

# Discussion guide for community conversations

## Social Studies Curriculum

### Event details

Name of note taker:

Date of engagement:

Location of engagement:

Organization(s) present:

Number of participants:

The Government of Alberta has heard clearly from Albertans that the province needs a strengthened approach for developing and engaging on curriculum – particularly Social Studies. Albertans have an important role to play in curriculum development, along with diverse education partners, teachers, education specialists, multicultural organizations, and Indigenous and francophone communities.

To support community conversations and engagements on Social Studies curriculum, the following tools are available:

- A curriculum fact sheet with information about curriculum development and engagement
- A presentation to share with attendees and guide your discussion
- A [survey](#) to submit direct feedback to Alberta Education
- This discussion guide

Please encourage attendees to bring a smart phone or other device so they can access discussion topics and survey questions during the event.

### How to support community engagement

To support quality conversations, we recommend the following approach:

1. Review all engagement materials to familiarize yourself with the content.
2. At the beginning of the event, encourage attendees to open the survey on their smart phone or other device by using the QR code in the presentation.
  - a. It's easiest to keep the survey open throughout the discussion.
3. Use the discussion guide and display the PowerPoint presentation to share key information and guide the discussion with attendees.
4. For each discussion question in the PowerPoint, share the content on the slide before allowing time for discussion on each topic.
5. For each topic, allow attendees to share their thoughts and opinions about the topic.
  - a. There are additional prompts provided for each question that you may use to further the discussion.
6. Before moving to the next discussion topic, ask attendees to share their feedback by answering the related question in the [survey](#) on [Alberta.ca](#) by using the QR code on the screen.

- a. This will ensure participants' feedback is submitted directly to Alberta Education and all feedback is captured in one place for analysis.
7. Once attendees have had a chance to share feedback through the survey, move to the next slide and discussion question.
8. If an attendee asks to provide feedback in person, you may capture their feedback directly on this form using the instructions below.
9. Once you've reviewed all discussion questions, let attendees know they may include any additional information in the final question on the survey.
10. At the end of the presentation, review the final slides that outline next steps for curriculum development and engagement.
11. Thank the attendees for their valuable feedback and encourage them to share the survey with friends or family. The survey will remain open until October 16, 2023.

## Guidance for note-taking

- Encourage all attendees to share their feedback in the survey directly by using the QR code provided on each slide.
- When possible, use a computer to take notes.
- If using paper, delete these instructions and leave at least one blank page per question so you have room to take notes.
- Answers should reflect what the participant said.
- Avoid editorial content. In other words, write what you hear, not what you want to hear.
- Ask for participant suggestions.
- Do not record any personal information such as participant names.
- Be sure to provide a recap at the end of the session.
- If you take any notes, submit the discussion guide to [goa.currdevengage@gov.ab.ca](mailto:goa.currdevengage@gov.ab.ca) by October 18, 2023.

## Questions for follow-up or “The Parking Lot”

- Participants may ask questions about curriculum content, supports for implementation, professional learning, and available resources.
- Let participants know they may visit [Alberta.ca/curriculum](https://alberta.ca/curriculum) and [new.LearnAlberta.ca](https://new.learnalberta.ca) for more information on these topics.
- Please list feedback on additional topics raised by participants in this guide and let them know you are sharing their questions with Alberta Education.

## Discussion topics and questions

1. **Social studies is an interdisciplinary course that includes content about history, geography, economics, politics, and civics. Social studies education can build active, informed, and responsible citizens who contribute to their communities and are knowledgeable about rights, responsibilities, and decision-making.**

**What areas of focus are most important in social studies education?**

<PROMPT IF NEEDED>

For example, ensuring students will:

- understand historical events
- understand local, Canadian, and global events
- develop critical thinking skills to make informed decisions
- identify functions and important positions in municipal, provincial and federal levels of government
- develop knowledge of geography and places around the world
- apply policies and practices of economic systems
- learn about the democratic system and participation
- respectfully interact with others who have different ideas and opinions

Notes from discussion (optional):

**2. Social studies can provide students with transferrable skills needed to question assumptions, and make informed decisions as active participants in society.**

**What skills should be the central focus of social studies education?**

<PROMPT IF NEEDED>

Possible skills may include:

- critical thinking
- problem solving
- research and investigation
- social participation
- decision making
- organizing information and drawing conclusions
- supporting argument with facts
- geography and mapping
- media literacy

Notes from discussion (optional):

**3. Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. Social studies education can provide students with knowledge about Canada and the world.**

**a) What topics should social studies curriculum focus on for students to understand Canadian history and culture?**

<PROMPT IF NEEDED>

Possible topics include:

- First Nations, Métis and Inuit content
- Francophone content
- diverse cultural groups in Canada
- diverse religious groups in Canada
- injustices and discrimination
- early settlement and exploration

- Canada's role in international conflicts
- structures of local, provincial, and federal governments
- international trade and agreements
- economic development and natural resources
- environmental issues
- current events

Notes from discussion (optional):

**b) What topics should social studies curriculum focus on for students to understand world history and global issues?**

<PROMPT IF NEEDED>

Possible topics include:

- legacies of ancient civilizations
- diverse cultural groups
- diverse religious groups
- legacy of interactions between groups
- trade and the global economy
- environmental issues
- international conflict
- injustices and discrimination
- terrorism and extremism
- human rights
- alternative forms of government structure
- alternative economic systems
- current events

Notes from discussion (optional):

## Next steps

Survey results, along with feedback from diverse education partners and research on best practices, will be used to refine the draft K-6 Social Studies curriculum before it is released for further engagement with Albertans and education partners in winter 2024.

In the 2024/25 school year, teachers will have an opportunity to pilot draft K-6 Social Studies curriculum in classrooms and provide further feedback. Alberta Education will carefully consider feedback from all engagement activities and classroom piloting to finalize the new curriculum.