



MEMORANDUM

December 19, 2023
Regular Board Meeting

TO Board of Trustees

FROM Shauna Boyce, Superintendent

ORIGINATOR Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent

RESOURCE Shaye Patras, Division Principal, Numeracy and Achievement
Travis McNaughton, Principal, Connections for Learning

GOVERNANCE POLICY Board Policy 1: Division Foundational Statements
Board Policy 2: Role of the Board
Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE BP 1: Vision, Foundational Statements
BP 2: Education Planning and Programming
Education Act: 19-23, 33, 196-197
Choice in Education Act

SUBJECT **ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS REPORT**

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

The Board is charged with the responsibility of providing, for its students and their parents, an education system organized and operated in the students' best interests. It exercises this responsibility through setting of local educational policy and the wise use of resources.

REPORT SUMMARY

This *Alternative Programs Report* provides an overview of the strong variety of program options that students may access within Parkland School Division. Current student enrollment totals are reviewed in comparison to previous year enrollments.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

SJ:kz



ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS REPORT

DECEMBER 2023

Presented to the Board of Trustees, December 19, 2023
Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent, Education and System Services
Resources: Shaye Patras, Division Principal, Numeracy and Achievement
Travis McNaughton, Principal, Connections for Learning

Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

Background

Parkland School Division continues to build on its history of offering parents and students with a diverse array of educational programming choices. This practice aligns with the *Education Act*, s. 19: (Alternative Programs).

The Division attends to our Vision and Mission through the provision of innovative, alternative programming.

Our alternative programs align closely with our Values as they enable us to provide learning opportunities that are purposeful, relevant, authentic and responsive to the needs of our students.

The Division actively responds to student needs and interests as we prepare our students for an ever-changing world. Parkland School Division's tagline "Where the World Opens Up" emphasizes and supports a future focused organization; our alternative programs strive to meet the needs of all of our learners demonstrating success with the following Educational Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Students Demonstrate Success;
- Outcome 2: Students Demonstrate Well-Being;
- Outcome 3: PSD Staff Build Systems and Structures that Promote Success and Well-Being; and
- Outcome 9: Trustees Foster Quality Learning and Wellness to Promote Student Achievement.

Enrollment Patterns

22.0% of Parkland School Division students are accessing alternative education programs (2,826/12,558).

The following programs have increased in enrollment:

- My Path (+129)
- Parkland Student Athlete Academy (+58)
- Parent Partnership & Core (+53)
- Nature Based Kindergarten (+36)
- Virtual Learning (+24)
- Home Education (+20)
- Building Futures (+11)
- Non-Primary (+5)

The following programs declined in enrolment:

- French Immersion (-23)
- Outreach (-19)
- Adult Education (-11)
- The Learning Hub (-5)
- PSD Christian Program (-2)

Program summaries are included below and arranged, based on enrollment size.

FRENCH IMMERSION (K-12)						
ÉCOLE BROXTON PARK SCHOOL	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Change
ÉCOLE MERIDIAN HEIGHTS SCHOOL	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	
SPRUCE GROVE COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL	1,220	1,210	1,213	1,128	1,105	-23
<p>Designed for students whose first language is not French, this bilingual education program is open to all students. Graduates of the program can participate easily in French conversations, move on to take French Immersion courses in high school, take post-secondary courses with French as the language of instruction, and accept employment with French as the language of work.</p>						
PSD CHRISTIAN PROGRAM (K-12)						
BROOKWOOD SCHOOL	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Change
WOODHAVEN MIDDLE SCHOOL	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	
	332	300	316	319	317	-2
<p>The Parkland School Division Christian Program is available to all families who want their Kindergarten to Grade 9 children taught in a non-denominational, spiritually nurturing environment. Grades K-4 are housed at Brookwood School and 5-9 at Woodhaven Middle School.</p> <p>The Christian Program supports the traditional values of the home by involving students in morning prayers, Bible readings, songs, and weekly “chapel” gatherings with a Christian perspective.</p>						
OUTREACH (7-12)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING: OUTREACH	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Change
	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	
	574	405	312	330	311	-19
<p>Junior High and High School Outreach provides flexible, innovative programming to help students realize success in their career and educational goals. This program focuses on the individual needs of students. The students, parents, teachers and administration collaborate closely together to create a personalized program plan designed specifically to meet the academic, social/emotional, health and wellness learning needs of each individual student. Programming is available for students to earn an Alberta High School Diploma or an Alberta High School Certificate of Achievement. This can be achieved through individualized outreach programming or other alternative High School programs that Connections for Learning offers. A reduction in Outreach students is offset by increased interest in Virtual Learning.</p>						
PARKLAND STUDENT ATHLETE ACADEMY (6-12)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING at	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Change
ÉCOLE BROXTON PARK SCHOOL	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-23	
	NA	123	154	184	242	+58
<p>The Parkland Student Athlete Academy (PSAA) is a program for Grades 6-12 that provides student athletes in pursuit of high performance with technical, theoretical and experiential opportunities, while keeping them engaged in a rich and complete school community focused on academic achievement. The aim of this program is to provide local, high quality affordable options for unique high-performance sport programming.</p>						

PARENT PARTNERSHIP & CORE PROGRAM (K-12)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING: PARENT PARTNERSHIP AND CORE	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
Grades 1 through 9 Total	138	124	153	183	209	+27
PARENT PARTNERSHIP	67	46	64	77	82	+5
CORE PROGRAM	71	78	89	106	127	+21

The Parent Partnership and CORE program exists as an alternative education program of choice that serves students in Grades 1-9. This program is a partnership between the school and home in which students attend school on a modified schedule. Staff work collaboratively with families to support the homeschooling portion or with parent designated community program providers to support assessment and programming. This gives parents flexibility to create a customized curriculum based on a student's interests, needs and abilities when they are not attending Connections for Learning.

The Stony Creek Program offers two schedules from which parents can choose:

- Stony Creek Parent Partnership - Geared towards homeschooling; and
- Stony Creek Core (My Path) - Geared towards community-based learning.

*21 students within the Parent Partnership program also choose to access the Virtual Learning Program to complete the educational programming needs for their children.

VIRTUAL LEARNING (K-12)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING: VIRTUAL LEARNING	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
Grades 1 through 9	NA	208	265	114	78	-36
Grades 10 through 12	NA	38	78	68	128	+60

Virtual Learning is designed to be a student-centered, authentic and engaging online program for K-12 that delivers the full program of studies for each grade level. Videos and interactive activities are embedded throughout the lessons, as are opportunities for hands-on learning and further enrichment (e.g. option courses, virtual field trips, etc.). Many projects provide students with the opportunity to choose how they demonstrate their learning, which allows them to use their strengths and talents.

Launched in the 2020-2021 school year, Virtual Learning is a teacher-directed program that enables students to work from any location via virtual learning tools and remote access to content. This program is designed for students who like the flexibility of working in the home environment and have the skills to work independently. This program provides greater flexibility and pathways to graduation for students with unique circumstances and who can work in partnership and collaboration with other schools and programs.

The Virtual Learning program is gaining interest as an alternative approach to high school, and the program is experiencing a reduction in students in the early years – most significantly in grades one through three. The school's perspective is that this reflects changing post-Covid perspectives for early learning, and is subsequently offset by an increase in Home Education.

HOME EDUCATION (K-12)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING: HOME EDUCATION	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
	58	265	167	111	131	+20
<p>In Alberta, families can choose to educate their children entirely at home. This is a parent-directed program with access to teacher support. Parents can select curriculum, resources and methodology consistent with their family's beliefs. Parents are encouraged to set a curriculum that aligns with their values, and provide learning opportunities specifically designed for their child.</p> <p>There are currently 6 students within the Home Education program who are also accessing the Virtual Learning Program within a "shared responsibility" agreement between Connections for Learning, Alberta Education and the parents.</p>						

MY PATH (1-9)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
Full-Time and Lite Program (1-9)	52	56	63	73	104	+31
My Path Graminia	NA	NA	NA	NA	41	+41
Outdoor Pursuits (Entwistle and Tomahawk)	NA	NA	NA	NA	44	+44
Outdoor Pursuits (Duffield and Wabamun)	NA	NA	NA	NA	13	+13
<p>My PATH is a community partnership program based at Connections for Learning that offers students a diverse blend of health and wellness activities to complement the core academic schedule. My PATH is open to students in Grades 1-9 who meet the program criteria. This unique program of choice grants students enhanced opportunities in physical education, arts, technology and health programming, and is offered in three different participatory pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My PATH Core - Full-time program for students registered in Stony Creek Core, Home Education or Virtual Learning. Students can choose from three CFL program options (Core, Virtual Learning or Home Education) to fill the core academic portion of their schedule. The coordinating My PATH programming begins in the afternoon, and all students enrolled in My PATH must attend in-person at CFL. • My PATH Lite - Part-time program for students registered in Stony Creek Parent Partnership, Home Education or Virtual Learning • My PATH Outdoor Pursuits - Part-time program for students registered in Duffield, Entwistle, Tomahawk or Wabamun Schools, or through Home Education or Virtual Learning. • My PATH Graminia - in its inaugural year 2023-24, this program serves students in grades 4-6. Grade configurations may be adjusted in subsequent years depending on stakeholder feedback. • MY PATH Outdoor Pursuits - Scheduling and timing has changed for the 2023-24 school year for our west end programs. Feedback from our stakeholders in these areas has led us to adapt scheduling to make the program more efficient and limit times for transportation, thus increasing activity length. 						

The Outdoor Pursuits Program in the 2022-23 school year consisted of Duffield, Wabamun, Entwistle and Tomahawk and had a total enrolment of 95 students. Based on parent and school feedback, these have been divided into two separate programs for the 2023-24 school year.

The program focuses on these key areas to support the development of healthy, engaged lifelong learners:

- Physical Activity and Recreational Sport
- Outdoor Adventure and Nature-Based Learning
- Fine and Performance Arts
- Nutrition and Healthy Behaviours
- Citizenship and Volunteerism
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

NATURE BASED KINDERGARTEN						
MUIR LAKE SCHOOL	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
	83	28	40	24	41	+17
GRAMINIA SCHOOL	NA	NA	NA	NA	19	+19

Parkland School Division’s Nature Kindergarten program has continued to evolve and expand for the 2023-24 school year as a result of stakeholder feedback.

The Nature Kindergarten Enrichment program at Muir Lake School serves as a supplement to students’ traditional kindergarten program at their designated community school. Students enrolled in this program attend their designated school half time and the Nature Enrichment program for the remaining half time to create a full-time kindergarten program. Children are offered a unique curriculum based authentic learning experience. It is an optional kindergarten program of choice that will get children active and in touch with nature, while essentially extending a child’s kindergarten experience from half time to full time.

Additionally, Muir Lake School offers a Nature Based Kindergarten program in which all Kindergarten programming is delivered in a nature-based setting.

Graminia School offers a Nature Based Kindergarten program that supplements their traditional Kindergarten program. Students enrolled in this program have their traditional kindergarten experience enhanced through a student-led, nature-based inquiry learning model.

The Nature Enrichment program and Nature Kindergarten programs both respond to identified early childhood indicators that demonstrate a need for additional social and physical development programming within our division. This program also seeks to explore the impact on early learning using the natural environment as a place where curiosity, play, problem-solving and calculated risk taking can take place in a safe way.

BUILDING FUTURES (10)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
		NA	18	18	24	25
BUILDING FUTURES APPRENTICESHIP	NA	NA	NA	NA	10	+10

Building Futures is an immersive and unique one-year program for Grade 10 students, who earn credits towards their diploma, all while learning by doing: working together to build a house from the ground up.

Building Futures takes students beyond the traditional classroom, providing them with all of the authentic learning opportunities that come with building a house, while ensuring they cover the Alberta Education curricula required for high school graduation. A Spruce Grove garage is transformed into an onsite classroom, where students learn academic courses from specialized teachers, and then walk outside to collaborate with the construction team at every stage of building the house.

Classroom work emphasizes mastery, and involves plenty of hands-on, project-based learning. Building Futures also allows for individualized instruction, creating an environment where students can pursue their passions. By the end of the year, with the help and instruction of qualified tradespeople, the students will have built a house, while learning how to contribute to their community.

As a result of increased demand, the 2023-24 school year has seen the creation of “Building Futures Apprenticeships”. This program is a collaboration between MCHS and SGCHS targeting students who did not participate in the Building Futures program in Grade 10, but foresee themselves going into the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) and may not yet be sure of what trade they will pursue. Students in Building Futures Apprenticeship are earning hours towards their future RAP program when they identify their trade.

ADULT EDUCATION (AGES 19+)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
		36	19	27	44	33

Connections for Learning provides “Mature Students” with the opportunity to complete their high school education so they are able enter a post-secondary institution, a trade or the job market. The Connections for Learning website contains details on options and applicable fees for mature students. A “Mature Student” is a student who is 19 (or older) by September 1st of the current school year, as per the *Education Act* s. 3(1). The Adult Education program varies significantly in student population from year-to-year.

THE LEARNING HUB (10-12)						
CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
		18	19	22	28	23

The Learning Hub (formerly the Y(Our) Program) is a program of choice for Grades 10-12. This program provides a safe learning environment with a focus on whole-person wellness. It combines core curriculum with out-of-classroom learning opportunities. Students are in their homeroom and have access to subject area courses and teachers through outreach and virtual, with the homeroom teacher helping to adapt courses as necessary.

Program intent:

- To create an environment in which students have access to supports for all aspects of their lives.
- To use these supports and education to broaden support to the community outside the school setting.

To provide an educational environment that fits the school to the students, instead of having the students try to fit the school.

NON-PRIMARY (10-12)						
Connections for Learning	Students 19-20	Students 20-21	Students 21-22	Students 22-23	Students 23-24	Change
		NA	NA	NA	NA	5

The non-primary program serves students in grades 10-12 who are registered with another school division in Alberta but who wish to access up to two courses through Connections for Learning. Typically, these students complete their coursework through the Virtual learning platform.

As student and family dynamics continue to evolve, Connections for Learning anticipates continued growth of this program in the upcoming years. Our Non-Primary students are attending from Erskine, Breton, Edmonton and Spruce Grove. Currently, the five Non-Primary students are enrolled in the following courses:

- Math 10C,
- English 10-1,
- Learning Strategies 15,
- Introduction to Animal Basics (AGR1040),
- Physical Education 20,
- Biology 20, and
- Aboriginal Studies 10 and 20.