

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

An Overview

- Arts
- Athletics
- Faith-based
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
- Languages
- Teaching philosophy

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(See inside back cover for alternative programs contact information)

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DISTRICT VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND PRIORITIES

VISION

Transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow

MISSION

We inspire student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningfully engaged students, parents, staff and community.

VALUES

Supporting the Vision, Mission and Priorities are the District's cornerstone values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity.

DISTRICT PRIORITIES 2014-2018

1. Foster growth and success for every student by supporting their journey from early learning through high school completion and beyond.
2. Provide welcoming, high quality learning and working environments.
3. Enhance public education through communication, engagement and partnerships.

Learn about the District's strategic goals and priorities in the [District Strategic Plan 2014-2018](#).

Introduction

At Edmonton Public Schools, we inspire student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningfully engaged students, parents, staff and community. Our work is guided by four cornerstone values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity.

We are committed to student learning that includes choices developed to respond to specific student interests and talents, options in neighbourhood schools and in specialized settings. Edmonton Public Schools has a long history of offering alternative programs and choice for our community to help support the success of all students through high quality teaching and learning environments.

Handbook purpose

This handbook is designed as a resource for parents and parent societies who are interested in beginning an alternative program or who work with the District's existing alternative programs.

The following pages outline how alternative programs promote student learning and respond to the interests of students and parents. It contains:

- background information related to the philosophy and rationale for alternative programs;
- a discussion of the roles of school and central decision unit administrators, parents and parent societies;
- brief descriptions of the various programs ([Appendix II](#)); and
- appendices containing relevant documents.

For additional information, view the Programming section at epsb.ca.

What are alternative programs and why does Edmonton Public Schools offer them?

Section 21 of the [School Act](#) defines alternative programs as education programs that emphasize a particular language, culture, religion, or subject matter or use a particular teaching philosophy. They are not special needs programs or Francophone programs or religious education programs offered by a separate school board of that religious denomination. They are programs of parental or student choice and school districts are enabled, but not required, to offer them. The District does its best to accommodate students applying to these programs, but cannot guarantee access. See the [Registration](#) section of the District website for enrolment information.

Alternative programs are defined programs that have received Board approval and can only be modified by the Board or Administrative Regulations.

They are intended to be long-term, sustainable and usually involve several grades and occupy a significant portion of the school. An alternative program is an educational approach that affects the entire schooling experience of a child (e.g., French Immersion, bilingual programs, religious-based alternatives). This distinguishes alternative programs from other kinds of choices that may involve, for instance, a single course such as Japanese, a single classroom or specific options in areas such as outdoor education or fine arts.

Edmonton Public Schools introduced alternative programs to support the success of all students by providing choice and educational options that support the development of high quality learning opportunities. The District believes public education can and should serve all children, and that it is neither necessary nor desirable to serve them all in the same way. Some positive aspects of alternative programs include:

- opportunities for students to have a variety of enrichment opportunities, without losing the benefit of the Alberta Education core curriculum;
- increased compatibility between teaching and learning styles and classroom environments in alternative programs that are based on a particular teaching philosophy; and
- providing teachers with the opportunity to choose a work environment that corresponds to their particular skills, interests, expertise or beliefs.

Finally, it is possible within public education to meet a variety of parental interests and aspirations while maintaining a consistent framework. Consistent with the [Board Policy GAA.BP – Delivery of Student Programs of Study](#), all alternative programs in Edmonton Public Schools:

- follow the provincial curriculum,
- are subject to Board policies, and
- are funded in the same way as regular programs.

Section 21(4) of the School Act states: “If a parent enrolls a student in an alternative program, the board may charge that parent fees for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of any non-instructional costs that

(a) may be incurred by the board in offering the alternative program, and

(b) are in addition to the costs incurred by the board in providing its regular education program.”

What is the history of alternative programs in Edmonton Public Schools?

Edmonton Public Schools has over 40 years of experience in offering alternative programs to families in Edmonton and now offers more than 30 alternative programs in over 90 schools.

Alternative programs timeline

Program	Type (Categories identified in School Act)	Implementation date
<i>Introduced open boundaries</i>		<i>1973</i>
French Bilingual/Immersion	Language and culture	September 1974
Ukrainian Bilingual/Ukrainian International Bilingual	Language and culture	September 1974 Revised September 2003
Academic Alternative	Teaching philosophy	September 1974
Caraway	Teaching philosophy	September 1975
Hebrew Bilingual	Language and culture	September 1975
<i>Piloted site-based decision making in seven schools</i>		<i>1976-77</i>
Arts Core	Subject matter	September 1977
Awasis (Cree)	Language and culture	September 1977
Late French Immersion	Language and culture	September 1978 Revised September 2003
Alpha	Teaching philosophy	September 1978 Discontinued June 1983
German Bilingual	Language and culture	September 1978
Waldorf	Teaching philosophy	September 1979 Discontinued June 1991 Re-introduced September 2009 Suspended September 2015
<i>Introduced site-based decision making throughout the system</i>		<i>1980-81</i>
International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme	Subject matter	September 1981
Arabic Bilingual	Language and culture	September 1983
Chinese (Mandarin) Bilingual	Language and culture	September 1983
Victoria School of Visual and Performing Arts	Subject matter	September 1986
<i>Charter school legislation introduced</i>		<i>1994</i>
Cogito	Teaching philosophy	September 1995
Edmonton Public Professional School of Ballet (now Vimy Ridge Academy Dance Program)	Subject matter	September 1995
Nellie McClung	Teaching philosophy	September 1995
LearnNet	Alternative delivery model	September 1995
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme	Teaching philosophy	September 1995
Logos	Religion	September 1996
Child Study Centre	Teaching philosophy	September 1996

Science Alberta Alternative (see Science Alternative)	Subject matter/ Teaching philosophy	September 2000 Discontinued in 2006
Sports	Teaching philosophy	September 1996
Hockey	Teaching philosophy	September 1996
Traditional	Teaching philosophy	September 1997
International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme	Subject matter	September 1998
L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy	Subject matter	September 1999
Edmonton Christian Schools	Religion	September 1999
amiskwaciy Academy	Language and culture	September 2000
Millwoods Christian School	Religion	September 2000
International Spanish Academy	Language and culture	September 2001
Advanced Placement	Subject matter	September 2002
Meadowlark Christian School	Religion	September 2004
Science Alternative (replaced Science Alberta Foundation)	Subject matter/ Teaching philosophy	Approved 2005 for September 2006
Pre-Advanced Placement	Subject matter/ Teaching philosophy	September 2005
Extended Cree Alternative	Language and culture	September 2008 Discontinued May 2014
Sakinah Circle	Teaching philosophy	September 2010

For descriptions of current programs, see [Appendix II](#).

As Edmonton Public is a District of choice, families can choose where they apply to send their children to school. In the 2014-2015 school year, 49 per cent of elementary students, 55 per cent of junior high students and 48 per cent of senior high students attended a school other than their designated school.

Based on demand, and supported by the availability of space and sufficient resources, many of the alternative programs are now offered in multiple locations. The growth of current alternative programs and introduction of new alternative programs demonstrates the continued support of our community for alternative programs.

How are alternative programs created and how do they operate?

Program creation

Current alternative programs have been developed based on concepts proposed by District staff, parents or community members. When individuals or groups [propose concepts](#) to the District, Central Services staff meet with them to explore and flesh out the concept. Discussions include basic parameters of the District for alternative programs, outlined in [Board policies](#). All alternative programs must:

- teach the [provincial curriculum](#),
- comply with [Board policies](#),
- function within the same funding base as regular programs, and
- demonstrate there is sufficient demand, surplus space and adequate resources to create a viable program.

If the program can be offered within the District parameters and is judged to be educationally sound, the Superintendent submits a recommendation report to the Board of Trustees for its approval. The recommendation report describes the program and addresses areas such as grades to be offered, staffing, transportation, over- and under-subscription and location. This program description represents the District's commitment to the program. Individual administrators are expected to fulfill this commitment on behalf of the Board and the Superintendent.

Program operation

The District promotes diversity within community. Therefore, alternative programs are usually located in a school alongside another program or programs. The alternative program is administered by the school principal, who is responsible for the administration of all programs in the school. All principals new to an alternative program school are encouraged to attend professional development opportunities offered by Edmonton Public Schools Planning staff.

All alternative programs teach the provincial curriculum. In some cases, the alternative program may involve teaching it in a particular way or providing additional subject matter, such as with the [Arts Core](#) program.

Several alternative programs have a parent society or program support group. These groups have an important role in the operation of the program. This role is outlined in [Appendix III - Role of program-related societies in Edmonton Public Schools](#).

Enrolment conditions

Enrolment conditions help parents, students and principals make the best choices by helping them determine if the alternative program will meet student needs, support student success and ensure that a student will not be educationally disadvantaged by being enrolled in the alternative program. The following are examples of enrolment conditions:

- A language-based program, such as French Immersion, might state that students who are not fluent in the language would not be admitted to the program after a certain grade because the student would not have the language skills to be successful.
- A dance-based program, such as the one at Vimy Ridge Academy, might specify that the student must have the ability to participate in a physically active environment.

The enrolment conditions should be part of all documentation provided to students and parents interested in the alternative program so that they can make an informed decision as to the appropriateness of the alternative program.

Entrance criteria

The Board and administration may develop entrance criteria for alternative programs. There are currently four schools with entrance criteria: Crestwood, Grandview Heights, Old Scona, and Victoria. These schools require students to submit an application so they can ensure the student meets the criteria for the school's instructional focus or programming.

Only schools with Board-approved entrance criteria can deny an application to their programs. For all other alternative programs, all families have the opportunity to apply to the entry level.

Program Promotion

At Edmonton Public Schools, we promote our schools and programs equally because we believe students receive a high-quality education in all of our programs. To help families find a school or program that best fits their child's needs, our Communications department provides information about the choices available by:

- managing an annual school [open house advertising campaign](#) to encourage students and families to visit an open house
- providing detailed school and program information on the [District's website](#), social media accounts and in some school materials such as handbooks and program guides

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS AND ADVERTISING

Some parent societies will choose to produce their own promotional materials, purchase advertisements or share information on their own websites or social media accounts. It's important for families to know that the program being advertised is a part of Edmonton Public Schools, so be sure to include the District logo and messaging that is consistent with the District's information on school sites, registration and transportation.

Guidelines

Here are a few things to keep in mind when developing promotional materials and advertisements.

- **Collaboration**
Parent societies are expected to work in consultation with a principal from one of the schools offering the program that is being promoted.
- **Content and design**
When developing materials, parent societies will need to:
 - write the content
 - state, on advertisements, that it's funded by the parent society
 - include the District logo
 - receive final approval from Communications
- **Timelines**
Allow at least a week for Communications to review your materials for approval.
- **Cost**
Parent societies are responsible for all costs associated with promotional materials or advertising, including:
 - printing and distribution costs
 - design and consultation costs if they choose to work with a design firm
 - media bookings
- **Websites and social media**
To provide parents with access to consistent, accurate and up-to-date information, Communications encourages parent societies to share links to epsb.ca for information on schools, programs, registration and transportation.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit epsb.ca/ourdistrict/policy/g/ged-ar to review the District’s policies and procedures regarding program promotion or talk to your school principal.

CONTACT COMMUNICATIONS

For District logo files, or to submit your materials for approval, contact Communications at communications@epsb.ca.

What is the role of the principal?

The school principal who administers the alternative program plays the key role in the successful implementation and ongoing operation of the program. Specifically, the role of the principal is to:

- understand and support the program philosophy as outlined in the Board recommendation report;
- have a clear vision of the intended results of the alternative program;
- ensure that the program is implemented consistent with the Board’s program description;
- hire appropriate staff, in consultation with Human Resources and with input from the parent society or program support group. The final decision for all hiring rests with the principal of the school. Consideration can be given to hiring an assistant principal or curriculum coordinator with particular expertise in the alternative program. It can also be helpful to have office staff and other support staff who understand and support the program;
- ensure appropriate professional development for staff;
- promote the program;
- work collaboratively with parents;
- liaise with parent societies or program support groups;
- liaise with other principals to share ideas, strategies and resources, and to ensure program consistency across the District where the alternative program is offered in multiple locations;
- maintain a cooperative and collaborative environment in the school and among various programs in the school. Some strategies to achieve this include:
 - having one school council with representation from all programs;
 - ensuring that students from all programs have regular opportunities to interact in assemblies, teams and intramurals; and
 - having staff meet and work together to exchange information and ideas.

Counselling families for success

Principals have the responsibility as instructional leaders to counsel families regarding programming. To support student success, it is critical that students, their parents and the school administration look for a match between the specific educational interests or needs of the student and the focus of the alternative program. Not all alternative programs are appropriate for every student. However, unless otherwise guided by Board-approved entrance criteria, this counsel is not meant to restrict access or dissuade interested students. Families have the right to apply to the alternative program of their choice.

What is the role of Central Services?

Central Services staff play a key role in developing and placing new programs and, subsequently, in providing support to the school administrators. Specifically, the role of Central Services staff is to:

- work with staff and/or community groups seeking new alternative programs. This includes meeting to define the program, identify resources, determine demand and review other program development issues;
- make recommendations to the Board or Trustees about the approval of new programs or to the Superintendent about amendments to existing programs (see [Appendix VII - Alternative program proposal](#) and [Appendix VII - Request to amend existing alternative program](#));
- support, advise and assist administrators and parent societies or program support groups by:
 - identifying and developing resources as required
 - providing program-related expertise and professional development
 - providing leadership training
 - assisting principals in identifying appropriate staff
 - organizing and coordinating transportation services to elementary alternative programs (transportation to alternative programs is at a cost to parents)
 - guiding marketing and promotional efforts
- provide ongoing liaison, advice, assistance and problem resolution to parent societies, program support groups or councils on behalf of the District;
- identify a school location for newly approved alternative programs and additional sites for current programs if warranted; and
- administer the [random selection process](#) when applications exceed enrolment limits.

What is the role of community stakeholders?

The three major roles that community members or groups may undertake with the help of a society, Parent Advisory Council or school principal, are:

1. proposing an alternative program (see [Alternative program proposal](#) form);
2. requesting amendments to an existing alternative program (see [Request to amend existing alternative program](#) form); and
3. providing expertise and resources to support an alternative program.

What is the role of parent societies?

Parent societies or program support groups play a key role in identifying new alternative programs and working with school administration to support current options. Specifically, the role of parent societies or program support groups is to:

- be partners with the school and the District in ensuring the integrity of the program;
- provide advice and input to school administrators, Central Services and the Board on matters related to the program as a whole. Examples of areas in which consultation with parent societies may occur include:
 - nature, content and intent of program
 - locations for the program
 - transportation boundaries and related issues
 - staffing at the school level
 - other issues of significance to the entire program
- assist in the promotion of the school program(s) within the community;
- help build understanding of the school program(s) within the community; and
- create bylaws that facilitate the operation of more than one program in a school. The [School Council Resource Manual](#) contains sample bylaws and development processes.

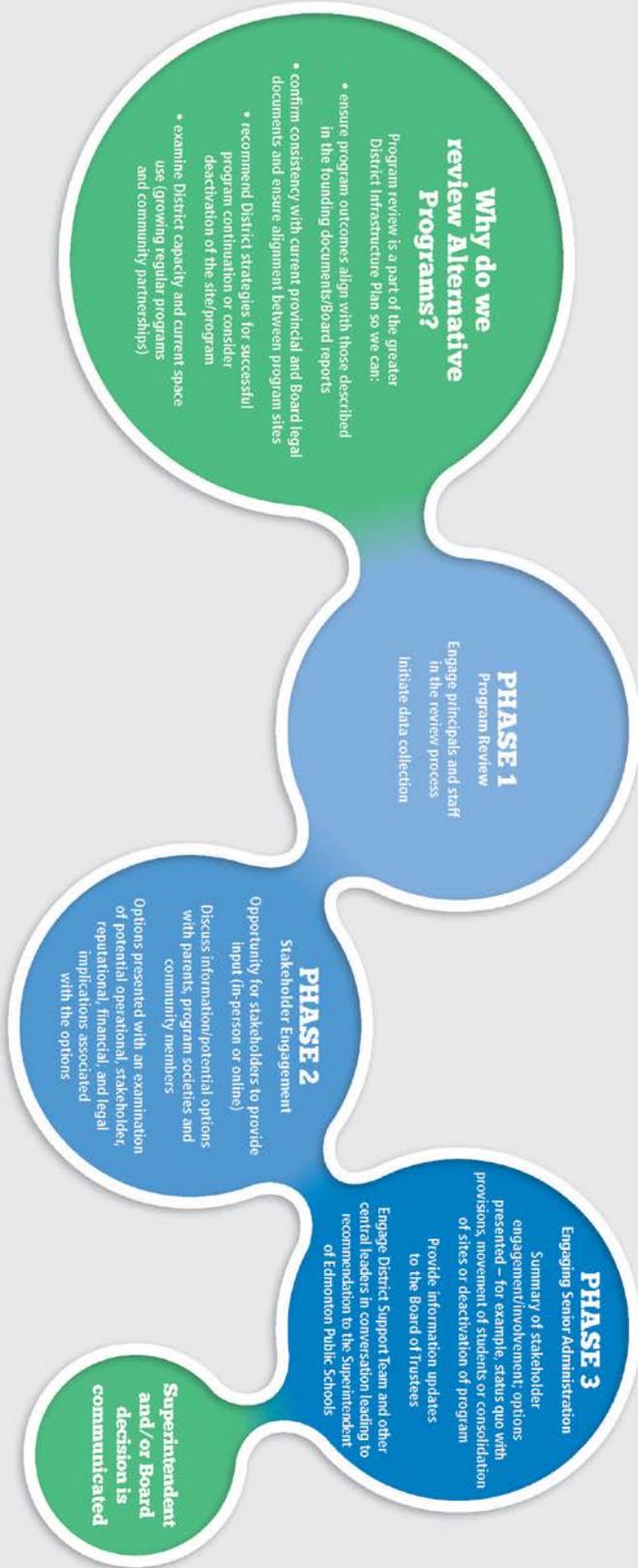
See [Appendix III - Role of program-related societies in Edmonton Public Schools](#) for more information.

Alternative Programs Review Process



EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

All programs are subject to review.



List of Alternative Programs offered by Edmonton Public Schools:

- ARTS**
 - Arts Core
 - Dance
 - Victoria School of the Arts
- ATHLETICS**
 - Sports Alternative
- FAITH-BASED**
 - Edmonton Christian School
 - Loring Christian
 - Holy Trinity Christian School
 - Millwoods Christian School
 - St. Ann's Academy
 - Avast (Core)
- LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**
 - American Sign Language/Bilingual
 - Arabic/Bilingual
 - Chinese (Mandarin) Bilingual
 - French Immersion
 - Late French Immersion
 - German Bilingual
 - Hebrew Bilingual
 - International Spanish Academy
- TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**
 - Academic Alternative
 - Advanced Placement
 - Caraway
 - Child Study Centre
 - Cogito
 - International Baccalaureate Certificate
 - International Baccalaureate Diploma
 - International Baccalaureate Middle Years
 - International Baccalaureate Primary Years
 - Notre-Ducung Girls' Junior High
 - Pre-Advanced Placement
 - Sakinah Circle
 - Science Alternative
 - Traditional
 - Viny Ridge Academy Alternative

For more information:

- Alternative Programs Handbook
- Delivery of Student Programs of Study – GAA BP
- Publishing Programs – GED AR

2-16-2020 - Nov 2015

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Academic Alternative programming supports motivated students with above-average performance.

Advanced Placement is an internationally recognized program that allows students to experience college- or university-level courses while enrolled in high school.

amiskwaciy Academy programming immerses students in a learning environment that honours Aboriginal culture, language and traditions.

Arts Core incorporates the visual and performing arts into everyday learning. Students explore their creativity and self-expression through art, music, dance and drama.

Awasis (Cree) programming enables students to increase their knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and traditions, and develop language skills in Cree.

Bilingual Language Programs provide students with an opportunity to acquire or maintain proficiency in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, Spanish or Ukrainian. Programming is provided in the target language for up to 50 per cent of the school day. American Sign Language is also an approved offering.

Caraway programming supports students in a learning environment that includes mixed-age groupings and instils a strong sense of community.

Child Study Centre programming takes an inquiry- and project-based approach to delivering curriculum.

Cogito programming is designed for students who want to achieve a high level of academic excellence in an environment that emphasizes structure and order.

Dance (Ballet) offered in affiliation with the Edmonton School of Ballet Society, balances dance training with classroom study.

Edmonton Christian Schools provide programming based on thematic, faith directed learning which integrates Biblical principles into all areas of study.

French Immersion students are initially taught in French 100 per cent of the time. Instruction offered in French gradually decreases as they progress through the grades. Students have the opportunity to achieve international language certification and recognition upon graduation. **Late French Immersion** is also available at the Grade 7 level.

International Baccalaureate Programme provides programming that emphasizes the development of the whole person and interrelatedness of knowledge and global awareness.

International Spanish Academy (see Bilingual Language Programs)

Logos provides programming within a non-denominational Christian environment grounded in Christian principles. Teacher-directed instruction, whole-group mastery learning and a knowledge-based curriculum are emphasized.

Meadowlark Christian School provides programming founded on the Christian world view, and teaches students how to live their faith in the context of their local and broader community.

Millwoods Christian School offers families an opportunity to apply Christian philosophy to the entire learning experience.

Nellie McClung provides junior high programming for girls which emphasizes leadership, initiative, self-reliance and independence.

Pre-Advanced Placement provides junior high students with academically rigorous programming.

Sakinah Circle provides programming within the context of a Qur'anic worldview.

Science Alternative programming supports students in building academic skills through investigation and hands-on learning to understand how science shapes our world.

Sports Alternative programming enables student athletes to participate in rigorous sports training routines while remaining on track with their academic goals.

Talmud Torah offers an integrated program of Judaic and secular studies in a Hebrew Bilingual setting.

Traditional programming focuses on traditional values and goals of education and citizenship. Students receive direct instruction of basic skills in a structured learning environment.

Victoria School of the Arts programming allows students to pursue their academic studies while exploring their creativity and developing a passion for the arts.

Vimy Ridge Academy Alternative programming supports students in building academic skills, with an emphasis on global history and in-depth courses on Canada and its place in the world. An outdoor component promotes physical fitness, self-discipline and leadership.

For a listing of program locations, visit epsb.ca.

ROLE OF PROGRAM-RELATED SOCIETIES IN EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Approved February 4, 1999

Edmonton Public Schools, as an advocate of choice, offers a wide range of alternative programs and programs of choice. The District has a twenty-five year history of providing such programs within the framework of the School Act and the Edmonton Public School Board's own policies and regulations. Many of these programs are associated with or were originated by a society composed of parents and/or community members. This document outlines the District's view of the role of such societies and their relationship to the programs as well as to district administration and the Board of Trustees.

The societies are valued by the District for the work they do in introducing new program ideas, in helping to maintain the integrity and intent of the programs as they are approved by the Board of Trustees, and in supporting the programs in various ways. The nature of this support varies somewhat from program to program, but may include recruiting students, recruiting parent and community volunteers, providing assistance with program activities, finding and acquiring resources, and, sometimes, providing financial support.

The District recognizes the legitimacy of program-related societies as advisory bodies, and appreciates both its ability and its obligation to consult with these societies on important program issues. It also expects that program-related societies, if they wish to be seen as speaking for program parents, are able to demonstrate that they include parent representation and can indicate their basis for believing they represent the views of parents. It is recognized that only the Board of Trustees can change the nature or intent of an approved program.

The societies provide advice and input to school administrators, Central Services and the Board on matters related to the program as a whole. Consultation occurs in a variety of ways, both formal and informal (e.g., meetings, phone calls, involvement in committees or interviews, request for written input, etc.). This occurs either at the initiation of the District or of the society, with the program principal(s) expected to play a key role in the process. Examples of areas in which such consultation may occur are:

- nature, content and intent of program, within the context that all schools and programs must follow the provincial curriculum;
- locations for the program;
- transportation boundaries and related issues;
- staffing of the program, including the appointment of principals; and
- other issues of significance to the entire program.

In the case of programs with multiple locations, issues related to one specific location, as opposed to those affecting the entire program, are normally dealt with by the principal, parents and school council of that location. An exception would be an issue arising in a specific location that is related to an area such as those listed above, and which potentially has an impact on the whole program.

Unless specifically agreed to by parents, and formally set up in that manner, the society does not take on the role of the school council. The school council would continue to be subject to requirements of the School Act and provincial regulations.

The District may seek input regarding program issues directly from parents, staff and others, as well as from the society.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Student Transportation provides safe, efficient and reliable services for thousands of students who use District-arranged transportation.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM YELLOW BUS

While [Edmonton Transit](#) is the preferred means of transportation for junior high students, yellow bus service may be provided to [Kindergarten](#) and elementary students attending [alternative programs](#). Learn more about yellow bus service [eligibility](#), [applying for service](#) and [bus passes](#).

District [alternative programs](#) are only offered in some schools, so students may need to travel outside their neighbourhood to attend schools offering these programs. Students who choose to attend an alternative program at a school outside of their neighbourhood are not eligible for yellow bus service if the same program is offered at their neighbourhood school.

Most of the alternative programs offered by Edmonton Public Schools have some yellow busing options available. Fees may apply for this service; find details at <http://epsb.ca/schools/gettoschool/buspasses/>.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply for alternative program yellow bus service a student must:

- attend the alternative program at the designated school
- live outside of the walk boundary
- live within the bus service area
- be in Kindergarten to Grade 6.

View the detailed map on any [school page](#) for the yellow bus service area, or contact the school.

BUS ROUTES AND STOP LOCATIONS

Yellow bus routes serving students in alternative programs are called modified-fixed routes. Students on modified-fixed bus routes walk a short distance (usually less than 400 metres) from home to a nearby ETS stop or intersection.

RIDE TIMES

The ride may be up to 90 minutes one-way, but most students are on the bus for less than 60 minutes.

For more information, visit epsb.ca/ourdistrict/departments/studenttransportation.

LEASING SPACE IN SCHOOLS

We understand that some alternative programs may want to include before and/or after school care to complement an alternative program and serve the families of program participants. Extra space in our schools may be licensed (part-time use) or leased (full-time use). License and lease holders such as day cares, before and after school care centres and many other community organizations provide valuable services that benefit students and the community.

To apply to license or lease space in our schools, please complete our [Leasing and License Request Form](#). If the space you want is unavailable, we can help you find a different space that works.

For more information, email leasing@epsb.ca or call 780-429-8540.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM PROPOSAL FORM

This document describes how to make a proposal to the Edmonton Public School Board to request the development of a new alternative program.

Please review the alternative program requirements outlined in this document and in Alternative Programs – An Overview before submitting a proposal.

Background

The Vision of Edmonton Public Schools is transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow. We inspire student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningfully engaged students, parents, staff and community. Our work is guided by four cornerstone values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity.

We are committed to student learning that includes choices developed to respond to specific student interests and talents, options in neighbourhood schools and in specialized settings.

Alternative program proposals will be respectfully and thoughtfully reviewed based on the values and priorities of Edmonton Public Schools and legislative regulations. All alternative programs offered by the Edmonton Public School Board to our students are the sole property of the Edmonton Public School Board.

The Value of Alternative Programs

Edmonton Public Schools supports over 30 alternative programs and strives to provide high quality learning environments. Alternative programs were introduced to enhance student and parent choice. The District believes that public education can and should serve all children, and that it is neither necessary nor desirable to serve them all in the same way.

Our approach is an extension of the provincial mandate outlined in Section 21(1) of the School Act which defines alternative programs as:

an education program that (a) emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject matter, or (b) uses a particular teaching philosophy, but that is not a special education program, a program referred to in section 10 [French language instruction] or a program of religious education offered by a separate school board.

An alternative program is a defined program that has received Board approval and can only be modified by a Board Policy or Administrative Regulation. Alternative programs are intended to be long-term, sustainable and usually involve several grades and occupy a significant portion of the school.

An alternative program is an educational approach that affects the entire schooling experience of a child (e.g., bilingual programs and Cogito). This distinguishes alternative programs from other kinds of choices that may involve a single course such as a Japanese language option, a single classroom or specific options such as outdoor education or fine arts.

Alternative Program Checklist

This checklist is designed to help determine if the proposed program qualifies as an alternative program and, as such, may be considered by the Edmonton Public School Board.

Does the proposed program have the following elements?

- The program is based on a particular language, culture, subject matter or teaching philosophy.
- The program is not a Francophone program.
- The program is not a special education program.
- A variation of the program does not already exist.
- The program is a consistent set of unique features intended to be long-term and sustainable.
- The program involves the entire elementary, junior high or senior high grades or a combination of these grades.
- Sufficient numbers of students are interested to warrant the program.

If the answer is ‘Yes’ to ALL of the above, then the proposed program qualifies as an alternative program and may be submitted to Edmonton Public School Board for consideration.

Required Content of an Alternative Program Proposal

Alternative program proposals must contain the following information:

Name of group (if applicable)	
Name of primary contact*	

* Edmonton Public School Board Planning Programs staff will contact the individual named as the *Primary Contact* for clarification and/or additional information during the proposal process and to update on the status of the proposal.

Primary Contact Information

Mailing Address

Street	City	Postal Code
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Telephone Numbers

Business	Residence	Cell	Fax
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Email Address

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ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Proposed name of the alternative program: _____

Proposed location of the alternative program: _____

Proposed opening date for the alternative program: _____

1. What is the purpose of/rationale for the alternative program? Describe the essential characteristics of the proposed alternative program with a focus on its base of language, culture, subject matter and/or teaching philosophy.
2. Describe the unique student learning outcomes that would result from the proposed alternative program. In addition, explain how the proposed alternative program is significantly different from programs offered by Edmonton Public Schools as related to language, culture, subject-matter or teaching philosophy.
3. Indicate how educational research supports the proposed alternative program, with an emphasis on Canadian and local contexts, where applicable. Cite research sources.
4. Describe the students for whom the alternative program is intended. What are the intended student benefits?
5. How will this program be long-term and sustainable? How will it involve the entire elementary, junior high and/or senior high grades?
6. What and where is the expected demand for the program? How have you measured expected demand?

7. What are the facility and staffing needs of the program?
8. Detail the estimated startup and implementation costs for the program.

Proposed Grade Levels for the Alternative Program

Place either a 'Yes' or a 'No' in the box below each grade level, from Kindergarten (K) to Grade 12. 'Yes' indicates the grades included in this proposed alternative program and shows the potential educational experience for a student.

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Yes or No													

Treatment of Collected Information

Personal information is collected under the authority of Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). The information in this application will be used to determine an outcome to the proposal and may be attached to reports made public. The personal information contained in this application will be treated in accordance with the privacy protection provisions of FOIP. If you have questions about this process, contact the Planning department at 780-429-8539.

REQUEST TO AMEND EXISTING ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

This document describes how to initiate amendments to an existing alternative program in Edmonton Public Schools. All requests are reviewed by the Planning department. If the request meets all requirements, it will be submitted to the Superintendent for approval.

Background

The Vision of Edmonton Public Schools is transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow. We inspire student success through high quality learning opportunities, supported by meaningfully engaged students, parents, staff and community. Our work is guided by the four cornerstone values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity. We are committed to student learning that includes choices developed to respond to specific student interests and talents, options in neighbourhood schools and in specialized settings.

All alternative programs offered by Edmonton Public Schools to our students are the sole property of the Edmonton Public School Board. Only a Board-approved amendment or administrative regulation can change existing alternative program practices.

To request a review of existing program practices or to create or modify enrolment criteria, please complete and submit this form.

Any changes to existing programs require Superintendent approval. Alternative program amendments will be respectfully and thoughtfully reviewed based on the values and priorities of Edmonton Public Schools and legislative regulations. The Superintendent will then make a decision regarding any submission that meets requirements.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM AMENDMENT FORM:

Name of the alternative program: _____

Number of students currently enrolled: _____

1. Describe your current program. What are the benefits / successes for the students enrolled in the program?
2. Is there a program specific registration form and/or process for determining student suitability for the program? If yes, please describe the process and attach a copy of the registration form, entrance test or other relevant documents.

3. Describe how students are supported in this alternative program.
4. Describe the changes you propose to the current alternative program.
5. Please give a detailed rationale as to why you feel these changes are necessary.

Grade Levels for the Alternative Program

Place either a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No’ in the box below each grade level, from Kindergarten (K) to Grade 12, to indicate which grade(s) would be affected by the proposed amendment(s).

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Yes or No													

Treatment of Collected Information

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Government of Alberta, Education. (2010). Alternative Programs Handbook. Retrieved from <http://www.education.alberta.ca/media/434640/alternative%20programs%20handbook%20policy%20branch%20edits%20march%2027%202009%20april%2013%202010%20kwrt.pdf>

Edmonton Public Schools is helping to shape the future in every one of our classrooms. We're focused on ensuring each student learns to their full potential and develops the ability, passion and imagination to pursue their dreams and contribute to their community.

