



## Parent Information About the New Alberta Social Studies Curriculum

### *Why are Multiple Perspectives Important?*

One of the goals of the Social Studies program is to foster understanding of the roles and contributions of linguistic, cultural and ethnic groups in Canada. Students learn about themselves in relation to others. Social Studies helps students to function as citizens in a society that values diversity and unity.

A key component of effective social organizations, communities and institutions is the recognition of diversity of experiences and perspectives. Social Studies emphasizes how diversity and differences are assets that enrich our lives. Students will have opportunities to value diversity, to positively recognize differences and to be aware of the changing nature of individual identities.

Social Studies addresses diversity and social unity and provides processes that students can use to work out differences, drawing on the strengths of diversity. These processes include:

- a commitment to respecting differences
- an understanding and appreciation for shared values
- a respect for democratic principles and decision-making processes

Diversity contributes to the development of a democratic society and historically has been an important asset in the evolution of Canadian society. Some key expressions of this diversity include:

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures
- official bilingualism
- immigration
- multiculturalism

Awareness of diversity is essential for fostering social unity in a pluralistic society. Social unity is a process that requires the development of the relationships within and among communities. Social unity is manifested by respect for:

- individual and collective rights
- civic responsibilities
- shared values
- democracy
- rule of law
- diversity

#### **When discussing issues with your child, explore different points of view:**

- What is the question or issue?
- Who are the people giving their opinions?
- What are the different opinions?
- Which opinions do you agree with, and why?
- Which opinions do you disagree with, and why?
- What is your opinion? Why?

#### **Or perspectives:**

- What perspective is being shared?
- What group of people holds that perspective?
- What might explain why they hold that perspective?

The Alberta Social Studies curriculum is built around core principles of citizenship and identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In classrooms throughout Alberta, students will critically examine and analyze important issues and concepts while they consider aboriginal, francophone and multiple perspectives from both the present and the past. This newsletter article is produced by the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium in cooperation with the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia as a result of a grant from Alberta Education to support implementation of Social Studies.

