



Essential Conditions for K–4 Curriculum Implementation:

Perspectives of 2,800+ Alberta K–4 Teachers



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Preface

The curriculum redesign process currently under way is the most ambitious and far-reaching in the recent history of education in Alberta. The government of Alberta is to be commended for taking on this often delayed and long overdue task and for doing it in a manner that has been more open and inclusive than previous efforts. The involvement of teachers via a partnership agreement with the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has been essential to the success of the project thus far and undoubtedly accounts for much of the enthusiasm being expressed by teachers around the promise of the curriculum.

But the acid test still lies ahead. Writing new curriculum is one thing—actually implementing new curriculum successfully in individual classrooms across the province is quite another. Fortunately, in 2010, education stakeholders collaborated on the development of a road map to successfully introduce changes in programming, policies, priorities, initiatives and curriculum: *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions*. The survey questions that are the basis of this document relate to the critical steps identified in the guide. The responses collected indicate that much work remains to be done and that we need time to do it.

Implementation of curriculum is a complex undertaking. Careful consideration must be given to managing the process within diverse school and classroom contexts. In particular, attention must be paid to building capacity across the education system and among classroom teachers to deliver the curriculum by ensuring that comprehensive communication strategies, adequate time, appropriate teaching and learning resources, relevant professional development, and focused inservice activities are in place. All of these must be available in both rural and urban settings.

In aid of this effort, the ATA conducted the survey reported upon here to gather Alberta teachers' perception of the conditions they believe are essential for successful K–4 curriculum implementation. It is hoped that the survey results will, at the outset of this process, open up conversations among decision makers to ensure that any new programs of study will be successfully supported and implemented across all schools. In the case of new curriculum, ongoing research of this sort becomes key to shaping and informing what Kent den Heyer (2018) would call “the map we design and hope to travel with students” (p 6).¹

The key findings outlined in this research report speak immediately to the need for a longer implementation timeline than six months to one year, as well as to the importance of limited

¹ den Heyer, Kent. 2018. *Next Acts: Educational Impasse, Events and a One-Legged Magpie—A Resource to Support Curriculum Inquiry and Educational Development*. Edmonton, Alta: Alberta Teachers' Association.

field testing for rural and urban teachers before new curriculum is rolled out across entire school jurisdictions. It also sheds light on specific needs in terms of resources and supports, as detailed by the thousands of qualitative comments by Alberta’s K–4 teachers in this study. I anticipate that the Association will continue to collect and report information and insights from our member teachers to check upon and inform the progress of implementation.

The research activity was directed and supported by ATA staff. In particular, Dr Philip McRae, associate coordinator, Research, led the study, along with Dr Joni Turville, Assistant Executive Secretary; Dr Mark Swanson, coordinator, Professional Development; and Dan Grassick, executive staff officer. ATA staff members Neil Hepburn and Dr Lindsay Yakimyshyn supported the analysis and production of the report. The collective work of these individuals is greatly appreciated.

Dennis E Theobald, Executive Secretary

Key Findings from 2,800+ Alberta K–4 Teachers

Enthusiasm:

Overall, Alberta's K–4 teachers are excited about new programs of study, defined by less content and greater flexibility, and look forward to successful implementation.

Implementation Timelines:

Eighty-nine per cent of K–4 teachers believe that six months to one year is not a reasonable time frame for implementation of a new curriculum. A majority (76 per cent) feel that implementation should be done over a one- to three-year period.

Vision and Exposure:

Sixty-two per cent of K–4 teachers are aware of the vision for the new curriculum, but only 43 per cent have seen a copy of the draft curriculum.

Preparation:

A majority of K–4 teachers had not yet discussed the new curriculum by November 2018 or prepared for its implementation with their colleagues (including their principal or central office teachers). This is not a surprising finding, given that the new draft K–4 curriculum was first publicly released by Alberta Education during the summer (July 18, 2018).

- Eighty-three per cent of K–4 teachers had not discussed the new curriculum with their colleagues (including their principal).
- Ninety-four per cent of K–4 teachers had not yet met with their colleagues (including their principal) to prepare for curriculum implementation.
- Ninety-two per cent of K–4 teachers report not having met with central office staff colleagues (as of November 2018) to discuss or prepare for curriculum implementation.

Time:

Time was identified as both a resource and a concern. As a resource, time is deemed necessary for teachers to review the new curriculum, adjust to new expectations, and create resources/lesson plans/unit plans and cross-curricular connections. The potential for a dramatic increase in work intensification and the implementation timeline were identified as concerns.

Resources and Supports:

K–4 teachers have a strong desire for adequate resources and supports for implementation that are provided on scheduled noninstructional or professional development days (87 per cent) and through face-to-face workshop(s) (78 per cent), collaborative unit and lesson planning (77 per cent), and resource selection and development (57 per cent).

Respondents specifically requested exemplars; books; digital materials; assessment resources (including performance tasks, rubrics and marking guides); resources to support science, math, French language, social studies, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit knowledge; and hands-on, video and printable resources.

French Language Resources

Data collected via the French version of the survey show that French respondents expressed concerns similar to those of their English-first-language counterparts. However, French-first-language respondents voiced greater concern with respect to the availability of French resources and lack of preparation for its implementation.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Resources

Respondents identified a need for resources and supports related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit foundational knowledge, as well as resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of Indigenous peoples.

Readiness:

Forty-seven per cent of K–4 teachers report feeling ready to implement the new curriculum by 2020. However, qualitative data indicate that readiness was broadly interpreted with consummate professionalism in terms of teachers' ability to adapt to any new curriculum, despite resource and time concerns. Other comments reflected a desire to proceed with new programs of study, given that curriculum redesign has been under way for several years.

Background

Alberta Education is in the process of rewriting the kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) programs of study. Six subjects and all grades are currently under review and will be rewritten simultaneously in English and French. The Government's goal is to have the K–4 curriculum in six subjects approved by the minister of Education by December 2018.

Implementation timelines have not been finalized by Alberta Education; however, there are considerations for partial implementation of the new curriculum in September 2019 and full implementation of the six subjects in K–4 by September 2020. This is an ambitious timeline for implementation of new programs of study (in all six subjects). Given this, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) conducted a survey throughout October 2018 that gathered perspectives from more than 2,800 Alberta K–4 certificated teachers (including principals and central office colleagues).

This survey on curriculum implementation aimed to identify individual and organizational readiness, as well as the status of essential conditions for implementation (along with important questions related to implementation) from the perspective of teachers, principals and central office colleagues across the Alberta education system. The findings outlined in this report detail the resources and supports for the new curriculum deemed necessary by K–4 teachers, and the extent to which the essential conditions for implementation will be in place by September 2020.

The English and French survey instruments used in this study were based on a resource cocreated by Alberta's education partners, entitled *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions*.² Survey questions were generated using the essential conditions of shared vision, leadership, research, evidence, resources, teacher professional growth, time and community engagement.

The draft survey instrument created by the Association was reviewed by Alberta Education, as the body responsible for the new programs of study, and feedback was incorporated into the final survey instrument. Results of this study were then shared with three Alberta Education bodies responsible for the new programs of study: Curriculum Management Committee, Implementation Working Group and Implementation Advisory Group.

The purpose of this research is to support evidenced-based and informed decisions across the public education system in Alberta on the necessary resources, supports and implementation timelines for the new K–4 curriculum to be successful.

² Available at http://essentialconditions.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/essentialconditions_eng.pdf.

Method

This study was conducted using three online surveys: two open surveys for all Alberta K–4 teachers, one in English and one in French, and a random stratified sample representing the K–4 teaching population in Alberta.

Qualitative data on the following were also collected and analyzed in the surveys:

1. The resources and supports that Alberta teachers want to support the new curriculum
2. The aspects of the new curriculum about which teachers are excited or concerned
3. Specific questions regarding the proposed 2020 full implementation

Research Sample

For this study, 2,816 Alberta K–4 teachers participated in the survey. The current sample includes 2,269 responses to the open English and French online surveys and 547 responses from a stratified random sample. The random survey results closely resemble the open survey data, reinforcing the key findings in this report.

Procedure

The open English and French surveys were shared by the profession through the Early Childhood Education Council and ATA locals, and highlighted on the ATA website and across social media to allow K–4 teachers across the province to contribute their voice. The open surveys were active throughout the month of October 2018, with analysis being done on 2,269 responses.

A second identical survey was conducted using a stratified random sample of 1,400 Alberta elementary teachers, who received an invitation to participate by the Association. This stratified random sample garnered 547 responses (a response rate of 39 per cent) and was used to triangulate and validate the key findings from the open survey.

The surveys were analyzed using a combined data set 2,816 respondents. The open and random stratified surveys showed almost identical quantitative findings, thus triangulating the data.

Given the similarity of the open and random sample groups, a new data set was created that combined the open survey and the unweighted responses from the stratified survey. Weighting was done with post-stratification based on the teachers' conventions identified by each respondent.

Limitations

The results of this survey are deemed to be accurate plus/minus 2 per cent, 95 times out of 100.

While the size of the survey sample, at 2,816 participants, is more than adequate for identifying common themes and key findings, the respondents in the open survey were self-selected. To triangulate the findings from the open survey, an identical survey was sent to a random stratified sample of K–4 teachers, the results of which were almost identical to the open survey, thus increasing the certainty that the results of this study are representative of all Alberta K–4 teachers.

The participants in this study were, in terms of demographics, also highly representative of Alberta's teaching population (see Appendix A).

Future Research on Curriculum Implementation

Over 700 survey participants from across Alberta have expressed an interest and willingness to be part of future Association research studies on the new curriculum implementation. This cohort from across the profession (urban and rural) provides the Association with an active research sample that can provide ongoing data on the successes and challenges of implementing these new Alberta K–4 programs of study.

Results

ENTHUSIASM

Overall, Alberta K–4 teachers are enthusiastic about the new curriculum and are looking forward to a new program of studies with less content and greater flexibility. The qualitative comments indicating this enthusiasm are contained in Appendix B, and include statements from survey respondents such as the following:

...

I am excited to be able to help students think more deeply about the outcomes and to work on applying their knowledge ... rather than memorizing information.

...

I am glad that there are [fewer] outcomes to cover and that there will be a focus on subject integration.

...

I am excited about the driving questions and how the essential understandings are connected among the grades.

REASONABLE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES

Alberta's K–4 teachers are, however, worried about resources, supports and the timelines for implementation, with 89 per cent of respondents indicating that a successful curriculum implementation will take longer than six months to one year. The majority (76 per cent) feel that implementation should be done over a one- to three-year period. Data also show a clear relationship between perceptions of a reasonable timeframe and teaching experience, with less experienced teachers more inclined to be optimistic about the quick adoption of the new curriculum.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

Several key themes emerged when K–4 teachers commented on what resources and supports K–4 teachers will need to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020 (see Appendix B). Respondents identified professional development (PD) as a necessary support. As noted in Figure 1, a majority of K–4 teachers have a strong desire for this to take place through face-to-face workshop(s) (78 per cent), collaborative unit and lesson planning (77 per cent), and resource selection and development (57 per cent) on scheduled noninstructional or professional development days (87 per cent).

Across convention districts and years of teaching experience there are some slight variations in the order of preferences. However, overall, face-to-face workshops and collaborative unit and lesson planning are the two most preferred methods of professional support.

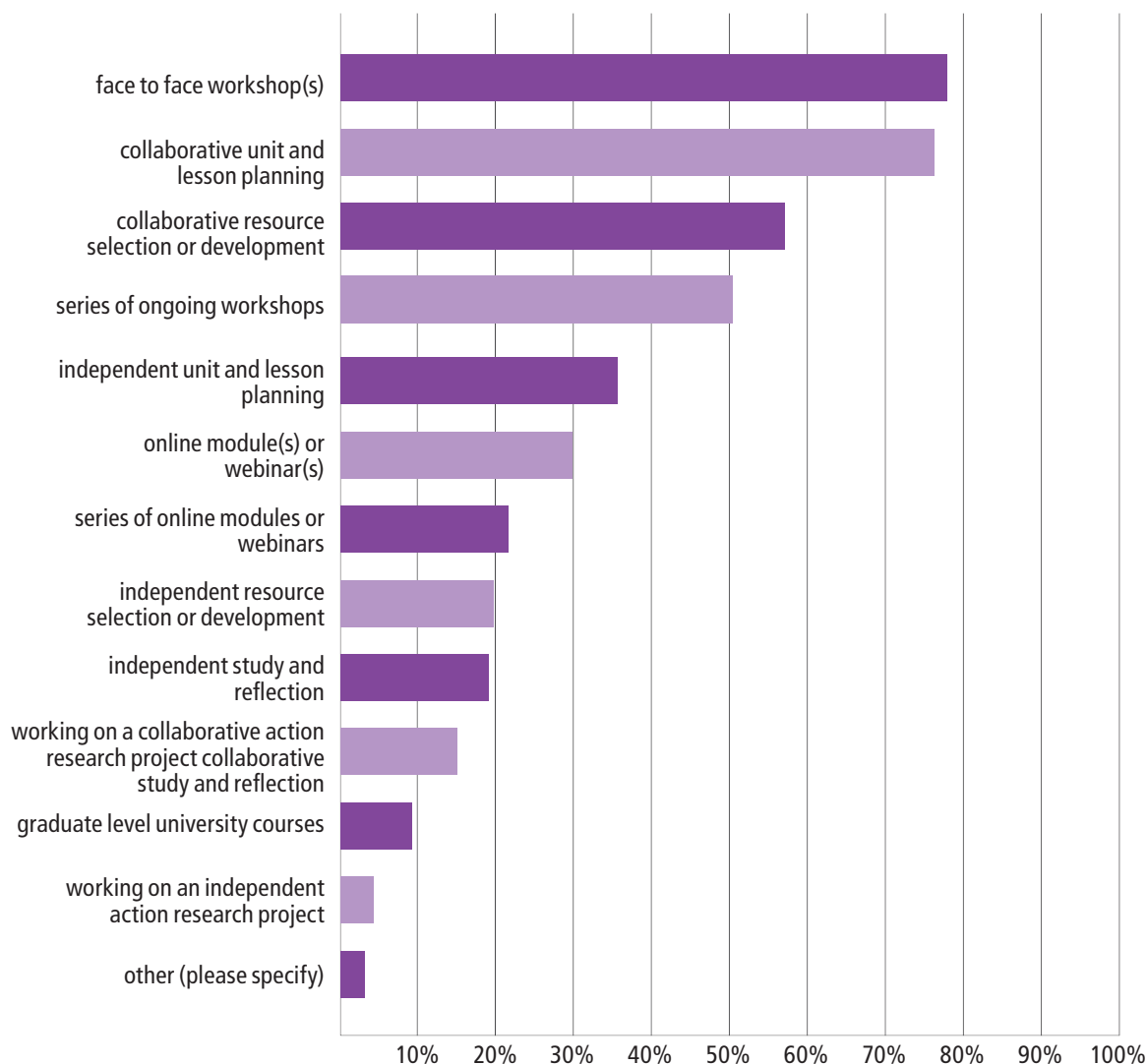


FIGURE 1. In what types of curriculum development and implementation professional development would you like to participate in the future? (Select all that apply.)

Other key resources identified (in order of frequency within the thousands of qualitative comments) were books; exemplars; online digital materials; science resources; assessment resources (including performance tasks, rubrics and marking guides); First Nations, Métis and Inuit resources; math resources; French language resources; social studies resources; video resources; and hands-on and printable resources. Data collected also clearly show that teachers who responded to the French survey

expressed concerns similar to those of their English-first-language counterparts. At the same time, French-first-language respondents voiced greater concern with respect to the availability of French resources and the lack of preparation for implementation.

As illustrated in Figure 2, when asked to agree or disagree with a variety of statements on key factors that will affect the successful implementation of the new curriculum, a majority of K–4 teachers were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that, by September 2020, they will have in place the necessary professional development and planning time (65 per cent disagree/strongly disagree), teaching and learning resources (59 per cent disagree/strongly disagree), and funding and staffing (68 per cent disagree/strongly disagree) for a successful curriculum implementation. These data likely speak to both the current conditions of professional practice and what is believed will be available at the start of the curriculum implementation.

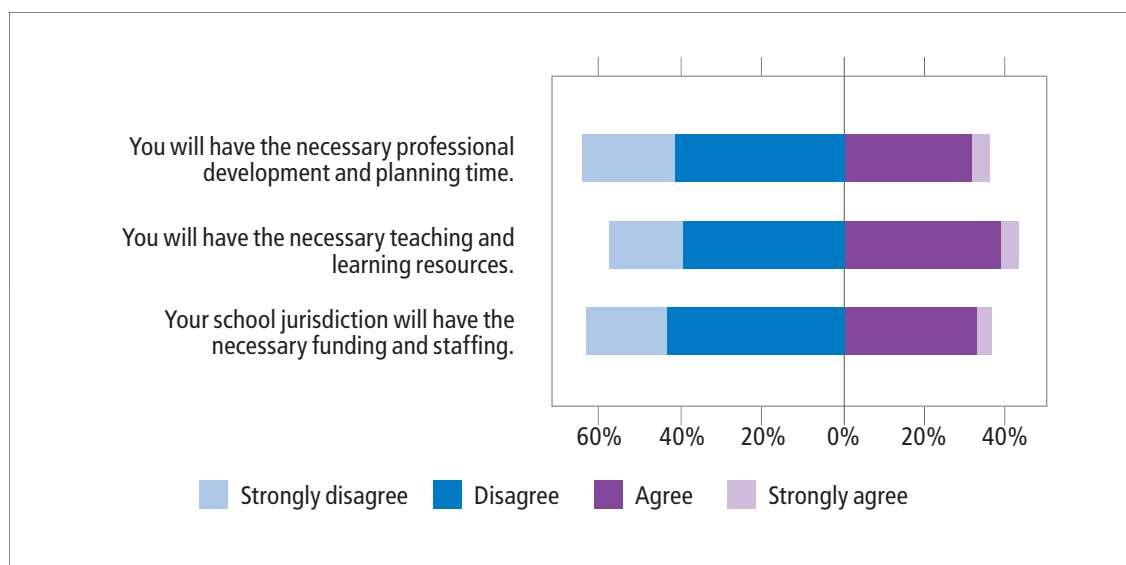


FIGURE 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements [necessary to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020]?

...

I'm concerned that school divisions, schools [and] teachers are not prepared to carry out the ambitious rollout by 2020 because very little has been shared or discussed. As well, providing access to resources for five grades across six subject areas seems cost prohibitive. From resources to teacher release time, this begs the question, where will the money come from to fund everything?

TIME

Time—as a resource and as a concern—was noted extensively in the qualitative responses. In analysis of the qualitative data, “time” emerged as an important consideration that permeated comments on implementation in terms of resources, concerns and questions.

Time was used to address a variety of topics, but most frequently linked to the need for K–4 teachers to have the time to create resources, plan (units, lessons), build new assessments, collaborate with colleagues, engage in professional development and learning on scheduled noninstructional or professional development days, and make ongoing connections with the new curriculum through collegial discussions.

As a concern, time came up frequently and is framed by the following exemplary comments from the qualitative data submissions:

...
I’m concerned that it is a complete overhaul and we won’t have the necessary time to prepare for it.

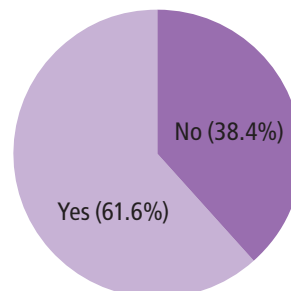
...
[I’m concerned that] teacher workload and personal hours working will increase dramatically.

...
At this moment, the prospect of implementing all new curricula in a short period of time concerns me.

VISION

In terms of the vision for a new K–4 curriculum, approximately 62 per cent of Alberta’s K–4 teachers are aware of the vision for the new curriculum (see Figure 3). This shows that there has been some reach with the communication on the vision shared by Alberta Education of a concept-based curriculum for Alberta students, but, as noted in other findings, there remains little discussion or preparation for implementation at this time.

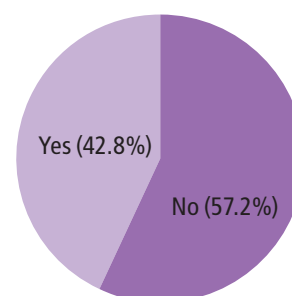
FIGURE 3. Are you aware of the vision for the new K–4 curriculum?



EXPOSURE TO DRAFT K–4 CURRICULUM

Many of the qualitative comments related to concerns, however, noted that teachers have not been exposed to the draft K–4 curriculum and feel that they do not have enough information at this time (see Appendix B). Qualitative data clearly show that teachers are looking for more communication, exposure and professional development on the new K–4 programs of study that they will soon be mandated to teach. Figure 4 shows that 57 per cent of teachers in this study have not seen a copy of the draft K–4 curriculum.

FIGURE 4. Have you seen a copy of the draft K–4 curriculum?



DISCUSSION AND PREPARATION

In terms of preparation, the vast majority of teachers have not had an opportunity to meet with their colleagues (including their principal or central office teachers) to discuss the new curriculum or prepare for its implementation. It is not surprising that there has been limited discussion or preparation at this time in schools with respect to the new curriculum, given that the new draft K–4 curriculum was first publicly released by Alberta Education during the summer, on July 18, 2018.

When asked if they had met to discuss or prepare for the new K–4 provincial curriculum, 83 per cent of respondents indicated that they had not yet had a discussion with their colleagues (including their principal). Further, 94 per cent have not yet met with their colleagues (including the principal) to prepare for the new programs of study. In terms of meeting with central office colleagues to discuss or to help prepare for the new curriculum implementation, 92 per cent of K–4 teachers in this sample have not to date.

The data in Figure 5 also show a statistically significant difference between the awareness of the new curriculum by school leaders (both school based and central office) and teachers. These data further highlight the need for Alberta Education to increase communications and conversations with Alberta's K–4 teachers on the design and structure of the new curriculum, but also to work with them to identify and cocreate practical and tangible curriculum resources and supports based on individual teachers' and schools' needs.

	No	Yes
Classroom teacher	41%	59%
Combined classroom and administrative duties	19%	81%
School administrator only	13%	87%
Central office staff or administrator	7%	93%

FIGURE 5. Are you aware of the new K–4 curriculum?

...

Where can I get the document? What should I do next? Are there meetings and workshops that are taking place already?

...

I haven't seen the curriculum yet. When will this information be formally shared with teachers? I have only seen comments about it on Facebook.

Many conversations are still to be had across the system so that K–4 teachers are made fully aware of the design and structure of a new concept-based curriculum, and have an opportunity to give further voice to the practical and tangible resources and supports necessary for successful implementation. If the K–4 curriculum is to be approved (in some form) by the minister in December 2018, these data indicate a need for improved communication by Alberta Education to K–4 teachers and principals across the province.

CHAMPION

Data from this survey show that there does not seem to be a designated individual at the school site who will be taking a lead role (that is, a “champion”) in the implementation of the new K–4 curriculum. In fact, only 9 per cent of respondents identified that there would be someone taking on this role at their school.

In the past, Alberta schools have field tested dimensions of new programs of study with an individual or small group in advance of implementation. These individuals (or small groups within the school) then became a primary resource for the rest of the school staff and community of learners as the curriculum moved into mandatory implementation.

OVERALL READINESS

As noted in Figure 6 below, 53 per cent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “You will be ready to implement the new K–4 curriculum in September 2020.”

In looking at the 47 per cent of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and in a review of the qualitative data, readiness was broadly interpreted. Some of the qualitative comments indicate consummate professionalism in adapting to any new curriculum, despite resource and time concerns. Other comments connected to agreement reflect a desire to move ahead with new programs of study given that curriculum redesign has been ongoing for several years. These data also express the strong desire by Alberta’s teachers for a revised curriculum with less content and greater flexibility to engage students in meaningful learning opportunities.

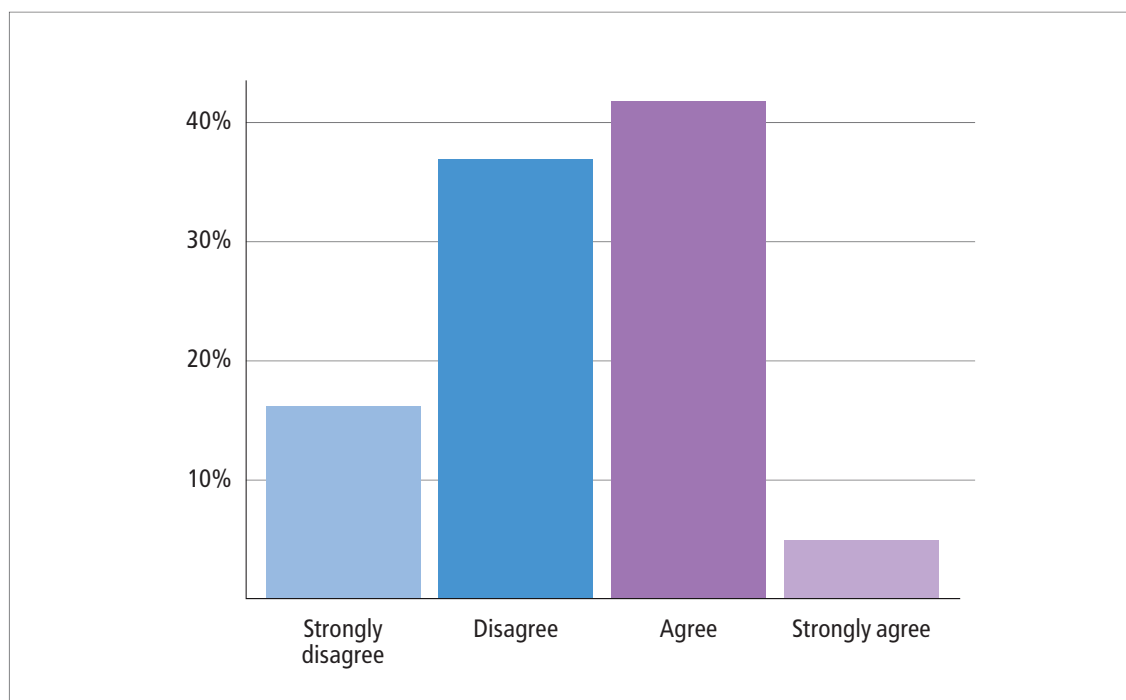


FIGURE 6. Statement: You will be ready to implement the new K–4 curriculum in September 2020.

There was also a difference in response based on role designation as teacher, principal or central office staff. Principals and central office respondents were more likely to agree with the readiness statement than the K–4 teachers in the sample. In particular, central office colleagues are much more likely than teachers at the school (teachers, administrators and teacher-administrators) to think that adoption and implementation in a short time are possible.

Conclusion

Overall, Alberta’s K–4 teachers are excited about new programs of study, defined by less content and greater flexibility, and look forward to successful implementation. However, 89 per cent of K–4 teachers in this large representative sample of the profession believe that six months to one year is not a reasonable time frame for implementation of a new curriculum. A majority (76 per cent) feel that implementation should be done over a one- to three-year period.

While 47 per cent of K–4 teachers stated that they feel ready to implement the new curriculum by 2020, readiness was broadly interpreted, as reflected in some of the qualitative comments. Review of this data point indicated that comments associated with readiness include a sentiment of professionalism in place to adapt to any new curriculum despite resource and time concerns, or a desire to move ahead with new programs of study given that curriculum redesign has been in progress for several years.

While 62 per cent of K–4 teachers are aware of the vision for the new curriculum, only 43 per cent have seen a copy of the draft curriculum. This suggests that clear and transparent communication by Alberta Education to Alberta teachers over the next several months, along with cohesive professional learning opportunities from the education partners to meet teachers’ diverse needs, will be important for implementation to be successful.

This study indicates that a majority of K–4 teachers have not yet discussed the new curriculum or prepared for its implementation with their colleagues (including their principal or central office teachers). This may not be a surprise, given that Alberta Education first publicly released the new draft K–4 curriculum during the summer, on July 18, 2018. When asked if they had met to discuss or prepare for the new K–4 provincial curriculum, 83 per cent of respondents indicated that they had not yet had a discussion with their colleagues (including their principal). Further, 94 per cent have not yet met with their colleagues (including the principal) to prepare for the new programs of study. In terms of meeting with central office colleagues to discuss or to help prepare for the new curriculum implementation, 92 per cent of K–4 teachers in this sample have not to date.

Time was identified by K–4 teachers as both a resource and a concern. As a resource, time is deemed necessary for teachers to review the new curriculum, adjust to new expectations, and create resources/lesson plans/unit plans and cross-curricular connections. Respondents also noted concerns related to the potential dramatic increase in work intensification and to the implementation timeline.

K–4 teachers have a strong desire for adequate resources and supports for implementation to be done on scheduled noninstructional or professional development days (87 per cent) and through

face-to-face workshop(s) (78 per cent), collaborative unit and lesson planning (77 per cent), and resource selection and development (57 per cent). Data collected through the French version of the survey show that French respondents expressed concerns similar to those of their English-first-language counterparts, a notable difference being that French-first-language respondents voiced greater concern with respect to the availability of French resources and the lack of preparation for implementation. Another dimension of need identified by respondents for resources and supports related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit foundational knowledge and stories, as well as resources on contextual perspectives of Indigenous people.

In conclusion, K–4 teachers are enthusiastic about the new curriculum and look forward to the long-awaited updates to the programs of study. However, they also express some very specific resource needs and supports, and have legitimate questions and concerns that must be taken into consideration sooner rather than later. The entire education system needs to focus its energies on supporting these teachers and school leaders, who are closest to K-4 students on a daily basis, if the new curriculum implementation is to be successful.

Appendix A: Demographics

Overall, the combined survey sample is highly representative of the population of Alberta K–4 teachers. The stratified random sample was based on convention districts, and the open survey sample highly correlated with the random survey. Figure 7 shows the distribution of respondents by teachers' convention across both surveys combined.

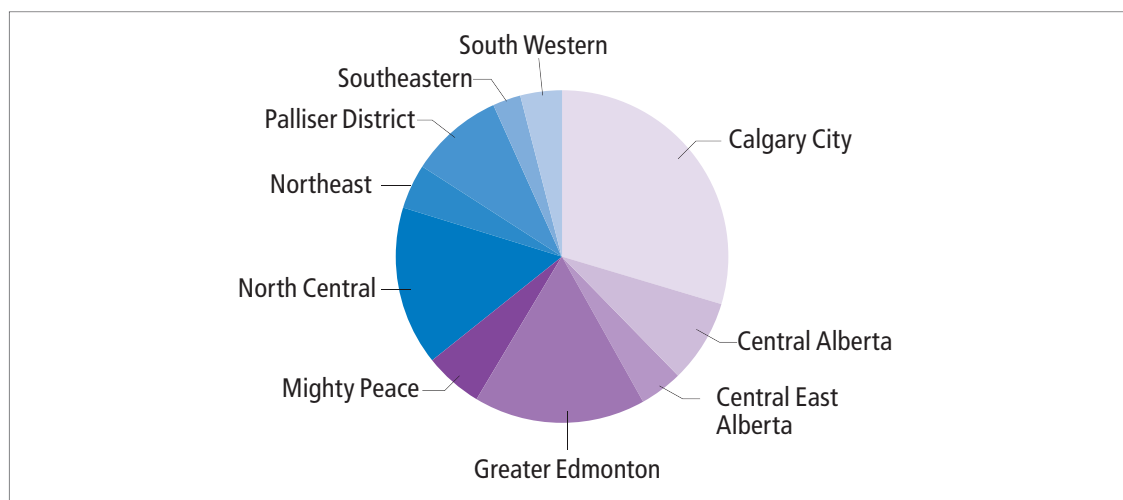


FIGURE 7. To which teachers' convention are you assigned?

In terms of gender, female teachers are overrepresented in this survey; however, given that the majority of elementary teachers in Alberta are female and that this survey is aimed at K–4 teachers, it is reasonable that 89 per cent of the respondents would be female, with 8 per cent male and 3 per cent preferring not to say.

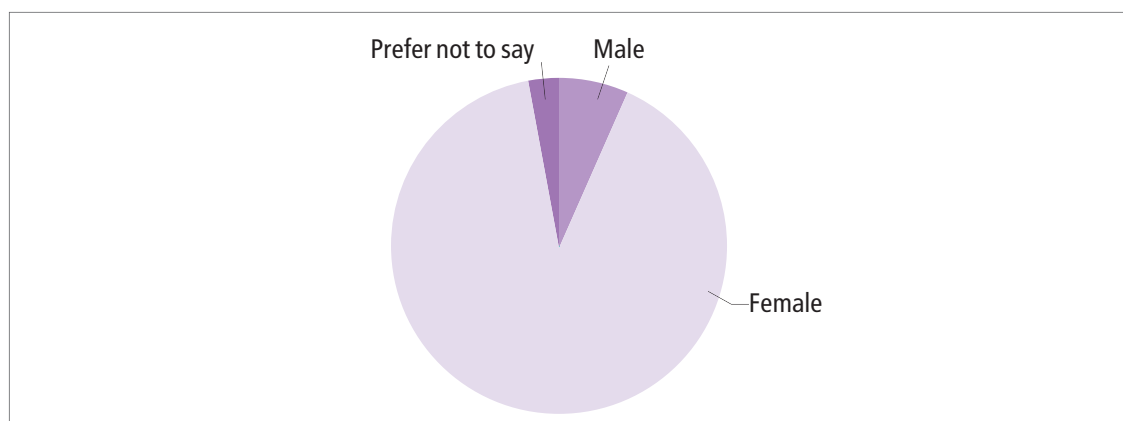


FIGURE 8. How do you identify?

In terms of teaching experience, the sample represents the Alberta teaching population well (see Figure 9). Ninety per cent of the sample are working full time, with 10 per cent part time.

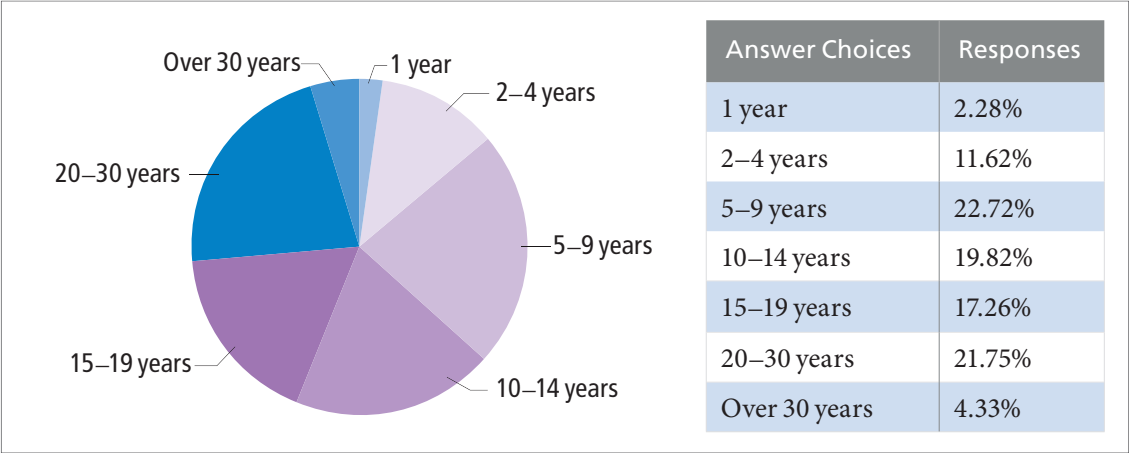


FIGURE 9. How long have you been teaching, including the current year?

As illustrated in Figure 10, the current teaching or leadership assignment of the respondents was primarily K–4 classroom teachers (84 per cent), with approximately 10 per cent school leaders and 2 per cent central office staff. The respondents’ grade level assignments were approximately 60 per cent Grades 1 to 3, 20 per cent Grades 4 to 6, and 20 per cent ECS/kindergarten.

Answer Choices	Responses
Classroom teacher	84.23%
Combined classroom and administrative duties	7.92%
School administrator only	1.77%
Central office staff or administrator	1.77%
Other (eg, alternative school, cyber school)	4.33%

FIGURE 10. What’s your current teaching or leadership assignment?

The age of this combined survey sample (Figure 11) is varied, as noted below.

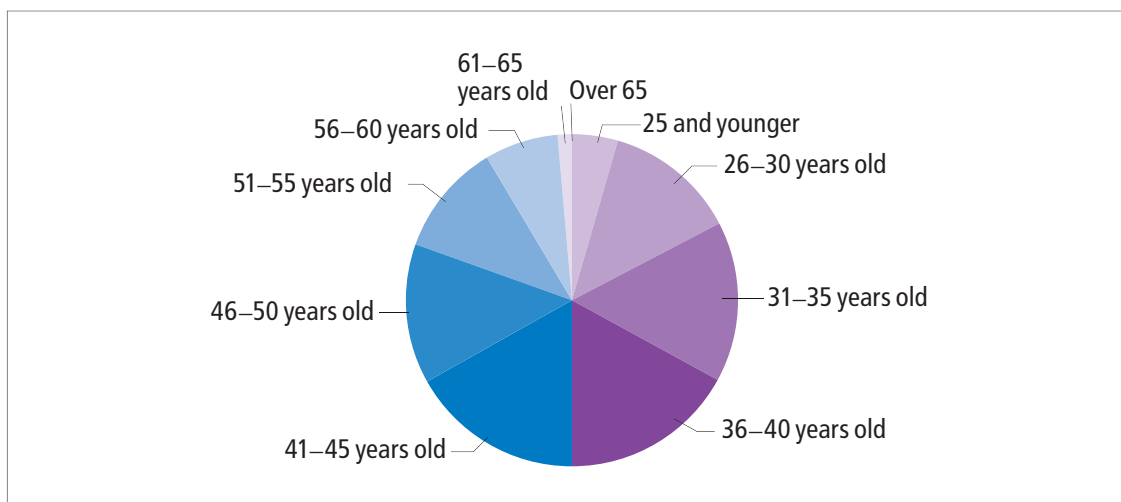


FIGURE 11. How old are you?

The survey responses are also quite representative of the balance of teachers between public (71 per cent), separate (27 per cent) and francophone boards (2 per cent) (see Figure 12).

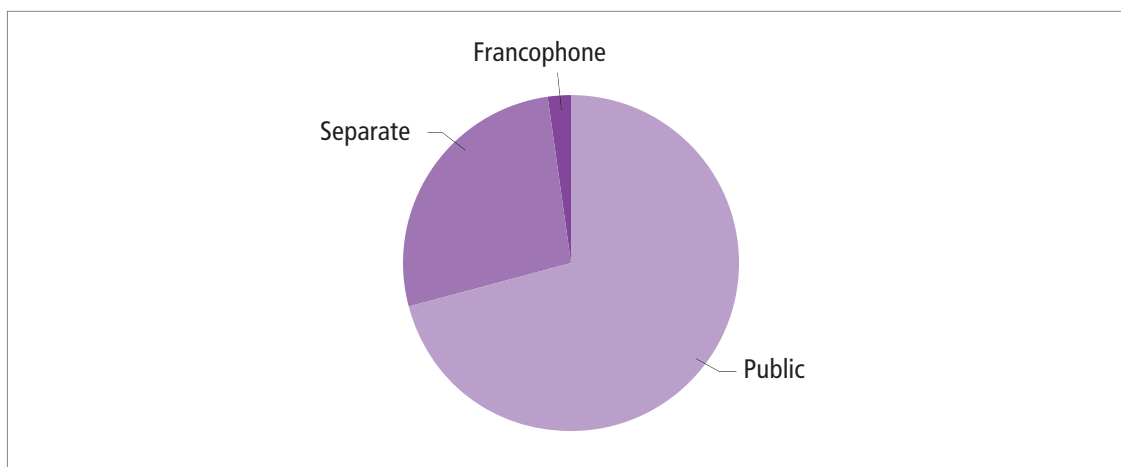


FIGURE 12. You are employed by which type of school authority?

Appendix B: Qualitative Data Frequency Analysis

1. RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

What resources and supports will you need to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020? (n=1462)

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
RESOURCES	641	- Unsure, hopefully there will be an approved list of resources available. - Resources to use to help implement the new curriculum.
Professional development (PD)	296	- Comprehensive professional development (PD) and implementation support with resource and PD funding. - Professional development, purposeful/inexpensive resources.
Books/guides/ PD time	221	- Textbooks/workbooks, picture books, teacher guides, PD oppor-tunities, time to collaborate with colleagues, planning time, digi-tal resources. - Books, websites, manipulatives, lesson ideas, professional development and planning, prep time.
Teacher resources	165	Teacher resources (guides, textbooks in physical and PDF form).
Textbooks	149	- Textbooks, teaching guides, PD sessions. - Student textbook and teacher unit guides.
Exemplars	114	- Curriculum including illustrative examples. Learning coaches. - Clear exemplars and demonstrations by the makers of the curriculum of what is being thought about and rolled out.
Online/digital resources	89	- Websites with clear overarching ideas and questions, sample lesson plans, [First Nations, Métis and Inuit] inclusion strategies, clear assessment exemplars, increased planning time. - Text/online resources for teaching implementation and student use.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Science resources	86	- Hands-on science manipulatives and experiment equipment. - New science, math and social materials, PD on [First Nations, Métis and Inuit] outcomes.
Assessment resources	82	- Assessment exemplars with rubrics and scoring guides, illustrated examples for instruction, literature links, technology links, background information regarding the outcome, vocabulary. - Finding out what resources will be available, assessment tools, exemplars of student achievement in the new outcomes, time to actually look at all of this and plan because six new curriculums at once is crazy.
First Nations, Metis and Inuit resources	62	First Nations, Métis and Inuit resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of Indigenous peoples, such as texts, art, stories about [First Nations, Métis and Inuit] celebrations and ceremonies, [First Nations, Métis and Inuit] petroglyphs, poems, dance and humour.
Math resources	58	New teacher resources for science, math, social.
Literacy resources	41	- Literacy resources, Indigenous resources. - Suggested titles of books (read aloud, shared reading).
French language resources	40	- Better access to <i>good</i> French immersion websites that are at an appropriate reading level for students. - Varied reading levels of student materials, resources in French available at same time as the English stream.
Social studies resources	34	- All our resources are from previous curriculum. Social studies is completely different so need all new resources. - Social Studies—building our resources related to Indigenous outcomes.
Video resources	34	- We need resources ready so we don't have to lose hours looking on [the] Internet finding what we need (video resources, book resources, Internet resources). - Lesson planning resources, videos, picture books.
Hands-on resources	31	- More hands-on ideas for math. - Hands-on science materials.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Rubrics/marketing guides	30	• Clear outcomes with associated student achievement indicators. • Copies of the draft, samples of assessments and rubrics so I would have a better understanding of what to look for/assess.
Printable resources	15	• Online resources and math games easily printable. • New printable resources for all subjects. Digital resources.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
TIME	641	• <i>Time</i> for teachers to adjust planning to align with the new expectations. • Time and opportunity to see the curriculum and the expectations for implementing it..
Time to create resources	64	• Time to create resources/lesson plans/unit plans/cross-curricular connections. • Time to create units and lesson plans.
Time for planning	51	• Time to plan and explore new objectives. • Time for planning.
Time to assess curriculum	41	• Time to review the new curriculum and learn it, time to plan lessons and units, funding to purchase new resources. • Need time to look at it and wrap my head around it, compare it to current curriculum and understand the differences.
Time for collaboration	43	• Need time to collaborate with grade partners on understandings. • Time to collaborate with colleagues to develop units and plan.
Time for PD	32	• PD time. • Adequate PD time to learn and plan with new resources
Time to make connections	20	• The online resource tool to make connections between subject areas. • The actual curriculum. To be able to unpack it and look at vertical connections.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Time to implement properly	18	Significant amounts of time should be designated within school boards and schools to provide teachers the time to independently and collaboratively work with colleagues and grade teams to develop lesson plans and unit plans.
Time to discuss curriculum	14	- Release time to meet with other grade level teachers to plan and design resources. - Time to discuss the new curriculum with colleagues and how it will look in our classrooms.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
FUNDING	46	- Funding for certified staff to teach/deliver new curriculum, particularly in ECS/Kinder[garten] classrooms instead of just planning programming for an assistant. - Additional funding for schools and school boards to invest in more current resources and support materials.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
SUPPORT	265	- Support and guidance with regards to major changes within the new curriculum vs old curriculum. - School and staff support.
Learning coach	14	Learning coaches who understand the essence of the document and the intended big ideas.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
UNSURE/DON'T KNOW	151	- As I am not sure what changes are taking place, I am not sure what resources and support I will need. - I do not know what the new curriculum will look like so I am unsure at this time.
Need more details/information	45	I would like to see more specific detail about what exactly needs to be taught.

2. EXCITEMENT OR CONCERN

About which aspects of the new K–4 curriculum are you excited or concerned (if any)? (n=1309)

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
CONCERNED	415	• Very concerned about the direction of less content and more skills.
EXCITED	280	• I am excited to be able to help students think more deeply about the outcomes and to work on applying their knowledge ... rather than memorizing information. I am glad that there are less outcomes to cover and that there will be a focus on subject integration. • I am excited about the driving questions and how the essential understandings are connected among the grades.
Not sure/ not enough information	215	• Not sure if I should be excited or worried as I haven't seen any copies of the new curriculum content. • I don't know anything about this new proposed curriculum, so I have no idea what will or will not excite me.
Time	186	• I'm concerned that it is a complete overhaul and we won't have the necessary time to prepare for it. Teacher workload and personal hours working will increase dramatically. • At this moment, the prospect of implementing all new curricula in a short period of time concerns me.
Resources	167	• I'm concerned with having enough science and social resources if the new curriculum remains as vague as it now is in the draft. • I am excited about the whole thing! I am concerned that we will need to create resources and materials from scratch with no extra time.
Science	153	• Excited for revisions in elementary science. • I do not have a specific aspect but I am very excited about the new social studies and science curriculum.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Social studies	142	• I'm concerned about the lack of new resources, and also dislike the way the social and science curriculum have seemingly changed completely. • I have concerns around the social studies curriculum and how it is changing significantly from being Canadian and more globally focused to more local community, historical and Indigenous focused. I currently teach Grade 3 social and feel that providing students with opportunities to gain greater global perspective is essential for preparing them for the future. Providing students with curriculum that prepares them for global engagement with the world and its cultures is essential for the future of Canada's success internationally. This must be reflected as a significant theme in the social curriculum.
Math	138	• I have heard that the math program is moving "forward," so we will teach further into the current curriculum. I am excited for this, as I feel my students (Grade 3) can often handle the current curriculum and I have to challenge a high percentage of my class. • I am excited to have fewer outcomes in social, science and art, in order to allow for more time to be dedicated to teaching literacy and numeracy—students at the early years need to be proficient in literacy and numeracy before focusing so heavily on such a great number of science and social studies topics.
First nations, Métis and Inuit	97	• I like that we are implementing [First Nations, Métis and Inuit education] more into the curriculum but I don't know why it is in the math curriculum. • I am excited about interculturalism and the [First Nations, Métis and Inuit] thread, if supported adequately.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Concepts	76	• Reading the draft arts curriculum, there doesn't seem to be a clear distinction between the different arts nor does there appear to be any specific skills or concepts associated with teaching music. This leads me to question whether music positions will be filled with qualified music specialists or just a general teacher [...]. • Kindergarten [language arts] curriculum seems to have lost some important concepts that are not included in Grade 1 curriculum.
Flexibility	66	• I appreciate that there is more flexibility within each subject area. • I like the flexibility of the new curriculum and how it aligns with key competencies.
Support	56	• I am most concerned that we will be directed to implement the new curriculum before supporting resources are developed. I am also concerned that too many new subjects will be expected to be implemented at the same time.
Language arts	51	• Excited for a revamped language arts curriculum. • Concerned that the language arts curriculum will still be too vague.
Assessment	49	• Assessment is also something that needs to be looked at. • I am concerned about assessing student growth in their ability to explore ... rather than concrete outcomes.
Funding	41	• I am concerned about the cost. There is no money and I'm already anxiety-ridden with the prospect of purchasing new resources to teach the curriculum. [...] I purchase what my students need to learn if the school does not have it. School boards lean too hard on their teachers to purchase necessities. [...] No other profession has this expectation. • Concern about lack of funding for all the new materials that will be required.
Deployment/ timelines	38	• Concerned [about] implementing six courses in 2020. • I am concerned about the push to implement it too quickly

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Vague	33	The vagueness and sometimes relevance of it. “Handwrite legibly” might not be relevant in today’s society and is subjective.
No discussion	28	- I don’t like that there was no discussion before [redesign and implementation]. - I am concerned that my school has not taken the time during staff meetings to discuss and share with staff about the new curriculum. Most of the info I know has come from watching the news, sadly.
Political agenda	26	- The government has strongly imposed their beliefs into this curriculum. - Concerned. In science and social studies, political agendas appear to be taking over neutral exploration of some topics. It is not a balanced view to be pushing for change in some areas.
Competency based	26	- The competency-based factor is both exciting and concerning in that it will require students to demonstrate actual 21st-century skills, but will require a different way to assess them in doing so. This poses challenges and opportunities for teachers to think outside the box [... Teachers] will need to be supported through this with online and face-to-face PD. - There are some good things about the old curriculum; however, I’m glad that the competencies are guiding planning and instruction.
Workload	25	- I am concerned it will be a huge addition to my workload. - Concerned [that] students with disabilities [are] falling further behind because of dramatic increase in teachers’ workload.

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
French language	25	- I teach French immersion (FI) and finding quality resources is a constant struggle. I feel that my school district provides very limited resources and supports—the vast majority of supports come from our FI schools, teachers and [administrators]. While I am excited about the changes to the curriculum, I worry about the added strain and challenge for my FI colleagues. - Excited that the French immersion version will be ready at the same time as the English version. Concerned that no one has talked about it at my school.
Kindergarten	24	- I am excited to see that the kindergarten part of the curriculum remains developmentally appropriate. - I am happy to see that the kindergarten math curriculum again includes numbers to 10 rather than 5.
Physical education/ wellness	20	- Excited for the collaboration of physical education and health to form wellness. - An emphasis on wellness and well-rounded students is exciting to me.
Project based	20	- Inquiry-based learning and project-based learning [is] too much cross curricular. - Excited about it being more project-based learning but was very disappointed to see how little focus there was in digital literacy and digital citizenship.
Active learning	15	- I am excited for the broader scope in science and social, allowing more exploration and discovery. - Excited—more emphasis on inquiry and “big questions” rather than just memorization of facts, more emphasis on learning competencies and thinking skills.
Music	13	- I’m concerned with the new music curriculum and the lack of specific skills being mentioned. - Very concerned about the watered-down music curriculum.

3. QUESTIONS ABOUT CURRICULUM OR IMPLEMENTATION

Do you have any questions about the new K–4 curriculum or its implementation? (n=873)

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Need more information	239	- Where can I get the document? What should I do next? Are there meetings and workshops that are taking place already? - I haven't seen the curriculum yet. When will this information be formally shared with teachers? I have only seen comments about it on Facebook.
No/not yet	191	None so far. But I know I will once I look through it more.
Implementation/rollout	160	- I am not sure why it has to be simultaneously implemented. We typically do a year-by-year approach. It feels rushed. - The fact that the changes are being implemented in two different stages. [How] are teachers who teach 5–6 or 7–12 supposed to adapt to the changes, without having any information prior?
Time	147	- How much time will we have to look at the new curriculum? - How much time will teachers be given to prepare materials and new units?
Teacher input	91	- Why don't we know more about the curriculum? Do we have a say or do we get to vote about the implementation? - Why is it developed without teacher input?
Resources	115	- What resources and time will be devoted to teacher training? I think about how the math curriculum was changed last time and how little was done to help teachers at my school to understand it. Results went down over the years because of this. - Will the Alberta government be creating provincewide resources?
PD	92	- How will it be implemented and who is responsible for the PD? - Will there be PD support from Alberta [Education] provided to teachers?

Theme/Category	Frequency	Exemplary Comment(s)
Support	76	- How will teachers be supported during this transition? - What is the current plan to support teachers? How will it be ensured that all teachers across the district are provided with the same amount of support and access to information/learning opportunities, regardless what school you are currently at? Will principals be encouraged/expected to make new curriculum changes a focus, rather than adding it on to the other many mandated focuses already at our schools?
Assessments	73	- What assessments will we be expected to implement? - Will there be support for assessing outcomes?
Funding	42	- Where will all the funding and time for PD come from? - I'm concerned that school divisions, schools [and] teachers are not prepared to carry out the ambitious rollout by 2020 because very little has been shared or discussed. As well, providing access to resources for five grades across six subject areas seems cost prohibitive. From resources to teacher release time, this begs the question, where will the money come from to fund everything?
Social studies	17	I'd like to know more about the social studies and science outcomes and best practices in cross curricular teaching.
Science	17	- Right now we need to place more focus on language arts and math. There should be less time devoted to social and science, especially K-3. - Lots of the outcomes in science and social are very general. Why such a huge shift in the vision?
Math	11	- Is everything new, or are some things kept similar? Will we still be able to use some of the resources we already have or start from scratch? I'm curious about the math curriculum. - I get parents asking each year [about] when students learn about money as a math concept. It's not directly in the curriculum. It is for things like $\\$4.15 \times 7$, but the parents mean the bottom-line basics, like "This is a loonie. It is worth 100 cents" and so on. Is it true that this is specifically in there somewhere, as opposed to being just embedded in word problems and so forth?

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION - ALBERTA K–4 TEACHERS

Introduction

Overview

Alberta Education is in the process of rewriting the K-12 school curriculum. Six subjects and all grades are under review and will be re-written simultaneously in English and French. The Government's goal is to have the K–4 curriculum in six subjects approved by the Minister of Education by December 2018. Implementation timelines have not been finalized by Alberta Education; however, there are considerations for partial implementation of the new curriculum in September 2019 and full implementation of the six subjects in K–4 by September 2020.

To this end, the Alberta Teachers' Association is conducting a survey of Alberta K–4 certificated teachers in order to determine the extent to which they will have essential conditions in place for the implementation of this new K–4 provincial curriculum.

About the Survey

This survey should take between 5 to 10 minutes. If you have recently completed this survey, we thank you and ask that you do not complete it a second time.

Research Survey Participation

The survey is totally voluntary and you are free to skip some of the questions in the survey. In addition, all responses will be confidential. Only aggregate data will be reported. No data from open-ended questions that might identify an individual respondent will be used without permission. You are free to withdraw from the survey any time up until the “Submit” button is pressed at the end of the survey. Because this is an anonymous research survey, once results are submitted it is not possible to withdraw.

Consent and Privacy Protection

The Alberta Teachers' Association requires the information collected through this survey in order to conduct the professional and business affairs of its membership and will collect, use, and disclose the information you provide accordingly. For inquiries, objections, or concerns about how the Personal Information Protection Act applies to your personal information, please refer to our privacy policy on the Alberta Teachers' Association website. For questions regarding participation, contact Dr. Philip McRae at the Alberta Teachers' Association at 780-447-9400 or 1-800-232-7208.

Continuing with this survey implies consent to participate. Once again this survey is voluntary.

Vision & Leadership

1. Are you aware of the vision for the new K–4 curriculum?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Have you seen a copy of the draft K–4 curriculum?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Has your principal or any of your colleagues met with you to discuss the new K–4 provincial curriculum?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Has your principal or any of your colleagues met with you to help prepare you for its implementation?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Has someone from your central office met with you either to discuss the new K–4 curriculum or to help prepare you for its implementation?
☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Do you know if someone in your school will be taking a lead role in the implementation of the new K–4 curriculum?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
7. Given everything you know about the proposed K–4 curriculum, what do you consider to be a reasonable time frame before full, mandatory implementation of all six subjects?
☐ 6 months to 1 year ☐ 2 - 3 years ☐ 1 - 2 years ☐ 4 years or more

Resources and Readiness

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

8. You will have the teaching and learning resources necessary to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020.
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
9. You will have the necessary professional development and planning time required to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020.
☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

10. Your school will have the necessary funding and staffing in place to successfully implement the new K- 4 curriculum by September 2020.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ N/A ☐ I don't work at a school

11. Your school jurisdiction will have the necessary funding and staffing in place to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

12. You will be ready to implement the new K–4 curriculum in September 2020.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

13. You will be ready to implement the new K–4 curriculum in September 2020

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Professional Development

Follow-up question for those who have participated in some PD related to the new curriculum.

14. In what types of curriculum development and implementation PD have you participated to date? (Select all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ face-to-face workshop(s) | ☐ independent unit and lesson planning |
| ☐ online module(s) or webinar(s) | ☐ collaborative unit and lesson planning |
| ☐ series of ongoing workshops | ☐ independent resource selection or development |
| ☐ series of online modules or webinars | ☐ collaborative resource selection or development |
| ☐ graduate level university courses | ☐ working on an independent action research project |
| ☐ independent study and reflection | ☐ working on a collaborative action research project collaborative study and reflection |

Other (please specify)

15. When did the majority of the curriculum development and implementation PD that you already attended take place? (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ during the normal instructional day | ☐ on scheduled non-instructional or professional development days |
| ☐ at the end of the instructional day (e.g. 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM) | ☐ on your own evening, weekend, and summer time |
| ☐ on instructional days when students have been dismissed early | |

Other (please specify)

16. In what types of curriculum development and implementation PD would you like to participate in the future? (Select all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ face-to-face workshop(s) | ☐ independent unit and lesson planning |
| ☐ online module(s) or webinar(s) | ☐ collaborative unit and lesson planning |
| ☐ series of ongoing workshops | ☐ independent resource selection or development |
| ☐ series of online modules or webinars | ☐ collaborative resource selection or development |
| ☐ graduate level university courses | ☐ working on an independent action research project |
| ☐ independent study and reflection | ☐ working on a collaborative action research project collaborative study and reflection |

Other (please specify)

17. When should the majority of future curriculum development and implementation PD be scheduled? (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ during the normal instructional day | ☐ on scheduled non-instructional or professional development days |
| ☐ at the end of the instructional day (e.g. 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM) | ☐ on your own evening, weekend, and summer time |
| ☐ on instructional days when students have been dismissed early | |

Other (please specify):

Summary

18. What resources and supports will you need to successfully implement the new K–4 curriculum by September 2020? (500 characters maximum)
19. About which aspects of the new K–4 curriculum are you excited or concerned (if any)? (500 characters maximum)
20. Do you have any questions about the new K–4 curriculum or its implementation? (500 characters maximum)
21. In 2019–2020, would you be interested in participating in an Association research project related to the implementation of the new K–4 curriculum?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Contact information for those willing to take part in further Association research on the new Alberta K–4 curriculum.

22. If you are interested in participating in future Association curriculum research, please let us know how we can contact you.

First Name _____

Last Name _____

City or Town _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Demographics

23. To which teachers' convention are you assigned?

☐ Calgary City ☐ Mighty Peace ☐ Southeastern

☐ Central Alberta ☐ North Central ☐ South Western

☐ Central East Alberta ☐ Northeast ☐ Greater Edmonton

☐ Palliser District

24. How long have you been teaching, including the current year?

☐ 1 year ☐ 10 to 14 years ☐ Over 30 years

☐ 2 to 4 years ☐ 15 to 19 years ☐ 5 to 9 years

☐ 20 to 30 years

25. Your current assignment is exclusively or mainly focused on students in:

- ☐ ECS/Kindergarten ☐ Grades 4 to 6 ☐ Grades 10 to 12
☐ Grades 1 to 3 ☐ Grades 7 to 9 ☐ 5 to 9 years

Combinations (please specify)

26. You are employed:

- ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time

27. You are employed by which type of school authority?

- ☐ Public ☐ Separate ☐ Francophone

28. What's your current teaching or leadership assignment?

- ☐ Classroom teacher ☐ School administrator only
☐ Combined classroom and administrative duties ☐ Central office staff or administrator
☐ Other (e.g, alternative school, cyber school)

29. How old are you?

- ☐ 25 and younger ☐ 41-45 years old ☐ 61-65 years old
☐ 26-30 years old ☐ 46-50 years old ☐ 61-65 years old
☐ 31-35 years old ☐ 51-55 years old ☐ Over 65
☐ 36-40 years old ☐ 56-60 years old

30. How do you identify?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender
☐ Not listed ☐ Prefer not to say



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