APPENDIX XII

District (Local) Courses: Policy and Procedures

Introduction

Local courses are intended to enhance the course options for students without negatively affecting student access to the provincial curriculum.

All schools offering the senior high program must ensure students meet the provincial graduation requirements. A school's program schedule must:

(a) make available at least one provincial course in each subject area (identified in the Program of Studies) at least once every three years;

(b) include courses in the fine arts;

(c) permit choice in the core areas of language, mathematics and science to accommodate student needs and post-secondary aspirations; and

(d) ensure a degree of consistency among schools in the scope of program available.

Schools may enhance their programs by offering additional provincially authorized courses, if this can be accomplished given sufficient numbers or by taking advantage of distance education or other delivery modes. In line with the principles noted above, school schedules should be organized to facilitate student access to provincially-authorized courses required to meet minimum graduation requirements.

Local courses must conform to standards of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). They must be written with an outcomes orientation as per the provincial curriculum and be formatted as per EECD guidelines.   A template will be provided by EECD upon request.

Definition

Provincially-Prescribed Courses refer to any course developed by and implemented through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (All provincially prescribed courses are provincially authorized.)

Local Courses are non-provincial senior high school courses developed externally from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Local courses are designed to meet the needs of a cohort of students from any school within the originating school district. Upon approval from EECD, local courses become part of the provincially
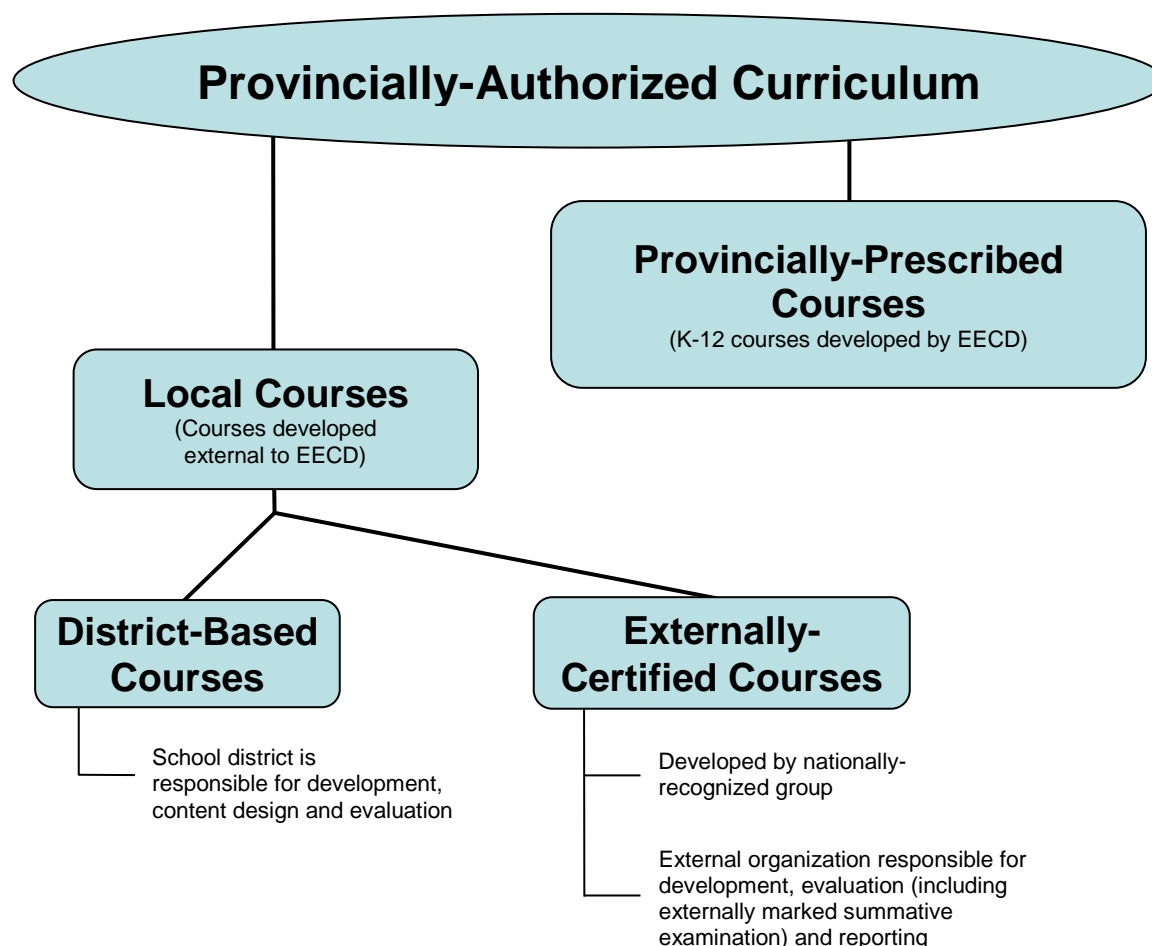
authorized curriculum. All local courses are categorized as either District-Based Courses or Externally-Certified Courses.

District-Based Courses, or DBCs, are developed within a school district by local personnel and/or within partnerships that districts may have formed. Districts are ultimately responsible for defining course content, pedagogy, instructional methods and evaluation for these courses.

Externally-Certified Courses, or ECCs, are developed by nationally or internationally recognized agencies. These courses may offer varying degrees of content description; however, evaluation of desired outcomes occurs in the form of an examination which is externally administered and marked. For example, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are considered ECCs.

Local courses are denoted by a third digit "2" (or "8" in the case of IB) in the four-digit course designation scheme (e.g., 4281-Biology (IB), 3220-Workplace Safety).

See below for course structure summary.

Policy

EECD approves in principle the development of a local course at least one year before the expected date of application for approval.

The school district ensures that local courses meet the usual standards for provincial courses and adhere to district policy before submission to EECD.

EECD Division of Programs and Services assesses and approves local courses for the Senior High School. A local courses may be approved in any curriculum area.

A maximum of FOUR local course credits may be used for graduation requirements. These are inclusive of local courses and/or alternate courses (as defined in *Pathways to Graduation*), of the required, minimum 36, for graduation. This limitation does not apply to Externally-Certified Courses or native language courses.

To be eligible for local course credits, a student must successfully complete, or be enrolled concurrently in, the highest level of the provincial course in that subject area. For example, to be permitted to register for an Advanced Placement Course in a particular subject area the highest level of the provincial course in that discipline is a prerequisite to any credit awarded for the AP course.

EECD is responsible for the assignment of four-digit course numbers to local courses. The course number is determined through a review of the content, as well as the district rationale.

Requests from school districts for new and/or revised local course approval shall be accompanied by a curriculum guide.

District-Based Courses are approved for up to five years after which it is the responsibility of the school district to request re-approval and to re-submit all required documentation.

De-listed provincial courses will **NOT** be approved as local courses.

Procedures

1. The school district requests approval in principle for a local course and then requests an administrator to submit the formal application for a district course, along with the curriculum guide, to the district Assistant Director (Programs). Upon request, the Division of Programs and Services will provide a template for use by district course developers to ensure consistency in district course descriptions.

Figure 2 Course Structure Summary

2. The district Assistant Director (Programs) arranges for district staff to evaluate the curriculum guide using the criteria supplied by EECD, and to prepare the supporting documentation for submission to the department for its evaluation and approval by the Director of Programs and Services. The Division of Program and Services will provide a course evaluation form for districts to use in their assessment of district courses.

   Districts conduct a thorough analysis of each of its local courses in relation to their conformity to the provincial learning outcomes and the provincial curriculum. Districts also ensure that the quality and diversity of the provincially prescribed program is not negatively affected by the implementation of a local course. The district submits the course evaluation form, as provided by EECD, accompanied by a letter of support stating why a course should be approved.

3. The request for new and revised courses must be received by the Director of Programs and Services by the first of **October** of the school year **preceding** the projected implementation date.

4. Approval of any District-Based Course is first contingent on the proposed curriculum guide following the outline in Appendix A of this policy.

5. The Division of Programs and Services evaluates the curriculum guide and, if approved, obtains a course number from the Evaluation and Research Division. The school district is notified of the outcome of the request within sixty (60) days. In some instances, the course is approved in principle with additional revisions required by **March 31** before final approval is granted.

6. School districts should submit one comprehensive request that lists all schools and all local courses proposed to be offered in each school. New and/or revised curriculum guides are also attached for evaluation.

7. In collaboration with the Evaluation and Research Division, the Division of Programs and Services maintains a database of all local courses.

8. The initial year of implementation of a local course could be considered a pilot year. In such cases, the school district submits a report to the Division of Programs and Services on the evaluation of the pilot indicating revisions made to the curriculum guide.

9. Approval of any Externally-Certified Course is first contingent on an EECD review of the curriculum outline/guide and external certification standard. The curriculum materials and certification information must be submitted in compliance with article 3 above.

10. Students will only receive credit for an approved Externally-Certified Course if they complete the external examination and attain an adequate score. This score will be determined prior to department approval of the course through consultation with the school district, Evaluation and Research Division and the Division of Programs and Services.

The curriculum guide format for local courses can be found by contacting the EECD.