



BLACK GOLD SCHOOL DIVISION

3rd Floor, 1101-5th Street
Nisku, Alberta T9E 7N3

P: 780.955.6025
F: 780.955.6050
blackgold.ca

November 23, 2020 (Electronic letter emailed)

Honourable Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Education
228 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Re: Ministerial Order #028/2020 Student Learning

Dear Minister LaGrange:

Let me start off by saying that we most appreciate that after years of delay, you are bringing forward a new curriculum for Alberta students. Black Gold School Division is proud that we were one of two boards chosen to write the draft grades 7 - 9 curriculum in 2013.

We have faith that your process will be transparent and include content that was delivered through the original development process. We trust that the advisors on the panel are there to advise, not direct, and that teachers and curriculum experts will have your expressed authority and confidence to make decisions that deliver the best possible outcomes for our children.

Furthermore, we trust that the ongoing politicized rhetoric around the draft curriculum is just that, political rhetoric, and the final product will be evidence-based and free of political or religious ideology.

Evidence shows that in order to develop foundational competencies, students need a grounding in basic facts, however, a nineteenth century model of rote learning and memorization cannot form the basis for a curriculum that is to prepare our students for Alberta's future economy and a vibrant Alberta.

As a public school board composed of educators and parents, we would expect that the final curriculum is future-oriented, and that it will contain topics and outcomes that challenge students to engage their creativity, emotional intelligence and other soft skills such as growth mindset, adaptability and collaboration to successfully compete in an era marked by rapid advances in automation and artificial intelligence.

Furthermore, we are confident in your ability to deliver a revised curriculum that will be balanced and thoughtful, and include a focus on regional, national and international matters, so that our children are prepared to be active and successful participants in the globally networked economy when they leave school.

We anticipate that teachers will have the opportunity to exercise their professional judgement in delivering the curriculum, once approved. We also have an expectation that our teachers will implement controversial issues in their classrooms with sensitivity, empathy and fairness, as is required through the Alberta Teachers Association's Code of Professional Conduct, sections 33 and 197 of the Education Act and Black Gold School Division's Board Policy 19.

As major contributors to the draft grades 7-9 curriculum, the people in our Division would be honoured to be part of the process to review and provide feedback on any part of the final product.

Once again, thank you for your leadership in prioritizing education as a key advantage for our province and an investment in our young people, as they are the future of a diverse, vibrant Alberta.

Sincerely,



Devonna Klaassen
Board Chair
Black Gold School Division

ec Bill Romanchuk, Superintendent/CEO, BGSD
Heather Caltagirone, ADM, Curriculum Division
Brad Rutherford, MLA Leduc - Beaumont
Mark Smith, MLA Drayton Valley - Devon
Honourable Rick Wilson, MLA Maskwacis - Wetaskiwin
Lorrie Jess, President, Alberta School Boards Association
Kim Mason, President, Greater Black Gold Teachers' Local #8