

DRAFT
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EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

K-12 LITERACY PLAN

FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS



VISION 2020
GUIDING DOCUMENT

OUR LITERACY CHALLENGE

Edmonton Public Schools' vision is to create a bright future for each child - a future that includes a prosperous life, happiness, good health and rewarding job opportunities.

"Next week, Edmonton Public Schools welcomes 5000 kindergarten students. Our District's vision for these 5000 students ...is clear, focused and unflinching – every student will complete high school in 2020."

Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Edmonton Public Schools
(August 27, 2007)

"Together, we must ensure that every child – particularly those who are at risk or vulnerable – has the support, resources and opportunities they need to fulfill their potential. This is Edmonton Public School's vision for 2020: every student crosses the finish line."

Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Edmonton Public Schools
(April 9, 2008)

Fewer than 75 per cent of district students complete high school (read the [high school results](#) and [Alberta Education's definition of high school completion](#)).

Literacy skills are increasingly essential in supporting each child's success. For every student to "cross the finish line," they must have the ability to read, write, create meaning, think critically and communicate, using evolving technologies and tools.

The District's 2020 vision for each student is to achieve maximum success within the realities of an increasingly interconnected world and the fast-paced global exchange of ideas, knowledge and information in society. Competency in literacy lays the foundation for each student's future. Our K-12 Literacy Plan for 21st century learners, is the core strategy to achieve the District's vision of 2020.

Watch this [video](#) illustrating the challenges of teaching and learning 21st century literacy skills.


OUR DEFINITION OF LITERACY FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

Literacy for the 21st century learner encompasses a broad set of skills and competencies, integrated across the Kindergarten to Grade 12 programs of study. These skills are manifested when students are engaged in authentic, relevant and meaningful learning contexts. Each student must develop competency in reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening, representing and numeracy as foundational skills for 21st century learning.

Literacy learning involves effective use of:

- personal and social skills such as collaboration, communication, leadership and self direction.
- digital age literacy that includes cultural competence, global awareness, accessing information from a variety of texts and effective use of technology and tools.
- learning and thinking skills such as inquiry based learning, critical and creative thinking, problem solving, number sense, higher order thinking, meta-cognition and intellectual engagement.

The 21st century learner embraces the pluralism of the contexts in which these skills are applied.



Michael Fullan asserts: "Everything that you would say in society that counts as humanly important – a better life, better health, more cohesion, more individual happiness, greater collective good, more money, economic development at the individual and societal level – the rates of those things go up as the [achievement] gap becomes smaller" (Crowe, 2009, p. 18).

Read this article "[enGauge 21st Century Skills](#)" to learn more about literacy for 21st century learners.

NOTE: Throughout this document, the term literacy encompasses the ideas expressed above.

GOAL

Each student (K-12) will demonstrate their full potential in literacy for the 21st century learner. Realization of full potential will result in significant yearly growth in literacy.

TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

- Each student will engage in high quality literacy learning experiences.
- Each teacher will design authentic learning tasks to ensure growth in literacy competencies.

Watch this [video](#) on "A learning classroom."

"To become fully literate in today's world, students must become proficient in the new literacy of the 21st century technologies. As a result, literacy educators have a responsibility to effectively integrate these new technologies into the curriculum, preparing students for the literacy future they deserve" (International Reading Association, 2009, p. 2).

SHARED BELIEFS AND UNDERSTANDINGS

District staff engage in ongoing dialogue to build the following shared beliefs and understandings:

- *Student success is dependent upon literacy skills for the 21st century.*
- *Literacy skills for the 21st century must be embedded into the teaching of the programs of study in all subjects.*
- *Each staff member has the responsibility to create a positive learning environment that ensures effective and consistent literacy instruction for the success of each student.*

CORE LITERACY PRINCIPLES

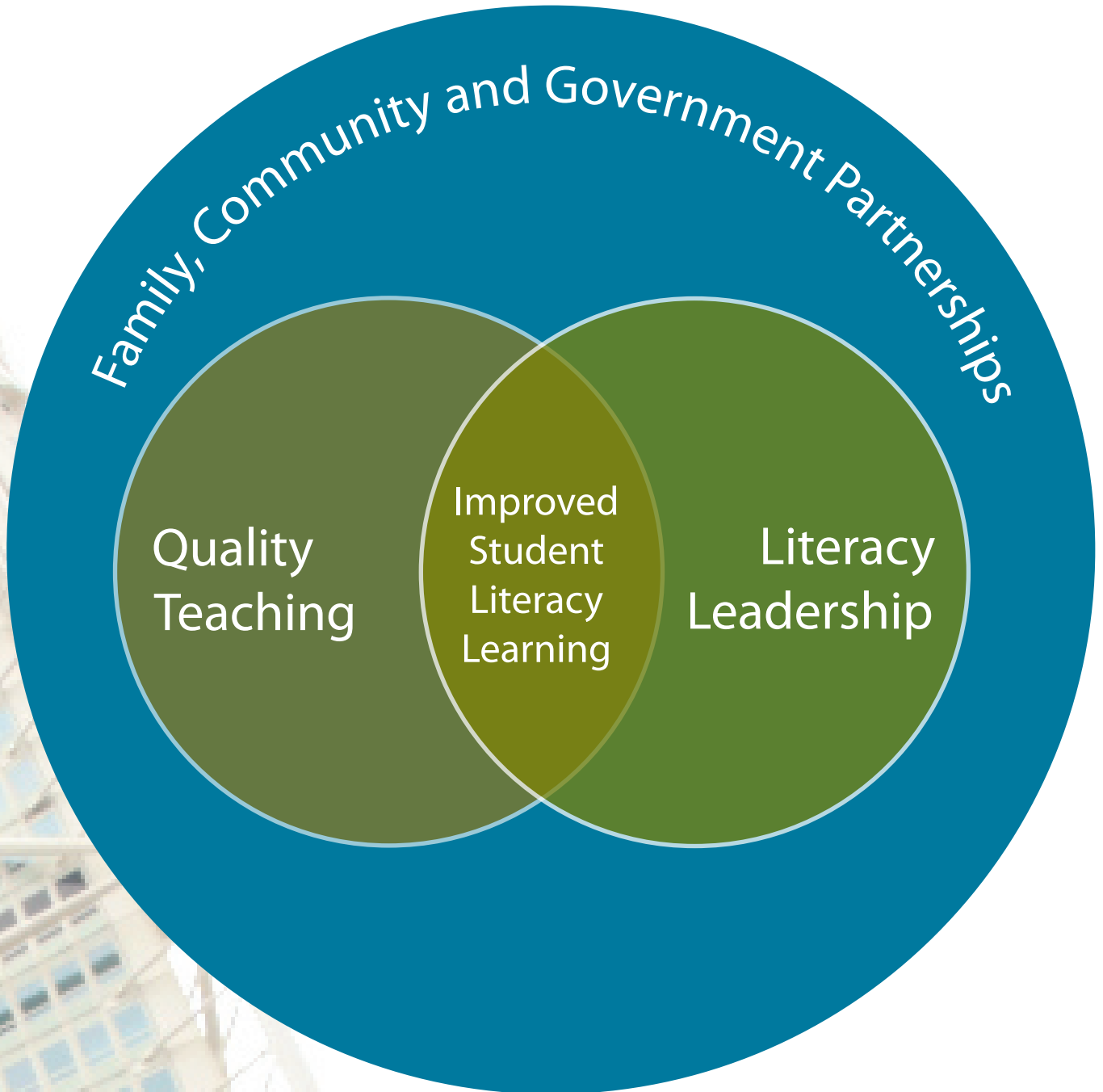
The core literacy principles outlined on the following pages will guide the work of each school. Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) work has contributed to the development and integration of these principles. The work within AISI will continue to support the creation of a district-wide, systematic, coherent and integrated approach. Across the District, each student will demonstrate proficiency in literacy as a result of the implementation of **each** of the following research-based core literacy principles.

“(We) have been using a rear-view mirror to teach. (We) are not looking to the 21st century, but using (a) vision of the 20th/19th.”

- Feb. 3, 2010 Superintendent Leadership Meeting (SLM)



Relationships are important for risk taking and learning. Hear an educator's [story](#).



NOTE: These core literacy principles replace the Framework for Teaching and Learning 2009-2012 document.

I Quality Teaching

- A. Teacher education and professional learning/capacity building:
- The District ensures each teacher engages in ongoing literacy learning in collaborative, job-embedded models.
 - Hiring and placement practices support the core work of literacy.
 - Each teacher has a common understanding of clear curriculum standards.
- B. Assessment “for”, “of” and “as” learning to inform instruction:
- Each teacher aligns assessments to curriculum standards.
 - Each student understands the purpose of assessment as part of learning and is actively engaged in the assessment process.
 - Data is used to monitor progress and inform instruction.
- C. Research-based effective practices to form the basis of instruction across all content areas in K-12:
- Direct, explicit instruction of literacy skills for 21st century learners that build and scaffold learning as students move through the grades.
 - Oral language development.
 - Use of diverse texts and media.
 - Extended time for literacy development.
 - Collaborative learning.
 - A balanced approach to instruction.
 - Literacy instruction across the curriculum.
- D. Appropriate use of technologies:
- Effective integration of technologies.
 - Each teacher and student has access to appropriate technologies.
 - Teaching digital citizenship.
- E. Whole school approach to support intervention:
- Intervene early and at all grades.
 - Provide tiered interventions.
 - Employ a collaborative, case management approach.

“[The Literacy] plan must reflect the belief that every adult is responsible for every child - we take collective responsibility for student learning.”

- Feb. 3, 2010 Superintendent Leadership Meeting (SLM)

Whole School Approach to Support Intervention



Intervention is needed at all levels. Hear one educator's [story](#).

II Literacy Leadership ([link to research](#))

- A. District central leaders actively lead, support and promote literacy leadership and learning by:
- collecting, analyzing, reporting and acting on system data to support the District's Literacy Plan;
 - allocating resources to support implementation of the literacy plan;
 - providing ongoing professional learning support for school literacy teams;
 - providing district-wide opportunities for sharing progress, reflecting on results, and building mutual accountability;
 - collaborating with external expertise for research and professional learning; and
 - liaising with external agencies (Alberta Education, Post Secondary Institutions etc.) to support effective literacy development.
- B. As instructional leaders each principal:
- has a strong understanding of literacy development for 21st century learners;
 - provides effective supervision to support quality teaching;
 - engages in ongoing, job embedded learning opportunities related to literacy leadership;
 - networks with colleagues around common literacy challenges;
 - establishes membership in a school based literacy leadership team;
 - engages staff in using data to inform all instruction;
 - provides teacher networks opportunities for collaboration and professional learning reflection.
- C. Literacy leaders, including district consultants and school-based lead teachers, actively support instruction:
- literacy leadership teams, including AISI leadership teams, work with staff to build capacity in literacy instruction for 21st century learners.

III Family, Community, and Government Partnerships

- A. Each district staff member supports parents/guardians in understanding literacy learning in the 21st century and in setting high expectations for learning.
- B. Community programs support literacy development for 21st century learners.
- C. The District works with government, businesses and post secondary institutions to garner support for literacy learning.



Collaborative action and shared responsibility among educators, school authorities, parents, community members, business leaders and students on literacy is needed. Literacy development begins at birth. Experiences in the family, in early learning environments, and in school years have important consequences in literacy skills development. (As conveyed in Alberta Education (2008) and Canadian Education Statistics Council (2009)).

Links *(for more information)*

assessment “for,” “of” and “as” learning
authentic tasks
case management approach
collaborative learning
direct, explicit instruction
effective integration of technologies
digital citizenship
interventions
job embedded
literacy coach
pluralism

“Why is [21st century literacy] crucial? Jobs have become more complex and integrated. As a society, our only competitive advantage is our people (their knowledge, skills and attitudes).” - Feb. 3, 2010
 Superintendent Leadership Meeting (SLM)

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The **second** best time is today.” - A Chinese Proverb
 as quoted at the Feb. 3, 2010 Superintendent Leadership Meeting (SLM)

Most literacy challenges can be prevented through an appropriate mix of: systematic and comprehensive instruction designed to help all students succeed; appropriate early learning experiences; systematic assessments that target early identification of children who experience difficulties; and appropriate intervention. (Based on ideas from Alberta Education (2008) and Canadian Education Statistics Council (2009)).



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