



Meet Your Provincial Department

# Education, Citizenship and Youth: an overview

By Heather Hunter

**Education, Citizenship and Youth** (ECY) works to ensure that Manitoba's children and youth have access to relevant, engaging, high quality and responsive education to meet their learning needs now and for the future. ECY is the department with responsibility for setting priorities and allocating funds to Manitoba's public and funded independent schools in the province's K-12 school system, as well as citizenship and youth initiatives. ECY believes it is important to work effectively with others – schools and school divisions, educators, parents, students and the general public – as partners to provide the best possible leadership and direction for public education in our province.

ECY has a fundamental goal to prepare young people for lifelong learning and citizenship in a sustainable society. As a result, the Department is continually seeking ways to create better and more opportunities for learner success. A large part of this work is done through the delivery of ongoing programs and services that assist the work of schools and school divisions across Manitoba. Support for instruction, curriculum and assessment, educational resources, special education, funding for schools, technology and other infrastructure development are all important areas that receive ongoing attention and support. In addition, the Department puts effort into planning and working on particular initiatives for identified priority

areas such as Aboriginal education, education for sustainable development, education in low-income communities, and rural and northern education.

## ECY Programs and Services

- **Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment**

ECY is responsible for the development and implementation of provincial curricula as well as the development of province-wide assessment activities with a strong emphasis on formative assessment. In addition to grade level activities, the Department supports initiatives such as career development, diversity and equity, citizenship and sustainable development,

Click here to return to  
**Table of Contents**

literacy and language programs, integration of technology into the curriculum, and distance learning. The Department has the responsibility to implement certain recommendations of the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures* task force report and this connects to the recent implementation of *Grade 11 and Grade 12 Physical Education/Health Education*.

**• Programs and Student Services**

ECY works closely with educators to deliver specialized education and support services to students in K-12 schools with

exceptional learning needs including those who are blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing. The primary goal is to provide support to schools through effective planning, monitoring of categorical support and the provision of professional learning opportunities. Important to this support to schools is the facilitation of a strong connection between schools, families and communities.

School divisions also receive grants to support areas such as early childhood development, early literacy, the achievement of Aboriginal students, and to pro-

vide for appropriate education programming according to learner needs. Other ongoing activities include sponsorship of the provincial *Student Services Forum* and the annual *Safe Schools Conference*. The Department provides library services to K-12 educators, teacher candidates and to the general public. These services help to facilitate parent involvement, community education and lifelong learning.

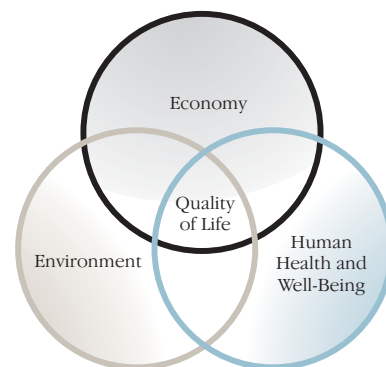
**• Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF)**


BEF works with the *Français* schools, French Immersion schools and the schools offering basic French courses to develop and administer policies and programs related to French-language education. The division aims to promote French language programs and services available by providing strong leadership in curriculum design, quality educational resources, and activities that correspond to the immediate and future needs of teachers and administrators in French language education.

**ECY Priority Areas**

**• Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**

The Department supports ESD in classrooms and schools, based on a shared vision and collaboration. Principles of sustainability suggest a careful look at habits, beliefs, values, and practices to help balance the needs of society, the environment, and the economy. Through ESD initiatives in schools, and integration of ESD with curriculum, Manitoba students are acquiring knowledge of the interdependency of these three pillars of sustainability: improving social well-being, maintaining the environment and making economic progress. The ESD website [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd) provides educational resources, grant information and supports school initiatives through the *Eco-Globe Schools* recognition program.





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• **Rural and Northern Education**

Teachers in small and remote schools often have challenging workloads, teach several different subject areas, and are in multi-level classrooms without specialized or cluster programs for students with exceptional needs. Small schools also have more challenges when it comes to accessing opportunities for professional learning, recruiting and retaining specialist teachers and highly sought after clinical professionals, and maintaining a range of programming options in the face of declining enrolments. In the 2008/09 school year ECY is undertaking a number of initiatives:

- Expanding support and services to enhance the delivery of programming for students with exceptional needs;
- Expanding direct and online professional learning opportunities in partnership with rural and northern educators, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC);
- Providing a bursary program to support the training of clinicians who will provide services in difficult-to-recruit areas; and
- Enhancing clinical supervision and professional learning opportunities for educators, speech language pathologists, psychologists, and social workers who work in rural and northern Manitoba.

ECY is providing additional consultants in rural and northern Manitoba to enhance training services and planning for students with exceptional learning needs. A significant aspect of this initiative is the establishment of three video conferencing classrooms to promote access to professional learning through web-based courses and video conferencing.

• **Youth connections**

ECY encourages young people to be active, responsible citizens. The new social studies curriculum has identified citizenship as its core curriculum concept throughout all grade levels. Being knowledgeable about the democratic process, learning about local government (and having the willingness to participate in it) is vital for good citizenship. Students demonstrate this through caring more about their schools, being willing to get involved and take action in order to make a difference. Last year, the *Youth Leadership Scholarship* of \$500 was awarded to 200 Grade 12 students who devoted time and effort towards leadership, citizenship, and the promotion of healthy living. Recipients use these scholarships for their post-secondary studies.

This brief overview highlights just a few of the activities undertaken by ECY in order to respond to the needs of all K-12 learners in Manitoba's schools and communities. It is work that reflects a recognition and respect for the requirements of an always changing world, the need to engage young people through meaningful learning and inclusive practices, and the need to decrease our carbon footprint while increasing our educational capacity to ensure learner access to high quality programs and services. ECY believes

that all students, no matter where they live in our province, deserve to have the best possible educational programs and opportunities for success. ■

For additional information about ECY, please visit: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/index.html> or contact:

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