

# Chapter 1

## An Introduction to International Education

### What Is International Education?

International education is the sum of all programs and initiatives that promote an understanding of the differences and connections between the world's people. Also referred to as internationalization of education, it

“... integrates an international dimension into the teaching/learning, research and service function of a [school]. An international dimension means a perspective, activity or service which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of an institution of ... education.”<sup>1</sup>

Knight 2008, p. 21

International education includes all educational initiatives that aim to build intercultural competency, an understanding of the international community and a sense of responsibility to others around the world. Its main goal is to ensure that learners develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to participate fully and responsibly in an increasingly global environment.<sup>2</sup>

### Key International Education Components

International education includes a wide variety of programs and initiatives. The following is a list of the most common and, when properly planned and managed, most effective international education programs.

- Professional development for Alberta educators
- Internationally infused curriculum
- International school partnerships
- Student and educator exchange programs
- International student programs
- English as a second language (ESL)
- Language programs

For a more detailed overview of each type of program, see chapters 5, 7 and 10–15.

## Capacity Building in International Education for Alberta Educators

To fully realize the potential of the above programs, school authority personnel, teachers and administrators must be equipped to effectively plan and manage them. Capacity building can take many forms, including the following:

- training sessions on intercultural communication and cultural adaptation strategies
- conferences or seminars on how to incorporate international topics in the classroom
- study tours that provide educators with a first-hand account of a country they are teaching about
- immersion experiences to improve the language proficiency and teaching skills of Alberta language teachers.

### A Snapshot of Professional Development for Alberta Educators

In the 2008–2009 school year:

- superintendents participated in a study tour organized by Alberta Education and the Office of the Chinese Language Council International (HANBAN)
- a delegation of teachers, administrators and school authority staff from Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 visited the United Kingdom to investigate best practices in career education
- four teachers from Alberta travelled to Saxony to improve their knowledge of teaching German as a second language
- three teachers were awarded the Spanish Language Study Scholarship to take summer courses in Spain and studied at the University of Salamanca and the University of Granada
- teachers from school authorities received a total of \$50,000 from Alberta Education's Language Teacher Bursary Program to participate in language and cultural immersion courses in Mexico, Spain and France.

MORE  
INFORMATION

••• see Chapter 5: Professional Development.

## Internationally Infused Curriculum

Many outcomes in Alberta's programs of study can be met by exploring global themes or involving students in global projects. A global mindset may be most obvious in the social studies and international languages programs of study. However, because the issues we collectively face as a planet require interdisciplinary examination and collaborative solutions, students need to think beyond their own school, community and country in every subject. We can help students make connections between their lives and the world by incorporating global elements into all subject areas.

## International School Partnerships

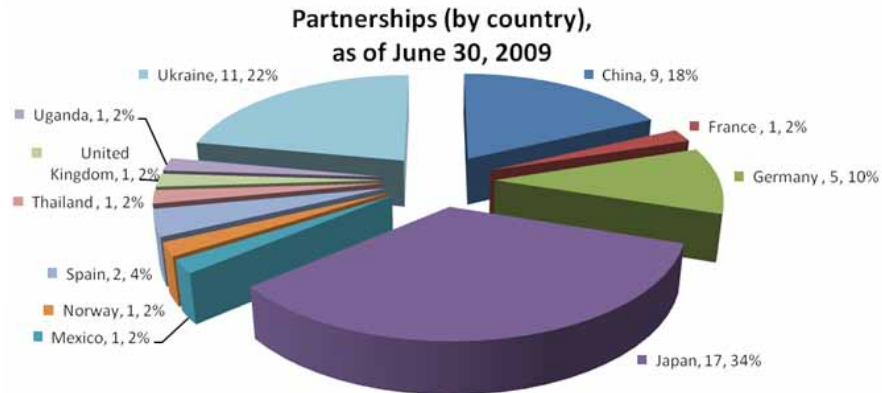
School partnerships link Alberta students with students from around the world to share knowledge and ideas. Partnerships may be short term or long term and may connect two schools or two classrooms. Students can exchange information about their culture, history, education system, and overall way of life through letters, Internet-based technologies, videoconferencing and school trips. They can also exchange perspectives on global issues or collaborate on projects of mutual interest.



MORE  
INFORMATION

•••• see Chapter 7: Curriculum Links.

## A Snapshot of School Partnerships in Alberta



Forty-three Alberta schools from twenty school authorities are formally twinned with schools in other countries, including schools in China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Thailand, Spain, Uganda, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Many more Alberta schools have established informal relationships with schools in other countries.

### MORE INFORMATION

•••• see Chapter 10: International School Partnerships.

## Student and Educator Exchange Programs

Exchange programs are a mainstay of international education, with a long history dating back to colonial times. These programs match Alberta students or educators with students or educators in other regions or countries of the world and then have the pairs trade places or, alternatively, spend time together in Alberta and then in the partner's home country.

### Student Exchange Programs

Student exchange programs vary significantly in length, from a couple of weeks to a whole academic year. They also vary in structure. Some exchanges involve groups of students that travel with chaperones; others involve only two students and their families. Some exchanges are formal programs organized by schools, government bodies or community organizations; others are simple agreements between two families. Regardless of the length or type, all exchanges are reciprocal by nature. For funding information regarding exchange students, see Chapter 11: Student Exchange Programs.

### A Snapshot of Student Exchange Programs in Alberta

Since 2006–2007, more than 100 students have participated in one-to-one reciprocal exchanges with schools in 23 countries each year. The most popular destinations have been France, Germany, Japan, Mexico and Brazil. Other countries include Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Ecuador, South Africa, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Poland, Austria, Spain, Belgium, Turkey, Russia and India.

The following number of students participated in Alberta's International Education Exchange Program for Students:

School Year	Number of Alberta Exchange Students					Total
	Germany	Japan	Mexico	Spain	Quebec	
2006–2007	27	6	3	23	17	<b>76</b>
2007–2008	18	6	1	23	15	<b>63</b>
2008–2009	24	8	2	21	19	<b>74</b>

**MORE  
INFORMATION**

•••• see Chapter 11: Student Exchange Programs.



## Educator Exchange Programs

Exchanges for educators (teachers and administrators) are diverse in structure and length. Short-term exchanges are often based on team teaching or job shadowing; for example, a visiting teacher job shadows an Alberta teacher and then, at a later date, the Alberta teacher travels overseas to shadow his or her partner. Long-term exchanges usually involve the exchange of jobs and homes for an entire year or school year. An educator exchange pairs an educator from Alberta with an educator from another region or country. It is distinct from an international teaching placement or visiting teaching program, which places teachers unilaterally.

### A Snapshot of Alberta's International Education Exchange Program for Teachers

The following number of Alberta teachers participated in the year-long Alberta's International Education Exchange Program for Teachers supported by Alberta Education:

Number of Alberta Participants		Number of Alberta Participants	
School Year	United Kingdom	Calendar Year	Australia
2006–2007	3	2007	25
2007–2008	4	2008	18
2008–2009	2 (1 to Switzerland)	2009	17 (1 to New Zealand)

The following number of Alberta teachers participated in the short-term Alberta's International Education Exchange Program for Teachers administered by Alberta Education:

Number of Alberta Participants		
Year	Germany	Denmark
2006	8	10
2007	6	4
2008	6	5

**MORE  
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•••• see Chapter 12: Educator Exchange Programs.

## International Student Programs

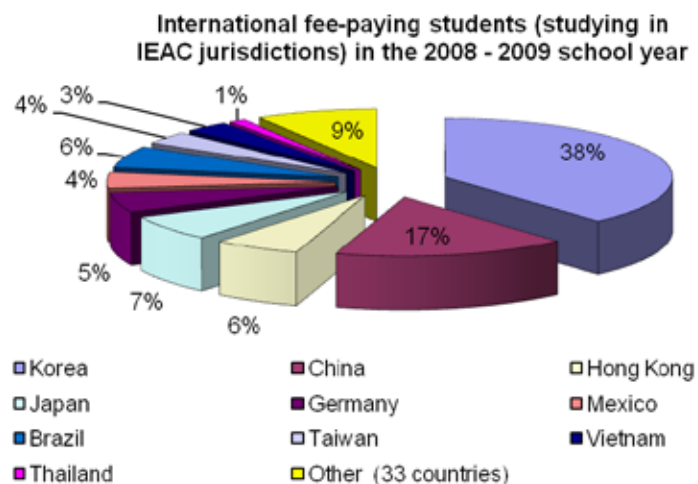
International student programs recruit students from other countries to attend school in Alberta. International students choose to come to Alberta for a variety of reasons. Some are seeking cultural and language immersion, while others want to graduate from an Alberta senior high school and continue their education in an Alberta post-secondary institution. International student programs are distinct from exchange programs in that they are not reciprocal. These programs focus on attracting students from around the world to study in Alberta.

### A Snapshot of International Student Programs in Alberta

School Year	Number of International Fee-paying Students*
2008–2009	1770
2007–2008	1592
2006–2007	1653
2005–2006	1480

\*Students coded 416 or students from outside Canada receiving instruction in person.

Of the 1770 international fee-paying students, 1094 (or approximately 62%) from 43 countries studied in the 19 Alberta school authorities represented on Alberta's International Education Advisory Council (IEAC).



**MORE  
INFORMATION**

•••• see Chapter 13: International Student Programs.

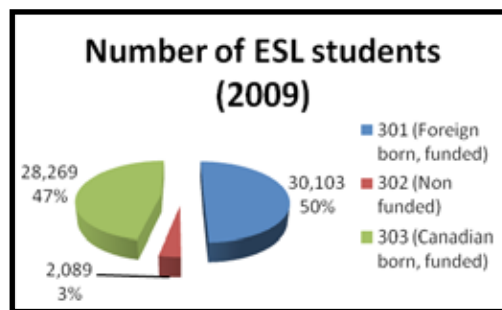


## English as a Second Language (ESL)

English as a second language (ESL) programming helps students improve their English language proficiency. Students enrolled in an ESL class in Alberta may include international fee-paying students, new immigrant or refugee students, and those “born in Canada who live in homes in which the primary spoken language is not English.”<sup>23</sup> From Kindergarten to Grade 9, ESL support is integrated into a student’s regular classes. In grades 10, 11 and 12, students register in separate ESL courses with distinct, provincially defined curricula. Some school authorities also offer intensive ESL programs during the summer months, often for international fee-paying students.

### A Snapshot of ESL Programming in Alberta

In the 2008–2009 school year, 60 461 students, or approximately 10% of the entire student population in Alberta, were coded as ESL (i.e., 301, 302 or 303). The breakdown by code was:



In 2008, 53 074 students (approximately 9% of the total student body) were coded as ESL. In 2007, 46 217 students (approximately 7.5% of the total student body) were coded as ESL.

**MORE  
INFORMATION**

•••• see Chapter 14: English as a Second Language Program.

## Language Programs

Language programs provide students with opportunities to learn a language other than their native tongue. They are offered throughout the academic year as for-credit courses. School authorities decide which language programs they will offer and in which schools these programs will be housed. Students may supplement these in-school courses by participating in an exchange program that immerses them in their language of study.



## A Snapshot of Language Programs in Alberta

Enrollment in language programs:

	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009
French Programming*	174 608	182 296	184 983
French as a Second Language	137 247	143 507	145 751
French Immersion	32 459	33 412	33 803
International Languages	36 622	37 307	37 180
Provincial Programs	Chinese (Mandarin), German, Italian, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish, Ukrainian		
Locally Developed Courses	Arabic, American Sign Language (ASL), Hebrew, Polish, Russian	Arabic, ASL, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Swedish	Arabic, ASL, Greek, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, Swedish
Total Student** Population	560 563 students	559 118 students	561 255 students

\* Includes Francophone students.

\*\* Public, Separate, Francophone and Charter students only.

- In 2008–2009, 26 full-time and 20 part-time French language assistants worked in French immersion and Francophone schools across Alberta as part of the Odyssey Program.
- Five special language and culture advisors representing China, Germany, Japan, Spain and Ukraine work with Alberta Education and Alberta school authorities to enhance language learning in schools around the province. In the 2008–2009 school year, language advisors presented sessions to Alberta teachers and administrators on a variety of topics, including:
  - teaching Chinese language and culture, learning Chinese abroad and participating in the Confucius Classroom Program
  - preparing for the Deutsches Sprachdiplom examinations, designing German curriculum and learning activities, and accessing resources for teaching German
  - facilitating the DELE (Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera/Spanish Diploma as a Foreign Language) examination, using authentic Spanish learning materials, and beginning school twinning projects.

**MORE  
INFORMATION**

•••• see Chapter 15: Language Programs.

## Additional Initiatives

The above list of components is not exhaustive; there are a number of other programs and/or activities that engage students and educators in intercultural and international learning and otherwise promote internationalization in Alberta school authorities. For example, schools may:

- set up student clubs that focus on culture, diversity or international issues
- sponsor globally relevant events, such as the celebration of International Education Week or holidays from other countries
- circulate information about international learning opportunities.

School authorities may also become involved in the following programs and initiatives, which contribute to the internationalization of Alberta schools, but are not explored in-depth in this handbook:

- international curricula
- professional development for international teachers
- accredited out-of-province schools (off-shore schools)
- visiting teacher programs.

## International Curricula

### **International Baccalaureate**

Some school authorities offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, which, among other things, emphasizes the importance of global mindedness and language learning. The IB curriculum is regulated by an independent, international body. It is offered by over 2500 schools in more than 100 countries and is recognized by post-secondary institutions worldwide. For more information on the IB program, visit <http://www.ibo.org>.



### **Advanced Placement**

Some Alberta school authorities also offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses to senior high school students who excel academically. These courses are designed by the College Board, an American, not-for-profit membership organization. They are offered predominantly in North America but are recognized by post-secondary institutions in Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia. For more information on AP, visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>.



### **UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)**

While not a defined curriculum, the UNESCO ASPnet program encourages schools to commit to “UNESCO’s ideals by conducting pilot projects to better prepare children and young people to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and interdependent world.” Pilot projects are structured around ASPnet’s four subthemes: 1) World concerns and the role of the United Nations system; 2) Human rights, democracy and tolerance; 3) Intercultural learning; and 4) Environmental concern. ASPnet schools are also encouraged to connect with teachers and students in other countries through UNESCO’s international network. For more information on UNESCO’s ASPnet, visit <http://www.unesco.ca/en/interdisciplinary/aspnet/default.aspx>.

#### **A Snapshot of International Curricula in Alberta in 2009**

- Thirty-nine Alberta schools from eleven school authorities offer International Baccalaureate programming.
- Five Alberta schools representing five school authorities are part of the UNESCO Associated School Project Network (ASPnet).

## Is Alberta's curriculum "international"?

Although not managed by an international body, Alberta's education system is highly regarded internationally. Alberta students have an excellent track record on international tests, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Partly as a result of this success, numerous international delegations visit the province each year. The Alberta High School Diploma is also well-recognized internationally, with graduates gaining admission into many prestigious universities around the world. In addition, Alberta's programs of study are continually updated to reflect new global realities. For example, the Grade 10 social studies program of studies thoroughly explores the concept of globalization.

### A Snapshot of Alberta's International Reputation for Education

In the 2008–2009 school year, 18 delegations from over 13 countries visited Alberta Education and Alberta school authorities to discuss topics ranging from the integration of technology to special education.

Alberta students have participated in international testing since 1995, completing tests such as the:

- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA): 2000, 2003, 2006 (see rankings below)
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): 2006
- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS): 1995, 1999, 2007.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Rankings, 2006, 2003, 2000:

#### 2006

Rank	Reading	Mathematics	Science
1	Korea	Chinese Taipei	Finland
2	Finland	Finland	Alberta
3	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China
4	Alberta	Quebec	British Columbia
5	Ontario	Netherlands	Ontario
6	British Columbia	Alberta	Canada
7	Canada	Switzerland	Chinese Taipei
8	Quebec	Canada	Estonia
9	New Zealand	Ontario	New Zealand
10	Canada	Liechtenstein	Quebec

#### 2003

Rank	Reading	Mathematics	Science
1	Alberta	Japan	Korea
2	Finland	Quebec	Japan
3	British Columbia	Alberta	Alberta
4	Quebec	Korea	Quebec
5	Canada	New Zealand	Finland
6	Ontario	Finland	British Columbia
7	Manitoba	British Columbia	United Kingdom
8	Saskatchewan	Australia	Canada
9	New Zealand	Manitoba	New Zealand
10	Australia	Canada	Australia

2000

Rank	Reading	Mathematics	Science
1	Alberta	Hong Kong, China	Finland
2	Finland	Alberta	Japan
3	British Columbia	Finland	Alberta
4	Korea	Korea	Hong Kong, China
5	Ontario	British Columbia	Finland
6	Canada	Netherlands	Korea
7	Liechtenstein	Quebec	British Columbia
8	Quebec	Liechtenstein	Australia
9	New Zealand	Japan	Liechtenstein
10	Newfoundland	Canada	Macao, China

## Professional Development for International Teachers

Some school authorities offer professional development to international teachers on a variety of topics such as pedagogy and classroom management. Most of these school authorities already have well-established partnerships with schools or institutions overseas, and run professional development programs in Alberta or abroad at the request of or with the active cooperation of their international partner(s). When structured to include Alberta teachers, this activity creates a unique opportunity for intercultural dialogue between educators.

### A Snapshot of Professional Development Activities for International Teachers in Alberta for the 2008–2009 School Year

- Calgary School District No.19 welcomed 16 Korean teachers to Calgary to take part in a one-month English teacher internship program.
- A group of 12 teachers from the United Kingdom visited Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7 to research best practices in children's rights education.
- A group of 12 teachers from the United Kingdom visited Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 to research best practices in elementary-to-junior-high transitions.
- Edmonton School District No. 7's Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education (IISLE) hosted month-long teacher training programs for teachers from Spain and China. The training programs focused on bilingual education and language pedagogy.

## Accredited Out-of-province Schools

Off-shore schools are satellite schools that offer the curriculum of their home institution, province or country in a foreign location. Alberta Education works with overseas schools that wish to offer Alberta's programs of study. Once these schools have satisfied rigorous requirements, Alberta Education accredits them as Alberta accredited out-of-province schools. Because they share a common curriculum with Alberta schools, accredited out-of-province schools offer opportunities for student and teacher exchanges and school partnerships. For more information on overseas school accreditation, accredited schools and the accreditation process, visit <http://education.alberta.ca/students/internationaleducation/accreditation.aspx>.

**Note:** Only the Alberta government may grant accreditation status to schools to teach the Alberta programs of study in a school outside the province of Alberta.

### A Snapshot of Alberta-accredited Out-of-province Schools

In 2009, the International School of Macao in Macau, China and The Christian Alliance P. C. Lau Memorial International High School in Hong Kong, China were fully accredited by Alberta Education. The Canadian International School in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and Mount Saint Agnes Academy in Hamilton, Bermuda have achieved preliminary accreditation status.

## Visiting Teacher Programs

Alberta Education's visiting teacher programs are enabled through agreements with the Office of the Chinese Language Council International, the Hokkaido Board of Education and the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. These programs enable teachers from Spain, Japan and China to teach in Alberta school authorities and to help develop Chinese, Japanese or Spanish language programs. For more information on the visiting teacher programs, visit <http://education.alberta.ca/students/internationaleducation/visitingteacher.aspx>.



Some school authorities have agreements with foreign education authorities that include visiting teacher programs. These programs are independent from Alberta Education’s visiting teacher programs. Instead, the teachers come to Alberta to assist with local programming or support certificated teachers in their classrooms.



### A Snapshot of Alberta Education’s Visiting Teacher Programs

Chinese Visiting Teacher Program:

School Year	Number of Visiting Teachers in Alberta
2008–2009	3

Japanese Visiting Teacher Program:

School Year	Number of Visiting Teachers in Alberta
2004–2006	2
2006–2008	2
2008–2009	2

Spanish Visiting Teacher Program:

School Year	Number of Visiting Teachers in Alberta
2006–2007	9
2007–2008	22
2008–2009	25
2009–2010	23



## Endnotes

1. Jane Knight, *Higher Education in Turmoil: The Changing World of Internationalization* (Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers, 2008), p. 21.
2. Robert Sylvester, “Framing the Map of International Education (1969–1998),” *Journal of Research in International Education* 4 (2005), pp. 123–151.
3. Alberta Education, *English as a Second Language Kindergarten to Grade 9 Guide to Implementation* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2007), p. 1.