
LEARNING COMMONS AND SELECTION OF LEARNING MATERIALS

Background

The Division recognizes that a strong learning commons (library) program enriches education by fostering literacy, inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, and student well-being. Access to appropriate resources supports curricular outcomes and helps ensure that students experience a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.

1. Definitions

As outlined in Ministerial Order 034/2025, the following definitions apply:

- 1.1 Child – a child younger than 6 years of age enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program.
- 1.2 Classroom Collection – a teacher’s curated collection of literary materials (print or digital) available in the classroom.
- 1.3 School Literary Materials – books, magazines, comics, graphic novels, or other literary or graphic materials, in print or digital form, available to children or students at a school.
- 1.4 Sexual Act – any activity of a distinctly sexual nature as defined in Ministerial Order 034/2025.
- 1.5 Visual Depiction – a visual or graphic representation, such as drawings, photographs, or digital images.

2. Standards for Selection and Access

The Division shall ensure that:

- 2.1 School literary materials containing explicit visual depictions of sexual acts are not accessible or available to children or students and are not selected for inclusion in school libraries, except for non-narrative reference works (e.g., technical materials, dictionaries, encyclopedias).
- 2.2 All school literary materials are subject to regular review to ensure compliance with these Standards.
- 2.3 A publicly available listing of all school literary materials (excluding classroom collections) is maintained.
- 2.4 Parents are informed of the contents of classroom collections accessible to their children.
- 2.5 Information and reports regarding school literary materials are provided to the Minister when requested.

3. Criteria for Selection

Learning commons resources shall be chosen to:

- 3.1 Support the Alberta Education Program of Studies and curricular outcomes.
- 3.2 Enrich literacy, critical thinking, and ethical reflection.
- 3.3 Represent diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic perspectives.
- 3.4 Uphold principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice.
- 3.5 Meet the following criteria:
 - 3.5.1 Compliance with Ministerial Order 034/2025
 - 3.5.2 Accuracy, timeliness, and durability
 - 3.5.3 Authoritativeness and credibility of creator/publisher
 - 3.5.4 Appropriateness for subject area, age, ability, and developmental stage
 - 3.5.5 Canadian content, where applicable

4. Annual Collection Evaluation

The Principal, with teaching and library staff, shall annually review the school collection to:

- 4.1 Ensure compliance with M.O. 034/2025.
- 4.2 Update or replace physical and digital resources as needed.
- 4.3 Support revised curricula and diverse student learning needs.
- 4.4 Ensure accuracy, age appropriateness, artistic/literary quality, and inclusivity.
- 4.5 Remove outdated, damaged, or non-compliant items.

5. Request for Review of Materials

The Division shall maintain a process by which the following may request review, reconsideration, or removal of specific school literary materials:

- 5.1 Students or children enrolled in a school
- 5.2 Parents/guardians of enrolled students
- 5.3 School authority employees
- 5.4 School council members
- 5.5 Community members with a direct connection to the school

6. Communication

- 6.1 Policies and procedures regarding school literary materials shall be clearly communicated to students, parents, and staff.
- 6.2 All policies and procedures shall be made publicly available.

References

- Education Act, Section 18, 52, 53, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225
- Ministerial Order 034/2025: Standards for the Selection, Availability, and Access of School Literary Materials
- Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12