



# FINAL REPORT

## January 2022

Feedback on Draft K-6 Curriculum

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) submits this final report as fulfillment of the Conditional Grant (dated September 1, 2021) received to support **Stakeholder Engagement – Draft K-6 Curriculum**. In accordance with the Conditional Grant Agreement, CASS conducted an engagement process with CASS membership to collect detailed and specific feedback about the draft K-6 curriculum. As well, interim and final reports were created to provide a comprehensive summary using specific sections and details as identified in the agreement, which were:

- A description of the engagement process undertaken by the organization
- Number of participants who contributed to the engagement process
- Detailed and specific feedback, by grade and or subject, outlining:
  - areas of strengths and opportunities in the draft 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
  - identifying supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation.

The analysis of detailed feedback obtained from the CASS membership about the draft K-6 curriculum indicated passion, deep concern, and dissatisfaction with the draft K-6 curriculum. Through a tiered approach, feedback was collected, summarized, and synthesized to gain a deeper understanding about the concern for each subject area. In certain subject areas, such as Social Studies, no strengths could be identified. In all subject areas, detailed suggestions and recommendations were provided on how to move forward with revisions.

During the engagement process, systematic themes were identified to provide a systems perspective from the CASS membership about the concerns and dissatisfaction with the draft K-6 curriculum. Five systematic themes were identified.

- **Age and Developmental Appropriateness** – Feedback consistently identified concerns about age and developmental appropriateness of the content in each subject area.
- **Content Load** – Feedback consistently identified concerns about the significant amount of content in subject areas which would lead to an emphasis on the mastery of content (rote learning) rather than an emphasis on the deepening of students’ understanding about concepts or skill development.
- **Indigenous Content and Ways of Knowing** – Feedback consistently identified the critical importance of ensuring Indigenous content and ways of knowing in the draft K-6 curriculum was authentic, purposeful, meaningful, and represented the Indigenous peoples in Alberta.
- **Progression of Learning Across Grade Levels** – Feedback consistently identified a lack of progression of learning across the grade levels, specifically the lack of a spiral curriculum which builds upon prior learning to ensure students are deepening their understanding, across grades, about concepts and skills.
- **Curriculum Front Matter and Terminology** – Feedback consistently identified an absence of curriculum front matter and consistent terminology which system leaders use to provide alignment of understanding across grades and subject areas.

To move forward, the CASS membership provided several suggestions about the next steps towards a renewed curriculum. The suggestions are organized according to characteristics of successful implementation as described by an Alberta Education Stakeholders (2012) guide. The characteristics include shared vision, leadership, research and evidence, resources, teacher professional growth, time, and community engagement. CASS membership also suggested a staggered curriculum implementation schedule be considered, only after each subject area curriculum was revised.

After the CASS membership stakeholder engagement process, Minister Adriana LaGrange announced, on December 13, 2021, a revised plan for the implementation of the draft K-6 curriculum. The announcement of a commitment to revise curricula and create a staggered implementation schedule is recognized as a positive step forward. CASS acknowledges the importance of this revised plan and is

committed to continuing to serve the collective efforts of the membership to ensure optimal learning for all students in Alberta.

The subsequent final report will provide detailed information from the CASS membership about the draft K-6 curriculum.

# INTRODUCTION

The College of School Superintendents (CASS) is pleased to provide Alberta Education with a final report that provides feedback from CASS members about the draft K-6 curriculum. Throughout Fall 2021, CASS members engaged in professional dialogue about the draft K-6 curriculum to provide detailed and specific feedback for each subject area. A tiered provincial engagement model was used throughout the process to ensure thorough and thoughtful feedback was collected. An interim report was provided to Alberta Education on October 29, 2021. This final report will provide:

- 1) A summary of the entire engagement process that began in September 2021 and continued until November 26, 2021. School authorities had the opportunity to engage in one or all of the 4 tiers of the engagement model.
- 2) A synthesis of the collected feedback which will identify key themes that emerged during the consultation process. In addition, detailed subject area feedback is included to identify areas of strength, opportunities for potential adjustments, suggestions for adjustment for age and developmental appropriateness, sequencing and alignment of content, and perspectives on content load.
- 3) A plan to move forward to implement a revised curriculum based on the feedback from CASS members. A suggested implementation plan as well as an implementation schedule is included.
- 4) Conclusion, references, and appendices will provide additional information based on the feedback received from system leaders.

Feedback on the draft K-6 curriculum is a topic that CASS members engaged with passionately, and from a perspective of system leadership. The Alberta Education Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (2018) states: “A superintendent engages with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success, bases on common values and beliefs” (p. 5). The implementation of a new curriculum is a demonstration of the preferred future of student success in

the province of Alberta, and as such, it is important that the perspectives of CASS members are shared to ensure Alberta continues to have “a world-renowned tradition of educational excellence” (Alberta Education, 2020, p.3). Rincón-Gallardo (2021) recognized CASS system leaders as world leaders for the collaborative, continuous learning approach that is present in the province. When engaging with the draft K-6 curriculum, Rincón-Gallardo encouraged system leaders to reflect upon the extent the draft k-6 curriculum is serving to advance our purpose for education, and on the other hand, to what extent it does not. Rincon-Gallardo also reminded system leaders to think strategically and consider how the draft K-6 curriculum can be leveraged and influenced to reach our provincial aspiration for students and their learning.

It would be remiss if this report did not recognize and acknowledge that the draft K-12 curriculum is controversial and an emotionally charged topic. The feedback from system leaders demonstrated a deep sense of commitment to the well-being and education of all learners in the province of Alberta. Rincon-Gallardo (2021) encouraged system leaders to consider their role in leading change in Alberta by reflecting upon heart (understanding and clarifying our why), head (learning continuously by engaging with quality practices and content), and hands (leveraging the collective capacity of the CASS membership). This report will demonstrate that system leaders rose to this challenge and provided constructive feedback, as well as a plan to move forward.

“Leadership is accepting responsibility to enable others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty” (Ganz, 2008).

# ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

## Summary of Engagement Process

During Fall 2021, the CASS membership engaged in a variety of opportunities for strategic discussions to contribute feedback about the draft K-6 curriculum. A tiered provincial engagement structure was designed to ensure wide-scale participation by CASS members. An overview of the tiered engagement process is outlined below.

### Provincial Engagement Process September 2021 – November 2021

1

#### Tier 1

☑ September 17 - October 29, 2021 - Feedback about each subject area collected from 5 CASS zones. (See Appendix A – CASS Zones)

2

#### Tier 2

☑ September 27 - October 29, 2021 - Subject area feedback synthesized by CASS system leaders.  
☑ October 29, 2021 - Interim Report completed for Alberta Education.

3

#### Tier 3

☑ November 3, 2021 - Synthesized subject area feedback discussed at CASS Fall Conference.  
☑ Additional data collected through an online repository known as CASS Perspective.

4

#### Tier 4

☑ November 4 - November 26, 2021 - Further review and synthesizing of feedback to develop themes and clarification on definitions. Potential implementation plans and schedules were identified.  
☑ November 30, 2021 - Final report submitted to Alberta Education.



## Summary of Participation

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
School Authorities (Public & Separate) (%)	58%	37%	N/A*	75%
System Leaders (n)	108	23	145	49
Contributions to CASS Pro-spective	N/A	N/A	190	N/A

Note: N/A denotes not available.



# SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

## Detailed and Specific Subject Area Feedback

Detailed and specific subject area feedback is organized in the appendices of this document by subject area. The subject areas included are: English Language Arts and Literature, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and Wellness, and Fine Arts. Each subject area appendix is organized by:

- Tier 3 Review of Summary and Synthesis from Tiers 1 and 2 feedback – At the November 3, 2021 Fall CASS Conference, system leaders reviewed the summary and synthesis of data from Tier 1 and Tier 2 to provide feedback and validate the findings;
- Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis by System Leaders – This data was part of the Interim Report submitted to Alberta Education on October 29, 2021. Questions that Alberta Education asked for each subject area are included in this section. Answers to each question were formulated from data collected during Tier 1. The information was summarized, and a synthesis prepared in Tier 2. Questions addressed for each subject area are:
  1. What are the strengths in the subject area?
  2. What are the areas of opportunities for improvement in the subject area?
  3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning?
  4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness?
  5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning?
  6. What are your perspectives on the content load?
  7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?

## Systemic Themes

The College of Alberta School Superintendents Act (2021) identifies one of the objects of the College is “to advance and promote the cause of education in Alberta” (p. 7). CASS members are expected to be advocates and well-versed in matters that advance and promote education in Alberta. CASS members develop systems thinking skills when addressing complex situations about education in Alberta.

“Systems thinking is about seeing the whole picture. It advocates focusing not only on the trees but

also on the forest – with the trees symbolizing particular situations or limited domains and the forest symbolizing the whole phenomenon” (Shaked & Chenchter, 2020, p. 108). Similarly, Heifetz et al. (2009) described the need for system leaders to have a balcony perspective to achieve a distanced observation about a situation. The ability to look at situations in a broader manner provides the ability for system leaders to examine situations from multiple perspectives.

The feedback collected about the draft K-6 curriculum was first analyzed and interpreted by each subject area, and through this process a second analysis occurred, where a systems perspective began to emerge. The five systemic key themes that emerged from the feedback were: Age and Developmental Appropriateness, Content Load, Indigenous Content and Ways of Knowing, Progress of Learning Across Grade Levels, and Curriculum Front Matter and Terminology. The following themes are supported through the specific feedback provided in Appendices B-H.

### Age and Developmental Appropriateness

Feedback across the subject areas consistently identified concerns about age and developmental appropriateness of content in the curriculum. Examples of feedback to further explain this systemic theme are:

- Content and concepts, building on prior knowledge from one grade to another, cross referenced across subjects, and outcome terminology addressing Bloom’s taxonomy, will support age-appropriate student learning, engagement and address the diverse learning needs of students who have different developmental needs.
- Fewer outcomes would allow for more time for appropriate sequencing of content that is age and developmentally appropriate.
- Appropriate coherence and consistency (scope) of concepts from grade to grade do not address age and developmental appropriateness which support diverse student learning needs.

## Content Load

Feedback from CASS members indicated the large amount of content in the subject areas would be challenging to teach within a finite amount of time available, and there would be limited opportunity for cross-curricular connections to deepen student understanding of concepts or to develop skills. Examples of feedback to further explain this systemic theme are:

- Content load in all subjects will not allow for breadth or depth of understanding which are essential components for student learning to progress.
- Knowledge, Understanding, Skills and Procedures (KUSP) structure under the Student Learning Outcomes contributes to an overwhelming content load. Repetitive lists of content to be memorized in the KUSP section of the curriculum results in too much emphasis on content, and not enough emphasis on depth of understanding in developmentally appropriate ways. The KUSP structure has too much emphasis on passive rote learning, rather than on active, high-level learning.

## Indigenous Content and Ways of Knowing

Feedback from CASS members consistently identified the critical importance of ensuring Indigenous content and ways of knowing in the draft K-6 curriculum is authentic, purposeful, and meaningful. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) identified, in Action 10iii, the importance of “developing culturally appropriate curricula.” CASS members suggested that Indigenous content and ways of knowing should be more purposeful in how it is incorporated in the curriculum. Examples of feedback to further explain this systemic theme are:

- Ensure more representation of meaningful and authentic Indigenous content as per the Alberta Education (2020) guiding framework document. This content should not be Pan-Indigenous, but representative of the diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture and communities in Alberta. Further consultation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit elders and curriculum experts is necessary to correct this missing foundational aspect of the curriculum in all subject areas.
- Ensure Indigenous content is not presented as, “By the way, did you know.” An Indigenous lens, perspective, or worldview to authentically embedded Indigenous content will strengthen curriculum.

- While the inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and diverse communities within Alberta is expected, the manner in which it is presented has an inherent bias within the curriculum. The construction of the outcomes appears to cultivate an exclusive view of “others,” rather than an inclusive Alberta. There is often a historical lens instead of examining contemporary culture and perspectives.
- There is a persistent and repetitive Eurocentric voice in this curriculum that positions white European-settlers as an assumed “us” and all “other” groups as “them” who are described as “different” and “unfamiliar.”

### Progression of Learning Across Grade Levels

Feedback from CASS members, across the subject areas, identified a need to consider the progression of learning, across the grade levels. Harden and Stamper (1999) defined a “spiral curriculum,” a term first coined by Bruner (1976), as “an iterative revisiting of topics, subjects or themes throughout the course. A spiral curriculum is not simply the repetition of a topic taught. It requires also the deepening of it, with each successive encounter building on the previous one” (p. 141). CASS members stated that a clear progression of learning that builds on, and deepens, prior learning should be evident throughout the draft K-6 curriculum. Examples of feedback to further explain this systemic theme are:

- Develop breadth and depth of student thinking based on a progression of concepts. Moving from discrete content to interwoven (spiraled) learning allows a shift in focus from knowledge outcomes to greater emphasis on understanding and skills.
- Develop thinking skills and depth of understanding based on progressions of concepts and content load. By framing curriculum development on the Government of Alberta (2020) Ministerial Order on Student and the Alberta Education (2020) guiding framework document, we have valued the opportunity to focus student learning on the foundations of learning (e.g., literacy and numeracy, shared civic and cultural literacy, problem solving and critical thinking as students become active and informed citizens leading healthy lives). Core components of knowledge development, character development and community engagement framed on an age and developmentally appropriate scope will provide for coherence and progression across the grade and subjects.

- Alberta Education literacy and numeracy progressions provide a frame of reference for literacy and numeracy development within specific age ranges or divisions, model appropriate progressions, and provide the field with expectations for learning. Explicit connection and inclusion of the knowledge and behaviours in these progressions would strengthen and connect all subject areas, making the curriculum more cross-curricular.
- Ensure learning outcomes that are spiraled (build upon prior learning) allow for differentiation to support diverse learners and will best support student growth.
- Student learning is strengthened when they can “cycle back” to use prior knowledge and skills in increasingly complex ways.

### Curriculum Front Matter and Terminology

System leaders identified the importance for curriculum front matter, and for consistent and accurate terminology throughout the curriculum. System leaders make use of introduction to the subjects to set the stage for understanding the outcome and benefits of any discipline. This “front matter” is used as foundational information for teachers, school leaders and the community in communicating the result of learning. In addition, it was noted the use of current, research-based accurate terminology and language terms across the curriculum and grade levels should be revisited. DuFour and Marzano (2011) explained the need to have an understanding and consistent use of subject or discipline specific vocabulary and definitions to understand the true intent of the terminology. The alignment of terminology is essential for continued growth and depth of understanding as students progress through the grades. Several comments encourage a more systemic use of Bloom’s taxonomy of learning (University of Alberta, 2014) which identifies a clear progression of levels of learning in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Examples of feedback to further explain this systemic theme are:

- Include subject information that addresses the “why” and vision for each subject area which is coherent with the Government of Alberta (2020) Ministerial Order on Student Learning, and that will provide important foundational information.
- Verbs used in outcomes should demonstrate a clearer progression towards deeper levels of understanding and encourage higher level thinking in learners. The use of Bloom’s



# MOVING FORWARD

During the consultation process to gather feedback on the draft K-6 curriculum, system leaders identified support school authorities will need to provide for teachers and school leaders as part of planning for the provincial curriculum implementation. While aspects of the draft K-6 curriculum have been identified for revision in this report, pre-planning for implementation could commence in this school year. The sections that follow are based on the characteristics of successful implementation as described by an Alberta Education Stakeholders (2012) guide to support implementation. The characteristics of successful implementation are explained below.

- Shared Vision – Stakeholders share an understanding of and commitment to the intended outcome(s). (p. 3)
- Leadership – Leaders at all levels have the capacity to champion the shift from the current reality to the intended outcome(s). (p. 4)
- Research and Evidence – Current research, evidence and lessons learned inform implementation decisions. (p. 5)
- Resources – Human resources, materials, funding, and infrastructure are in place to realize the intended outcomes(s). (p. 6)
- Teacher Professional Growth – Teacher knowledge, skills, and attributes are enhanced through ongoing professional learning. (p. 7)
- Time – Time is provided to support implementation. (p. 8)
- Community Engagement – Parents, school councils, community members, businesses, industry and post-secondary institutions are partners in supporting implementation. (p. 9)

## Shared Vision

### Summary

Front matter is an important component of the curriculum that allows educational stakeholders to understand the big ideas of each curricular area. The front matter guides teacher planning, instruction, and assessment of curriculum. The front matter in the current curriculum spans student learning in K-12. Therefore, it also provides educational stakeholders with information and progressions of the overall scope and sequence of each subject area. Teachers gain valuable information and insight about



the intent of the curriculum from the front matter; for this reason, it needs to be included in the final draft curriculum.

### **Synthesis**

Program rationale, philosophy, vision, goals, foundations, and scope and sequence are key components of the curriculum and many of these components can be shared in a front matter. These components not only assist in developing a shared understanding (shared vision), but also guide planning, instruction, and assessment.

### **Next Steps**

It is important that front matter or program rationale and philosophy be included in the final draft curriculum to support the intended direction of the change. System leaders are willing to provide feedback through professional dialogue about front matter or program rationale.

## **Leadership**

### **Summary**

System leaders who represent school authorities play a fundamental role in interpreting, implementing, and shaping provincial education policy (Anderson, 2006; Hargreaves & Braun, 2012; Spillane, 2002), developing system coherence (Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Johnson et al., 2015), and supporting the growth and development of school leaders and educators (Anderson & Rincón-Gallardo, 2021; Brandon et al, 2015; Honig & Rainey, 2019; Leithwood et al, 2019). The links and relationships that system leaders have with students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community partners (Marsh, 2002) place them in a unique position to convene and gather valuable, varied and robust input and feedback from multiple education stakeholders.

### **Synthesis**

System leaders, based on the Education Act for Alberta, will be responsible for designing and supporting a plan for implementation that will support teachers and leaders in addressing the intended changes in the curriculum. The system leaders' role, as intended and represented in the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard and Leadership Quality Standard will result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority (Ministerial Order #002/2020).

## Next Steps

CASS is well-positioned to collaboratively support school authorities in the pre-planning process for curriculum implementation. (e.g., Coordinate a second review of a revised curriculum based on feedback in the report, update the CASS implementation guide to align with a curriculum implementation, coordinate Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC) to support school authorities)

## Research and Evidence

### Summary

Resources were identified as the key consideration for school authorities and teachers in planning for curriculum implementation. Appropriate resources need to be researched for the curriculum implementation. Within this essential condition, the following themes emerged from the feedback collected.

- *Age-appropriate teaching and learning resources aligned with new curricula.* Teachers require access to well-developed teaching and learning resources that align with curricula and are age-appropriate. In supporting Alberta curricula, resources that are custom developed, preferably within Alberta, or at least Canada, will be more tightly aligned to learning outcomes. This ultimately reduces the cost of learning and teaching resources when one or two resources address the learning outcomes in a course as opposed to requiring school authorities to purchase multiple items for each grade level subject.
- In supporting teachers in implementation of new curricula school authorities will need to allocate *funding for resources*. Provincial support will help to support fair and equitable distribution of funds to access resources.
- Effective implementation requires *shared understanding of achievement expectations and vocabulary*. To ensure clarity and build the capacity of educators to understand the curriculum as intended (i.e., breadth and depth of learning outcomes), it is recommended that *achievement indicators* are developed and provided with new curricula. An additional resource for teachers, students and parents would be to include a glossary of terms in both English and French for each subject area of new curricula.

## Synthesis

Provincial funding to select and procure curriculum aligned resources (preference should be given to made in Alberta or Canada) that are age appropriate is a primary consideration for successful implementation. Curricula that include achievement indicators and builds a shared understanding of new vocabulary are important to support implementation coherence throughout Alberta.

## Next Steps

After a revised curriculum is developed, coordinate provincial subject area groups to focus on resources to support the new curriculum and to develop achievement indicators. System leaders are willing to be engaged in this process.

## Professional Learning

### Summary

The draft curriculum introduces new topics in all subject areas and grade levels. Teachers in Kindergarten through Grade 6 are primarily generalists and may not have the specific knowledge needed to address this. Professional learning to *develop content specific understanding* that increases teacher competence and confidence to teach new curricula should begin as soon as the final draft curricula is released. Subjects and grade levels with the greatest changes will need to be the initial focus. Given the number of subjects and magnitude of the changes from the current curriculum to the draft curriculum, this learning will best occur if it is spread over time with multiple opportunities and various designs for professional learning. In addition, professional learning focused on new resources to support new curricula will support curriculum implementation.

With the significant changes in content and sequencing from existing curricula to draft curricula, teachers require *facilitated collaborative professional learning opportunities* to develop lessons, activities, classroom materials, and assessments to support implementation. *Collaborative* professional learning will also allow time to unpack the learning outcomes working to understand the shifts in content and how this will impact students in their context. Professional collaboration is highly effective when it is iterative, with time embedded for the conversations to continue throughout the implementation process. Not only does the professional dialogue and collaboration build teacher efficacy, but it also reduces the workload on individual teachers as networks are developed to support

sharing and revision of materials based on feedback from teachers and students and the learnings from the sustained professional collaboration process. An additional benefit of ongoing collaborative professional learning is the deeper understanding of achievement indicators and effective evidence of student learning for each learning outcome through the collection and analysis of exemplars.

### Synthesis

Professional learning in advance of implementation and throughout the implementation process is important to support curriculum change. The draft curriculum reflects significant changes to content and scope and sequencing of learning outcomes. A variety of professional learning opportunities, (e.g., content specific, collaborative professional learning time) designed in a comprehensive approach will support implementation. Building shared responsibility for the intended change at the provincial, regional and the school authority level will provide for efficiency and an opportunity to build and measure collective impact.

### Next Steps

Utilize the services of the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC), under the direction of CASS, and in service and collaboration with school authorities to coordinate provincial professional learning opportunities.

## Time

### Summary

Time was identified as a very important consideration for school authorities and teachers in achieving curriculum implementation. Within this area, four themes emerged from the feedback collected, all of which will be impacted by time.

- Developing *teacher efficacy* with new curricula requires time for teachers to engage with the final version of the new curricula. Teachers will not only need to understand the new learning outcomes but also to ensure that they have a strong working understanding of the progression of outcomes and the background knowledge to allow them to support all students, at all points in their learning journey. The COVID-19 pandemic has added a layer of complexity to collaboration opportunities. Finding substitute teachers, so classroom teachers can be released to participate in collaborative learning and planning, is an ongoing challenge for school authorities.

- Effective implementation must also consider the *scope of work*. Given that feedback is being currently collected on the draft curriculum, CASS members anticipate that final draft K-6 curriculum will not be available before April 2022. This allows, at most, three months to create readiness for implementation, finalize implementation plans based on available resources, and begin the first stage of implementation.
- Implementing new curricula creates *gaps in student learning* as students lack the understanding and background knowledge to transition into the new curriculum learning outcomes. Time is needed to identify areas that will require scaffolding between the current curricula and the new curricula. COVID-19 could not have been foreseen when the initial implementation of new curricula was planned and there is ample evidence of student learning gaps due to disruptions of learning throughout the pandemic. In isolation, these gaps will take time to remediate. However, combined with inherent gaps created when implementing new curricula, learning gaps will be exacerbated and cause more students to be at risk of not completing their education.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity to curriculum implementation. System leaders all want the same thing, a successful implementation of new curricula, but the lack of time and the obstacles to readiness preparations are hurdles that seem to increase as time progresses. A staggered curriculum implementation would allow the time needed to focus on collaboration and remediate gaps in student learning, whether caused by the pandemic or implementing new curricula.

Appendix I demonstrates a way to stagger the curriculum implementation schedule. An approach of this kind would alleviate the concerns previously noted.

### **Synthesis**

Successful curriculum implementation is strongly linked to teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy, perceived high value of the curriculum to be implemented, collaboration, collective participation in professional learning, teachers' perception of collective efficacy, and a sense of ownership over the change to be implemented. All of these take time to develop, and time is a finite resource.

### **Next Steps**

System leaders recommend a staggered curriculum implementation. While it is not possible to add time, slowing down implementation spreads the work out and provides conditions for successful

implementation with curriculum as it is intended. See Appendix I – Suggested Curriculum Implementation Schedule.

## Community Engagement

Parent awareness about curriculum changes is important. It was noted that system leaders, teachers, and parents appreciate previously developed resources called “A Parent Resource for My Child’s Learning” in all subject areas.

### Next Steps

It is recommended that a similar resource is developed for new curricula.

### Summary

“Successful implementation is possible in environments where education stakeholders are committed to sharing the responsibility for supporting implementation within a culture of learning” (Alberta Education Stakeholders, 2012). Planning for successful implementation requires an understanding of the characteristics of successful implementation; coherence among plans and priorities; and the intentional efforts by education stakeholders to collaboratively address the essential conditions. In understanding the intended change and building our collective capacity for change leadership we can plan for a successful implementation approach.

### Synthesis and Next Steps

A successful implementation results in students benefitting from the new K-6 curriculum.

### Next Steps

With support from Alberta Education, CASS would lead a collaborative process with Education partners to update the guide for supporting implementation with a focus on curriculum implementation.

## CONCLUSION

This final report provides detailed feedback about the draft K-6 curriculum from the perspective of system leaders who are members of the College of School Superintendents (CASS). In addition, a plan for moving forward, conceptualized from system leader feedback, has been included. It was evident throughout the feedback collection process that system leaders are passionate and care deeply about the students they serve. System leaders desire a curriculum that builds upon the strong education foundation we currently have, and one that will uphold and further advance the world-renowned reputation that Alberta curriculum is known for, and admired for, around the world.

CASS reiterates its appreciation to the Ministry of Education for providing this opportunity for our professional perspective to be incorporated into further decisions regarding the Draft K-6 Curriculum.

“A lead learner creates the conditions for everyone to learn while learning alongside them about what works and what doesn’t” (Fullan, 2014).



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# APPENDIX A – CASS ZONES

CASS is organized into 5 zones, representing different geographic regions in Alberta.

 <b>Zone 1 – Northwest</b>	 <b>Zone 2/3 – Edmonton and Surrounding Area, Northeast</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bigstone Cree Nation Education Authority</li> <li>• Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest</li> <li>• Driftpile Cree Nation</li> <li>• Fort Vermilion School Division</li> <li>• Grande Prairie &amp; District Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Grande Prairie Public School Division</li> <li>• High Prairie School Division</li> <li>• Holy Family Catholic Regional Division</li> <li>• Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council Education Authority</li> <li>• Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council</li> <li>• Northland School Division</li> <li>• Peace River School Division</li> <li>• Peace Wapiti Public School Division</li> <li>• Sahtu Divisional Education Council</li> <li>• Valhalla Community School</li> <li>• Whitefish Lake First Nation</li> <li>• Yellowknife Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Yellowknife Education District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Métis Education Council</li> <li>• Aspen View Public Schools</li> <li>• Aurora Academic Charter School</li> <li>• Black Gold School Division</li> <li>• Boyle Street Education Centre</li> <li>• Buffalo Trail Public Schools</li> <li>• Conseil scolaire Centre-Est</li> <li>• Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord</li> <li>• East Central Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Edmonton Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Edmonton Public Schools</li> <li>• Elk Island Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Elk Island Public Schools</li> <li>• Evergreen Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Fort McMurray Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Fort McMurray Public Schools</li> <li>• Grande Yellowhead Public School Division</li> <li>• Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Indigenous Services Canada</li> <li>• Lakeland Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Living Waters Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Lloydminster Catholic School Division</li> <li>• Lloydminster Public School Division</li> <li>• New Horizons School</li> <li>• Northern Gateway Public Schools</li> <li>• Northern Lights School Division</li> <li>• Parkland School Division</li> <li>• Pembina Hills Regional Division</li> <li>• St. Albert Public Schools</li> <li>• St. Paul Education Regional Division</li> <li>• St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Schools</li> <li>• Sturgeon Public Schools</li> <li>• Suzuki Charter School</li> <li>• Yellowhead Tribal Council</li> </ul>



### Zone 4 – Central

- Battle River School Division
- Chinook’s Edge School Division
- Clearview Public Schools
- Maskwacis Education Schools Commission
- Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools
- Red Deer Public Schools
- Sunchild First Nation
- Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools
- Wild Rose School Division
- Wolf Creek Public Schools



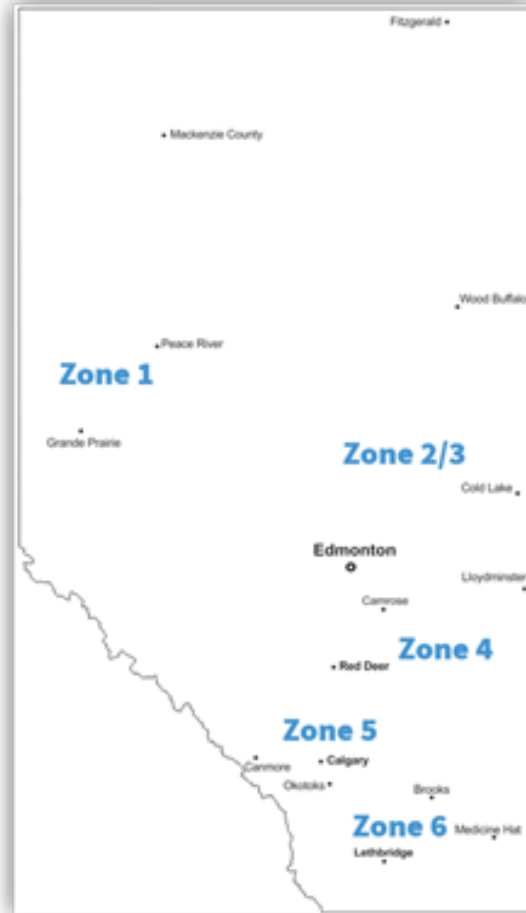
### Zone 5 – Calgary and Surrounding Area

- Almadina Language Charter Academy
- Calgary Arts Academy Society
- Calgary Board of Education
- Calgary Catholic School District
- Calgary Girls Charter School
- Canadian Rockies Public Schools
- Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools
- Connect Charter School
- Conseil scolaire FrancoSud
- Foothills School Division
- Foundations for the Future Charter Academy
- Golden Hills School Division
- Prairie Land Regional Division
- Providence Children
- Rocky View Schools
- Siksika Board of Education
- STEM Innovation Academy
- Stoney Education Authority
- Tsuut’ina Nation Department of Education
- University of Calgary
- Westmount Charter School



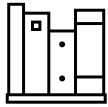
## Zone 6 – South

- Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence
- Grasslands Public Schools
- Holy Spirit Catholic School Division
- Horizon School Division
- Kainai Board of Education
- Lethbridge School District
- Livingstone Range School Division
- Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education
- Medicine Hat School District
- Palliser School Division
- Peigan Board of Education
- Prairie Rose School Division
- Westwind School Division



# APPENDIX B – ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERATURE (ELAL)

Tier 3 Summary and Synthesis of ELAL by CASS Members – November 3, 2021



During the 2021 CASS Fall conference, CASS members had an opportunity to review the summary and synthesis of the data collected during Tier 1 and 2 of the data collection process. Below is a transcript of feedback based on cohort conversations led by a system leader facilitator.

- Strong consensus in agreement on the summary and synthesis.
- Oral language is one of the area's storytelling pieces left out.
- Enhancing opportunities to engage First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as it pertains to storytelling.
- Although it's mentioned, oral language lacks depth.
- Concerned about the developmentally appropriateness of some topics such as Shakespeare.
- Overwhelming number of outcomes have been listed.
- Discussed the different kindergarten experiences students receive across the province. (e.g., part-time kindergarten, full time kindergarten, optional kindergarten). Students come to Grade 1 with different Kindergarten experiences which results in varied levels of learning entering Grade 1. Kindergarten outcomes may not be addressed for those students from families that choose to not attend.
- Need to ensure that the digital literacy is evident throughout the curriculum.
- Literature needs to be the choice of the teacher and the class through being exposed to the world, and not just what's prescribed. Need student choice in literature and reading opportunities as these nurtures a love of reading. Need diversity within the literature so students see themselves in the books they are reading, and this also contributes to literacy engagement.
- Curriculum as presented doesn't allow for differentiation.
- Importance of knowing facts and knowledge but not to forget providing language experience for students that allow them to demonstrate critical and creative thinking and application of knowledge.
- Offer opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning thru differentiated means.
- Consistent input from all involved about the five literacy pillars: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension - all not to be taught in isolation. There needs to be a comprehensive approach to addressing the literacy pillars as that will result in a comprehensive approach to literacy. This was identified as an item to be highlighted. Do not address the pillars in isolation.

## Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis of ELAL by System Leaders – October 29, 2021

A summary reports the common details and outlying ideas across multiple sources, whereas a synthesis analyzes the details and ideas to help us consider the implications for our provincial context and in our role as system leaders. A synthesis uses inference to interpret the details and ideas in order to present a coherent understanding of all inputs.

### 1. What are areas of strengths in the ELAL subject area?

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#### Summary

The outcomes are specific and written in a language that is easy to understand. The overall layout is easy to use, and it is helpful to see all grade levels for ease of knowing what is before and what teachers are preparing students for in the next grade. The layout works well with the organizing idea, knowledge, and understanding sections.

The ELAL curriculum emphasizes the five pillars of reading (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension), incorporating the research that supports how children learn to read and understand text.

The draft curriculum includes oral language; however, it was identified that further development of this area should be included in the learning outcomes.

#### Synthesis

The overall structure and layout of the curriculum is easy to navigate and easy for teachers to compare grade level expectations across the grades. The content to be covered in each grade is explicitly stated and typically clear.

### 2. What are recommendations for improvement in the ELAL subject area?

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#### Summary

There are opportunities for improvement in the ELAL curriculum to engage students in building literacy skills that encompass reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. Organization of the outcomes emphasizes skills being developed in silos and does not recognize the interrelated nature of language learning. A focus on balanced literacy would encompass the foundational skills required for successful literacy acquisition as well as the opportunity to apply skills, engage with text, analyze, reflect, create, and become critical thinkers.

The following summarizes specific suggestions to address concerns with the draft curriculum:

- Revise the front matter to include the interrelated nature of Language Arts across the curriculum.
- Expand oral language development beyond public speaking to include oral storytelling, daily social interactions, and communication peer to peer.
- Include digital literacy skills through the use of technology and digital tools to expand learning opportunities for all students, in conjunction with developing competencies and the skills to become a critical producer and consumer of digital text.

- Ensure that there is a balance of comprehension with specific skill development in reading.
- Balance the emphasis on low-level skills by including outcomes that foster higher level thinking skills, like critical thinking, synthesis, creativity, evaluation, and expressive use of language to move beyond basic skill development.
- Provide more opportunities for teacher autonomy in choosing relevant literature that is reflective, relevant, and optimal to meet the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds and takes into consideration all relevant variables (aligning with TQS # 3). Learners should see themselves (mirrors) in texts, should be able to see and learn about different cultures, backgrounds, etc. (windows).
- Include language and opportunities that promote learner choice and voice when engaging with text. Choice contributes to learner engagement and ownership in their learning.
- Expand outcomes related to writing to include all parts of the writing process to integrate specific skill development in the context of student writing.
- Remove “Literature” from the curriculum title. Literature selection used by teachers should be based upon ensuring relevance and responsiveness to the students each year.

### **Synthesis**

Include outcomes so students can experience a wide variety of texts and genres, including current literature. To optimize student motivation and engagement in reading, allow teacher and student choice in selecting literature to meet the needs and context of the learner. In other words, incorporate outcomes that foster a love of reading and literature learning through choice and student voice.

Ensure students are exposed to rich and varied text and media forms, and not limited to predictable and decodable text. Text needs to be represented more frequently as other than a book, and student outcomes should encourage students to engage with a wide variety of texts. When children, their parents, and teachers can see some part of themselves in the learning experience, they are validated.

Ensure that the curriculum promotes word reading and comprehension simultaneously. Comprehension occurs throughout the reading process and should include critical analysis of text through reflection, discussion, evaluation, and synthesis.

The strong emphasis on facts and knowledge does not allow for deeper critical thinking or for relationships to be made among concepts. Include more opportunity for application of knowledge and critical thinking. Students need opportunities to navigate, evaluate, and create knowledge.

Expand the writing outcomes to include the writing process, content, organization, genres, creativity, and strategies. Remove the list of skills, terms to be memorized, parts of speech to be identified and isolated grammar across the grade levels to focus on application of grammar within the context of student writing. Recognize that the early stages of writing in Kindergarten and Grade 1 include drawing, labeling, and captioning.

Include technologies and digital tools in the early grades (K-3) through to grade 6 to expand learning opportunities for all students (especially those with complex needs). Add outcomes to address the need for students to navigate, evaluate, and create knowledge assisted by technology. Students need to be able to read, understand, and critique digital texts. Include outcomes that ask students to discuss, create, and evaluate online content.

Either add a new organizing idea that reflects an expanded view of oral language or expand the focus on oral language to include listening, storytelling, social interactions, questioning, turn-taking, presenting, and sharing. Oral language needs to include experiences beyond public speaking.

Eliminate the specified number of sight words at each Division One grade level. The mastery of sight words, without capacity for individualized adaptations for each student, is unrealistic, and inaccessible for some learners.

The five pillars of reading identified by the National Reading Panel (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) are supported in the curriculum. However, with the way the curriculum is presented, there is danger that the skills might be taught in isolation rather than embedded in the context of reading connected text or infused across the curriculum. In other words, a list of skills to be sequentially mastered through the teaching process is needed.

### 3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for ELAL?

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#### Summary

The scope of the ELAL curriculum is inconsistent and there are areas where refinement would create continuity, the ability for learners to build on skills from year to year, and alignment with Alberta Education's literacy progressions. Considering that Kindergarten is an optional program, reducing the number of outcomes and foundational skills will ensure all learners have access in Grades 1 and 2. Align outcomes with the cognitive development of learners and the developed literacy progressions. Ensure consistency with language and terminology throughout the curriculum so learners are deepening their knowledge and understanding of concepts, skills and processes over time beyond a focus on content and basic skills. Include Indigenous teachings and learnings in an authentic context. Ensure the ELAL curriculum is connected in a cross-curricular manner so learners use their literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum.

#### Synthesis

Create a front matter to the ELAL curriculum that creates the context about how literacy is acquired. This section could provide an overview of the structure of language such as phonology, semantics, syntax, etc.

Ensure continuity and appropriate progression of concepts from grade to grade with respect to skills, outcomes, concepts, and processes connecting and building from year to year. The scope should include a progression of complexity and thinking aligned with the development of learners and the Alberta Education literacy progressions.

Ensure alignment of Knowledge, Understanding, Skills and Procedures for clarity, and reduce granularity of Knowledge statements. Granularity and specificity also make scaffolding of learning difficult in a diverse classroom.



## 4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for ELAL?

### Summary

The ELAL draft curriculum contains outcomes, expectations, and content that do not align with the developmental, cognitive, social, and emotional stages of children in K-6. The scope and sequence of the ELA curriculum should align with the Alberta Education literacy progressions and ensure a balanced approach to language learning that is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate.

The following examples have been identified as not developmentally appropriate:

- Figurative language is introduced too soon. Focus on adverbs and adjectives for the earlier grades.
- Use of past, present, and future tense is more appropriate beginning in Grade 4 not 2.
- Grade 1 students should focus on what makes a complete sentence and how to write one, instead of focusing on the labels of nouns and verbs.
- Grade 1 should list items by alphabetical order (first letter), and Grade 2 should list items by alphabetical order (first and second letter).
- Focus on both narrative and expository text in Grade 1 and move folk tales, fairy tales, and identifying the moral or lesson of a fable, folk tale, or myth to a later grade.
- Recommend which list to use for high-frequency word recognition – i.e., Dolsch or Fry.
- The emphasis on oration in Grades 5 and 6 is a large developmental leap from current expectations. Expectations for public speaking in Grade 2 are not appropriate.
- Remove Shakespeare, Greek, and Homer drama and references from Grade 6 content.

Review the use of terminology used across all grades to determine consistency and if/when learning the vocabulary is necessary:

- It is not developmentally appropriate to use terminology such as "open" and "closed" syllables in Grade 2.
- Grade 3 students learn about a sonnet, which includes knowing it contains stanzas, but the term stanza is not introduced until Grade six.
- In Grade 4 students are introduced to the complex understanding of 'round' or 'flat' characters. 'Main' and 'supporting' characters are more developmentally appropriate and represented in age-appropriate text.
- The phrase 'sensory details' is used in Grade 3 in Writing Knowledge and in Grade 4 there is a change to 'sensory language'. Determine which phrase is preferred.

### Synthesis

Clarify expectations about terminology being used for teacher use or learner understanding and use. Revisit if the specific terms are necessary and when to introduce terms (i.e., noun, verb, subject predicate, open/closed syllables) to ensure student vocabulary knowledge and the writing process is aligned with the development of the learner. For example, sequence, structure, consistent, clarify, vibration, alliterative, phonemes, cluster, digraph, distinguishable characteristics, accurately, and graphemes are all words included in the Kindergarten knowledge section. If this section is made for children, then the vocabulary included in this section will need to be changed or removed as these words are not developmentally appropriate for children aged 4-6 to know or understand.

There is a clear distinction between learning about how listening and speaking skills help to communicate feelings, ideas, and thoughts, and learning about how voice is created by vibrations

moving through the air. Learning about the purpose of oral language is developmentally appropriate for Kindergarten students; however, learning about how our voice is produced is not. For reference, “voice is vibration moving through the air” is similar to outcomes in the current Grade 3 Science curriculum. Kindergarten children do not need to know that voice is vibration moving through the air in order to know that speaking and listening skills help us communicate.

Introducing high frequency words at Kindergarten is not appropriate when the focus must be on establishing foundations of both phonemic and phonological awareness.

Overall, Greek drama and Shakespearean content is not appropriate for elementary learners. Remove content related to sonnets (Grade 3), iambic pentameter (Grade 5), Shakespeare, Homer and Greek drama (Grade 6), and revise Text Structure to include grade appropriate and relevant content and context. Key outcomes could be met through teacher and student selected text that are authentic and reflect learner diversity and experience.

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for ELAL?

### Summary

The following statements reflect the feedback received on sequencing of learning:

- During the revision process, ensure the outcomes and content align with the developmental stages of elementary students and provide engaging opportunities for learners to develop higher-level thinking skills and a deep understanding of the concepts. Examples include:
  - The concept of circular or parallel plots should be moved to Grade 7 or 8 from Grade 5.
  - Epic poems should be moved to Grade 8 or 9 or removed from the curriculum.
  - Irony should be moved to Grade 7 or 8 from Grade 6.
  - Dramatic works from ancient Greece, ancient Rome, or the renaissance should be moved to higher grades.
  - Move the concept of ‘mood’ back to Grade 6.
- Revisit oral language development from Kindergarten to Grade 6 and match progression to the developmental level of learners (refer to the Literacy Progressions). Oral language in the primary years needs to be more informal and focus on conversation and building connections to develop the skills necessary for presentations, such as speeches in Division Two (Grades 4 to 6).
- Reduce the specificity and granularity of the content to allow for differentiation, facilitating inclusion of a wide variety of learners.
- Allow teacher and student voice and choice in literary selection to foster creativity and development of higher level thinking skills. Include opportunities for real-world, authentic contexts, and connections.
- Reduce the repetition of the statements in the ‘knowledge’ section. This creates confusion in which year specific knowledge is introduced and how it may be extended. An example is the reference to capitalization in Grade 6. This should be firmly established among the writing conventions learned by this point in school.

### Synthesis

Sequencing of concepts, skills, and processes within and between grades appears disjointed and fragmented. Ensure understandings/concepts demonstrate a progression of depth of knowledge and understanding from Kindergarten through Grade 6 that reflects learner development.

Concepts introduced should gradually build towards more complexity.

Create a front matter to the ELAL curriculum that creates the context about how literacy is acquired. This section could provide an overview of the structure of language such as phonology, semantics, syntax, etc. The front matter is critical for teachers to understand the subject discipline, development, and connections to other subjects.

Allow for more time for learners to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts by continuing the outcomes at the next grade level. For example, reinforce some of the core outcomes through Division One, from Grade 1 to Grade 2; and possibly to Grade 3 - to allow learners more time to focus on and master foundational knowledge and skills.

Avoid isolated learning related to skill/term memorization and examples that are not present in text that learners choose to read.

Weave concepts like grammar and conventions into the writing process to be learned within the context of student writing.

## 6. What are your perspectives on the content load for ELAL?

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### Summary

The content load of the ELAL curriculum is heavy, is focused on low-level or knowledge-based outcomes and detracts from the development of the competencies outlined in the “Guiding Framework” and described as necessary for “successful learning, living and working”: critical thinking, problem solving, managing information, creativity and innovation, communication, collaboration, cultural and global citizenship, and personal growth and well-being. With the architecture of the curriculum, there is an opportunity for cross curricular connections to integrate core subjects which could help to reduce content load in one subject area (i.e. ELAL and Social Studies connection).

### Synthesis

The content load is significant. This could translate to students being exposed to more breadth than depth, fostering memorization, and reducing the opportunity for meaningful and rich learning experiences.

The outcomes are siloed and present as long lists of discrete knowledge. Integrate the components of literacy and reduce the knowledge to essential understandings. Reducing content would allow for depth of understanding in developmentally appropriate ways. This would ensure that learners are introduced to a “rich, interconnected knowledge base” as stated in the Ministerial Order on Student Learning.

Reduce the number of learning outcomes in Kindergarten. Completing all of the outcomes in the Kindergarten program is not achievable.

Ensure a focus on balanced literacy to ensure that phonological awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, word study, and concepts of print are all part of the reading process. Currently, the heavy focus on phonics leads to imbalanced literacy instruction.

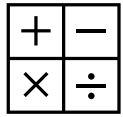
## **7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?**

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See “Moving Forward” Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.

# APPENDIX C – MATHEMATICS

## Tier 3 Summary and Synthesis of Mathematics by CASS Members – November 3, 2021



During the 2021 CASS Fall conference, CASS members had an opportunity to review the summary and synthesis of the data collected during Tier 1 and 2 of the data collection process. Below is a transcript of feedback based on cohort conversations led by a system leader facilitator.

Members agreed with the feedback provided in the math synthesis and summary document. Discussion focused on scope and sequence, and lack of consistency and progression grade to grade. For example:

- Concepts taught in one grade but not brought into future grades are missed opportunities for scaffolding. Terminology needs to be addressed – some of it is inconsistent, and some of it is incorrect.
- Missed opportunities for developmental moves from concrete to abstract. For example, in Grades 1-3 there are some references to strategies, however, in Grades 4-6, there is much more focus on algorithms which requires having students “doing math” or “memorizing math” and maybe not necessarily “understanding math.”
- The progression from concrete to pictorial to symbolic is missing and/or disjointed. Are teachers are going to be able to support the depth of learning needed and the pacing of concepts? Teachers may feel pressure to move through concepts/skills at a rapid pace that does not represent children’s’ developmental growth.
- We recommend there be a revisit of the order in which concepts are introduced. As well, consider the learning gaps that will emerge because of new sequencing in concepts
- There is so much content that there is not much time for critical thinking or problem-solving skills. The sheer volume of expected learning outcomes (which are knowledge-based), does not allow for depth of thinking.
- In terms of supporting diverse learners, there are some missed opportunities around engaging Elders and tying Indigenous ways of knowing to the math curriculum.

### 6 Recommendations

Note: Recognizing there is value in prioritizing our recommendations, but given the time for completing this report, these recommendations represent the views of this group.

1. One would be connected to 21st century skills as highlighted in the review. While it is important to highlight 21st century skills, we should be there by now. As such, let’s focus on using correct math terminology and labelling math processes first, then add competencies later. There are many language/vocabulary discrepancies.
2. Achievement indicators will support implementation, and would be valued, if added to the curriculum.
3. Tie the Ministerial Order to our review or as part of the bigger synthesis in terms of foundational skills and helping those that are reading the review document to see where the connections are to the MO. This is work that system leaders will do with

teachers/leaders in building coherence across ministry source documents and expectations.

4. Tie in math research like National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) to our review, which would highlight strong mathematical teaching practices including mathematical discourse, productive struggle, rigour, etc. which is a highlight in teaching math well (and may disrupt some misconceptions about teaching math well).
5. Scope and Sequence – it is too hard to do this work when there are gaps and we noticed concepts from Junior/Senior High now in the elementary mathematics draft curriculum, which is concerning for age-appropriateness. As well, seeing beyond Grade 6 helps us understand and see what's coming up next (right now we do not have that next step past Grade 6 so how having that would really help us blueprint).
6. Noticing a lack of technology in the mathematics draft curriculum which is an oversight

## Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis of Mathematics by System Leaders – October 29, 2021

A summary reports the common details and outlying ideas across multiple sources, whereas a synthesis analyzes the details and ideas to help us consider the implications for our provincial context and in our role as system leaders. A synthesis uses inference to interpret the details and ideas in order to present a coherent understanding of all inputs.

### 1. What are areas of strengths in the Mathematics subject area?

#### Summary

The following elements received positive feedback:

- Increased inclusion and specificity surrounding concepts related to money, time, and financial literacy.
- Emphasis on specific counting principles, spatial reasoning, and place value.
- Introduction of the concepts of fractions in the primary grades would be beneficial for enhanced understanding by students.
- Development of a logical structure of the curriculum by providing a guiding question along with the three pillars (Knowledge; Understandings, Skills, and Procedures).
- Including specific mathematical terminology for each knowledge pillar was seen as positive.
- Emphasis on students acquiring fluency with the operations.

#### Synthesis

In the draft Kindergarten to Grade 6 curriculum, generally the feedback for the design and organization of the draft was positive with the inclusion of a guiding question, then specific learning outcomes. The draft curriculum shifts learning outcomes to different grades and includes additional concepts, including introducing fractions in the early grades, more money and time concepts, additional specificity regarding counting principles, and an increased emphasis on spatial reasoning and place value, including explicit instruction on the 10:1 multiplicative relationship between places. In the draft curriculum, there is evidence of cross-curricular learning opportunities.

## 2. What are recommendations for improvement in the Mathematics subject area?

### Summary

From the feedback received the following are recommendations for reviewing and improving the draft:

- Highlight current mathematical research in the front matter and ensure that the draft reflects this throughout.
- Increase the opportunities for students to engage in authentic, real-life problem solving, reasoning, and applying their mathematical understanding. Rote memorization resides at a lower level of cognition, and it is important to ensure an appropriate balance between rote skills coupled with conceptual understanding and application.
- Ensure the focus is on the 21st century skills of problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, reasoning, confidence, fluency, and flexibility.
- Review the draft for specificity and be clear about grade level expectations, what students need to know and what they need to be able to do/demonstrate for each curriculum. This will also bring clarity to teachers and parents about what outcomes should be assessed and progress reported.
- Review the draft curriculum for errors and consistent use of terminology. Ensure that math vocabulary/terminology is proper, common, consistent, and correct. For example, the use of the terminology Canadian Units is not common nor consistent across the province or country.
- Conduct a review of math vocabulary for each grade level to ensure a logical progression and sequence of skill development from grade to grade.
- Provide a glossary of mathematical vocabulary in each grade to ensure that there is a logical and developmentally appropriate sequence being employed.
- Review the financial literacy outcomes per grade to ensure developmental appropriateness and alignment to other curricular outcomes from the same grade.
- Financial literacy should be embedded throughout with the provision of real-life examples and problem solving since having students become proficient in applying this knowledge is the overarching goal.
- Ensure developmental appropriateness and take into consideration the needs of diverse learners. Throughout the draft curriculum, there needs to be explicit reference to the progression between Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract, and the use of manipulatives should also be explicit.
- Provide illustrative examples and clear achievement indicators at each grade level for clarity. Focus on the curricular outcome and provide examples of potential tools to employ to help achieve the outcome through the provision of illustrative examples. Remove items that are more pedagogical in nature (i.e., number lines which are tools, not curricular outcomes).
- Review learning outcomes in each grade level to be able to consider if there is ample time to go deeper for understanding and transfer. Too many outcomes will result in surface level understanding, which is not sufficient.
- Evaluate the number of outcomes, complexity and sequencing of skills from grade to grade. It is imperative that the knowledge, skills, and understandings from one grade to the next spiral for continued practice and deepening of understanding.
- Engage with Elders to ensure that there is inclusion of meaningful and authentic Indigenous content and connections to mathematical outcomes. Ensure that this is evident in all grade levels and that it is logical for the developmental stages of students.

- Develop a definitive plan to address gaps that will exist in expectations from the current end of year outcomes bridging to the foundational understanding for the next curriculum and new set of outcomes. The leaps between grade levels are great and this must be accounted for during implementation. Devising an organized plan for this will be essential for a successful implementation.

### Synthesis

There are many opportunities for improvement in the draft Kindergarten to Grade 6 Mathematics curriculum. The draft curriculum should reflect current, evidence-based research in mathematics education, and there needs to be opportunities for students to engage in authentic reasoning and problem-solving. The draft curriculum focuses on rote memorization and the application of a standard algorithm without ensuring students are learning mathematical competencies in problem-solving, critical thinking, building confidence, fluency, and flexibility. There is inconsistent and inaccurate use of terminology and vocabulary in the draft curriculum. The draft curriculum is not developmentally appropriate and does not consider the logical progression of how students acquire mathematical understanding. There are few entry points or opportunities to revisit concepts for diverse learners, as a result of the heavy content load and premature introduction of sophisticated concepts. Thoughtful and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing is missing from the draft curriculum. Given the shifts in where concepts reside from the current curriculum to the draft curriculum, a strategic plan for implementation will be necessary to ensure students have the requisite knowledge to engage with their learning.

## 3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for Mathematics?

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### Summary

The draft Mathematics curriculum contains too much content that is often presented too early with learning progressions that are not developmentally appropriate.

- Scaffold content to match students' developmental abilities. Learning should be scaffolded and concepts should be interconnected and revisited. There should be opportunities for students to learn in different ways and at different paces.
- Ensure that key concepts are presented repeatedly throughout the curriculum, but with deepening layers of complexity that will support a curriculum that cycles through the concepts and emphasizes their interconnectedness.
- Focus on thinking and understanding, fluency and flexibility, and problem solving. The draft curriculum currently has an overemphasis on low-level skills.
- Connect spatial and quantitative components of numeracy.
- Clarify what students should know and be able to do. The learning outcomes read like a checklist in the draft curriculum, and some learning outcomes do not provide enough specific information for meaningful planning for instruction to occur.
- Enhance meaningful, purposeful cross-curricular, and Indigenous knowledge, ways of knowing, and connections.
- Clearly define language and terminology used, and apply it consistently.
- Correct errors evidenced throughout this draft.



## Synthesis

Learning progressions throughout the draft Mathematics curriculum are not developmentally appropriate, with the introduction of too much content too early. Learning must be scaffolded and concepts should be interconnected and revisited throughout the grades. There should be more emphasis on higher-level thinking, understanding, mathematical fluency, problem-solving, reasoning, and metacognition. It is critical that language and terminology are clearly defined and consistently applied throughout this draft. Errors throughout should be corrected.

## 4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for Mathematics?

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### Summary

- Adjust learning outcomes to reflect age-appropriate developmental benchmarks. There are currently developmentally inappropriate learning expectations throughout the draft curriculum.
- Concern was expressed regarding the number of higher-grade content areas that have been moved to the lower grades because the content is **not developmentally appropriate**. Some of the concepts that have been moved to lower grade levels from their current grade level in existing curriculum are:
  - Numbers to 1000 Grade 3 → 2
  - Transformations Grade 4 → 2
  - Prime/Composite Numbers Grade 6 → 4
  - Prime Factorization and GCF Grade 10 → 4
  - Pascal's Triangle - Grade 2 ???
  - Add/Subtract Fractions and common denominators Grade 7 → 4
  - Multiply/Divide fractions Grade 8 → 5/6
  - Order of Operations Grade 6 → 4
  - Types of Triangles Grade 6 → 4
  - Angles Grade 6 → 4
  - Negative Numbers grade 7 → 6
  - Percent Grade 6 → 5
  - Powers Grade 9 → 6
  - Algebraic Properties Grade 7/8 → 5/6
  - Metric vs Imperial Grade 10 → 3
- Reconsider financial literacy learning outcomes. A large number of these outcomes are not age-appropriate, and they do not respect different socio-economic status and cultural diversity of learners.
- Review language and terminology in learning outcomes for age-appropriateness.

## Synthesis

A large portion of the draft Mathematics curriculum is developmentally inappropriate, with content and concepts being introduced too early and without enough foundational understanding. Introduce content referencing learning progressions that are based on current research and build

from a conceptual understanding, not rushing to procedures and formulas. Abstract concepts should be introduced when students are able to move into more abstract thinking.

Numeracy progressions should be embedded throughout. Purposeful scaffolding of learning must be embedded within this curriculum. Language and terminology should be clarified throughout and vetted to ensure it is age appropriate. Financial literacy outcomes are not age-appropriate, and they do not respect different socio-economic status and cultural diversity.

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for Mathematics?

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### Summary

#### **Distribute introduction and consolidation of big or foundational concepts over two grades.**

For example, in the draft curriculum, Grade 2 focuses on the associative property in addition but doesn't address that order matters in subtraction, yet they were both introduced in Grade 1. In Kindergarten, measurement is limited to length until Grade 3 when both metric and imperial measures are introduced. Imperial measures are difficult for students in Grade 1. Introducing metric in one grade, and then imperial and metric in the next grade would lead to a better chance of success. Similarly, learning the 12- and 24-hour clock at the same time is overwhelming. Stretching this over two grades would support success and deep understanding. In the draft curriculum, expecting students to learn all the facts to  $10 \times 10$  in Grade 3 encourages rote memorization without deep understanding. Again, distributing the acquisition and consolidation of this learning over two grades would support deeper understanding.

#### **Revisit the order in which concepts are introduced.**

For example, in the draft curriculum, Grade 1 students are expected to work with money (bills and coins), yet decimals aren't introduced until Grade 4.

Place value is only properly explained in Grade 3; however, it is the foundation of numbers. Quantities up to 1000 are covered in Grade 2 with no mention of place value. In the draft curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 2 specifies magnitudes (up to 1000) but needs clarification of what magnitudes should be addressed in Grades 3 and up.

#### **Consider the learning gaps that will emerge as a result of new sequencing in concepts.**

With the sequencing in the draft Mathematics curriculum, transition to the new curriculum with all six grades at once will create learning gaps for students. Students in higher grades will come across things that they should have learned years ago in the "new curriculum" that were not present in the previous curriculum. For example, when implementing the draft curriculum, students entering Grade 6 will have missed all of adding and subtracting fractions and be expected to do all operations with integers. They will be missing the foundational understandings from the draft Kindergarten to Grade 5 curriculum to move forward. Rolling in the curriculum one or two years at a time will address this transition.

### **Learning progressions and foundations are missing.**

The progression from concrete manipulatives to pictorial representations and then to symbolic notation is missing. The new curriculum is disjointed and not sequenced to develop students' understanding and skills.

### **Check the draft for language discrepancies and missing conceptual connections.**

For example, in the draft curriculum, using sharing, partitioning, and grouping interchangeably may lead to confusion. In the Grade 4 curriculum, the term “factor” is used in reference to knowledge. Although in Grade 3 students are expected to reach multiplication of  $10 \times 10$ , nowhere is the term “factor” introduced. Therefore, this is a critical disconnection in the scope and sequence of multiplication. Consider adding in “distributive property or distribution” beside “multiplying in parts” in Grade 3 Knowledge to keep language consistent and specific as currently being portrayed in the draft.

### **Add Problem Solving across all Organizing Ideas.**

#### **Synthesis**

The draft Mathematics Kindergarten to Grade 6 curriculum requires adjustments in the sequencing of learning. In the draft curriculum, students are not provided enough time nor opportunities to engage with foundational numeracy concepts. They often reside in a single grade and are not revisited in a meaningful way for consolidation. The draft curriculum does not follow a research-based numeracy progression and does not move logically from concrete to pictorial to symbolic understanding. The order in which the concepts are introduced does not consider the requisite prior knowledge students will need to engage with the concept. With the shifts in the order in which concepts are introduced between the draft curriculum and the current curriculum, learning gaps will exist, particularly in the upper elementary grades. The concepts introduced in upper elementary assume that students have acquired all the learning outcomes from previous grades and, due to moving some concepts to lower grades, these will need to be taught before students can attend to their grade level learning. A staggered rollout will assist in addressing this concern. Throughout the draft Mathematics curriculum, there is inconsistent and incorrect usage of terminology and vocabulary.

## **6. What are your perspectives on the content load for Mathematics?**

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### **Summary**

The content load is currently very high, and this is exacerbated because abstract content has been moved into lower grades, so it does not allow for developmental thinking. Recommendations to mitigate the heavy load are:

- Shift the focus from computational thinking and standard algorithms to mathematical competencies to reduce content load. The learning outcomes should be focused on mathematical competencies, such as critical thinking and problem solving, making connections, number sense, reasoning, and application.
- Increase the focus on cognitive processes to support learners to become critical and flexible thinkers. Increase the cognition level of verbs in the draft curriculum.

- Revisit acceleration and compression of concepts. The acceleration and compression of the outcomes will result in greater surface-level treatment of the subject matter. Students will be required to memorize procedures that will have little or no meaning for them. This has been proven to be highly unsuccessful for the majority of our students.
- Ensure that outcomes include more opportunities for problem solving and making connections from the visual to the symbolic.
- Clarify the expectations for Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills and Procedures. Clarification is needed about the intended purpose of the Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills and Procedures components. By making how these elements work together more explicit, it may reduce the content load for students.

### Synthesis

In the draft Mathematics curriculum, many concepts are condensed and are moved to earlier grades (downward curriculum shift), which will cause issues around both adequate teaching time and allowing students time to absorb foundational concepts. For example, in Grade 3, new concepts include: place value to 1000, use of standard algorithms, time 12-hour cycle, time 24-hour cycle, metric measurement, imperial measurement, introduction to multiplication and division, as well all facts to 100, and fraction operations. An understanding of integers and operations is currently developed over three grades (Grades 6-8); in the draft curriculum, the entirety of these concepts are in Grade 6. As well, currently, students learn the numerous and increasingly complex iterations of adding and subtracting fractions from Grades 4 to 7; in the draft, all these progressions are condensed into Grade 4. The expectation that students master  $10 \times 10$  multiplication by the end of Grade 3 in order to build understanding of factors, prime and composite numbers is an extraordinary gap to bridge.

Condensing concepts into lower grades will also necessitate an instructional focus on superficial, abstract procedures, as teachers will not have the time needed to build conceptual understanding through a research-based concrete-representative-abstract progression. There is no room for differentiation, scaffolding, and focusing on student's strengths and interests.

There is a significant amount of content and memorization in the draft curriculum. It is already challenging to find sufficient time to establish student understanding of foundational concepts, and the presence of too many outcomes will require quick coverage, as opposed to depth of investigation and understanding on the part of the students.

## 7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?

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See "Moving Forward" Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.

# APPENDIX D – SCIENCE

## Tier 3 Summary and Synthesis of Science by CASS Members – November 3, 2021



During the 2021 CASS Fall conference, CASS members had an opportunity to review the summary and synthesis of the data collected during Tier 1 and 2 of the data collection process. Below is a transcript of feedback based on cohort conversations led by a system leader facilitator.

- The group identified a lack of a K-12 scope and sequence. A K-12 scope and sequence is an important tool in defining not only the progression of learning but also the breadth and depth of learning outcomes. Providing a K-12 scope and sequence document will create greater cohesion and consistency to curriculum implementation.
- While it was noted that some Indigenous content was included, it was widely evident that it was Eurocentric in approach and lacked authenticity, currency, and accuracy. Further consultation with Indigenous leaders to identify purposeful and meaningful content could lead to greater inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, understandings, and skills aligned with a larger worldview.
- There was unanimous concern expressed in presenting the scientific method as a separate organizing idea in Science. It was felt that this removed curiosity and investigation from the curriculum, and these are essential to understand science. The scientific method is the foundational underpinning of scientific understanding and should be embedded throughout the science curriculum. If the scientific method is taught in isolation, without context, the coherence across science education will be lacking.
- The group discussed the need for a “spiralling” approach and structure. It was noted that the current draft curriculum lacks a cohesive progression of conceptual development. The progression of science from K-12 should present outcomes that build on students’ current knowledge, understanding, and skills, and create conditions to deepen that understanding in subsequent years. An important note is that while foundational knowledge development is seeded in the early years, it should be embedded and built upon throughout K-12 and beyond.
- Overall, there were few areas of strength identified in Science, and there is a lack of intentional conceptual development with an overemphasis on memorizing content. Curiosity, wonder, investigation, and evidence are not supported by the current draft curriculum, and it is felt that these are essential components of Science.

## Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis of Science by System Leaders – October 29, 2021

A summary reports the common details and outlying ideas across multiple sources, whereas a synthesis analyzes the details and ideas to help us consider the implications for our provincial context and in our role as system leaders. A synthesis uses inference to interpret the details and ideas in order to present a coherent understanding of all inputs.

### 1. What are areas of strengths in the Science subject area?

#### Summary

Keep the interweaving cohesive design of continuity of topics throughout the grades. The structure is written in a manner that will allow more continuity throughout the grades and allow for deepening of understanding each year rather than disjointed units taught in one grade and then never looked at again. Teaching the disciplines of science (Biology [Living Systems], Chemistry [Matter], Physics [Energy], Earth Science [Earth Systems], Computer Science) provides a strong basis for development of scientific understanding. Use the terminology of the discipline in the organizing idea (i.e., call it Biology).

The inclusion of computational thinking shows the importance of this growing knowledge stream and industry.

Expand and refine the inclusion of Indigenous connections. Topics introduced are developmentally appropriate. There are opportunities for experiential learning, as well as some connections to Indigenous ways of knowing and real-world connections.

The real world and local connections to industry and innovation in Alberta are evident.

#### Synthesis

Organizing ideas based on the streams of science provide a basis for development of scientific understanding.

### 2. What are recommendations for improvement in the Science subject area?

#### Summary

Examine if, in an attempt to force the inclusion of each organizing idea in each grade, some more complicated outcomes are included in grades that are not age-appropriate or necessary. Trying to visit every organizing idea at every grade level creates repetition and surface learning instead of in-depth study. For example, properties are spread out over multiple years; studying some properties some years causes repetition. This also occurs in the Chemistry organizing idea: colour in K, size and length in Grade 1, and mass and transparency in Grade 2 never allows for examining the full concept. In Grades 4-6, the space organizing idea being separate spreads, leaves small details out unnecessarily, instead of teaching it cohesively with Earth Systems.

Examine the depth in the computer science content. It is interpreted as following instructions. Coding is absent in younger grades and is not introduced until Grades 5 and 6. According to the

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), when coding is integrated into learning for young students in a developmentally appropriate way, it builds computational thinking (definition from ISTE). This curriculum reduces the complexities of coding to mechanical processes. It is important to note that coding is just one aspect of computational thinking. This curriculum does not address the wider applications that extend beyond a single subject area to multiple disciplines.

Allow for more local content and connection in the Indigenous connections, i.e., Grade 2 and the local names for communities and landforms.

Ensure Indigenous content isn't presented as, "By the way, did you know." It comes off as tokenism or oversimplified. An Indigenous lens, perspective or worldview would be more valuable.

Include more career connections. There is explicit research on the importance of teaching about a variety of careers from an early age; the Ministerial Order on learning states, "Students will explore life opportunities that develop their unique talents and potential." This should begin in primary school, and connect to all subject areas, especially in STEM. Every organizing idea should have career references.

Ensure all statements in the curriculum are scientifically accurate.

- An example in Grade 1 states, "Speed can be...stopped."
- A Grade 4 Guiding Question asks, "How are organisms designed for survival?" The use of the word *designed* is inaccurate.

Examine the verbs to ensure opportunity for scientific inquiry, hands-on experimentation, or activation of students' interests. There is an emphasis on memorizing knowledge and developing a very basic understanding, without providing opportunities to apply information to new situations through synthesizing, assessing, evaluating, and creating.

### Synthesis

To improve the science curriculum, the wording and use of Indigenous-focused content should be examined, more career connections should be included, verbs should be enhanced to have higher level thinking, and factual errors should be corrected.

## 3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for Science?

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### Summary

Evaluate the focus on memorization. To create depth, the focus would be on determining the validity of information. Students need more time on the why, so they can become better critical thinkers. Students are empowered by answering questions about how things around them work, and hands-on activities foster engagement and deeper learning in young learners. Ensure that the organizing ideas are well aligned to allow for rich exploration and depth of learning in science. Consider fewer KUSPs (Knowledge, Understanding, Skills & Procedures) in order for students to be able to analyze and synthesize at a deeper level and not just gain surface level knowledge. The breakdown of learning outcomes into KUSPs keeps scientific exploration at a surface level, instead of building a deeper synthesis or evaluation. A number of the "Skills & Procedures" are rearticulations of "Knowledge." Example: Grade 3 "Describe how natural events change Earth's surface." This is neither

a skill nor a procedure. It is a rearticulation of the knowledge goal of “events that can change Earth’s surface in a short period of time can include...” Procedures in this vein would include verbs such as model, investigate, represent, test. Skill verbs might include observe, analyze, infer, hypothesize, predict, etc. While there are certainly skill & procedure goals identified, a number of these represent content knowledge that can be simply memorized and regurgitated with no requirement for understanding the content.

Consider a broad scope over time instead of trying to fit content where it seems out of place. As well, some learner outcomes should be in other subject areas such as math or social studies. Examples include:

- activities that include repeated steps or instructions can include - brushing teeth in a repeated motion, tying one shoe and then using the same process on the other, creating a repeating pattern.
- Math outcomes (measurement) on SI units in Grade 4 as well as Grade 6.
- The sun is not observable at night. (a Grade 4 outcome)
- Grade 4 Living Systems: “Micro-organisms include bacteria” and “Organisms are individual animals, plants, or single-celled life forms.” But the main point of the outcome seems to be about structures and functions of plants and animals. No Skill & Procedure task references apply to bacteria or single-celled life forms, so it’s unclear to what depth students are to understand these concepts or how they are to demonstrate understanding.
- Grade 5 Living Systems: “Evolution over long periods of time leads to increasing complexity of organisms.” Students are asked to explain how complex organisms have evolved from simple organisms – this is a significant understanding without any further scaffolding.

### Synthesis

The science curriculum needs to reflect a broad scope over time instead of trying to fit content where it seems out of place. Add curiosity and intrigue through stronger verbs and interesting content to support engagement and a deeper level of thinking.

## 4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for Science?

### Summary

Identify definitions and explanations for terminology for the teacher only. It will clarify age appropriateness if some ideas are just for the teacher. Examples include the landform list in Grade 2, the inclusion of Indigenous names, and concepts such as slope. Grade 2: Change in rate of vibration can alter pitch.

Ensure high level concepts are scaffolded and supported in the learning sequence. Remove any concepts that cannot be developmentally supported through a progression of learning and are just straight memorization without context. Examples:

- Grade 6: Newton’s laws are currently in Physics 20, which will make this topic very challenging for the Grade 6 learner.
- Grade 3 - Earth Systems: We like to see the progression of learning, but do not necessarily feel that it is currently age-appropriate. There should be a greater focus on just examining the landforms, surfaces, and waterways. After the surface knowledge is taught, a teacher could naturally move into how surfaces can change.



- Grade 1 - Explain why [physical changes] do not affect the composition of an object, when chemical and physical properties differences are normally found at the end of Junior High.

Provide concepts that are personally relevant to the age level to establish an environment that is engaging and motivating for student learning. Missing creative pieces brings excitement to scientific understanding. For example, dinosaurs should be introduced in Grade 2 or 3 to bring excitement around the ideas of fossil fuels and resources in Grades 4, 5, and 6.

Investigate if the depth of knowledge in early years (K-4) is too deep. Examples:

- Grade 2: “explain the relationship between suitability of materials and purpose”.
- Grades 3 & 4 Scientific Methods outcomes are potentially complex for these age groups. The Grade 3 Forces outcomes are also potentially complex at this age.

Examine if the level and taxonomy of the verbs is age-appropriate to create more opportunities for hands experimentation. Learners in K-6 need opportunities to explore and discover in Science.

Examples:

- Grade 6 Space: “Name the eight planets in the solar system.”
- Grade 3 example: “Newton’s first law of motion states that an object that is at rest will stay at rest until some force makes it move; and an object that is in motion will stay in motion until a force stops it.”
- Grade 3 Energy: “Represent contact forces in relation to the use of simple machines through diagrams.”
- Kindergarten Matter: “Discuss how objects can be similar in some ways but different in others.”

### Synthesis

The Science curriculum is inconsistent in its depth of knowledge and use of verbs, which makes it less exploratory and less engaging.

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for Science?

### Summary

Analyze the progression of learning. There is a definite increase of content through the grade levels, but many of the Knowledge, Understandings and Skills & Procedures are disconnected and lack a logical flow which creates gaps in learning. For example, energy content bounces around from movement to sound & light to forces to energy resources without any logical connection between them. Example: Grade 5 Earth Systems says “analyze climate” but the content is more about weather. It would be clearer for the Grade 5 outcome to be “weather” and the concept in Grade 6 to be “climate.”

Explore slowing down the progression of learning and reducing content knowledge so that students have more time to master and apply their knowledge by synthesizing, analyzing, and creating artifacts to demonstrate their learning. For example: The Scientific Method organizing idea breaks down the process too much instead of looking at the process holistically with more depth each year in each topic.

Express the scientific method as an organizing idea that spans all aspects of science learning. It is not an isolated idea in science. Science should be explored and discovered through hands-on activities and simulations that generate the curiosity that leads to the why and scientific process embedded in every grade level.

Identify and align areas where cross-curricular connections need to be matched to ensure they are at the correct level. Some examples are:

- Grade 2: Understanding the slope of a landform.
- Grade 3: Volume in science, which is a concept that does not appear until Grade 6 in Math.
- Coding: Coding doesn't tie in with other subjects or topics. As it is missing the mathematics side of computer science outcomes, it is just looking at design without the mathematical foundations.

Examine if the science curriculum focuses more on facts than on scientific understanding and process. It is essential that the organizing ideas flow logically from grade to grade. It is challenging to stretch the content in some areas across all grades in age-appropriate ways. Students should be experiencing concepts in early elementary that are revisited in an expanded approach as they progress through upper elementary and on to middle school and high school. Attempts are made to draw correlations between unit topics through the organizing idea, guiding question, and learning outcomes. However, “materials” is not included in the outcomes in Kindergarten and Grade 1 in relation to properties. Spending two years examining only the properties of objects is very narrow, likely leading to misconceptions about properties of objects that are actually properties of the materials. Students should be differentiating properties that characterize the object (e.g., bottle) from properties that characterize the material (plastic, metal, glass).

### **Synthesis:**

The science curriculum needs to be more deliberate in slowing down the progression of learning so that students have more time to master and apply their knowledge.

## **6. What are your perspectives on the content load for Science?**

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### **Summary**

Consider lessening the content load. The vast amount of content that students are expected to learn could result in students who only gain surface-level understanding. There are too many specific knowledge outcomes. A teacher will need to simply touch on, or gloss over much of it in order to cover all of the included content and understanding that this curriculum could entail.

Examine if this is a perceived overload: The structure or architecture of this draft curriculum leads to a perception of overload in many areas. The Knowledge and Understanding columns could be combined. Part of this perception could be unclear assessment expectations. It is unclear exactly what content and skills teachers would be expected to assess. For example, in Kindergarten, for the “Energy” content, the Knowledge column uses the sentence stem, “Movement of humans, animals and objects can include” and lists 10 different movement words in bullets. The Understanding

column states, “Humans, animals, and objects move in various ways.” These two statements and ideas should be combined, eliminating the repetition and taking up additional space.

Examine the content imbalance in that some grades have rather simplistic outcomes and other grades have more detailed outcomes. There would be fewer issues with the content load if a more reasonable scope and sequence with appropriate scaffolding was established.

**Synthesis:**

The content in the science curriculum needs to be lessened. An examination of the KUSP structure (Knowledge, Understanding, Skills & Procedures) needs to be revisited as it is causing repetition of content.

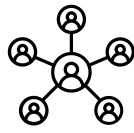
## **7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?**

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See “Moving Forward” Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.

# APPENDIX E – SOCIAL STUDIES

## Tier 3 Summary and Synthesis of Social Studies by CASS Members – November 3, 2021



During the 2021 CASS Fall conference, CASS members had an opportunity to review the summary and synthesis of the data collected during Tier 1 and 2 of the data collection process. Below is a transcript of feedback based on cohort conversations led by a system leader facilitator.

- Agreement that the synthesis was well done and in-depth but a major recommendation, that we all took a vote on, was to remove the strengths section from our review.
- Overall, we all felt that in trying to highlight areas that may possibly be seen to be working well in the social studies curriculum, it weakened the overall arguments or the overall feedback that we were providing.
- There were significant concerns throughout about inherent bias within the curriculum that were brought up again in discussions as well as in the summary and synthesis.
- Concerns over the low cognitive level of outcomes.
- Request to again see a scope and sequence to see the big picture, know direction, and understand the goal of the curriculum.
- Similar to the other groups, there was discussion around spiraling and coming back and revisiting things; the approach seems to be very chronological right now.
- Developmental appropriateness came up again in a number of areas as lacking.
- The idea of missed opportunities to do some cross-curricular pieces. One example was an outcome in Grade 1 that is seen again in Language Arts but not till Grade 6 so being able to put those pieces together would be a recommendation.
- Major concerns over resources and developmentally appropriate resources for some of the pieces that are contained within this curriculum.
- A general recommendation to start again.

## Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis of Social Studies by System Leaders – October 29, 2021

A summary reports the common details and outlying ideas across multiple sources, whereas a synthesis analyzes the details and ideas to help us consider the implications for our provincial context and in our role as system leaders. A synthesis uses inference to interpret the details and ideas in order to present a coherent understanding of all inputs.

### 1. What are areas of strengths in the Social Studies subject area?

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It was requested by system leaders to remove the “Strengths” section about Social Studies.

### 2. What are recommendations for improvement in the Social Studies subject area?

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#### Summary

- **Move the concept of the past to higher grades.**  
Starting with the ancient past in Kindergarten to Grade 3 is developmentally inappropriate.

Early learners are trying to develop a sense of self and place. A local context in the sequence of learning would allow for students to explore the world they live in. Putting young students in a different time and place is abstract and will only confuse learners during this critical period of development.

- **Build on connections to local communities and contexts.**

Create a local, provincial, and national pride and deep understanding of contemporary and historical roots of our communities. The subject introduction focuses on providing opportunities for students to learn about and appreciate ideas that have shaped Alberta, Canada, and the world. Build on the local community business connection in Grade 2. Young learners should learn more about their local environment. A local context in the sequence of learning would allow for students to explore the world they live in. It allows for rural representation in the curriculum and building knowledge of local communities. Build on the personal stories and connections in Kindergarten to help early learners build a sense of their world.

**Reduce the overall number of outcomes, facts, and details to be learned.**

The overall content load of this curriculum far surpasses the number of instructional minutes assigned to K-6 Social Studies in the Alberta Education (2020) guiding framework document. Two Organizing Ideas that focus on history and then more history embedded in civics, economics, and government Organizing Ideas means that historical concepts are given too much weight and focus. This abundance of historical content distracts from other important learning in Social Studies.

- **Remove pedagogy from the curriculum.**

Any directed activities, guidance on how to teach or language that does not focus on the “what” of the curriculum need to be removed. Alignment with The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum is lacking and needs to be re-examined.

- **Examine the curriculum to remove bias and disrespectful language and concepts.**

The Social Studies curriculum, in its current form, is disrespectful and harmful to Indigenous and diverse perspectives. It pushes harmful Eurocentric ideology, uses othering language and is not reflective of the diversity of Alberta and Canada. The proposed curriculum is colonial, cis-gendered, American, and Eurocentric. While inclusion of Indigenous content and diverse communities within Alberta is appreciated, the manner in which it is presented has an inherent bias within the curriculum. The construction of the outcomes appears to cultivate an exclusive view of “others”, rather than an inclusive Alberta. There is often a historical lens instead of examining contemporary culture and perspectives.

## Synthesis

The Social Studies curriculum requires a shift and reframing to meet the needs of learners in Alberta. System leaders who assisted in their review hold a unanimous view that this curriculum is flawed throughout. The overemphasis and inclusion of historical concepts instead of local communities in the early years misses the mark. The amount of content is too vast to allow for depth of understanding. Pedagogical elements and biased language are present and need to be removed.

### 3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for Social Studies?

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#### Summary

- **Reduce the number of Knowledge, Understanding and Skills and Procedures outcomes.**  
In the Grade 1 program, there are 106 Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills and Procedures learning outcomes. This number does not include the sub-bullets contained in a number of those learning outcomes. That number does not include the Organizing Idea, Guiding Questions or Learning Outcome overarching statement. This is a significant number of outcomes required to be addressed in one year. The other grades follow a similar pattern and represent a scope of learning far too broad to be meaningfully addressed in one year of learning.
- **Embed competencies to work in concert with the knowledge outcomes.**  
The alignment between the Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills and Procedures of each overarching learning outcome are often disconnected. For example, in Grade 4, under the Knowledge column students are to learn about a business plan and that the building of the CPR was one the biggest business projects at the time. From there, students are to understand that business plans help ensure the success of a project by assessing the potential gains and losses. In the skills and procedures, students are then expected to make a business plan for the CPR, including human and financial resource management, to keep losses to a minimum. In a separate task, students are asked to select a contemporary project supported by the government and identify why the government would want to support the project. Greater alignment between the Knowledge and Understanding would assist in creating opportunities for students to then use those learning outcomes to engage in the competencies (critical thinking, problem solving, managing information, creativity and innovation, communication, collaboration, global and cultural citizenship, and personal growth and wellbeing), as well as discipline-specific skills that will transfer to other learning contexts.
- **Shift the topics to include a more robust Canadian focus.**  
Over the course of seven years, students visit their own community, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, the Middle Ages, Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Central and South America, the Aztecs, the Mayans, the Blackfoot, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, North Africa, the Middle East, European Age of Discovery, the colonization of North America, New France, Rupert's Land, Acadia, the Fur Trade, Prairie settlement, Louis Riel, Francophones in Canada, American War of Independence, Seven Years War, Continental Tensions, American "Indian Wars", Early Colonial America, Reform and Union in Canada, Confederation, Indian Act, American Residential Schools, Slavery and Immigration. This is not an exhaustive list of what students are asked to learn about in the curriculum. Throughout is a significant emphasis on places other than Canada, particularly the history of the United States. Through the elementary years, the scope of the Social Studies curriculum should move from the student's community to province, to an understanding of Canada and Canadian history, with other topics linked when there is a way to make a meaningful connection to the topic and to students.

- **Centre content knowledge around strong organizing concepts (ideas).**

As noted in the examination of broad topics included, there is little to create meaningful connections between topics. For example, in Grade 1, students learn about and explore their community. In Grade 2, students examine a number of ancient cultures and in Grade 3, students then examine the beginnings of colonization, settlement in New France and the fur trade. The concepts that connect within and between years are tenuous. To provide a stronger organizational structure for the scope of the Social Studies curriculum, there needs to be clear, consistent concepts that connect the topics. These concepts will not only assist students in remembering information, but they will also assist students in using the big ideas to transfer to new and novel situations.

- **Include a more robust representation of Indigenous and Metis history, culture, contributions and ways of knowing.**

The Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are not evident in the draft Social Studies curriculum. Missing from the scope of the draft curriculum are opportunities for students to learn about pre-contact Indigenous societies, cultures, and ways of knowing. As first peoples to this land, the Indigenous perspective on European colonization is essential, yet in the draft curriculum, the focus on the New France and the Fur Trade is on the actions of Europeans. Canadian Residential Schools are not introduced until Grade 5 and American Residential Schools are examined in Grade 6. Louis Riel is introduced in Grade 4, and students are first asked to examine his legacy as a traitor, and then consider why some might consider him a hero. This is representative of how Indigenous history is included in the draft curriculum, with the national narrative presented as the correct view, and any other perspectives presented as alternative or other focused.

- **Include a more robust representation of the diverse people of Canada and their history, experiences, culture, and perspectives.**

Similar to the representation of Indigenous peoples, people who are racially and culturally diverse are marginalized in the draft curriculum. With the emphasis on ancient Western societies (ancient Rome and Greece) as the foundation of knowledge (Grade 2) through to the narrative of European exploration and settlement (Grades 3, 4 and 5), a male, Eurocentric, Christian version of our world is created. People whose race, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, and ability vary are put in a position of “other” in the draft curriculum. Inclusion of token examples (John Ware, a Black rancher, or Black settlement in Alberta in Grade 4 or Black migration to Nova Scotia in Grade 5) do not provide students with the opportunity to adequately examine the complexities of racism. Racism is addressed in Grade 4 with this outcome: “Racism, discrimination, and exclusion were everyday realities, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. Some Black Albertans overcame prejudice and achieved individual success. Many Chinese pioneers persevered and established successful local businesses”. Not only is this simplistic examination patronizing to difficult experiences of Black and Chinese pioneers, but it also treats racism as historical without recognizing the ongoing discrimination and racism faced by those identified as “other” in the draft curriculum. A more robust representation of the experiences and perspectives, historical and contemporary, of diverse people need to be evident in this curriculum.

- **Clarify skills and procedures so that they represent the competencies and disciplinary specific skills.**

Typically, the skills and procedures of a curriculum capture the competencies and discipline specific skills (historical thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, geographic thinking, among others.) In the draft curriculum, the skills and procedures are captured in tasks for the students to accomplish but do not lead to the development of competencies or skills that can transfer to new and different contexts. For example, in Kindergarten, students are asked to “Know birth date (day, month, year) and famous people with that birth date” and in Grade 4 students are asked to “Draw a sketch of the NWMP in uniform: Why are Mounties often shown on horseback?” and in Grade 5 students are asked to “Write a short scene for a play starring Mercy Coles and focusing on one of two age-appropriate real-life episodes: talking with Premier Leonard Tilley (a widower) and her father George Coles during the stagecoach ride to Quebec City, or her spell of illness in the Quebec Hotel and the visit of Dr. Charles Tupper to check on her condition.” These are just a few examples. By clarifying the skills and procedures so that they focus on the competencies and discipline specific skills to Social Studies, the curriculum will provide students with opportunities to engage with learning that will be meaningful beyond the specific content of a task.

### Synthesis

The breadth of the scope of learning in the Kindergarten to Grade 6 Social Studies curriculum provides a significant number of learning outcomes covering a vast array of topics. The scope of the draft curriculum provides for the segmented study of disconnected historical time periods, focused on creating a narrative that values a Eurocentric, Christian focused version of history. In the draft curriculum, Indigenous experiences, contributions, cultures, and ways of knowing, when included, are presented in a tokenistic manner, as historical in nature, and do not capture the diversity of Indigenous communities. With the emphasis on examining historical time periods, students are asked to tackle abstract concepts without the necessary prior knowledge or the ability to create meaningful personal connections to the areas under study. There is a strong emphasis on content knowledge, structured around low-level thinking (low level verbs) that does not provide opportunities for students to engage in analysis, synthesis or critical thinking. The scope of learning in the draft curriculum focuses on the history aspect of Social Studies and the other areas of the social sciences (geography, civics, and economics) are under-represented.

## 4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for Social Studies?

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### Summary

- **Adjust content for age-appropriateness.**  
The topics selected for study in the Social Studies curriculum must be considered within the context of the age and experiences of the learner. In the draft Social Studies curriculum, Grade 2 students examine Ancient Greece, Rome, China and Africa. These same students are expected to examine the Middle Ages, a topic currently in the Grade 8 curriculum alongside the Renaissance. Junior high students find the abstractness of considering the implications of events in the distant past on our current world challenging; asking students in Grade 2 to examine how our culture is still influenced by early Jewish, Islamic, and Christian cultures will



be difficult as they are working on understanding their community and culture. Similarly, content that currently resides in Grade 7, Canadian history, has been shifted to Grade 3 with an emphasis on historical events, dates and rote learning, which will be challenging for eight-year-olds. Currently, learners in Grade 6 study democracy, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens and governments. They are able to engage with this topic at an introductory level and revisit it in Grade 9 to develop a more nuanced understanding of democracy and the role of government. In the draft curriculum, government is introduced as a historical concept, beginning in Grade 2 through to Grade 5. In Grade 6, students examine the federal government and compare it to the government of the United States. These abstract concepts must be grounded in age-appropriate topics, beginning first close to the learners' personal experiences (local government) then broadening to include more and more distant examples (provincial and federal government, historical origins of government.)

- **Adjust skills for age and developmental appropriateness.**

In the draft Social Studies curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 2 includes abstract ideas and concepts, when the thinking of learners in the early grades is much more concrete. The Skills & Procedures often do not represent developmentally appropriate expectations. For example, in Kindergarten, students are to know how to read a timeline and sketch a personal example, but many are still learning the basics of letter sounds, fine motor grip, and self-regulation. This task is not age appropriate. Again, in Kindergarten, children explore maps and globes to identify where we live and how we find our way around, and students are tasked with reading a map and constructing a neighbourhood map. This is neither age nor developmentally appropriate. The Literacy Progressions (Alberta Education) indicate that tasks such as these are beyond the developmental expectations of most 4-and 5-year-old children.

- **Align literacy related learning outcomes with the English and French Language Arts and Literature learning outcomes and Literacy Progressions.**

Accessibility of a Social Studies curriculum is significantly impacted by learners' literacy skills. The draft Social Studies curriculum delves into topics that students are not able to access with their growing literacy skills. For example, in Grade 1, students are expected to access vocabulary such as Beringia, Mesopotamia, sphinx, and in Grade 2, vocabulary include words such as Charlemagne, Norman Conquest, Anglo Saxons, patricians, and plebeians, just to name a few. Much of the Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills & Procedures for Grades 1 and 2 assume a much higher level of language and literacy competency than is outlined in the Alberta Education Literacy Progressions under Division I. By ensuring the Social Studies curriculum does not exceed the literacy expectations coming from the English and French Language Arts learning outcomes and Literacy Progressions, students will be better positioned to enter into the learning, consolidate, and transfer it to new situations.

- **Align numeracy-related learning outcomes with the Mathematics learning outcomes and Numeracy Progressions.**

As with any subject, Social Studies has learning outcomes that call upon students' numeracy skills. In Grade 2, in the draft curriculum, students are expected to know Before Christ (BC), Anno Domini (AD), Before Common Era (BCE), Common Era (CE), decades, centuries, millennia, and time immemorial. In the Mathematics curriculum, at the end of Grade 1 students are expected to know numbers to 100 and by the end of Grade 2, they are expected

to know numbers to 1000. Students will not have sufficient prior knowledge to understand centuries, millennia and time immemorial, let alone distinguishing the complexity of Before Christ/Before Common Era and Anno Domini/Common Era. By ensuring the Social Studies curriculum does not exceed the knowledge and skills and procedures coming from other subjects, students will be better positioned to enter into the learning, consolidate it, and transfer it to new situations.

- **Shift financial literacy learning outcomes to later elementary and junior high.**  
The financial literacy learning outcomes, introduced as early as Kindergarten are abstract concepts for young students. Learning outcomes include money has value (Kindergarten), money involves hard decisions and priorities (Grade 1), borrowing and lending money has risks and rewards (Grade 3), interest earned on investments can vary greatly (Grade 5) and borrowing for appreciated and depreciated assets can lead to good and bad debt (Grade 6). These learning outcomes are abstract and complex and would be better addressed at a more developmentally appropriate juncture.

### Synthesis

The draft Social Studies curriculum is content heavy, much of which is not age appropriate. From matching birthdays to famous people in Kindergarten, to ancient societies in Grades 1 and 2, to Canadian history in Grades 3 and 4, to American history in Grade 6, the draft curriculum does not consider the age-appropriateness of the topics. Learners are also asked to attempt skills that they are not developmentally prepared to tackle. For example, students are asked to engage in high level mapping skills in Kindergarten and read challenging vocabulary in Grades 1 and 2. With the introduction of financial literacy, students are also asked to engage in numeracy skills that do not align to the expected skills from the draft Mathematics curriculum or the Numeracy Progressions, including concepts of time and negative numbers.

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for Social Studies?

### Summary

- **Develop a robust sequence that spirals developmentally appropriate knowledge and skills that scaffold current and future learning.**  
Key Social Studies concepts such as belonging, identity, community, citizenship, conflict, cooperation, diversity, continuity and change, culture, and equity (to name a few) should be introduced beginning in Kindergarten. Creating a spiraling curriculum that revisits these key concepts, competencies, and skills and procedures year over year, using topics of increasing sophistication, provides students multiple entry points into the concepts and many opportunities to develop a layered, nuanced understanding of the concepts. Similarly, the topics under study should follow a spiraling pattern of growing sophistication, moving outward from the students. For example, instead of beginning with societies of the past in Grades 1 and 2, begin by developing an understanding of self, family, and the community, then move to the extended community of town or city, to province, to Canada, and from there, introduce more abstract places and time periods. The sequence of learning needs to be deliberately structured so that students can recognize themselves in what they are learning and be scaffolded with many opportunities to practice the competencies and the discipline-specific skills of Social Studies.

- **Structure the scope so that students are able to access prior knowledge.**

A crucial part of the learning process is that students are able to make connections to their prior knowledge. Not only does prior knowledge need to be activated and connections deliberately made, they need to have prior learning to acquire that knowledge, whether it be information, competencies, or discipline-specific skills. For example, focusing in Kindergarten on my community to ancient societies in Grades 1 and 2, followed by colonization in Grade 3 does not provide students the requisite background knowledge to make connections to previous learning. Similarly, if the end goal of Social Studies is for students to actively use the competencies and their discipline-specific skills, these skills need to be built over time. The heavy reliance on low level thinking (identify, recognize, explain, examine, construct, discuss) in the learning outcomes means that students will have fewer opportunities to engage in critical thinking: analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and judgement. Like the concepts of Social Studies, competencies and discipline-specific skills need to be introduced in an age-appropriate manner from Kindergarten onwards, and be supported as they access their prior understanding, integrate it with new knowledge and understanding, and apply it with increasing sophistication to more complex situations. The sequence of learning needs to create opportunities for students to have the requisite knowledge, competencies, and skills and procedures to tackle their next learning.

### *Synthesis*

The sequence of learning in the Kindergarten to Grade 6 Social Studies draft curriculum is indiscernible. Topics and skills are introduced in isolation, without the requisite prior knowledge and scaffolding. Significant leaps in complexity and abstractness occur between grades, such as from my community in Kindergarten, to the Aztecs and Incas in Grade 1, followed by ancient societies in Grade 2. Complex topics such as colonization of Canada and economic systems currently addressed in junior high reside in Grades 5 and 6 in the draft curriculum. The levels of thinking asked of students in the draft curriculum remains, for the most part, at knowledge and comprehension in all grades.

## **6. What are your perspectives on the content load for Social Studies?**

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### **Summary**

- **Pare down the number of learning outcomes and topics in every grade level.**

There are a significant number of learning outcomes in all grades in the draft Social Studies curriculum. Each grade tackles a number of topics, many of them not linked by knowledge or skills. For example, in Grade 2, students are introduced to ancient Greece and Rome, the Mongol Empire, and the Black Death. Not only are these divergent topics but they are complex and heavy topics. By reducing the number of learning outcomes and topics, there will be greater opportunities to increase the depth of learning and transfer learning to different contexts. As well, greater access points for diverse learners will be created, as well as opportunities for meaningful, purposeful scaffolding.

- **Consider atypical learners and the developmental appropriateness of the amount of content and requirements for memorization.**

There is an inherent bias towards children from English-speaking, middle-class homes who would have previous understandings of our country and the world. English Language

Learning students and students who require modifications or support for their learning would not find success with the overwhelming amount of content, vocabulary, and facts to memorize. The ability to memorize a great deal of content will be a requirement for success in this curriculum.

- **Provide a completed Kindergarten to Grade 12 scope and sequence and richer front matter.** By providing a fully articulated scope and sequence for Social Studies, teachers will better understand where students are headed and will be able to support their learning more effectively. By plotting the entire scope of learning for students, some of the content load can be shifted to other, more age and developmentally appropriate opportunities. A richer, more discipline-specific front matter will assist in framing a vision for Social Studies in Alberta. Currently there is a sense of not understanding the “big picture” of the discipline. The current emphasis on knowledge in the draft curriculum does not allow students to fully develop critical, creative, historical, and geographical thinking skills.

### *Synthesis*

In the draft Kindergarten to Grade 6 Social Studies curriculum, the content load for each grade is too great to accomplish in a single year. Time constraints of programming for this subject represents 10% of instructional time in a school year and with such a significant number of learning outcomes, students will not access the learning with any meaningful depth. The learning outcomes are generally at a low level of cognition and, in combination with the large number of outcomes, there is concern students will only engage with the learning as rote, focused on memorization and without connection to their lives. Given the significant content load in the draft curriculum, there are fewer entry points for diverse learners and fewer opportunities to appropriately scaffold the learning for students.

## **7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?**

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See “Moving Forward” Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.

# APPENDIX F – PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND WELLNESS

Tier 3 Summary and Synthesis of Physical Education and Wellness by CASS Members – November 3, 2021



During the 2021 CASS Fall conference, CASS members had an opportunity to review the summary and synthesis of the data collected during Tier 1 and 2 of the data collection process. Below is a transcript of feedback based on cohort conversations led by a system leader facilitator.

- Group discussed the value and concerns in combining Physical Education and Health and Wellness.
- Based on content load in the draft curriculum, quite a bit of a worry that one subject area will be neglected. There's quite a large emphasis on the health and wellness areas so could be sacrificing a lot of the physical education time for being active. Unless additional time is added to the current load, implementation will be irregular.
- There are some things that are not well laid out, understanding some topics that would really need more clarification in terms of what the expectation is for student learning.
- The value of having standardized understanding of terminology and the clarification of some terms being used.
- Worry about the comfort or confidence of teachers in addressing the mental and physical wellness area.
- Age appropriateness is another big concern. Scope slide, other things moving into lower grades.
- Safety was not addressed in the draft curriculum where it is attached in the current Physical Education curriculum.
- Scaffolding and sequencing, spiraling and progression are lacking, same as what others were saying in other subject areas.
- Indigenous content came afterwards, it was not intertwined as effectively as it could have been. Although it's there, it doesn't appear seamless in the entire body of the curriculum.
- Developmentally appropriate resources will absolutely be necessary to have commonality especially in health and wellness across the province.
- Large potential need for access to other professionals to help deal with some of the mental health areas from trauma-informed practice, social services, and other different areas that might be suited for them instead of teachers.

## Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis of Physical Education and Wellness by System Leaders – October 29, 2021

A summary reports the common details and outlying ideas across multiple sources, whereas a synthesis analyzes the details and ideas to help us consider the implications for our provincial context and in our role as system leaders. A synthesis uses inference to interpret the details and ideas in order to present a coherent understanding of all inputs.

### 1. What are areas of strengths in the Physical Education and Wellness subject area?

#### Summary

Including a variety of dynamic and controlled activities should continue as it provides students the opportunity to explore multiple ways to engage in physical activity.

Combining Physical Education and Wellness (Health) allows for a concept-based approach. This is a strength in allowing the concepts of:

- healthy eating;
- mental health;
- physical wellness;
- concepts of fair play;
- discussion around the importance of inclusion;
- understanding of movement and its relation to activities (including ergonomics in the world of work);
- value and importance of self-regulation; and
- sexual health/consent.

The generalized progression of complex health components (as noted above) throughout grades in the document is positive as it provides greater attention and focus on mental health, food, relationships, and strategies towards personal development. A strength of the draft is these are addressed in age-appropriate ways in multiple grades.

The inclusion of Indigenous values, beliefs and culture occurs throughout physical activity and wellness. Consultation with Indigenous Elders should be undertaken to ensure the appropriateness of this inclusion.

#### Synthesis

Bringing together Physical Education and Wellness is a positive approach.

## 2. What are recommendations for improvement in the Physical Education and Wellness subject area?

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### Summary

Increase the emphasis on physical safety of the student. This includes an awareness of how to prevent injury and proper procedures when an injury occurs.

Address the lack of evidence-based content in physical/mental health literacy, and comprehensive health and wellbeing.

Include a return to using the progression of the ABCD's (Activity, Benefits Health, Cooperation, and Do it Daily...for Life) within the planned curriculum. This acronym and language are easily recognizable and referenced as a common language between teachers, parents, and students.

Include main areas of opportunity for students to participate in, such as the formerly identified dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities, and alternate environments which are missing in the draft curriculum. This allowed for clarification and organization for implementation.

There is a need for reference to the idea that an appropriate amount of time is allotted to both Physical Activity and Wellness. The Health and Wellness part of the curriculum is much more heavily weighted than the physical activity components.

Include greater emphasis and/or clarity on:

- the benefits of movement unrelated to appearance: invite students to focus on how they feel when they are active to promote embodied, moderate, and lifelong engagement in physical activity;
- moving beyond the simple categorizing of nutrients as healthy or unhealthy, a shift can be made to what those nutrients do for our bodies;
- understanding where foods come from and their connection to health is valuable and should be emphasized;
- missing terms for body parts, including genitals, breasts and anus as needed for child safety in an age-appropriate manner, with focus on well-being along with sexual health;
- the concept of mindful eating (limiting distractions, paying attention to cues);
- the idea of addictive behaviours (video games, screens) is needed;
- the terms 'feelings' and 'emotions' seem to be unclear; and
- how 'roles' facilitate resilience.

Include fundamental components of bullying and cyber bullying in the student of healthy relationships.

Introduce a closer look at incorporating understanding of Mental Health Literacy including, understanding mental health disorders and treatments, understanding how to maintain strong mental health, decreasing stigma, and learning how to obtain help for self and others.

Develop learning about permission skills not just refusal skills. The current structure can reinforce negative bias associated with consent.

Include more clarity around terminology, while ensuring clear progression and an unbiased approach to gender roles and family roles and types in relation to character, character development, family and family norms:

- gender, gender identity et al.;
- ‘risk-taking play’ should be reworded to a more appropriate term that is found throughout literature of ‘risky play’. The term ‘risk-taking play’ is misleading and materials and resources to support this understanding do not exist as the focal point of research and understanding is associated with ‘risky play’;
- ‘feelings’ and ‘emotions’ are often switched or referenced without thought to clarity;
- family as some family structures are accorded negative terminology, for example, students go between divorced or separated parents which seems negative;
- family structures currently exclude families with polyamorous parents, step-parents, non-binary or trans parents, and co-parents;
- stress and its role/impact on socio-emotional health and physical health; and
- diversity of physical and mental perspectives. Only a typical view is included; there is no space or consideration for disability or atypical pace, thinking or activities.

Better align the curriculum to the inclusive nature of our society. Indigenous content is an add-on, and content connected to other cultures is often absent, thereby creating a Eurocentric focus. Current use of wording such as *“Consider ways in which other diverse perspectives align or differ”* suggests that there is a ‘normal’ perspective to which others are seen as diverse”.

### Synthesis:

The Physical Education section of the curriculum needs to include more explicit safety and movement terminology. The Wellness section of the curriculum needs to add diversity and come from a place of comprehensive health and wellness with positive and inclusive terminology.

## 3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for Physical Education and Wellness?

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### Summary

Reduce the number and breadth of the outcomes required at each grade level. It would require a significant increase in the amount of time dedicated to these subject areas to address these required outcomes.

Include an explicit and tangible expression of how physical activity positively affects mental health. This should be integrated at all grade levels to promote holistic and comprehensive health.

Remove and update terminology and references which are problematic regarding the scope of learning:

- ‘Proper nutrition’ is too advanced for younger students, needs more clarity, and should be referenced back to the Canada food guide;
- The statement ‘physical growth is the change of body features’ is inaccurate – physical growth means ‘getting bigger’ while physical development is how parts of the body grow and change;



- The statement ‘hygiene habits can support health and growth’ is inaccurate as hygiene does not impact growth;
- The relationship between ‘risk’ and ‘consent’ is misaligned. Consent is about following rules and lacks any discussion of nuance and nonverbal communication;
- The term ‘sexual intercourse’ is outdated and may reinforce ideological bias against using the term ‘sex’, and may also reinforce a heterosexism bias as it suggests that only reproductive sex is sex;
- The term ‘abstinence’ is used incorrectly and does not only relate to sex, rather it just means choosing not to do something, and it may reinforce a faith-based bias that sex is for the purpose of reproduction; and
- The statement ‘fetal development during pregnancy can be adversely affected by’ needs to be balanced with a statement of “healthy fetal development during pregnancy can be supported by... .”

Review the inclusion of physical activities like javelin, shot put, hunting, trapping, and fishing, as they may be controversial and/or safety issues outside the scope of acceptable activities for insurance purposes.

### Synthesis

Outdated and biased terminology need to be removed from the curriculum. Reduce the number of outcomes.

## 4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for Physical Education and Wellness?

### Summary

Review the use of terminology about food and portion sizes, and number of servings in Grade 4. This introduces a diet/restriction mentality and neglects the importance of hunger and satiation cues. It creates inequality around food access and security.

Remove the terminology focusing on measuring and quantifying health, for example, recording the amount of personal time spent engaged in physical activity, measurement of a growing body, assessment of nutritional value of foods, looking at macro and micronutrients, etc. There is concern that these will lead to unhealthy body image issues and there is the potential to get into calorie counting and food journals. A holistic view of comprehensive health and body image is more age appropriate.

Applying recommendations from nutritional guidelines and health professionals to individual food decisions is problematic as children are rarely the sole decision-maker with respect to their food choices.

Introducing the idea of ‘fitness goals’ at this age is problematic and can lead to inappropriate peer comparisons that are not developmentally appropriate.

Remove concepts and associated terminology that is not appropriate for elementary grade levels, for example:

- Kindergarten - ‘Describe physical changes in the body since birth’, and
- Grade 1 - *“move sensitively”, physical endurance, ‘Fight, Flight or Freeze’, Knowledge outcome - Physical activity categorized as light, moderate, and vigorous.*

### Synthesis:

Fitness and weighing and measuring are not about healthy body image or movement for fun. Students need to love activity and themselves, not just measure and count it.

Healthy relationships with food aren’t developed. An overfocus on nutritional guidelines, rules and numbers takes away any mention of a healthy body image.

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for Physical Education and Wellness?

### Summary

Include all dimensions of wellness, including social, physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and environmental wellness, as these are important and interconnected.

Refine the consistency (both in terms of usage and flow) in the use of terms in all grades. Examples include:

- self-regulation is introduced early then is subsumed by “resiliency” by Grade 3;
- mental health is introduced once then not re-introduced until Grade 4;
- spatial awareness is defined in three different ways by Grade 3; and
- substance use is introduced in Grade 2 and then does not appear until Grade 6.

Ensure we build in logical, age-appropriate sequencing throughout. This will assist in consistency and flow that addresses needs in an age-appropriate manner. I.e., managing emotions and self-regulating looks very different in ECS, Grade 4, Grade 8, etc.

Move the topic of consent to healthy relationships instead of safety. Consent isn’t about unsafe behaviour, but about learning to deal with people and the nuisance relationship interaction.

Include the use of active terms in all curricula, but especially in Physical Activity and Wellness, as this must appear to be something students can actively do to enhance their overall health. Examples are: “participating” or “experiencing” as opposed to “investigate” or “describe.”

Include learning about the impact trauma informed and emotional regulation that might come from trauma. The student side is emotional regulation and how to be mindful and regulate with others. This is missing.

Ensure that bias is removed in terminology as this ensures more accurate definitions. Examples include: “reproductive health” (defines the physical health or condition of the reproductive system) should be replaced with “healthy sexuality” or “healthy sexual health” (reproductive health reinforces an ideological bias).

Model sequencing around the four pillars of activity, benefits of life, cooperation and do it for life. Organizing ideas would be better organized, scaffolded and understood through this basic structure.

Ensure we address new ideas or approaches in a way that is easy for teacher and student to understand. For example: Gr. 3 “Tactics in Indigenous communities honour place and are learned through traditional games and physical activities.”

### **Synthesis:**

A comprehensive Physical Education and Wellness curriculum would include all dimensions of wellness, incorporate more active verbs, and have a bias removed.

## **6. What are your perspectives on the content load for Physical Education and Wellness?**

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### **Summary**

Reduce the number of outcomes for K-3 (Division 1) as the content load is very heavy given the small number of instructional minutes allotted to this curriculum in the Guide to Education.

Ensure that there is an adequate allotment of time for both Physical Education and Health. The time allotment for Physical Education and Wellness needs to reflect the volume of outcomes and relative importance of the material.

Expand the focus to include a holistic view of health as opposed to activities and rules. There is too much emphasis on numbers, rules, and order to live and no comprehensive view. The curriculum is more of a checklist to cover in a short time frame instead of building healthy students.

### **Synthesis**

The Physical Education and Wellness curriculum has too much content that is covered in a checklist, instead of focusing on building healthy and well students.

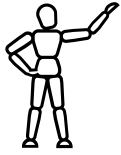
## **7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?**

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See “Moving Forward” Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.

# APPENDIX G – FINE ARTS

## Tier 3 Summary and Synthesis of Fine Arts by CASS Members – November 3, 2021



During the 2021 CASS Fall conference, CASS members had an opportunity to review the summary and synthesis of the data collected during Tier 1 and 2 of the data collection process. Below is a transcript of feedback based on cohort conversations led by a system leader facilitator.

- The group conversation referred to items other groups discussed and agreed with perspectives shared. (e.g., age and developmental appropriateness, spiraling curriculum, terminology inaccuracies, scope and sequence)
- Some ideas that were brought up was the use of the verbs in the Fine Arts curriculum. Lack of consistency, and they don't seem to focus on the act of production of art versus the idea of understanding more about something. This speaks to the theory-heavy content in art. An example would be showing a video on drawing a circle or drawing a figure or a student learn by doing and producing a figure. In both ways when the outcome says explore, the video is a form of exploration and missing the concept of art of production.
- Clarity around the minutes of instruction that are expected or the choice or lack of choice of strand, will be important for implementation. For example, current practice in some schools have teachers approach Fine Arts in a cross-discipline format providing students with the ability to explore a variety of the arts. The current draft may not allow for this to occur given the content load and focus on theory.
- In a school, can you do art in Grade 2 and then music in Grade 3 and drama in Grade 4? It seems that there's not obvious ways to enter in and out without having that background that's needed in the prior grades. Again, it seems that when you add that to the fact that you could spend all your time talking about the historical context in the theory that you never actually create anything in your fine arts classes.
- The pan-Indigenous approach does not reflect the reality of the Indigenous peoples found in the world. Just the Eurocentric approaches that do not reflect our communities nor classrooms. Indigenous art should be supported and guided by the Elders by Indigenous artists, by Knowledge Keepers.
- The wonderful opportunity to fully utilize the great Alberta outdoors in the Fine Arts curriculum has not been developed in any meaningful way.
- Finally, the opportunities for using multimodalities is lacking. That includes making art of any sort using technology so that the kids who are strong in that area may be able to create using that.

## Tier 2 Summary and Synthesis of Fine Arts by System Leaders – October 29, 2021

A summary reports the common details and outlying ideas across multiple sources, whereas a synthesis analyzes the details and ideas to help us consider the implications for our provincial context and in our role as system leaders. A synthesis uses inference to interpret the details and ideas in order to present a coherent understanding of all inputs.

### 1. What are areas of strengths in the Fine Arts subject area?

#### General

Breaking down the Fine Arts into the four disciplines of Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama is a helpful distinction for schools to use and incorporate different aspects of Fine Arts as their local context dictates.

There is clear intent to ensure Indigenous perspective is embedded in all the Fine arts (drama, music, visual arts), examples include:

- First Nations winter count, First Nations, Metis and Inuit Talking Stick;
- introduction of the role of protocol specifically related to storytelling;
- inclusion of the oral traditions shared by our Indigenous peoples; and
- inclusion of the concept of Land as a source of learning.

The addition of the element of narrative to all programs is valuable.

There are elements of this curriculum that lead to integration (e.g., “The body, as a dramatic tool, needs exercise to be healthy and flexible.” means we could address this in physical education as well).

#### Visual Arts

There are opportunities for cross-curricular teachings, particularly in Social Studies and both English and French Language Arts and Literature. If content moves and shifts in those drafts, Fine Arts will need to follow.

There is a clear progression of learning objectives from grade to grade. The visual arts curriculum includes more detail so a generalist teacher would have more ease in teaching it. Students moving from the current curriculum to the new curriculum would not have too much trouble with most of the content.

The organizing ideas of Foundational Elements, Appreciation and Creating are clear and accessible by teachers, which should assist in ensuring students can explore using the outcomes.

The Visual Arts curriculum does not limit teachers to physical and traditional art media. The outcomes are general enough that teachers would be able to incorporate digital media according to the needs and availability of technology at the school.

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**Music**

Music concepts and skills are appropriate and consistent. In many cases, upper grade outcomes are elaborated and improved upon; in this way, elements of essential learnings are reinforced and accorded value.

Music is shared in combination with other areas of performing arts which demonstrates its far-reaching impact and implications.

Strong foundational elements of music and related skills are well articulated.

**Dance**

The guiding questions offer an excellent exploration of dance as an artform. The inclusion of basic dance knowledge and the progression from grade to grade is well thought out and easy to understand.

The recognition of dance as a reflection of cultural change is also valuable for students to learn. This curriculum looks to foster deep creativity in students, which is missing from a lot of students' education, and the curriculum clearly notes that Dance contributes to physical and mental well-being.

There is direction to use a variety of stimuli as inspiration, and the acknowledgement that dance can communicate ideas, messages, and narratives.

**Drama**

There is recognition that dramatic play contributes to well-being and the development of empathy. Dramatic productions are noted as assisting students in building connection and community.

The inclusion of basic drama knowledge, the direction to use a variety of stimuli as inspiration, and the acknowledgement that drama can communicate ideas, messages, and narratives helps to make connections to the ELAL and FLAL curricula.

Readers' theatre in the older grades supports reading fluency and speaking confidence, which provides cross curricular connection to ELA programming/outcomes.

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**2. What are recommendations for improvement in the Fine Arts subject area?**

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**General**

The curriculum is heavy on explanation and description, and many of the ideas could be condensed.

There needs to be a larger emphasis on Alberta art (past and present), Indigenous art from across time, Canadian art and Canadiana (kitsch art).

Expand the focus to include the Oral Teachings and Land-based learning in all grade levels.

Consider adjusting the language used around Indigenous people in the proposed curriculum as it is often pan-Indigenous and inaccurate, for example referring to the Indigenous people of this territory having only been here for ‘hundreds of years’ when we know for scientific fact that they have been here for at least thousands of years.

Review to ensure correct terminology is used. For example, in music, the draft uses the word ‘patching’ when the correct word is ‘patschen’.

Reconsider the use of the Eurocentric notion to look to value or judge as it is not a universal trait.

### **Visual Arts**

Students should be exploring the wide range of creating, which means creating more than just 2D works of art. More sculpture, Fine Craft Objects (jewelry, ceramic vessels, landscape art, models of architecture, textiles, etc.)

Include explicit references and support exploration of various creative technologies for even the very youngest students in order to explicitly encourage the use of technology to create art.

Include new references such as colour theory within the Foundational Elements and Principles section only after earlier foundational pieces (need other basic elements of art such as space, form and principles of art.)

Encourage rewording of the sentence, “Give credit to other artists when using their ideas as an inspiration” found in the Appreciation section. This statement is problematic as it discusses areas such as truth, beauty, goodness, and greatness, which are subjective and differ between cultures and individuals.

### **Music**

It appears that much of the curriculum is focused on “knowledge.” If all the knowledge areas were covered, there would be no time for “skills and procedures” and music is, in fact, much more about the “doing” instead of the “knowing.”

Music is heavy on theory, which would be daunting to a generalist teacher.

Ensure a greater cultural balance of illustrative examples throughout as the music appreciation outcomes are overly Eurocentric, colonial, imbalanced from a gender perspective, and do not provide flexibility for teachers and students to design learning about music and musicians that meaningfully enrich other learning or exemplify local experiences and histories.

Indigenous music is presented as something to listen to or learn about as opposed to learning with and from Indigenous artists and knowledge keepers.

In the Grade 2 learning outcomes, there are inaccuracies in the way foundational music concepts are explained and presented; for example, the draft uses the word ‘patching’ when the correct word is ‘patschen’.

Also in Grade 2, it states that “A sense of community and well-being among participants can be established through First Nations, Métis, and Inuit music.” Whose community? The wording of this phrase should be addressed as it ventures into appropriation vs. appreciation.

### **Dance**

The curriculum references ‘dance elements’, ‘foundational knowledge’, and ‘vocabulary’, but never defines what that is. Ensure that there is a standardized vocabulary to use and pull from. Even under the creative movement umbrella we would want the students to leave each grade with a vocabulary both practically and creatively. It would be beneficial to place in the curriculum at least a small set of dance step vocabulary increasing in difficulty for each grade. Basic steps that could be found in many genres, for example, “pas de bourree”, three step turns, step touch, etc.

Citing more Canadian references to style and history within the dance curriculum would be beneficial.

Introducing more modern dance elements would likely engage students more in the dance curriculum.

## **3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for Fine Arts?**

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### **General**

Ensure skills and concepts are formatted side by side across the grade levels to see the scope and sequence of learning from one grade level to the next.

### **Visual Arts**

Remove the overemphasis on the past instead of teaching art skills. In the social studies curricula, there is emphasis on history and dates of objects, as opposed to showing transition and growth of artistic elements (for example, perspective, 3D modelling, life-like musculature in sculpture, etc.) In this examination of the past Indigenous art is not included.

Explore and consider how students can be helped to explore and enjoy as well as understand the theory behind the art.

Expand opportunities for students to work on individual skills that are needed at this age, such as the specific development of the fine motor skills required for art (and other) skills -- pencil grasp, cutting skills, appropriate use of art tools, etc.

Review and edit of statements such as “*Principles of design can be applied to colour to create focus*” as they do not clearly address which principles of design.

Encourage clarification of terms such as "Beauty", "Goodness" and "Truth" as these can often take on Eurocentric or value-based definitions.

### **Music**

Ensure balance where theory/knowing is reviewed and edited to provide enhanced opportunities for doing. The scope of the curriculum is much too broad, especially in the knowledge category. Much of



this overemphasis on this knowledge is linked closely to the draft social studies curriculum. While co-curricular learning is an excellent idea, in this case it misses the mark with the goals of elementary music education.

The draft curriculum places knowledge about music before exploration and creation of music.

In the appreciation organizing idea, the scope of topics to be explored are far too difficult to teach children. For example: Grade 2 is supposed to investigate culture in relation to music from ancient Greece and present day. Under Knowledge, grade 2 students are supposed to learn that the Greek used numbers to identify pitches in music. This is developmentally too hard for children at this age as they are just learning the concept of pitch. Then under the accompanying “Skills and Procedures” section we find, “Explore how melodies can be notated using numbers.” (Not developmentally appropriate for grade 2). The average Elementary Generalist would not have the background to teach many of the Foundational Elements from Grades 3-6. For example, in Grade 4, “The structure of the pentatonic scale omits the fourth and seventh degrees of the scale.”

### **Dance**

Ensure the curriculum provides the opportunity for children to experience Metis jiggling or appropriate Indigenous dances (such as the round dance) from Metis and Indigenous knowledge keepers – rather than placing Indigenous dancing as something to watch or learn about as opposed to learning with and from Indigenous artists and knowledge keepers.

Increase opportunities for students to experience and respond to a variety of music, rhythms, tempos, accents and beats.

### **Drama**

Expand the focus on creativity, exploration and imagination as opposed to technical expertise and direction. For example, grades 5 and 6 place too much emphasis on production and technical theatre elements such as memorized stage directions.

There is an attempt to connect to the social studies curriculum, however, the social studies curriculum is overly dense and needs to be streamlined. In grade 1, connecting representation of animals and nature in drama is a solid enough component; there is no need to do an investigation of ancient cave paintings of humans wearing animal heads as a form of costume.

## **4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for Fine Arts?**

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### **General**

The theory-heavy format results in many instances of content that is not age appropriate.

### **Visual Arts**

Ensure that the curriculum fully explores concrete ideas and forms before requiring abstract ideas. Some of the notions around line and form are likely to be abstract for primary-aged students (i.e., Grade 2: “Shapes can convey meaning in the way they are organized within artworks.” Inclusion of a discussion on abstract art in kindergarten is a concern; they’re pretty concrete thinkers.

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The knowledge section jumps in complexity and leaves out an important “bridging time” – understanding differences between prehistoric arts to a collection of very refined ancient cultures leaves out major events and bridges (i.e., - the middle stages between prehistoric and ancient times as exemplified by Mesopotamian culture; it is hard to talk about written words or connections between pictographs and calligraphy without talking about Sumerian language).

Include the concept of narrative beginning in Kindergarten to support children in telling stories through images at all ages.

### **Music**

Rework to focus more on experience and less on history and theory. For example, in Grade 2 music: “Time signatures, major and minor chords, absolute note names, do and re (could be ok), and form.”

Review the Appreciation component as much of the topic material is not age appropriate. For example: Greek music, Gregorian Chant, the Protestant Reformation, music in ancient Egypt and ancient China, and the Golden Age of Islam. Many of these topics are university courses.

Remove esoteric topics such as found in Grade 2: “The lyre, a stringed, harp-like instrument, was the most important instrument in ancient Greece and was used to accompany discussions about philosophy and storytelling.”

Encourage appropriate and relevant cross-cultural comparisons to the present day in the music curriculum.

Explore greater use of music that was written with children in mind, for example, *Peter and the Wolf*, *Carnival of the Animals*, *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, and music from different cultures that is engaging and inclusive of the cultures of children in our community, including Indigenous examples.

### **Dance**

While the foundational elements presented are age appropriate, the historical references and elements included are more abstract and not age appropriate. Outcomes should focus more on local and contemporary dances to understand self in relation to dance first, before exploring the past/abstract concepts.

In grade 3, the inclusion of force needs to be tempered somewhat as students are still learning to move in safe and appropriate ways. Suggestions of movements such as punch and kick are not age appropriate. Also, knowledge of Binary and Ternary forms in choreography is not age appropriate.

### **Drama**

Nothing noted in review.

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for Fine Arts?

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### General

Need greater clarity as sequence is not always clear. Items are mentioned in more than one grade level.

Review to address the heavy historical content, then focus on students' expression and creativity and building knowledge of mediums and skills in all areas.

Use of verbs is not standard across skill and procedures. For example, the use of “experience” and “explore” are inconsistent.

Review to avoid the mixing of ‘what’ and ‘how’ in terms of pedagogy, which results in confusion around sequence. Remove any ‘how’ pedagogy elements.

### Visual Arts

Explore ways to encourage the creation of art as opposed to the theory and history of art. Re-evaluate the proposed scope of the theory, as it will likely intrude upon the students' creativity and exploration of their artistic impulses. The broadness of the time periods and objects may result in superficial and/or vacuous handling of the topics. Time means the theory and time/date expectations might prove difficult. A class in elementary is not meant to provide the students a solid base in a university level art history survey course.

Review the level of depth and detail in the Foundational Elements for Grades 3-6.

### Music

Encourage focus on the making of music as opposed to general theories. For example: Grade 5 discussions on societal change in music is not music. It is more appropriate in social studies.

Include greater awareness and emphasis on the idea that music skills should build from year to year in a scaffolded manner. This curriculum mostly presents information in chunks without building on knowledge or understanding.

### Dance

Revise to replace types and history of ancient dance to provide more opportunities to appreciate dance before pulling in theory. Remove learning about Ancient history and forms of dance in the primary grades.

### Drama

Introduce the concept of improvisation earlier, as early as kindergarten. Children are masters at it. Waiting to call it improvisation in the upper grades is a disservice. Preteens are often terrified of it. It is a time where students are typically deep in comparison and are not always willing to take creative risks easily. If they have had it developed from a young age, their comfort and ability to embrace it will be greatly enhanced.

## 6. What are your perspectives on the content load for Fine Arts?

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### General

The theory and history-heavy content mean there is overall too little time to perform, create and explore. Students are far too busy memorizing or learning about age-inappropriate and unengaging content. This will diminish a passion for the Arts instead of fostering it.

### Visual Arts

Review the volume of artworks included as knowledge instead of examples used to show art techniques as the curriculum becomes far too dense. Young students need to create and make art, not memorize facts.

### Music

Review the amount of material covered in music, as teaching all of the skills and concepts and the music history would make it impossible to complete the curriculum. Review the amount of music history, as expecting study and exploration of the music of ancient Egypt and China is not necessarily warranted as these cultures were not particularly influential on music history, stylistic periods, notation, or tonality in Western culture. Most elementary music programs have only 60 minutes per week of instruction time.

### Dance

Examine the range of cultural dance from Roman to Metis, to Inuit, to Pagan to French Canadian to Medieval Europe and more. This breadth provides no opportunity for depth or to explore the passions and local contexts of the learners.

### Drama

Nothing noted in review.

## 7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?

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See “Moving Forward” Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.

# APPENDIX H – FRENCH IMMERSION LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERATURE

Note: School Authority feedback for French Immersion Language Arts and Literature resulted in 5 submissions. As a result, the data was not summarized or synthesized, and is shared as received.

## 1. What are areas of strengths in the French Immersion Language Arts and Literature subject area?

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- Learning progression is evident. Scaffolding of complexity between grade levels. Sequencing that relates to the Science of Reading is very complete.
- The focus on oral language at the outset of French immersion is consistent with current research. In addition, the inclusion of First Nations' oral traditions, clear, age-appropriate, the addition of conscience phonologique as its own section are other area of strengths. In Grade 3, emphasis on graphemes and conscience phonologique is important and could appear in all elementary level grades.
- Organization of Knowledge, Understanding, Skills & Procedures. We see that this curriculum is more concrete, tangible, focused on the observable. There is also greater clarity with scope and sequence, for example, communicating the knowledge components students are expected to learn with phonography and morphology. It also seems to be reflective of a structured literacy approach, which research suggests is beneficial for the majority of students.
- Focus on Phonemic awareness in early grades (blending/segmenting, rhyme, syllabification).
- (1) Continuity between the Organising Ideas in ELA, FLA&L, and Français is important and evident. (2) The Organising Idea of Oral Communication is an important focus in Immersion, consistent through K-6, well written and emphasizes the importance of oral skills. The Guiding Questions are engaging. Grade 3: How can oral communication and message comprehension influence interactions? Grade 5: How can oral communication and the unique attributes of the French language support harmonious relationships? (3) The open endedness of the cultural referents and examples listed allow teachers to address the differences within their group of students. Grade 4: Respond to a variety of classic and contemporary texts from local, national, and international sources using extracts, including texts from the Francophonie and from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. (4) Sequencing of learning is well organized in many areas: K-2 progression of phonemes, graphemes by order or difficulty; Grades 3-4 reading comprehension and writing processes.
- The draft curriculum provides some grade specific outcomes that teachers felt were not in the current curriculum, especially with grammar and verb conjugation. It was difficult to be certain if specific elements had been taught, or what their grade's starting point should be.
- References to provincial, national, and international French literature and culture are in the draft curriculum. "Francophonie" is well defined.
- Infusion of First Nations Metis and Inuit content.
- We appreciated the specificity of information in some areas (i.e., list of common graphemes introduced in Grade 1 and the order to introduce them in). This specificity may really benefit newer teachers looking for specifics.

- The language used in this document is more “teacher friendly” than the previous document.
- We were happy to see that “risk taking” was introduced overtly in Grade 1. In French Immersion, the ability to take the risk and speak in a second language is crucial (even if you may make a mistake).
- “Active Listening” is an important skill when learning a second language. This document outlines for teachers what active listening looks like.
- Students in Grade 5 are introduced to the concept of “taking notes”. This is a skill that isn’t overtly found in the previous curriculum document and, as a result, may not have been taught.
- The term “Cultural Literacy” broached as early as Kindergarten.
- The importance of editing and revising has been included and should remain. The link with honoring home language is a good addition. The recognition of the similarities and differences with pronunciation. Métis students and Elders who share their knowledge may also be able to share their thoughts on this topic. It also acknowledges students from various linguistic backgrounds. The statement "Repérer des textes en français et possiblement en d'autres langues dans son milieu immédiat" recognizes other languages and could encourage “translanguaging” in our school communities. But why is it only recognized in kindergarten? The letter formation outcomes are a positive aspect of the draft. It is very important that students learn this with the shift in society due to technology. (e.g., Some learners arrive at school without having held scissors, glue sticks or markers).

## 2. What are recommendations for improvement in the French Immersion Language Arts and Literature subject area?

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- Title needs to be reworked. French Immersion is a type of program and not a subject. Teachers are teaching the French language and literature. The content of the draft curriculum being quite dense, it may not be realistic to address all aspects thoroughly. The current program is divided into 4 organizing ideas (written production, reading comprehension, oral communication and oral production), which allows teachers to teach the language through a communicative context vs the 9 organizing ideas that are compartmentalizing it into silos. The organizing ideas need to be reorganized and regrouped. If it was reorganized into the four language competencies (Oral production/written production/Reading comprehension/listening comprehension) it would make the curriculum easier to read. The emphasis is on reading (5 organizing ideas) while in a French Immersion setting oral communication is important and there is only one organizing idea. Listening and oral expression have been grouped together. While they do go hand in hand, there seems to be a big emphasis on active listening or listening behaviours and not as much on oral development. Thus, the terms “oral interaction” and “oral production” should be used. Students’ motivation increases when learning the language orally to avoid feeling frustrated. Therefore, a greater focus should be on speaking not on writing. (ex. “les progrès et les réalisations dans l'apprentissage du français constituent des sources de motivation dans l'approfondissement de la langue”). There is an emphasis on passive learning. For example, within the oral communication outcome, there is a disproportionate focus on listening vs speaking (producing). Oral production is fundamental to language learning. For Oral communication, the emphasis is on act and rules of talking and not on communicating the

message (ex. les règles de communication). Overall, a much stronger focus on oral development is needed.

- A large part of the proposed curriculum is identical to the Français langue première et littérature draft curriculum. This is problematic as it does not reflect the second language learner's reality. Overall, the language used in the curriculum is not clear and sometimes confusing. Thus, some words are very generic which may lead to some confusion for parents and teachers. (ex. une expression efficace). The reader may wonder what “efficace” really means. In the statement “compter les syllabes à l’oral”, the teachers may also wonder what is expected. Should it be introduced or mastered? Overall, what needs to be mastered at each of the grade levels is unclear. Finally, in the following grade 5 statement Décrire les cinq temps du texte littéraire narratif, it is unclear what is meant by “les cinq temps”. In the current FLA curriculum, there are indicators of what grade level outcomes should be mastered and what is measurable and observable. These indicators are lacking in this draft. Thus, the choice of verbs makes it unclear how to report and even measure these outcomes (ex. Les enfants réagissent adéquatement à diverses situations de communication en français). Some Learning outcomes seem more adequate to measure than others (ex. les comportements d’écoute). Can teachers really measure behaviours? Shouldn’t the focus be on skills and knowledge only? “identifier”, “reconnaître”, “utiliser”, “nommer”, “faire”, “expliquer”, “déterminer” are the dominant verbs, which are on the low level on Bloom’s taxonomy. Some statements appear from Grades 1 to 4 (e.g., Des règles orthographiques qui facilitent l’écriture comprennent...).
- For the Reading Comprehension section, it is important to list all of the comprehension strategies in each grade (Predicting, Connecting, Inferencing, Summarizing, Visualizing, Analyzing, Critiquing, etc). These are strategies that can be used at all grade levels with varying complexity. Guidelines for teachers on the level of complexity appropriate at each grade level would ensure consistency and proper scaffolding. For reading comprehension, some statements refer to strategies that students are to use, which is difficult to measure. Students are also to discuss cultural references and feelings of belonging; connection to reading comprehension needs to be more firmly related and encourage the link to personal experiences. There is also a need to focus more on actively constructing meaning. For the Writing section, all elements of writing should be listed in each grade (ideas and content, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, presentation) as they can be worked on every year and refined over time. Author’s purpose or craft is not really addressed. The current draft presents a discrepancy that must be corrected : there are 36 graphèmes in the French language and not 39 as stated.
- The Skills and Procedures are difficult to evaluate. It is also prescriptive, heavy and does not scaffold from one year to another. In “La conscience phonologique section” (grade 2) there is a very detailed account of what are the vowels and syllables. This content would be best appearing in the support document that should accompany the curriculum.
- Overall, the draft is a mixture of approaches and curriculum and will force teachers to use a particular approach to meet the outcomes of the curriculum. A direct teaching approach will be required to get through the content. The draft contains many skills and is very knowledge based. Thus, it does not take into consideration the specific context of the French immersion program in which students learn French language through all subject areas, not just in FLA.
- The reading and writing skills can definitely be implemented within the other subjects. However, it is too knowledge based which could lead to less cross curricular connections. The

content of the draft curriculums in Social Studies and Science make it very difficult for early second language learners to access. The FLA curriculum is completely siloed. The integration of subjects is left to each teacher and the links are not very explicit. The draft does not support an inclusive education system. Instead, the program requires such rigor and is content heavy. It may discourage students who require a higher level of support. As mentioned previously, it is not clear when all the different outcomes need to be mastered. As a result, new teachers may have a tendency to cover everything using a check mark approach as opposed to teaching based on their students' needs and abilities. Some students may reach 5th grade without meeting the learning outcomes of the previous years. Although learning can be adapted, it is important to understand that such students cannot do three years of content in one. Qualifying reading fluency with words such as "rapidement" does not recognize students' differing abilities. Thus, it is in contradiction with the following statement: "chaque individu possède un niveau de lecture autonome personnel".

- There are some FNMI references (ex. "le cercle de partage" in grade 1) but not enough about the Métis culture and literature. It appears to have been an afterthought in the curriculum. It is mentioned in the oral section of the curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 2, and there is no mention of it for the other grades. The statement "les textes comprennent: la nature" is unclear. Is it in relation to land-based learning? If it is, it should be specific and through the grade levels not just kindergarten. Francophone histories, contributions, and perspectives are mentioned in the draft of the curriculum but as with the FNMI perspective, more like an afterthought. However, it should not only be found in the FLA curriculum but in all curriculums of the French Immersion program. The importance of oral stories in the FNMI culture is included in the oral communication but not the francophones', which is also a culture that relies on oral stories (légende, contes).
- The draft is lacking opportunities to discuss the evolution of French culture and the spoken language in Canada, and its history in Alberta and how it currently lives with new immigrants from across the globe. This could truly be a great opportunity to integrate Francophone perspective. There is a change in the level of verbs between the grade levels. However many lower level verbs are used (appuyer, contribuer); yet ideas do become more advanced as students move up the grade levels. Levels from grade K to 4 do increase in difficulty, going from "understanding" to "applying". However, for grade 5 and 6 levels, the verbs used stay mostly in that middle range but the task requirements and knowledge needed becomes greater.
- In Grade 1, an important adjustment is required around French Grammar in the Connaissances section. It says, "Un mot contient autant de syllabes qu'il a de voyelles" (a word contains as many syllables as it has vowels)" The Office de la Langue Française writes: "En français, les syllabes se construisent obligatoirement autour d'une voyelle, qu'on appelle le noyau, qui peut être suivie ou précédée d'une ou de plusieurs consonnes. Il y a donc autant de syllabes qu'il y a de voyelles prononcées." this sentence of the curriculum needs to be replaced by the correct statement from the OLF.
- There is concern about a possible perceived reduction of emphasis on oral language acquisition as the anchor for written language and an overemphasis on memorization of verb conjugations, syntactic analysis, etc. that would result in a more text-based approach to acquiring the language. We would like it made explicitly clear that the goal for primary students would be to expand their verbal memory of language before the move to focusing on the text-based acquisition.



- Consider direct references to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the 4 language competencies of listening, speaking, reading and writing, as used by other systems around the world. This would ensure coherence with the current research on language learning and best practices for developing competencies in a second language while also increasing access to international resources.
- Accurate criteria and terminology for literacy terms is important.
- Reading fluency includes three components, prosody, accuracy, and automaticity. Prosody is highlighted in the grade 3 guiding question however all three are required?
- Universal terms in English for Phonemic Awareness skills are isolation, blending, segmenting, adding, deleting, substitution. In the English text, these terms should be consistently used (ie blend instead of merge or fusion, phonics not phonology)
- Writing expectations are unclear. The curriculum does not specify the type of writing forms to be explored. Ex: no mention of writing a letter, narrative story, personal reflection, etc.
- There is a heavy emphasis on grammar. These outcomes are not interwoven in other parts of the French Immersion curriculum. They are stand alone outcomes and are not tied to any functional or authentic task. There is a lot of memorization of rules.
- The terminology used in the grammar section is highly complex and lacks clarity. Grammar is decontextualized and could easily become a check-list.
- The goal of Immersion is to become functionally fluent, however, the curriculum itself has minimal emphasis on oral production and comprehension. The four language competencies represent an evolving way of learning, with increasing complexity, but do not work in isolation. To read and write, one must be able to speak and understand the language.
- Bloom's taxonomy is minimally represented. The learning outcomes are based on low outcome verbs such as "identify-find, etc". There are also terms used such as "the student will adequately, correctly...". Those statements make the outcomes difficult to measure. In both the knowledge and abilities sections, there are also many statements, not actual outcomes.
- With specificity comes a lot of content. One example was a list of 6 common greetings and 12 "respectful expressions" when speaking. Another example was listing the symptoms of nervousness when speaking publicly.
- There is a missed opportunity to provide teachers with a "High Frequency Word" list and/or "Tier 1", "Tier 2" words etc.
- Inclusion of FNMI seemed to be a bit of an afterthought. The specificity associated with FNMI was lacking compared to elsewhere in the document.
- The title French Immersion Language Arts & Literature is problematic as French immersion (FI) is a program, not a subject.
- FI is unique in that French is a subject, but it is also the language used to teach all other subjects. The name of the subject is problematic as it implies that FI is a course and not a program. Students learn the language through all subject areas, not just French Language Arts. Students learn more than the language; the FI program integrates language instruction and subject area instruction; students learn the French language, they learn about the French language and they learn through the French language (Alberta Education, 2014).
- There is no defined vision or continuum for K-6 French language learning specific to the French Immersion context. • Several research based, well- established second language frameworks exist (CEFR, ACTFL, the FLA curriculum from Ontario) that could serve as foundations for this curriculum. This would facilitate resource development and nation-wide collaboration.

- Front Matter is misaligned with the organizing ideas presented in the draft curriculum • Front Matter doesn't mention the unicity of French language in Canada and how/why French immersion language arts and literature can be supportive of this; i.e. official language, Canada is a bilingual country, integral part of our Canadian identity.
- Draft does not align with current goals of the French immersion program (Alberta Education). In the current program, the student is at the center of language learning. The draft would not allow students to actively construct meaning. Second language learning is not honoured in this document; it reduces language learning to mechanics.
- Alberta Education outlines the goals for FI on page 1 of the Handbook for French Immersion Administrators (2014). The goals are defined objectives including participating easily and willingly in French conversations and achieving learning outcomes in all core courses, with French as the language of instruction. The draft curriculum places minimal emphasis on speaking abilities and does not show a research-based, cohesive approach to second language learning.
- In FI, it is important to look not only at the French Language Arts curriculum but all other curricula. The content of the draft curriculums in Social Studies and Science make the proposed content completely inaccessible to early second language learners. Research (Lyster, 2007; 2016; Tedick & Lyster, 2020) states that an integrated approach to second language learning is the most beneficial for L2 learners. This means that there is an interaction between language strands (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and that language is taught in every subject. This draft fragments all aspects of language learning, making it difficult for the teacher to see the connections. Additionally,
  - excessive amounts of content does not allow for deep learning to occur
  - the complexity of content in other subject areas is inaccessible to L2 learners
  - complexities of language learning are not honoured as outcomes have been taken verbatim from ELA and Français drafts
  - does not reflect the communicative approach a proven second L2 model
  - traditional approach to grammar which favours memorization and low level, passive skills
  - Access to resources is problematic; currently the recommended resource from Alberta Education for FLA 3-6 is *Littérature en Action* (Pearson); this resource does not align with the draft curriculum and it would be a huge financial undertaking for schools and a school division to replace. Additionally, procuring resources for all other subjects will be a major challenge.

### 3. What are the potential adjustments to the scope of learning for French Immersion Language Arts and Literature?

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- We would like to see higher order thinking skill progression throughout the curriculum. A lot of outcomes want students to "identify" (6t times) and "locate" (76 times). Very few outcomes encourage discussion or application of knowledge.
  - This curriculum is nearly identical to the "Français" (first language French) curriculum which does not take into account how second language (French immersion) learners learn.
  - In gr 2: Some of the vocabulary used in the Connaissances sections are not age appropriate. For example, understanding that the i in "lieu" is a semi-vowel pr. this should be in gr 4.
  - In gr 5; Very clear inclusion of the elements of language; prendre conscience et distinguer are better than memorize, understanding, building awareness of language forms
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- In general: (related to Social Studies) Adding francophonie mondiale to the cultural aspects...starting with home community, home province, home country, and then broadening to other countries where there are French-speakers and cultural events
- In gr 6: strong emphasis on sentence structure is appropriate, a bit more is needed on text structures
- Revisiting the conjugation of verbs and adjusting for grade level expectations with the goal being conceptual understanding of the language.
- Kindergarten: “Discuss letters that represent more than one phoneme”. “Use letters and their corresponding phonemes to recognize and attempt to write words”. Cognitively too demanding for Kindergarten students. Until students start speaking/understanding and using these words organically, the sounds within the words will have little significance or meaning to them.
- Continuity between the Organising Ideas in ELA, FLA&L, and Français is important. The titles and descriptions should also be congruent when in the same language. A blending of the best descriptions should be considered for the three Language Arts.
- ELA Oral Language: Listening and speaking form the foundation for literacy development and improve communication, collaboration, and respectful mutual understanding.
- FLA Oral Communication: Listening and speaking promote language development, positive relationships, and collaboration. La communication orale : L’écoute et l’expression orale favorisent le développement de la langue, des relations positives et de la collaboration.
- Français La communication orale : L’expression orale et l’écoute favorisent le développement de la langue, des relations positives et des liens durables dans l’échange, le partage et le respect de l’autre.
- ELA Text Forms and Structure: Identifying and applying text forms and structures improves understanding of content, literary style, and our rich language traditions.
- FLA Text Organization: Different text genres are used to understand and express ideas, perspectives about the world, and cultural information. L’organisation des textes : Différents genres de textes sont utilisés pour comprendre et exprimer des idées, des perspectives sur le monde et des informations culturelles.
- Français L’organisation des textes : Différents genres de textes sont utilisés pour comprendre et exprimer des idées, des perspectives sur le monde et des informations culturelles.
- Clarity on the intent of the Knowledge, Understandings, Skills & Processes (KUSP): Are these possibilities or compulsory grade level learning? There are too many items listed within a grade level, so if the intent of the KUSP is grade level evaluation, priorities should be clarified and those listed as recommendations either removed from the curriculum document to a support document or set in a different font to contrast them from the essential learnings.
- There are many details repeated across grade levels. Why? Having clarity about the intent of learning, either through font or symbol, to identify the reason for the repeated Knowledge. Are they intended as an introduction, continuation, or mastery of skills?
- This is important, as we have learned the importance of having outcomes prioritised during COVID, and having that prioritising be consistent across the province is beneficial to all students.
- In addition, why are different terms (grammatical structures) used for the same intent (predicting vs prediction)?
- The visual of the progression is important, thus acceptance of the repetition, however clarity of learning intent is needed.

- Grade3- Strategies that support prereading include • purpose of reading • overview • prediction • identification of keywords
  - Grade4- Strategies that support prereading include • purpose of reading • overview • prediction • identification of keywords identification of clues related to features and structure of a text
  - Grade5- Strategies that support prereading include • identifying purpose • scanning text and paratext • predicting • identifying key words identifying clues related to the text genre
  - Grade 6- Strategies that support prereading include • identifying purpose • scanning text and paratext • predicting • identifying key words identifying clues related to the text genre • determining if further reading is required
  - Definitions will be important to support a cohesive provincial understanding of curricular intent. Several definitions are included in this document to support that clarity, however having these hyperlinked to a definitions document (with additional examples and resources) would be a better way to support a common understanding (and minimise the excess text).
  - e.g. definitions are detailed for voice, active listening, oral presentation, non-verbal language, phonological awareness, rules of conversation, elements to support a good oral presentation
  - Guiding Questions: If these are intended for students and to “spark curiosity and wonder, which inspires truth seeking, understanding, and a lifelong love of learning” as outlined in the Guiding Framework (2020), they should be simple yet compelling. Several will need revising.
  - Fluency: Most of the Guiding Questions related to this Organising Idea are clear and logical. The grade 3 question has intentional vocabulary students (and teachers) will need to learn. The grade 5 question is poorly worded with repetition. The grade 6 question is not overly engaging for the age group.
  - Grade 3: How can prosody support reading fluency?
  - Grade 5: How can fluency contribute to the development of reading fluency?
  - Grade 6: How can fluency contribute to the development of proficient readers?
  - In the Guiding Framework, educators were assured that they would not be told how to teach, just what to teach...This Draft Curriculum is now so prescriptive, there is a real danger of losing best second language acquisition teaching and learning strategies. There was a need for clarity in the sense of vertical alignment of the outcomes to be reached to ensure continuous progression of learning, and teachers have mentioned often that the current curriculum lacked clarity, but where is a good middle ground?
  - The oral must come first to support all domains of the language, wrapped around valuing being a language learner in an authentic and functional contextual learning environment, which is where one finds the true value of learning a second language and see their accomplishments towards goals. This is what we need to strive for the good of our FI programs.
  - More specificity when it comes to meaningfully including FNMI ways of knowing in the FILAL curriculum.
  - Cursive Writing is introduced in Grade 3 and then not mentioned again in any other grade. If cursive writing is to be meaningfully learned by students, there should be some cycling back of this concept later.
  - When introducing dialogue in Gr. 5, it is suggested to use a dash before the dialogue. In my experience in French, it should be the << and >> symbols used (similar to the “ and ” symbols in English).
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- The emphasis should be put on the development of the oral language and phonemic awareness first and move towards reading and writing. The proposed curriculum is trying to do it all with little scaffolding and not using a developmental approach, especially when learning a new language.
- There is much research documenting the language learning continuum experienced by second language learners (Common European Framework of Reference). The draft does not take into account what is developmentally appropriate in the language acquisition process. For example, in Grades 5 and 6, students are asked to identify and use idiomatic expressions. In the CEFR, idiomatic expressions are considered a C1/C2 skill, meaning native-like proficiency.
- The current FLA program presented a clearly scaffolded, iterative set of skills and abilities that are developmentally appropriate for second language learning. The draft presented fragmented skills and abilities that do not build from one year to the next.
- It is very difficult to see the connections between speaking, writing, and reading various kinds of texts, yet research in literacy clearly indicates that these skills are mutually reinforcing and that it is crucial to address them in an integrated manner.
- There are several skills and procedures that appear at multiple grade levels. There is no clear indicator of when a student should master these skills and therefore it is difficult to evaluate.
- The language and terminology used between grade levels is often misused. For example, students are asked to identify types and genres of text. The definitions for these types of texts are incorrect as are the examples provided in the draft.
- The emphasis on low level verbs such as recall, identify and memorize (*repérer, identifier and mémoriser*) lends itself a stand and deliver, worksheet approach.
- The current FLA program does not include an explicit phonological awareness component. It is recognized that PA is a critical and foundational skill for reading. However, it should not exist in a silo. PA should be part of reading comprehension.
- The number of phonemes stated on page 9 is incorrect; there are 36 phonemes in French. \*The number 39 come from the website: Wikipedia • Pronunciation, while an important aspect, does not reflect if a child is successful in learning a second language. Immersion students are separate from Francophone students.
- Clarification for “Produire des phrases qui riment”(grade 2) is needed. • “Distinguer des mots dans des phrases à l’oral” would be difficult in French immersion Kindergarten as they are still learning basic vocabulary; this skill would be better suited for grade 1

#### 4. What are the recommendations on age appropriateness for French Immersion Language Arts and Literature?

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- In gr 2: Some of the vocabulary used in the Connaissances sections are not age appropriate. For example, understanding that the i in “lieu” is a semi-vowel pr. this should be in gr 4.
- In gr 5; Very clear inclusion of the elements of language; prendre conscience et distinguer are better than memorize, understanding, building awareness of language forms
- In general: (related to Social Studies) Adding francophonie mondiale to the cultural aspects...starting with home community, home province, home country, and then broadening to other countries where there are French-speakers and cultural events;

- In gr 6: strong emphasis on sentence structure is appropriate, a bit more is needed on text structures
- In K: focus on the oral and the enjoyment of text.
- In gr 3: identifying the tense of a story would be complex for this age - more information about this would be helpful - if students are expected to simply id or move this to gr 5.
- In gr 4: the concepts/terminology outlined in connaissances & compréhension: identifying the roots of prefixes and suffixes, morphemes, morphologie, graphèmes, polysemique definitions, congénères should be in gr 6.
- Language use for students in Grades K-2 is typically focused on the personal and familiar (ie. “je”, “tu”) which has implications for practical applications such as learning the conjugation of verbs. For example, there are concerns about the expectation for grade 2 students to memorize all the conjugations of the verbs “avoir” and “être” and to understand that a verb can indicate an action or a state. This would be outside the scope of their needs for language use and beyond their developmental level to learn with meaning.
- Grade 1 “Sort words into categories according to predetermined criteria” and “Make connections between words known in their home language and words in French”. This implies a student would have a depth of understanding around word work, phonics and phonemic awareness between both the home language and the language of instruction. Although this develops with exposure and practice, this skill is certainly only just being introduced in Grade 1 and is scaffolded and built upon in Grades 2 and 3. This is cognitively too complex in Grade 1 and assumes a greater capacity for oral language (similar to an L1 French student).
- It appears that content is presented at a much younger age. In order to acquire reading and writing skills, students must first have been exposed to the language and be able to understand it. Not enough emphasis is placed on this in the initial grades.
- “Morphology” introduced in Grade 3. This seems early to me in a second language.
- In Grade 6, students learn that an accent can distinguish some homophones. For example a, à, ou, où etc. This seems late to me. By Grade 6, many writing and spelling habits will have been formed. Introducing this in Grade 6 may be a challenge.
- The draft does not take into consideration what is developmentally appropriate in learning another language. A large part of the proposed curriculum is identical to the Français langue première et littérature draft curriculum. This is problematic because it does not reflect the second language learner's reality. Plus, language learning is reduced to a checklist of skills to learn. The program does not take into account the authentic communication situations needed for second language acquisition. As such, emphasis on oral communication should be an important part of the curriculum. Some terms are inappropriate for young learners (ex. “rapidement”). And how do you measure it?

## 5. What are potential refinements to sequencing of learning for French Immersion Language Arts and Literature?

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- Although the content is sequential, the curriculum does not develop skills in a sequential manner. The application of learned content is weak.
- In K; remove: “Discuter les lettres qui représentent plus d’un phonème.” (Move to gr 1)
- In gr 3: -the content load around grammatical and linguistic concepts is very heavy - would reduce the number of expectations and include more requirements around reading for the

purpose of comprehension and writing ideas and creative aspects of writing as well as oral communication. Some of the grammatical concept could be move to gr 5.

- In grade 4: add: identifying and understanding new words -appreciation of French language and culture -inclusion of digital resources such as ebooks
- In grade 5: '-texte argumentatif-- move to grade six; grade 5 can look at the elements and discuss. Awareness in gr 5 of type of text; imparfait and passé composé-- is appropriate . Production should be moved to gr 6.
- Recommend the Grammar strand be moved to the grades 7-9 levels and that any grammar taught in the K-6 range be through oral acquisition and use, rather than analysis and memorization.
- Emphasis on Active Listening implies a behaviour focus or social thinking curriculum. The focus instead should be on oral comprehension and developing this skill. There needs to be a larger focus on developing oral language and providing students the opportunity to practice using oral language as this is a driver for written comprehension and written production (i.e. reading and writing).
- Grade 1 “Identify the phoneme at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of spoken words.” This skill is not appropriate as many words in French contain silent consonants at the end of words- the worry is that these words would be taught in isolation (almost a checklist) and is not a reflection of authentic language learning. Children at this grade level are still learning alphabet sounds and phonemes in isolation so that they can learn to decode.
- The Draft curriculum is now organized in 9 different, stand alone, organizing areas. The current curriculum is developed around the four main domains of language - which is what DELF ) Diplôme d' études en langue française, based on the Cadre Européen Commun de Références - CECR) centers around. The additional section on valuing the language is a very important one.
- The organizing ideas and guiding questions are sequential. But the guiding questions are too broad considering the number of hours allocated to the subject.
- There is no defined vision or continuum for K-6 French language learning specific to the French Immersion context. This would necessitate a complete rewrite in order to achieve. • The current FLA program includes a limited focus on phonics. It is recognized that phonics is a critical and foundational skill for reading; however, it should not exist in a silo. Phonics should be included as part of reading comprehension. • It is unclear as to when students are to master some of the skills and procedures as they appear in multiple grade levels. • Concepts about print appears in this category; this should appear under the learning objective “reading comprehension” or it would be better if there was one learning objective for reading that was then divided into the five pillars. • The knowledge “section” with regards to graphemes is practically identical in grade 1 and grade 2; and some of the knowledge statements appears from grades 1-4 - making it difficult for teachers to understand when the skill is to be mastered. • Additionally in the skills and procedures section, the verbs used, such as identify (remarquer - grade 1), recognize (reconnaitre - grade2), are difficult to assign a level of achievement and present more as a yes/no set of skills. • Concerned that this outcome lends itself to a paper/pencil (worksheet) activities where students play a passive role.

## 6. What are your perspectives on the content load for French Immersion Language Arts and Literature?

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- The Draft FLA curriculum is more prescriptive and has more outcomes than the current curriculum. This could impact other subjects taught in French as there would be less time for cross-curricular teaching.
- Therefore, teachers will rush to cover everything and will have little time for deep authentic learning.
- Ex: Grade 1: lettre attaché; Grade 3: Radical form of verbs; Grade 5: morphologie
- Cross curricular learning does not seem to be an option.
- In general: Some objectives are almost identical across multiple grades - we recommend a greater emphasis on the development and organization of ideas in writing in division 1 and more about the specifics of editing in division 2. Also, we recommend a focus on creativity in div 1 and keep the focus on formal conventions in Div. 2. Those adjustments will reflect current research around how students learn a language -some more flow between grade level concepts and objectives (sometimes objectives are simply repeated from one year to the next with minor changes and sometimes there is no previous concept related to the new one. - graphic organizers can be used at younger ages as well -in reading section there should be some objectives around higher level thinking, making inferences, connections.
- Concerns about the heaviness of the Grammar strand.
- A focus on oral language and speaking should be reflected in the draft curriculum. This draft curriculum does not take into account the language acquisition process from a developmental perspective.
- Essential outcomes for each grade level should be identified, streamlined and specific.
- There is a very large emphasis on grammar and it is very prescriptive. The outcomes are not interwoven into other parts of the French Immersion curriculum. They are stand alone outcomes and not tied to functional tasks.
- We believe this could be a strong curriculum with some tweaking. The level of specificity is both a pro and a con. While providing in-depth information in certain areas, it does make for a content-heavy curriculum. Language Arts (specifically French Language Arts) has traditionally been content-heavy. In our option, the level of specificity in this document is mostly positive and provides teachers with clear objectives and information.

## 7. What are the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of planning for provincial implementation?

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See “Moving Forward” Section of this final report for a detailed account of the supports school authorities and teachers will need to consider as part of the planning for provincial implementation.



# APPENDIX I – SUGGESTED CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

During the consultation process, feedback was gathered about potential curriculum implementation schedules. System leaders expressed significant concern about the draft K-6 curriculum in its current state and want to see significant revisions to the draft curriculum before moving to an implementation. Four potential curriculum implementation schedules were identified, with three being eliminated, leaving one as a possibility. A summary of the three eliminated options is below, followed by the preferred approach to a curriculum implementation schedule.

## Eliminated Curriculum Implementation Schedules

- **Fall 2022 K-6 Implementation** – A K-6 curriculum implementation of all grades and subject areas was discussed to examine the pros and cons of this type of implementation. System leaders identified that one pro was that a full implementation would allow a thorough examination of cross curriculum connections. No other pros were identified. An extensive list of cons was created:
  - the pandemic has created missed learning opportunities and a full curriculum implementation would have further impact on learning;
  - a provincial lack of expertise to draw upon when everyone is new to the curriculum;
  - concern about lack of time to connect resources to curriculum and how to obtain appropriate resources;
  - achievement indicators need to be developed;
  - substitute teachers are limited during COVID leaving time for teachers to access professional learning about curriculum limited;
  - assessment and reporting need to be reconsidered; and
  - budget for curriculum renewal is vague making forward planning a challenge.

- **Fall 2022 K-2 Implementation/Fall 2023 Grades 3 – 6 Implementation** – In this option, full curriculum implementation would occur first with K-2, and then in the following year, Grades 3 – 6. A similar pro and cons as identified above were discussed. An additional con was about the added pressure placed on K-2 teachers and students, especially while dealing with the implication of the pandemic.
- **Fall 2022 – Transitional Year with 3 Subject Areas Introduced in K-6/Fall 2023 – Move from Transitional to Implementation of 3 Subject Areas plus Transition the Remaining Subject Areas/Fall 2024 - Remaining Subject Areas Implemented** – In this option, a pro was that each school authority could choose 3 subject areas to introduce. Three cons were identified: a high level of system coordination would be needed to support a multi-pronged approach, if school authorities in the same CASS zone chose different subject areas it would limit the ability to collaborate, and limited access to developed resources would remain.

### Suggested Curriculum Implementation Schedule

System leaders expressed interest in a transitional, staggered approach to curriculum implementation. In this model, some of the same cons, as noted above, would still exist but following a scheduled and planned approach to the implementation would help to alleviate the impact of a full curriculum implementation on school authorities. The following chart will provide an overview of a potential curriculum implementation schedule.

The following chart illustrates the feedback received from the CASS membership about a potential curriculum implementation schedule. Of note, this feedback was obtained prior to December 13, 2021 when the Minister of Education announced K-6 students would be introduced to a new language arts, mathematics, and physical education and wellness curriculum in September 2022. The CASS membership continues to recommend a staggered curriculum implementation schedule, however, given that the Minister of Education will continue to seek consultation in the form of an advisory group, CASS is interested in further discussion about a staggered curriculum implementation plan.

Suggested Curriculum Implementation Schedule			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>K-3</b>	English Language Arts and Literature, French Immersion Language Arts and Literature	Mathematics Science Social Studies	
<b>4 - 6</b>		English Language Arts and Literature, French Immersion Language Arts and Literature	Mathematics Science Social Studies
<b>K-6</b>	Fine Arts Physical Education and Wellness		