

POLICY REVIEW 2023

SECTION II CURRICULUM

1. ASSESSMENT POLICY

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union believes that teacher-developed and teacher-administered in-house evaluation instruments are the most effective and accurate means of assessment of student achievement. The NSTU supports the position of the Canadian Teachers' Federation that the primary purpose of student assessment is to support student learning and that classroom teachers have the primary responsibility for assessing and evaluating student achievement. The NSTU firmly believes that provincial and regional/board standardized tests are not intended, nor should they be used, for the purpose of teacher, administrator, or school evaluations. While the NSTU does not support the administration of standardized tests; the organization recognizes the authority of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to implement assessment measures.

- A. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Regional Centres for Education/School Board must use standardized assessments exclusively as a tool to inform instruction and support student learning.
- B. The NSTU believes classroom teachers from across the province must be involved in a primary way with the design, implementation, and marking of all provincial assessments.
- C. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must report exam marks only on a provincial and regional/board basis. The compilation of scores on a school-by-school or student-by-student basis must not be permitted.
- D. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development must define, adopt, and clearly communicate a curriculum implementation model. Such a model must clarify the components such as pilots, field tests and their necessary evaluation.
- E. The administration and marking of the student's exam must remain the prerogative of the classroom teacher who has taught the course to the students.
- F. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union accepts the Policy on Assessment and Evaluation authored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Reference: Resolution 2001-B, Reaffirmed 2004-97, Amended 2011-16, 2017-20

2. CENSORSHIP

The NSTU believes:

- A. Students have the right of free access to different types of learning materials.
- B. Regional Centres for Education/School Board should recognize the right of Members, librarians, and administrators to select books and other learning materials in accordance with current trends in education and to make them available in the schools. The NSTU further recognizes that there should be a procedure for reconsideration of materials in accordance with Regional Centres for Education/School Board policy.
- C. Members have the right to use for instruction any books or other learning materials prescribed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is fully supported.

Reference: Resolution 2001-41, Reaffirmed 2004-99, Amended 2011-18, 2017-21

3. COMPREHENSIVE MATERIALS FOR FRENCH MEMBERS

All Members, including French Core, French Immersion, or French First Language should have access to comprehensive materials, including texts and library resources.

Reference: Reaffirmed 1999-59, Amended 2004-100, Reaffirmed February 2011, March 2017

4. CURRICULUM POLICY

- A. The NSTU believes that the Department should:
 - I. provide clear outcomes for all grade levels;
 - II. provide suitable materials that allow schools to provide programs suited to the student's level of development;
 - III. provide adequate staff, facilities, and equipment in schools;
 - IV. provide specialized programming for such areas as Guidance, Art, Music, Technology Education, Family Studies, Teacher-Librarians, Physical Education, French, and other areas as appropriate;
 - V. provide that all school grades become a true continuum from elementary through to high school; and,
 - VI. provide a minimum of a one-day inservice to all teachers when introducing a new report card.
 - B. The NSTU believes that adequate financial support for program changes must be assured before any introduction and implementation of such changes.
 - C. The NSTU believes that prior to implementation of any new program, or change to present programs, the teacher must receive:
 - I. sufficient professional development; and,
 - II. materials, resources, and support.
 - D. Decisions regarding choices of materials that support the curriculum should be made by licensed teachers.
 - E. Teachers of combined classes should receive the necessary resources/support for all grade levels in order to implement the program appropriately.
 - F. The NSTU believes that the credit system should not be introduced in the grade nine level.
- Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-44, Amended 2002-41, 2002-43, 2003-30, 2004-101, 2011-20, 2013-65, 2017-23*

5. CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- A. Although the establishment of curriculum standards and guidelines is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, teachers should have direct input through NSTU nomination of committee members.
 - B. It is the responsibility of each individual Member to be fully aware of and conversant with the particular sets of guidelines and other Departmental publications that are of direct concern to the individual's teaching situation.
 - C. Guidelines established by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should be as specific as the diversity of the Nova Scotia school population will permit.
 - D. Members should, as part of their professional responsibility, bring to the attention of the Department any concerns they have with Department publications or guidelines.
- Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-54, 2004-102, Amended 2011-21, Reaffirmed March 2017*

6. DISTANCE EDUCATION

Quality public distance education programs must be carefully designed, planned, implemented by NSTU Members, and adequately funded. Successful implementation of public distance education requires that:

- A. adequate resources and inservicing are available for public distance education teachers;
- B. the NSTU support teachers engaged in providing public distance education;
- C. NSTU Members holding valid teacher certification exclusively are engaged in providing public P-12 distance education;
- D. there be support for a network of public distance education teachers so as to provide for discussion, exchange of ideas, and mutual support;
- E. the NSTU inform the public of issues regarding public distance education; and,
- F. the NSTU monitor the growth of public distance education in the province.

Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-42, 2004-103, Amended 2011-22, Reaffirmed March 2017

7. GLOBAL EDUCATION

- A. Global education is a perspective that underlies and shapes the teaching and learning processes in schools.
- B. Through global education, learners develop critical understandings of global issues, as well as the skills to enable them to address those issues.
- C. Through global education, learners acquire values that give priority to ecological sustainability, global interdependence, social justice for all the world's people, peace, human rights, and globally beneficial process of economic, social, and cultural development.
- D. Through global education, learners are enabled to develop the will and ability to act as mature, responsible citizens with a commitment to create positive futures for themselves, their communities, and the world.
- E. The NSTU believes Members should be supported by all partners in education in their continuous efforts to bring a global perspective to Nova Scotia classrooms.

Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-45, 2004-104, February 2011, March 2017

8. HISTORY EDUCATION

A. LABOUR HISTORY

The teaching of the Labour History of Canada shall be encouraged in the junior high school's social studies curriculum.

B. CANADIAN HISTORY

The NSTU supports the inclusion of Canadian history in the public school system.

Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-35, Amended 2002-48, Reaffirmed 2004-107, February 2011, March 2017

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The NSTU believes that intellectual property created by the Member must remain the property of the Member.

Reference: Resolution 2002-76, Reaffirmed 2004-106, February 2011, March 2017

10. LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND STUDY

The NSTU supports Article 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-47, Amended 2004-108, Reaffirmed February 2011, March 2017

11. LEARNING RESOURCES

- A. Learning resources should support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the Province and the Regional Centre for Education/School Board, as well as with the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses.
- B. Learning resources should meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
- C. Learning resources should be appropriate for emotional development, ability level, learning style, and social development of students.
- D. Learning resources should help students gain an awareness and understanding of our pluralistic society and the contributions of its members.
- E. Learning resources should motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behaviours and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in our society.
- F. The NSTU opposes any arbitrary or unilateral addition or removal of learning materials or units of study.

Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-48, Amended 2004-109, Reaffirmed February 2011, March 2017

12. MULTICULTURALISM

Schools of Nova Scotia reflect a pluralistic, multi-ethnic society, which influences the teaching/learning styles represented in our schools. The values and behaviour patterns present and presented in our schools differ among cultural groups. Citizens in a democratic society need ethnic and cultural literacy (adequate understanding of ethnic groups, ethnicity, and culture). Members, because of their role in society, have a major responsibility to contribute to the development of ethnic and cultural understanding.

A. THE CURRICULUM SHOULD:

- I. provide students with continuous opportunities to develop positive self-identities;
- II. recognize the ethnic and cultural diversity of students within the school community;
- III. describe the development of Nova Scotia and Canada as a multi-faceted society; and,
- IV. explore and clarify ethnic and cultural alternatives and options within Nova Scotian and Canadian society and make maximum use of local community resources.

B. THE EMPLOYER SHOULD:

- I. set policies and procedures that foster positive multi-ethnic interactions and understandings among students, teachers, administrative, and other support staff; and,
- II. provide information to Members about the implications of multiculturalism in Nova Scotia and about services, programs, materials, and developments relating to multiculturalism.

C. THE NSTU SHOULD:

- I. foster and stimulate a higher level of Member awareness and a deeper understanding of the relationships between social behaviour, learning styles, and cultural differences and their implications;
- II. encourage and promote the cooperation of Members with organizations, groups, and individuals involved with multiculturalism;
- III. encourage the development of a curriculum that reflects the ethno-cultural similarities and differences within the province; and,
- IV. promote an anti-homophobic, anti-heterosexist, anti-sexist and anti-racist approach to educational strategies, materials, and attitudes within the provincial schools.

D. EDUCATORS SHOULD:

- I. accept their responsibility to educate themselves and to reflect upon their own attitudes and behaviours in modeling respect, understanding, and affirmation of diversity.

Reference: Reaffirmed 2001-46, Amended 2004-110, 2011-24, 2017-24

13. NEW CURRICULUM – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The NSTU supports the principle of professional development for Members prior to and during the implementation of new curriculum.

Reference: Resolution 2003-36, Amended 2004-111, Reaffirmed February 2011, March 2017

14. NON-CORE PROGRAMS — DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS BE ESTABLISHED

The NSTU shall seek to ensure that a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development standard be established and maintained regarding non-core programs at all levels. This must include the provision for instruction by qualified professionals who are NSTU Members.

Reference: Resolution 1999-56, Reaffirmed 2004-112, February 2011, March 2017

15. OUTCOMES-BASED RESOURCES

The NSTU urges the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Regional Centres for Education/School Board to ensure the development and implementation of outcomes-based resources across the curriculum.

Reference: Reaffirmed 1999-60, Amended 2000-25, 2004-113, 2011-25, Reaffirmed March 2017

16. PEACE EDUCATION

- A. Peace is not merely the absence of war.
- B. The pursuit and attainment of peace is initially the responsibility of each individual person and is a special responsibility of Members.
- C. The pursuit of peace is inextricably bound to the issues of human rights, a more equitable international economic order, preservation of the environment, individual and collective security, and disarmament.
- D. To be genuine and lasting, peace must be shared equally by all the peoples of the world.
- E. Violence and the abuse of power are never to be used to solve conflicts.
- F. Children have the right to live, grow, and develop in a world free of war and the threat of nuclear destruction.
- G. The NSTU endorses the principle of worldwide nuclear disarmament and the reduction of other armaments.
- H. World peace and individual freedom are both rational premises and viable objectives for education.
- I. Educators should provide leadership in supporting the concept of global understanding and peace.
- J. Justice, mutual respect, and a respect for differences can be taught and learned.
- K. Students must be assisted in acquiring skills to make choices related to world concerns.
- L. Peace education must concern itself with teaching cooperation at all levels.
- M. A most urgent task of public education is to provide our young people with the knowledge, understandings, attitudes, skills, and powers to transform our earth into a world beyond war and to live fully and authentically in this world of peace, democracy, and justice.

- N. Funds must be made available from public sources for the school system to undertake changes in structure and curricula, to educate the youth of our country, to believe they have a right to live in peace and to give them the skills to achieve this end.
- O. Rules, decision-making procedures, interpersonal relationships, discipline, and other institutional features of the school should foster cooperation, non-violent conflict resolutions, and responsibility for the school environment.
- P. In planning peace education activities in schools, Members and other persons responsible for peace education should consider, among other things, the following matters:
 - I. inclusion of studies of nuclear weapons, the arms race and its connection to world hunger and poverty, the history of international disarmament negotiations, broad social and political studies including multiculturalism and racism, and protection of the environment as aspects of peace education;
 - II. developing skills of mediation and other forms of non-violent conflict resolution; and,
 - III. finding a balance between special peace studies and integrating education for and about peace within the regular curriculum.

Reference: Resolution 2001-49, Amended 2004-114, Reaffirmed February 2011, March 2017

17. SCHOOL BOOK BUREAU FUNDING ALLOCATION

The NSTU believes that the School Book Bureau allotment should be flexible enough to allow schools to use up to 25% of their allotment for purchasing teachers resources outside of the School Book Bureau offerings.

Reference: Resolution 2001-53, Amended 2004-119, 2011-27, Reaffirmed March 2017

18. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION PRINCIPLES

The following are principles for technology integration in public schools:

- A. While technology tools can enhance the ability of Members to deliver educational programs and enrich the educational environment for students when applied in a pedagogically sound manner, people are the most important resource in the teaching/learning process.
- B. Technology should be used as a tool to improve the quality of student-teacher relationships and not to replace Members.
- C. Technology must be integrated into the education system with consideration for equity of opportunity for students and NSTU Members.
- D. All Regional Centres for Education/School Board should articulate a vision statement and long-range plan for the integration of technology into the curriculum.
- E. Members require access to appropriate, comprehensive, flexible, and ongoing professional development opportunities in the effective integration of technology.
- F. Developing and maintaining a technology-integrated education environment requires an increase in Member preparation time.
- G. Members own what they create and are entitled to the protection of Canadian Copyright Laws.
- H. In order to effectively integrate technology into the curriculum, every Member requires access to technology and the internet both in the workplace and at home. This access is primarily the responsibility of the employer.
- I. Technology infrastructure (resources, technical support, professional development) must be in place prior to implementation of technology initiatives in order to achieve the intended curriculum/information technology outcomes.
- J. Technology requires ongoing budget support for technicians, upgrading of hardware and software, and consumable supplies in order to be effective.

- K. Technology maintenance and network administration are primarily the responsibility of Regional Centre for Education/School Board technicians and not Members.
- L. The Nova Scotia education system must be protected from inappropriate corporate intrusion resulting from pressure to place technology in educational sites.
- M. Audio and/or video recording or photography of Members must be authorized by the Member(s).
- N. Any use, publication, posting, and/or distribution of any audio or video recording or still image must be authorized by the Member(s) in the audio or video recording or still image.
- O. Developing a supportive educational environment requires a focus of teaching and learning on appropriate online cyber conduct.

Reference: Resolution 2002-50, Reaffirmed 2004-120, Amended 2011-28, 2015-32, 2017-27