

AP 203 – Establishment of Specialized Programs, Academies or Schools

Background

The Board of Education is committed to serving the diverse needs of students, as seen by parents, while recognizing the needs of the district as a whole. This section describes the criteria and process which will be applied in considering the implementation of alternate programs or schools, as well as the requirement for periodic assessment following implementation.

Procedures

1. The Superintendent will establish a process for program development and communicate it to all schools. Proposals for new programs will be presented to the Board for consideration.
2. The Board of Education will consider the establishment of specialized programs or schools only when the following criteria and conditions have been met:
 - 2.1 A proposed program or school must meet the requirements of the [School Act](#) and [Regulations](#), and the provincial and district prescribed curriculum.
 - 2.2 A proposed program or school will have a statement of philosophy and objectives.
 - 2.3 A proposed program or school will be open to application by any student in the district. Where selection of students is required because of the nature of the program or space limitations, criteria and a process will be approved as part of the program or school proposal.
 - 2.4 The constraints of regular planning timelines of the district (school calendar, budget planning processes, etc.) will determine the date of establishment for an alternate program or school.
3. Preliminary Requirements
 - 3.1 Where a proposal to establish an alternate school is considered, a comprehensive assessment will be undertaken which will include:
 - 3.1.1 an educational assessment, to determine:
 - i) the needs of the students the program is intended to serve
 - ii) the level of interest on the part of students/parents
 - 3.1.2 the long-term viability of the proposed offering, which shall include considerations such as, but not limited to:
 - i) the ability to maintain established minimum enrolment levels without the provision of special transportation assistance by the Board of Education;

- ii) the impact on the viability of other established programs or schools;
 - 3.1.3 compatibility with the aims and objectives of the school district as established by the Board of Education;
 - 3.2 an enrollment assessment which considers the availability of suitable space, the impact on the viability of other district programs or schools, and the potential impact on future capital funding for the district;
 - 3.3 a financial assessment which considers the availability of supporting grants and operating funds, as well as the financial impact on a district-wide basis in both the short and long-term.
4. Guidelines
- 4.1 Specialty Academies must conform to the Specialty Academy Criteria regulation; [School Act](#) Section 82.1;
 - 4.2 Fees may be charged for an approved specialty academy as per the [School Act](#), Section 82.4;
 - 4.3 Fees payable to a specialty academy as subject to Administrative Procedure AP317, Student Fees, and the applicable financial hardship provision;
 - 4.4 Specialty Academies are open to all students in the Abbotsford School District;
 - 4.5 Spaces in Specialty Academies will be assigned as per the Registration Priorities in Policy 18, School Catchment Areas, and will be confirmed by June 15th annually;
 - 4.6 Enrolment in a Specialty Academy is managed by the host school and acceptance into an academy is determined by the criteria established at the host school;
 - 4.7 District Students who wish to enroll in an academy in another non-catchment school within the district must complete a Non-Catchment Request form for the Academy;
 - 4.8 Out of District Students must apply to the Abbotsford School District first using the appropriate form with the request to attend an Academy;
 - 4.9 Students who enter an academy from a non-catchment school or from an out-of-district school will return to their home school or home district at yearend if they withdraw from the academy within two years.
5. Periodic Evaluation of Alternate Programs / Schools
- 5.1 The superintendent will conduct periodic program evaluations, with reports presented to the Board of Education.

Reference [School Act](#), Section 82
Board Policy 16 'Programs/Schools of Choice'

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