

DATE: November 30, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Kusiek

SUBJECT: Advocacy Regarding New Curriculum

REFERENCE: [Education Act, section 16 and 18](#)
[Alberta Draft K-6 Curriculum](#)
[June 23, 2020 Motion re: Anti-Racism and Curriculum Design](#)
[April 27, 2021 Motion re: Proposed Resolutions for ASBA General Meeting](#)
[June 8, 2021 Board Chair comments](#) on importance of word “rewrite”
[November 15, 2021 ASBA Fall General Meeting Emergent Motion](#)
[May 20, 2021 Letter to Minister of Education to halt piloting of curriculum](#)
[Alberta Government Feedback Survey Link on Proposed Curriculum](#)

ISSUE

Trustee Kusiek served notice of motion at the November 9, 2021, public Board meeting to affirm the position of Edmonton Public School Board in regard to the proposed K-6 provincial curriculum.

BACKGROUND

The Edmonton Public School Board has been a steadfast advocate regarding Alberta’s K-6 curriculum. With the recent October 18, 2021, municipal election, seven of the nine Trustees are new to the Board. During the election period, several elected Trustees committed to continue to advocate for a better K-6 curriculum draft. It is important to affirm that the intent and direction of the Edmonton Public School Board’s position regarding the proposed K-6 curriculum has not changed post-election.

RELATED FACTS

Edmonton Public School Board Trustees have taken several advocacy positions on the proposed K-6 curriculum, including:

- Supporting not piloting the draft, alongside 58 of 61 public school divisions
- A motion to embed anti-racism throughout the K-6 curriculum (June 23, 2020)
- Letter to the Minister of Education to halt piloting of draft curriculum (May 20, 2021)
- A resolution to the Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) General Meeting for a non-confidence vote in the proposed K-6 curriculum and a call for a rewrite (April 27, 2021).
 - The word “rewrite” was removed from the approved resolution through discussion at ASBA, and it was amended to emphasize a delay, a review and further engagement.
- Supporting a position resolution from St. Albert Public Schools at the Fall 2021 ASBA General Meeting that environmental literacy and competencies be integrated, across all grades and subjects, into the Alberta K-12 curriculum
- Putting forward an emergent resolution at the November 15, 2021, ASBA Fall General Meeting regarding the curriculum, which was passed. That motion is immediately below.

Given that school boards across Alberta wish to collaborate with the Minister of Education and all stakeholders to leave a legacy of quality curriculum for our students;

And given that our provincial curriculum should prepare our students for post-secondary studies and the workplace by providing experiences that move learners beyond acquiring facts into learners who are engaged students, agile thinkers, and creative problem solvers for the 21st century;

And given that successful implementation of the new curriculum across Kindergarten to Grade 6, will require a range of supports and resources, including:

- quality student resources aligned to curricular outcomes;*
- professional learning opportunities for teachers to understand the new architecture and design;*
- provision and creation of supporting documents needed to understand the new curriculum (e.g., glossaries, illustrative examples, guides to implementation, etc.); and*
- a robust pilot of the new curriculum with opportunities to make refinements through a transparent stakeholder feedback process and field testing of quality assessments to support student learning;*

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the ASBA advocate to the provincial government that recommended stakeholder revisions to the curriculum be included and released in a second draft in the Spring of 2022, be piloted, field tested and reviewed by stakeholder groups for two years;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, this feedback will include robust engagement with teachers, curriculum experts, subject area experts, parents, Indigenous leaders, francophone leaders, and other key stakeholders including the business community. The feedback gathered will also help inform the phased implementation of the new curriculum beginning in September 2024.

Provincial government timelines regarding implementation of the proposed K-6 curriculum continue to adjust and more feedback is being gathered. A survey is open to the public to provide feedback until spring 2022. Currently, full implementation of all subjects is scheduled for fall 2022.

Community members continue to express their concern over the proposed draft curriculum and process, and have expressed the following:

- A call for a curriculum rewrite
- A desire that some subjects be implemented ahead of others
- Concern over the significant human resource and professional development investments in a very short time should all subjects be implemented at once
- Timing the implementation during the global pandemic, which is still presenting significant impacts on the ability to consistently deliver K-6 instruction

RECOMMENDATION

That the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees affirm advocacy for:

- **anti-racism to be embedded within the K-6 curriculum**
- **environmental and climate change literacy and competencies to be embedded within the K-6 curriculum**
- **a delay in implementing the proposed K-6 curriculum, to be preceded by two years of piloting and field testing**
- **piloting to begin only after the current proposed draft K-6 curriculum has been significantly reviewed and rewritten where necessary, using the advice and feedback of current teachers, curriculum and subject-area experts, Indigenous leaders, francophone leaders and parents**

- transparency in the feedback received by the government and how that feedback was incorporated into the revised draft; specifically, how the feedback of teachers, curriculum and subject-area experts, parents, Indigenous leaders, francophone leaders and other key stakeholders such as employers were incorporated
- phased implementation beginning no earlier than September 2024

OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Approve the recommendation as presented.
2. Provide feedback on desired changes to the recommendation and ask that the revised recommendation be brought to a future meeting.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

Option 1 is consistent with the positions the Edmonton Public School Board of Trustees has taken since the release of the draft K-6 curriculum. Advocating for a significant rewrite prior to piloting is consistent with previous motions served by the Board of Trustees. Advocating for a delay is also consistent and recognizes the challenges of implementing a new curriculum during a global pandemic.

There are no significant disadvantages to affirming advocacy on the proposed K-6 curriculum as presented. School boards across Alberta are taking a similar approach and Edmonton Public Schools is reflecting what we have heard from parents, community members, stakeholders and curriculum experts.

This affirmation of advocacy provides a positive path forward, whereby we are moving towards an updated curriculum that will nurture learners into acquiring not only facts but also into becoming engaged students, lifelong learners and problem solvers. The Edmonton Public School Board of Trustees believes that before any draft or revised curriculum is introduced into Edmonton classrooms, feedback from current teachers, curriculum and subject-area experts, Indigenous leaders, francophone leaders and parents needs to be incorporated and accounted for.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, the Board Chair will write to the Minister of Education providing information on each of these points of advocacy. This letter should emphasize EPSB's desire for a new curriculum and our wish to work collaboratively with the Minister on moving towards a curriculum we can all be proud of.

JK:km