



ESTABLISHMENT OF CHOICE PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS

APPROVED: 2004.05.25
REVISED: 2010.10.26

POLICY

The Board of Education, within available resources, will provide parents and students with a choice of programs. Additionally, the Board will attempt to optimize the use of its resources to facilitate choice options for parents and students.

DEFINITIONS:

“Choice Management Committee” is composed of the Superintendent of Schools and the Assistant Superintendents.

“Choice programs” are the district’s French immersion, Aboriginal, Montessori and traditional programs, or any other program approved in accordance with this policy, when operated in a school that also offers a regular program.

“Choice school” is an elementary or secondary school with a community- or district-wide catchment area, which, while meeting provincial and district curricular expectations, has a significant or pervasive philosophical, organizational or curricular difference from other schools. A choice school offers a choice program as a single track and requires Board endorsement.

“Focus school” is an elementary or secondary school in which the administrator, the parent advisory council and the staff have developed, and wish to maintain over an extended period of time, a particular area of emphasis or focus that exceeds both provincial and district curricular expectations. A focus school serves a local catchment area.

“Neighbourhood school” is the elementary or secondary school located in the catchment area, as defined in Policy 5119 (School Catchment Areas and Student Transfers), in which the student normally resides.

Responsibility Centre: Assistant Superintendents

References: *School Act*, Section 85

Policy 5119 (School Catchment Areas and Student Transfers)



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PREAMBLE

School District No. 57 (Prince George) recognizes that parents have a right to be involved in their children's education and that they should have choices about how their children will be educated. The Board recognizes the individuality of students and their learning styles by offering them different programming options.

The Board believes that the provision of choice in programs and schools will increase parent involvement, increase both parent and student satisfaction with schooling, and ultimately leads to higher academic achievement.

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REGULATIONS:

1. Neighbourhood Schools
 - 1.1 The Board will ensure that every student will have the choice of attending their neighbourhood school, or any other educational program provided by the Board, space permitting and in accordance with the *School Act*.
 - 1.2 Registration priority for a particular school or program will be determined in accordance with Policy 5119 (School Catchment Areas and Student Transfers).
2. Focus Schools
 - 2.1 Students enrolled in a focus school or program should expect to receive extra support and knowledge in the area of focus, although the school philosophy and regimen should not be so specialized that students without a strong background in the focus area would be disadvantaged.
 - 2.2 There would be no additional resource allocation from the district to such a school.
 - 2.3 There could be any number of focus schools in a community.
3. Choice Schools
 - 3.1 Board approval is required to create a choice school.
 - 3.2 A choice school would usually be a single-track school.
 - 3.3 A choice school may have physical plant requirements that differ from neighbourhood schools.
 - 3.4 The Board may allocate additional resources in order to create or operate a choice school.
 - 3.5 It is likely that there would be only one school of its kind in the community until that school was full.
 - 3.6 A choice school will work towards meeting the best practices and generally held expectations for such a school.
4. The district will increase public awareness of choices in the district through an annual celebration of strengths, by highlighting program and school choice on its web page and the publication of a "Directory of Schools."

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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

1. Focus Schools
 - 1.1 When a school determines that it wishes to be recognized as a focus school, it should identify the area of focus and how it exceeds provincial and district expectations. Upon verification by the appropriate Assistant Superintendent, the Board of Trustees will be informed.

2. Choice Schools
 - 2.1 The initiating group would work with members of the Choice Management Committee to develop the philosophical, organizational and/or curricular intent of the proposed school or program. This would be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval in principle.
 - 2.2 Upon approval in principle, the Superintendent, in consultation with the Board, would create a development team and prepare a budget, if required.
 - 2.3 The development team should consider the following issues in preparing a report for the Board's consideration:
 - 2.3.1 Overview of proposed program or school
 - a) Philosophical, organizational and/or curricular uniqueness
 - b) Need
 - c) Primary objectives
 - 2.3.2 Student, parent, staff and community support
 - a) Estimate of enrolment
 - b) Any entrance stipulations
 - 2.3.3 Staffing, facility and resource considerations
 - a) Desired attributes of facility
 - b) If the facility being considered is an existing operating school, then consultation with the administration and staff of the school and its parent advisory council should occur.
 - c) Additional financial resources, material or support required.
 - d) Staffing issues.



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2.3.4 Promotion of the school or program.

2.3.5 Catchment area Issues

2.3.6 Implementation timeline

2.4 Upon Board approval, the Superintendent, in consultation with the Board would create an implementation team to lead to the opening of the school or program.

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