



## Parent Information About the New Alberta Social Studies Curriculum

### Social Studies and Aboriginal Perspectives and Experiences

The new K to 12 Social Studies program focuses on individual and group beliefs and worldviews. The curriculum is enriched with past and contemporary insight into our Aboriginal peoples.

With Aboriginal perspectives woven into the curriculum, students recognize the importance of oral tradition, community and family. The exploration of the role of Elders and community enhance the curriculum and provide students with an authentic perspective of the traditional and contemporary Aboriginal way of life. This integration helps all students develop an understanding of and respect for the history, cultures, contemporary issues, contributions and accomplishments of Aboriginal peoples. The presence of Aboriginal role models from past to present promotes citizenship and instills a sense of respect for diversity.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES AND ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES

For historical and constitutional reasons, an understanding of Canada requires an understanding:

- of Aboriginal perspectives
- of Aboriginal experiences
- that Aboriginal students have particular needs and requirements.

Central to Aboriginal identity are languages and cultures that link each group with its physical world, worldviews and traditions. The role of Elders and community leaders is essential in this linkage.

The social studies program of studies provides learning opportunities that contribute to the development of self-esteem and identity in Aboriginal students by:

- promoting and encouraging a balanced and holistic individual and strengthening individual capacity
- honouring and valuing the traditions, concepts and symbols that are the expression of their identity

- providing opportunities for students to express who they are with confidence as they interact and engage with others
- contributing to the development of active and responsible members of groups and communities.

*Alberta K-12 Social Studies Program of Studies (2005)*

#### How can parents help their children develop a better understanding of Aboriginal Perspectives?

- Finding out what Aboriginal events are happening in your community through the Aboriginal Friendship Centers and getting involved
- Participating in *National Aboriginal Day* (June 21) celebrations in your community
- Visit LearnAlberta website to listen to Aboriginal Elders and cultural experts from various First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives.
- Visit an Aboriginal site to experience histories and contributions within Alberta and Canada, i.e, Fort Edmonton, Blackfoot Crossing, Métis Crossing, Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump.

#### Other Resources:

- Library & Archives: Aboriginal Peoples <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aborigin-al-peoples/index-e.html>
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada – Kids' Stop <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ach/lr/ks/index-eng.asp>
- Aboriginal Perspectives – Resources for Social Studies <http://aboriginaleducation.epsb.ca/services.html>
- Resources available at <http://www.learnalberta.ca/>

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.

