

## Arts Education



### **Q: What is happening with the fine arts programs?**

**A:** Alberta Education is reviewing the fine arts curriculum with a view to enhancing student learning opportunities in the arts. The current fine arts curriculum has not been updated for more than 20 years. Alberta Education is considering current research, changing populations and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning to guide the curriculum review. Curriculum documents from the 1980s and 1990s no longer fully support the many quality arts programs found in our schools or reflect the diversity of Alberta students and communities.

The draft *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework* and Online Discussion Questions have been removed from this website in order to review all responses and inform further revisions to the draft framework. Once these revisions are complete, the proposed framework will again be posted for viewing by interested Albertans.

### **Q: What is a curriculum framework and how is it different from a program of studies?**

**A:** A curriculum framework is a foundation document. The draft *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework* proposes a common rationale, vision, guiding principles, general learning outcomes and a potential program structure for dance, drama, music and visual art programs.

Programs of study outline in detail what students are specifically expected to learn, and schools decide how best to guide student learning. New programs of study have not yet been developed for Arts Education. Programs will be developed from the final framework and will include learning outcomes for individual subjects.

The following table illustrates the features of contributing documents and materials to the curriculum review process:

	<u>Curriculum Framework</u>	<u>Programs of Study</u>	<u>Implementation Strategy</u>	<u>Resources</u>
<b>Purpose</b>	Provides a foundation for four arts disciplines: dance, drama, music and visual art	Developed for each discipline and at all grade levels	Outlines the supports offered for each discipline and at all grade levels	Are acquired, adapted and developed by grade for each discipline
<b>Components</b>	Includes a vision, rationale, guiding principles and general learning outcomes for all Arts Education disciplines	Includes specific learning outcomes by grade level, for each discipline	Outlines specific strategies that support the implementation of a new curriculum (including resources and professional development), in each discipline and at all grade levels	An important feature of the implementation strategy, resources include the materials, delivery methods (e.g., digital) and personnel to support learning at all grade levels and in each discipline
<b>Stakeholders involved</b>	Is developed by Alberta Education with input and consultation from research, focus groups, working groups and validation groups	Are developed by Alberta Education with input and consultation from, research, focus, working and validation groups	Is developed by Alberta Education with consultation from focus groups	May be developed by Alberta Education, commercial publishers, local or community groups, or other sources. Are reviewed and/or authorized for recommended use by Alberta Education

**Q: What is “Arts Education” and does it mean the end of fine arts programs that are now in schools?**

**A:** Arts Education means learning *in* the arts, *through* the arts and *about* the arts. It includes deep learning in individual arts disciplines, similar to existing fine arts programs. It also introduces infusion of the arts across the curriculum. This means making connections between the arts and other school subjects.

Arts Education does not mean the end of the current fine arts programs in schools. The draft *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework* proposes that student learning outcomes be developed for K–12 in each of these disciplines: dance, drama, music and visual art. Arts Education will provide even more opportunities for students to explore their passions in the arts.

**Q: Who was involved in developing the draft *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework*?**

**A:** Creating a framework document is a collaborative effort for all curriculum areas in Alberta. Alberta Education representatives met with several different stakeholder groups in preparation for creating the draft *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework*. All groups included teachers of dance, drama, music and visual art, representing grades K–12, as well as administrators, artists and community leaders in the arts. Participants came from rural and urban areas across the province and included representatives from Francophone, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

**Q: Is the fine arts curriculum being revised because of funding cutbacks?**

**A:** Alberta Education began the review process three years ago. This review process has no connection to current budgets. Current fine arts programs of study are more than 20 years old, so there is a need for updated curriculum, especially in the areas of dance and multidisciplinary art forms.

**Q: Isn't dance already taught as part of the music and physical education programs of study?**

**A:** The purpose of dance in the physical education program is physical activity rather than as an art form and means of communication. Dance appears within the elementary music curriculum as a skill in movement. The proposed Arts Education Framework includes dance as the fourth area of focus, in addition to drama, music and visual art, for the purpose of creativity and cultural expression. Currently, Alberta does not have a provincial dance program of studies. The specialized concepts, skills and vocabulary that are unique to dance are not included in any current Alberta program of studies.

**Q: If four arts disciplines are required at the elementary level, will the rigour of each discipline be watered down?**

**A:** No, and in fact, they will be enhanced. Students will continue to learn the concepts, skills and vocabulary of the individual arts disciplines. In addition, students will explore connections between the arts and other areas of learning. Resources, professional development and teacher collaboration will support learning in, through and about the arts.

**Q: How will elementary teachers fit four arts disciplines into their schedules?**

**A:** Learning in the arts, about the arts and through the arts offers flexibility of programming. The proposed program structure for K–6 Arts Education allows teachers, both arts specialists and elementary generalists, to work together to provide focused instruction in each arts discipline and to infuse the arts across the curriculum.

**Q: Are teachers who specialize in one arts discipline at risk of losing their jobs?**

**A:** Not as a result of the new Arts Education curriculum. School authorities in Alberta employ both specialist and generalist teachers to implement the current fine arts curriculum. Provincial programs of study identify specific learning outcomes for students that school authorities are expected to ensure their students achieve. That will continue to be an expectation.

**Q: Is it true that this curriculum will mean the end of band and choral classes and large performing ensembles?**

**A:** No, this is not true. Band and choral programs, including large ensembles, will remain whenever junior and senior high schools choose to retain them. There are many excellent performing arts programs throughout the province and we anticipate they will continue.

**Q: Will the proposed structure of single-credit courses in senior high schools remain in the framework?**

**A:** Early responses to the *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework* have indicated that this section will need to be revised to meet stakeholder needs. Once all of the feedback has been reviewed, a revised organizational structure will be presented within the revised draft framework.

**Q: Will locally developed courses be eliminated under the new curriculum?**

**A:** Locally developed courses (LDCs) are created by school authorities to respond to a locally identified need that they feel is not addressed in provincial programs of study. LDCs are reviewed by Alberta Education to ensure that they meet the standards of provincial programs of study and do not duplicate or have significant overlap with the content and learning outcomes in provincial programs of study. School authorities will be able to continue to develop or renew locally developed arts courses providing that these courses meet the standards of provincial programs of study and do not duplicate or have significant overlap with the content and learning outcomes in the new arts curriculum.

**Q: When will the Revised Framework be available?**

**A:** Based on the feedback on the draft framework, the need to fully consider the feedback, and ensure alignment with Inspiring Education as well as Education’s review of its curriculum development process (currently in the early stages) I anticipate a new edition of the draft *K–12 Arts Education Curriculum Framework* will be available by spring 2011 at the earliest.

## **Q: How can I get involved?**

**A:** Whether you are a teacher, student, parent or other interested Albertan, you can stay informed of new developments and new opportunities to provide input by visiting the Fine Arts Program Updates page on the Alberta Education website:

English: <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/finearts/program-updates.aspx>

French: <http://education.alberta.ca/francais/teachers/progres/core/beaux-arts/proget/revision.aspx>

If you are a teacher, you can subscribe to the free online newsletter, *Connection: Information for Teachers* (in English at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/connection.aspx> or in French at <http://education.alberta.ca/francais/connection.aspx>).

If you are a student, you can also add your voice to the Speak Out website at <http://speakout.alberta.ca> where students can discuss and blog about their education.