

DATE: June 23, 2020

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Instruction provisions for students in full-day child care
(Response to Request for Information #74)

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director Board and Superintendent Relations

ISSUE

Trustee Gibson made the following request at the May 26, 2020, public Board meeting:
As part of the re-entry plans for the 2020-2021 school year, the Division advise how it plans to coordinate access and scheduling of online school sessions for children that will be in full-day child care should both parents be at work.

BACKGROUND

On March 15, the Alberta government cancelled all Kindergarten through Grade 12 classes indefinitely to help contain the spread of COVID-19. Daycares were also closed.

As part of the province's relaunch strategy, child care operators were permitted to resume operations, with heightened health requirements, as of June 1.

On June 10, 2020, the province introduced their School Re-entry Plan and guidance documents for Scenarios 1 and 2 and stated that their preferred plan was a resumption of in-person classes in the fall.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Division is currently planning for all three scenarios proposed in Alberta Education's [School Re-entry Plan](#):

- Scenario 1: In-school classes resume (near normal operations with health measures)
- Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume with additional health measures
- Scenario 3: At home learning continues (in-school classes are cancelled)

If transmissions of COVID-19 continue their downward trend and in-school classes resume with health measures in September (Scenario 1), it is expected that the majority of students will return to schools and accommodation for students not returning will be made on a case-by-case basis. It is also difficult to imagine a situation where a student who would be too medically fragile or uncomfortable to attend in-person classes would find day care an acceptable setting, thus a "blanket" solution does not seem warranted or helpful.

Should a classes in an individual school need to be cancelled for a limited time due to a COVID-19 outbreak, plans will be in place to support remote student learning. In the 2020-2021 budget approved at the June 9, 2020, public Board meeting, Trustees approved directing \$4 million from reserves for the development of online instructional videos and accompanying plans and resources for subjects across the grade levels.

Curriculum and Resource Supports has begun creating digital and print teaching and learning packages for teachers and families for core subject areas Kindergarten to Grade 9 to assist teachers to seamlessly support

high quality instruction as they and their students transition in and out of three possible teaching and learning contexts:

- face-to-face
- distance, either online (for students who have connectivity) or paper based (for students without connectivity)
- a blended context, with some instruction provided face-to-face and some instruction provided through a digital environment (or paper based for students without connectivity), with or without synchronicity

Family packages will support teachers to provide families with means to support their students that may need to be learning at home through providing a parallel paper package, or through similar materials with instructions to be posted to a Google Classroom.

Packages will include:

- essential learning outcomes (documents for each grade and each core subject)
- videos of teachers providing direct instruction, and written versions of those instructions
- developed student learning materials (digital and print resources), with recorded instructions from teachers
- instructional design and planning templates
- identified or developed teaching and learning resources to support all learning experiences

Families are encouraged to talk with school staff to explore any apprehensions or assumptions, and ensure a clear understanding of the options available before deciding that a student will not be returning to class for an extended period. The Division's re-entry plans contemplate both having school plans for supporting distance learners and communication between schools and parents to discuss parents' plans for the return to classes and how to best accommodate learners.

Students anticipating not returning to in-person classes for an extended period may investigate learning opportunities such as Parent Directed Home Education, where parents design the student's program according to the Home Education Regulation; Shared Responsibility (Blended) Programming where the parent and teachers are responsible for different aspects of the student's coursework, and teacher-directed online programming. Child care operators' willingness and/or ability to support student learning in their facilities will vary, and so collaboration between the family, the school and the operator will be important to understand expectations, available supports and what is logistically possible.

KEY POINTS

- The Division is planning for all three scenarios proposed in Alberta Education's School Re-entry Plan.
- Through the Board's investment put forward in the 2020-2021 budget, resources are being prepared to support teachers and families who participate in distance learning.
- Long-term alternatives to in-class learning for students will require collaboration between the Division, families and child care operators.
- Communication between families and schools is encouraged before any decisions about student attendance are finalized.

KM:km