

CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION REASONABLE INTERPRETATION FOR ENDS 3: *CITIZENSHIP*

The Calgary Board of Education Ends 3: *Citizenship* states:

Each student will be a responsible citizen by being an informed and involved member in his or her local, national and global communities.

Accordingly, each student will:

1. Participate in developing and maintaining our Canadian civil, democratic society;
2. Understand the responsibilities of citizenship in local, national and international contexts;
3. Respect and embrace cultural diversity;
4. Develop the skills necessary to work and communicate effectively with others;
5. Actively contribute to creating a better local and global community.

Citizenship is about who we are, how we live together, and what kind of people our children are to become.¹

Most historical interpretations of the concept of citizenship have encompassed a wider definition of that term than simply referring to the rights of birthplace or homeland. Historically, four basic facets of citizenship education have been identified; the civil domain of citizenship, the political domain of citizenship, the socio-economic domain of citizenship and the cultural domain of citizenship.² Each of these domains has evolved over time, leading to an ongoing reframing of the notion of citizenship, as increased globalization has produced a need for greater social responsibility in the global community. The five policy provisions of Ends 3: *Citizenship* encompass this variety of skills, within the context of the four domains of citizenship as we work towards developing each student's capacity for effective participation in local, national and international contexts.

The Chief Superintendent believes citizenship education must combine understandings of one's own community with broader understandings of communities around the world; including governance, laws and societal norms.³ This view coincides with the recently

¹ Hebert, Y. & Sears, A. *Citizenship Education*. Canadian Education Association, p. 2.

²The civil domain of citizenship includes tenets such as freedom of speech and the rights of individual citizens. The political domain of citizenship refers to political participation in a democracy including the right to vote. The socio-economic domain of citizenship refers to social and economic rights like minimum wage, the right to work, social security and the development of labour laws. The cultural domain of citizenship refers to how societies deal with cultural diversity and an individual's rights against all forms of discrimination. Hebert, Y. & Sears, A. *Citizenship Education*. Canadian Education Association, pp. 1-2.

³ The concept of a responsible citizen is often connected with the concept of being a well educated person. For example, in the McKinsey Education report from July 2009, Michael Barber discusses a well-educated

revised Alberta Education Social Studies Programs of Study wherein it states that students leaving Grade 12 will have been provided with a number of opportunities to explore concepts and ideas relative to their own identities, and within the world around them.

The Social Studies Programs of Study provide examples of learning outcomes that promote the understanding and analysis of multiple perspectives, both historical and contemporary, so that students might develop reasoned positions informed by evidence. Along with these understandings, citizenship education encourages actions one might perform in order to be a contributing member of a global community; a concept some educators term “worldmindedness.” Along with the fostering of understandings and action, citizenship education must work to develop students’ abilities to analyze and critique causes of social problems⁴ and responsibly address injustices they have recognized.⁵

In this way, the very definition of what it means to be a responsible citizen has changed over time. Rather than seeing citizenship education as simply developing understandings of what it means to be a good citizen, citizenship education has come to be viewed within a context of *citizenship-as-practice*. “Citizenship-as-practice suggests that young people learn to be citizens as a consequence of their participation in the actual practices that make up their lives.”⁶ This participation must be accompanied by scaffolded, directed learning opportunities, as students do not become responsible citizens merely through the act of participation. Citizenship as practice requires increased participation of students in the learning process, and the contextualization of knowledge gained. **Citizenship is a concept that must be lived to be measured.**

Citizenship as practice cannot be taught as an independent topic of study, just as a student’s learnings in all curricular areas cannot be compartmentalized. As discussed in the Reasonable Interpretation for Ends 2: *Academic Success*, the Program of Studies for each curricular area is not an entity unto itself, as each one is related to others in a myriad of ways. Literacy development, for example, does not only take place in an English class, just as mathematics learning is not contained within the mathematics block in a student’s schedule. In fact, literacy, it has been said, empowers the individual “both in the psychological and the social sense, and...sharpens consciousness, creates discontent with the unacceptable, and adds potential to individual capacity for participation.” In short,

person as one with an ethical underpinning to wield influence for the good of society. Barber’s equation demonstrating his conceptualization of what constitutes a well-educated citizen was used as a model in the Chief Superintendent’s Reasonable Interpretation for Ends 1: *Mega End*, as it encompasses knowledge, thinking and leadership within an ethical framework. This framework mirrors the interplay between all of the Calgary Board of Trustees’ Ends policy statements, reinforcing the idea that all must work together to develop a well educated citizen.

⁴ Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2004). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*. Volume 41, No. 2, p, 21,

⁵ Alberta Education Social Studies Program of Studies at <http://education.alberta.ca/media/774377/soc30.pdf>

⁶ Lawy, R. & Biesta, G., 2006, Citizenship-as-Practice: The Educational Implications of an Inclusive and Relational Understanding of Citizenship. *British Journal of Educational Studies*. Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 45.

literacy makes modern democracy possible.⁷ Just as all curricular areas can contribute to one's citizenship education, citizenship education -- to be practiced and lived -- will cross all curricular boundaries. It will serve, not as a subject to be studied, but to address the many issues pertinent to student lives. "The issues themselves should be viewed as interconnected or mutually embedded...(and) learners should be helped to understand that their perspective on any issue is but one among many."⁸

The interplay between and amongst the concepts in the five Ends not only contribute to the development of a person who is "well-educated," but also to illustrate the forces at play within the concept of citizenship itself, as each of the other Ends contributes to the development of our young citizens. Guiding students in becoming responsible citizens requires the acquisition of knowledge and understandings described in the reasonable interpretation for Ends 2: *Academic Success*, the development of participatory and communication skills and values described in Ends 4: *Personal Development* and Ends 5: *Character* and the ethical framework and personalization of learning described in Ends 1: *Mega End*.

The *Mega End* describes processes whereby students engage deeply in the learning process through the personalization of student learning; developing foundations needed to function effectively in life, work and continued learning. These foundations are the tenets stated in the policy provisions of the four CBE Ends leading to the *Mega End: Academic Success, Citizenship, Personal Development and Character*. With these necessary foundations developed in synergy with one another, students can become citizens of the world who contribute to the common good. These student citizens are ethical, builders of trusting relationships, open minded team players, and effective communicators. They are engaged, life-long learners, who are able to adapt to change with optimism and hope. They are entrepreneurs, confident and bold explorers striving for excellence. Calgary Board of Education students are supported in developing these attributes that contribute to healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities.

The development of desired attributes of responsible citizens can be most effectively realized through the personalization of student learning; meeting each student's needs in becoming informed and involved members of their communities. Being informed denotes an individual who seeks information, considers conflicting discourse, is reflective and uses critical thinking skills. In addition to being informed, a responsible citizen is also involved; active in seeking both knowledge and experience. The combination of these attributes serves to foster the development of social and critical-thinking capabilities in each of our students.

⁷ Bhola, H.S. *Literacy for Survival and for More Than Mere Survival*. International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, Geneva, 1990.

⁸ Selby, D., & Pike, G. (2000). Civil Global Education : Relevant Learning for the Twenty-First Century. *Convergence*, 33(1/2), 138. Retrieved January 31, 2008, from Professional Development Collection database. p. 2. Linked at: <http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=3500292&loginpage=Login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Monitoring and measuring reasonable progress towards Ends 3: *Citizenship* requires a balanced examination of our students' understandings and actions; how they are informed and involved. Current research also suggests the addition of monitoring student values within the realm of citizenship education. Evaluating values is complex as it involves appraising what constitutes *responsible* or *good* citizenship; the definition of which may change over time or in different contexts. For example, one would usually not advocate for breaking the law, however positive examples of law-breakers like Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi cannot be overlooked when examining the history of human rights and what constitutes a *responsible* citizen.⁹

The Chief Superintendent believes that the monitoring of a student's values should primarily reside within families, guided by familial morals and expectations. Public education has a role in complementing those family-based value systems by guiding students in the development of societal values. Although schools cannot assess the values students hold, they can monitor and assess attitudes and behaviours displayed in the context of responsible citizenship in school.

All three aspects of citizenship education -- understandings, actions and values -- are reflected in the outcomes, measures and data sources listed below.

Outcomes

- Students demonstrate understandings of local, national and international political processes pertinent to their age and stage of development, as per outcomes in the Alberta Program of Studies for Social Studies
- Students demonstrate understandings of a variety of perspectives on local, national and international issues
- Students demonstrate understanding of membership obligations in communities
- Student actions demonstrate understanding of local, national and global value systems
- Students participate in decision-making involving issues directly affecting their lives
- Students participate in community service, school service and volunteer work

Measures

- Percentages of students who achieve the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams in Social Studies
- Percentage of students who report having had opportunities to participate in classroom or school decisions that affect them
- Percentage of students who report participating in political or social causes in order to improve the community

⁹ Sears, A. (2004). In Search of Good Citizens: Citizenship Education and Social Studies in Canada. Challenges & Prospects for Canadian Social Studies. Pacific Educational Press, Chapter 5.

- Percentage of students who report that they believe they can make a difference in the local, national and international community
- Percentage of students who report having been encouraged through public education to appreciate multiple perspectives
- Percentage of students who report participating in community service, school service or volunteer work
- Percentage of students who understand digital citizenship requirements and use them effectively
- Percentage of students who are reported to exercise democratic rights and responsibilities within the learning community
- Percentage of students who are reported to demonstrate respect and appreciation for diversity as measured through school report cards
- Percentage of students who are reported to work and communicate effectively with others

Data Sources

- Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Overall Summary
- Provincial Achievement Test and Diploma Exam results
- CBE Mega End Symposia data
- CBE Student Survey
- CBE Student Report Card Data
- Media reports involving CBE schools or students
- School-based digital citizenship reporting