



# Curriculum Redesign Update

In 2010, the Ministry of Education began consultations about the transformation of BC's K-12 education system. Since the beginning of this transformation initiative, several documents have been posted that summarize the overall desired directions. The document *Exploring Curriculum Design (January 2013)* describes how the provincial curriculum and assessment redesign processes differ from those of the past — in co-construction, openness, and transparency.

The Ministry is working closely with education partners, including the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF), BC independent schools, and the BC First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) to name a few, to co-construct and redesign the provincial curriculum. Development processes are intended to be open and transparent, giving stakeholders many opportunities to provide feedback at various points. During development, team members are encouraged to share curriculum draft materials with colleagues, and the BCTF posts drafts on its website and listservs. Introducing such processes has meant a learning curve for all participants, but this has been a positive step in curriculum development, encouraging broader involvement.

The Ministry appreciates the feedback received from individuals and groups who sent emails or reports or responded to the online questionnaire. While we could not respond to every submission, please be assured we have read all the feedback received. The Ministry has also received a synthesis of responses on the draft curriculum from the BCTF and has included key comments within this report.

Following on from the *Curriculum Redesign Update* of May 2014, this update describes where we are now in the redesign process and how the feedback process occurred. It summarizes overall themes and themes by area of learning from the feedback, identifies key items requiring action by the Ministry and the curriculum development teams, and sets out the next steps in development.



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# Where We Are Now

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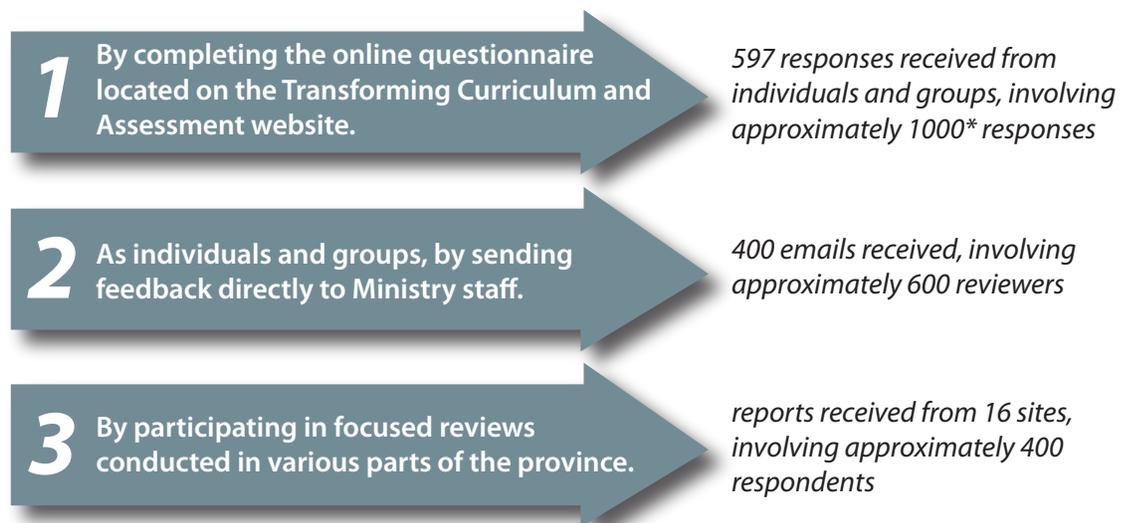
As of November 2014:

- ▶ K-9 curricula for eight areas of learning are posted (including English and French versions, where applicable).
- ▶ Recent K-9 postings include:
  - Français langue première K-9 curriculum
  - Français langue seconde — immersion K-9 curriculum
- ▶ Elaborations have been added to the Science K-9 draft.
- ▶ Draft competency profiles and student illustrations are posted for Communication, Creative Thinking, and Positive Personal and Cultural Identity; additional illustrations will be posted as they are ready.
- ▶ Drafts of Critical Thinking competency profiles are being readied for posting on the web. Work is underway in district teams to develop Personal and Social competency profiles.
- ▶ A curriculum development team is working on the development of the Core French curriculum; that work will continue for several months.
- ▶ During the summer, responses to the renewed curricula received by August 30, 2014, were analyzed and form the basis of this analysis. Responses received after that date were scanned for consistency or inconsistency with the themes identified in the bulk of the responses.
- ▶ The K-9 curriculum development teams are being reconvened to revise the drafts based on the feedback received and the 10-12 curriculum outlining teams are being formed.
- ▶ Ministry of Education staff prepared summaries of the feedback received to discuss with the curriculum development teams when they resume work in 2015.

# Feedback Process

The purpose of the review process was to seek input from the broader education community and the public on BC’s draft redesigned curricula and use this information to improve them. The analyses of this information produced an in-depth understanding of the spectrum of respondents’ views on many aspects of these curricula. Some features of the renewed curricula received strong approval — others received a mixed response. We recognize and value these differences in views. They will help us create curricula relevant to the diversity of learners and educators in our province. The Ministry appreciates the richness of the views presented and will use many of the suggestions in revising and refining the draft curricula. These suggestions will also influence the development of curricula not yet drafted in other areas and grades.

People responded in three ways:



\*Estimate only, not all groups identified how many were in their group.

The format of each type of response differed. The online questionnaire and the focused reviews had specific questions. The direct feedback to Ministry staff was open, with people posing questions and offering a variety of feedback comments and suggestions. Responses from all sources were read and coded, based on key themes identified during initial readings. Additionally, the BCTF collected feedback and submitted a summary report to the Ministry. Some of that feedback is included in this report.

A qualitative approach was taken to the analyses. This approach was chosen partly because it is relatively open-ended and exploratory; it uses a collection of structured and unstructured forms of data; and it allows shifts in the research questions themselves during the course of the inquiry (as issues were identified). But it was chosen mainly because the objective of the study was to identify people’s reasons for their views — that is, we wanted answers to “what?” and “why?” so we could improve these drafts as well as future curriculum drafts.

The specific questions on the Ministry website and those used in the focused reviews were guided by the principles established by the Curriculum and Assessment Framework Advisory Group. Their discussions and consultations led to a set of guiding principles for the future development of provincial curricula designed to support the development of educated citizens, be inclusive, and be concept-based and competency-driven. Based on what we have learned in working with the curriculum development teams and from the results of the review processes, we have updated the list of principles to read as follows:

- ▶ Focus on the important concepts and big ideas in each area of learning to support the transfer and application of essential learning.
- ▶ Ensure core competencies are explicit and built into renewed curriculum to support deeper learning and the transfer of key skills and processes to new contexts.
- ▶ Reduce the prescriptive nature of curriculum while ensuring a focus on a required amount of essential learning.
- ▶ Focus on higher order learning, emphasizing the key concepts and enduring understandings (big ideas) that students need to succeed in their education and their lives.
- ▶ Take into consideration the developmental phases that learners move through from school entry to graduation.
- ▶ Allow for flexibility and choice for students and teachers.
- ▶ Respect the inherent logic and unique nature of the disciplines while supporting interdisciplinary approaches.
- ▶ Integrate and embed First Peoples Principles of Learning and Aboriginal knowledge and worldviews in all areas of learning.

# Highlights from Feedback

The following highlights include quotes taken from various responses to illustrate the nature and range of feedback on the renewed curricula. The numbers and letters in the brackets following each quote are references to the various sources of this feedback: “OF” refers to a response from the online form, “DF” refers to a response from direct feedback, “FR” refers to a response from a focused review, and “BCTF” refers to a response from the BCTF summary report.

## RESPONSES TO THE CURRICULUM REDESIGN

### Positive Features of the Curriculum Redesign

Most respondents welcomed the overall direction as outlined in the renewed curriculum drafts, making points about the reduction in the number of learning standards and the increased flexibility. For example:

**“Simple. Clear. Not an unattainable list of things to cover.”**

*These changes are long overdue. The biggest strength is, by shortening that enormous list of learning outcomes, we can now focus on thinking and learning and the big ideas. Now there is some flexibility to help us better personalize learning and to find ways to use areas of student interest to facilitate learning. (OF133)*

*Overall I like the redesigned curriculum format. The essential ideas are well laid out and explained. The big ideas give the teacher an opportunity and freedom to work within the concepts and have a degree of autonomy. (OF599)*

*Overall, I am happy with the direction the curriculum is taking. (OF159)*

Several commented on the importance of these changes to our future. For example:

*Overall, we fully support the new directions taken . . . recognizing change is needed to prepare students better for a future in a vastly more complicated and less predictable world. (DF85-AC)*

**“Biggest improvement overall is the flexibility — less prescriptive and content driven, more ability and permission for teachers and students to work with passions to engage learners.”**

*I love how we are focussing on brain based research. I love that we are looking at ways to personalize learning and increase numeracy. I love that we are continuing to make students the center of their own learning... I could go on and on about how we have improved our techniques [and] our reflections about our teaching over the last 20 years...We are moving in the right direction here!!! (OF135)*

*I appreciate the fact that this curriculum is more in tune with the needs of the real world. (OF418)*

*Being more concept-based is in line with educational research. (OF566)*

A few respondents commented on the process used to develop the draft K-9 curriculum:

*Keep going!!!! Love that the BCTF has been so involved. Love that there is no timeline for implementation. And instead waiting to ensure that everyone’s voices [have] been heard. (OF137)*

Others seemed impatient for the Ministry to work with teachers to develop the rest of the pieces:

*Get the rest of the links up and running! Give us some ideas as to what the reporting piece will look like. Also, timelines... what are we thinking? (OF162)*

Overall, those welcoming the change identified the following as positive consequences of the redesigned curriculum:

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**“Excited about the progress towards a new direction in education.”**

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- ▶ more manageable curriculum
- ▶ greater flexibility
- ▶ focus on personalized learning
- ▶ focus on inquiry and deeper learning
- ▶ improved curriculum design and website presentation
- ▶ inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews

Without question, the most popular features of the renewed curriculum are the elements (big ideas, curricular competencies, content), with big ideas leading in popularity. Some respondents simply said, “I like the big ideas,” while others gave reasons. Reasons varied from those who appreciated that the renewed curriculum focuses on big ideas and important concepts, rather than minute details, to others who made statements such as:

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**“Redesigned curriculum provides teachers and schools with greater opportunity to exercise professional judgment in creating flexible learning environments and using creative approaches to teaching.”**

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*They inspire me to create unit plans based on each big idea. (OF141)*

*Absolutely love the big ideas. The big ideas really allow for understanding by backwards design. The concepts and content are also nicely organized and allow for clear and concrete outcomes that students will understand. (OF434)*

While the majority of respondents found at least some aspects of the renewed curriculum to be positive changes, a few individuals questioned the need for the change.

## Suggestions to Improve the Curriculum Redesign

### *Choice, Flexibility and Deeper Learning*

Most respondents noted that the curricular elements opened up the structure to provide choice and flexibility for teaching and learning and allowed for deeper learning — although not everyone agreed that this was a positive aspect of the renewed design. Some saw choice and flexibility as a negative aspect, stating that the choice and flexibility would lessen the consistency of standards around the province. While many respondents recognized how the elements worked together to support deeper learning, others expressed confusion. Deeper analyses of those responses made clear that they defined terms such as “deeper learning” differently from the way they were used in the renewed curriculum. Several commented about the need for greater balance between the amount of content and the time required for deep learning. As well, some others did not agree that deeper learning is possible for younger learners. Clearly, the rationale for the renewed curriculum design needs to be stated and the research and theory behind deeper learning and concept-based and competency-driven curriculum needs to be clarified.

## Topics and Skills De-emphasized

Many respondents commented that the curricular elements reflected concepts, content, and competencies that were important for students to learn. Others identified ideas they felt had been de-emphasized in these drafts (e.g., environmental issues, scientific citizenship, a focus on basic skills) — although, again, not everyone agreed that these were de-emphasized. The findings provided by the BCTF in their feedback report echoed this concern: *“The two areas where problems were identified were in environmental education and fine arts, but from a small number of respondents.”* (BCTF, p. 2)

**“The two areas where problems were identified were in environmental education and fine arts, but from a small number of respondents.”**

### Learning Progressions

Several respondents stated that the progression of big ideas through the grades needs to be more clearly articulated and made more evident to readers. Particularly in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics, respondents asked for scope-and-sequence charts or continua to illustrate development of skills such as the developmental stages of reading. For example, one respondent summarized the views of many: *“If a truly clear developmental continuum is established, then it will make it easier for all teachers/learners, especially those in multi-grade classes, to monitor progress and plan next steps in learning in order to ensure effective instruction and learning.”* (OF50)

### Supporting All Learners

Several made comments regarding the need to ensure that curriculum addresses the needs of all learners, including English language learners, special needs learners, and Aboriginal learners.

### Aboriginal Ways of Knowing

Responses regarding the inclusion of Aboriginal ways of knowing in all areas of learning were mixed. One group reported that they were *“impressed with how the Aboriginal worldviews and First Peoples Principles are integrated and expressed throughout the curriculum in natural ways. Much more visible and offers valuable suggestions of ways to integrate on an ongoing basis — not one-off experiences.”* (FR) Other respondents had concerns about its inclusion with, in their view, no clear plan. One respondent felt that *“to specify the Aboriginal culture over and over again is contrived”* (DF-VC3e),

**Some others made comments about the need for visible Aboriginal content on the website and for a balance among representations from the past, present, and future.**

and another asked whether there would be support for teachers to teach Aboriginal content (DF-VC13I). Several respondents, including Aboriginal educators who responded to the draft, wanted to see a more central position for Aboriginal knowledge and the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Some others made comments about the need for visible Aboriginal content on the website and for a balance among representations from the past, present, and future. As well, many respondents stated that they would need professional development and specific teaching and learning resources to be able to support the learning intentions related to Aboriginal ways of knowing in the renewed curriculum.

## ***Supports and Professional Development***

Many respondents expressed concerns about need for professional development resources, supports, time, and funding. Most respondents identified the need for ongoing professional development to help teachers implement the transformation being proposed. Several people identified the need for professional development to help educators support students with special needs. The findings in the BCTF feedback report also identified this as a concern. High among the request for resources were lists of and links to learning resources and activities. At the same time, some expressed the need for new resources to address new learning standards. Respondents also want to see examples of learning/teaching units based on the renewed curriculum, including case studies and inquiries; others also wanted to see examples of student work. Others noted the need to see examples that illustrate ways to use the renewed curriculum with multi-grade classes and to support cross-curricular integration.

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***“A common thread across these areas was the expressed need for collaboration with other teachers...”***

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The BCTF feedback report addressed concerns about supports and resources in considerable detail. Regarding resources, the BCTF received responses similar to those mentioned above and highlighted the point that *“they were worried about the lack of supports for implementation”* (p. 2). Under supports, the report included “time” as an important element: time to internalize and adapt curriculum to changing needs; time to figure out the methods the new curriculum encourages; and time to meet, discuss, and collaborate. *“A common thread across these areas was the expressed need for collaboration with other teachers and with specialists such as teacher-librarians and special education teachers.*

*This indicated a preference for greater collaboration in both the understanding and delivery of new curriculum.”* (BCTF, p. 6)

## ***Assessment***

Most respondents expressed the need for assessment resources to include rubrics, exemplars, self-assessment, and criteria for core and curricular competencies. They also requested clarity on what will be assessed, including revised performance standards and examples of authentic tasks. The suggestions included in the BCTF feedback report identified the need for more information about assessment approaches and how assessment would be aligned with curriculum. As well, respondents expressed a need for *“ensuring assessment for learning was built into assessment proposals”* and *“informing students how assessment and testing would be developed.”* (BCTF, p. 5)

## ***Responses to Areas of Learning***

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This section summarizes highlights from the information received for five areas of learning: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Arts Education. The feedback to date on Arts Education and Physical and Health Education draft curricula has been limited. Initial themes for Arts Education are presented in this report; further feedback on both areas will still be sought. Français langue seconde — immersion and Français langue première were posted in November 2014. Targeted feedback will be sought for these areas.

## English Language Arts

Overall, the response to the English Language Arts draft was mixed. Analysis of the responses reveals a clear tension, sometimes within the same response, between support for the intentions of the overall curriculum redesign and concern about the lack of specificity.

### *Positive Features of the English Language Arts Draft*

Some respondents found much to praise in the new curriculum including support for such directions as the *“renewed emphasis on human story, and the joy and power of language.”* (DF5e) Most commonly mentioned were the curriculum’s flexibility, greater manageability, and focus on deeper learning. Also frequently mentioned were:

- ▶ fewer prescribed learning outcomes
- ▶ emphasis on inquiry and process
- ▶ increased opportunities for personalized learning
- ▶ focus on 21st-century skills (competencies)
- ▶ opportunities for integration with other areas of study
- ▶ opportunities for project-based learning
- ▶ inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews

### *Suggestions to Consider in the English Language Arts Draft*

The following are key items identified, including examples of comments made:

ITEM IDENTIFIED	EXAMPLE COMMENT
Clarity and specificity	Some respondents stated that it is not necessarily clear within the draft what should be taught. The level at which the curriculum is written leaves much to individual teachers’ discretion, with the possible outcome that students would not learn what they needed to continue to progress. Even among the respondents who supported the greater flexibility and manageability of the curriculum, many asked for more clarity and specificity about the scope and sequence of language arts development. “Clarity” was the most frequently mentioned improvement requested by respondents.
Learning progressions	Even some of those who felt that the simplification of the curriculum was a strength wanted greater guidance on the development of students’ English Language Arts skills. For example, one respondent listed as a strength <i>“simplified Language Arts curriculum,”</i> but then added: <i>“We will need a continuum that will give some direction as to what skills the students need to be learning at the different stages of their learning (for example, learning letter sounds in Kindergarten, sight words in Grade 1) to facilitate their ability to find meaning and joy in literature.”</i> (OF264)

ITEM IDENTIFIED	EXAMPLE COMMENT
Content by grade	Several respondents described the content grade bands for K-2, 3-5, and 6-9 as strengths of the English Language Arts draft, noting, for example, that they “reflect a continuum of learning” (DF-VC11); “The grade bands are a great idea. I have been conscious of that for years as I have taught K-12.” (OF255) However, the organization of the curriculum by grade bands, especially the K-2 band, was often raised as a matter of concern. Respondents felt that the curriculum did not adequately distinguish content for each grade and would make assessment particularly difficult. One pointed out the difficulty of the K-2 band in combined Grade 2/3 classrooms.

## Mathematics

### ***Positive Features of the Mathematics Draft***

Many people commented positively on the intent of the revised curriculum to foster mathematical understanding and thinking, with statements such as: “Connecting mathematical concepts to each other and making mathematical connections to the real world helps make what we teach in class meaningful and interesting to our students. This will eventually help students figure out what interests them and will help them make decisions regarding their career life.” (DF61) Many others expressed support for the following aspects of the renewed mathematics curriculum:

- ▶ highlighting of competencies in math
- ▶ concept-driven curriculum
- ▶ flexibility for teachers and students
- ▶ opportunities for integration and collaboration
- ▶ a focus on problem solving, inquiry, and application
- ▶ emphasis on students communicating their learning
- ▶ increased focus on financial literacy
- ▶ meaningful mathematical connections

### ***Suggestions to Consider in the Mathematics Draft***

The following are key items identified, including examples of comments made:

ITEM IDENTIFIED	EXAMPLE COMMENT
Clarity and specificity of big ideas and content	<i>Topics are way too general (could result in some concepts being missed)...(OF157)</i>

ITEM IDENTIFIED	EXAMPLE COMMENT
<b>Aboriginal content</b>	<p><i>It is possible to show students how math is used in Aboriginal context: key number words in each area: food harvesting — measure, weight — measurement in [the] environment — patterns/proportions in design (canoe, art) — language — central concepts across — calendar times — next generations — calculate what you use now, future generations, what you can take (plants, salmon). (DF73)</i></p> <p><i>Both elementary and secondary teachers wonder about what inquiry-based approaches in mathematics might look like and expressed a need for examples and resources for embedding the First Peoples Principles of Learning in mathematics. One issue that emerged through discussion is the need to be culturally responsive in our community and consider ways to honour the many ways of thinking about mathematics. (DF60)</i></p>
<b>Ensuring the basic skills</b>	<p><i>...times tables, basic division...etc. are all core skills that enable students to spend more time understanding the bigger concepts rather than the little things. (OF35)</i></p>
<b>Content and concepts</b>	<p><i>Deeper learning requires covering fewer topics (which doesn't seem to be the case with the new math curriculum) and more one-on-one time with teachers so students can be guided. It would be nice if students were self-motivated, independent learners, but very, very few are. (OF518)</i></p>
<b>Mental math strategies</b>	<p><i>Just wanted to comment specifically on the absence of explicit mental math strategies in the math curriculum, for grades 1-5. A group of us from four districts are sitting here and realizing that this is a missing piece. (OF481)</i></p>

## Science

### **Positive Features of the Science Draft**

The strongest support was for the framework of the renewed science curriculum with respondents making comments such as: *“The rationale document is the best I’ve seen in all my years of science teaching. It actually sounds like it [was] created with the input of real scientists, or at least, by those who understand, respect, and follow the methods of science. The focus on developing scientifically minded (or scientifically literate) citizens is the most worthwhile endeavor that we can embark on in science education; this rationale document not only allows science teachers the freedom to pursue this goal but requires it.”* (DF154) As well, many respondents commented positively on the following features of the renewed curriculum:

- ▶ science competencies and big ideas
- ▶ place-based focus
- ▶ greater flexibility
- ▶ opportunities for inquiry and active learning
- ▶ expanded focus on chemistry

## Suggestions to Consider in the Science Draft

Science and social studies received the largest volume of feedback overall. Many respondents suggested improvements or posed items for consideration. The following are key items identified, including examples of comments made:

ITEM IDENTIFIED	EXAMPLE COMMENT
Clarity of ideas	<i>I STRONGLY urge a specific focus on environmental literacy through the entire curriculum and in every grade. The proposed draft either has removed attention on environmental education or has worded it in such an embedded way that it is not apparent. (OF189)</i>
Alignment between standards and rationale and goals	<i>The Rationale speaks to developing citizens with a caring and responsible disposition, and an understanding of the social, ethical, and environmental dimensions of issues. Yet going further into the draft curriculum it is not evident to me how this is to be achieved as the grade specific draft curriculum lacks alignment with this opening discourse. (DF71)</i>
Effects of proposed changes	<i>I am curious as to why the content of certain curricula by grade has changed so drastically (I am referring to Science and Social Studies 6 in particular). I am wondering if there is a significant educational reason that is driving the decision. (OF37)</i> <i>We think the scope and sequence in science needs to be addressed, as well whether some of the abstract topics are within the zone of proximal development for some of these grades. Please ensure that there is flow from one year to the next (and to the senior grades). We would like to build on concepts, rather than just teach isolated snapshots. (OF106)</i> <i>We feel there has been a shift towards introducing concepts that are too abstract for our young students at the cost of removing content, which is very meaningful/concrete/interesting to young students and allows for lots of hands-on, discovery-based teaching. (DF269)</i>

## Social Studies

### Positive Features of the Social Studies Draft

Most people supported the transformation efforts of the draft Social Studies curriculum, making comments such as: *“The SS curriculum allows for covering the big ideas rather than specific PLOs. Given the basics for teaching the students, concepts and content help to identify clear time periods and concepts. They are specific but not restrictive. Help to guide the teacher but not limit. Clear and prescriptive without giving labels to specific PLOs so the teacher and student can learn about what interests them and is meaningful to them.”* (OF393) As well, many respondents commented positively on the following features of the renewed curriculum:

- ▶ design that is specific without being prescriptive
- ▶ flexibility for both students and teachers
- ▶ reduction in the number of outcomes
- ▶ opportunities for curriculum integration
- ▶ historical and geographical thinking
- ▶ focus on multiple perspectives
- ▶ students as historians
- ▶ design that focuses on developing thinking skills
- ▶ inquiry and personalized learning
- ▶ student engagement in meaningful, relevant concepts

### ***Suggestions to Consider in the Social Studies Draft***

Social studies and science received the largest volume of feedback overall. The following are key items identified, including examples of comments made:

<b>ITEM IDENTIFIED</b>	<b>EXAMPLE COMMENT</b>
<b>Clarity of ideas</b>	<i>Keep and include the scope and sequence [for] mapping skills. A suggestion is to include and specify that these skills need to be taught as part of curricular competencies if not actually reincorporated as outcomes. Further skills in geography (mapping, provinces/territories content knowledge) in social studies are important. (OF168)</i>
<b>Effects of proposed changes</b>	<i>As a teacher of a split class, it is very important that the material works together so that both grades can be taught with no emphasis of one over the other. In today's classroom, split grades are now the majority, and totally changing the Social Studies curriculum as you have, will make it near to impossible to cover such a wide time period. (DF5)</i>
<b>Learning progressions</b>	<p><i>I don't understand the rationale for moving Local Government from gr. 3 to gr. 5. It seems that learning about municipal government is a natural extension after children have been learning about themselves, family and community in K-2. (OF464)</i></p> <p><i>The current Gr. 3 Social Studies Curriculum, which focuses on Canada and communities past and present, is replaced in the draft with a theme called Global Indigenous Societies and Issues, which seems beyond the Gr. 3 level to me. I feel that it is too complex and is not suited to the needs of our Gr. 3 students at all. (DF6)</i></p> <p><i>I feel such drastic changes (especially in Grade 6), are not necessary. It would result in many resources needing to be replaced and possibly much teacher training needed in order to implement the new topics. (DF8)</i></p>

## Arts Education

While feedback has been limited, some initial themes are emerging.

### **Positive Features of the Arts Education Draft**

Positive feedback includes appreciation for 1) how the importance of Arts Education is being recognized, 2) how easily the Arts Education curricula can be combined with others areas of learning, 3) how the four disciplines are integrated, and 4) how a broader, more flexible curriculum supports learners to pursue their passion in Arts Education. Quotes supporting these opinions included: *“There are some great philosophies embedded into this document that will help the field grow and develop, which is very exciting.”* (DF3) *“The curriculum is no longer overwhelming with specific details (i.e., lots of learning outcomes) and has big overview ideas. We like that the goal is for art to be infused/integrated with other curriculum/subject areas, and feel that this could be stated even more explicitly. Big ideas might allow for the crossover into other curricular areas (umbrella ideas).”* (DF7) *“I am pleased with the connections between the arts, social studies and language arts. Much of this learning revolves around story and culture and how our arts, history and interconnectedness help us find meaning and understand our cultures.”* (FR)

### **Suggestions to Consider in the Arts Education Draft**

The following are key items identified, including examples of comments made:

ITEM IDENTIFIED	EXAMPLE COMMENT
<b>Progression of principles and elements</b>	One suggested improvement is to ensure the alignment of the progression of principles and elements through the grades, while honouring the unique aspects of each discipline. <i>“We would like to see hot links that teachers could click on to see tutorials that help teach [them] areas of the Arts Education curriculum that they do not have expertise in.”</i> (DF7)
<b>Integrated curriculum</b>	Additionally, while some educators saw the integrated nature of the arts as a positive feature, others suggested that the four disciplines be distinguished from one another, particularly by Grade 8 or 9. A typical quote is: <i>“Integrated Curriculum: While I see integrating as a workable possibility, the integrity of the disciplines must be maintained.”</i> (DF11)

## KEY ACTIONS

The feedback demonstrates that the overall direction of the concept-based and competency-driven curriculum is well received. At the same time, however, more clarity has been requested to support teachers in this educational transformation. Also evident from the feedback is the range of views held by respondents. For example, the amount of flexibility in the current drafts was praised by some and questioned by others; some made comments such as *“give specific outcomes for teachers to follow. The main problem with broad-based outcomes would be interpretation of those outcomes and a consistency throughout the province.”* (OF307) This is in contrast to those who made comments such as *“now there is some flexibility to help us better personalize learning.”* (OF133)

Reflecting the rich and diverse responses received, the Ministry and curriculum development teams will need to ensure that they make edits and revisions as best they can to accommodate or strike a balance among the range of views in the feedback. Following are the key actions that will be taken during the next phase of development.

### Ministry

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Ministry staff will consult with the curriculum development teams as well as other individuals and groups to address the suggestions and concerns that emerged during the recent response phase. Each of the review summaries above began with what respondents saw as positive features of each curriculum draft. In any development, what is liked and appreciated needs to be kept in mind while making changes so that, in fixing one problem, we do not create another.

The following are the key actions that the Ministry will take:

- ▶ Make clear the research and theory behind BC’s concept-based, competency-driven curriculum. In the process, make evident the connections among the big ideas, curricular competencies, and content so that educators can better understand how the elements are intended to work together.
- ▶ Provide examples to support teachers in using the new curriculum in a variety of learning environments (e.g., multi-grade, interdisciplinary).
- ▶ Provide additional information to make clear the audience, function, and progression (sequence) of big ideas, curricular competencies, and content.
- ▶ Make clear how the curriculum relates to the learning for English language learners and special needs learners.
- ▶ Make clear the role of core competencies within the renewed curriculum — including the relationships between the core competencies and:
  - the curricular competencies
  - assessment and communicating with parents
- ▶ Develop a strategy to support Aboriginal worldviews in the curriculum.
- ▶ Clarify the policies and future directions for the provision of learning resources.
- ▶ Clarify the future direction of assessment and communication of student learning.

## **All Curriculum Development Teams**

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All curriculum development teams will take the following actions:

- ▶ Ensure that learning standards and/or their extensions and examples support place-based learning. This applies particularly to Social Studies and Science curricula but relates as well to English Language Arts and Arts Education.
- ▶ Ensure that learning standards and big ideas support active, experiential learning in all grades and the transfer of learning across curriculum areas and to real-life applications.
- ▶ Ensure developmental appropriateness and content continuity across the grades.
- ▶ Identify key concepts throughout the curriculum to be developed from K to 12 and clarify how they develop through the grades.
- ▶ Ensure clarity in the learning standards by clarifying the intended breadth/depth of the content (e.g., provide more specificity in some learning standards through elaborations).
- ▶ Provide educational rationales for changes made in moving content to other grades.
- ▶ Make Aboriginal worldviews explicit in the content and curricular competencies, making clear what is unique within each grade.
- ▶ Provide supports, including instructional and assessment-related examples and cross-curricular learning suggestions (e.g., themes or concept-based examples).

## **English Language Arts Curriculum Development Team**

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The English Language Arts team will work on the actions for all curriculum development teams as well as those below, which are specific to the English Language Arts curriculum.

- ▶ Clearly define language arts by illustrating that the foundations of language and literacy development are evident.
- ▶ Provide more clarity and specificity in all grade levels by differentiating content learning standards by grade level.
- ▶ Refine the progressions of curricular competency learning standards within grade bands.

## **Mathematics Curriculum Development Team**

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The Mathematics team will work on the actions for all curriculum development teams as well as those below, which are specific to the Mathematics curriculum.

- ▶ Illustrate and highlight the foundations of mathematics.
- ▶ Reconsider the amount of content across all grades, giving particular attention to Grades 7 to 9.
- ▶ Determine how best to incorporate Aboriginal content/competencies in mathematics.

## ***Science Curriculum Development Team***

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The Science team will work on the actions for all curriculum development teams as well as those below, which are specific to Science.

- ▶ Better represent environmental understanding in the curriculum.
- ▶ Better align the learning standards with the rationale and goals that support place-based knowledge and First Peoples Principles of Learning .
- ▶ Review the effect of proposed changes on multi-grade classrooms and examine the linkages between grades.

## ***Social Studies Curriculum Development Team***

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The Social Studies team will work on the actions for all curriculum development teams as well as those below, which are specific to the Social Studies curriculum.

- ▶ Increase the focus on key content topics/thinking skills in geography, economics, and politics/civics.
- ▶ Review the K-9 topic sequence and reconsider changes made to the existing topic sequences, with two main issues in mind:
  - Reconsider the rationale for changes made to topics and sequences at all grades. In particular, reconsider the reduction of the global citizenship content that was in the existing Grade 6 curriculum and the addition of the content to the draft Grade 3 curriculum.
  - Review the effect of proposed changes on multi-grade classrooms and examine the linkages between grades.

## ***Arts Education Curriculum Development Team***

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The Arts Education team will work on the actions for all curriculum development teams as well as those below, which are specific to the Arts Education curriculum.

- ▶ Address any inconsistencies or omissions regarding the progression of the arts' principles and elements through the grades.
- ▶ Use elaborations or other strategies, as needed, to emphasize the uniqueness of the four disciplines.
- ▶ Consider if the four disciplines of Arts Education should be developed separately by Grade 8 or 9.

In summary, the Ministry has collaborated with many groups and individuals to co-construct provincial curriculum to make it future-focused and build on the many positive features of BC's current education system. Many thanks go out to those who have contributed thus far as well as to those who have put considerable effort into reviewing and suggesting improvements for the renewed curriculum. This collaboration is not over. The responses received during the development have confirmed that the time needed for co-construction is indeed worthwhile. This collaboration will need to continue as we move to the next steps.

# Next Steps

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All aspects of education transformation are underway and the curriculum development component of the education transformation continues to progress.

## **Winter 2014/15 Activities**

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- ▶ Continue development of Core French curriculum
- ▶ Continue the development of core competencies
- ▶ Post the proposed directions for curriculum in the graduation years
- ▶ Begin work on redesigning applied skills curricula
- ▶ Begin work on redesigning career education curricula
- ▶ Establish K-9 and 10-12 curriculum teams for the next round of activity
- ▶ Solicit further feedback for some areas (Physical and Health Education, Arts Education, Français langue première, and Français langue seconde — immersion) through targeted mechanisms

## **Winter/Spring 2015**

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- ▶ Teams of BC teachers will revise K-9 drafts based on the feedback received
- ▶ Teams of BC teachers and other educators will begin outlining the curriculum for the graduation years
- ▶ District teams will continue the development of core competencies
- ▶ Curriculum teams will explore classroom assessment strategies
- ▶ Further developments in provincial assessment will be forthcoming