental fees and other instructional fees
- Fees relating to Career and Technology Studies (CTS)
- Extra costs relating to course and optional instructional courses



- *Curricular field trip fees (day trips) (eg: transportation, entrance fees, lift tickets and or for equipment rentals).
- Student union fees
- Locker rentals and fees
- Graduation Fee

*Curricular field trips- is a day trip within the province of Alberta; an instructional activity that is away from the school, to enrich and enhance classroom instructional program, give students practical experience to link ideas and theories to their study and is supervised by a certified teacher.

Funded ancillary supplies paid directly to legal parent/guardian of the student:

- Instructional items which are compulsory eg. pens, pencils, erasers, binders (\$100/student provided to the student directly through MESC)
- Mandatory graphing calculator for high school students. Reimbursement of up to \$100 and must provide proof of registration in Math 10, 20, 30 & 31 and receipt of purchase.

Unfunded supplies for students living in Maskwacis and attending school off-reserve:

- School photos
- Yearbooks
- Graduation banquet tickets or refundable portion of graduation
- Running shoes
- Refundable costs eg. deposits for books, lockers
- Lost books
- Extracurricular activities or trips that require transportation, food and accommodations. An extracurricular trip is:
 - Non-instructional activity that is away from the school
 - May occur during or after instructional hours
 - Not limited to any geographical location
 - Includes sports clubs, travel clubs and other clubs

7. HOW WILL THE CURRICULUM CHANGE TO ENSURE TREATIES, CREE LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE ARE UNDERSTOOD AND MAINTAINED?

The Maskwacis leadership and MESC are dedicated to honoring and implementing the Treaty right to education. MESC consults Maskwacis Elders on the use of Indigenous knowledge and philosophy to support the preservation and revitalization of Cree language, culture, natural laws and protocols in curriculum.

MESC will also work towards developing more curriculum on Treaty education, Maskwacis history and residential school history for all grades. Land-based learning



has also become an important part of Maskwacis schools. MESC's Wâhkôhtowin inspired governance model includes a permanent circle of Elders to advise the MESC board and administration.

8. WHAT IS THE MASKWACIS CURRICULUM GUIDE?

The Maskwacis Curriculum Development Guide outlines the key components for curriculum development from Early Learning to Grade 12: “what” students are expected to know, understand, and demonstrate. Teachers, with the support of Nehiyaw educators and Kehtehayak, have the flexibility to determine “how” students achieve the learning outcomes. The intended audience for this document includes students, parents and guardians, teachers, school and system administrators, board members, and Maskwacisak.

The Maskwacis Curriculum affirms commitment to what Maskwacisak value in Nehiyaw education and outlines the vision for Awâsisak as lifelong learners who are engaged in rich learning environments and experiences based on the MESC foundational values of Îyiniw Mâmitonehickan, Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin, Nehiyawewin, and Wâhkôhtowin.

The design of the Maskwacis Curriculum also reflects cohesion and consistency of Nehiyaw Okiskinwahamâwasowin and contemporary teachings, thereby providing a balanced education for Awâsisak who will have a strong foundation in traditional Nehiyaw teachings and the provincial curriculum. As a result, Maskwacisak will acquire the enduring knowledge and skills to apply to their chosen pathway and the lifelong journey of Kahkiyaw Kîkwây Kânehiyawemakahk; Nehiyaw traditions, Nehiyaw life, Nehiyaw thought, and Nehiyaw language.

9. WILL THE NEW ALBERTA EDUCATION CURRICULUM BE TAUGHT IN MESC SCHOOLS?

MESC exercises control over our education system as stated in the Maskwacis Cree Declaration and Maskwacis Education Law to ensure our vision of competent, confident and resilient Maskwacis Cree speaking students is actualized.

While provincial education authorities have mandated the implementation of the new provincial curriculum; K-3 English Language Arts and Literature, K-3 Mathematics, and K-6 Physical Education and Wellness in September of 2022, MESC will **not** be implementing these new programs of study. We recognize that new subject areas and grade levels, including Junior and Senior High School curricula, are under development and we will consider these in the future.



MESC is committed to a balanced education and will continue to implement the previous Alberta curriculum with Indigenization. MESC has completed the Kindergarten to Grade 9 curriculum for Nehiyawewin, Wâhkôhtowin, and Nehiyawatisiwin. The Kindergarten Nehiyawewin curriculum is being field tested this year in Ermineskin Elementary and Grace Marie Swampy Primary Schools.

10. WHO DO I CONTACT FOR TRANSPORTATION?

Cindy Nicotine can be contacted at 780-585-3333 between **7am - 11am** and **2pm - 5pm** for questions regarding bus routes to a MESC school.

Prairie Bus Lines can be contacted at 403-506-3398 for questions regarding bus routes to Wetaskiwin and Ponoka schools.

Bus Status App: To keep updated as to whether your child's bus may be running late or canceled please use the bus status app or visit the MESC website at:

<https://mesc.busstatus.ca/>

Bus status will be updated every morning prior to 7:45 a.m. and by 2:00 p.m.



Scan this QR code to download the Bus Status app.

Contact Us

Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission
PO Box 58
Maskwacîs, Alberta, Canada
T0C 1N0

P: 780-585-3333
F: 780-585-3857
Toll Free: 1-800-843-7358
Email: info@maskwacised.ca