

DATE: September 12, 2017

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation to Alberta Education – Next Steps (Response to Request for Information #218)

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director, Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE STAFF: Janice Aubry

REFERENCE: [June 6, 2017 Board Meeting – Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation Initial Draft Provincial Curriculum Implementation: District Readiness Plan 2017-2020](#)

ISSUE

That the District provide the June 6, 2017, report in response to Request For Information #218 – Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation to Alberta Education and that Administration identify next steps (e.g., funding request to the Province).

BACKGROUND

Administration provided a response to the Request for Information #218 – Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation at the June 6, 2017 board meeting. That report included five initial recommendations for efficient and effective use of District and provincial resources to support the implementation of new curriculum, as well as the (Initial Draft) Provincial Curriculum Implementation: District Readiness Plan 2017-2020.

The District is midway through implementation of the first year of the (Initial Draft) Provincial Curriculum Implementation: District Readiness Plan 2017-2020. Through funding provided through 2016-2017 central access to surplus funds, many preparedness activities have been initiated, including:

- The hiring of 14.3 FTE curriculum staff
- The provision of professional learning supports (in-service, professional learning days, materials, etc)
- The opportunity for 140 District staff to gather to review the initial draft curriculum materials and provide feedback to the province
- The training of over 140 teachers on the use of the new District resource selection criteria
- The provision of communications materials and tools to schools
- Collaboration with other school districts to prepare for new curriculum

CURRENT SITUATION

A targeted outcome of the (Initial Draft) Provincial Curriculum Implementation: District Readiness Plan 2017-2020 is to build staff confidence and competence. Work to build staff capacity and readiness for curriculum implementation continues. For example, curriculum consultants are available to schools to support staff in current curriculum and for preparation for new curriculum. Digital materials to support staff, students, parents and stakeholders will continue to be made available, including digital learning professional development modules and face-to-face opportunities for teachers. As we look to the time, resource materials and staff that will be needed to successfully implement the new curriculum, it is apparent that funding above what is normally allotted for resource development and staff support will be required.

The following five recommendations were outlined and provided to Board as part of the June 6, 2017 Response to Request for Information #218 – Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation. Each recommendation below now includes potential next steps for Board consideration:

1. That Alberta Education continue to engage teachers and collaborate with school districts throughout the development and implementation processes, including during the development of an implementation and resourcing strategy.

NEXT STEPS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

- That the Board urge Alberta Education to meaningfully and in a timely manner:
 - share information with districts
 - engage districts in collaboratively developing an implementation plan, including strategies for staff development and classroom resourcing.
- 2. That funding for professional learning supports be directed to school districts, with a focus on collaboration, the building and sharing of expertise, and the development of digital tools to support job-embedded, timely access to information, professional learning, and resources.

NEXT STEPS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

- That the Board advocate for future funding to cover staff release time for learning, planning and collaboration.
 - That the Board advocate for current and future funding for the development of quality digital learning tools that will enable teachers to receive information and support in their school, catchment and classroom environments. The goal is to ensure that teachers can learn collaboratively in their own teaching contexts and are enabled to access knowledge and skill development supports “anytime” and “anywhere”.
 - That the Board advocate for support for the development of quality resources by Alberta school districts, as opposed to the contracting of for-profit publishers or third-party developers.
3. That Alberta Education begin immediately to collaborate with school districts to identify, gather and/or develop any needed new resources (human, print, digital, as well as curriculum content, classroom assessment and professional learning resources).

NEXT STEPS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

- That the Board urge Alberta Education to engage in collaboratively developing an implementation plan, including strategies for staff development, and classroom resourcing.

- That the Board advocate for funding to support the development of resources in preparation for new curriculum (for example, District staff are currently revising key District mathematics resources in preparation for the new curriculum).
4. That Alberta Education begin to support action research initiatives in school districts immediately, to continue enabling districts to build capacity and to investigate the most effective means and processes through which large-scale curriculum and pedagogical change will occur.

NEXT STEPS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

- That the Board urge Alberta Education to collaborate with districts to initiate and fund local action research projects that could inform districts and the province regarding the most effective processes through which large-scale curriculum and pedagogical change will occur.
5. That Alberta Education provide support to strengthen collaboration and sharing among school districts, and with key educational partners.

NEXT STEPS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

- That the Board urge Alberta Education to engage with districts to identify effective mechanisms for collaboration and sharing among school districts in preparation for curriculum change, then provide support to implement these mechanisms.

KEY POINTS

- The Board Chair sent the Response to Request for Information #218 – Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation to the Minister of Education.
- The June 6, 2017 Response to Request for Information #218 – Shared Approach to Curriculum Implementation outlined five recommendations for Board consideration
- There are next steps that the Board could consider in its advocacy for curriculum preparedness support. These next steps are based on the five initial recommendations and content from the (Initial Draft) Provincial Curriculum Implementation: District Readiness Plan 2017-2020. The next steps for Board consideration, as outline in this report, include urging Alberta Education to continue to communicate and collaborate with districts, to involve districts in their strategic plans for implementation, to work with districts on action research and to fund resource development and staff release time.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

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