

Sample Letter

This is an example of a letter requesting more information. Please write your own letter, or feel free to use all or part of this version to address your concerns to Alberta Learning or your MLA.

Your Name,
Address,
Calgary, AB
Postal Code

To whom it may concern,

My name is NAME HERE and I am a PARENT/STUDENT at SCHOOL. I am writing to share my concerns about the K-12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework June 2009 draft.

Although this draft was made public In June, I do not believe that it was publicized well enough to the appropriate stakeholders, as it has only very recently come to my attention.

After reading through the draft, I have a number of concerns that I feel need to be addressed. The first of these is that the draft in question is very general and the direction in which the proposal is heading is vague and unclear. Furthermore, the aims set in the draft document do not match the proposed changes in curriculum.

Second, in the K-12 Arts Education Curriculum Consultation Report, part of the document reflects on the challenges that are being faced within the fine arts program. As a part of the fine arts program, I can understand what these challenges are. My concern is that the proposed draft shows no clear signs of fixing these challenges. In addition, the draft lacks to explain how these challenges are being addressed.

Lastly, there is no level of detail in the draft, and no curriculum to reference. This is where the difficulty lays in responding with constructive and informed feedback, as the detail is not adequate to respond constructively to. From the information I can gather from the draft, I see a number of potential challenges that will be faced if the proposal were to go through. These challenges would lead to negative consequences in the arts

As a stakeholder directly affected by these changes, I am requesting a more informative, more detailed draft with a clear and in depth proposal. I would also like to inquire why these changes are being made. After that has been publicized to all appropriate stakeholders, I would like to see an extended deadline for feedback, with sufficient time for all stakeholders to reply. I hope to see a setup where I as a stakeholder can work with, and assist in the developing of a fully informed, fully representative plan for the arts curriculum in Alberta. With that, I ask for a response showing that you have read through and understand my concerns. I would also like to know what you can do to make sure my concerns are understood by the appropriate parties. I would also appreciate an email following up on your actions and what has been accomplished.

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing back from you presently.

YOUR NAME HERE

Prepared by: **SOFA Organizing Committee**
November 9th, 2009

Letter/Email Writing Tips

Letters don't have to be long or fancy; ideally, they shouldn't be longer than one page.

The basic format includes:

- Your own address
- The date
- The name, title and address of the person to whom you are writing
- Salutation "Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms" or if a cabinet minister – The Honourable Dave Hancock, Minister of Education
- First paragraph—the purpose of the letter
- Second paragraph—the situation and the facts
- Third paragraph—what you would like done about it
- Closing—"Yours truly" or "Yours sincerely"
- Your signature
- Your typewritten name
- Your telephone number.

Letter writing tips:

- Write the letter in your own words and use information with which you are familiar – you don't have to be an expert. You are demonstrating your concern.
- Avoid form letters if possible. Each letter should express the writer's own opinions. Form letters receive form replies.
- If you are using a form letter, add your own thoughts to personalize it.
- Avoid inflammatory remarks, be polite, don't threaten and avoid hyperbole. This approach will weaken your credibility. Think about how you would feel in the recipient's position and how you might respond.
- Commend as well as criticize (for example, thank Alberta Education for being responsive and extending the deadline and/or acknowledging that the framework needs to be reworked).
- Try to suggest solutions or include the action you would like the recipient to take. If you ask questions, or request clarification on unclear facts, the recipient of your letter will be more inclined to send a prompt response. Try to limit your concerns to addressing two to three issues.

E-mail:

- Follow guidelines outlined in letter writing. Consider keeping your message short and recording when you sent it—such documentation might prove useful at some future date.
- As with written correspondence, if you do not provide contact information (including a complete "snail mail" address), you may not get a response.

Excerpted from the ATA handbook, *Advocacy: A Practical Guide*
<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/ADVOCACY%20AND%20ACTION/Pages/Advocacy%20A%20Practical%20Guide.asp>

Adapted from *The Art of Advocacy: A Handbook for Non-Profit Organizations* <http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/AdvocacyHandbook-FIN2.pdf>