

Alberta's curriculum – The FCSFA's position

Press Release For immediate distribution

April 23, 2021 – Alberta's curriculum – The FCSFA's position

Following, you will find the position of the Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta (FCSFA) regarding the draft Alberta curriculum. In the week of April 12th, all four francophone boards took, independently, the decision not to pilot the proposed curriculum.

A key consideration is that, in its current form, the curriculum does not correspond to the mandate of francophone education. We noted that the francophone perspectives, such as cultural identity, the sense of belonging to the community and the contributions of francophones in today's society, do not seem to meet the expectations and needs of our students.

In the document **Affirming Francophone Education, foundations and directions**, it is stated that: *"Clearly, the francophone school must be an establishment whose pillars are language, identity, culture and community integration."* This document also describes very well the double mandate of Francophone education: *"One is to provide a schooling experience built around francophone language, culture and community as provided for under section 23 of the Charter". "The other aspect of the mandate is to help correct the linguistic and cultural erosion suffered by students and the community in a predominantly English milieu."*

Furthermore, in the Ministerial Order on Students' Learning, it is stated that: *"All students will see themselves, their families and their communities in the curriculum, with space in the curriculum for the study of local traditions, history and geography, including Alberta's Francophone history."* We feel that the Français and Social Studies programs of studies do not go far enough to demonstrate the diversity, the inclusion and the vitality of the current francophone community.

On the piloting question, the challenges brought on by the pandemic also played a role in the boards' decision. Under the current situation, it did not seem reasonable to add this responsibility to our teachers' workload.

The efforts of the ministry to ensure that the program of studies would be available at the same time in French than in English are appreciated. On the other hand, the translation work which followed the development process of this curriculum in English should have included some adaptation work. It is essential to recognize that a translation in French does not have the same value as the original version.

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The FCSFA and the francophone school boards had offered many times to collaborate with Alberta Education in the development process of this program of studies. In a letter to Minister LaGrange, the Federation reiterated our will to continue working with Alberta Education to develop a curriculum that will better answer the needs and specificities of our francophone schools. The boards are committed to perform a thorough analysis of the program of studies and to share their findings with the ministry. To begin with, the working committee will concentrate its efforts in reviewing the Français, Social Studies and Music programs.

As well, the FCSFA's board members will be meeting shortly with the Education Minister to discuss suggestions to make the francophones boards' feedback as meaningful and productive as possible. During that meeting, the FCSFA will also discuss the elimination of the French Language Branch within Alberta Education and the negative repercussions that this decision has had on the services offered to support Francophone students.

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