

SCHOOL LEARNING COMMONS

Background

Division students are to have access to a student-centered school library learning commons where they are supported in their diverse learning needs through both a physical and an online library. This “learning commons” will meet the goals of basic education as prescribed by Alberta Education and keep the Division mission and vision.

The purpose of a school library learning commons is to support kindergarten to grade 12 students in their diverse learning needs across the programs of study in real and digital landscapes. This is done in collaboration with staff, students and communities so that students develop into critical thinkers, evaluators and creators of information.

The concept of a learning commons is a shift in thinking from a library as a physical space that is a repository of books, to an inclusive, flexible, learner-centred, physical and/or virtual space for collaboration, inquiry, imagination and play to expand and deepen learning. A learning commons is an agile and responsive learning and teaching environment available to individuals and groups to use for multiple, often simultaneous, purposes. It supports literacy, numeracy, competency development and student learning outcomes through access to and instruction in the effective use of an up to date and in-depth print and digital resources. The learning commons approach functions best when learning experiences in the school community are coordinated to support student learning outcomes through collaborative planning, teaching and assessing.

Definitions

Student Centered – where students are supported in their diverse learning needs across the programs of study in both a physical and digital library.

School Library Learning Commons – a school library containing print, nonprint, film, multimedia, and digital resources which support learning and teaching innovation in collaboration with staff, students, other libraries and the community.

Print resources are a medium of communication produced or reproduced using letters, words, pictures, or designs.

Nonprint are instructional materials in forms such as audio and manipulative.

Film is cinematic media in film, video, DVD or digital formats.

Multimedia are learning and teaching resources that combine different media and may include both digital and non-digital components.

Digital resources are electronic files of resources that may include text, images, graphics, video, and audio that may be used as stand-alone resources or in combination (multimedia).

Procedures

1. Each Principal has the responsibility for the development of an effective student centered school library learning commons that is integrated into instructional programs to improve student success. Refer to the published Alberta Education Learning Commons policy and guidelines.
2. The library's resources are to be fully integrated with the instructional program of the school.
3. Library Staff
 - 3.1. The Division shall endeavor to provide sufficient support staff to ensure library services are provided according to Board policy and Division administrative procedures.
 - 3.2. It is expected that school library staff will share ownership in the implementation of the vision of the Division for the library.
 - 3.3. From the support staff allocations to each school, Principals will strive to ensure an appropriate assignment of assistance to the school library.
 - 3.4. Qualifications for the school library support staff will be based upon job descriptions.
 - 3.5. The Division shall provide opportunities for library based staff to receive professional development to enable them to provide library services that meet Alberta Education library standards.
4. Learning Resources
 - 4.1. The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Excellence is responsible for the services essential to facilitate selection of quality learning resources at school and Division levels.
 - 4.2. All learning resources selected for use in schools must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans. The

collection is to meet, if not exceed, the minimum collection standards as specified in Alberta Education Standards for School Libraries.

4.3. Principal Responsibilities

- 4.3.1. The Principal is responsible for all resources used in the instructional process within the school. The school learning resource selection procedures are to be applied to both school library and other resources used by staff.
- 4.3.2. The Principal, in consultation with staff, shall determine the allocation of sufficient funds, from the school's instructional budget, to ensure library services include access to a wide range of inquiry based learning projects, library professionals, learning resources such as books, films, digital formats, and new emerging technologies that are available in person and online.
- 4.3.3. The authority to coordinate the selection process for school library resources may be delegated to the teacher-librarian/designate with input from teachers.

4.4. Teachers are to:

- 4.4.1. Consider resources and the school library learning commons as an integral part of their instructional programs;
- 4.4.2. Utilize the school library learning commons as an alternative teaching centre; model positive attitudes to physical and digital resources;
- 4.4.3. Model effective use of resources;
- 4.4.4. Evaluate physical and digital learning resources based on Alberta Education and Division library standards.
- 4.4.5. Share ownership in the implementation of the vision of the Division library administrative procedures.
- 4.4.6. Instructional materials are to recognize diversity and promote respect by fostering understanding and respect for all groups and individuals by, but not limited to, presenting fair and just depictions of age, gender, race and/or ethnicity, religion, people with disabilities, social and/or economic matters, political and/or belief systems and/or controversial issues.
- 4.4.7. Instructional materials must not promote or foster doctrines such as racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, religious intolerance or persecution, social change through violent action or disobedience of laws, or discriminate against any individual or group. However, biased or slanted learning resources may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives (e.g., to recognize propaganda and its purpose in a given context or to balance an argument.)

- 4.4.8. Selection of learning resources on controversial issues are to be directed toward maintaining a balanced collection representing various views so that students have an opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and make informed judgments, but teachers shall be sensitive to students enrolled in the class and current events.
5. Budget
 - 5.1. The Principal, in consultation with the teaching and library staff shall determine an annual library budget.
 - 5.2. The school's annual library budget is to include provisions for:
 - 5.2.1. Day-to-day operational needs;
 - 5.2.2. Growth of the collection to meet new and revised curricular needs;
 - 5.2.3. Replacement of out-of-date resources;
 - 5.2.4. Both physical and digital resources to support the school's efforts to respond to each student's learning needs;
 - 5.2.5. Every school library learning commons to have a collection that is supportive of both curriculum and individual interests containing print and digital resources to reflect and support a diversity of users needs;
 - 5.2.6. Sufficient technological resources to be available to support the delivery of library services.
6. Basic Collection
 - 6.1. The size of the basic collection will be dependent on the total student enrollment served, and reflect Alberta Education and Division library standards.
 - 6.2. The ratio of fiction to nonfiction and reference materials is to be in compliance with Alberta Education learning guidelines.
 - 6.3. Annual Collection Evaluation

The Principal, in cooperation with teaching and library staff, is to annually assess the school's existing library collection to:

 - 6.3.1. Determine the need to update by replacing physical and digital resources;
 - 6.3.2. Ensure that there are sufficient materials to support each curricular area especially core areas;
 - 6.3.3. Ensure that there are physical and digital resources to support new or revised curricula;
 - 6.3.4. Ensure the physical and digital resources are available to support special needs areas;

- 6.3.5. Ensure age appropriateness for the intended audience;
- 6.3.6. Ensure quality and durability of format;
- 6.3.7. Ensure accuracy and currency of information;
- 6.3.8. Ensure credibility, reputation, and significance of author, producer or publisher;
- 6.3.9. Ensure artistic/literary quality;
- 6.3.10. Ensure freedom from bias and stereotypes;
- 6.3.11. Ensure accurate portrayals of First Nations and Métis peoples;
- 6.3.12. Ensure that there are sufficient physical and digital resources to support the development of viewing, listening, research and other identified educational skills.

7. Selection Criteria

In setting criteria for resource selection, personnel are to:

- 7.1. Ensure learning resources shall support the student learning objectives of the Alberta Education Program of Studies.
- 7.2. Ensure the selection is consistent with Catholic Education Philosophy; Guidelines for Tolerance and Understanding, Controversial Issues Policy Statement; and Canadian content priorities.
- 7.3. Consult reputable, professionally prepared aids for selection.
- 7.4. Ensure that resources are appropriate for subject areas and for age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles and social development of students.
- 7.5. Ensure learning resources selected:
 - 7.5.1. Anticipate and plan for the needs of the future by considering the changes and developments in society such as trends in employment, globalization and advances in technology.
 - 7.5.2. Incorporate values of good citizenship and respect for different languages and cultures.
 - 7.5.3. Integrate how the study of a subject contributes to student personal growth and development.
 - 7.5.4. Ensure that gift materials shall be accepted or rejected by the criteria outlined above.
 - 7.5.5. Ensure items that no longer meet selection criteria or are in poor physical condition are to be removed from the collection. Disposal of weeded library resources include removal from database and destruction of the barcode.

8. Digital Citizenship

8.1. All school library learning commons users shall follow Division technology acceptable use administrative procedures.

9. Facilities and Equipment

9.1. The school library learning commons shall support the goals and objectives of education through the provision of flexible and functional space that meet the needs of a variety of teaching strategies and learning styles.

9.2. Basic space requirements should be consistent with School Buildings Regulations and Guidelines as set forth by Alberta Education.

9.3. Space is to be a multi-dimensional, whole school learning space, able to meet diverse information needs, learning styles, learning tasks, and instructional approaches. The learner must be at the heart of a well designed library learning commons.

Reference: *Education Act*, SA 2012, c E-0.3, ss.3, 18, 33, 41, 52, 53, 55, 196, 197, 222
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12