Policy on the Coordination of Public Education Policies

Approval Date: May 2024

Effective Date: May 2024

1. Policy Statement and Objective

All public education policies should promote and support Nova Scotia's ongoing commitment to safe, equitable, and inclusive education, and student achievement and well-being, through a strong and responsive policy framework.

To support a provincially aligned policy environment for the public education system, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has committed to improved coordination of regional, board, and provincial policies.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all provincial policies related to the public education system in Nova Scotia support student achievement and well-being through coherence and connection, collaborative development and consistent application across all Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP). This policy provides guidance to the RCEs and CSAP on the development and rescission of regional and board policies.

2. Definitions

guidelines: Guidelines outline suggested processes according to sound and established practices. Guidelines may be developed in the absence of a policy or may supplement a policy by providing information, best or leading practices, and guidance on the implementation of policies and procedures.

policy: A policy provides high level direction related to the delivery of public education and the operation of schools in Nova Scotia. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (or designate) provides final approval for all provincial policies related to public education.

procedures: Procedures provide detailed instructions to staff responsible for implementing policies and are administrative in nature. Procedure documents under a particular policy should, whenever possible, align with each other but can include variance when appropriate to local context.

protocols: Protocols are formal, regimented directives which provide step-by-step actions to be taken under specific circumstances. Protocols are more explicit and specific than guidelines.

Public Education Policy Coordination Committee (PEPCC): A committee with representation from EECD, and all RCEs and CSAP. This committee includes representatives who are responsible for programs and student services, operations, finance, and human resources, along with African Canadian and Mi'kmaw regional representatives. PEPCC works to ensure a cohesive policy environment for the public education system in Nova Scotia.

3. Guiding Principles

- Provincial policy development is a shared responsibility between EECD, RCEs, and the CSAP.
- Whenever possible, EECD, RCEs, and the CSAP will work together to develop consistent provincial policy directions.
- When developing provincial education policies, EECD, RCEs, and the CSAP will seek to support the academic success and well-being of all students through the lenses of inclusion, equity, language, and cultural responsiveness.
- School Advisory Councils will be included in the policy consultation process when appropriate.

4. Application

This policy applies to the development, revision, rescission, and implementation of provincial public education policies. All provincial public education policies will be published and made available on EECD's Provincial Education Policies web page in English and French.

5. Policy Directives

5.1   All provincial public education policies are developed and distributed under the authority of the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

5.2   Provincial public education policies that are no longer relevant may be rescinded under the authority of the Minister.

5.3   Provincial public education policies and related materials (e.g., procedures) will be made available in both English and French.

5.4   Provincial public education policies and related materials (e.g., procedures) will be drafted using clear language to support usability.

5.5   The *Inclusive Education Policy* provides a framework for all policies, procedures, strategies, and initiatives in the public education system to support the achievement and well-being of every student. The Inclusive Education Policy Lens Tool, developed by EECD, will be used throughout the policy development process to ensure policies align with the guiding principles of the *Inclusive Education Policy*.

5.6   The policy development process will seek to include local and first voice input and include consultation with key partners and/or community members.

5.7   Provincial public education policies will be implemented consistently across RCEs/CSAP and evaluated regularly to ensure they are working as intended.

5.8   All RCE/CSAP policies and procedures must conform to the provisions of any relevant provincial legislation and regulations and must not conflict with provincial public education policies or other provincial directives.

    5.8.1   The RCEs may develop their own regional policies on region-specific issues, with appropriate approval from EECD.

    5.8.2   The RCEs may develop regional procedures that are supplemental to provincial policies and procedures, when appropriate to local context.

5.8.3   RCE policies that are no longer relevant may be rescinded with the approval of the Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Research.

5.8.4   CSAP may develop its own board policies on specific issues that reflect the board's responsibilities, in accordance with its governing legislation. The Superintendent is responsible for communicating to the Executive Director of Strategic Policy and Research when an existing board policy has been revised or a new board policy has been developed.

5.8.5   The CSAP may develop board procedures that are supplemental to provincial policies and procedures, when appropriate to the French-first language or local contexts, with appropriate approval from its elected board.

5.8.6   CSAP policies that are no longer relevant may be rescinded under the authority of its elected board. The Superintendent is responsible for communicating to the Executive Director of Strategic Policy and Research when a board policy has been rescinded.

6.   Roles and Responsibilities

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

- provides final approval for all provincial policies related to public education
- provides final approval to rescind existing provincial public education policies

Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

- provides final approval for provincial public education policy proposals

Public Education Policy Coordination Committee

- identifies opportunities to align existing policies and procedures across EECD, RCEs, and the CSAP
- identifies potential policy needs and brings them forward for consideration by EECD
- provides advice on the prioritization of provincial policy work
- provides recommendations on the appropriate approach and policy instrument (i.e., policy, protocol, guideline, procedure, etc.) to respond to an identified policy need
- reviews provincial and regional policy proposals and makes suggestions on the approach, including identifying the appropriate partners to support the development process
- reviews requests to rescind provincial and regional policies and identifies any concerns
- reviews draft provincial policies to ensure they meet the policy need as identified
- works with their regional policy committees/board to ensure RCE/CSAP policies do not conflict with provincial policies, which includes modifying or rescinding regional/board policies when required

Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Research (EECD)

- chairs the Public Education Policy Coordination Committee
- provides final approval for proposals to develop or revise regional policies and communicates this approval to the Regional Executive Director and PEPCC
- provides final approval for proposals to rescind existing RCE policies that are no longer relevant and communicates this approval to the Regional Executive Director and PEPCC

EECD

- identifies potential policy needs and brings them forward for consideration
- supports the development of policy proposals and proposals to rescind policies, when needed
- identifies staff to participate as members of the policy development team (as defined in the policy proposal), when needed
- uses the Inclusive Education Policy Lens Tool to ensure policies are developed in alignment with the guiding principles of the Inclusive Education Policy and that all relevant partners are consulted, including School Advisory Councils when appropriate
- supports the implementation and evaluation of provincial public education policies
- monitors the implementation of this policy

RCE/CSAP

- works collaboratively with EECD to develop provincial public education policies
- communicates provincial public education policies throughout the RCE/CSAP
- monitors the implementation of provincial public education policies, in collaboration with EECD, including seeking advice from the regional student advisory committee and the regional school advisory council (RCEs only)
- ensures adherence to provincial public education policies within the RCE/CSAP
- submits requests to develop, modify or rescind regional policies to EECD for consideration by PEPCC (RCEs only)

School Advisory Council

- advises their school administrator(s) and RCE/CSAP on the implementation of provincial public education policies in their school(s), as appropriate
- participates in consultations as part of the policy development process, when requested

7.   Procedures/Related Documents

- *Policy on the Coordination of Public Education Policies: Administrative Procedures for Provincial Public Education Policies*
- *Policy on the Coordination of Public Education Policies: Administrative Procedures for Regional Policy Development*

8.   References

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. 2018. *Inclusive Education Policy*. Halifax, NS: Province of Nova Scotia. www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/inclusiveeducationpolicyen.pdf.

Nova Scotia. 2018. *Education Act. SNS, c. 1.* https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/education.pdf.

———.2019. *Education (CSAP) Act. SNS, c. 1.* https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/education%20(csap).pdf.

All provincial public education policies will be published and made available on EECD's Provincial Education Policies web page in English and French: www.ednet.ns.ca/policies.