

Secondary Education in the Provinces and Territories of Canada: A Student Transfer Guide 2023–24

Northwest Territories

Part 1 – Summary Statement

1.1 Introduction

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is responsible for the Northwest Territories (NWT) education system. This system currently consists of the Department of ECE and ten (10) education bodies responsible for the delivery of Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) education in 49 schools throughout 33 communities. The Minister is responsible for the establishment of the curriculum and the standards for the education program. As a small jurisdiction, the NWT partners with other provinces for curriculum and assessment tools. Partnering with another province gives the NWT opportunities to share important teacher resources, access large-scale student assessment tools, and to participate in professional development activities. It also ensures high school students have the qualifications they need to access post-secondary programs across Canada.

1.2 Organization of School System

Depending on the community, NWT parents and students can choose from within the public education system: public schools, public denominational (Catholic) schools, francophone schools, alternative programs and distance learning options, and home schooling. Education bodies develop methods of school organization and delivery that best meet the needs of their students and communities. Schools aim to provide northern learners with a quality education, to live fulfilled lives as capable people, and contribute to strong, healthy communities.

The school year involves 185 days of instruction (sessional days) and typically begins late August/early September and ends in late June of the following year.

Students in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten are prescribed a minimum of 485 instructional hours per school year whereas students from Grades 1–12 are allowed a minimum of 945 instructional hours per school year.

Individualized programming is provided to students with special needs according to the Inclusive Schooling Directive (2016). Inclusive schooling places an emphasis on addressing diversity in the classroom while meeting and supporting the unique needs of the student through the collaboration between the school and the child's parents. School staff will develop Student Support Plans (SSPs) as well as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to help support learning and support student success.

A credit at the senior high school level involves the student meeting the curricular objectives while the curriculum also meets the needs of the student. Typically, a senior high school credit is earned through 25 hours of instruction within reasonable completion of specific course outcomes which can differ between individuals.

1.3 Explanation of Terms Used (including special-education/student services terms)

- Accommodation

Various measures that allow students to best gain access to and achieve success with expected learning outcomes, including those who experience obstacles to learning and those who require enriched opportunities for learning. Accommodations may include changing the teaching process, learning environment, time demands, assistance, evaluation and/or the ways in which a student demonstrates learning.

- Inclusive Schooling

Students access the education program, and required supports, in a common learning environment in the student's home community and local school.

- Student Support Plan (SSP)

An actively updated document that is meant to highlight accommodations or modifications for a particular student to meet the learning outcomes of a certain grade level in one or more subjects.

Different kinds of SSPs exist: Regular Education Program with Accommodations for Difficulty (JK–12); Regular Education Program with Accommodations for Enrichment (JK–12), Modified Education Program — Below Grade Level (JK–9); Modified Education Program – Above Grade Level (JK–9).

- Modified Education Plan (MEP)

A record of supports for learning which documents accommodations or modifications required for a student to best experience success with their programing. The MEP may change at any time to best reflect student needs and successes.

- Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A comprehensive written education plan with annual student outcomes and shorter-term objectives, determined through a collaborative process, driven by the strengths and needs of the student; it may or may not include learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula. A student on an IEP usually requires supports, accommodations, facilities, resources and/or equipment required beyond those required by his/her peers.

1.4 Course Designation

Junior High (Grades 7, 8, and 9)

Students register in Grade 7, 8, or 9. Course name and codes are dictated by the subject and the related grade in which the course is offered. Courses are named and assigned a number corresponding to the grade in which the course normally offered (e.g., Music 8 is the Grade 8 music course). However, some schools only include the grade number in the course code, not the actual course name (e.g., Aboriginal Language for Grade 8s is only called *Aboriginal Language*, but the course code is ABOLAN8).

Senior High School (Grades 10, 11, and 12)

Students register in courses. Senior high courses are identified by course numbers reflective of the grade level and level of academic challenge. Number 10–15 are designated for Grade 10 courses, 20–25 for Grade 11 courses, and 30–35 for Grade 12 courses. Dashes (-1, -2, -3) are used in several courses to indicate different academic pathways students may choose.

Most high school courses follow this structure with notable exceptions that include:

- Math
 - Upon completion of Mathematics 10C, students may choose to pursue multiple Mathematics pathways to either 30-2 Foundations of Mathematics, 30-1 Pre-Calculus, or 31 Calculus
 - Choices are dependant upon a student's post-secondary plans.
 - See [Section 5.1.3 – Sr. High Processes \(gov.nt.ca\)](#)
- French
 - Français 10-1, 20-1, 30-1, and Français 10-2, 20-2, 30-2 are for students whose first language is French.
 - French Language Arts 10-1, 20-1, 30-1, and French Language Arts 10-2, 20-2, 30-2 are for French immersion students.
 - French 10-3y, 20-3y, 30-3y, and French 10-9y, 20-9y, 30-9y are for students who are learning French as a second language and can be considered core French courses. French x-3y is for students who are starting to

learn French in Grade 10 while French x-9y courses who have been taking French courses since Grade 4 or earlier. In NWT, French 10-3y and French 10-9y can be offered in the same class with different expectations depending on the course.

- Literacy 10,20,30
 - English Language Arts (ELA) 10-3/20-3/30-3 are now named Literacy 10/20/30. Literacy courses are for students struggling with literacy skills and the course is aimed to improve these skills.
- Career and Technology Studies (CTS)
 - CTS is a competency-based curriculum with courses being organized by levels (introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced). These courses are organized into five clusters with more than 1000 one-credit courses. Introductory courses are numbered in the 1000s, intermediate courses are numbered in the 2000s, and advanced-level courses are numbered in the 3000s. CTS courses are listed on the Alberta Education website are approved for use in the NWT, however, NWT educators are permitted to modify up to 15% of learner expectations, assessment, and specific learner expectations to fit the NWT context.
- Locally Developed courses
 - Locally developed courses are designated as 10, 20 and 30 or 15, 25, and 35.

1.5 Time Allotments and Course Load

Junior High School

Students in junior high may complete course objectives and acquire knowledge and skills relative to coursework in an amount of time that is shorter or longer than the allocated course times. These times are recommendations and estimates.

The recommended time allotment (hours per year) for each part of the junior high school program is indicated in the following table:

Subject Area	Recommended % of Instructional Time	Approximate # of Hours
Language Arts	21%	210 hours
Another official language of the NWT	9%	90 hours
Mathematics	18%	180 hours
Science	9%	90 hours
Social Studies	9%	90 hours
Physical Education	9%	90 hours
Health	6%	60 hours
Arts Education	6%	60 hours
Local Discretion*	7%	70 hours
Career and Technology Studies	6%	60 hours

**Local Discretion* is decided by the principal in consultation with the DEA/DEC and approval of the superintendent and director of the board. This course time can be allocated to Indigenous cultural activities and outcomes, religion studies, organizational skills, or study habits depending on the school.

The junior high Arts Education curriculum is based on the Saskatchewan Arts Education curriculum:

- **Grade 7:** [Arts Education 7 | Saskatchewan Curriculum \(gov.sk.ca\)](#)
- **Grade 8:** [Arts Education 8 | Saskatchewan Curriculum \(gov.sk.ca\)](#)
- **Grade 9:** [Arts Education 9 | Saskatchewan Curriculum \(gov.sk.ca\)](#)

Senior High School

At the Senior High School level students earn credits for completed courses, and one credit is defined as being equal to 25 hours of instruction per credit, but students sometimes meet objectives through more than the minimum hours, while others sometimes meet objectives through fewer hours. Priority is placed upon a student meeting the curricular objectives rather than meeting a requirement. Courses are offered for a number of credits between 1–5, and time is allocated accordingly. Students must achieve at least 50% as a final mark in a course to earn the designated credit(s).

Instructional time is defined as time scheduled for purposes of instruction and assessment, other student activities based on curricular expectations, parent/teacher/student conferences, development of Career and Programs Plans, and participation in culturally based activities.

1.6 Curriculum Organization

Course sequences are meant to meet a variety of student needs and have varying degrees of academic rigour. Senior high school students must start from 10 level courses at Grade 10 and work towards 30 level courses. In most cases, students cannot take 30 level courses if they have not taken the prerequisite 20 and 10 level courses. Course sequencing is not linear, and options to transfer from -1 to -2 or vice versa exist. Mainly, the following course transfer points are recommended for student success, however, there may be need for transfers at other points in the sequence:

https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/section_5_senior_high_processes.pdf (Section 5.1.3).

1.7 Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites

Prerequisites

- English
 - o ELA 30-1 requires ELA 20-1 or ELA30-2,
 - o ELA 30-2 requires ELA 20-1 or ELA 20-2 or Literacy 30
- Français
 - o Français 30-1 requires Français 20-1 or Français 30-2
 - o Français 30-2 requires Français 20-1 or Français 20-2
 - Students must be enrolled with a Francophone school board to take Français -1 or -2 (Student Handbook Section 5.1.3)
- Social Studies
 - o Social Studies 30-1 requires Social Studies 20-1 or Social Studies 30-2
 - o Social Studies 30-2 requires Social Studies 20-1 or Social Studies 20-2
- Mathematics
 - o Mathematics 30-1 requires Mathematics 20-1
 - o Mathematics 30-2 requires Mathematics 20-2
 - o Mathematics 30-3 requires Mathematics 20-3
- Science
 - o Biology 30 requires Biology 20
 - o Chemistry 30 requires Chemistry 20
 - o Physics 30 requires Physics 20
 - o Experiential Science 30 requires Experiential Science 20

Waiving of Prerequisites

Special exceptions may be made for waiving prerequisites if addressed by the principal and Senior Secondary Committee (e.g., due to a major injury, a student is exempt from Physical Education 10).

1.8 Assessment and Evaluation Practices; and Transcripts (including issuing authority)

Senior high provides student assessment and evaluation through percentage-based grades; however, junior high utilizes a range of proficiency and grading scales which are ultimately determined by the education body of the school.

1.9 List of Graduation Credentials (including credentials giving access to postsecondary education)

A Senior Secondary School Graduation Diploma will be awarded to students who meet the criteria for graduation as listed below.

Course	Credit	Details
English	15	5 credits at the grade levels of 10, 11, and 12
Social Studies	10	5 credits at the grade levels of 10 and 11
Mathematics	10	5 credits at the grade levels of 10 and 11
Science	10	5 credits at the grade levels of 10 and 11
CALM 20	3	3 credits taken at the Grade 11 level, or earned through <i>Career Focusing Program</i>
Community Service	1	25 documented hours of unpaid service
Physical Education	3	At the Grade 10 level
Northern Studies 10	5	5 credit Grade 10 level course
Career & Technology Studies	5	At any level
Fine Arts	3	At any level
Career & Program Plan	1	Developed throughout secondary education
Additional Grade 12 Credits	10	In any course areas at the 30 level — in addition to required Language Arts
Elective Credits (previously identified as <i>Unspecified</i>)	24	At any level and in any course areas — excess credits from required areas will be logged here
Total # of Credits	100	

As NWT schools use Alberta curriculum for senior high courses, NWT students must write Alberta Diploma examinations for grade 12 courses.

Diploma Examinations are mandatory in following courses: ELA 30-1 and 30-2, Français 30-1, French Language Arts 30-1, Math 30-1 and 30-2, Social Studies 30-1 and 30-2, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30

1.10 Other Types of Programs

Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) is a work experience program for NWT high school students who are interested in skilled trades with a way to gain valuable work experience while also attending high school.

Northern Distance Learning (NDL) offers an online learning solution to provide a greater variety of courses to small high schools in the NWT. NDL uses videoconferencing and a learning management system with online classes of up to 20 students in small communities. Students in the NDL program take blend of online classes and local high school classes.

1.11 Assessment of Out-of-Province/Out-of-Territory and Foreign Studies

Students entering an NWT senior high school from outside the territories should submit transcripts, or other official statements of previous standing, to the school they plan to attend. The school then completes an evaluation and looks for equivalencies in the NWT course catalogue and submits it to ECE for verification and allocation of equivalent credits. Students will be required to meet all NWT graduation requirements for their year of entry.

First time NWT students in Grade 11 may request the senior secondary committee to waive the mandatory credits in the following course:

- Physical Education 10, Northern Studies 10.

First time NWT student entering Grade 12 can request the Senior Secondary Committee waive the mandatory credits in the following courses:

- Career and Technology studies, Physical Education 10, CALM 20, Fine Arts Courses and Northern Studies 10.
- Community Service 20, and Program Plan (CPP) will NOT be waived.

All other graduation requirements must be met, including the minimum of 100 credits.

Part 2 – Summary of Course Content

NWT is currently renewing its JK-12 school curriculum in partnership with British Columbia (BC). As part of this process, the NWT graduation requirements have been updated and the NWT will be adapting the BC curriculum for use in NWT schools.

The transition to a new NWT Adapted curriculum will take place over the next five years with certain grade groupings being trialled, implemented, and finalized over three years each.

- 2023–24 Grades 4–6 and 9 were trialled in all schools, in selected subjects.
- 2024–25 Grades 7–8 will be trialled in all schools, in selected subjects, and Grades 4, 5, 6 and 9 **and Grade 10** will be implemented in draft in all schools and all subjects.
- 2025–26 Grades JK–3 will be trialled in all schools, in selected subjects, and Grades 7–8 **and Grade 11** will be implemented in draft in all schools and all subjects, while Grades 4–6, 9 and 10 should be finalized.
- 2026–27 Grades JK–3 **and Grade 12** will be implemented in draft in all schools and all subjects, while Grades 4–6, 9 and 10 should be finalized.
- 2027–28 Grades JK–3 and Grade 12 should be finalized.

For more information on curriculum during the transition underway, refer to the following website: [Curriculum \(instructure.com\)](https://www.instructure.com)

Contact information

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