

DATE: January 23, 2018

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Locally Developed Course to Address Contemporary Problems (Response to Request for Information #004)

ORIGINATOR: Ron MacNeil, Assistant Superintendent, Mike Suderman, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE STAFF: Janice Aubry, Laurie Houston, Sean Jones, Gail Wozny

REFERENCE: November 7, 2017 Board meeting (Trustee Gibson)
[Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12, 2017-2018](#)
[Locally Developed Courses: A Guide for Schools](#)
[Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Program of Studies](#)
[Advanced Governance and Public Policy 15-25-35](#)
[Community Marketplace Pilot](#)
[The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum \(Programs of Study\)](#)
[Ministerial Order on Student Learning \(#001/2013\)](#)

ISSUE

The following information was requested:

That Administration offers an opinion on the value of a locally developed course with the following characteristics, and if there is value, the steps to undertake such development which would:

1. Provide an opportunity for students to extend the social studies curriculum to discuss contemporary problems facing Edmonton, Alberta and Canada that affect the future of District students in support of Edmonton Public Schools District Priorities 1, 2 and 3.
2. Assist students to hone critical thinking skills and supports Ministerial Order on Student Learning #001/2013 in preparing for life beyond school in support of Edmonton Public Schools District Priority 1.
3. Offers an opportunity to engage speakers from outside the Edmonton Public Schools school community, including residents and community organizations in support of Edmonton Public Schools Priority 3.
4. Is more widely accessible than offerings through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.

BACKGROUND

Locally developed courses (LDCs) are courses that are either District-developed or acquired from other school authorities in order to provide students with learning opportunities that complement, extend and/or expand upon provincial programs of study. All LDCs must emphasize the extension of learning offered to students beyond the scope of existing LDCs or provincial programs of study. As stated in the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12, 2017-2018*, when considering the need for a new LDC, it must be

determined “whether or not existing LDCs or provincially authorized courses could be used to address the identified need” (pg. 64).

Any proposal for a new LDC must identify existing LDCs or provincial programs of study that overlap with the proposed LDC, and provide a detailed rationale as to why a new LDC is necessary. As well, LDCs cannot replace activities that are a normal part of extracurricular or co-curricular programs run by schools or community programs offered either by individuals or organizations.

CURRENT SITUATION

It is the opinion of Administration that there is significant value of a course with the identified characteristics. However, such an LDC would currently overlap with the Alberta *Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12* Program of Studies and several current locally developed courses. As well, the identified content is currently incorporated into other subject areas, including English Language Arts.

Administration obtained informal feedback from Alberta Education that the described content appears to have extensive overlap with existing curricula and that a high school LDC would therefore not be provincially authorized. Examples of areas of overlap are identified below:

1. Provincial Programs of Study

The Alberta *Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12* Program of Studies takes an issues-focused approach to social studies. Using this approach, students are given opportunities to develop and use active inquiry and critical thinking skills. In the Alberta *Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12* Program of Studies (pg. 6), the philosophy regarding current affairs states:

“An issues-focused approach that incorporates multiple perspectives and current affairs helps students apply problem-solving and decision-making skills to real-life and controversial issues.

In order to allow opportunities for students to engage in current affairs, issues and concerns of a local nature, the program of studies provides the flexibility to include these topics within the time allotted for social studies.

Opportunities may include:

- current events in local communities
- issues with local, provincial, national and/or global relevance
- cultural celebrations
- visits from dignitaries
- special events”

There are numerous specific learning outcomes reflecting critical thinking and contemporary issues in the Alberta *Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12* Program of Studies (see the identified outcomes in Social Studies 10-1/20-1/30-1 in Attachment I; similar outcomes also exist in Social Studies 10-2/20-2/30-2, for example).

2. Existing Locally Developed Courses

- a. Advanced Governance and Public Policy 15-25-35 has specific learning outcomes that require students to engage in the detailed analysis of contemporary social issues and public policy. Students examine leadership in the contexts of understanding governance structures

within public, private and voluntary sectors, and public policy and societal issues in various communities.

- b. Speech and Debate 15 requires students to examine current issues and become adept at discussing various perspectives on the issues of local, national and global interest.

3. Future Curriculum

Currently, Alberta Education is developing new provincial curriculum which will reflect the Ministerial Order on Student Learning (#001/2013). It is anticipated that several of the identified characteristics will be strengthened in the new curricula. For example, in *The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum (Programs of Study)*, it states that a key consideration for the design and development of new curriculum is that “[t]eachers and students need to be able to make connections within and outside the school or the subject; provincial curriculum must therefore be created to allow for these connections to emerge” (pg. 5).

As well, resources are available for all schools to engage speakers from outside the District in both face-to-face and technology-mediated environments. For example, the Community Marketplace is a Career Pathways pilot project whose goal is to establish relationships with parents and a variety of community partners in business, industry, civil society. These partners are then available to provide engaging learning opportunities for District students. At present, the Community Marketplace focuses on teacher-facilitated, in-class interactions between community representatives and students. These sessions are designed as hands-on explorations of specific career pathways that are intended to provide students with a broader perspective and exposure to the many opportunities available in their futures. Currently, there are 40 teachers participating in this project. Students in schools across the District also engage in videoconference opportunities to learn from external experts about current issues that have local, provincial, Canadian and often global impacts.

KEY POINTS

- The Administration recognizes the significant value of a course with the identified characteristics.
- Based on the description provided, such an LDC would overlap significantly with existing curricula; a high school LDC would therefore not be authorized by Alberta Education.
- There are currently opportunities for students in many schools across the District to explore social issues and access guest speakers, for face-to-face learning and for learning through technology-mediated interactions.
- New provincial curriculum may contain more outcomes related to the proposed content, and may provide more opportunities for making connections to emergent social issues.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Specific Learning Outcomes in Social Studies 10-12 Program of Studies:
Contemporary Issues and Critical Thinking

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**Sample Specific Learning Outcomes in Social Studies 10-1, 20-1 and 30-1 Program of Studies:
Contemporary Issues and Critical Thinking**

Course/Grade	Specific Outcomes	
Social Studies 10-1		
	1.1	acknowledge and appreciate the existence of multiple perspectives in a globalizing world
	1.2	appreciate why peoples in Canada and other locations strive to promote their cultures, languages and identities in a globalizing world
	1.3	appreciate how identities and cultures shape, and are shaped by, globalization
	1.4	explore ways in which individuals and collectives express identities (traditions, language, religion, spirituality, the arts, attire, relationship to land, ideological beliefs, role modelling)
	1.5	explore understandings and dimensions of globalization (political, economic, social, other contemporary examples)
	1.6	examine the impact of communications technology and media on diversity (universalization of pop culture, hybridization, diversification)
	1.7	analyze opportunities presented by globalization to identities and cultures (acculturation, accommodation, cultural revitalization, affirmation of identity, integration)
	1.8	analyze challenges presented by globalization to identities and cultures (assimilation, marginalization, accommodation, integration, homogenization)
	1.9	evaluate efforts to promote languages and cultures in a globalizing world (language laws, linguistic rights, cultural content legislation, cultural revitalization, linguistic revitalization)
	2.2	exhibit a global consciousness with respect to the human condition
	2.3	accept social responsibilities associated with global citizenship
	2.11	analyze contemporary global issues that have origins in policies and practices of post-colonial governments in Canada and other locations (consequences of residential schools, social impact on Indigenous peoples, loss of Indigenous languages, civil strife)
	2.12	evaluate various attempts to address consequences of imperialist policies and practices on Indigenous peoples in Canada and other locations
	2.13	examine legacies of historical globalization and imperialism that continue to influence globalization
	3.1	recognize and appreciate multiple perspectives that exist with respect to the relationships among politics, economics, the environment and globalization
	3.2	recognize and appreciate impacts of globalization on the interdependent relationships among people, the economy and the environment
	3.3	explore understandings of contemporary economic globalization
	3.6	analyze political and economic challenges and opportunities of globalization (trade liberalization, foreign investment, economic growth, privatization, outsourcing, knowledge economy)
	3.7	explore multiple perspectives regarding the relationship among people,

		the land and globalization (spirituality, stewardship, sustainability, resource development)
	3.9	analyze multiple perspectives on sustainability and prosperity in a globalizing world
	4.1	recognize and appreciate the impact of globalization on the quality of life of individuals and communities
	4.2	recognize and appreciate the importance of human rights in determining quality of life
	4.3	accept political, social and environmental responsibilities associated with global citizenship
	4.4	explore various understandings of quality of life
	4.5	analyze impacts of globalization on children and youth (awareness of global issues, employment issues, identity)
	4.6	analyze impacts of globalization on women (gender issues, labour issues, opportunities for entrepreneurship)
	4.7	evaluate relationships between globalization and democratization and human rights
	4.8	analyze how globalization affects individuals and communities (migration, technology, agricultural issues, pandemics, resource issues, contemporary issues)
	4.9	explore multiple perspectives regarding the civic responsibilities that individuals, governments, organizations and businesses may have in addressing opportunities and challenges presented by globalization
	4.10	evaluate means by which individuals, governments, organizations and businesses could address opportunities and challenges of globalization (pro-globalization activism, anti-globalization activism, legislation, agreements, consumer activism, corporate responsibility)
	4.11	develop strategies to demonstrate active, responsible global citizenship
Social Studies 20-1		
	1.3	appreciate how the forces of nationalism have shaped, and continue to shape, Canada and the world
	1.6	develop understandings of nation and nationalism (relationship to land, geographic, collective, civic, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, political, spiritual, religious, patriotic)
	1.10	evaluate the importance of reconciling contending nationalist loyalties (Canadian nationalism, First Nations and Métis nationalism, ethnic nationalism in Canada, civic nationalism in Canada, Québécois nationalism, Inuit perspectives on nationalism)
	2.1	appreciate that nations and states pursue national interest
	2.2	appreciate that the pursuit of national interest has positive and negative consequences
	2.3	appreciate multiple perspectives related to the pursuit of national interest
	2.9	analyze impacts of the pursuit of national self-determination (successor states; decolonization; Québécois nationalism and sovereignty movement; First Nations, Métis and Inuit self-government; contemporary examples)
	3.1	appreciate that nations and states engage in regional and global affairs for a variety of reasons

	3.2	appreciate the impacts of nation and state involvement in regional and global affairs on individual and collective identities
	3.3	demonstrate a global consciousness with respect to the human condition and global affairs
	3.4	analyze the motives of nation and state involvement or noninvolvement in international affairs (economic stability, self-determination, peace, security, humanitarianism)
	3.5	explore understandings of internationalism
	3.6	analyze how internationalism can be promoted through foreign policy (multilateralism, supranationalism, peacekeeping, foreign aid, international law and agreements)
	3.7	evaluate the extent to which selected organizations promote internationalism (United Nations, World Council of Indigenous Peoples, European Union, l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Arctic Council, contemporary examples)
	3.8	analyze impacts of the pursuit of internationalism in addressing contemporary global issues (conflict, poverty, debt, disease, environment, human rights)
	3.9	evaluate the extent to which nationalism must be sacrificed in the interest of internationalism
	4.1	appreciate historical and contemporary attempts to develop a national identity
	4.2	appreciate contrasting historical and contemporary narratives associated with national identity
	4.3	respect the views of others on alternative visions of national identity
	4.4	explore multiple perspectives on national identity in Canada
	4.5	analyze methods used by individuals, groups and governments in Canada to promote a national identity (symbolism, mythology, institutions, government programs and initiatives)
	4.7	evaluate the challenges and opportunities associated with the promotion of Canadian national unity (Québec sovereignty, federal–provincial–territorial relations, Aboriginal self-determination and land claims, bilingualism, multiculturalism)
	4.8	evaluate various perspectives of future visions of Canada (pluralism, multination model, separatism, Aboriginal self-determination, global leadership, North American integration)
	4.9	develop personal and collective visions of national identity
Social Studies 30-1		
	1.1	appreciate various perspectives regarding identity and ideology
	1.2	appreciate various perspectives regarding the relationship between individualism and common good
	1.3	explore factors that may influence individual and collective beliefs and values (culture, language, media, relationship to land, environment, gender, religion, spirituality, ideology)
	1.4	examine historic and contemporary expressions of individualism and collectivism
	1.5	examine the characteristics of ideology (interpretations of history, beliefs

		about human nature, beliefs about the structure of society, visions for the future)
	1.6	explore themes of ideologies (nation, class, relationship to land, environment, religion, progressivism)
	1.7	analyze individualism as a foundation of ideology (principles of liberalism: individual rights and freedoms, self-interest, competition, economic freedom, rule of law, private property)
	1.8	analyze collectivism as a foundation of ideology (principles of collectivism: collective responsibility, collective interest, cooperation, economic equality, adherence to collective norms, public property)
	1.9	analyze the dynamic between individualism and common good in contemporary societies
	1.10	evaluate the extent to which personal identity should be shaped by ideologies
	2.1	appreciate Aboriginal contributions to the development of ideologies
	2.2	appreciate how citizens and citizenship are impacted by the promotion of ideological principles
	2.3	appreciate that individuals and groups may adhere to various ideologies
	2.11	analyze perspectives on the imposition of the principles of liberalism (Aboriginal experiences, contemporary events)
	2.12	analyze the extent to which modern liberalism is challenged by alternative thought (Aboriginal collective thought, environmentalism, religious perspectives, neo-conservatism, postmodernism extremism)
	2.13	evaluate the extent to which resistance to the principles of liberalism is justified
	3.1	appreciate various perspectives regarding the viability of the principles of liberalism
	3.2	appreciate various perspectives regarding the promotion of liberalism within political and economic systems
	3.3	explore the extent to which governments should reflect the will of the people
	3.4	explore the extent to which governments should encourage economic equality
	3.5	analyze the extent to which the practices of political and economic systems reflect principles of liberalism (consensus decision making, direct and representative democracies, authoritarian political systems, traditional economies, free market economies, command economies, mixed economies)
	3.6	analyze the extent to which liberal democracies reflect illiberal thought and practice (Canada, contemporary examples)
	3.7	analyze why the practices of governments may not reflect principles of liberalism
	3.8	evaluate the extent to which governments should promote individual and collective rights (American Bill of Rights; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms; First Nations, Métis and Inuit rights; language legislation; emergencies and security legislation)

	3.9	evaluate the extent to which the principles of liberalism are viable in the context of contemporary issues (environment concerns, resource use and development, debt and poverty, racism, pandemics, terrorism, censorship, illiberalism)
	4.1	appreciate the relationship between citizenship and leadership
	4.2	exhibit a global consciousness with respect to the human condition and world issues
	4.3	accept responsibilities associated with individual and collective citizenship
	4.4	explore the relationship between personal and collective worldviews and ideology
	4.5	explore how ideologies shape individual and collective citizenship
	4.6	analyze perspectives on the rights, roles and responsibilities of the individual in a democratic society (respect for law and order, dissent, civility, political participation, citizen advocacy)
	4.7	analyze perspectives on the rights, roles and responsibilities of the individual during times of conflict (humanitarian crises, civil rights movements, antiwar movements, McCarthyism, pro- democracy movements, contemporary examples)
	4.8	evaluate the extent to which ideology should shape responses to contemporary issues
	4.9	develop strategies to address local, national and global issues that demonstrate individual and collective leadership
	4.10	explore opportunities to demonstrate active and responsible citizenship through individual and collective action