

## **Guiding Principles of a Modernized Curriculum**

Modernizing curriculum in Ontario is about ensuring that every child in Ontario has the opportunity to succeed and contribute in a complex and rapidly-changing world regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances.

Fundamental shifts in education are occurring globally. Students today have instant access to factual information on multiple digital platforms, which means they must also become discerning and critical thinkers who are able to process, analyze and use this knowledge for action. In an increasingly interconnected world, students and educators need to be agile, flexible and able to work collaboratively with diverse groups locally and afar.

- Change isn't just about "new". It's about retaining the best of what we're currently doing, letting go of some things and incorporating what we collectively believe to be best for our students today and in the future.
- Ontario's students need environments and programs that reflect a modern world that will support and prepare them to achieve their full potential in school, as engaged citizens and to lead happy and productive lives, ready to contribute to society.
- Honouring the recommendations of the *Truth and Reconciliation Report* and responding to the calls to action. Curriculum modernization will be co-developed with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit partners; uphold Indigenous ways of learning and knowing; and will enable First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities to fully participate in the education of their children.
- A modernized curriculum will integrate equity, inclusivity and well-being throughout the development and implementation processes and recognize and address systemic bias and barriers, ensuring that physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual health are fundamental aspects and not add-ons.
- Curriculum within publically-funded education must reflect the commonality of values, strengths and needs of Ontarians with consistent core learning outcomes while allowing flexibility to honour the distinct identities of Ontario's four publically-funded school systems to address local student, community, school board priorities. Students, parents, the public, trustees as well as all educational professionals must see themselves in and have voice within the public education curriculum.
- Effective development and implementation process to ensure the time, resources and supports are in place, and a cyclical review processes.

## **Equity, Well-Being and Success for all Students**

- The purpose of modernizing the Ontario curriculum is to meet the needs of all students, to support conditions for improved teaching and learning, and address challenges and needs to build on the diverse strengths, interests, identities and abilities of all learners.
- Focus on stages of child development that support differentiation and meet the developmental needs of each learner to honour the whole child.
- Ensure that responsiveness to student strengths, interests and exceptionalities is a fundamental quality of the curriculum rather than an add-on.
- Strengthen inclusive, culturally responsive and relevant teaching, learning, assessment and resources to ensure the curriculum supports and promotes equity and well-being.
- Inclusion of multiple and diverse perspectives that reflect our pluralistic society, to prepare students to be engaged citizens, and ensure flexibility and consideration of geographical and socio-economic realities.

### **Learner Knowledge, Skills and Competencies**

- Clearly define and understand competencies and skills so that they can be effectively integrated into curriculum. Competencies and skills will not be reported on in isolation. Rather they are assessed, evaluated and reported on within the curriculum.
- Recognize that the needs of learners are diverse and the need to support all learners in the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need to become informed, productive, empathetic, responsible and active citizens in their own communities and in their world.
- Align cross-curricular big ideas and skills with subject-specific goals and content at developmentally appropriate levels so that students are prepared to meet the changing demands of today's and tomorrow's world of life, work and participation in society.
- Develop enhanced and contextualized communication and resources to support continued engagement, awareness and understanding among educators, students, parents and communities, including those we might not always reach.
- Research, best practices and other evidence are fundamental to successful transformation and implementation.

### **Connecting Curriculum Expectations – Addressing an Overloaded Curriculum**

- Identify the core elements and mandatory learning outcomes to reduce current curriculum expectations and connect the curriculum so that educators contextualize the content based on school and classroom needs.
- Particularly at the elementary level, reducing the number of curriculum expectations to allow teachers to respond to student needs, interests and strengths.
- Particularly at the secondary level, providing students sufficient opportunity to select a variety of courses and experiences.
- Strengthen existing staff and system capacity to foster flexibility and local priority setting that reflects the differences among learners, schools, school boards, systems and communities across Ontario.
- An essential purpose of the curriculum is to foster self-awareness, resiliency and life-long learning that prepare learners for meaningful lives in a complex and rapidly-changing world.

## **Pathways and Transitions**

- Promote and strengthen the viability of all pathways available to learners from kindergarten to post-secondary, and build awareness of the value in these pathways as meeting the needs of learners and communities.
- Support students and their families in understanding options for learning pathways throughout their education experience with focussed support and attention during times of transition.
- Identify and make recommendations to address issues and contributing factors through research and evidence to address the disproportionate representation of specific student groups in certain pathways
- Value experiential learning in and beyond the formal classroom to promote informed choices and opportunities relating to professions, trades and post-secondary learning.

## Priority Areas for Further Action

The Transformation Steering Committee has identified the following priority areas for further consideration and the development of recommendations:

1. Equity

The disproportionate numbers of students from marginalized groups in particular programs and pathways including but not limited to special education and applied and locally developed courses - with a focus on contributing factors and relevant solutions that include supports for students, parents and educators.

2. Balancing Consistency and Flexibility

The appropriate levels of province wide consistency in learning outcomes and programs with the need for professionals at the school, school board and system levels to address the needs, strengths and interests of students.

3. Assessment and Reporting

The alignment of assessment and reporting with a transformed curriculum including the timing of change within the context of the implementation sequence. This includes a consideration of the [\*Findings and Recommendations from the Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting\*](#).

4. Structure of the Curriculum

The nature and structure of curriculum including the balance between current traditional subject areas, emerging disciplines and effective integration across the curriculum. Such a review will consider the continuity and flow from early primary through to post-secondary.

5. Curriculum development, Co-Development, Implementation and Review Cycle

The timing of curriculum development and sequencing of changes to assessment and reporting. Develop an explicit implementation, development and review cycle that supports the roles of all parties throughout the process and the concept of “co-development” and connectivity between development and implementation.

6. Enhanced Parent and Community Connections

The need to build stronger connections and ongoing two-way communication among parents, communities, community organizations and the education system; including supports for more accessible and timely plain-language communication, informing impact on student outcomes of the modernized curriculum and increasing their awareness of and involvement in decisions about pathways and supports for their children.