

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

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January 30, 2013

Mr. Nathan Tidridge
300 Progreston Road
Carlisle ON L0R 1H1

Dear Mr. Tidridge,

Thank you for your correspondence to members of the Legislature expressing concerns about the Grade 10 Civics (CHV2O) course. Ms. Julia Munro, MPP for York-Simcoe, also sent it to my attention, and a reference to it was made in a letter I received from Mr. Monte McNaughton, MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. I am pleased to respond.

Our government believes that learning goes beyond basic facts and conventions. Education must inspire and challenge students. As you know and have stated in your letter, the *Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8*, and *Canadian and World Studies, Grades 9 to 12* curriculum policy documents are currently in the review process. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the curriculum remains current and relevant, and to identify areas that need revising from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The review process includes research on new education developments that will inform the curriculum, comparisons of Ontario's curriculum policy documents with those in other jurisdictions, and consultation with parents, teachers, students, and other educators. This review provides the opportunity for citizenship education to be strengthened in the revised curriculum, which is nearing finalization. Examples and teacher prompts have also been strengthened through this review process to help teachers plan their lessons. The revised curriculum policy documents are expected to be released this spring, for implementation in fall 2013.

Students learn about Canadian government, including roles, concepts and terms related to the parliamentary system, constitutional monarchy, the Crown, important Canadian symbols and ceremonies, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms mostly in the curricula for *Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8* and *Canadian and World Studies, Grades 9 to 12*.

The overall expectation that you identify in your letter addresses, in general terms, the knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of the current Grade 10 Civics course: *Students are expected to describe the main structures and functions of municipal, provincial, and federal government in Canada.*

The corresponding specific expectations describe this knowledge in greater detail:

- identify the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and describe how these rights and responsibilities are exercised in schools, communities, and the nation;
- explain why it is essential in a democracy for governments to be open and accountable to their citizens, while protecting the personal information citizens are required to provide to governments (e.g., *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*).

Currently, other references to this topic are also found in Grade 5, in Social Studies, in the section on Canada and World Connections: Aspects of Citizenship and Government in Canada. There, students are expected to use appropriate vocabulary (e.g., *government, local, municipal, provincial, federal, democracy, citizenship, legislature, constituency, prime minister, premier, mayor, governor general, monarchy, lieutenant-governor, cabinet, opposition, election, majority, minority, electors, riding, county, civil servant, right, responsibility*) to describe their inquiries and observations.

In the Grade 11 Canadian and World Studies, Canadian Politics and Citizenship course, students are expected to describe the organizing principles that shape Canadian government (e.g., constitutional monarchy, federated union, parliamentary system).

Please understand that while the ministry is responsible for developing curriculum policy, implementation is the responsibility of school boards. Teachers plan units of study, develop a variety of teaching approaches, and select appropriate learning resources to address the curriculum expectations, taking into account the needs and abilities of their students.

In reference to your concerns about textbook inaccuracies, educational publishers develop textbooks and other learning resources and they are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information their products contain. Publishers' reputations in the marketplace are dependent upon the quality of their products. That is why editing and fact-checking are intrinsic to the resource development process. In some instances, errors are detected after the books are printed and delivered to customers. When this happens, it is the current practice of publishers to issue an errata sheet and/or correct the error in the next printing of the textbook. I encourage you to contact the publishers of textbooks to ensure that they know about the particular errors you have detected.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours truly,



Laurel Broten
Minister

c: Teresa Piruzza, MPP
Windsor West

Julia Munro, MPP
York-Simcoe

Monte McNaughton, MPP
Lambton-Kent-Middlesex