
INTRODUCTION

Program of Studies

The *Program of Studies* identifies the outcomes for the core and optional learning components for Kindergarten to Grade 12. Content is focused on what students are expected to know and be able to do.

Though organized into separate subject, course or program areas, there are many connections across the curriculum. Students see the world as a connected whole rather than as isolated segments. Integrating across content areas, and providing ways for students to make connections, enhances student learning. The reporting of student progress should, nevertheless, be in terms of the outcomes outlined in courses of study for each subject area.

Within any group of students there is a range of individual differences. Flexibility in planning for individuals within a group is needed. Therefore, school organization and teacher methodology are not mandated at the provincial level and may vary from class to class and school to school in order to meet student needs.

For guidelines and regulations relating to school programs and organization for instruction, refer to the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12*, available for viewing and downloading from the Alberta Education Web site. Print copies are available for purchase from the LRC.

Basic Learning Resources

Alberta Education authorizes a variety of resources to support the programs of study. Complete listings of all resources can be found on the Learning Resources Centre Web site at <http://www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca>.

Resources can also be accessed through the:

- Authorized Resources Database at <http://education.alberta.ca/apps/lrdb>.

Alberta Education Web Site

Information covering all areas of Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Alberta, including curriculum and resources, can be found on the Alberta Education Web site at <http://education.alberta.ca>.

PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS

Alberta's Education System^①

Vision

The best Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system in the world.

Mission

The Ministry of Education, through its leadership, partnerships and work with the public—including stakeholders—inspires, motivates and provides the necessary tools and opportunities for every child to attain the knowledge, skills and attributes required for lifelong learning, self-sufficiency, work and citizenship.

Values

- Respect
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Excellence

Principles

Student Centred

- The highest priority of the education system is the success of the student.

Leadership

- Alberta is a leader in academic excellence so that all students can find their passions and achieve their potential.

Accessible

- Every student in Alberta has the right of access to a quality basic education consistent with the student's needs and abilities.

Responsive

- The education system is flexible, anticipates student needs and provides opportunities for parent and student choice.

Innovative

- The education system demonstrates leading-edge innovation in support of improved student learning outcomes.

Collaborative

- The foundation for lifelong learning best occurs when partners and stakeholders work together to provide a holistic approach and a supportive environment.

Equitable

- All students have equitable access to quality learning opportunities.

Accountable

- All those involved in the education system are accountable to Albertans for quality results, system sustainability and fiscal responsibility.

Core Business One: Lead and Support the Education System So That All Students Are Successful at Learning

Goal 1 – High quality learning opportunities for all

Goal 2 – Excellence in student learning outcomes

Goal 3 – Highly responsive and responsible education system

^①Excerpted from the *Education Business Plan 2008–2011*, April 2008. This plan is available on the Alberta Education Web site at <http://education.alberta.ca>.

Goals and Standards Applicable to the Provision of Basic Education in Alberta¹

A basic education must provide students with a solid core program, including language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Students will be able to meet the provincial graduation requirements and be prepared for entry into the workplace or post-secondary studies. Students will understand personal and community values and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Students will develop the capacity to pursue learning throughout their lives. Students also should have opportunities to learn languages other than English and to attain levels of proficiency and cultural awareness which will help to prepare them for participation in the global economy.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare them for life after high school. A basic education will allow students to:

- read for information, understanding and enjoyment
- write and speak clearly, accurately and appropriately for the context
- use mathematics to solve problems in business, science and daily-life situations
- understand the physical world, ecology and the diversity of life
- understand the scientific method, the nature of science and technology, and their application to daily life
- know the history and geography of Canada and have a general understanding of world history and geography
- understand Canada's political, social and economic systems within a global context
- respect the cultural diversity and common values of Canada

- demonstrate desirable personal characteristics, such as respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, caring, loyalty and commitment to democratic ideals
- recognize the importance of personal well-being, and appreciate how family and others contribute to that well-being
- know the basic requirements of an active, healthful lifestyle
- understand and appreciate literature, the arts and the creative process
- research an issue thoroughly, and evaluate the credibility and reliability of information sources
- demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving and decision making
- demonstrate competence in using information technologies
- know how to work independently and as part of a team
- manage time and other resources needed to complete a task
- demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility and persistence
- evaluate their own endeavours and continually strive to improve
- have the desire and realize the need for lifelong learning.

Standards for Student Learning

The Minister of Education defines acceptable standards and standards of excellence for student achievement in consultation with Albertans. Employers are involved in specifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in the workplace. Schools, school authorities and the Minister of Education assess and report regularly to the public on a range of student learning.

The school's primary responsibility is to ensure that students meet or exceed the provincial standards, as reflected in the Student Learning Outcomes (outlined above), the Alberta Programs of Study, provincial achievement tests, diploma examinations and graduation requirements.

¹ Excerpted from the *K-12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual*. This manual is available on the Alberta Education Web site at <http://education.alberta.ca>.

Education Delivery

Schools must engage students in a variety of activities that enable them to acquire the expected learnings. Schools have authority to deploy resources and may use any instructional technique acceptable to the community as long as the standards are achieved. Schools, teachers and students are encouraged to take advantage of various delivery options, including the use of technology, distance learning and the workplace.

Schools play a supportive role to families and the community in helping students develop desirable personal characteristics and the ability to make ethical decisions. Schools also help students take increasing responsibility for their learning and behaviour, develop a sense of community belonging and acquire a clearer understanding of community values and how these relate to personal values.

Students learn basic, transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes in school. Schools, in co-operation with employers, provide opportunities for students to develop and practise employability skills. The Minister of Education provides credit for off-campus learning that is approved and accepted by the school and the employer. Government works with schools, employers and post-secondary institutions to help young people make a smooth transition to work and further study.

RELIGIOUS AND PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION

The following section of the *School Act* focuses on religious and patriotic instruction. It is cited here for the information of administrators and teachers.

SECTION 50(1) A board may

- (a) prescribe religious instruction to be offered to its students;
- (b) prescribe religious exercises for its students;
- (c) prescribe patriotic instruction to be offered to its students;
- (d) prescribe patriotic exercises for its students;
- (e) permit persons other than teachers to provide religious instruction to its students.

(2) Where a teacher or other person providing religious or patriotic instruction receives a written request signed by a parent of a student that the student be excluded from religious or patriotic instruction or exercises, or both, the teacher or other person shall permit the student

- (a) to leave the classroom or place where the instruction or exercises are taking place for the duration of the instruction or exercises, or
- (b) to remain in the classroom or place without taking part in the instruction or exercises.

1988 cS-3.1 s33;1990 c36 s16