

BACKGROUND

As a public school jurisdiction, Rocky View Schools provides universal accessibility for all students in inclusive settings. In meeting the needs of individual students, the Board of Trustees believes in divisional programs of choice within its public system and boundaries in accordance with the *Education Act*.

An “Alternative Program” is outlined in Section 19 of the *Education Act* and is a program that emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion, or subject matter, or uses a particular teaching philosophy. It is not a special education program or a Francophone education program or a program of religious education offered by a separate school board. Where the *Education Act* uses the term Alternative Program, it is felt that divisional program of choice is a more understandable term for families.

Divisional programs of choice include, but are not limited to, a particular language, religion, culture, the arts, athletics, and specialized subject matters. They provide for multiple points of engagement of learners, while also ensuring strong learning opportunities for student success while addressing the curriculum.

Divisional programs of choice are those offerings which any student from across the division can apply to attend. Attendance is not limited by defined attendance areas (open boundaries). Select schools are designated to offer these divisional programs of choice with no student designated to the divisional program of choice. Divisional programs of choice are not a special education program.

GUIDELINES

1. The Board of Trustees considers support for divisional programs of choice, provided they are:
 - 1.1. Consistent with the vision and direction of Rocky View Schools and follow all policies and procedures of the jurisdiction unless specifically exempted by the Board of Trustees;
 - 1.2. Accessible to as many students as possible;
 - 1.3. Pedagogically sound and follow the Program of Studies for the Province of Alberta;
 - 1.4. Financially sound;
 - 1.5. Warranted by sufficient number of interested students;
 - 1.6. Not interfering with any student’s access to a regular program of instruction;
 - 1.7. Mindful of existing school space, enrolments, and utilizations; and
 - 1.8. Employing and evaluating staff according to the same policies as other staff of Rocky View Schools.
2. The Board may or may not provide transportation to a divisional program of choice.



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DIVISIONAL PROGRAMS OF CHOICE

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3. The Board may charge a fee for non-instructional costs to parents who enroll their children/students in a divisional program of choice.
4. Divisional programs of choice may have limits on the enrolment.
5. Divisional programs of choice will be reviewed regularly by the Superintendent to ensure viability. Decisions to eliminate or close a divisional program of choice are made by the Board.
6. The Superintendent, when necessary to determine viability, will invoke a community engagement process prior to consideration of new divisional programs of choice in the system and include feedback in the recommendation to the Board.
7. Divisional programs of choice are only approved by the Board.
8. Parties interested in proposing a divisional program of choice shall follow the process described in an administrative procedure created and maintained by the Superintendent.

Legal Reference:

- Section 11, 16, 18, 19, 32, 33, 51, 52, 53, 60, 67, 222 Education Act