

SCHOOL LIBRARIES: LEARNING COMMONS and CLASSROOM COLLECTIONS

Background

The Learning Commons is a space that inspires imagination, curiosity, collaboration, engagement, and learning. The Learning Commons provides programming, resources and library services to both students and staff to advance deep and transferable learning. The Learning Commons Facilitator, under the leadership of the principal, provides a range of learning resources in a variety of formats at appropriate levels for students, as part of an integrated learning commons program.

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 learning-centered, physical and/or virtual space for collaboration, inquiry, imagination, and play to expand and deepen learning. A learning commons is a flexible 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 print and digital resources. Students and staff can access and use a wide variety of learning resources to enrich and support the Program of Studies in a way that caters to varied interests, abilities, maturity levels and learning styles to provide improved opportunities for student achievement and learning that transfers.

Principals and the Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services are responsible for the administration of this administrative procedure.

Definitions

"Child" means a child younger than 6 years of age who is enrolled in an early childhood services program and therefore does not fall within the definition of "student" in the Education Act;

Classroom collection means a teacher's collection of literary materials, including books, magazines, comics, graphic novels or other literary or graphic materials, whether in physical or electronic form, that are selected, curated or managed by the teacher for use by or available to children or students in the teacher's classroom;

School authority means any Alberta public or separate school board, francophone regional authority, operator of a charter school, person responsible for the operation of an independent school, or independent ECS operator as defined in the Early Childhood Services Regulation (AR 126/2022);

School literary materials means any materials, including books, magazines, comics, graphic novels or other literary or graphic materials, whether in physical or electronic form, that are accessible or available to children or students at a school;

Sexual act means an activity or action of a distinctly sexual nature

Visual depiction means a visual or graphic representation, such as a drawing or painting, an illustration, a photographic or digital image or a video file”(Ab. Education, 2025);

Procedures

1. The instructional program of the Learning Commons and its resources help students achieve the outcomes for learning as specified in the Program of Studies.
2. An effective integrated learning commons program, supported by a wide range of carefully selected and vetted resources, enhance learning opportunities and experiences for students.
3. Intellectual inquiry requires learning resources representing a wide range of interests so that students may freely explore the world of ideas.
4. Staffing in Learning Commons will be in accordance with Administrative Procedure 505 – *Instructional Support Staff Allocations*.
5. The Principal or designate is responsible for the instructional program of the Learning Commons.
6. The principal is responsible for ensuring
 - 6.1 The Learning Commons program is part of the instructional philosophy and curricular program of the school. Staff understand the purpose of the Learning Commons and how it can support and enhance student learning;
 - 6.2 Students have access to a well run and administered learning commons program that is funded through school budget allocations, and which is integrated with instructional programs that support and enhance student learning.
 - 6.3 The Learning Commons provides a comprehensive collection of resources and materials for students and staff to use. Resources are housed within the Learning Commons
 - 6.4 The Learning Commons maintains an up-to-date library catalogue of books and resources. The Learning Commons inventory is regularly reviewed and updated ensuring compliance with the standards identified in [Ministerial Order \(#034/2025\): Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials](#). This does not include classroom libraries;
 - 6.5 The Learning Commons has established procedures for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning commons program including budget and purchasing considerations, instructional goals, technology applications, regular collections review and resource culling processes;
 - 6.6 The purchase of resources and materials involve the certificated staff of the school according to Administrative Procedure 251 – *Authorized Learning Resources* and Administrative Procedure 206 – *Supplementary Learning Resources*;
 - 6.7 The Learning Commons resources meet the curricular needs of the school, are built through a recognized planning system for school resource collections, and comply with the standards identified in [Ministerial Order \(#034/2025\): Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials](#).
7. The Learning Commons Facilitator, under the leadership of the principal, should:

- 7.1 Collaborate with school staff to gather data and resources to meet the learning needs and interests of students;
- 7.2 Provide support, space and resources for academics, maker-centred learning, inquiry, play, and imagination in consultation with School Administration;
- 7.3 Collaborate with teachers to find resources (repositories of learning materials, audiobooks, etc.) to support learning;
- 7.4 Engage students in the learning process and encourage literacy, numeracy, and maker centered, Career and Technology Foundations, or Career and Technology Studies activities in the Learning Commons;
- 7.5 Provide support, resources, and opportunities for transferability of learning to support broad exploration and inquiry that leads to deeper learning;
- 7.6 Provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop the ability to gain information from a variety of information sources and communicate to others through a variety of technology sources;
- 7.7 Promote student interest in reading, viewing, and listening.

8. Selection of Resources

- 8.1 The intent of the Learning Commons is to provide a wide range of learning resources at varying levels of difficulty and in several different formats.
- 8.2 Learning resources are sources of information regardless of format. Careful evaluation and selection of these learning resources is necessary to meet student and curricular needs.
- 8.3 Research and material selection and purchase are guided by criteria specified in Administrative Procedure 251: Authorized Learning Resources and Administrative Procedure 206: Supplementary Learning Resources;
- 8.4 Authorized and supplementary learning resources are selected carefully and collaboratively between the learning commons facilitator, teachers, and school administration. In the selection of resources, the Division expects sound professional judgment and consultation with others, including parents and other professional colleagues when deemed appropriate.
- 8.5 Authorized resources are resources that meet Alberta Education's evaluation. The use of authorized resources is not mandatory for program delivery. The authorized resources criteria as outlined in the Education Act includes:
 - 8.5.1 curriculum congruency
 - 8.5.2 instructional and technical design
 - 8.5.3 Canadian content
 - 8.5.4 First Nation, Metis, and Inuit perspectives
- 8.6 Supplementary learning resources in a school's collection are to:
 - 8.6.1 Enrich and support the Program of Studies in a way that caters to the varied interests, abilities, maturity levels and learning styles of students.
 - 8.6.2 Provide variety for students as they seek to gain understanding of curricular outcomes.
 - 8.6.3 Cause students to critically examine the information in the resources in support of curriculum in order to encourage learning that transfers, reason logically, examine different points of view and through these processes develop skills associated with arriving at sound student judgments.
 - 8.6.4 Represent a diversity of worldviews and perspectives.
- 8.7 Selection of supplementary resources is to consider:
 - 8.7.1 Age appropriateness.

- 8.7.2 Link and support to curricular outcomes.
 - 8.7.3 Enrichment of learning that transfers.
 - 8.7.4 Readability and popular appeal.
 - 8.7.5 The academic credibility of the author/producer.
 - 8.7.6 The literary merit of the work.
 - 8.7.7 Compliance with ["Ministerial Order \(#034/2025\): Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials."](#)
 - 8.7.7.1 "The school authority must ensure that school literary materials containing any explicit visual depiction of a sexual act are not accessible or available to children or students in a school, and must ensure that no such school literary materials are selected for inclusion in a school library, unless such materials are for information or reference, such as technical materials, dictionaries or encyclopedias, that are not narrative in nature"(Ab. Ed, 2025);
 - 8.8 Despite the care taken to select supplementary learning resources, occasional objections will be made to an item in the resource collection. The procedures for resource challenges are available in Administrative Procedure 206 Supplementary Learning Resources.
9. Discarding Materials
- 9.1 Materials that have been badly damaged should be discarded as the need arises. Appropriate records should be kept to allow the purchase of a new copy or a suitable substitute if the material is judged to be of sufficient value, interest and/or quality to warrant the cost.
 - 9.2 Weeding of learning commons materials by school personnel will take place yearly during the inventory in June and/or on a continual basis. Out-of-date material should be removed from the shelves in favour of more current information so that students and teachers will be able to locate relevant data in their subject area.