



### Additional Languages Curriculum FAQ

#### 1. What is the Additional Languages Curriculum?

The Additional Languages Curriculum was provincially prescribed language curricula, to take effect July 1, 2012, for French, German, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Punjabi and Spanish language courses. This curricula was to be structured based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The term “additional languages” was selected based on its inclusiveness. Under this curriculum, students would choose the language, in addition to English, that they wish to study.

#### 2. What is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)?

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was developed in the early 1990s under the direction of the Council of Europe, the Council for Cultural Co-operation (Steering Committee for Education), and the Modern Languages Section, officially published in 2001. CEFR provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. This framework aims to represent the diverse languages and cultures present in Europe, while facilitating communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues through a better knowledge of European modern languages.

#### 3. Why introduce CEFR into Canadian education systems?

The CEFR acts as a reference tool, presenting what needs to be considered in the teaching, learning, and assessment process of language learning, and raises a series of questions to help educators determine what learners need to know and do with the language. Though originally a European framework, the CEFR is not a standardization tool and is therefore context-amendable. The framework provides a more comprehensive way to discuss and evaluate language proficiency.

#### 4. Why was the Additional Languages Curriculum proposed?

Additional Languages are a required area of study, described as “second languages.” BC students come from rich and diverse linguistic backgrounds and connections to other cultures, and this curriculum was aimed at allowing students to study a language or languages with which they already had some prior learning experience as well as giving them the opportunity to study others.

#### 5. What curriculum is being used?

The Additional Languages Curriculum was scheduled to take effect July 1, 2012. This will not go forward. After public opposition to the proposed curriculum and fears that the change would undermine the importance of French as Canada’s other official language, the Ministry will continue with the previous French Language Curriculum; other language curriculums have been approved by the Ministry and may be taken as additional languages, where offered. However, having been endorsed by the Council of Ministers of Education, CEFR will be introduced into the Core French curriculum.

#### 6. How does the introduction of CEFR affect the BC curriculum?

The CEFR introduces a curriculum based on students’ proficiency and language skills. A student’s abilities in a second or additional language would be assessed through proficiency levels rather than grade levels; for example, rather than taking grade 8 French, the student would be placed in the level (A1, A2, B1, B2 etc.) that best represents their abilities.

#### Sources:

*Working with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the Canadian Context: Guide for policy-makers and curriculum designers*, by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, January 2010.

*Final Draft: Additional Languages - Elementary-Secondary Curriculum 2010*, by the BC Ministry of Education, 2010.