

Date	May 12, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Trustee Jan Sawyer
Subject	Motion re: Engagement on Second Language Instruction Requirement in Board Policy GA.BP
Resource Staff	Kelsey Duebel
Reference	GA.BP Student Programs of Study Education Act Alberta Education – Guide to Education

ISSUE

Board Policy GA.BP Student Programs of Study includes a requirement that schools provide “instruction in a second language (in addition to English) in Grades 4 to 9 and support and encouragement to students to continue to build proficiency in a second language through the end of Grade 12.”

This requirement for second language instruction has been in place in board policy since 2006 and has not been thoroughly reviewed since its implementation, and warrants reconsideration to ensure alignment with the Board’s governance role, current educational context, and stakeholder perspectives.

RECOMMENDATION

That Administration enter into engagement with students, staff and families as to whether schools should continue to be required to provide instruction in a second language (in addition to English) in Grades 4 to 9 and support and encouragement to students to continue to build proficiency in a second language through the end of Grade 12, as outlined in Board Policy GA.BP Student Programs of Study and that the results of this engagement be reported back to the Board of Trustees.

BACKGROUND

Board Policy GA.BP Student Programs of Study is intended to reinforce the Division’s commitment to provincially prescribed programs of study and to outline the characteristics of student programming.

Within this policy, the requirement related to second language instruction has been in place for a number of years. Since its adoption, there have been ongoing changes in curriculum, instructional priorities, student demographics and system pressures, as well as evolving perspectives on student programming and choice.

Since its implementation, the Board has not undertaken a focused review of this specific requirement within the policy.

RELATED FACTS

- Programs of study, including curriculum expectations, are established by Alberta Education.
- Board Policy GA.BP primarily reinforces provincial expectations and outlines broad characteristics of student programming.
- The statement regarding second language instruction is the only provision within the policy that specifies a particular element of programming in this manner.
- Implementation of programming is an operational responsibility delegated to the Superintendent under the Education Act.
- No recent formal engagement has been undertaken specifically regarding this requirement.

OPTIONS

1. Maintain Status Quo

No engagement is undertaken, and the current policy requirement remains unchanged.

2. Undertake Engagement (Recommended Option)

Administration engages students, staff and families to gather input on the requirement and reports findings to the Board.

3. Amend or Remove Requirement Without Engagement

The Board proceeds directly to policy amendment without formal stakeholder engagement.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

Option 1: Maintain Status Quo

Advantages:

- No additional resource requirement
- Maintains consistency and stability

Disadvantages:

- Does not address potential misalignment between policy and governance role
- Missed opportunity to gather current stakeholder perspectives
- Leaves an older provision unreviewed despite changing context

Option 2: Undertake Engagement (Recommended)

Advantages:

- Provides evidence-informed input from students, staff and families
- Supports transparent and inclusive decision-making
- Allows the Board to assess whether the requirement remains relevant and appropriate
- Aligns with good governance practice by informing future policy direction without pre-determining outcomes

Disadvantages:

- Requires time and administrative resources
- May surface differing or conflicting perspectives

Risks/Implications:

- Stakeholder interest may be high given the potential impact on programming
- Careful communication will be required to ensure engagement is understood as exploratory, not predetermined

Option 3: Amend Without Engagement*Advantages:*

- Timely decision-making
- No engagement costs

Disadvantages:

- Lacks stakeholder input
- Potential reputational risk if perceived as insufficiently consultative
- Does not provide evidence base for decision-making

Rationale for Recommendation

Undertaking engagement is the most appropriate option as it allows the Board to better understand current perspectives before considering any future policy changes. It also reflects the Board's role in setting direction while ensuring decisions are informed by those most impacted.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the recommendation, administration would develop an engagement plan identifying stakeholders, methods and timelines. Engagement would then be conducted with students, staff and families. Findings would be compiled and analyzed, and a report would be brought back to the Board of Trustees with results and any potential implications for policy consideration.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I [Board Policy GA.BP Student Programs of Study](#)

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