

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

The Board supports the provision of Alternative Programs within the Division as an educational choice for students and parents.

An alternative program means an education program that emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter, or uses a particular teaching philosophy; but that is not a special education program.

Specifically

1. Alternative Programs shall:
 - 1.1 Emphasize a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter, or use a particular teaching philosophy which is distinctly different from that emphasized in the regular program;
 - 1.2 Be established only with Board approval of a detailed program proposal;
 - 1.3 Be closed only with Board approval;
 - 1.4 Receive a Division budget allocation upon the recommendation of the Superintendent or designate and approval by the Board, only where significant costs beyond those of regular school programs can be identified;
 - 1.5 Be allowed to charge a non-instructional fee.
2. The Principal, Alternative Program Society, or other proponents shall submit to the Superintendent or designate, a proposal to establish an Alternative Program.
 - 2.1 This submission shall be made with sufficient time before the expected “start up” date to allow clarification, discussion, planning and approval before the Division budget for the first year of operation is determined.
 - 2.2 Feedback regarding the proposal shall be provided to the originators of the Alternative Program proposal.
 - 2.3 Once the proposal is complete, the Superintendent shall arrange for the originators to make a presentation of the proposal to the Board.
 - 2.4 The Board may accept or reject the proposal or may direct administration to bring a recommendation to the Board for further discussion and a decision to accept or reject the proposal.
 - 2.5 If the proposal is accepted by the Board, the proponents of the program in conjunction with the Superintendent and/or designates, shall complete detailed preparations (timelines, transportation, student recruitment, staffing, location, budget, administrative services, and fees, if required) and submit them for approval to the Superintendent or designate.

3. Each Alternative Program proposal shall include the following elements:
 - 3.1 Background research;
 - 3.2 Philosophy, objectives, and mission statement;
 - 3.3 Distinguishing feature of the Alternative Program;
 - 3.4 Operational budget including all instructional and support costs;
 - 3.5 Proposed fee for non-instructional costs;
 - 3.6 Staffing profiles desirable to meet the Alternative Program objectives;
 - 3.7 Evaluation of Alternative Program methodology and objectives;
 - 3.8 Projected student population and geographical location/ages;
 - 3.9 Transportation of students to and from the Alternative Program if other than through Policy 17 – Student Transportation Services;
 - 3.10 A list of curriculum and instructional materials in addition to those approved by Alberta Education;
 - 3.11 A completed Initiative Impacts Checklist (Form 18-1) and a summary of possible human and financial resource implications for any other part of the current system;
 - 3.12 A list of start-up costs and sources of funding.
4. Where an Alternative Program is offered as an alternative school:
 - 4.1 The alternative school shall not qualify for the Small School Allocation;
 - 4.2 The alternative school shall receive all other budget allocations and services available to other schools.
5. Criteria for approval and continued support of an Alternative Program include:
 - 5.1 All provincial and federal legislation must be met. Division policies and procedures apply unless specifically exempted by the Board.
 - 5.2 There is a supportable education approach and there are numbers of students sufficient to warrant the program.
 - 5.3 The program is financially viable within the operational budget submitted as part of the program proposal.
 - 5.4 The program does not interfere with any student's access to a regular program of instruction.
 - 5.5 The program follows the Program of Studies for Alberta.
 - 5.6 The program is integrated as part of the Division within existing schools wherever feasible.
 - 5.7 Transportation to Alternative Programs shall be granted according to Policy 17 – Student Transportation Services or as per an agreement in the program proposal.
 - 5.8 Staff shall be employed by, evaluated by, and responsible to the Division, according to Division procedures.

6. Alternative Program(s) shall be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Superintendent to assess its viability.
 - 6.1 The Superintendent shall provide six (6) months notice to the Principal, Alternative Program Society, or other advisory body (as approved by the Board) if the Alternative Program is to be considered for termination.
 - 6.2 Notice of less than six (6) months may be accepted by mutual agreement.
7. The Principal, Alternative Program Society, or other advisory body (as approved by the Board), shall provide six (6) months notice to the Superintendent or designate that it no longer plans to offer or support the Alternative Program.
 - 7.1 Notice of less than six (6) months may be accepted by mutual agreement.
8. The Board shall decide whether the alternative program will be terminated.

Legal Reference: Sections 10, 13, 20, 21, 22, 47, 60, 61, 113 School Act