

Q&A re Quebec's revised History program

Q: Are there problems with the revised ⁽¹⁾ History program?

A: The revised program is not without its **political** problems, as it has too much nationalism, not enough Canadian content and pays little attention to Quebec's many diverse communities.

Q: Given these political problems, why has the EMSB decided to implement the revised program?

A: Because this is not a new problem, as the first senior History program in Quebec (1982) as well as the current program (2009) exhibit the similar issues. However, compared to the current, this revised program includes more Canadian content and more opportunities to teach about the indigenous people, immigrants, etc.

Q: What about the nationalism in the revised program.

A: Nationalism has always been an issue in Quebec's history programs. Teachers at the EMSB will continue to address this problem by complementing the program with Canadian content to ensure equity in how political matters are addressed. At the EMSB we have introduced a local History program ⁽²⁾ that addresses this very issue, and has increased students' interest and motivation in History. This local program is directed by the teacher to the benefit of his or her students.

Q: How will the EMSB address these political problems?

A: It is our understanding that there will be changes to this program before it is finalized by the Ministry. Therefore, the EMSB will continue to provide feedback to the Ministry on this program. And, by implementing the revised program, it will give all of our teachers the opportunity to provide more feedback that is based on their daily experience with the students. We would not want the teachers at the EMSB to miss out on this opportunity.

Q: Is the EMSB the only school board that is implementing this revised program?

A: After much consultation and extensive deliberation, the decision to implement this program is unanimously recommended by the Directors of English Education Network (DEEN) representing all nine English boards. Furthermore, at a Directors-General meeting, all nine English school boards supported the DEEN's recommendation.

⁽¹⁾ Although the Ministry of Education calls this a new program, all of the components of the Quebec Education Program (Quebec's official curriculum) as well as most of the content of the current History program are included in this revised program.

⁽²⁾ In the Outreach schools, local History is formally addressed with a complementary course (587-442). In many of the secondary schools, local history is covered in class through projects, special lessons, etc. (such as the Veteran's Memorial Project at Westmount High School).

Q: Why is the EMSB not waiting until these problems are addressed before implementing the revised program?

A: Because the revised program addresses those **pedagogical** concerns that have been raised by many teachers. It is chronological over two years, rather than chronological in Sec. III and thematic in Sec. IV. (In short, we currently do not have two years of History, but one year of History that is taught twice.) This chronological approach over two years renders the revised program less repetitive and therefore more interesting to students.

Q: Is this the only pedagogical reason to implement the revised program?

A: No, furthermore, rather than thematically compartmentalizing the content in Sec. IV, the revised program allows the teacher to apply a narrative approach that is more conducive to how most students learn.

Also, by implementing the program teachers will have the maximum amount of time to update their lessons and prepare for the eventual provincial exam.

Q: What initiatives will the EMSB take to address the concerns that have been raised regarding the revised program?

A: As this is not a new problem, the EMSB will continue to support its teachers with complementary material and programs. For example, in 2013, the EMSB introduced a local History program to address many of the issues raised in the current program. Our objective, as always, to provide students with those History lessons that are pedagogically sound and socially respectful.