

Lethbridge Herald: Eye on Education
A Glimpse at Alberta's Future Curriculum

At a spring conference of Alberta's school system leaders, author Michael Fullan asked, "Do you want your students to be good at school... or good at life?" Of course, our answer is *both*. In recent years in education, we have been talking about teaching for transfer: teaching deep understanding that students can draw on in contexts other than their classrooms. The world is changing and our access to quick facts and figures is as simple as, "Hey, Siri...?" In response, concept-based learning is about teaching deep understanding of big, transferable ideas which transcend time, place and situations.

Alberta's future curriculum will focus on making sense of the facts and the world around us rather than on facts that are often isolated and disconnected. This approach is designed to equip our students - and future workforce - with competencies including managing information, critical thinking, and collaboration.

The process for developing Alberta's new curriculum has been underway a number of years now. The former government began the process of "Curriculum Redesign" in 2011 and the Ministerial Order on Student Learning followed in May 2013. After the change in government, six subject disciplines were confirmed (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Wellness, & Fine Arts) and working groups comprised of teachers and post-secondary educators were established. This time last year, the draft scope and sequence documents for each subject were shared through face-to-face engagement sessions and via an online survey. Scope and sequence outlines the high level overview of *what students will learn* and *when (what grade) they will learn it*, mapping from Kindergarten all the way through Grade 12.

While the draft curriculum for each of the six subject disciplines is still under development, we do know a good deal about how it has been organized and the intent of how it will be used. Having all six subject areas developed at the same time will create lots of opportunity for cross-curricular planning. The programs of study will be released in three phases: Early Years (Kindergarten to Gr 4), Middle Years (Gr. 5-8), and the Older Years (Gr. 9-10 and 11-12). The next milestone we look forward to is when the Minister of Education authorizes the first full curriculum in these six subjects from Kindergarten to Grade 4 by the end of 2018. As educators, we continue to look for ways create deep learning opportunities and shape students who are both good at school and at life.

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