



Superintendent's Report
Impact of Outreach Program Closures
of
Saamis REAL and McMan REAL

30 August 2022

To: The Board of Trustees

This report is intended to advise the Board as to the implications for the Division and families of the potential closure of The Saamis REAL and McMan REAL programs. These programs were established in partnership with community agencies to support the learning of children and youth who experienced considerable anxiety and other challenges that impacted their function in the social setting of the "traditional" school. These programs are no longer operated by Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD).

Saamis REAL served students between grades 7-12

McMan REAL served students between grades 6-7

The information and advice below are provided to assist the Board in the decision-making process. Further, this informs the Board as to actions to be taken in order to comply with Administrative Procedure 724 P 002 and section 62 of the Education Act. Matters for Board consideration are:

1. Timing: Effective Closure Date – June 30, 2020:

The program ceased to operate when enrolment dropped to zero. This loss of enrolment is due to the shift in our system to a greater emphasis on inclusion and improved partnerships between families and school professional staff (education and other professions). Essentially, as schools shifted their focus to in-class, or in-school, supports for students encountering social-emotional challenges (primarily anxiety) the demand for a segregated program declined quickly to zero.

Formal Closure Date – September 30, 2022

This date reflects the date at which the school codes associated with the two programs would cease to exist for the purposes of student registration and school finance. *

*While "outreach" programs have, historically, held school codes Alberta Education indicates that the process described below is not unusual across the province, particularly in situations where programs have occupied shared space and where system evolution has led to redundancy.

2. Impact on Utilization Rate

The closure of these programs will have no impact on school utilizations.

3. Impact on Long-Range Capital Plan (LRCP)

Outreach Programs are, by definition, almost always housed outside of regular school buildings. Since the Alberta Education's facility funding (LRCP) only encompasses provincially funded buildings, program closure has no effect on facility funding or capital planning.

4. Number of Students Impacted

As noted above no current students would be impacted by this decision.

5. Impact on Busing

There is no impact on busing. The School Division provided city transit passes in order to support families. Otherwise students made their own way to the program.

6. Program Implications to Other Schools

The students who migrated out of these programs moved into traditional schools, Pathways (formerly YMCA Stay in School) and Coulee Collegiate. As the average combined enrolment on these programs has not exceeded fifteen in the past several years, no appreciable impact on any one school or program has been noted.

7. Educational and Financial Impact of Closing

Educational Impact:

There is no substantive educational impact as the students who may have attended these programs are being accommodated in more robust, school-based programming.

Financial Impact:

Instructional Costs – There are two less certificated teaching staff (saving approximately \$205,000 - already realized).

Facility Costs – There has been very little impact on facility costs as these programs were being run out of the same building as Pathways, at 770 1st Street S.E. The Division has since moved Pathways into a shared space with The HUB.

8. Educational and Financial Impact of Continuing the Programs

Educational Impact:

There is no benefit to continuing programs away from which families have turned. Indeed, this decision reflects a benefit of the system's improved success in providing optimal learning to students in their community school.

Financial Impact:

No funding is lost as a result of program closure. Conversely, no decrease in expenditures is achieved, as the staffing implications of family choice have already been addressed.

9. Timeline and Process for Consultation

Notice of Motion:

26 April 2022

Notification to Proposed Closure to Impact Families:

Direct Notification of Impact Families – This is not necessary as no students are attending these programs.

General Notification – Proposed closure was posted on the website from May 12, 2022 to June 22, 2022. No responses were received.

Meeting with Families of Students in the Program – This is not necessary, as no students are currently enrolled.

Notification of Impacted Staff – There are no staff currently operating these programs.

Timelines

Barring the timely expression of a concern for student service that cannot be addressed within other currently operating programs, I recommend a motion for closure of the above programs at the September 27, 2022, Board meeting.

End of Report to the Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Davidson,
Superintendent