The Ontario Curriculum and 21st Century Education

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Current Approach and Philosophy

• The provincial curriculum is current, relevant, age-appropriate and coherent and identifies key knowledge and skills to prepare students for success in a knowledge-based global economy.
Background: How did we get here?

The curriculum review process (2003):
• responds to government’s sustained focus on:
  ▪ improving student achievement;
  ▪ closing the gaps;
  ▪ increasing public confidence in our publicly-funded education system.
• builds on quality curriculum in place while identifying targeted areas in need of support
• is a staged cyclical process
Current Framework

• Focused coherence within disciplines from K-12
• Common organization of learning expectations, knowledge and skills
• Increased focus on critical thinking, inquiry-based learning
• Enhanced cohesion, depth and support within the curriculum
• Aligned program planning support across disciplines
Current Framework

• Subject-based elementary curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 8
• Discipline-based secondary curriculum, Grades 9 to 12
• Curriculum policy documents are organized as follows:
  – *Front Matter*: provides an overview of the subject and a common context for program planning across subjects
  – *Courses and Strands*: broad organizing areas of the curriculum in each subject and grade
  – *Overall expectations*: describe in general terms what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade
  – *Specific expectations*: describe the expected knowledge and skills in greater detail
Ontario’s Student Achievement Success Story
Foundations for 21st Century Teaching and Learning
Challenges and Opportunities

• Frameworks for learning
• Fact-based and inquiry-based learning and assessment
• Foundational and higher order 21st Century knowledge and skills
• Effective 21st Century pedagogy
• Effective technology-enabled practices
• Student engagement
• Formal and informal learning
Future Directions

• Cross-curricular “21st century skills”
• Responsive, flexible curriculum using technological supports and digital resources
• Consider learning opportunities within the curriculum, across the school and within the local and global community
• 21st Century teaching and learning strategy