



The Bark

Winter 2018

Upcoming Events

[UN Observances](#)

November 16 - [International Day for Tolerance](#)

November 12-18 - [Bullying Awareness Week](#)

November 17-19 - [Parkland Institute Conference: Collapse: Neoliberalism in Crisis](#)

November 20 - [Universal Children's Day](#)

November 25 - [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#)

November 29 - [International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People](#)

December 01 - [World AIDS Day](#)

December 02 - [International Day for the Abolition of Slavery](#)

December 03 - [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)

December 10 - [Human Rights Day](#)

January 21-27 - [National Non-Smoking Week](#)

January 22 - [Weedless Wednesday](#)

January 27 - [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust](#)

February - [Black History Month](#)

February 04 - [World Cancer Day](#)

February 20 - [World Day of Social Justice](#)

February 28 - [Pink Shirt Day](#)

March 1 - [Zero Discrimination Day](#)

Agents of Change

Nicola Ramsey

Since our latest look are the proposed Alberta Social Studies Scope and Sequence certain politicians, pundits, and media have derided the current NDP government for suggesting that students should be "agents of change." Why? For the last 60 years, no matter what the ideology of the day, our education system has tried to teach kids to seek a better way forward-not just for themselves but also for society.

In 1947, the Department of Education wrote "Society wants and needs good citizens. It is the business of the Social Studies courses to help produce these good citizens, well-adjusted socially and well equipped mentally, citizens capable of thinking intelligently and determined to do their part in bringing about social progress."

After World War II, fully aware that, "This is an age of propaganda fraught with pitfalls for the unwary, the ignorant, the unthinking and the mentally unawakened." Ernest Manning and the Social Credit were determined that schools would train critical thinkers who were equipped to separate fact from fiction and make decisions based on evidence. Creating students who were committed to "social betterment" and had "an appreciation of the worth and dignity of the individual and a desire to preserve the rights of minority groups and maintain justice for all."

In 1970, the Social Credit lead by Harry Strom unveiled a new curriculum, "...with optimism about the nature of man and the efficacy of democratic ideals...free and open inquiry into individual and social values that will serve the humanistic goals of education by offering students *experience in living* and not just *preparation for living*...students will deal not only with the 'what is' but also with the 'what ought to be' and will have the opportunity to make this world a more desirable place in which to live."

By 1978, with Progressive Conservative Peter Lougheed as premier, the curriculum called for the development of students who are "sensitive to their human and natural environment, with intellectual independence, moral maturity, effective participants in community affairs."

By 1990, under Progressive Conservative Premier Don Getty, the ultimate aim of education was "to develop the ability of the individual so that he might fulfill personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society...including justice, fair play and fundamental rights, responsibilities and freedoms."

The latest implementation in 2005 under Progressive Conservative Premier Ralph Klein reads "Social Studies develops the key values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills and processes necessary for students to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the democratic process and aware of their capacity to affect change in their communities, societies and world."

Continued on Page 2 →



Aspen Foundation for Labour Education



Agents of Change, Nicola Ramsey, continued

So whatever we call it, successive generations of educators in our province have advocated for students to work towards creating a better world for all. Recognizing that the status quo isn't good enough, and understanding that "To know and not to act is not to know," they encourage their students to play a part in making a better, fairer and more just world. Education should give children knowledge about the world. It should help them think critically and creatively. It should give them confidence to follow their dreams. It should help break the cycle of poverty. It should show them the world for what it is, including the marvels that are worth preserving and the injustices they need to do something about while providing them with the abilities and skills to act. I think of the hundreds of kids I have worked with over the years. Kids who are now adults who are making changes every day in their families, their communities, their workplaces and on the global stage. As a parent and a teacher,

I want my children to be empowered in their own lives and as global citizens, with the skills, attitudes and knowledge that will help them create a positive future for themselves and the planet. I want them to keep reaching and striving to make changes in their world. What that change looks like is up to them.

Social Justice Learning Grants

Congratulations to our 2017-2018 Social Justice Learning Grant Recipients! We at the Aspen Foundation for Labour Education are so proud to be supporting such diverse projects from across our province. Please see a [full list](#) of recipients on our [website](#), where you can also access our incredible free education resources. .

Happy Holidays from the Aspen Foundation!

Our Board and Staff wish you and your family the warmest of wishes during this holiday season, and look forward to continuing our work serving Alberta's students and their teachers in the New Year!

Aspen Foundation Feedback and Participation

We value your comments, please send them to us. If you would like to write an article regarding social justice work in the classroom, please contact Laura at aspenfoundation@gmail.com.

We believe that it is important that schools teach about building new, fairer, kinder, and more just workplaces and communities. Friends like you make our work possible.

Your support is key to offering Social Justice and Labour Education in schools

Aspen Foundation is a registered charity and provides **income tax receipts** to individual donors.

[Click here to support our work!](#)

Resources and Links

Article: [We Shouldn't Always Feel Comfortable: Why 'To Kill a Mockingbird' Matters](#)

Article: [45+ Fifteen-minute crafts for kids](#)

Video: [Secret Alberta: The Former Life of Amber Valley](#)

Article: [Classroom Discussion Strategies](#)

Video: [The Privilege Race](#)

Website: [We Were So Far Away: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools](#)

*Always review resources before using them in class.

Visit us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) for more resources



The Aspen Foundation for Labour Education

◆ Contact us at aspenfoundation@gmail.com or Gary Hansen afle@telus.net ◆ www.afle.ca