

Saskatchewan Teachers' Perspective on
Curriculum Renewal



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The quoted statements in blue are from participants at the three Ministry of Education curriculum consultation meetings held in October 2016.

Introduction

Saskatchewan teachers appreciate the opportunity that the Ministry of Education’s curriculum consultations have provided for their professional voices to be heard and wish to emphasize the crucial importance of their voices continuing to be relied upon in all aspects of curriculum renewal, implementation and actualization.

Following an invitation extended by Legislative Secretary Lisa Lambert, Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation staff and members participated in three Ministry curriculum consultation meetings during October 2016, along with other partners in education and community-based organizations. This document is the formal submission to the Ministry of Education by the Federation on behalf of approximately 13,000 professional teachers. It elaborates on the key messages that Federation staff and members provided to the Ministry, other partners in education and community organization members in attendance at these meetings.

The purpose of this submission is to formally offer Saskatchewan teachers’ voices through a set of 13 principles upon which a successful system of curriculum renewal can be based. These principles are situated within the legislated mandate of the Federation as well as within the formal bylaws and policies adopted by teachers’ elected councillors through a rigorous process of review, research and professional reflection.

The Federation and its members are supportive of the Ministry reinvigorating and reinvesting in curriculum renewal efforts at this point in time and hold a deep professional desire for those efforts to be successful. For Saskatchewan teachers, a curriculum is not simply an informational document that guides teaching and learning in the classroom. Rather, curriculum comes into existence – it is enacted – through the myriad of particular and contextualized educational experiences that students have over time and that teachers create.

It is for this reason that teachers never stop “doing” curriculum renewal. That is, curriculum renewal is a constant, ongoing part of being a professional teacher. Because of this professional obligation, Saskatchewan teachers want to create, and in the past have consistently created, well-thought-out, well-constructed and well-resourced provincial curricula, curricular foundations and curricular supports (such as professional growth opportunities and learning resources) as an integral part of robust learning environments for students.

Some of the curricula identified go back a long time. One is 50 years old. If we ask: How can a curricula that is that old still be taught, still be relevant, still get kids into university, still prepare them for university?

I like to think that what keeps curricula fresh, relevant, is the teachers’ professionalism and judgment.

So, how do we keep that notion alive, and harness it?

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation), Prince Albert meeting

If curriculum renewal is to be successful, it must be sustainable. Sustainability in this context means that curriculum renewal must be ongoing, properly resourced and strategically planned. Sustainability is enhanced through collaborative and responsive processes. A successful system will be inclusive, with broad representation in recognition of the shared responsibility and accountability across the education sector in Saskatchewan. It will be based on renewed or reaffirmed Saskatchewan goals of education and well-understood curricular foundations that honour the excellent work done in the province to date while at the same time being forward-looking and shaped by our current contextual needs.

A successful system will, as both a societal moral imperative and a foundational curricular need, consistently infuse and rely upon Indigenous ways of knowing. It will be student centred, giving confidence that students' voices are consistently heard by ensuring that a robust vetting and piloting of curriculum possibilities occurs in Saskatchewan classrooms.

A successful system will see teachers filling leadership roles at all levels of curricular decision making and in all phases of curriculum renewal.

The success of curriculum reforms largely rests on the shoulders of teachers, since they are the ones who put [curriculum] reform ideas into practice

Successful implementation of reforms depends on teachers' ownership of and their knowledge about reform ideas ... [and] involving teachers from the early stages of curriculum design fosters [that] ownership. (Huizinga, Handelzalts, Nieveen, & Voogt, 2014, p. 33)

History of Collaboration

Principle #1 – A collaborative system of curriculum renewal should reflect our successful professionally led practices of the past.

Saskatchewan’s education partners have a long history of commitment to providing the best research-based educational programs possible. This commitment, combined with high quality curriculum and instruction, effective assessment practices, a wide range of resources, and supportive families and communities, prepares students to live full and rewarding lives (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1)

Not only is there a long history in the province of collaboration and commitment among its partners in education, Saskatchewan teachers have also had a significant leadership role in curriculum development, implementation and actualization since at least 1944.

Our history of education and curriculum development in Saskatchewan is important. We need to remember where we’ve been.

I recommend adding a page to the introductory sections of all subject area curriculum documents summarizing their timeline from the beginning of the 20th century.

- Participant (University of Saskatchewan), Saskatoon meeting

Early History

Principle #2 – Saskatchewan teachers should have a leadership role at all levels of curricular decision making and in all phases of curriculum development, implementation and actualization.

Since 1944, Saskatchewan teachers have, through collaboration between the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation and the Ministry of Education, led and been heavily involved in curriculum development at all levels of decision making and renewal. From the laying of curricular philosophical foundations to the examination of the educational system as a whole, to the writing, piloting, evaluating and implementing of subject- or grade-specific renewed curriculum, dedicated teachers have consistently brought valuable wisdom and professional insight to collaborative processes producing curricula that “is highly respected nationally and internationally” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1).

When teachers and administrators are present in curriculum development, I know that the process will be rooted in professionalism ... I’d also like to see pre-service teachers involved.

- Participant (University of Saskatchewan), Saskatoon meeting

This tradition of collaboration began with Henry Janzen who, as a newly appointed director of curriculum in 1944, immediately established a broad-based general advisory committee and continued to rely on the already-established Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation curriculum committees that "kept him in touch with the sentiment in the field" (Lyons, 2006, p. 54).

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s "Janzen continued the expansion of collaborative approaches to curriculum development" (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016a, p. 5) and this way of renewing curriculum became both well established in Saskatchewan and an exemplary model used by other jurisdictions around the world.

From this early history, and in the continued fulfilment of their legislated mandate to promote the cause of education, Saskatchewan teachers expect their professional voices to be heard and acted upon by those who have legislative authority and responsibility for public education. This professional expectation continues to this day. It was made evident, for example, during the recent joint Ministry of Education and Federation meetings held across the province in early 2014, where teacher voice was one theme that emerged. As one teacher participant said then:

How or where are teachers going to be inserted into the decision-making processes? The things that work, how will they become broader policy? ... The system needs to be getting feedback directly from teachers, the government needs to be acting on it, and then coming back and checking with us again. (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2014, p. 2)

Recent History

Principle #3 – An enduring inclusive cross-sector body with appropriate representation and leadership should be established for reviewing and reaffirming our curricular foundations and for determining signposts, criteria and strategies that will ensure ongoing curriculum renewal efforts are successful.

The tradition of collaboration and teacher leadership is not simply a relic of early history. It has continued, with few exceptions, from the early 1940s until now. In the 1980s, *Directions* earned a worldwide reputation as a successful model for curriculum renewal, where its:

... education and curriculum review, oddly enough, survived three changes in government, and Saskatchewan ... emerged as one of the Canadian prototypes for provincial curriculum reform. (Robinson, 2006, p. 209)

Directions was a massive review and renewal effort that involved 34 public meetings, the distribution of 160,000 household questionnaires and 156 formal submissions, which culminated in the establishment of a curricular foundation and the *Goals of Education for Saskatchewan* that have served the public, teachers and students well ever since.

Keep doing what we've done historically. Focus on the whole student, we've been doing that for 30 years. I'm hearing around the room that we need to include this or that [topic]. So yes, consult, bring it together. This [Ministry consultation] is a good start, but there's a need to ensure we build a strong foundation.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Saskatoon meeting

Although it is not envisioned that the current effort would require consultations of the same scope, it is important that a professionally led, collaborative and co-operative structure be established to support the educational partners in taking sufficient time to reaffirm our curricular foundations and, if needed, refresh or rearticulate them taking into consideration current contexts, realities, needs and language.

The overarching structure that supported *Directions* was the Minister's Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Instruction Review (1984). There were 24 members of the Committee which was chaired by a teacher and co-ordinated by an STF senior staff member. Of the 24 committee members, nine were members or leaders of the Federation. There were also four representatives of the Ministry, three members of the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, three representatives of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, two members from Saskatchewan's universities, two members of the public and a Dene materials developer.

Other examples of collaborative approaches to curriculum-related renewal and review are easy to find. For example, in the 1990s there was the High School Review Advisory Committee with a similar composition, chaired by a teacher. In 1999 the Saskatchewan partners in education jointly prepared *Actualization of Core Curriculum* through the Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Committee, which "[took] stock of where we are in our understanding of how to implement, revise, and renew all aspects of Core Curriculum" (Saskatchewan Education, 1999, p. 1) and reaffirmed the *Goals of Education for Saskatchewan* that emerged from the *Directions* process. This Committee had representation from the francophone community; Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies; League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; Saskatchewan Association of Historical High Schools; Saskatchewan Association of School Councils; Saskatchewan Education; Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology; Saskatchewan School Trustees Association; Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; University of Regina; and University of Saskatchewan.

More recently, in 2010 the Provincial Panel on Student Achievement was convened, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education. There were four members from each of: the Ministry of Education; the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; the Saskatchewan School Boards Association; the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations; the University of Regina; the University of Saskatchewan; the Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations; the Gabriel Dumont Institute; the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan; and the First Nations University of Canada. The panel provided a set of comprehensive, practical and sustainable recommendations to best serve Saskatchewan students' educational interests.

As a final example, in 2013 the Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People was created. The Joint Task Force was a panel of three people, which included a retired senior staff member of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, a senior vice-president of corporate social responsibility at Cameco Corporation and the executive director of the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan.

Through these and other collaborative structures and processes, Saskatchewan teachers have made significant contributions to the creation and renewal of the foundations of provincial curriculum. Through the establishment of these foundations it came to be understood among Saskatchewan partners in education that it was imperative for teachers to have a leadership role in all aspects of curriculum development, including the creation, renewal, implementation, actualization and evaluation of curricula.

I'd invite us to discuss what we all mean by curriculum. I'm not sure we all come with the same understandings. So that you're starting in the right place. It takes me back to the question: What is an educated person in Saskatchewan?

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Saskatoon meeting

Saskatchewan's Curricular Foundations

Principle #4 – Reaffirmed, refreshed and rearticulated curricular foundations are necessary that appropriately consider, and are reflective of, Saskatchewan's current contexts, realities, needs and commitments to First Nations and Métis peoples.

Saskatchewan's professionally led, collaborative and co-operative curriculum development processes of the past resulted in a strong vision for the future of education, well-articulated goals of education and a foundational curriculum framework most recently built around broad areas of learning and cross-curricular competencies.

The results of these past processes, which still have much relevance today, demonstrate how visionary, necessary and impactful this part of the overall process has been.

I thought the Directions process was very valuable. It engaged teachers, parents and students.

- Participant (University of Regina), Regina meeting

Below are excerpts from these foundational documents provided as both background and a reminder of the strong work that has come before.

Directions Vision

The school that we see is built upon a clearly articulated and understood set of goals. The goals are a guide for educational planning, and truly reflect the uniqueness of the school population. They are foremost in the minds of the trustees, administrators, teachers, parents and community. The students in the school understand what the goals of the school are and know what they are expected to learn. Expectations are high.

The school has built-in mechanisms for continuous evaluation and improvement. A method of dealing with problems as they arise has been determined and is clearly understood by all. Reporting to students, parents, and staff is frequent, and the school employs long-range planning. Teachers in the school are continuously learning new skills and updating their professional knowledge.

Attention is given to the needs of individual learners. The school curriculum is designed to teach basic skills, yet remain flexible enough to accommodate the needs of all students. A well-organized network of counselling and support services is available to students who require such services. A variety of learning activities are coordinated by trained staff in a well equipped resource centre.

The school has an effective principal who guides day-to-day operations. The principal provides leadership in a variety of ways: by initiating dialogue concerning expectations and school-wide goals, by ensuring that decision making takes place at the local level, by establishing efficient planning procedures, by encouraging parental and community involvement and by managing and controlling the facility. Above all else, the principal is seen by both teachers and students as supportive, caring and trustworthy. In addition, both principal and teachers know they have the support and assistance of board and central office administration.

Well-developed curricula are available to guide the teachers in the school. Instructional materials and teaching strategies which are most appropriate are selected. Teachers monitor students' work carefully and frequently provide feedback on their progress. Many opportunities are available for students to assume responsibility and direct their own learning.

Each person in the school is valued as an individual. Children experience success as they learn the skills required to function as productive members of society. The atmosphere is supportive and non-threatening, yet constructive and orderly. The school that we envision is a place where both teachers and students want to be. It achieves a happy medium between right and responsibility, and combines caring and respect with learning.

The school that we see ahead of us is not one that can be established overnight. We recognize that achieving such a degree of excellence takes time and direction. But we also recognize that elements of our vision are already in place, that the foundation has been laid. We present our action plan as a long-term plan, and ask for the commitment of all those involved with education in attaining that school of our vision. (Minister's Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Instruction Review, 1984, pp. 5-6)

Goals of Education for Saskatchewan (1985)

Goals of education in Saskatchewan should direct efforts to develop the potential of all students in the province. Education should affirm the worth of each individual and lay the foundation for learning throughout life.

Students benefit from exposure to learning in a variety of situations. Attainment of the goals is a venture the school shares with the student, the home, the church and the community. Although the degree of school responsibility will vary from community to community, the school has some responsibility for each goal.

A body of knowledge and a range of skills and attitudes are necessary to function in a changing world. It is intended, then, that education will enable Saskatchewan students to do the following to the best of their abilities:

- Basic Skills;
- Lifelong Learning;
- Understanding and Relating to Others;
- Self-Concept Development;
- Positive Life Style;
- Spiritual Development;
- Career and Consumer Decisions;
- Membership in Society;
- Growing with Change.

(Reaffirmed in Saskatchewan Education's *Actualization of the Core Curriculum*, 1999.
Details under each heading listed above were omitted for brevity.)

Broad Areas of Learning

The Broad Areas of Learning ... provide a conceptual foundation for the renewal of curricula, and encompass and build upon the provincial Goals of Education ... The K-12 goals and grade level outcomes for each area of study are designed to ensure that students reach their full potential in each of the following Broad Areas of Learning:

- Lifelong Learners;
- Sense of Self, Community, and Place;
- Engaged Citizens.

(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 3)

Cross-Curricular Competencies

Saskatchewan curricula are designed to develop four interrelated Cross-curricular Competencies ... that synthesize and build upon the six Common Essential Learnings. The following competencies contain understandings, values, skills and processes considered important for learning in all areas of study:

- Developing Thinking;
- Developing Identity and Interdependence;
- Developing Literacies;
- Developing Social Responsibility.

(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 4)

Student Achievement

Provincial Panel on Student Achievement Recommendation Number Two:

The Panel concludes that action to improve the well-being and educational outcomes of First Nations and Métis students is urgent – a moral, social and economic imperative. The Panel further concludes that student learning and achievement is improved when all students feel a sense of belonging at school and have hope and goals for the future. The Panel recognizes that the Ministry of Education, under the guidance of the First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee, and through other partnerships, has developed a cohesive and comprehensive body of policy toward these ends. Therefore the Panel recommends:

That the Ministry of Education take action to ensure the First Nations and Métis education policy that already exists is fully implemented in all classrooms, schools and school divisions across Saskatchewan. Recommended actions include:

- i. Creation of a strategy that meaningfully engages the First Nations and Métis communities in educational decision making and that empowers First Nations and Métis people to shape educational decisions
- ii. Expansion of culturally responsive programs
- iii. Increased professional development at all levels
- iv. Strengthening and renewal of relationships between the Ministry of Education and school divisions with First Nations and Métis organizations
- v. Creation of supports for policy implementation at every level of the education system
- vi. Development of indicators of policy implementation.

(Provincial Panel on Student Achievement, 2010, p. 3)

Strong curricular foundations have been laid throughout the early historical and more recent collaborations across Saskatchewan's education sector. These foundations include a set of recommendations provided by the Provincial Panel on Student Achievement convened by the Ministry in 2010. Although the Panel's recommendations were comprehensive, practical and sustainable, many have not yet been fully implemented and remain as goals for the partners in education to work toward.

If or when a formal reinvestment of resources and energy in curriculum renewal happens, time needs to be set aside for review, reaffirmation and re-articulation of Saskatchewan's curricular foundations to take into consideration current contexts and to ensure that we are heading in the right direction.

There are some strong foundations. It started with Directions. We don't need to throw everything out. But there is a need for a clear process.

In the past, there were teachers involved, they were piloting, etc. The recent science renewal is closer to that history.

- Participant (University of Regina), Regina meeting

We support a return to the historical involvement of teachers.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Prince Albert meeting

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Principle #5 – Curricular foundations, frameworks, structures and processes should consistently infuse and rely upon Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous community leadership.

Building on Principle Number Four and on Recommendation Number Two of the *Provincial Panel on Student Achievement Final Report*, Principle Number Five recognizes that Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing must not be included in curricula simply as information for students to learn. Indigenous ways of knowing should also be infused throughout all aspects of curriculum renewal and the education system as a whole.

We hear much about indigenizing the curriculum; putting Aboriginal history and culture into the curriculum so Aboriginal people are correctly represented ... A prevailing philosophy is that if Aboriginal people see themselves in the texts, they will be able to associate with the concepts ... and this will make learning easier ... I agree to a certain degree, but I believe indigenizing the curriculum has to be done by and with Aboriginal people to get it right (Hogue, 2016, p. 164)

Although Saskatchewan's curricular foundations remain relevant, there have been important and necessary changes in our society over the long time period through which these were established.

With respect to Aboriginal content, I do see lovely resources available now, however, I don't see a lot of the most current resources included in our curriculum documents.

In addition, these resources still feel like "add ons." We need to offer Aboriginal perspectives to curriculum as a whole, as well as individual resources.

- Participant (University of Saskatchewan), Saskatoon meeting

The profound imperative of responding to these changes appropriately in curriculum renewal is reflected in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*:

7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:
 - i. **Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.**
 - ii. **Improving educational attainment levels and success rates.**
 - iii. **Developing culturally appropriate curricula.**
 - iv. **Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.**
 - v. **Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.**
 - vi. **Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.**
 - vii. **Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.**
11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pp. 1-2)

The Federation must emphasize here, in this current submission, that this is not the first time Saskatchewan teachers have advocated for these types of appropriate and necessary changes. In 2009, for example, the Federation submitted to the Provincial Panel on Student Achievement the following:

First of all, it is important to emphasize that the teaching profession remains strongly committed, as demonstrated in the Federation's policies and programs, to a holistic, student-centred education for all children and youth in which First Nations as well as Métis ways of knowing, teaching and learning are foundational. Bringing about this education involves working with, rather than 'for' or 'on behalf of,' First Nations or Métis communities. (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009, p. 3)

Beyond these important recommendations for renewed curriculum foundations and curriculum development processes, the Federation's submission to the Panel also supported the establishment and authentic use of specific structures to ensure Indigenous leadership is sought, valued and responded to appropriately in educational matters.

The STF respectfully suggests that, insofar as the provincial government's authority and responsibilities for PreK-12 education are concerned, an appropriate venue in which to engage in discussions about 'First Nations and Métis education' ... is the newly established First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee (FNMEPAC). We also suggest that the Action Plan (and revisions) prepared by the former Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee (AEPAC) included the kinds of practical steps that educators and others should take to strengthen all students' knowledge and understanding about the respective histories, ways of knowing, and cultures of First Nations as well as Métis peoples. (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009, p. 3)

Again, it is important at this point in time to take an opportunity to reflect together, inclusively, upon both the currently established curricular foundations as well as the design of the necessary structures and processes for curricular renewal to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing and being are honoured, respected and foundational going forward. The way forward demands more than simply adding Indigenous content to existing curriculum.

Curriculum and Supporting Curriculum Renewal

Curriculum

Principle #6 – Curriculum should continue to be understood as experiential and relational in nature, which is enacted within and dependent upon the teaching and learning environments that teachers create.

Curriculum is complicated. At first glance, one might think that curriculum is just a set of documents to be taught to students. However, as you delve deeper and consider everything that is taught and learned in a classroom, curriculum becomes much more involved ... Curriculum is 'a complicated system of interpretation, interactions, transmissions – planned and unplanned'. Curriculum is complicated – particularly when examined within its relationship with teaching. (Bufalino, 2013, p. 10)

Teachers are in relationships with curricula and students. Teachers are meaning makers. The work that teachers do implements, actualizes and interprets curricula. Teachers ensure students have quality experiences in their own relationships with curricula. Teachers bring context to curricula – that is, their knowledge of their students, schools, communities and beyond informs their professional practice and provides context for their students in support of student learning.

Teachers have a relationship with curricula and the student. It is important that they feel they have been a part of that process, that they get to create, pilot and field test curricula.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Prince Albert meeting

At the recent Ministry of Education consultation on curriculum renewal held in Saskatoon, one teacher participant told a powerful story about his son's recent educational experience:

We need to be careful just how much measurement we do. Measurement has its place and is certainly important, but things that are easy to measure are not always important, and things that are important are not always easy to measure. My own son went to [a reserve] recently, as part of his Native Studies 20 class, where they participated in a sweat lodge ceremony and they had a sweat lodge experience. Before he went, we had a conversation about what is appropriate and not appropriate. We debriefed when he came home, and I asked him about what he learned. I don't know that he could put into words what he got out of it. He was moved. He did say that he now understands what they have been talking about in his class, though. He will remember that experience for the rest of his life, long after anything he might have done on a final exam. But how do you test that - measure that?

This story provides a good example of how important it is that curricula and curricular frameworks are designed to support teachers in their interpretations of curricula that allow for rich student experiences, for meeting students' diverse learning needs and interests, and for reaching toward Saskatchewan's overarching goals of education.

Relatedly, among teachers' beliefs stated in STF Policy 2.10 (Teaching and Learning) Section 2.10.2 are the following:

- (1) Teaching and learning occurs within many different contexts. Teachers share the responsibility with students, parents, communities and partners in education to provide conditions that are necessary and appropriate for teaching and learning to be holistic, equitable and effective.
- (2) Holistic, equitable and effective teaching and learning is grounded in a relationship of mutual respect, acceptance and trust among teachers and students. It is a deeply personal human endeavour that is enhanced by the cultivation of such relationships.
- (3) Teaching and learning should be guided by sound educational research identified by the teaching profession, the Saskatchewan curricula, professional standards and ideals, and professional judgment with respect to students' well-being.
- (4) The primary professional goal of teachers is to create learning opportunities that support and encourage students to grow individually and collectively to the greatest extent possible

(Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016b, p. 85)

I can't emphasize enough the importance of having that professional flexibility built in to curricula, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach, so that teachers can meet their particular students' needs.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Prince Albert meeting

Principle #7 – Curriculum should continue to have a place for specific desired content situated within a coherent educational framework at all levels of curricula (including subjects, subject areas, cross-curricular goals and overarching foundations).

As Saskatchewan's curricular foundations are renewed, reaffirmed and rearticulated, it is important to develop common understandings of key terms and concepts. For example,

- **Curriculum:** Curriculum is more than a set of subjects and content that is taught to students. Grundy (1987) notes that curriculum is a cultural construction – it is a broad set of experiences that seek to ensure children have the understandings, attitudes and abilities necessary to thrive in society both in the present and the future.
- **Instructional Methods:** Instructional methods are the wide range of techniques and processes that teachers use to engage students in learning. There is a growing research base regarding effective instructional methods. *Saskatchewan Reads* is a good example of a collection of instructional methods. Instructional methods should not be confused with curriculum.

- **Programs:** Programs are discrete sets of information pertaining to a topic or set of topics. They may or may not contain suggestions for instructional methods. Programs can support the actualization of the broad goals of curriculum by providing content that supports the understandings or skills identified within a curriculum. Information sets related to citizenship, financial literacy and other topics are programs that support the delivery or actualization of curriculum. Again, programs should not be confused with curriculum.

Sometimes we blur the lines between what is a program and what is a curriculum.

A program is a vehicle, one among many, a resource, that can be used in a curriculum. I'm thinking of, for example, the work around financial literacy. It isn't a curriculum itself, but it certainly has a role within various curricula.

So, be deliberate in not blurring those lines.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Prince Albert meeting

A recurring theme at the recent Ministry curriculum consultations, brought forward by various community-based interest groups, was that there is a perceived need for certain specific topics or sets of topics to be taught in schools at various grade levels. Some examples given were financial literacy, citizenship perspectives, the Paul Martin Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program and English language literacy. While it is laudable and appreciated that various community groups take an interest in what is taught in schools, there are common misperceptions regarding what is already an integral part of the curriculum and what is actually taught in schools.

Renowned Canadian researchers Connelly and Clandinin (1988) spoke generally to this common problem within public education when they wrote:

Curriculum development and curriculum planning are fundamentally questions of teacher thinking and doing. We believe that it is the teachers' 'personal knowledge' that determines all matters of significance relative to the planned conduct of classrooms. (p. 4)

Saskatchewan teachers welcome the involvement of the public in curriculum renewal efforts and appreciate the public's support of this and of public education more generally. Community interest groups' involvement must, however, be at the right place and time and be done in appropriate ways if renewal efforts are to be successful and for the overall benefit of students. There is certainly room for programs and other learning resources within provincial curricula in which community groups may take a particular special interest. These must, however, fit into the educational frameworks and curricular designs that come first.

I'm surprised to see as many stakeholders here as there are. I've worked well with many of them, or the organizations they represent, and appreciated their input when redeveloping curriculum in the past.

I'm worried, though, about stakeholders coming in too early. It risks the process being held hostage or too responsive to needs other than teachers' and students'.

The education has to come first, then the stakeholders can come in and fit their interests into the curriculum outcomes and indicators that are there.

- Teacher participant, Saskatoon meeting

Supporting Curriculum Renewal

Principle #8 – The Ministry of Education should continue to meet its legislated mandate for providing teachers, students and the public with well-researched and well-thought-out curricula.

The Ministry has a legislated responsibility to provide the curricula from which teachers create learning environments for their students.

When thinking about curriculum renewal, we should start with the statutory obligation of the Minister, who's responsible for providing curriculum. In doing so, asking the good questions, like today: What does the process need to look like?

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Saskatoon meeting

According to *The Education Act, 1995*:

- 3(2) The minister shall:
- (c) provide curriculum guides pertaining to courses of study authorized by the minister with respect to kindergarten and grades 1 to 12;
 - (d) make provision for the preparation and publication, as the Minister considers fit, of information with respect to goals, objectives and educational planning with respect to the present and future growth and development of the educational system;
 - (e) provide lists of textbooks, library books, reference books, other learning resources, apparatus, equipment and other materials that the minister may prescribe, approve or recommend pursuant to clause 4(1)(e);
 - (f) make provision for in-service education programs and related activities that pertain to implementation of new programs and courses and for any seminars, conferences and other meetings considered advisable for the purposes of consultation with respect to educational planning

Further, according to *The Education Regulations, 2015*:

- 48(2) Subject to subsection (3), if the minister has prescribed textbooks, library books, reference books or other learning resources, a board of education and the conseil scolaire shall ensure their use in schools.
- (4) A board of education or the conseil scolaire may, in accordance with policies established pursuant to clause (1)(a), approve other textbooks, library books, reference books or other learning resources to be provided at the expense of the board of education or the conseil scolaire, as the case may be.
- (5) A board of education and the conseil scolaire shall:
- (a) provide school library services; and
 - (b) establish policies and standards governing school libraries.

Teachers believe that government best carries out these roles and obligations by providing the institutional structures and related human and financial resources that are necessary to support professionally led, collaborative efforts in ongoing curriculum renewal.

The leadership the Ministry can provide, it is around the broad framework, and doing it in a holistic way. When we look at what's happened in the past, at the discrete areas, we need to keep the holistic vision, including appropriately infusing Indigenous ways of knowing.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), Saskatoon meeting

Principle #9 – The Ministry of Education should continue to support teachers in ensuring a variety of pedagogically appropriate learning resources are made readily available so that renewed curricula can be actualized effectively.

Teachers need ready access to a variety of high-quality learning resources that can be used to meet the goals of a particular curriculum and that also fit Saskatchewan and students' local contexts. A wide range of resources is necessary to support teachers in taking a variety of pedagogical approaches in order to ensure rich student experiences and to better meet students' diverse learning needs.

The focus on prepackaged materials in the English language arts curriculum (i.e., the Collections series of basal readers listed as a Core Resource) doesn't honour the importance of local themes the way the very best selections of children's literature can.

If we keep Collections as Core, we should absolutely include updated children's literature suggestions and other digital resources as a second option, so that teachers have a supported choice away from prepackaged materials that are expensive and not necessarily best practice.

- Participant (University of Saskatchewan), Saskatoon meeting

STF Policy 2.1 (Teacher Success) Section 2.1.2 captures this need:

Teaching and learning [are complex processes] that involve social, emotional and cognitive dimensions ... Teachers must have the flexibility, ... [therefore], to try new approaches and learning resources in their work with students. Some of these ... methods may be better suited than others to meet students' educational needs. (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016b, p. 77)

As we begin to focus attention on, and put into place, the types of structures and processes that are necessary for successful ongoing curriculum renewal, all partners in education must clearly understand the need for, and challenges of, sourcing, creating, testing, evaluating, approving and purchasing learning resources.

In the recent science renewal, the government funded learning resources development. We created our own resources for our elementary science programs. These made-in-Saskatchewan resources are priceless. They have been so successful that other provinces are now using them.

- Teacher participant, Saskatoon meeting

Principle #10 – The Ministry of Education should continue to support teachers in implementing renewed curricula by ensuring related ongoing professionally led professional growth opportunities are readily available for all teachers.

Once a particular curriculum, or curricular area, has been renewed at the provincial level – that is, it has been chosen in relation to the province’s overall goals, evaluated, written, resourced, vetted, piloted and rewritten – it must be implemented across the province.

Implementation of a renewed provincial curriculum means that individual teachers must have a chance to learn about the renewed curriculum – and there are many things to learn. It is not simply about discovering if there is any new content that is expected to be taught. Teachers must explore whether there are new foundations and pedagogies incorporated, how it may differ from previous curricula, past and possible new learning resources that might or might not fit, and how it relates to or sequences with other curricula. They also need to examine how to plan for the year and the units they will use, revise or create, and whether there is a need to create or adapt resources for their own personal professional practice.

We need to understand that curriculum is the total bundle of student experiences, not a document.

So, it is what the teacher brings, what the student brings, what the culture of the school is. Professional development is an important part of this.

- Participant (Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation), Prince Albert meeting

Opportunities and time for teachers to do this professional work must, therefore, be available if curriculum renewal efforts are to be successful. These opportunities must bring a provincial-level perspective for consistency in dissemination and for generating shared understandings. They must also be ongoing and not simply a “one-time” opportunity offered immediately upon the adoption of a renewed curriculum.

Professional development is needed for teachers to implement curriculum. How do we ensure that?

- Participant (school board member), Saskatoon meeting

STF Policy 2.1 (Teacher Success) Section 2.1.3 captures this need:

Key supports that are expected by teachers as they carry out their professional responsibilities include ... designated time, teaching resources, opportunities for professional reflection and growth, and other supports, as identified by the teaching profession, that enable teachers to create and maintain a learning environment that meets students' diverse educational needs. (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016b, p. 78)

Additionally, STF Policy 2.6 (Professional Growth) Section 2.6.2 emphasizes that:

- (1) Teachers' professional growth benefits teaching and learning and contributes to the betterment of the teaching profession as a whole.
- (3) Teachers have the ability and responsibility to self-direct their professional growth and expect the autonomy necessary to exercise their professional judgment in related decision-making at both group and individual levels.
- (5) Consistent and meaningful access to high-quality professional learning opportunities is fundamental to teachers' continued professional growth.
- (6) The creation of opportunities for teachers' professional growth is a shared responsibility among teachers, school boards and the provincial government that depends critically upon the provision of time, resources and other necessary supports for teachers.

(Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016b, p. 82)

Over my career I've seen professional development [for renewed curricula] anywhere from some to none.

Professional development is necessary for teachers to actualize the curricula, to make it come alive.

Teachers do not want to leave the classroom. It is a lot of [extra] work to leave the classroom. We need to make it worth their while with meaningful professional development. Teachers need time with the new curricula, for preparing teaching materials and strategies prior to the implementation of the curriculum.

- Teacher participant, Regina meeting

The Work of Teachers

Principle #11 – The Ministry of Education should ensure provincially co-ordinated curriculum renewal structures and processes are put in place that serve as an avenue for the further strengthening of both the teaching profession and the education system as a whole in Saskatchewan.

The work of teachers, as professionals, goes far beyond what may be directly observable within a classroom or school environment. In addition to the planning, preparing, assessing, communicating, co-ordinating, volunteering, administering, directing and other work-related activities teachers routinely carry out for the benefit of their students, Saskatchewan teachers also contribute to maintaining and building their profession for the benefit of the education system as a whole and the public more generally.

These obligations to the profession and to the public not only stem from individual teachers' inherent commitments they make upon assuming the role of professional teacher, they also stem from teachers' collective mandate granted through legislation.

For example, according to *The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006*, among the legislated purposes of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation are:

- 5(b) to carry on activities, in a manner consistent with the public interest, that improve:
 - (i) the quality of education; and
 - (ii) the delivery of educational support for and by teachers;
- (d) to promote the cause of education;
- (e) to raise the status of the teaching profession;

Individually, by assuming the role of professional teacher within Saskatchewan's publicly funded public education system, teachers commit to a Code of Ethics. Among these commitments are:

- 6.3.3 To make the teaching profession attractive in ideals and practices so that people will desire to enter it.
- 6.3.10 To develop teaching practices that recognize and accommodate diversity within the classroom, the school and the community.
- 6.3.11 To respect the right of students to form their own judgments based upon knowledge.
- 6.3.13 To seek to meet the needs of students by designing the most appropriate learning experiences for them.
- 6.3.14 To implement the provincial curriculum conscientiously and diligently, taking into account the context for teaching and learning provided by students, the school and the community.
- 6.3.20 To protect the educational program from exploitation.

(Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016b, pp. 41-42)

As a final example, STF Policy 2.10 (Teaching and Learning) states:

2.10.2(6) Therefore, teachers individually and collectively:

- (a) Advocate for a central role for teachers and the profession in curriculum development, implementation and renewal.
- (b) Advocate for a central role for teachers and the profession in the development of student evaluation, assessment and achievement goals, targets, policies and/or strategies at all levels of the education system.
- (c) Exercise professional judgment, autonomy and agency with respect to the carrying out of their duties for the benefit and well-being of students.
- (d) Engage in ongoing professional growth and advocate for it to be both supported and encouraged to the greatest extent possible.

(Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016b, p. 85)

For these reasons, Saskatchewan teachers support the government in establishing provincial-level curriculum renewal structures and processes that will allow teachers to meet both their legislated mandate and their professional aspirations.

Before we talk about subjects we need the province to develop a clear process. The idea that we will begin and end curriculum development is wrong headed. It needs to be an ongoing process. Every few years, a new subject is renewed. Then teachers can include it, no problem.

I know from a new government perspective, that it is kind of hard because each government wants to put its own stamp on things. Well, you can still have your stamp, but within an ongoing process.

- Teacher participant, Saskatoon meeting

Adding to that, a student will go through a cycle, 12 or 13 years ... Can we do this [renewal] on a 12 or 15 year cycle? Take language arts, for example, do the renewal over 12 years, then take a couple years to reflect?

That would be brilliant for the government to take on, to establish. Everywhere else they'd be looking to our system. You'd always know exactly where you are in the cycle.

- Teacher participant, Saskatoon meeting

Finally, the crucial importance of curriculum renewal structures and processes having a provincial-level focus must again be emphasized. At the Regina consultation meeting, four requirements emerged during discussion, and were supported by participants, as necessary for provincewide curriculum renewal processes to be sound and to have long-term success:

- (1) Renewal of curriculum requires a solid plan for implementation over a period of years or it will falter.
- (2) Facilitation and leadership by teachers is necessary.
- (3) Testing by students and parents during pilot phases is necessary.
- (4) Funds need to be designated for curriculum development as well as for professional learning and growth.

Without the latter, school divisions and teachers will not have the time, resources and supports that are necessary to be able to contribute fully to curriculum renewal and actualization.

A Sustainable Curriculum Renewal Process

Principle #12 – The Ministry of Education should ensure that grade- or subject-specific curriculum renewal structures and processes “talk to” the newly established curricular foundation renewal structures and processes.

In this document and in the Ministry of Education’s recent consultation meetings, the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation and several of its individual members have expressed the voice of teachers with respect to the principles that are necessary for provincial curriculum renewal efforts to be successful in both the near and longer term.

There are two major components within an entire system of curriculum development that have recently been referred to as “the what” and “the how” of curriculum renewal. Much of this document has so far been referring to “the what” of curriculum renewal. It has been focused on the overarching structures, processes, strategies and principles that are necessary at the provincial and cross-sector level to address high-level concerns, interests and questions.

Consideration must also be given to “the how” of curriculum renewal – the structures and processes that are necessary to address the more specific or detailed concerns, interests and questions related to the renewal of a specific provincial curriculum or set of provincial curricula.

First, and perhaps most importantly, those who are professionally engaged in “the how” processes must be able to communicate back and forth with those who are professionally engaged in “the what” processes. The two structures, and their established respective processes, should not be entirely separate or “siloed.” This is of paramount importance because when provincial curricula or sets of curricula are being renewed, they should not be renewed as “one-off” items or be done in an ad hoc or piecemeal fashion. They must be renewed in relation to the overarching foundations and in a way that supports and resources the long-term plans that are established by “the what” processes. If this does not happen, then much effort will be wasted and, unfortunately, curriculum renewal will not be successful.

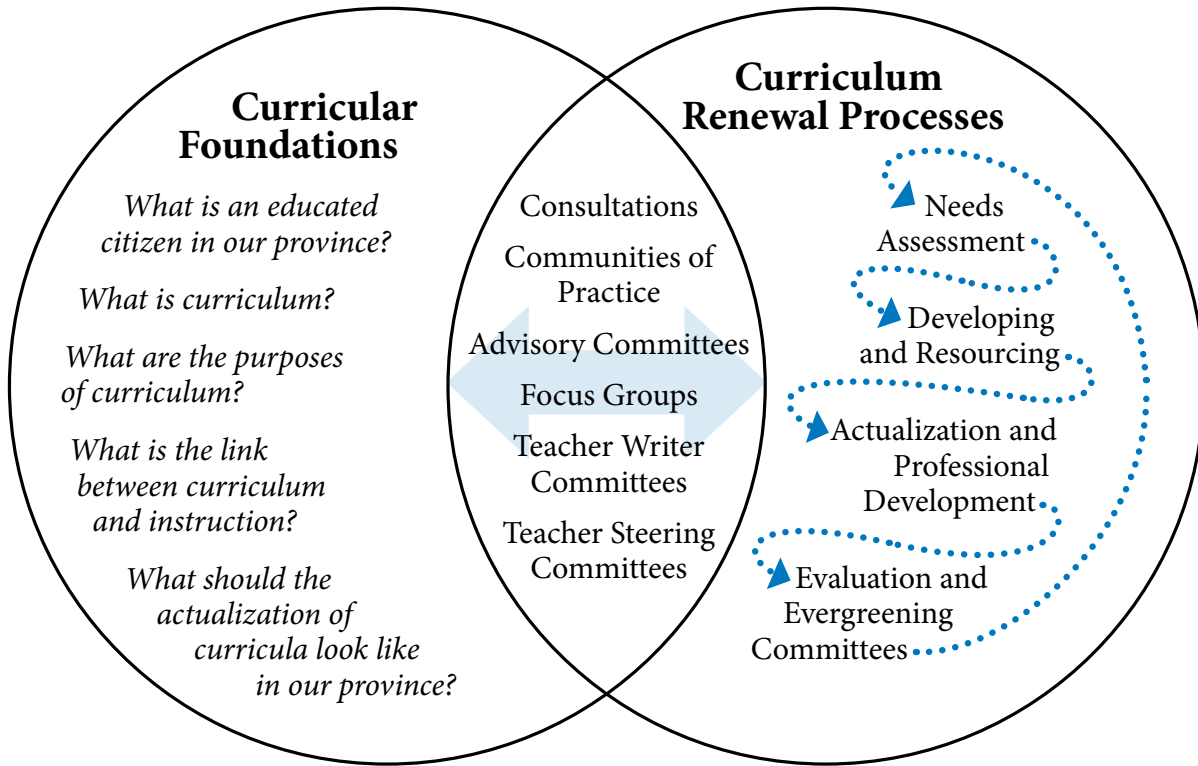
I’m a non-educator in this room, so I’m speaking from my perspective as a trustee and a parent. Keep using professionals. The writers they are using are professionals and write great curricula. It seems [though] that we are just doing everything piece meal.

The Ministry needs to start looking at the future. Not just this year or five years. We need to look down the road, 15 years, 20 years, and put a plan in place.

- Participant (Saskatchewan School Boards Association), Regina meeting

Simultaneous Work of Curriculum Renewal

For Saskatchewan teachers, curriculum renewal in the province involves two interconnected bodies of work. One body of work explores and articulates curricular foundations (i.e., “the what”) and the other body of work attends to the development of specific and flexible curriculum renewal processes (i.e., “the how”).



Foundations Work

As has been articulated already, it is necessary to establish a structure to facilitate curricular foundations work in the province. Exploring and articulating curricular foundations involves representatives from across the sector and members of the public engaging deeply in deliberations on higher-level curricular questions. Some early foundational questions may be:

- What is an educated citizen in our province?
- What is curriculum?
- What are the purposes of curriculum?
- What is the link between curriculum and instruction?
- What should the actualization of curricula look like in our province?

The results of these deliberations provide guidance, advice and direction to those engaged in curriculum renewal work.

Curriculum Renewal Processes

Curriculum renewal processes are responsive to curriculum foundations work. Curriculum renewal work involves practicing teachers and Indigenous leaders at all steps and phases of the curriculum development and implementation process and also involves other educational and community partners throughout.

It is important to emphasize that while the results of renewal efforts will support the Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2014-20, the Plan should not be the sole force driving the direction that curriculum renewal efforts take. The desires and goals expressed in the plan should be considered together with the actual and desired states of Saskatchewan curricula to provide overall direction and guidance for more specific curriculum renewal efforts, planning and staging. In other words, curriculum renewal will support enduring strategies to achieve the short- and long-term outcomes of the plan, including culturally relevant and engaging curriculum, differentiated and high-quality instruction, and culturally appropriate and authentic assessment.

Moving Forward

Principle #13 – The Ministry of Education should bring together cross-sector educational leaders for committed dialogue with respect to putting teachers’ curriculum renewal principles into provincial-level action in a timely, effective, efficient and sustainable fashion.

The Federation and its over 13,000 members have a proven history of leadership, partnership, collaboration and accomplishment in support of student learning and teacher success in our province.

The Federation respectfully offers in this submission to the Ministry of Education 13 principles that teachers believe will support a successful system of ongoing provincial curriculum renewal. The perspective, principles and advice that Saskatchewan teachers offer are based upon many years of professional research, experience and practice that inform the Federation’s policy base.

Working collaboratively with Saskatchewan’s Indigenous and Métis communities, the Ministry and other community and educational partners, Saskatchewan’s teachers seek to lead, facilitate and participate in provincial curriculum renewal efforts.

The degree of success of curriculum reform and implementation depends on the depth and genuineness of the involvement of teachers and, indeed, upon the level of leadership teachers can assume. (Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation, 2016a, p. 2)

Saskatchewan teachers are deeply committed to curriculum renewal and look forward to both strengthened partnerships and collaboration as all of us continue to strive for improvements to public education in Saskatchewan.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of Principles for Curriculum Renewal in Saskatchewan

1. A collaborative system of curriculum renewal should reflect our successful professionally led practices of the past.
2. Saskatchewan teachers should have a leadership role at all levels of curricular decision making and in all phases of curriculum development, implementation and actualization.
3. An enduring inclusive cross-sector body with appropriate representation and leadership should be established for reviewing and reaffirming our curricular foundations and for determining signposts, criteria and strategies that will ensure ongoing curriculum renewal efforts are successful.
4. Reaffirmed, refreshed and rearticulated curricular foundations are necessary that appropriately consider, and are reflective of, Saskatchewan's current contexts, realities, needs and commitments to First Nations and Métis peoples.
5. Curricular foundations, frameworks, structures and processes should consistently infuse and rely upon Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous community leadership.
6. Curriculum should continue to be understood as experiential and relational in nature, which is enacted within and dependent upon the teaching and learning environments that teachers create.
7. Curriculum should continue to have a place for specific desired content situated within a coherent educational framework at all levels of curricula (including subjects, subject areas, cross-curricular goals and overarching foundations).
8. The Ministry of Education should continue to meet its legislated mandate for providing teachers, students and the public with well-researched and well-thought-out curricula.
9. The Ministry of Education should continue to support teachers in ensuring a variety of pedagogically appropriate learning resources are made readily available so that renewed curricula can be actualized effectively.
10. The Ministry of Education should continue to support teachers in implementing renewed curricula by ensuring related ongoing professionally led professional growth opportunities are readily available for all teachers.
11. The Ministry of Education should ensure provincially co-ordinated curriculum renewal structures and processes are put in place that serve as an avenue for the further strengthening of both the teaching profession and the education system as a whole in Saskatchewan.
12. The Ministry of Education should ensure that grade- or subject-specific curriculum renewal structures and processes "talk to" the newly established curricular foundation renewal structures and processes.
13. The Ministry of Education should bring together cross-sector educational leaders for committed dialogue with respect to putting teachers' curriculum renewal principles into provincial level action in a timely, effective, efficient and sustainable fashion.

APPENDIX B

Related Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Policies

Goals of Publicly Funded Education

Definition

Publicly funded education refers to the provincially funded education system, as defined by *The Education Act, 1995*. Basic principles underlying publicly funded education are that the system is universally accessible and inclusive, funding is a societal responsibility, and the system is governed by elected representatives who are accountable to the public. The goals of publicly funded education provide an important context for teaching and learning, and for the professional growth of teachers.

Beliefs

(1) **General**

- (a) Publicly funded education is intended to meet the educational needs of all children in a society.
- (b) Publicly funded education must recognize and respect diversity among students, staff and communities, and must be committed to promoting equity within schools and society.
- (c) Publicly funded education must shape and enrich the character and life opportunities of each student.
- (d) The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation supports the curriculum-related Goals of Education for Saskatchewan (1984), as established by the provincial Ministry responsible for PreK-12 education through a public consultation process. These goals affirm a student-centred, broadly based understanding of education which will prepare students to become knowledgeable, caring and responsible citizens.

(2) **Processes to Define and Revise Goals**

- (a) The goals and curriculum of publicly funded education should have sufficient flexibility to balance provincial as well as local interests and needs.
- (b) The goals and direction of publicly funded education are best defined and revised through processes in which the interests of all stakeholders are heard and considered.
- (c) Teachers must have a central role in the processes used to define and revise the goals and direction of publicly funded education.

(3) **Responsibilities and Supports**

- (a) Although publicly funded education has a central role in meeting the educational needs of students, the general well-being of children is a collective responsibility that is shared among the home, school and community.
- (b) Teachers have a responsibility to model decision-making values and practices that are associated with democratic societies.
- (c) Teachers, in carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, should be active supporters of publicly funded education.

(2001)

Teaching and Learning

Definition

Teaching and learning are complex, dynamic and interdependent processes through which teachers facilitate students' growth along cognitive, social and emotional dimensions.

Beliefs

- (1) Teaching and learning occurs within many different contexts. Teachers share the responsibility with students, parents, communities and partners in education to provide conditions that are necessary and appropriate for teaching and learning to be holistic, equitable and effective.
- (2) Holistic, equitable and effective teaching and learning is grounded in a relationship of mutual respect, acceptance and trust among teachers and students. It is a deeply personal human endeavour that is enhanced by the cultivation of such relationships.
- (3) Teaching and learning should be guided by sound educational research identified by the teaching profession, the Saskatchewan curricula, professional standards and ideals, and professional judgment with respect to students' well-being.
- (4) The primary professional goal of teachers is to create learning opportunities that support and encourage students to grow individually and collectively to the greatest extent possible. To meet this goal, it is understood that:
 - (a) A variety of planned formal instructional strategies and informal interactions are necessary and desirable for encouraging individual and collective growth.
 - (b) Valuable learning opportunities can arise spontaneously, often as a result of informal interactions and the strong relationships forged among teachers and students.
 - (c) The creation and capturing of both planned and spontaneous learning opportunities depends upon teachers having considerable flexibility and freedom in their work with students.
- (5) An essential part of teaching and learning is the provision of timely and appropriate feedback, which includes student evaluation and assessment processes.
- (6) Therefore, teachers individually and collectively:
 - (a) Advocate for a central role for teachers and the profession in curriculum development, implementation and renewal.
 - (b) Advocate for a central role for teachers and the profession in the development of student evaluation, assessment and achievement goals, targets, policies and/or strategies at all levels of the education system.
 - (c) Exercise professional judgment, autonomy and agency with respect to the carrying out of their duties for the benefit and well-being of students.
 - (d) Engage in ongoing professional growth and advocate for it to be both supported and encouraged to the greatest extent possible.

(2015)

Indigenous Education

Definitions

Indigenous peoples of Canada are the first inhabitants of the land and their modern descendants, which include Aboriginal peoples of First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry.

Indigenous education cultivates holistic understanding of knowledge, the land, communities and all relations while emphasizing that Indigenous ways of knowing are foundational to teaching and learning.

Beliefs

- (1) Indigenous histories, teachings and stories must be included in curricula at all levels to ensure all students develop understandings of complex Indigenous cultures, customs, languages and knowledge.
- (2) Education can be a form of reconciliation through a focus on restorative justice, healing and other holistic healing initiatives.
- (3) Indigenous peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of Canadian society, are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals, and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination particularly that based on their Indigenous origin or identity.
- (4) Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination including the opportunity to control and lead the development of education legislation, systems, policies, research, and teaching and assessment practices that affect, and are reflective of, their diverse communities.
- (5) Education must respect the sovereign and sacred relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown, as represented by the Government of Canada, and the rights and responsibilities established under treaties and other constitutional agreements.
- (6) Indigenous children and youth have the right to equitable access to publicly funded education resources and services that are responsive to their needs.
- (7) Indigenous children and youth have the right to see the unique social and cultural context of their experiences, their world views and cultural norms reflected in the classroom and education system in positive ways.
- (8) Therefore, teachers individually and collectively:
 - (a) Are self-reflective about their own attitudes and beliefs shaped by colonialist discourses in doing healing work.
 - (b) Embrace holistic Indigenous educational practices as foundational to ongoing curriculum development and promote the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages, history, heritage, perspectives and ways of knowing to all students as a means to preserve the continuity and growth of Indigenous cultures and communities.
 - (c) Respect and recognize the intellectual property and communal rights of Indigenous peoples to their hereditary knowledge by securing the appropriate consent of the Indigenous individual or community that shared any information to be used in teaching and learning materials.
 - (d) Engage with and support Indigenous students, parents, caregivers, Elders and communities in culturally sensitive and appropriate relationships to identify and work to eliminate racism and discrimination in schools, and to enhance teachers' professional practice with better understandings of Indigenous cultures.
 - (e) Engage with and support Indigenous pre-service teachers and teachers, who must be treated equitably in all aspects of education but often experience additional challenges including racism and discrimination.

(2015)

Cultural Diversity and Language

Definitions

Culture refers to the knowledge, beliefs, customs, morals, understandings, language and habits that are acquired by a person as a member of a societal group.

Cultural diversity is the existence of a plurality of cultures within the province as recognized in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Indigenous languages are the languages spoken by the First Peoples of this land.

Heritage languages are languages that are connected to the early settlement of the province.

Beliefs

Cultural Diversity

- (1) Cultural diversity is a recognized fact in Canadian life and acknowledged both by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and other legislation.
- (2) Cultural diversity contributes to the richness of Canadian society.
- (3) People of all cultures are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals, and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination based on their cultural origins or identities.
- (4) Language is a primary medium through which culture is expressed and transmitted since culture is embedded in language.
- (5) Therefore, teachers individually and collectively:
 - (a) Are self-reflective about their own attitudes and beliefs in modeling respect and affirming of cultural diversity.
 - (b) Engage with and support students, families and communities in culturally sensitive and appropriate relationships to identify and work to eliminate racism, colonialism and discrimination in schools, and to enhance teachers' professional practice with better understandings of diverse cultures.
 - (c) Engage in meaningful dialogue within classrooms, schools, communities and society that explores the rich diversity of cultural differences and personal histories experienced by students and staff, and encourages transcultural learnings.

Language

- (1) Canada is a bilingual country within a culturally diverse framework as outlined by applicable legislation.
- (2) French education, French immersion and core French programs support the bilingual nature of the country and should be available to all students wanting access.
- (3) Indigenous languages are imperative to nurturing and protecting Indigenous cultures, and both immersion and core Indigenous language programs should be available to all students wanting access.
- (4) Programs, services and supports should be available to students whose primary language is not English or French.
- (5) Therefore, teachers individually and collectively:
 - (a) Continue to advocate for and support French education, French immersion and core French programs.
 - (b) Recognize the cultural importance of Indigenous languages and advocate for programs to provide Indigenous language instruction to all students wanting access.
 - (c) Advocate for the teaching of heritage and other languages to reduce the loss of fluency in languages other than English and French, and to broaden student exposure to cultural diversity.
 - (d) Advocate to ensure all students who need it have timely access to language programs and supports.

(2015)

Professional Growth

Definition

Professional growth refers to the change in knowledge, skills, abilities or perspectives resulting from the continuous professional learning that teachers intentionally pursue with the goal to further understand the nature of teaching and learning, enhance professional practice or contribute to the profession.

Beliefs

- (1) Teachers' professional growth benefits teaching and learning and contributes to the betterment of the teaching profession as a whole.
- (2) Professional growth is an inherent part of being a teacher and is an integral part of a teacher's practice.
- (3) Teachers have the ability and responsibility to self-direct their professional growth and expect the autonomy necessary to exercise their professional judgment in related decision-making at both group and individual levels.
- (4) Continuous professional learning should include a broad range of formal, informal and experiential learning opportunities that are planned, meaningful and related to the general duties, responsibilities or aspirations of the teacher.
- (5) Consistent and meaningful access to high-quality professional learning opportunities is fundamental to teachers' continued professional growth.
- (6) The creation of opportunities for teachers' professional growth is a shared responsibility among teachers, school boards and the provincial government that depends critically upon the provision of time, resources and other necessary supports for teachers.
- (7) Therefore, teachers individually and collectively:
 - (a) Support, encourage and provide opportunities for the professional growth of teachers.
 - (b) Advocate for appropriate provision of time, resources and supports for professional growth.
 - (c) Engage in ongoing reflective practice, self-assessment and professional renewal.
 - (d) Engage in continuous professional learning and contribute, where possible and appropriate, to research into teaching and learning.
 - (e) Encourage and support each other in the pursuit of professional growth, the sharing of professional insights and in other collaborative endeavours to improve teaching and learning.
 - (f) Pursue, develop and deliver a broad range of opportunities for professional growth. In addition to one-time formal learning opportunities, teachers engage in innovative, authentic, sustained, relevant, flexible, collaborative and locally embedded professional growth.
 - (g) Support a variety of organizations, networks and services related to teachers' professional growth.

(2015)

Teacher Success

Definitions

Teacher success refers to the degree to which individual teachers attain, within the context of their entire teaching careers, their desired professional goals.

Teacher competence refers to the quality of having an appropriate level of professional knowledge, skill and judgment to carry out specific teaching objectives and other professional responsibilities.

Teacher success is the more encompassing concept in the sense that a successful teacher is necessarily competent, generally speaking. It is also important to understand, however, that an individual may demonstrate an insufficient level of competence in a specific situation (e.g., when faced with a new teaching assignment on short notice), yet continue to be a successful teacher.

Preamble

Teachers recognize the interdependence between their students' success as learners and their own success as professional educators. Although each teacher has a responsibility to offer the best possible learning opportunities for students, no teacher should be expected to fully achieve their professional goals at all times. Teaching and learning, as processes that involve social, emotional and cognitive dimensions, are far too complex to guarantee competence or success in every circumstance. Teachers must have the flexibility, for example, to try new approaches and learning resources in their work with students. Some of these trial and error methods may be better suited than others to meet students' educational needs.

As with individual students, the extent of each teacher's success depends upon a wide range of interconnected contextual factors. Although some of these variables (e.g., career-related decisions) are largely within the teacher's control, many others are not (e.g., the diversity of students' learning needs, health, family situation and so on). It is essential to take this full range of factors into account when there are questions or concerns about a teacher's success generally, or the individual's competence in a specific situation.

Teachers believe that they should be supported to become as competent as possible as they carry out their professional roles, and to become as successful as possible throughout all stages of their careers. Questions or concerns about a specific competence matter should always be addressed within the broader context of teachers' goals and needs as successful professionals.

Beliefs

(1) Teacher Success

Throughout their careers, individual teachers experience various degrees of success in meeting a range of professional goals and objectives, including the following:

- (a) To conduct professional relationships in ways that are consistent with the principles of equity, fairness and respect for others.
- (b) To create and maintain a learning environment that encourages and supports each student to reach the highest level of individual achievement possible.
- (c) To demonstrate a professional level of knowledge about the curriculum.
- (d) To demonstrate a repertoire of instructional strategies and methods that are applied in teaching activities.
- (e) To have the professional knowledge, skills and judgment to carry out the teacher's responsibility for student assessment and evaluation.
- (f) To reflect, individually and collectively, upon the goals as well as the experience of professional practice, and adapt one's teaching accordingly.

- (g) To work with colleagues in ways that are mutually supportive, and develop to the fullest extent possible effective professional relationships with students, administrators, parents and other members of the educational community.

(2) **Questionable Practices**

- (a) Legitimate questions or concerns about an individual's teaching practice typically involve situations in which, taking the full context of the practice into consideration, a teacher demonstrates an unacceptably low level of professional knowledge, skill, or judgment, or a disregard for the welfare of the student to an extent that renders the teacher unfit to continue teaching.
- (b) Questionable practices include one or more of the following patterns of conduct in which a teacher:
 - (i) Takes no action or makes minimal effort in the face of manifest needs or opportunities to act on behalf of students.
 - (ii) Treats students in an unacceptably unjust or disrespectful manner.
 - (iii) Makes poor decisions and judgments in shaping students' educational experiences.
 - (iv) Persistently fails to implement the provincial curriculum conscientiously and diligently, or performs at an unacceptably low level in carrying out teaching objectives and other professional responsibilities.

(3) **Supports for Teacher Success**

- (a) Teacher success should be supported through a broad spectrum of structures, processes and resources, many of which are identified in various Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation bylaws and policies. Key supports that are expected by teachers as they carry out their professional responsibilities include the following:
 - (i) Provincial, school division and school-level policies and practices that support and enhance teacher success, and are developed with the direct involvement of teachers.
 - (ii) Employment conditions that are consistent with the teaching profession's understanding of an equitable, ethical, respectful, healthy and safe work environment.
 - (iii) Teaching assignments and other related duties or responsibilities that are commensurate with an individual teacher's professional knowledge, skills and experience, taking into consideration the context in which the teacher works.
 - (iv) Designated time, teaching resources, opportunities for professional reflection and growth, and other supports, as identified by the teaching profession, that enable teachers to create and maintain a learning environment that meets students' diverse educational needs.

(4) **Accountability for Teacher Success**

- (a) Accountability for teacher success is a responsibility that is shared among key participants in the education system.
 - (i) The individual teacher is primarily responsible for:
 - (A) Setting personal goals and objectives for a successful professional practice.
 - (B) Conducting one's professional practice in ways that are consistent with the Code of Ethics, the Standards of Practice, the Code of Collective Interests, and the Federation's policies on teacher success and professional growth.
 - (C) Engaging in career-long personal and professional reflection, and self-directed professional growth opportunities as necessary.
 - (ii) The teaching profession is primarily responsible for addressing, in ways that are consistent with *The Teachers' Federation Act, 2006* and the Federation bylaws and policies, situations where there are questionable practices.
 - (iii) The education community as a whole is primarily responsible for ensuring that the supports for teacher success, as identified by the teaching profession, are available and that these supports are revised or expanded as necessary.

(2003)



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November 2016