



Alberta Education and AISCA Conditional Grant Agreement Stakeholder Engagement Draft K-6 Curriculum

Final Report, January 28th 2022

In August 2021, AISCA entered into a conditional grant agreement with Alberta Education to engage the Association's membership on feedback on the draft K-6 curriculum. Over the course of the project, AISCA undertook the following work as part of the grant agreement:

- A consultant was hired to develop, implement, and report on a curriculum engagement plan for AISCA member schools.
- Communication was sent to all AISCA member schools with the goal of having as many independent teachers participate as possible. In total, 153 teachers from at least 33 independent schools and ECS operators in the sessions (a few teachers registered without identifying their specific school).
 - participation in each of the eight sessions ranged from 14 individuals to 24 individuals
- Having self-registered, participants were asked to provide pre-session observations about perceived strengths in each of the curriculum areas, along with comments about areas where participants recognized opportunities for improvement.
- The interactive sessions were scheduled for three hours and held on the following dates:
 - October 6 – English Language Arts
 - October 7 – Kindergarten (A)
 - October 18 – Mathematics
 - October 19 – Kindergarten (B)
 - October 20 – Social Studies
 - October 21 – Science
 - October 25 – Physical Education and Wellness
 - October 26 – Fine Arts
 - Note: French Language and French Immersion subject areas were not part of this review.

- These engagement sessions featured a thorough review of each of the draft K-6 curriculum areas, and included the following components:
 - Initial multiple group breakout sessions to enable consensus seeking discussions about perceived strengths of the curriculum area and about areas perceived to be needing improvement
 - Large group reporting and debriefing
 - Further breakout sessions included discussion about:
 - matters related scope and sequence in the curriculum area
 - age and developmental appropriateness of the curriculum
 - perceptions about overall content load of the curriculum, and
 - observations about curriculum implementation supports that will be required by teachers and schools

- Following each of the scheduled sessions, draft summaries of the engagement discussions were prepared and distributed to all participants in each session.
 - Participants were invited to offer feedback to confirm that the summary represented an accurate reflection of the discussion and the major observations provided by participants.
 - In addition, participating teachers were asked to identify any significant omissions or misrepresentations in the summary.

- Feedback provided by participants indicated a high degree of resonance between the summaries provided and the actual discussions that occurred at each of the engagement sessions. All follow up feedback was carefully reviewed by the facilitator and a number of minor edits were made to some of the summary documents.

Participant engagement and response across the six curriculum areas indicated that identifiable and specific strengths can be found in each of the K-6 drafts. However, the strengths identified were outweighed in all of the subject areas by the views of participating teachers who recognized and described multiple areas as problematic and where they perceived that implementation would not successfully occur unless significant efforts were made to modify, improve or change the curriculum. While general findings are highlighted below, the detailed and much more comprehensive observations provided by teachers are found in Appendix 1: (Compilation of Participant Feedback - AISCA K-6 Curriculum Engagement Sessions).

In broad terms, participants identified the following as overall strengths of the draft K-6 curriculum:

- a) Teachers support the recognition by government that curriculum renewal in several of the K-6 subject areas is timely and, in some cases, overdue. Still, participants took issue with government’s approach to curriculum change, asserting that a model which

proposes to introduce new curricula on multiple fronts will serve neither teachers nor students effectively.

- b) In large measure, teachers are supportive of the “lay-out” of the K-6 curriculum areas, particularly with the organizing ideas and guiding questions which teachers find are generally presented in a readable, teacher friendly manner.
- c) Respondents to the K-6 English Language Arts draft expressed strong support (especially in K-3) for the focus on the explicit teaching of emergent reading skills, through the early introduction of phonological awareness and morphological studies.
- d) Teachers participating in the K-6 draft Mathematics and Science engagement sessions expressed general support for the scope and sequence though the elementary grades, notwithstanding some very significant concerns about what they perceived to be excessive content in all grades, along with many examples of grade level content that is not age-appropriate.

Teachers in the engagement sessions were encouraged, as part of the planned dialogue, to identify areas in the draft curricula where they believed that opportunities exist for improvement. The volume of the response to this question was substantial and the summary of these consensus-based views is described for each subject area in Appendix 1. In addition to the extensive general range of improvement areas recommended by teachers, the appendix offers a comprehensive and detailed response to the Ministry’s request for specific feedback about areas of strengths and opportunities in the K-6 curriculum, potential adjustments to the scope of learning, recommendations on age appropriateness, potential refinements to the sequencing of learning, perspectives on the content load and a description of supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for implementation.

There was broad agreement expressed by teachers about the elements addressed below. Much more supporting detail and many more related examples are described in the *Compilation of Participant Feedback - AISCA K-6 Curriculum Engagement Sessions* (Appendix 1) to this final report:

- a) Teachers found the **scope of learning** contemplated in the K- 6 draft to be overly ambitious, both in regard to individual subject areas and also with respect to the scale of change for teachers and students across the six subject areas. Teachers indicated that if scope is intended to refer to the topics and areas of development to be taught, then the Science draft might be considered mostly reasonable while the Social Studies curriculum would be mostly unreasonable. Scope, however, also refers to intended learning outcomes and participating teachers in the engagement sessions found many problems with the outcomes (poorly worded, ambiguous, and just too many). Teachers also expressed frustration that they were not provided a clearer indication of intended scope of change beyond grade six, as they perceived a need for understanding the full K-12 picture to enable a more objective response to questions about scope and sequence. While teachers in the engagement sessions recognized some beginning attempts by the curriculum writers to incorporate learning content that would appropriately recognize and build respect for the increasingly diverse province and country we live in today, they

found the coverage of Black, Indigenous and other people of color to be limited.

Teachers appreciated the attempts in the draft to incorporate indigenous content and ways of knowing, but found many of the examples used to often be inaccurate and/or poorly representative of the contributions of indigenous people to our current society.

- b) Teachers expressed multiple concerns about the curriculum content as it related to **age and developmental appropriateness**. By way of example, Kindergarten teachers were highly concerned with what they perceived was a drastic departure from a focus of “play” in the curriculum. As experienced professionals working with our youngest learners, Kindergarten teachers recognize children learn best at this age and stage through play. They were very concerned to see play being replaced with more intensive knowledge-based, teacher-led learning in the new curriculum and they expressed worry that the draft as written will limit teacher ability to create joyful learning experiences for children. In the K-6 draft for Mathematics, several concerns about age/developmental appropriateness of the content were expressed. Teachers found that in many instances, this curriculum draft does not line up with what we know about how children’s brains develop and how they learn. Teachers referenced the number of specific learner outcomes in grade 6 as an example in point. The number of outcomes has tripled in number (up from 27 SLOs to 74 in the new draft). Of these 74 new outcomes, teachers feel 0 are easier than in the current program, 33 are similar, 16 are slightly more difficult and 25 are significantly more difficult. Teachers expressed related concerns about the “piling on” of outcomes which they perceive have been moved down from the grade 7/8/9 program to upper elementary.
- c) In consideration of possible improvements regarding the **sequencing of learning** in the draft K-6 curriculum, teachers expressed a high degree of concern about the approach taken in the Social Studies draft, where they perceive that a well-respected, developmentally appropriate and common sense approach to curriculum design focusing on children/students learning about themselves, their families and their communities has been turned on its head. Teachers indicate that Social Studies should be the perfect vehicle for allowing children to bring their own experiences and backgrounds and family interests into classroom learning. However, teachers perceive that the new draft’s focus on having grade one students focus on heavily knowledge-based content like ancient civilizations and grade 2 students learning about world religions is contrary to what current research says about supporting foundational skills learning and creating deeper learning opportunities. In English Language Arts, where teachers are supportive of the early learning emphasis on phonological awareness and the teaching of decoding skills, they were not satisfied that this early K-3 focus prepared students sufficiently well for the application of these skills to reading for comprehension or for writing. More generally, teachers found that curriculum sequencing across subject areas does not lend itself well to cross-curricular learning.
- d) Perhaps more than with any other criticism, teachers in the engagement sessions expressed high levels of concern about what they considered excessive **content load**, in all subject areas. Teachers indicated that the combination of specific learning outcomes, knowledge outcomes and understandings will present an unwieldy and unwise expectation for instructional practice, where teacher-centred (more than student-

centred) instruction would predominate and where student learning would be characterized by acquisition of facts and knowledge. Teachers expressed high anxiety about this inclusion of so much explicit, prescriptive content and worried that, without significant change to the drafts, their roles as pedagogical experts will suffer greatly. Teachers would actually prefer reduced content from what is currently the case, so that they are able to use their professional skills to address diverse learning needs in the classroom and ensure that all students can study deeply and meaningfully about key concepts and then apply these learnings to real world problems and situations.

- e) Teachers in the engagement sessions had a good deal to say about ***supports that government, school authorities and teachers will need to consider*** as part of planning for provincial implementation. Participants, all strongly of the view that this draft curriculum is not nearly ready for implementation, suggest that once substantial improvements have been made and the curriculum is deemed ready, a preferred approach would include:
- Consideration for extending pilot periods in all subject areas
 - Using “phased in” or a “staged” or “staggered” approach to the implementation of the curriculum, using models similar to those used in earlier provincial curriculum implementation initiatives
 - Much more opportunity for ongoing feedback processes (between teachers and curriculum writers and resource developers)
 - Greater opportunity for professional development that focuses more on instructional design and less on learning about the curriculum
 - Teachers suggested that implementation should consider a facilitated design approach, using a variety of subject and knowledge experts in the field, including experts from the First Nations, Metis and Inuit community, to help ensure that content in the draft curricula is understood and teachers are able to provide instruction in appropriate and respectful ways.
 - Teachers perceive that with intended curriculum change across multiple subject areas, it will be more necessary than ever for schools to identify designers, coaches, numeracy and literacy leads, all of which will mean increased costs for government and schools. Both beginning teachers and experienced teachers will require professional development supports.
 - A volume of professional development supports to span the subject areas, with professional development providers using a transdisciplinary lens to develop learning content.
 - Communication and proactive planning between government, Alberta teacher education institutions and school authorities to help ensure that major changes to curriculum programming are supported in teacher preparation coursework.

Teachers also expressed hope that, in future curriculum review and updating endeavors, consideration may be given to dynamic curriculum review, which may mean annual review and editing and updating as opposed to planning massive curriculum changes every 10 or 15 years.

Overall, teachers believe a large financial investment will be required by the province to support the development and provision to schools of curated lists of resources, materials, diagrams, interactive sites, simulations and investigations for each curriculum area that are age-appropriate and established on a copyright-free/open-source basis. Independent school teachers in the engagement sessions expressed concern about the limited resources available to small independent schools and supported whatever steps government might be able to take to ensure equitable access to resources for such schools. With the assumption that sufficient resources would be at hand:

- Teachers highlighted the possible role for the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium as a strong partner for helping to prepare teachers for implementation.
- Teachers indicated it would be helpful if AISCA could take on a significant role in preparing resources and providing professional development for independent school teachers, perhaps with the creation of several grade or division-based, collaborative communities designed to allow teachers to come together and learn from one another.
- Teachers recognized that the Learn Alberta website has some strong components. They asked, “Could this resource be leveraged and used for the distribution of resources? Could it be combined with a warehouse/centralized location with physical resources that could be ordered and delivered where needed?”
- Teachers expressed the need for multiple available resources to support the major shifts intended in this draft curriculum, and they emphasized the importance of government working well in advance of implementation with resource development providers.

In view of their concerns about the current state of the draft curriculum, participants expressed high anxiety about their ability to successfully implement the full K-6 curriculum in Sept. 2022, and it was a consensus view of the participants that government should re-think its implementation plan and timeline.

- Teachers suggest government should take a “go-slow” approach, with an initial focus by government on addressing the many improvements which will be necessary in the drafts, followed by a “staggered” or “staged” or further “piloted” implementation of those K-6 curricular areas deemed most ready.
- Teachers believe that the implementation of the full range of K-6 subjects in September 2022 would be hugely stressful for teachers, with the very short window for preparation. Teachers perceive that full implementation will be similarly unhealthy for the well-being of students, leading to significant learning gaps amongst diverse groups of student learners.
- Teachers strongly recommended limiting the number of subject areas to be implemented at one time, so as to permit teachers to meaningfully engage in good instructional practices while balancing their generalist responsibilities across the range of subject areas for which they may be responsible.

Participating teachers suggest that if government is intent on making the many changes that will be necessary to the draft curriculum, the implementation process would be strengthened if the creators and collaborators in the curriculum design were made visible and if it was clear which voices had contributed. Teachers recommended the following question as one should guide improvement efforts to the draft K-6 curricula, “Does the curriculum appropriately represent the voices of child developmental learning specialists, the voices of scientists and post-secondary education curriculum experts, the voices of First Nations, Metis and Inuit leaders and, especially, the voices of Alberta teachers who work with children on a daily basis?”

Once again, engagement session teachers expressed appreciation for their opportunity to provide feedback to Government. Teachers were pleased to be able to bring their views and their ideas to the table and they expressed hope that their feedback would help the Ministry determine its next steps regarding curriculum improvements, changes and/or implementation.

On behalf of AISCA and the participating independent schools and teachers involved in this initiative, thank you for the opportunity to engage with the Ministry through this conditional grant agreement.

Sincerely,

John Jagersma

Executive Director, AISCA

Appendix 1 - Compilation of Participant Feedback - AISCA K-6 Draft Curriculum Engagement Sessions

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Compilation of Participant Feedback - AISCA K-6 Draft Curriculum Engagement Sessions

1. Draft English Language Arts AISCA Engagement Session Feedback- October 6, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum

- Participants appreciated the more explicit content in the draft ELA curriculum, especially that related to teaching and learning emergent and early reading in K-3. Teachers feel the move in the K-3 section towards such a research and evidence-based approach is appropriate.
 - Teachers expressed support for the “how to” of reading and writing, the science of literacy, the step by step approach, emphasis on phonemic awareness, morphology and sight words.
 - Approach will enhance work in the classroom and schools that do not have sufficient resources to build system supports.
 - Approach should also help teachers working with students who require structure (perhaps students with learning differences/difficulties).
 - Emphasis on not just spelling but word parts, morphology, and the breakdown of words to understand word formation should help all students.
 - The introduction of morphological studies right from the beginning is appropriate and consistent with current research about the best practices around spelling instruction.
 - There is teacher agreement that building phonological awareness in early readers is critical to foundational reading.
- Scope and sequence in K-3 builds progressively and it will work well especially for multi grade classes.
 - Being able to have students learn the letters, then blend, then differentiate one vowel word from two vowel words (start with phonics, then to grammar, then to making sentences, then on to paragraphs), is a good approach!
 - Division 1 is well set up, great for ESL or students who have gaps in their learning. It will serve all students well.
 - Early intervention will be more manageable for teachers, with remedial pieces built right into the curriculum for use at the time when they are most needed.
- The lay-out of the curriculum is considered a strong point by most participants.
 - Considered especially helpful for student teachers and beginning teachers, curriculum is written like a guide and is easy to understand.
 - Allows teachers to navigate easily and to focus on what they need when they need it.

- The layout makes it easier to locate the foundational phonemic awareness and phonics activities that are important for young students (k-3).
- The organizing questions and ideas at the head of each section are useful and they help guide the learning focus.
- In general, teachers support the listing of the learning outcomes and the companion references to KUSP (Knowledge, Understandings, Procedures/Skills)
- Participants supported the in-depth knowledge piece – “great to have helpful content clarification right there”.
- The focus on oral traditions is important, and it is notable that it crosses curriculum (SS)
 - Teachers believe that oral story telling is a good way to build in Indigenous teachings and religious stories.
- The curriculum connections to vocal health and speech production are also positive, related to oral sharing; this represents a link to music curriculum.

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

- Teachers are concerned that continuity of student learning opportunities is absent in many areas of the ELA curriculum:
 - Some skills are addressed specifically in some grades but not all in others. There should be a stronger element of continuity.
 - While the continuum of skills approach is a strong point in the reading area, it is much less evident in writing.
 - What does the teacher need to do to get students up to speed in writing? There is an expectation for competent student writing at Gr. 5/6 without the skill building mentioned here.
 - Horizontal and vertical alignment is not clear. The connections to the previous learning/skills within a grade level are difficult to see – the current curriculum does a better job in this area.
 - Provisions for scaffolding are not clear in the curriculum - a grade 4 student who is new to the school or to this curriculum and doesn't have the background from grades 1-3 is at a deficit. How will we expect them to move forward from there without the appropriate background knowledge?
 - Learning should not stop if it is not listed in a following grade level; the skills should continue to be built upon. Teachers need to know the developmental sequence as students may not have the necessary background knowledge (have never been introduced to or have missed it).
 - There is inconsistency in the comprehension and fluency organizing levels (oral language is introduced in Gr. 5/6 but there is nothing in the fluency piece for 5/6). These pieces need to be carried through K-6.
- Participants expressed concern about the significant amount of material (content) to cover and with limited direction about how “in depth” teachers should go. More clarity would be helpful.
 - There are so many more learning outcomes, there is going to be so much to cover due to the specificity and there are portions that are missing – the opportunities for rich, deeper discussions by students may be lost.

- The high content load will make this curriculum so fast paced. If a student has fallen behind for whatever reason, it will be hard for them to recover. Students who are out for a number of reasons, or learning online, or those who have gaps, will be especially challenged.
- Are we looking at student mastery of learning outcomes? How will it be achieved and then retained? At what cost? Is the expectation for more breadth than depth?
- The scope is very broad in some areas (e.g. Mechanics of reading has so much content, it may overload some teachers).
- The Skills and Procedures section is content heavy – not sure if students are to learn/do all of this, or if this section is intended for more flexible use by teachers.
- Teacher ability to effectively differentiate according to differing student needs may be compromised if teachers feel compelled to attend to the all the detailed expectations.
- Teachers feel the image of an active, engaged student on an exciting learning journey does not emerge from this curriculum. Rather, the predominant image is of a teacher trying to cover all of the concepts (checking off boxes).
 - Curriculum writers should rethink an approach that will be more likely to instill a love of reading and engagement with the world of ideas.
 - Where is student choice built into this curriculum? If the curriculum is going to be explicit in some areas, there must also be explicit support for student motivation and engagement, choice, and a love of reading.
 - Most of the curriculum is “dry” and lacks inducement for a joy of learning.
 - The curriculum seems to lack meaningful relevance to the day-to-day life of students: where, for example, are the references to contemporary genres like graphic novels? Where are the references to the multiple uses of technology for learning that are so common amongst elementary aged children today?
- The balance between an open-ended, thematic, and conceptual approach to literacy instruction and specific outcomes/skills is off; too slanted towards a checklist of skills to be taught.
 - The predominant focus on decoding in division one seems to not be effectively balanced with a focus on development of reading comprehension.
- **In Division 1 (K-3)**, the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum is questioned in several areas of the curriculum.
 - Grade one expectation for students to “adjust verbal and non-verbal language according to a variety of situations” is overly advanced and may be placed more appropriately in grade 2/3 Health curriculum.
 - Also, the expectation to “discuss the narrator’s contribution to a story and message” – important concept but too advanced for grade one and does not seem to appear in later grades.
 - Grade 1 expectation “identify the moral or lesson of the fable, myth or folklore”, although intended to build comprehension skills, is not age appropriate.

- **In Division 2 (grades 4-6):**
 - Concern that the study of Homer and Shakespeare will not be inherently relevant nor developmentally appropriate to a Grade 5 or 6 student. If students are to enjoy the exposure, significant resources for both students and teachers will be needed.
 - Regarding introducing Shakespeare at the grade 5 level? What depth is expected? Is the focus about the study of where words come from? History of word text? More clarity is needed.
 - “Mnemosyne, Calliope, nine daughters, “muses“– this is pretty advanced content. Not sure what the goal of this content is in an elementary curriculum? Does content trump competency?
 - The Classical and European references that appear to lack context in the overall ELA curriculum - seemingly randomly, particularly in grades 5 and 6: for example - Homer, Greece, Rome, classical poetry, Shakespeare, classical art forms, structures (Neolithic, Inuit, Ancient, cave paintings).
 - All of the above will require a great deal of background teaching and learning to ensure they will be meaningful references for students. What is the meaningful learning that is anticipated from these sources?
- The curriculum lacks an appropriate reflection of the genuine diversity of Alberta students:
 - While there are many references to European traditions and norms that are developed, our students come to us from a diversity of backgrounds that need to be more prominently reflected in the curriculum, including cultural, linguistic, etc.
 - Overall, greater care needs to be taken with the language – e.g. binary references to “hero”, “heroine” – not inclusive
 - More effort to develop cross-curriculum connections are recommended, especially with respect to indigenous learning.
 - Increased suggestions for Indigenous texts, resources, sources, access to Elder support from various Treaty areas would be helpful.
- The new draft curriculum has lost some of the philosophy/‘big picture’ / front matter that would explain the “WHY” behind the ELA program; the preamble is shorter and not as rich in motivation as the current front matter section of the ELA curriculum.
 - Teachers wonder about whether a set of ‘enduring understandings’ could be developed to guide work from grade-to-grade with learners
 - Could such enduring understandings be written to support teachers, but also parents in understanding the end of grade level goals?

C. Other notes about the ELA curriculum as a whole

- Teachers are unsure about the place for cursive writing? Is it only to be introduced at Grade 3? Should teachers continue to encourage its use?
 - There is a strong body of literature about the teaching and use of cursive writing. (Fine motor control, ability for students to read it when they encounter it in travel, historic documents, etc.).

- Curriculum mentions keyboarding, but provides little direction for either keyboarding or the use of student friendly emerging and new technologies. Teachers struggle with how and when to teach keyboarding, as most students are not proficient.
- Several teachers recommended that the teaching of inference should be introduced at an earlier grade level.
- Teachers are interested in knowing more about the references to ‘top 125’ or ‘top 300’ words - where do these lists come from? Several teachers felt the curriculum should be more explicit about these lists and why they have been identified.

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers.

- Teachers are anxious about the availability of and access to needed teaching and learning resources, including print, digital and web resources. Teachers feel they will need these in a timeframe that will permit ample pre-implementation study and preparatory work.
- Teachers will need significant professional development and resource support concern with the teacher capacity to jump into morphology, phonological awareness, etc. Schools alone will not have the capacity to provide this support.
- The provincial government will need to take a leadership role (including funding leadership) in rolling out a support plan that will ensure independent school teachers have equitable opportunity to receive supports.
 - Both beginning teachers and experienced teachers will require professional development supports
 - As most teachers in K-6 are generalists, the volume of professional development supports will span the subject areas. Professional development providers will need to use a transdisciplinary lens in developing learning content
- University teacher prep programs will need to adjust curriculum programming to address the significant changes across subject areas.
- Teachers say they will need a repository of resources recommended for specific grade levels – teachers are concerned about the short time frame between now and implementation in sept 2022, especially with the current resource scarcity related to so many of the new program areas.
- Teachers indicated a desire for help from AISCA in coordinating learning and professional opportunities for independent schools. Independent schools may also be able to partner with the Regional Consortia.
- Teachers believe that the best resources will be developed if/when teachers, schools, teacher education institutions and government can work together in collaboration.
- Teachers recommended the creation of online teacher learning communities across the various subject areas, as one means to ensure individual teachers are able to reach out and find support in a timely way.

- Specific resources teachers say they will need include:
 - Canadian and Alberta specific resources
 - Resources that target specific Learning Outcomes
 - Web-links to resources directly in the curriculum document
 - Student resources and professional books
 - Development of Exemplars by grade level
 - Pacing guides
 - Updated lists of recommended novels
 - More Indigenous Ways of Knowing resources
- The consensus of the K-6, ELA participant group is that if government plans to implement all K-6 subject areas in September 2022, such an expectation will be unreasonable for teachers:
 - Limiting the number of subject areas to be changed at one time would permit teachers to meaningfully engage in good instructional practices. Teachers suggested the implementation of just a single subject area in 2022.
 - Also, participants expressed significant concerns about Covid 19 related learning delays that have been evident in their student populations, and are concerned that a major curriculum shift, taking effect in Sept. 2022 across K-6, would be likely to exacerbate learning delays for children.

2. Draft Mathematics Draft Curriculum Engagement Session Feedback - October 18, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum

- Participants acknowledged the need for and the timeliness of a “new” and “updated” curriculum in mathematics.
 - Participants support the goal, as expressed with the statement: "Math is necessary for daily life and should inspire curiosity"
- In general, the lay-out of the draft, with organizing ideas, guiding questions and learning outcomes is easy to follow.
 - The sequencing of the draft demonstrates appropriate developmental progressions through the grades.
 - The draft curriculum is organized very well. It is easier to read and to find details that are needed for classroom planning.
- Participants recognized and appreciated some beginning attempts in the draft to connect content to Indigenous studies, although more development is needed
 - Support expressed for efforts in draft to integrate Math/Art using FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT visual arts
 - Teachers expressed appreciation for the attempt to incorporate different ways of knowing from an indigenous perspective
- Support was expressed for the explicit infusion of financial literacy content
 - Learning about money for itself is a very worthwhile addition.
- Support was expressed for the earlier introduction of fractions

- Learning about fractions in earlier grades is very helpful to avoid "cramming" a lot of fraction and decimal information into grade 4.
- Participants expressed general support for a greater emphasis on operational fluency than in the past
 - Focus on skill development
 - Use of standard algorithms
 - Recalling facts
- Participants appreciated the draft's focus on gathering and using data to help students build scientific literacy.

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

- Participants found several examples in the draft curriculum which they perceived to be at odds with inclusivity:
 - Historical perspective - appears to be very Eurocentric
 - Support seems to be lacking for students with learning disabilities or those with English as a second language
- Teachers found that examples of cross curricular connections were limited in the draft and, where they existed, there were often inconsistencies, e.g. expecting young students to be building a budget but only having the skill set to count to a dollar.
- Participants expressed a concern about the draft's balance between knowledge and skills
 - Currently the draft is very skills based, there is a need to balance these important skills with deeper experiential/concrete.
 - Research clearly shows that the concrete understanding of skills is needed to be successful and to allow for student retention of knowledge.
- Participants were concerned that there is a movement with this draft towards a strictly knowledge based program and that this shift will have an adverse effect on student learning outcomes in the long term:
 - Over - emphasizing of procedural knowledge in the absence of conceptual understanding will not prepare students to become mathematicians with a deep, authentic, understanding of the subject.
 - Students need a deeper understanding of mathematics – need to be able understand how and why mathematics matters in today's world; conceptual understanding needs to be balanced with procedural understanding.
 - Focus on standard algorithms is important, but should not be at the expense of ensuring students learn various strategies to approach and solve mathematical problems.
 - There needs to be an application of that knowledge through a conceptual lens and learning needs to be engaging, fun and exciting. This can happen by introducing a curriculum which scaffolds learning to support student needs.
 - Students need to learn to apply new knowledge and skills in real life, engaging students in efforts to solve perplexing, interesting problems.

- Research is clear that to best support students, we need to transition through concrete to pictorial and then to abstract. This curriculum appears to have missed both the concrete and pictorial stage.
- Concern expressed that many of the guiding questions are far too narrow; again, procedural knowledge does not equal understanding. A guiding question of *How can we apply the processes of addition and subtraction to problem solving* speaks only to rote learning and memorization, when the curriculum also needs to be challenging students to apply new understanding and transfer these to new problems.
- Students who are diagnosed with a mathematics LD, a reading LD, or who have working memory and/or processing speed deficits will suffer with this narrow view of mathematics.
- Several concerns about age/developmental appropriateness of the content were expressed. Teachers found that in many instances, this curriculum draft does not line up with what we know about how children’s brains develop and how they learn:
 - The number of specific learner outcomes in grade 6 has tripled in number. (74 from 27 SLO, all of this in just 40 weeks of school) and many of these outcomes are not age-appropriate: (0 are easier than current program, 33 are similar, 16 are slightly more difficult, 25 are significantly harder, 14 have been lost to earlier grades)
 - Gr. 6 Math is already difficult for students, and the new draft makes it even more challenging
 - Concern expressed about waiting until grade 6 to work with negative numbers (this, in a cold country, where we use the metric system), feels very late. Many integer operations need to come later, but their existence should be acknowledged sooner.
 - The expectations for students to be counting backwards in grade one from 20 and for Grade 2 students to count backward from 1000 seems unreasonable
 - The expectations for recalling multiplication facts in grade 3 is too high, including multiplying fractions in grade 3, which seems too advanced for students
 - Learning about congruency of shapes in grade 6 seems an easy concept that could easily be mastered in earlier grades
 - Grade 4 students are capable of learning the 8, 9 and 12 multiplication facts.
 - Converting measurements between the metric system and the Imperial system is too ambitious for the grade 3 curriculum since the students are in the process of learning only basic division facts at the same time. Students in Grade 3 should simply be able to compare the units in the different systems.
 - Grade 3 students should only be required to learn time to the hour, the half hour and to 15 minutes.
 - Students in grade 3 do not have mastery with multiplication and division in order to accomplish the skill of converting imperial to metric.

- There were concerns expressed about the “piling on” of new content by teachers of several grades.
 - Specific example around place value to greater than one million in grade 5, but in the draft curriculum in grade 5 there is discussion of the infinite nature of place value
 - Grade 3 – students currently learn 5×5 , but in new draft curriculum, must learn 10×10
 - Percentages had been in grade 6 but, in this draft, it has been moved to grade 5
 - Surveys, questionnaires and bar graphs currently studied in grade 6 but in draft they are in grade 5 - okay developmentally, but no outcomes have been moved up from grade 5.
- Participants expressed concern that topics currently introduced in grades 7, 8 and 9 are now “pushed down” (in this draft) into earlier grades. The result is that much of content is too advanced for the grade to which it has been assigned. Also, teachers are concerned that nothing appears to have been taken out of the curriculum to allow room and time for these skills to be taught in grades K-6.
 - Examples - Grade 6 - one outcome is multiplying and dividing fractions (was in middle school) and now there are exponents (powers) and the distributive property in algebra, area of parallelograms and triangles - all of these outcomes have dropped down from 7/8/9 to grade six.
- Teachers expressed concern that there is too little acknowledgement in the draft about the research around mathematics learning, and the development of mathematical cognition that has occurred over the past hundred years:
 - Readers/teachers are left with uncertainty about the research that provided direction for the changes
 - Improved “front matter” or a preamble with rationale should be developed to help set the stage for a “new” curriculum change
 - Clarification is required on what the “tried and true practices” are that are referenced and more background on “leading jurisdictions” from which some of the curriculum content has been drawn.
 - Teachers expressed concern that curriculum does not take into account current understandings in cognitive science.

C. Other notes about the curriculum as a whole

- Although having the scope and sequence laid out for the K-6 curriculum is beneficial, more information about the scope and sequence through to grade 12 would provide teachers with the opportunity to provide deeper more meaningful feedback.
- Participating teachers expressed the observation that the mathematics language referenced in learner outcomes may require teachers to have greater mathematic knowledge than may currently be the case, with only about 5-10% of Alberta teachers have curriculum expertise in mathematics.
- Teachers expressed concern that curriculum drafters seemed to have had limited input from teachers in identifying the strengths of our current curriculum and building from

there. Teachers feel the C-R-A (concrete-representational-abstract) is a huge strength of our current curriculum and are concerned that it may be lost with the implementation of this curriculum.

- Participants say lack of teacher involvement in the creation of this curriculum means government is missing out on the opportunity to engage with classroom experts help to create a curriculum that will meet the needs of our students and inspire joy of learning at the same time.
- Participants express a significant concern with what they perceive to be a very high volume of content across all grades – too much for students to reasonably be expected to acquire in the course of a single school year
 - Sheer volume of the curriculum (outcomes) will make it difficult to address even the curriculum itself, never mind going deeper with what should be a deeper focus on problem solving, reasoning and critical thinking.
- Teachers also expressed concern about the ability to develop quality assessment practices, given the combination of the identified learning outcomes and also the greater range of knowledge outcomes.
- Participants expressed concern about what they perceived as the heavily pedagogical nature of the curriculum and the constraints they think this will place on their ability to exercise professional autonomy.

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers

- Support groups, similar to this engagement group, will need to be established to allow teachers to work collaboratively, plan lessons and assessments, share resources etc.
 - Participants in the engagement session suggested a shared responsibility for professional development should be funded by government and organized/developed by organizations like AISCA, the Regional Consortia, schools and possibly post-secondary teacher education institutions
- It will especially difficulty to implement this curriculum if teachers are simultaneously expected to implement 5 other new curricula – a huge quantum leap of this kind would mean that by grade 6, if all the curriculum areas were rolled out at once, the teaching and learning gaps experienced by teachers and students alike would be very worrisome.
- Mathematics teachers view the prospect of multiple subjects being implemented at the same time as highly stressful for teachers and unhealthy for students.
- Teachers indicated that as relatively few elementary teachers have specialty math backgrounds as part of their university teacher education programming, teacher preparation programs may need to be reviewed and possibly adjusted as this program is implemented.
- With a skills heavy curriculum like this, teachers say they will need professional development support and resource support to help students make real world connections and to apply their skills in problem solving situations.
- Teachers believe that government will need to expend considerable time and effort to make needed improvements to the mathematics curriculum before fall of 2022, thus

leaving very limited time for teachers to “dive deeply” into studying and understanding the direction of the new curriculum.

- They believe this scenario (implementation in fall, 2022) would be exceptionally hard on any students, and particularly those with learning difficulties.
- Teachers say considerable communication will be needed with colleagues assigned to grades behind and grades ahead to talk about alignment and about supporting student transitions in an effective manner.
- Teachers express professional concerns about their ability to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and content – they suggest significant investments in professional development, perhaps led by FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT experts, will be necessary to provide them with the background/support required.
- Teachers recommend a mix of school based and provincially based professional development to support implementation:
- Professional development opportunities for all teachers will be necessary, with a focus on supporting new teachers. Professional learning opportunities should use a scaffolding approach - breaking down the curriculum into manageable sections.
 - Teachers will require resource supports/documents that outline skill gaps to support teachers since they will not have learned previous materials
 - Support teachers in implementing this curriculum will be critical. They will need a roadmap of resources and expectations, including those related to assessment.
 - Teachers express anxiety about resources for student assessment in mathematics and indicate this will be another important resource development focus for teachers.
- A significant investment, supported by government, will be necessary to ensure textbooks, web resources and other age/grade appropriate school resources are accessible to all schools.
 - Strategies to ensure resource access by small independent schools will be important
 - Costs for PD and new resources - Algebra tiles, for example will be needed in Elementary, as will new resources to support metric and imperial measurement comparisons.
- In the longer term, teachers indicate they will want to see the scope and sequence for grade 7-12, especially to help build appropriate numeracy progressions and establish skill building scaffolds across the grades.
- Participants in the mathematics engagement expressed strong disapproval for any implementation plan that would introduce a simultaneous changeover of curriculum in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and Wellness and Fine Arts
 - Teachers indicate such an approach would be detrimental to student learning, lead to significant learning gaps amongst diverse groups of student learners and leave professional teachers in a particularly vulnerable and stressful condition.
- Teachers strongly recommend a “phased in” or “staged approach” to the implementation of the curriculum, using models similar to those used in earlier provincial curriculum implementation initiatives:

- Possible approach might focus on
 - Kindergarten in year one
 - Grades 1 - 3 in year two
 - Grades 4 - 6 in year three
- An approach of this nature, teachers believe, would enable
 - Improved coordination between Ministry and resource developers
 - More time and ability for teachers to become familiar with the full scope of the curriculum
 - Effective professional development planning and implementation

3. Draft K – 6 Social Studies Curriculum Engagement Session Feedback - October 20, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum:

- Participants expressed general appreciation for the focus on financial literacy throughout
- Support was expressed for the focus on identity and community in Kindergarten, as a strong beginning point
 - While the kindergarten curriculum provides a strong start to Social Studies learning, participants found the strong start was not sustained in later grades
 - Learners need to start with understanding themselves, their families and their community before jumping out into the world.
- General support (with caveats) was expressed for First Nations, Metis and Inuit content included in the draft, including explicit study related to residential schools and the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- There was general agreement amongst participants that an update to the Social Studies curriculum is due.

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

- Participants expressed significant concern about what they considered a drastic departure from the current curriculum, which participants believe has served students very well. Participants were curious about the “evidence” that may have supported the significant content departure from the current curriculum.
 - Feels like the draft curriculum is starting from scratch - Why scrap everything from the current and previous K-4 draft curriculum? Why are we not strengthening what we know is already working?
 - Current curriculum goes from the individual to the community to the world, and that beautiful progression has been lost in this curriculum
- Concern expressed that philosophical grounding is fundamentally wrong -
 - Idea that everyone in Canada needs to know the same laundry list of facts and we'll be better citizens is wrong headed
 - Where is the philosophical rationale? The draft curriculum offers just a short two paragraphs as opposed to the much richer philosophy espoused in the current

curriculum, with its emphasis on the development of engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens

- Major concern expressed about a dominant Eurocentric white lens approach to the curriculum content - Metis were hardly mentioned at all - concerns from Metis teachers to this effect
 - Comment – “White euro-centric Alberta” doesn’t exist anymore but the curriculum tries to convince us (and students) to believe that it does.
 - Curriculum needs to allow students more opportunity to explore their identity and citizenship - rather than simply exploring newly prescribed religions and cultures
 - Curriculum seems so inflexible and, unlike the current curriculum, appears to leave so little room for teacher professional autonomy in developing/using lessons geared to the personal lives, contexts and backgrounds of children in class
- Concerns were expressed about the treatment of diverse cultures in the draft
 - If this content and learning is to be beneficial, curriculum needs to enable teachers to teach conceptually about beliefs and cultures
 - Outcomes need to better reflect how the different beliefs and cultural backgrounds in the room can be celebrated
 - Draft curriculum as presented is not a “lived curriculum” - an effective curriculum should always have a foundation in “our community, our people” – “we” are the curriculum
 - Learning about the cultures in your own community is SO much more important than the draft curriculum permits - choosing random cultures from the past isn’t relevant to our students and it won’t deepen their understanding of Canada.
- Participating teachers expressed real concern about the very extensive amount of knowledge grade 2 and grade 6 students are required to know about world religions
 - Teachers expressed questions about the age appropriateness of this content and concern that the content does not fairly represent the diversity of religious belief that will be present in the families who send their children to school in Alberta
 - Also, many teachers found the absence of any reference to indigenous spirituality troubling.
- Concern expressed that the attempt in the draft to incorporate a “civics” approach to learning about government does not do justice to helping students learn about the importance of democracy and the responsibilities that come with living in a democratic society
 - Current curriculum focus on government in grade 6, always very popular with students and teachers, for example, is lost
 - Attempt to have carried it through 1-6 (Civics) - government is there but democracy is not as clear a focus, rather seems to be a focus on American civics
 - Participants are concerned with what they perceive to be an over emphasis on studying American history
- Focus on too much content has resulted in important skills and processes being completely removed - critical thinking, research as deliberate inquiry, etc.

- The purpose of social studies should be to develop the competencies, with the content as the vehicle - not the other way around
- The skills and procedures are overly prescriptive - does not honor the autonomy and professionalism of teachers as learning designers
- Concern expressed with the minute, granular focus on specifics that there is no room to pull-out the conceptual understandings - no room for students to nurture curiosity and passion
- Does not provide opportunity for deep learning – there is an over- emphasis on surface level learning
- Several concerns about age and developmental appropriateness were identified by participants:
 - The topic of “abstractions” seems a bit too abstract for grade 6 thinkers. It looks more suitable for a junior high school student.
 - Concern about study of world economy. Much care and teacher preparation will be required to teach this topic. It seems a little much for Grade 5 and 6 students.
 - Geography terms and Timelines does not seem to fit with the age groups - eg. – Gr. 1 – Knowledge - would be more fitting to move maps and globes related to the early Indigenous and ancient world to a higher grade.
 - Also, Gr. 1 – Chronology of migrations and settlements seems misplaced.
 - Gr. 1 & 2 – World Religions – much too specific for young students
 - Gr. 2 – study related to Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Roman Empire, Middle Ages not appropriate for age level
 - Concerns expressed about budgeting in grade 6, and Investments in grade 4
 - Teachers found some of the content seems questionable, given potential detriment to student well-being. E.g. grade 2 discussion comparing the Black Death, Spanish flu and Covid-19
- Concern expressed that majority of indigenous content in the draft is presented as fact, history, and perspective; there is not enough focus on Indigenous ways of knowing and learning – the pedagogical piece is missing
 - To be really rich, much more effort should be expended to help FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT students see themselves in the learning
 - Students should be able to bring forward their own/their family and their community stories, experiences and knowledge to make learning more relevant for everyone in class
 - More focus could also be placed on using examples of resiliency (past and present) amongst First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples
- Participants expressed additional concern about instances of bias in the treatment of FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT and offered the following observations:
 - Grade 4 topic, for example, is heavily focused on settler society and is missing some very important information.
 - “Were the Indigenous peoples of this province not displaced onto small reserves, most of the settlers arriving here to set up homesteads would have discovered that this land was not as ‘empty’ as the government of the day wanted them to believe”.

- “You can’t begin to tell the story of how Alberta became a province without including the creation of Treaties 6, 7 and 8”.
- Concern expressed that a number of important competencies are missing from the draft—collaboration, global citizenship, problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation – all of which should be at the core of a good SS curriculum
 - Opportunities to develop such competencies should be leveraged when learning social studies.
 - Critical thinking, for example must be planned for and designed in a curriculum to prepare students for the future and global citizenship. Students need to actively engage in building questions for inquiry.

C. Other notes about the curriculum as a whole

- Additional concerns were expressed about too much content, especially knowledge and fact based – leaving too little time for deep and transferable learning
 - Names, dates, places with no connection as to why students are required to learn these
 - Teachers perceive the draft to be “exhausting”
 - Too much secondary content has been dropped into upper elementary grade levels.
 - Concerns expressed about what student assessment will look like – where appropriate assessment practices should not be limited to a regurgitation of facts
- So much emphasis on history, which is not a bad thing, in and of itself, but the draft has so few connections to help students understand how history has shaped our country and our identity today
 - Needs to be more of a Canadian focus, especially in the lower grades
- Teachers expressed a generalizable concern about how the draft curriculum seems to be so limiting in references to the diversity of our own Alberta population
 - In a province where there are real concerns about the acceptance of all people and all backgrounds, the draft curriculum could be written to help students value differences, promote respect for all peoples and recognize racism where it exists
- Participants expressed concern that the draft curriculum has a lack of focus.
 - The draft seems to be overly focused on content/subject areas that are isolated and not well connected to related to either the outcomes or the guiding questions
 - The draft does not effectively build on itself from Grade to Grade.
 - Things need to be connected for students to understand. You can’t go to the other side of the world before understand your own town or city.
- Participants spent some time discussing the relevance of an Alberta Education document, *Primary Programs Framework for Teaching and Learning (K-3): Guiding Principles (2007)* to their assessment of this draft Social Studies curriculum. The principles are intended to help Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers reflect on the nature of young children as diverse, active learners and to support teachers in making informed instructional decisions in learning environments that are responsive to children’s needs, capabilities, and cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.
 - Principle 1: Childhoods differ depending on social and cultural circumstances

- Principle 2: Children’s development is influenced but not determined by their early experiences
- Principle 3: Children interact and learn in a variety of contexts
- Principle 4: Children are co-constructors of knowledge and partners in learning
- Principle 5: Children are unique and active contributors to their learning
- Principle 6: Children construct and represent knowledge in a variety of ways
- Principle 7: Children are citizens and active participants in school and society
- Principle 8: Children are active collaborators in and users of assessment
- It was the consensus of the participant group that the draft curriculum, in its current form, will not present the learning opportunities whereby these principles will be achievable.

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers

- Participants are strongly of the view that this draft curriculum is not nearly ready for implementation. Participants expressed far greater support for the current curriculum than for the proposed draft. They suggest that when it is deemed ready, a preferred approach would include:
 - Staged or staggered implementation
 - Extended pilot periods
 - Much more opportunity for ongoing feedback processes (between teachers and curriculum writers and resource developers)
 - Greater opportunity for professional development that focuses more on instructional design and less on learning about the curriculum
 - Increased consideration for dynamic curriculum review, which may mean annual review and editing and updating as opposed to massive change every 10 or so years
- Participants expressed concern about the current lack of available resources to support the major shift intended in this draft curriculum, and emphasize the importance of government working well in advance of implementation with resource development providers
- Participants indicate that if/when the Ministry establishes a date for official implementation, then a huge amount of money will need to be invested in teacher professional development
 - Teachers suggest that when the curriculum is deemed ready for implementation, there will be a need to use a facilitated design approach, using experts in the field, to enable greater implementation success
 - With intended curriculum change across multiple subject areas, it will be more necessary than ever for schools to identify designers, coaches, SEL, numeracy/literacy leads, all of which will mean increased costs for government and schools
 - To ensure teachers access the support they need to assist students in learning about the FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT topics, it will be important that indigenous people with expertise are invited to share the perspective and world view of Indigenous people

- Participants expressed significant concern about the Ministry’s apparent expectation that elementary teachers will be able to teach an entirely new curriculum in all subject areas. They indicated concerns that:
 - Teacher well-being is not being considered
 - Resources are highly unlikely to be provided in a timely manner
 - Opportunities to improve the resources will be missed
- Participants observed that, with the very high and pronounced increase in learning content in all K-6 subject areas:
 - We may be compelled to look at redesign of our elementary school system – where teacher subject area specialists will replace the current preponderance of elementary generalists
- Participants posed this question for the Ministry’s consideration: *Is curriculum design/redesign really the job of the current provincial government? What if curriculum development was in the hands of an independent body made up of post-secondary education program representatives, school organization representatives, teachers, parents, and curriculum experts?*

4. Draft K – 6 Draft Science Curriculum Engagement Session Feedback - October 21, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum

- The inclusion of the computer science stream – bringing coding into the classroom is very important for the 21st century learner. Some kids are tech savvy, but some are not as they don’t have the resources at home. This feature also addresses the Numeracy competency.
- Participants expressed general support for the lay out of the draft
 - The guiding questions are largely appropriate.
 - In general, teachers indicated support for the sequencing of the topics - curriculum appears to build year by year on similar topics, providing continuity of learning
 - Outcomes, questions, and content seem quite clear
 - Some but not all outcomes are developmentally appropriate
 - Scaffolding of topics is supported by teachers - it will be helpful to know how to guide learning and teach new concepts.
 - Topics carried across grades, organizing ideas are vertically aligned across grades. Allows for co-creation in multiple grade schools
 - Vertical alignment will allow teachers to have a better understanding of skills kids arrive with and how to best prepare them for subsequent learning
 - Learning outcomes are relatively clear and not too flowery.
 - Organizing ideas do try to facilitate continuous building on the same theme, which is a good thing, even though the language of the organizing ideas could be improved for clarity.
 - The content is largely age appropriate (with exceptions as noted below), but there is just too much of it.

- In this draft, FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT perspectives seem more natural than in other subject areas, and the level is more appropriate
 - Many of the “forced” FMNI perspectives from the previous draft have been removed and the current perspectives seem better suited to the study of science
 - Still, teachers find that the draft should focus more on contemporary lessons related to FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT and less on historical
- Participants appreciated that elements of scientific processes are embedded throughout the draft
 - In grade 5, for example, the question about energy resources is a good building block for building the idea of energy stores and transfers as outlined in Miller's work (2014) on a researched informed teaching sequence for energy. (This was part of the old draft 7-9).
 - The focus on the “scientific method” and on “evidence” is supported.
- Participating teachers were encouraged to think that if appropriate science implementation resources, including professional development for teachers, are provided, the draft has potential to allow for more experimentation opportunities for learners.
- Teachers are supportive of the attempts made in the draft to honor the spirit of inclusion and to recognize the diversity of Canadians.

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

- Teachers observed that this draft would benefit from “stronger front matter” designed to express the major goals of the K-6 Science program and to demonstrate how the curriculum is tied to current research about how young students can best learn science.
- Teachers expressed concern about a number of outcomes they believe to be developmentally inappropriate. Some examples included these:
 - Change in the rate of vibration can alter pitch seems misplaced in grade 2.
 - In the draft, volume appears in grade 2 and grade 5 science but not until grade 6 math.
 - The draft expects grade one students to calculate area in grade 1, when they don't learn that until grade 4.
 - Grade 1 students are asked to identify objects based on measurable area. If this means they are expected to measure and then calculate area of objects, this is a tall order for 6 year-olds.
 - Progression is not always sound: Example: Gr 3 will teach volume of different states of matter without necessary background in previous years (current curriculum at least has it in grade 2 math).
 - Principles of flight are introduced too early in the curriculum.
 - All the discussions of forces and laws of motion are far above a grade 3 level.
 - Grade 6 - “Identify the force(s) that are acting on an object during a specific interaction. Everything listed in the energy resources section is way beyond grade 6

- Refraction in grade 2 will be highly challenging for 7 year olds - Light 'bending as it travels from one material to another". Students need to have a solid understanding of particles and density to fully understand refraction.
- The whole concept of how light travels is introduced too early.
- Teachers indicated concerns that the complexity of vocabulary will be challenging for young learners and for those who do not have English as a first language. Also, teachers indicated that the use of many scientific terms in the draft is questionable. Teachers are concerned that many of the terms are not explicitly addressed in the curriculum, meaning student understanding of the terms may be inconsistent given the interpretation provided by teachers. This may be a particular concern for generalist science teachers. Examples include:
 - using mass in grade 1 where it should be weight, and where the concept of mass isn't introduced until grade 5, anyway.
 - Gr 5 – incorrect use of the term buoyancy, as text claims it to be a force acting only on liquids.
 - Movement is a change in an object's position that happens over time.
 - Speed can be stopped.
 - "Energy use may have environmental or economic impacts, including human-caused (anthropogenic) climate change"
 - "Environment refers to physical surroundings."
 - "Earth's revolution around the Sun takes a year." and "Earth's rotation on its axis takes a day."
 - "Explain how climate can influence human activity."
 - "How are organisms designed for survival?"
 - Most of society follows the Western (Gregorian) calendar in daily life.
 - "Discuss the trustworthiness of sources of information or data."
 - The understanding of a force needs better clarity overall as this sequence is developed in the draft. The guiding question should be about forces and not about energy.
- Teachers find that literacy and numeracy competencies are not clearly tied in this draft, leaving the possibility of them being missed entirely. Teachers feel these connections should be much more explicit.
- Overall, teachers are concerned that an apparent expectation for teachers to focus heavily on knowledge outcomes, vocabulary, skills - limiting their ability to promote students' conceptual understandings.
 - Too few of the topics lend themselves to open-ended inquiry, the kind of inquiry that can make science fun!
 - Lots of the "fun" topics of the current curriculum have been removed - E.g. classroom chemistry in current grade 5, always so inspiring for students - and there are too few replacement topics that will cause kids to love science and want to know more.
 - Similarly, teachers found that the draft provides only very limited opportunities for self-directed learning, which again is a feature of the current curriculum that teachers support

- Elementary science should be about trying to get that sense of wonder of the world, while this draft is mostly about getting to the facts – it should be more about the sense of wonder, ways to extend students’ natural curiosity.
- Making this draft so knowledge-based will diminish the enjoyment for students. Drafters should reduce the knowledge outcomes and concentrate on building general understandings so that students can be critical thinkers able to understand how to search for information.
- Teachers say the draft curriculum misses the mark in terms of it being exploratory.
 - Much of the content seems overly theoretical and abstract, especially for young learners, it’s harder for them to connect with personally
 - New curriculum doesn’t feel as engaging for learners
 - If this draft prevails, it will be more important than ever to have science teachers who are “specialists”, able to create opportunities outside of the curriculum that will cause students to love science.
 - Not sure how teachers will have time to create the experiential learning that students need when they have so much content to teach.
- Participating teachers, while pleased with the efforts of this draft to emphasize a computer literacy stream, indicate that the content and learning outcomes in this section are nevertheless limited and teachers believe there is room for much more focus on the use of technologies to broaden student learning, or to engage in exploratory science and research opportunities.
 - Students can use technology in so many exciting ways to make, play and create. This helps them connect with more abstract concepts when they’re exposed to material later.
 - Lego robotics, as one example, lends itself well to student exploration and creativity.

C. Other notes about the curriculum as a whole

- Teachers found that the broad range of expectations for students related to knowledge, skills, understandings and learning outcomes will make creating realistic student assessment tasks challenging. The draft program seems to lack specifics in many aspects of what is actually being asked of the students. It is suggested that an accompanying document for implementation should be put together to support the assessment of outcomes.
 - E.g. in grade 4, the understanding "*Astronomical phenomena can be observed differently during the day and night*" does little to tell us what the students are really meant to understand.
- Teachers express a concern that the very high number of knowledge outcomes – particularly in grade 6 Science, will force teachers to treat Science learning in a more superficial way than is appropriate – when what they would prefer would be to focus on fewer really important concepts so that students can apply these to real world problems and situations.
 - For example, the draft limits the opportunities for students to deal with current issues – e.g. Contaminated water in many First Nations, climate change

challenges, and other authentic/relevant scenarios needed to support student critical thinking and understanding.

- With the draft Science curriculum and also the draft Mathematics, Social Studies and Language Arts curricula, teachers expressed questions about the plans for the related provincial achievement tests and anxiety about the stressors teachers will face with multiple new PATs arising.
- Teachers anticipate that with so much content in this draft having been shifted down from Junior High, that the junior high curriculum will also be impacted. They indicate a desire to see the draft plan for secondary Science as well.

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers

- Teachers indicated that the implementation of this draft curriculum, once improvements have been made, will require a significant investment in resources, time and professional development. They believe a large financial investment will be required by the province to ensure schools have the resources to provide:
 - Appropriate literature/text/videos to support age appropriate language acquisition and instruction in new topics.
 - Reading resources that link to curricular outcomes, including those for early learners/readers to help them connect to different topics
 - Textbooks – teachers ask, “will these be available and have text publishers been alerted to the high expectations related to multiple curricular changes?”
- Teachers believe that a curated list of resources/materials/diagrams/interactive sites/simulations/experiments should be developed for Science that is age-appropriate and established on a copyright-free/open-source to create resources and notes for our students.
 - Teachers highlighted the ARPDC as a strong partner for helping to prepare teachers for implementation
 - Teachers indicated it would be helpful if AISCA might be able to take on a significant role in preparing resources and providing professional development for independent school teachers
- Teachers recognize that the Learn Alberta website has some strong components. They ask, “Could this resource be leveraged and used for the distribution of resources? Could it be combined with a warehouse/centralized location with physical resources that could be ordered and delivered where needed?”
- Teachers suggested the creation of several division-based, collaborative communities designed to allow teachers to come together and learn from one another. This kind of opportunity would need to be accessible for all - not just available in big cities.
- Teachers believe that increased teacher preparation will be required to ensure that the FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT content in the draft curriculum is understood and that teachers can present it in appropriate and respectful ways.

- Teachers said that with a new curriculum, it will be important to have pathway resources developed and lessons available to help implement new programs – there will be a need for strong teacher resources & lesson plans and assessment supports.
 - Activities and resources will need to be created and provided to help teachers provide meaningful learning opportunities and connections to be made.
 - As many skills and procedures in the draft will appear vague (especially for those who are not science specialists), the provision of possible experiments/lesson plans to scaffold teaching would be helpful.
 - It was observed that Edmonton Public has a great resource developed way back in 1995 that could serve as an exemplar of the product that would be helpful.
- Teachers recommended a review of OHS concerns prior to implementation of the new curriculum - what training will needed to keep our children & teachers safe?
 - New labs = greater risk. New chemicals used by teachers - which are approved? Are they approved for Elementary?
 - The Safety in the Science Classroom resource needs to be updated with the new curriculum in mind.
- Teachers expressed a good deal of anxiety about government announced plans to implement this curriculum along with others in September 2022 and it was a consensus view of the participants that government should re-think this plan.
 - Teachers suggest a “go-slow” approach, with an initial focus by government on addressing the many improvements which will be necessary in the draft, followed by a “staggered” or “staged” implementation of those K-6 curricular areas deemed most ready.
 - Teachers believe that the implementation of the full range of K-6 subjects in September 2022 would be hugely stressful for teachers, with the very short window for preparation and similarly unhealthy for the well-being of students.
- Teachers believe the curriculum development process would be strengthened if the collaborators/creators of curriculum design were made visible and if it was clear which voices have contributed
 - Teachers asked, “Do we have the FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT voices, voices of child developmental learning specialists, the voices of scientists and the voices of Alberta teachers who work with children on a daily basis?”

5. Draft Physical Education and Wellness Curriculum Engagement Session Feedback – October 25, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum

Participants in the engagement session expressed general support for the following elements of the draft curriculum:

- Teachers find that, overall, the scope of the program is appropriate. It is written broadly enough to be taught in all schools with both basic and/or advanced resources.

- Level of Risk and Level of Play – it’s appreciated that the curriculum encourages an exploration of what Risk looks like, and support for risk taking and exploration.
 - Appreciation for the emphasis on ‘exploration’ and learn through “play”, over the traditional skills based learning as seen in the previous curriculum
- The connection to where our food comes from is better represented in this curriculum.
 - Consistent integration of food and its sources (e.g. large scale farms, personal gardens, etc.)
- Teachers support the effort to consistently integrate the First Nations, Metis and Inuit perspective
 - The curriculum has considerable content related to First Nations, Metis and Inuit, across the grades, including a focus on land-based activities
- It’s helpful that the curriculum uses a common umbrella (health, physical, mental/emotional), as these elements fit naturally together as wellness components.
 - The new curriculum addresses the whole student- including emotional, mental and physical well-being, in one document, that is easy to read, and to understand, at least at first glance
 - The curriculum recognizes that mental and emotional health is strongly connected to one’s physical health and activity levels
- Participants appreciate that the new curriculum effectively combines the old Health and Wellness with traditional PE. This seems a natural combination. It is more effective teaching kids about Health and Wellness while at the same time teaching them about PE.
- Teachers appreciate the focus on Lifelong learning and directions. Focus is that, regardless of skill level, ability of the student, the speciality of the teacher, the student and teacher goal in this new curriculum is for the student to grasp the keys points of a healthy active lifestyle, i.e.: nutrition, growth and development, community appreciation and exploring active living and participating in an active lifestyle, beginning early on.
 - inclusion of topics like health choices, responsibilities, and goals is excellent!

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

When considering and commenting upon areas for improvement in the Physical Education and Wellness curriculum, participants identified the following:

- Teachers expressed concern with the breadth of the Physical Education and Wellness umbrella, and with what they perceive to be an excessive amount of content. Teachers are worried that an over focus on knowledge content will detract from a more appropriate focus on student engagement in activity.
- Concern expressed about structural design of the curriculum. Participants suggested consideration be given to an approach such as: From K to 6, suggest it should be divided into Active start, learn to train, sport specific to allow proper progression and growth of “whole student” learning of physical literacy.

- Concern expressed about teachers being challenged to establish an appropriate instructional balance between Health and Wellness related outcomes and the more traditional PE related outcomes. If we are going by the current draft Curriculum, the majority of the outcomes pertain to Health and Wellness, whereas it could be argued that the predominant focus should remain on physical activity outcomes.
- Teachers appreciate the conceptual support for risky play, but believe greater clarification is necessary.
 - Would like to see some concrete examples for the parents – what does the Ministry of Education want the parents to understand in terms of what risky means?
 - Would be valuable to have sample lesson ideas, particular re: level of risk (and for higher risk things) – would be helpful for subs as well
 - Language used is unclear, e.g., transportation, risk – how do you define these terms - there should be examples or what different levels there would be for each of the grades – otherwise, problems may arise for the many generalist teachers working in PE and Wellness. Will certification be required to teach certain areas/skills?
 - The curriculum should outline, for both schools and parents, what the adventurous/risky play looks like so we're all on the same page
 - Concern is expressed about the level of teacher expertise that will be required to effectively provide instruction in PE and Wellness, and the reality that in many independent schools, generalist PE and Wellness teachers will represent the norm
 - There may be issues with small town versus big city delivery and accessibility- what resources/supports will be offered to allow this new style of curriculum to help teachers be educated, and fluent in what whole person means?
- Teachers expressed specific concerns that curriculum:
 - Does not define the difference between or the growth of FMS (fundamental movement skills) versus locomotor skills.
 - Does not differentiate between specific locomotor and non-locomotor objectives
 - Does not mention importance of teamwork/ cooperation in grades 5 or 6 – this is concerning
 - Does not address Technology and PE, what is the correlation and how can we use, or not use in respect to the development of the whole student for lifelong learning.
 - The curriculum should encouraging more outside learning time, and how individuals can be active and healthy without a gym or equipment – greater focus on experiences with Alberta's nature like hiking, adventure, exploring, navigating is recommended.
- Participants expressed several concerns about developmental and age-appropriate issues:

- Teaching kids about empathy in Grade 1 is good, but we have to keep in mind that it will be hard for them to understand – scaffolding or some suggestions for this would be helpful
- Grade 2 covers illegal substances and substance use?! Seems beyond the age level. Perhaps limiting content to safety with pills and medication, household items (sugar addictions, bleach is dangerous if ingested etc.). Could include screen time harm as one of the dangers for addiction/misuse instead of discussing drugs and other substances that are too mature for discussion.
- Directional movement should start in Grade 1, not Grade 3
- Grade 3 Wellness covers career roles influencing roles in the community, as well as financial considerations. Does not seem age appropriate
- Teaching genetics/internal development factors to grade 3 students seems unreasonable.
- The term “consent,” especially in earliest grades, should be replaced with “permission” and be more related more to healthy boundaries within relationships and interactions. It is an important concept to teach for wellness, but it is the wrong word. As a term, “consent” has a certain context that may frighten parents and educators if they are not given more background.
- Kindergarten -Gr2 digital health should be focussed only on screen time and its effects on the body and the mind (takes the place of physical activity and what their body needs and wants for exercise and movement to be healthy). Less need to discuss conduct online.
- Gr.3-6 should focus on digital safety, conduct (cyber bullying), social media (privacy) and youtube safety, effects on body and brain, mental health, etc. Screen/Tech can be discussed as a “substance” for addiction – related to how it can change your perception of the real world, harms your impulse control, the role of dopamine in addiction response.
- Concerns about scope and sequence:
 - Organization - To find the Scope and Sequence, one has to go through the whole document
 - It would be helpful to see the Organizing Ideas all at once – then one can visually see the progression. The curriculum is not laid out well for a specialist.
 - For a generalist at one grade level, it’s fine, but a PE specialist teaching all levels in K-6 will not readily see the intended skill progressions
- Examples of how to effectively teach First Nations, Metis and Inuit perspective seem either too broad or lacking (does AB government have a list of resources/ First Nations, Metis and Inuit individuals we can use to support us in this?)
 - Teachers express considerable anxiety about doing justice to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit components of the curriculum:
 - More detail and guidance would be useful for teachers - for e.g., in grade 2, teachers will be challenged to help students learn how the roles of people, land and animals connect to PE & Wellness?
 - Fitness Testing (testing, but also physical fitness goals) being in the curriculum at a grade 3 and 4 level is problematic

- there is evidence that such a focus can create negative experiences in PE. Physical fitness goals for this level are inappropriate. It's one thing to teach it but it's another thing to test it (timed, etc.). You can show the kids examples, explore an activity, but not test them on it. It creates too much social and emotional anxiety for older kids as well.
- Overall, teachers say the curriculum content with respect to body image, nutrition, fitness, substance abuse, etc., should be reviewed to ensure it is consistent with student well-being.

C. Other notes about the curriculum as a whole

- Learning outcomes are written in a very open-ended manner, so it is difficult for teachers to assess developmental progressions and skill achievements
 - Some indicators could be included, i.e., “has met, has reached, or has mastered x”
 - Should also include examples for Active Living and more concrete examples to support teachers when working with children around “goal setting”
 - The terminology is challenging and effort should be made to make it understandable for everyone - For teacher understanding especially, terminology should be written so generalists can understand and apply appropriate procedures
 - Physical literacy tends to be quite broad – there should be concrete examples of how it should look for ages vs grades – to help teachers determine whether the skill is age appropriate or not and to help with conceptualizing what the learning progression should look like?
- Participants recommended the curriculum should address Mental Health Literacy in addition to the SEL.
 - Mental health literacy in K-6 could combine understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health, decreasing stigma related to mental health concerns and knowledge about when and where to seek help
 - This focus would create more of a connection in the curriculum with physical activity and mental health.
- Teachers will need help with Health related components and how to address these with all students - Particularly hard for elementary generalists teaching PE
 - Access to exemplars would help
 - Generalists won't necessarily recognize what progression looks like, so more support for the generalist teachers will be necessary?

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers

Participants discussed what they perceived to be necessary for successful curriculum implementation and offered the following comments/recommendations:

- Participants expressed a concern that the curriculum will require a higher level of expertise in Physical Education instruction, and that the effect of instruction led by generalist teachers may make for lower levels of achievement/performance by students
 - There will be a heightened requirement for teachers to gain certification in First Aide and potentially certification in gymnastics instruction, for example.
 - Teachers appreciate the renewed focus on risk-taking, adventure play, climbing, hanging, swinging, etc., but also recognize the need for teachers to have more training and to be more vigilant about student safety
- Teachers expressed support for consultation and collaborative planning with organizations like Physical and Health Education Canada as well as Health and Physical Education Council of Alberta.
- Teachers believe that umbrella instruction in Physical Education and Wellness will require extensive time commitment by schools.
 - The outcomes in the program are extensive and accomplishing all of them may well necessitate daily PE and Wellness instruction
 - In schools challenged by gymnasium availability and time constraints, teachers feel there may be a need to access organizational supports around content delivery for the PE and Wellness components, especially when specialist teachers may not be assigned to this curriculum area.
- Teachers appreciated the increased level of attention to the inclusion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit content into the curriculum, along with the focus on new land based activities, but believe that extensive professional development and supports will be necessary to support teacher learning.
 - Teachers recommended professional development supports that include engagement with indigenous instructors who might introduce/teach First Nations, Metis and Inuit games
- Participating teachers asserted that they do not support mass implementation of the full range of K-6 subject areas at one time. Rather, the suggestion is that implementation be staggered with the introduction of one or two subject areas (at most) being introduced in any one year.
- With respect to implementation of the PE and Wellness curriculum in particular, teachers widely agreed that they will need considerable time to fully understand and know about the changes to the curriculum.
 - Teachers expressed a high level of concern that the timeline between government's corrections to the curriculum and the onset of the 2022 school year is very short, and teachers do not believe they can do an appropriate job of implementing the curriculum without more preparation and study time.
 - Teachers say if government is intent on the earliest possible implementation date, then teachers will need further interaction and further discussion with Ministry officials, especially following further changes to the draft.
 - Participating teachers recommend that once the curriculum updates and improvements have been made to the PE and Wellness curriculum, that a

further year of optional implementation be established, thus providing teachers with much needed preparation time.

6. Draft K – 6 Fine Arts Curriculum Engagement Session Feedback - October 26, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum:

Music

- Clearly set up for new teachers and experienced teachers alike
- Easy to understand descriptions
- New curriculum provides multiple, varied and excellent examples of music
- Listening and folk songs related to specific outcomes are outlined in each grade
- Focus on elements of music skills progression makes developmental sense and is similar to the previous curriculum sequence
- Several examples are provided for cross-curricular integration – these are especially helpful for new teachers
- General support for the concept of organizing ideas/guiding questions, with recognition that greater clarity of meaning could often be provided

Dance and Drama

- Structure of both Dance and Drama enables incorporation into music instruction. In fact, a large number of the dance curricular outcomes are integral to implementing many of the music curricular objectives.
- Drama elements appear to progress logically

Visual Arts

- Clearly set up for newbies and experienced teachers alike
- Easy to understand descriptions
- The update itself is timely
- Apparent relationship to Social Studies curriculum

Overall:

It is a strength of the Fine Arts curriculum that aspects of First Nations, Metis and Inuit and French Canadian culture are incorporated, although greater specificity around expected learning outcomes and procedures is needed to ensure teachers can correctly share information and teach aspects of these cultures about which they might not have prior background knowledge.

B. Areas Where Opportunities Exist for Possible Improvement:

- The heavy emphasis on European/Western historically-specific content in the elementary music curriculum seems developmentally inappropriate:
 - Grade One music of Ancient Egyptian, Chinese, and prehistoric content;
 - Grade Two music of Ancient Greece
 - Grade Three music of Ancient Rome

- Grade Four music from Middle Ages and Catholic church (Gregorian chant); references to the 'Golden Age of Islam'
- Contemporary music that is popular should be the context and the vehicle for helping students understand historical elements (like 12-bar blues or African American music traditions), that students might be interested in learning about, as it is contemporary music that students most consume and make connections with.
 - If the curriculum intends to connect meaningfully with students' lives, far more emphasis on contemporary content is needed.
- This music curriculum is largely devoid of references to contemporary music that is popular. There is a need for:
 - More Canadian artists, folk songs and Social Studies related songs
 - use of jingles in both advertising and for retaining information - particularly in Div. II
 - More participatory music at every level where students can physically get involved in the music with something other than traditional instruments
 - An associated site/cache of music and songs, videos that can be a quick source of examples for teachers to access
- Concern that the content in this curriculum will not be meaningful for young students without a lot of context teaching, and the teaching of context will not represent an effective use of music class time.
 - References to the organizing idea in music of, "Recognizing beauty, goodness, and truth in music can be developed by understanding the complexity and richness of great works of music" seems value laden when most of the examples then given come from the Western European historical tradition.
 - With this curriculum, the Fine Arts may need to be approached more like a 'core' subject for students and teachers
 - Music should a place where all students, including those with learning differences, can flourish and feel unburdened by academic challenges, and this curriculum seems likely take the joy out of music for some.
- In the Grade Six music curriculum, there is a huge emphasis on US music traditions prior to and post-colonization: why is this here? Why is there not a Canadian focus here? What is the purpose of this theme?
- Participants expressed a number of concerns about the Visual Arts curricula:
 - Seems very prescriptive - in Kindergarten alone, 20 specific art works are referenced. Same concern about prescriptive nature of curriculum extends across the full range of the Fine Arts – teachers will lack professional discretion
 - The artists referenced lack diversity
 - There is a very narrow focus on elements of art for each grade level
 - Does not support the interdisciplinary focus that my school values in an authentic way
 - Topics/references do not consistently align with other parts of the curriculum and are not always developmentally appropriate

- Content matter requires more Canadian art throughout - not just First Nations, but early and contemporary visiting artists to the country, and other Canadian artists
- Strengthened connections to Science/LA/Math/Social Studies curriculum would be helpful
- In Art, the primary focus on “old masters” represents a traditional Eurocentric vision of the arts, and this is unfortunate.
 - References to the art of the French Revolution in art class (Grade 5) would expose students to some pretty violent images and subject matter, currently not introduced until secondary school in the social studies curriculum.
- To be successful, teachers will require a site/cache of imagery, paintings, drawings, sculptures, etc. that can be a quick source of examples for teachers to access with ease
- The introduction of colour theory in Art seems to be moved to later grades than in the present scope and sequence. What is the reason for this? Is this not knowledge that earlier grades should learn and explore?
- In Art, the elements need to all be introduced right from the beginning, and then worked with and examined continuously. The proposed curriculum has them introduced one per year, until Grade 6. Having them introduced in the curriculum one per year, and not all considered until Grade 6, is not actually appropriate pedagogical practice.
- Classical arts educational experiences like these in the draft curriculum will require significant new and different teaching resources, as there are currently limited related resources available for K – 6 teachers.
 - If currently practicing teachers were to gather all of their favorite contemporary resources for teaching in the Arts, with the criterion that they must reflect best teaching and learning practices in the arts, the new curriculum is not a good match.
- Seems incongruous that where students study “my community” in grade 2 social studies, grade 1 and grade 2 art would include references to the French Revolution, the Renaissance and Ancient Greece and Rome – participants found the “randomness” of historical references puzzling.
- Across the arts curriculum, when referencing practices and traditions of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, little direction is provided about how to present this content in culturally respectful ways. For example, permission is often needed to share some songs. How is this going to be ensured as teachers undertake this work? One suggestion is that a bank of people who are experts in their fields be content creators for Alberta Learning, who then make this work available (stories, videos, listening examples, Zoom and in-person opportunities) to Alberta teachers.
 - And when referencing First Nations, Indigenous, and Metis peoples, the references need to be more specific. This is an Alberta curriculum and it

seems that there could be more references to specific indigenous content and work that is located right here in our province.

- In Dance, we must avoid the tokenization of Indigenous culture when teaching; with only very general curricular objectives, this will; be challenging.

C. Other Notes about the Curriculum as a Whole:

- Participants indicated a desire to see increased opportunity for cross curricular integration with more subject areas on a more consistent basis. Curriculum developers should be able to connect music and art, for example, to Social Studies because of the historical aspects.
- The focus on history in all Fine Arts curricular areas, but especially in Dance, seems to

be introduced too early and is too complex for the early grades. A closer look by curriculum writers at what historical knowledge should be shared and at what grade it should be introduced is warranted.

- The full scope of the history present in all Fine Arts curricular areas seems unnecessary.
- The knowledge objectives regarding history of dance, drama, art and music seems excessive and will tend reduce the amount of joy children should find in learning about the Fine Arts.
 - Teachers expressed concern that the prescriptive nature of the curriculum prevents professional decision making about what resources will best meet the needs of individual students/classes
- This curriculum seems to call for a specialist in each area of the Fine Arts. For someone who is teaching all subjects in a grade to teach all of this as well is a lot. Learning all new curriculum and implement all at once. (Imagine if you had a split class!)
- Participants expressed concerns about Age & Development appropriateness:
 - Practically, students cannot be expected to sit and learn content as well as apply that learning to their project work - we often only see students for 30- 60 minutes/week
 - Need to experience less “talking about” and more doing!
 - Curriculum needs to focus on participating, doing. It is so important that students not dread the Fine Arts - we want them to be joyful, fun, exploratory, creative and “hands-on”.
- Participants also expressed concerns about overall content load:
 - There is too much focus on fact based knowledge rather than skill/application of knowledge
 - The depth at Grade levels is too much

- This content will be very challenging for Generalist teachers to manage and it will be difficult to ensure that every student in Alberta has the opportunity to have a robust Fine Arts program

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers:

Participants identified the following observations and concerns regarding curriculum implementation and implementation supports that may be required:

- Specialized teacher training will be needed as generalist teachers with assignments in the Fine Arts will struggle with the content. This may require coordination with teacher training institutions in Alberta.
- Published resources and lists of resource people (especially for Indigenous support people in certain areas of the province)
 - A resource bank for teachers to easily access the works mentioned in the curriculum, (for example, art organized by elements, concepts)
- It will be important to draw on the students and families in the community and to incorporate their strengths and contributions into the curriculum (having a resource bank for these)
- A “Learn and Go” resource, providing illustrative examples for objectives in each area of the curriculum would be helpful (help teachers build resources they may want to use). Perhaps this is an initiative that could be supported through the Regional Consortia or AISCA
 - Participants expressed high anxiety about being expected to deliver all of the new K-6 curriculum in one year. They advocate for a slower, more deliberate roll out
 - Teachers say it’s hard enough for specialists to learn a whole new curriculum for their subject matter, and neither reasonable nor feasible to expect generalist teachers to learn a new curriculum in every single subject matter; especially with limited support for PD and resources. Teachers indicated they would much prefer to concentrate on one area at a time (per year), this would allow for a stronger roll out and better understanding by students.
 - Independent school teachers describe an equity issue that may be very problematic, especially for small independent schools that do not have the resources to be able to staff the Fine Arts with specialty teachers.
 - Teachers expressed a need to have an improved understanding of how the K-6 Fine Arts curriculum will flow into Jr/Sr high curriculum.

7. Draft Kindergarten Curriculum Engagement Session A Feedback - October 7, 2021

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum

- The English Language Arts curriculum is strong, overall:
 - Curriculum foundation is research based and informed by evidence.
 - The foundation for competency in literacy is established early on.

- Appreciate the emphasis on phonological awareness and phonics as a positive step
- The five pillars of literacy - phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are used as learning foundations
- ELA curriculum is well structured and age appropriate with the scope and sequence of the program well organized and meaningful, especially in K-3.
- There is continuity of language and there are a number of clearly defined terms across subject areas, which could allow the creation of IPPs/ISPs to be a smoother process
- The breakdown of Fine Arts into 4 specific sections is helpful for teachers
- The layout is generally well done - it is relatively easy to reference other grade levels
- Generally, goals and learning outcomes are stated specifically
- In Science, the shift to a study of the branches of science enables students learning each year that builds on the former – prefer this approach to the segregated unit focus in the current curriculum.
 - The properties area of Science, and the opportunity to connect teaching/learning to the outdoors, is a positive.
 - Also there is a strong link between the science and math vocabulary.
- In Physical Education and Wellness, the outcomes are generally age appropriate and there is a reasonable emphasis put on having fun and enjoying physical activity.
 - Support for the emphasis on spatial awareness and the ties into Math and Science concepts
 - Support for learning about consent, which will be taught as an essential part of the health and wellness curriculum
- In the Social Studies, there is support for the incorporation of indigenous content, for helping children see the world through their eyes and of others, for appreciating different perspectives and for the introduction to Character Development
 - Also in Social Studies, the timeline concept for teaching past, present and future has value, but it needs to be introduced in an introductory way – the examples used in the curriculum are too advanced.

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

- In the ELA curriculum, there are some contradictions. For example, children are expected to identify beginning, middle and ending sounds in words but later expected to only identify some letters.
 - Children need to know all letters to complete the first objective.
 - Expectation that Kindergarten children should be “reading and writing” punctuation not age appropriate – disconnect here with grade 1 skill set.
 - Identifying upper and lower case letter by sight is OK, but should add “identify the sounds of the 21 consonants and 5 short vowels”
- The Social Studies curriculum is, in many ways, not developmentally appropriate for Kindergarten:
 - Mapping concepts are too high level

- Economic concepts – like “differentiating between levels of needs and wants” is not an age appropriate learning outcome for K children.
- Would like to see more about diversity and empathy represented in the community awareness (i.e., “My community” – know their own immediate surroundings and people/roles within)
- Developing a personal timeline – this is an abstract concept for Kindergarten children (i.e. some do not know their birthdate, let alone how to transfer this understanding to a timeline), and sequencing is also very much just a developing skill at this stage
- Knowing the birthdates of famous people seems to be an unreasonable focus; perhaps the focus should be on learning more about their own/family information
- Stories and fables could be tools occasionally used, but again, these can be abstract for young children; their minds are just learning to distinguish between what is real and what is pretend
- With respect to financial literacy, most kindergarten children do not have an understanding of the value of money. When children play store, an ice cream cone can range in price from \$1 - \$500.
 - Also, there is too much content in this section that will not have a lasting impact on their financial literacy (ie. the story of the loonie and toonie)
 - The ‘financial literacy components related to credit and debit cards seems unnecessary at this age and stage; it inconsistent with the actual Math curriculum, as the counting and quantification stops at 10 and there is no mention of money skills
 - Consideration should be given to moving the emphasis on economics and financial literacy to health and wellness outcomes.
- Geography/math concepts like mapping, globes and the relationship between metres, km, are unreasonable at this age group. Introduction makes sense, but not these specific learning requirements.
 - miles (why is the measurement unit ‘miles’ even included?) and kms are abstract concepts for kindergarten students. While they should certainly be exposed to maps and globes, specific learning outcomes should be limited to the community(ies) with which they are most familiar.
 - Expecting Kindergarten children to read a map and construct a neighbourhood map is too difficult. Maybe they could make a map of their classroom or their kitchen at home?
- The Math curriculum has been simplified too much, to the point that teachers would complete the curriculum by mid-year. Basic math skills are stretched too far across K-3 then there is a huge increase in learning expectations for grades 4-6. The gap between Kindergarten math outcomes and grade one outcomes seems significant.
 - As a curriculum standard, Kindergarten children can be expected to learn quantities up to at least 20; many Kindergarten children can count to 20, 30, 50 and even 100.

- Shift away from focus on pictorial, symbolic and concrete representation is a concern.
- Some of the sections for numeracy do not align with the rest of curriculum - For example, children are only expected to know numbers to 10 but are expected to understand longer distances in social.
- Okay to expect children to recognize dollar and cent signs, but should not be expected to know where they go.
- Recognizing Canadian currency appropriate, but assessing “value” too challenging for Kindergarten age children.
- There is a disconnect between Math and ELA - in ELA there is a requirement to write familiar words but there is no parallel requirement in Math with the need to print numbers.
- In Science, the language of the curriculum is quite passive – “identify, explain, discuss”. It does not lend itself well to students being actively engaged.
 - Many of the learning outcomes in Science are too abstract for kindergarten. For example, it would be better for Kindergarten children to learn about seasonal changes and move identifying man-made and natural items in environments to grade 1 or beyond.
 - Lots of focus on behaviors and attitudinal development in K Science, but program is lacking in actual teachable content.
- In Fine Arts (Art/Music), there is a general lack of joy and recognition that we often engage in music and art for fun, especially in Kindergarten.
 - Children need more freedom to create, more focus on the enjoyment, more opportunity to experience, or explore the value of play and playful learning
 - Drama is framed as ‘make a presentation’ but it should be more of a focus of the process being the learning.
 - It is striking in the Arts that the examples are very “white” and very “European”.
 - The Visual Arts curriculum is heavily focused on drawing skills with no mention of cutting and pasting. Reference to painting, collage, sculpture, etc. is minimal.
 - Fine Arts should allow for greater connections across drama, art and music.
- In PE and Wellness, the combination of what is more traditionally called health outcomes is confusing.
 - Many of the organizing ideas have more to do with relationships and mental health than with physical education.
 - Would like to have seen some focus on interoceptive awareness included (understanding of body sensations such as hunger, needing to use washroom, etc.) and some additional focus on skill building to help young children with self-regulation.
 - Concepts in Social Studies curriculum designed to help learners develop resiliency and personal talents and promote lifelong learning might be better placed in PE and Wellness.

C. Other Notes About the curriculum as a whole:

- The curriculum needs to create more space for exploration and play; needs for more perspective about learning from the child's level (e.g. as a model, the "FLIGHT" program refers to the "Play, Participation and Possibilities" curriculum that is more child centred and allows more space for exploration)
- There is a concern that the Kindergarten program is missing a 'joy' for learning.
- It would be helpful to have a better snapshot of the requirements for each grade in a way that doesn't require so much "scrolling".
- The curriculum would be further supported by drawing greater attention to interdisciplinary connections.
- The curricular attempt to recognize the diversity of our province and society is recognized, but there are insufficient references to First Nations/BIPOC stories and examples and many of the references to First Nations sources and stories seem forced.

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports that may be required by schools and teachers

- There are many, many learner outcomes associated with the Kindergarten program, and of course the kindergarten program in Alberta is not yet a mandatory program for children.
- Teachers will need significant levels of professional development and support from the Ministry and from school officials to help them navigate the appropriate balance between introductory learning for children and mastery learning expectations.
- Teachers believe that professional development opportunities across the range of the K-6 curricula will be critical to implementation.
- With wholesale change such as is proposed, time and opportunity will be critical. Teachers are highly concerned about the relatively short time frame available between the completion of draft curricula and the 2022 implementation schedule.
- Government may need to take the lead (working with provincial professional development agencies, (Consortia, AISCA, others) in providing equitable funding and supports to ensure that new teachers and seasoned teachers alike have the resources to make implementation successful.
- Teachers are anxious about the availability of and access to needed teaching and learning resources, including print, digital and web resources. Teachers feel they will need these in a timeframe that will permit pre-implementation study and preparatory work.
- The consensus of the Kindergarten participant group is that too much change is contemplated for one year of implementation.
 - Participants say changing the entire K-6 program of studies is too much change to be meaningful for teachers or students.
 - While certain of the subject areas are "nearly" ready for implementation, there are many other sections that need significant revision.
 - Limiting the number of subject areas to be changed at one time would permit teachers to meaningfully engage in good instructional practices.

- Participants expressed significant concerns about Covid 19 related learning delays that have been evident in their student populations, and are concerned that a major curriculum shift, taking effect in Sept. 2022 across K-6, would be likely to exacerbate learning delays for children.

8. Draft Kindergarten Curriculum Engagement Session B Feedback - Oct 19

A. Areas of strength in the draft curriculum:

- Curriculum format is easy to navigate and teacher friendly.
 - Goals and outcomes seem to be clear – seems to be good articulation with grades 1 and 2, especially in early reading skill development
- Step up in expectation is good, the curriculum is a bit more challenging - expecting more now which is good but, in some areas, expectations are not age appropriate.
 - It is a step up from what it was, it will be less stressful for Grade 1 teachers. Students will have more skills going into Grade 1. There is often a huge difference in exposure for students so starting early for all students is great. They will be able to move forward together. It is a bump up in a good way.
 - Still, must be consideration for those with varying levels of skill, as Kindergarten is not mandatory in Alberta.
- Financial literacy is included - this is an important topic to begin teaching in kindergarten.
- Layout of the science section provides freedom to explore and broaden specifics.
 - Shifted to Matter, Energy, Earth System, and Computer science in the curriculum has potential to be exciting
 - Opportunities for learner “exploration” are appreciated
- Support for ELA, with focus on 5 areas of literacy - this is important, starting with sounds and blending, helps kids learn to blend and read which lends itself to writing.
 - Focus on literacy at an early age is a positive feature
 - Will provide the building blocks.
 - Focus on reading, writing, listening, speaking at a young age is good.
 - A balance of phonetics and sight reading skills is important and makes for better readers. Having both skills is an advantage to readers

B. Areas where opportunities exist for possible improvement

- Although the curriculum attempts to ensure the inclusion of First Nation, Metis, and Inuit content, more is possible. There are resources that could be used to strengthen the indigenous perspective.
 - *Aboriginal Headstart* program teaches culture first. These teachings could benefit all children and it does not look like ideas from this resource have been incorporated.
 - ELA: First Nation, Inuit, Metis content is only mentioned once in an oral sense. It is important for all children to recognize themselves in the curriculum.
 - The importance of learning about other cultures should be further emphasized in the curriculum

- We need to recognize there are a number of children who do not participate in Kindergarten. This deficit needs to be taken into consideration as integration plans are made for these children.
- In Language Arts:
 - Compound words are not developmentally appropriate, nor is the addition and deletion of syllables within words.
 - Introduction of concepts related to “real” vs “not real” is not age appropriate
 - Curriculum does not seem to accommodate the needs of ELL children - too much focus on teacher led discussing, explaining and describing
- In Math:
 - The focus of Kindergarten math should be based on number sense and awareness.
 - There is a general thought that this area of the curriculum could be made more challenging, i.e. exposure to numbers beyond the 1-10 of the current curriculum - possibly to 15 or 20? The jump from 1-10 in Kindergarten and then up to 100 in grade one seems a developmental leap.
 - Clear vision and goals are missing. Example: number sense (10) - Quantity (using objects etc.) need not be used to represent numbers if children already have the number sense.
 - Measurements section is not developmentally appropriate (area and capacity in particular).
 - Concerns with gaps in the Math area – linkages are poor and lesson planning will be difficult.
 - Overall, there is too much emphasis on rote memorization.
 - Some concerns exist around composing, decomposing and subitizing numbers from 1-10.
 - New measurement concepts, such as developing an understanding of area, are not considered appropriate for this level. Again, maintaining the focus on number sense is most important.
- In Social Studies:
 - Participants expressed concerned that many topics are not age appropriate.
 - Consensus that this material will be confusing for K students.
 - Learning should focus on the child and then going out from there to family. Focus on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs would be appropriate.
 - The 7 Sacred Teachings would be a great introduction to teach ways of being from an Indigenous perspective.
 - Diversity could be expanded upon (e.g. Different families should be introduced, children should be aware of and understand diversity).
 - Many concepts within this curriculum area do not follow what we know of childhood development. The perspective is more global, but we know that Kindergarten children are still very ego-centric. For example, they want to learn their own birthdate or those of their family and are not interested in birthdates of famous people to whom they do not have a connection. Similarly, their community and surroundings are more relevant to them than those in other parts

of the world. A focus on the present, family, and community makes more sense to young children.

- Developmentally, children explore their surroundings, perceive everything through their senses and connect first with themselves and their families. From there, they make their understanding to their surroundings, school and community. The curriculum is not built to support this progression.
- Reference to maps and globes - especially to measuring distance - is way too advanced and why, as Canadians, would we want children in Kindergarten to learn about miles and yards?
- It would be developmentally challenging for children to read a timeline and sketch a personal example.
- The curriculum does not instill critical or historical thinking. It is linked to memorization.
- In Science:
 - Science would be the perfect place to introduce land-based teachings, but this focus is very limited in the draft.
 - Weak integration of topics across subject areas is a concern
 - Kindergarten children are at a cause and effect stage, there is an opportunity to teach from this and to make learning in Science more engaging and more active – this draft has too much of a focus on young children acquiring knowledge – not enough emphasis on critical thinking.
 - Concern expressed that there seems to have been a deletion of meaningful, relevant and high-interest areas in the new curriculum. Some teachers are worried that there has been a removal of the opportunity to explore topics such as dinosaurs, magnets, etc. which have been replaced by seemingly more rigid concepts such as matter, energy, computer science, etc.
- In Fine Arts:
 - Outcomes seem totally overwhelming - so much to get through.
 - Fine motor skills are missing (beading, cutting, etc.)
 - The new curriculum is far too in-depth and specific for Kindergarten children to master, let alone for teachers to have the knowledge and resources to teach.
 - Creativity and exploration are an important part of this developmental stage. There is a concern with the overly prescriptive approach to the arts curriculum
 - Development and practice of fine motor skills is an integral part of the Kindergarten program. This seems to be missing in the new curriculum. Learning to correctly and efficiently hold a writing implement, use scissors effectively, etc. should be incorporated.

C. Other notes about the curriculum as a whole

- Personal and social responsibility is so important for Kindergarten students and seems to be largely missing in this curriculum. Social skills are mentioned in the PE area, but more emphasis is needed throughout the curriculum.
 - Kindergarten students should learn the social skills first (self-regulation, learning to be a part of a group, use of five senses to experience things)

- Children learn through play, and the only mention of play is in Drama. There needs to be more focus on how to teach things through play.
 - Where has play gone in the curriculum? We know that children learn best at this age and stage through play. It is concerning that play has been replaced with more intensive knowledge-based, teacher-led learning in the new curriculum.
 - Kindergarten should be a joyful learning experience for children, but the draft as written (level of prescription) may constrain teachers from creating a joyful learning experience.
- Concern that this would be a difficult curriculum for a beginning teacher to jump into.
 - Teacher implementation of some sections will be difficult (e.g. teachers who do not have specialist training in music or visual arts will find it difficult to teach these sections)
- Overall, there is a concern about some of the very specific components of the curriculum and the relevance that these have to this age group (e.g. the history of the loonie and toonie, birthdates of famous people, architecture from the US and world-wide, famous artist studies, etc.).
- The curriculum as drafted has an over-emphasis on passive learning, which is the last thing we would want for kindergarten children who typically present as very active, engaged learners who need to explore – curriculum seems to more adult- centred than child-centred
- The curriculum drafters do not seem to have had the benefit of input from experienced kindergarten teachers who are currently in the classroom.
- Participants expressed a general level of concern about content load/overload, especially for the reality of diverse student learning groups in Kindergarten classes.

D. Comments about curriculum implementation supports anticipated by schools and teachers

- Participants believe teachers will need significant levels of professional development and support from the Ministry and from school officials to help them navigate the planned changes.
 - Teachers believe government may need to take the lead (working with provincial professional development agencies, (Consortia, AISCA, others) in providing equitable funding and supports to ensure that new teachers and seasoned teachers alike have the resources to make implementation successful.
 - Teachers suggest the establishment of a “forum style” learning environment where teachers could come together and learn/plan through sharing sessions similar to those now convened by AISCA.
- Teachers believe that professional development opportunities across the range of the K-6 curricula will be critical to implementation.
 - An area of particular professional development support will need to be a focus on development of/ awareness of/access to resources to help teachers understand indigenous ways of knowing, land-based learning, reconciliation, etc. Note:

University of Calgary website is recommended as a good beginning resource list related to FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT learning.

- Teachers also identify the increasing diversity of Alberta classrooms as another reality and another reason for new and expanded resources.
- In general, teachers believe the proposed K-6 draft highlights the need for extensive resource development and participants expressed questions and concerns about funding supports that government may/may not be providing. Many independent school teachers, concerned about small school size and limited resource budgets, want government to recognize the importance of establishing equitable resource support levels.
- Participants recognize the importance of coordination with post-secondary teacher training institutions and recommend close collaboration with under graduate teacher education programs in Alberta
 - Support is expressed for re-introduction of a B.Ed. diploma specialization in Early Childhood Education
- Teachers are anxious about the availability of and access to needed teaching and learning resources, including print, digital and web resources.
 - Teachers feel they will need these in a timeframe that will permit pre-implementation study and preparatory work
 - Teachers are concerned that they have, so far, seen no evidence of newly recommended resources
- The consensus of the Kindergarten teacher participant group is that far too much change is contemplated to permit full implementation in 2022.
 - Participants say changing the entire K-6 program of studies is too much change to be meaningful for teachers or students.
 - Teachers feel that with significant changes as presented in the curriculum, and with the considerable work curriculum drafters will need to do to improve the products, the onus on teachers to be sufficiently prepared for implementation in 2022 would be completely unreasonable.
- With wholesale change such as that proposed by the Ministry, teachers believe time to prepare will be far too short to support a proposed 2022 implementation schedule.
 - Teachers express significant concerns about Covid 19 related learning delays that have been evident in their schools and they urge government to “go slowly” with respect to planning curriculum implementation.
 - Participants prefer the idea of a staggered (staged) implementation approach, where the “most ready” curricular areas would be implemented and where compatible resources and supports would be available to teachers.