

## Alberta's High Quality Curriculum: Development and Implementation

Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world. One of the many reasons is that it has a centralized, high quality curriculum that outlines what students are expected to learn and be able to do, in all subjects and grades. Alberta's curriculum is designed to help students achieve their individual potential and create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities.

*Several countries around the world, including China, Hong Kong, the Republic of Ireland, and Thailand, have expressed interest in our curriculum.*

### Programs of Study

Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum is outlined in legal documents called [programs of study](#), which are posted on the Alberta Education Web site, in English and in French. There is also a [Kindergarten Program Statement](#), posted on the Web site. Each of the documents outline why the program is offered, what students are expected to learn and the basic principles about how students are to achieve the required knowledge, skills and attitudes. School authorities use the programs of study to ensure that students meet provincial standards of achievement. However, authorities have the flexibility to decide how to provide students with the best possible learning opportunities.

### Deciding What Students Should Learn

The Alberta curriculum strives to:

- reflect the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that Alberta students need to be well-prepared for future learning and the world of work
- anticipate and plan for the needs of the future by considering the changes and developments in society, such as trends in employment, globalization, advances in technology and stewardship of the environment
- provide learners with attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens
- promote the recognition and respect for individual and collective identity that is essential in a pluralistic and democratic society
- consider students' needs and abilities—intellectual, social, emotional and physical—at different ages and stages of growth
- ensure that each grade provides a foundation of knowledge for successful learning in subsequent years
- incorporate new discoveries and theories that are generally accepted by experts in subject areas
- develop skills that are necessary for success in learning a subject
- consider new research on effective teaching methods and how students learn best
- reflect the most appropriate level at which the skills are to be acquired
- integrate how the study of a subject contributes to student personal growth and development

- accommodate learning in different environments
- consider various ways of delivering a program to students, including innovative opportunities using print, digital, distributed, community and workplace resources.

### **Who Is Involved?**

Alberta Education leads the development and revision of provincial curricula. Through public consultations, many stakeholders—including teachers, principals, parents, education experts, post-secondary representatives and community members—play a vital role in the process. Input from various stakeholders ensures that curriculum continually meets the needs of students and that there are smooth transitions from grade to grade and to post-secondary education and the world of work.

### **Ensuring Curriculum Stays Current**

Curriculum must provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for the present and future. Changes are made to keep the curriculum current and relevant. Curriculum revisions occur after extensive consultations with education stakeholders and other members of the public.

### **Planning Curriculum Changes**

Alberta Education plans curriculum changes well in advance to minimize any impact on schools, teachers and students. Changes are often minor and do not require new teaching practices or resources. However, if it becomes clear through the review process that there is a need for major change, Alberta Education ensures that school authorities have advance notice so they can prepare for the changes and purchase any needed resources.

The [Implementation Schedule for Programs of Study and Related Activities](#) – May 2012, which indicates dates planned for program implementation and resource availability, is posted on the Alberta Education Web site. The degree of change for each new program is indicated using a star rating system.

### **Revising Curriculum**

Stages involved in curriculum revision include the review of the current curriculum, literature and practices; planning; and the development of the program and supports for implementation.

Stakeholders play a major role in the curriculum revision process. Alberta Education conducts initial consultations and prepares a draft program of studies. The draft is shared through advisory committees, online feedback forms available for public input, conferences and presentations to teacher specialist councils. Teachers play a vital role in the process. They use their practical knowledge about a subject and about students' needs at specific age levels to provide input and feedback during the process.

## **Implementing Curriculum**

The draft program of studies, developed in consultation with education stakeholders, is referred for approval to the Minister of Education. Once approved, school authorities take primary responsibility for curriculum implementation. Schools may have the option to implement the program for one year prior to full provincial implementation. This optional year gives schools time to prepare and transition from the previous curriculum. When a curriculum is provincially implemented, all schools must teach the new curriculum.

Alberta Education supports the implementation of new curricula by providing resource support and professional development opportunities. Alberta Education selects, acquires, develops, produces, translates and authorizes the best possible instructional materials for the implementation of approved programs of study. Funding is provided to help schools purchase authorized learning and teaching resources through the Learning Resources Centre. The LearnAlberta.ca Web site provides multimedia resources that may enhance teachers' lesson plans and provide students further review of concepts learned. The Ministry provides orientation for school jurisdiction leaders and lead teachers about curriculum changes and shares updates at regional meetings and professional conferences. Professional development funds are provided to seven Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia. Each consortium organizes and provides activities to respond to in-service needs identified locally. This may include information and orientation sessions related to curriculum revisions.

**Alberta's high quality curriculum provides students with a well-rounded and comprehensive education. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for the future, including lifelong learning and the world of work.**

## **More Information**

*My Child's Learning: A Parent Resource* is available to help parents better understand what their children are learning at school, how they might be assessed and what resources are available to help them learn. *My Child's Learning* is available in English at [www.mychildslearning.alberta.ca](http://www.mychildslearning.alberta.ca) and in French at [www.apprentissagedemonenfant.alberta.ca](http://www.apprentissagedemonenfant.alberta.ca).