

Provincial Resource Review Guide

Table of Contents

Preface.....	1
Introduction	1
Purpose and Audience	1
Vision.....	1
Background	2
Context	2
Regulatory Framework	3
Key Directives and Priorities	3
Part 1: Resource Management.....	4
Roles and Responsibilities	5
Improvement Cycle	5
Part 2: Guidelines for Resource Selection.....	6
1. Curriculum Alignment.....	6
2. Developmentally Appropriate	7
3. Student Experience	7
4. Pluralism.....	7
5. Key Considerations	8

Preface

This guide contains the following sections:

The **Introduction** contains the document’s purpose and audience, vision, background, context, regulatory framework, and key directives and priorities.

Part 1: Resource Management introduces the concepts that support the resource review process through which Alberta Education, school leaders, and teachers can provide learning and teaching resources for use in the local learning environment.

Part 2: Guidelines for Resource Selection provides guidelines for developing new resources and using professional judgement in selecting resources for use in the local learning environment. School leaders and teachers may use the guidelines to develop local resource selection processes and create evaluation tools to approve resources for use in the local learning environment.

Introduction

Purpose and Audience

This guide provides a provincial approach for Alberta’s Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) education system to select and manage learning and teaching resources for the local learning environment. It is recommended that school leaders and teachers use this guide to provide a consistent provincial approach for the integration of resources into the local learning environment.

The guide serves the following purposes:

- Support Alberta’s K–12 education system in sharing responsibilities to provide resources for use in the local learning environment.
- Provide supports for consistency in selecting and managing resources and resource collections that align with provincial curriculum and promote equal opportunities for Alberta’s students.
- Equip Alberta Education, school leaders, and teachers with information for making informed decisions on evaluating resources for use in the local learning environment.

Vision

Providing high quality, relevant, and inclusive resources to support learning and teaching in all grades and subjects.

Background

Over the years, Alberta Education, school leaders, and teachers have shared learning and teaching resource responsibilities, including monitoring and performance management, financial commitments, and sourcing and managing resources. With advancements in technologies and accompanying skill development, school authorities, including school leaders and teachers, have increasingly developed local resources to meet the needs of their local learning environments.

In managing resources, Alberta Education developed an evaluation process, including criteria such as *Guidelines for Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect (RDPR)* and *Guiding Voices: A Curriculum Development Tool for Inclusion of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Perspectives Throughout Curriculum*, for reviewing, authorizing, and developing learning and teaching resources to support curriculum implementation. Although Alberta Education reviewed and authorized resources, and developed subject-specific authorized resource lists, school leaders and teachers retained autonomy over selecting resources from any source as best met learning needs, including selecting resources not authorized by Alberta Education. Although many have come to rely on Alberta Education's authorized resource lists, selecting resources from these lists remains optional.

Context

Alberta Education and school authorities may develop and maintain resource collections to store, manage, and share resources to support curriculum. School leaders and teachers may select resources from any source, in addition to locally developed collections, to meet local needs.

- The *Provincial Resource Review Guide* supersedes *RDPR* and *Guiding Voices* to streamline the resource review process.
- Alberta Education will use the *Provincial Resource Review Guide* to authorize and recommend resources.
- School leaders and teachers may use the *Provincial Resource Review Guide* to support approval of local resource decisions.
- School leaders and teachers are ultimately responsible for selecting resources deemed appropriate for students that are in alignment with legislation, provincial and local policies, and directives.
- While resource sharing is not required, it capitalizes upon economies of scale and offers professional supports for school leaders to work collaboratively to meet diverse student needs.

Regulatory Framework

Acknowledging that education is under provincial authority, school authorities have flexibility to use resources and any method of delivery as long as they comply with provincial and federal regulations. Alberta Education, school leaders, and teachers share responsibility for identifying and selecting resources for use in the local learning environment to meet specific needs. The *Provincial Resource Review Guide* reflects the broader governing frameworks imposed by federal and provincial legislation and policy:

- [Accessible Canada Act](#) (2019)
- [Affirming Francophone Education, Foundations and Directions](#) (2001)
- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) (1982)
- [Canadian Multiculturalism Act](#) (1985)
- [Copyright Act](#) (1985)
- [Criminal Code](#) (1985)
- [Education Act](#) (2012)
- [First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#) (2002)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (2000)
- [French Policy: 2020-23 Action Plan](#) (2020)
- [Inclusive Education Policy](#) (No date)
- [Ministerial Order #028/2020 \[Education\]: Student Learning](#) (2020)
- [Personal Information Protection Act](#) (2003)
- [Alberta Provincial Curriculum](#)
- [Protection of Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Expressions in Canada](#) (2020)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) (2012)

Key Directives and Priorities

A variety of factors influence and inform shifts in federal, provincial, and/or local policy. In addition, emergent social or cultural considerations may also influence key directives and priorities. Alberta Education and school leaders share responsibility for identifying and addressing resources to meet specific needs, beyond ongoing operational commitments.

Part 1: Resource Management

Resource management is the ongoing curation of quality resource collections. It enables and supports scalable, cost-effective solutions for school leaders and teachers. The strategies and guidelines within resource management apply to all resources selected for use in the local learning environment, regardless of content, format, or source.

For the purposes of this guide, the term *learning and teaching resource* is used interchangeably with the term *resource* and is defined as follows:

- Resource — Any material used by students and teachers to engage in learning and teaching.

The following types of resources align with the *Provincial Resource Review Guide*:

- Authorized Resource — A resource successfully reviewed by Alberta Education that is relevant to at least one learning outcome within the provincially authorized curriculum.
- Recommended Resource — A resource that is part of a subset of authorized resources that align to knowledge elements within the provincially authorized curriculum.
- Approved Resource — A resource successfully reviewed by a school leader or teacher for use in the local context.

Note: The term *review* refers to the resource selection process that is performed for each resource.

Development of a flexible and scalable resource collection meets the needs of the education system by

- enabling students and teachers to access the provincial curriculum in digital format
- providing access to trusted and authoritative digital and non-digital resources aligned with curriculum outcomes
- including resource discovery tools that facilitate efficiencies in searching for and retrieving resources
- enabling improvements and efficiencies in the resource collection and resource curation functions within a continuous improvement process

A common resource selection process meets the needs of students and teachers by

- ensuring currency, accuracy, and relevancy with respect to the provincial curriculum outcomes
- providing resources from trusted and authoritative sources
- integrating design and technologies that facilitate inclusive local learning environments

Roles and Responsibilities

Alberta Education, school leaders, and teachers share responsibilities in maintaining resources and resource collections by applying common resource management principles to provide accurate, current, and relevant resources that teachers can share and/or adapt to meet the needs of their local learning environments. To support these shared responsibilities, Alberta Education

- provides a centralized provincial resource collection to share and/or adapt authorized and recommended learning and teaching resources
- encourages use of the *Provincial Resource Review Guide* to select resources best suited for the local learning environment
- engages with jurisdictions to identify and close gaps in resource collections by addressing
 - learning outcomes where resources are lacking
 - subjects where there are few resources
 - regulatory needs, including legislation, policy, directives, and key priorities
- identifies and selects resources as informed by the *Provincial Resource Review Guide*

School authorities may want to incorporate their own locally developed resource evaluation tool into their policies and processes to select resources.

Improvement Cycle

Selection of resources is an ongoing process. Alberta's education system strives to be proactive in ensuring that students and teachers have access to accurate, current, and relevant resources to support learning outcomes.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is the proactive methodology that identifies, analyzes, and improves upon existing processes and procedures to select or develop learning and teaching resources. The methodology enables active maintenance of resources and resource collections. Continuous improvement also provides Alberta Education with the ability to leverage economies of scale to access, share, and adapt resources to support the attainment of learning outcomes.

- Review of the *Provincial Resource Review Guide* allows for improvements and updates based on research, policy, and/or legislative changes; shifts in key directives or priorities; and feedback from the field and/or subject-matter experts.

- Professional judgement and best practices inform and foster creation of inclusive local learning environments that embrace pluralism and diversity, emphasize a sense of belonging, and ensure that students are welcomed, cared for, respected, and safe.
- Identification of gaps in provincial and local resource collections may result in augmentation of resources.
- Whenever there are significant, time-sensitive developments, including policy and/or legislative changes, shifts in key directives or priorities, or trends, Alberta Education and/or school leaders may initiate a review of their respective resource collections.

The continuous improvement process will also consider trends, current events, and evidence-based research to inform the relevancy of resources selected. A review cycle meets the following objectives:

- Review of resources validates the accuracy, currency, and relevancy of resources and may highlight areas of concern, gaps, or needs.
- A review of a provincially authorized or recommended resource, or locally approved resource, focuses on ensuring alignment with one or more subjects and grades as described in the provincial curriculum and on congruency with at least one learning outcome.

Part 2: Guidelines for Resource Selection

The selection of resources used in the local learning environment is ultimately the responsibility of school leaders and teachers. School leaders and teachers may use the guidelines below to develop an evaluation tool to support consistency in selecting quality resources. Teachers must review resources to ensure that the resources provide students with the opportunity to enhance connections to the curriculum.

1. Curriculum Alignment

A resource is acceptable when it is relevant to at least one learning outcome within curriculum. Note that resources may support learning outcomes across grades and/or subjects, thus supporting multiple learning outcomes.

Resource Series

A resource series encompasses two or more resource components that are interdependent upon one another and have a recommended order. When selecting a resource series, at least one component must align with at least one relevant learning outcome.

Resource Set

A resource set is composed of two or more resource components and is not constrained by a specified order. When selecting a resource set, the set needs to align with at least one learning outcome for a specific subject and grade.

2. Developmentally Appropriate

Developmentally appropriate refers to a resource being cognitively, physically, and emotionally appropriate for the age of the students. When selecting a resource for use in the local learning environment, a teacher will consider the extent to which the resource will meet individual student needs, as well as the needs of the entire class.

3. Student Experience

Resources are meaningful and support student learning in a relevant way.

4. Pluralism

Resources aligned with curriculum acknowledge the diverse nature and heritage of Alberta, promote understanding of Albertans and Canadians, and recognize the importance of treating all people with equity and respect. Resources used in schools address imbalances of power with respect to diversity and forward the idea that all persons are equal in dignity, rights, and responsibilities without regard to race, colour, ancestry, or place of origin. Resources contribute to anti-racism and address racial power dynamics by providing equity for diversity and attending to inclusion, presentation, and juxtaposition of information, ideas, and images. They also promote awareness and appreciation of and respect for the multicultural heritage of Alberta society and beyond, where all citizens can participate in and contribute to cultural, social, economic, and political life.

Promotion of Equality and Non-discrimination

Resources reflect, where relevant and applicable, diverse perspectives, including race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status, or sexual orientation, as outlined in the [Education Act](#), section 35.1(2).

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Experiences and Perspectives

The *Provincial Resource Review Guide* sets expectations for resources to reflect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences, history, cultures, viewpoints, and ways of knowing in an authentic and appropriate manner across the K–12 curriculum. Reflecting Education for Reconciliation Calls to Action commitments, resources shall

- accurately share the linguistic, geographic, political, and cultural diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Alberta and Canada
- include contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, their languages, cultures, and/or identities
- share examples, narratives, stories, and images of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, their languages, cultures, and/or identities, and ensure respect for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit voices, perspectives, experiences, and worldviews
- use language, narratives, and visual and textual representations that are inclusive and respectful of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, linguistically, geographically, politically, and culturally

Francophone Perspectives

Resources provide students with access to Francophone perspectives. Students will gain an appreciation and understanding of the linguistic duality, cultural diversity, history and contemporary contexts, and contributions of Francophones and their communities. Resources that support Francophone perspectives

- communicate Francophones' contributions to Alberta's economy, cultural mosaic, and society as a whole
- affirm Francophone students' sense of identity and belonging
- incorporate topics and contributions related to Francophones, including significant individuals, stories, ideas, and histories in local and global contexts
- use adaptations, not direct translations, of narratives, stories, perspectives, and experiences

5. Key Considerations

Intellectual Property

In reviewing a resource, Alberta Education, school leaders, and teachers must also consider intellectual property owners' rights to copyright. Certain uses of copyrighted material may only be allowed with the permission of the intellectual property owner. An intellectual property owner is the original author/creator and has the sole right to grant the terms of a specific licensing agreement, contract, or other form(s) of permission for the use and delivery of the copyrighted material.

Accessibility, Usability, and Inclusion

Resources designed with the student in mind are preferred so the student can control how they interact with the resource. A resource that is accessible, usable, and inclusive

- provides an equivalent user experience for students of all abilities
- enables students to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the resource without barriers

Design and Technology

In addition to content and curricular alignment, school leaders and teachers must review digital and non-digital resources for characteristics such as universal design, integrated usability supports, responsive design, currency and relevancy of technology, and adaptability. Review for design and technology takes into consideration the effective and appropriate use of audio, visuals, and layout. Compliance with best practices, and whether and how effectively the resource uses design and technology to support learning, may influence the overall merit of a resource.

Sensitive Topics

Resource review should address the inclusion of sensitive topics or social issues that teachers must identify and consider prior to using a resource with students. Sensitive or controversial issues are topics that are publicly sensitive and upon which there is no consensus of values or beliefs. Sensitive topics may be long-standing or very recent in existence; vary by jurisdiction, from local to global contexts; and/or vary in intensity over time. Resources containing publicly or personally sensitive topics may be an integral part of student learning. Sensitive topics may help prepare students for responsible participation in a democratic and pluralistic society, to reason logically, and to examine different points of view in order to make sound judgements while adhering to legal obligations and professional standards.

Resources containing sensitive topics or sensitive issues provide opportunities for teachers and students to explore

- alternative points of view, subject to the condition that information is not restricted by federal or provincial legislation
- perspectives and informed decision making while respecting the student's maturity, capabilities, educational needs, and context
- integrated opportunities within curriculum
- local, provincial, national, and international contexts

Resources for literature, in particular, may connect students with sensitive, complex issues that may not be simply resolved. Resources that contain sensitive topics or issues engage students to think critically and creatively; help to develop ethical citizens who demonstrate respect, teamwork, and democratic ideals; and may contribute to the development of students' levels of empathy and acceptance.

Parents have the right to be informed by the student's school authority, via a notice to parent letter, when courses, curriculum/programs of study, instructional materials, or instruction or exercises include subject matter dealing primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality. The resource review process seeks to identify subject matter in resources that require a school authority to provide parents/guardians with a written notice to parent letter.

Notice to parents is also required for locally developed courses that contain subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality, where applicable. The intent of the legislation over this matter is not to disrupt instruction or the discussion of sensitive issues in the local learning environment but to provide parents with advanced notice of subject matter provided to students. (See the [Education Act](#), sections 58.1 and 58.2, for legislative requirements.)

Conclusion

The approach to planning for instruction, the professional judgement of the teacher, and the local context influence resource selection. These guidelines for resource selection are intended to provide a consistent approach for the identification of high quality or inclusive resources for the local learning environment. The guidelines are a way of ensuring that provincially authorized or recommended resources, or locally approved resources, exemplify qualities of accuracy, currency, and relevancy.