

The Western Canada Protocol, under the leadership of Alberta, is developing a common core mathematics program for British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The Grades K–9 curriculum is already established, and the Grades 10–12 program will be in place before the end of this school year. This should allow easier transfer of students throughout western Canada. Publishers should be able to prepare materials for a larger market.

As I see it, the biggest challenge to the success of the new curriculum will be a shortage of qualified teachers. Significantly more emphasis is placed on such areas as statistics and probability, estimation, mental mathematics, the use of technology, and manipulatives. Currently, many mathematics teachers have little or no training beyond high school in either area of content or methods.

If the new curriculum is to be effectively implemented, teachers are going to have to be provided with extensive inservice sessions in mathematics. Postsecondary institutions, Alberta Education, school boards and the ATA are going to have to share responsibility for this training. Teachers, as individuals, must not only pressure for these inservice programs but also attend them. Costs will have to be a shared responsibility.

The new mathematics program should be exciting to teach and should develop in students a genuine enthusiasm for mathematics.

Arthur Jorgensen

What Do You Think?

Stop "experts" from spoiling our schools.

Those who sabotage our state schools always refuse to believe the obvious—that there can be no teaching without peace and order; that mistakes must be corrected; that spelling, sums and neatness are the building bricks of a good education.

The symbol of their willful stupidity is the use of calculators in class. Any fool can use a calculator. But if that fool should press the wrong button, how will he be able to tell the answer is wrong?

The "experts" who brought the calculator into British schools are the same people who flatly refuse to teach young children their tables.

The countries that actually make the calculators, and sell them to us in millions, know better. Their youngsters still sit in orderly rows and learn things by heart, and their economies will overtake ours if we do not mend our ways.

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