

Parent Information About the New Alberta Social Studies Curriculum

Why is the Francophone Perspective Important to the New Social Studies Curriculum?

Alberta's Francophone Heritage

The Francophone heritage in Alberta dates back to the early days of the fur trade when the Montreal traders came to the Northwest region in search of business opportunities. The voyageurs married Cree women and the first Francophone communities, Métis communities, were created. Christian missionary orders (Roman Catholic Francophones) came and were followed by Francophone settlers. In this process, which continued for over 200 years, important contributions were made to the settlement of the West and the founding of the province.

Why is the Francophone perspective important to the new Social Studies curriculum?

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

- of Francophone perspectives
- of Francophone experiences
- that Francophone students have particular needs.

Social Studies play a central role in successful Francophone education in Alberta. Francophone schools are a central point of the Francophone community. They meet the needs of parents by ensuring the vitality of the community. For students enrolled in Francophone schools, the Social Studies program will:

- strengthen Francophone self-esteem and identity
- encourage students to actively contribute to the flourishing of Francophone culture, families and communities
- promote partnerships among the home, community and business world

- engage students in participating in the bilingual and multicultural nature of Canada.
Alberta K-12 Social Studies Program of Studies (2005)

The Francophone Community

Francophones are important contributors to Canadian history, identity, and culture. Francophone communities in western and northern Canada seek to participate fully in Canadian society and believe that their continuity affects the course of Canadian history and is of positive value to Canadian society. A partnership of school, family, and community is vital to Francophone education; Francophone communities must be communities of learners in order to continue to evolve. Programs must, therefore, support learning within the home and the community, as well as within the school.

Adaptation for French Immersion

The goals of the French Immersion program are to help students reach functional proficiency in French and to develop an appreciation and an understanding of diverse cultures of Francophones.

French Immersion students are expected to achieve the same Social Studies outcomes as those in an English language program by the end of their elementary years. At the same time, through French Language Arts, Social Studies, and other subjects, they are expected to develop a better comprehension and appreciation of the cultures of Francophones in Canada and the world.

The Alberta Social Studies curriculum is built around core principles of citizenship and identity in the 21st 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.

