



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

## Overview to BC's Curriculum Transformation Plans

### What is curriculum?

Curriculum defines for teachers what students are expected to learn and be able to demonstrate in their grade or course of study. It is an essential tool in providing consistency of educational experience and achievement for every student in B.C.

### Why does it need to change?

Educators say the current curriculum has too many objectives to cover and with so many objectives it can in some ways restrict student learning. Moreover, its highly prescriptive nature puts it at odds with the vision of a more personalized learning experience set out in BC's Education Plan.

Similarly, it tends to focus on teaching children factual content rather than concepts and processes – emphasizing what they learn over how they learn, which is exactly the opposite of what modern education should strive to do. In today's technology-enabled world, students have virtually instant access to a limitless amount of information. The greater value of education for every student is not in learning the information but in learning the skills they need to successfully find, consume, think about and apply it in their lives.

Naturally there is important value in a consistent provincial curriculum. The challenge, however, is to ensure it actually enables rather than impedes an effective educational experience for B.C. students. This recognition is the impetus for the work now underway to dramatically overhaul B.C.'s curriculum.

### How is it changing?

Drawing on extensive research and ongoing consultations with educators across the province, the Ministry of Education is in the midst of redesigning a new and more effective curriculum that fits with the education system we need for B.C. students in today's world.

While the work is ongoing, the approach is to:

- Reduce the volume and prescriptiveness of the current curricula while still ensuring a consistent focus on the essential elements of learning.
- Allow teachers and students the flexibility to personalize their learning experience to better meet each student's individual strengths and needs.
- Focus less on imparting facts and the information-based details of what needs to be learned and more on the "big ideas" or concepts that students need to master to succeed in their education and their lives.

This does not mean that the current curriculum is of no value. Much of the essence of it will remain intact. For example, there will continue to be an emphasis in primary grades on the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy. And subjects such as math, science, language arts and social studies will remain at the heart of every student's education. But with the improved curriculum students will be able to develop a deeper understanding of those subjects and their fundamental concepts. And assessment and reporting of student success will also continue, albeit in ways that reflect the new curriculum, to allow students, parents and teachers to track progress.

### **What is the benefit?**

With the improved curriculum, students will have increased opportunities to gain the essential learning and life skills necessary to live and work successfully in a complex, interconnected, and rapidly changing world. Students will focus on acquiring skills to help them use knowledge critically and creatively, to solve problems ethically and collaboratively, and to make the decisions necessary to succeed in our increasingly globalized world.

Ultimately, both students and society will benefit from the changes underway.

For more details on these changes, see: *Enabling Innovation: Transforming Curriculum and Assessment*.