

25% Credit Allocation Policy and Procedures

Revised: May 9, 2014

Introduction

Credit allocation refers to the financial system for the purchase of learning resources by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and/or school boards and their schools for use by students and teachers in the public schools of Nova Scotia. Learning resources include such items as textbooks, software, and manipulatives. A credit allocation is established yearly upon approval of Cabinet for each school board.

Up to 60% of each school board's credit allocation will be targeted for directed purchase of learning resources by the Department. The remaining 40% of the credit allocation for each school board can be accessed by individual schools/boards to make purchases of authorized learning resources in support of school board and/or school priorities. Authorized learning resources will be purchased from the School Book Bureau using the *On-Line Ordering System*.

Up to 25% of the credit allocation for each board may be used to purchase eligible learning resources not included in *Authorized Learning Resources*, at the discretion and authorization of the school principal. Authorization for the 25% allocation is given according to the policies and procedures specified by the Department in this document. All reimbursements for 25%'s to individual schools will be paid to the board, and they in turn will forward to the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

School

The responsibility for the management of the 25% credit allocation rests with the principal of the school. The principal

- establishes and manages the evaluation process for selecting learning resources using the *Bias Evaluation Instrument* provided by the Department
- keeps permanent records of all evaluation results
- approves the purchase of eligible learning resources
- establishes a system for tracking expenditures
- submits receipts together with appropriate documentation to the Nova Scotia School Book Bureau for reimbursement, all reimbursements for 25%'s will be paid to the board, and they in turn will forward to the school
- adheres to the time lines for requesting reimbursement as set annually by the Nova Scotia School Book Bureau, and as found in the form/documentation available from the Department's Web site www.EDnet.ns.ca.
- utilizes the school rebate provision to recoup 68% of taxes paid on learning resources

The Nova Scotia School Book Bureau

- reimburses the board for each approved expenditure under this allocation plus 32% of the taxes upon receipt of proof of purchases and appropriate documentation (proof of purchase includes paid invoices, receipts, and cancelled cheques)
- provides the school boards with monthly financial reports on all components of the credit allocation system, including expenditures under the 25% credit allocation
- guarantees 25% credit allocation reimbursements in the current fiscal year for all approved requests received up to January 15
- reallocates unused portion of the 25% credit allocation after January 15 to the remaining school board balance for purchases of authorized learning resources

Eligible Purchases

1. Learning resources may include

- limited quantities of materials that are not listed but reflect the philosophies of the public school programs (maximum of one class set of materials)
- examination copies of materials not included in *Authorized Learning Resources*
- materials to meet special needs of individuals, groups, or communities

2. Learning resources may NOT be items included in *Authorized Learning Resources*.

3. Learning resources may NOT be

- library books
- magazine and other subscriptions
- print encyclopedias
- hardware (such as step ladders, mirrors, building supplies, electrical equipment)
- globes
- maps
- computer hardware
- expendable supplies (such as paper, pencils, rubber stamps, student workbooks)
- lab supplies (such as test tubes, beakers, vials)
- furniture and equipment (such as office equipment, storage and filing cabinets, audio-visual or other media equipment and supplies)
- weights and measuring devices (such as rulers, tape measures, scales, thermometers, stop watches)
- annual renewal fees of site licenses for software products

4. Learning resources must be evaluated for

- consistency with the principles of learning
- bias using the *Bias Evaluation Instrument* provided by the Department

Evaluation Criteria

Learning resources purchased through the 25% credit allocation must be consistent with the principles of learning which provide the foundation for public school programs in Nova Scotia and must be evaluated for bias, using the *Bias Evaluation Instrument* provided by the Department.

The Principles of Learning

1. Students construct knowledge and make it meaningful in terms of their prior knowledge and experiences.
2. Learning is a process of actively constructing knowledge.
3. Learning is enhanced when it takes place in a social and collaborative environment.
4. Students need to continue to view learning as an integrated whole.
5. Learners must see themselves as capable and successful.
6. Learners have different ways of knowing and representing knowledge.
7. Reflection is an integral part of learning.

Therefore, resources that are consistent with these principles should

- ensure that students' diverse prior experiences are recognized, valued, and activated as the beginning of new learning experiences
- begin a new learning experience by providing students with opportunities to identify what they already know and can do relevant to the topic, concept, or skill to be addressed and prompt them to communicate this prior knowledge and ability in a variety of ways
- challenge students to use their prior knowledge to make a prediction or conjecture and act upon it, thereby allowing them to examine the validity and usefulness of their current understandings
- ensure that students are invited or challenged to engage actively in the construction of meaningful understanding through inquiring, predicting, exploring, collecting, drawing, or by engaging in educational play, writing, and/or talk
- ensure that learners have opportunities to engage in experiences where collaboration and discourse are key features of the learning environment
- help students to make connections within subject areas, across subject areas, and with the world beyond the school and to engage in activities that require reflection on those connections
- situate students' learning in real-life contexts which are personally meaningful and socially relevant
- ensure that learners see themselves reflected in the learning materials used in the school and provide learning opportunities that respect and support students' racial, cultural, and social identity
- be developmentally appropriate and provide opportunities for a broad range of learners to experience genuine learning success
- communicate clear expectations for all students and offer students multiple ways of demonstrating what they know, are able to do, and value
- recognize, acknowledge, and build on students' diverse ways of knowing and representing their knowledge
- encourage students and teachers to see themselves as learners and prompt them to reflect on and communicate what they have learned and how they have learned it

Bias Evaluation

Every resource acquired under the 25% allocation requires the completion of a bias evaluation. The *Bias Evaluation Instrument* has been designed to facilitate the process. A draft copy is enclosed and additional copies are available upon request from Student Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, PO Box 578, Halifax NS B3J 2S9 (phone: (902) 424-7454, fax: (902) 424-0749) .

This tool provides information on the policies and criteria governing bias evaluation. Definitions and examples have been provided for recognition of bias issues. The section on Assessment Criteria provides a series of analytical questions regarding each type of bias issue so that evaluators may identify the various aspects of bias present in the resource and provide for ways in which teachers and students might address these issues within the classroom.

The principal's signature on the 25% Request for Reimbursement form indicates that the learning resource has been evaluated for bias and has been approved for purchase.

The Department may request copies of bias evaluation reports from the school as part of an audit process.

25% Credit Allocation Request for Reimbursement

To: Nova Scotia School Book Bureau
10 Acadia Street
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 4H3

From: Name of School _____

Full Mailing Address _____

Phone _____

Attached are the paid invoices, receipts or cancelled cheques for the following learning resource purchased under the 25% credit allocation system.

Title			
Publisher			
Author(s)		ISBN	
Date of Publication		Course and Grade Level	
Unit Price		Number of Copies	
Reason(s) for Purchase	<input type="checkbox"/> Examination copy only <input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please specify		
This learning resource is consistent with the Principles of Learning as outlined in <i>Public Schools Program</i>.			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
This learning resource was evaluated for bias using the <i>Bias Evaluation Instrument</i>.			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Teacher Evaluator Signature		Date	

My signature below indicates that I have approved the purchase of this learning resource and have ensured that the 25% Credit Allocation Policies and Procedures of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have been followed.

Principal Signature _____ Date _____

My signature below indicates my approval for the process of payment for this learning resource under the 25% Credit Allocation.

Department Authorization _____ Date _____