



"Accepting the Challenge"

Education Committee Minutes

Monday, December 17, 2012, 11:30 a.m.
Conference Room, Administration Office

Present: P. Bartlette (Chairperson), P. Bowslaugh (entered at 11:55 a.m.),
M. Sefton (Alternate), Dr. D. Michaels.

Guest: G. Malazdrewicz, Associate Superintendent

Regrets: M. Snelling

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Education Committee Meeting was called to order at 11:40 a.m. by the Committee Chairperson, Mr. Bartlette.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Committee minutes from November 19, 2012 were received as information.

4. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE GOAL ITEMS

A) Grade 7 and 8 Elective Report (Timed Event)

Mr. Greg Malazdrewicz, Associate Superintendent, attended the Committee meeting to speak to the Grade 7 and 8 Elective Report. (Attached as Appendix "A") Mr. Malazdrewicz noted an evaluation of the programming had taken place as per Board Policy 4050 – "Evaluation of Instructional Programs and Services". The Grade 7 and 8 Electives reviewed under this policy included Industrial Arts, Clothing and Textiles, Foods and Nutrition, Band and Basic French. Mr. Malazdrewicz confirmed a survey had been conducted, of various stakeholders including students, the teaches of the optional programs, the administrators of the feeder schools, the administrators of the host school, the teachers of vocational programs at the high school level, and the senior administration of the Division. He spoke to the various questions which had been reviewed. Mr. Malazdrewicz provided detailed information about the facility development and resourcing for the Industrial Arts, Home Economics and Band program. He spoke to curricular considerations for each elective; answering trustee questions as they arose. Mr. Malazdrewicz concluded his report by addressing administrative considerations for each of the electives. It was agreed the Committee Chairperson would highlight the report at the next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Superintendent, Dr. Michaels, asked the Committee if the report provided them with the information they needed. The Committee confirmed they required more time to review the report and would bring it back at a later date for further discussion, if needed.

Dr. Michaels also noted the other program evaluations which were currently taking place and spoke to the costs to conduct such evaluations.

Mr. Malazdrewicz exited the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

5. **OTHER COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

A) Internet Music Program Follow-up

Trustee Bowslaugh provided information with respect to conversations she had with Mr. Thomas Mathews, regarding his internet music program. She noted the program was mainly for guitars and piano; used the Suzuki method; and could work for as few as 2 students to as many as 30 students. Discussions were held regarding how this program would fit into the Division's current music curriculum. Trustee Sefton also noted the Committee needed to gauge the level of interest by both staff and students before moving forward. The Committee agreed to send the matter to Senior Administration for further study, review and report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

B) January Meeting Date

As the Manitoba School Boards Association Region 1 meeting is to take place on January 21, 2013, it was unanimously agreed to move the Committee meeting from the 21st of January to the 15th of January.

6. **BRIEFINGS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION**

- Dr. Michaels, Superintendent, reviewed the MASS Document – Position Statement on Aboriginal Education for the Committee. It was requested that the document be included in the agenda for the first Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee meeting.
- The summary document from the Education Committee's consultation with students regarding "Equity of inclusion and protection of Human Rights for individual differences" was received as information. Dr. Michaels noted the timeliness of the Committee's work in this area as there was currently legislation before the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on this matter. She confirmed further discussions on this topic would take place in February following an evaluation of the data collected.
- **(In-camera)** Trustee Bowslaugh referenced conversations she had with a Group Home administrator.

7. **OPERATIONS INFORMATION**

NIL

8. **NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, January 15, 2013, 11:30 a.m. Board Room.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Bartlette, Chair

P. Bowslaugh

M. Snelling

M. Sefton (Alternate)

Senior Administration Summary Report

Review of the Option Programs Offered in Grade 7 and Grade 8

Introduction

Brandon School Division Policy 4050 states: "The Board of Trustees recognizes its responsibility to provide for the evaluation of instruction and learning of programs and services. The Board believes that structured reviews of instructional programs and services are essential to improve instruction, student achievement and fiscal responsibility." (Brandon School Division, Policy 4050)

This Senior Administrative Summary Report provides an overview of the review the options (Industrial Arts, Clothing and Textiles, Foods and Nutrition, Band, and Basic French) offered at grade seven and grade eight. This report will answer the following question: How do the optional programs affect the stakeholders (the students, the teachers of the optional programs, the administrators of the feeder schools, the administrators of the host schools, the teachers of vocational programs at the high school level, and the senior administration of The Brandon School Division) in the Brandon School Division? This question may be broken down into sub-questions:

- How do the optional programs meet the provincial requirements of curricula implementation and delivery?
- What are the views of the teachers of the optional programs?
- How do the optional programs affect the host schools?
- What are the opinions of the principals whose grade seven and grade eight students are enrolled in the optional programs?
- How do optional programs affect students' achievement in grade seven and grade eight?
- How do the optional programs affect students' achievement as they proceed into and through high school?
- What resources are used to offer the optional programs?
- What are the costs of running these optional programs?

To answer these questions a survey was distributed to most (some students were absent the day their class completed the survey) students enrolled in grade seven and grade eight during the 2011-2012 school year in the Brandon School Division; a survey was distributed to all the principals of grade seven and grade eight students who attend the option programs; a survey was distributed to a sample of high school students who had taken the options program in grade seven and/or grade eight; a survey was sent to a sample of high school teachers who teach Band, Basic French, or Vocational programs; an interview was conducted with all principals who have an option program in their school; an interview was conducted with all teachers of the options programs.

Context

Currently the grade seven and grade eight optional programs are offered in the following manner. Home Economics, which includes Clothing and Textiles for half the year and Foods and Nutrition for half a year, is taken by all grade seven students. Industrial Arts, which is woodworking, is taken for

the full year by all grade eight students. Both Home Economics and Industrial Arts are offered once in a six day cycle for a three hour block.

Band is offered three times in a six day cycle for a 50 minute blocks of time. Students in most schools have the choice between Band or an Art program that is offered in their home school.

Basic French is offered, on average, for 35 minutes daily during the six day cycle. Students have the choice in grade 7 and grade 8 to either take French or non-French (which is a school developed course).

The Industrial Arts programs are offered at École Harrison, Earl Oxford School, and Riverheights School. The Home Economics programs are offered at Earl Oxford School and Riverheights School. The Band Program is offered at Earl Oxford School and at Waverly Park School.

General Overview

There certainly are some concerns about the **Industrial Arts programs**, as expressed by all the stakeholders, which need to be addressed. However, as all the students, teachers, and principals stated, many of the students are able to experience some achievement because for most of the students it is a new skill, it exposes the students to a different type of learning, they are able to work through a creative process that ends with something they have made and can take home. All these successes helps the students develop confidence and independence.

With regard to **Clothing and Textiles**, students have some successes, especially those who are engaged. Many of the students are exposed to new skills, and for some they view these skills as life-long skills. Some of the students are engaged in the hands-on style of learning, and again the students are involved in a creative process. With this program, not as many students are engaged and if a student is not engaged to some extent it is difficult to experience success. However, some students truly find a passion and thus experience great success.

With regard to **Foods and Nutrition** more students seem to be engaged. The students viewed this program as teaching them a life-long skill that they use now and will always use in the future. With learning to cook, students achieve a sense of independence (they can look after themselves), confidence (they are able to help with meal preparation at home and are able to prepare a meal by themselves, as well as use a stove). Thus, some experience more successes as they discover a real passion for cooking and/or the hands-on style of learning.

There are varying degrees of success achieved in the **Band program**. Some students just want to be exposed to music and/or try something new, while others are building on prior knowledge of music and foresee music being a part of their life in their future. It seems if the students are somewhat engaged in the program they are able to experience some sort of achievement. There are certainly some students who are not engaged and as a result do not experience success.

Once again, it seems engagement is linked to experienced success. Whether a student is engaged because he/she loves the French language or because they see **Basic French** as helping to get a job and/or with travel, it seems the student experiences some success. However, if the student is not engaged, they do not seem to experience success, rather they seem to view the program as useless and do not wish to take/pursue it.

Governance Considerations

Facility Development and Resourcing

Industrial Arts and Home Economics

Industrial Arts teachers voiced concerns about class sizes. Historically, classes have often grown into the 20-25 student range. Education assistants were assigned to classrooms on an “as needed” basis when class sizes exceeded 20 students. This presented concerns with regard to the effectiveness of learning as well as growing safety concerns as the class sizes expand.

Growing enrolments again this year have necessitated a change in schedule configuration this fall to manage *Industrial Arts and Home Economics* class sizes at acceptable levels. In addition to the reconfiguration of the timetable, Education Assistant support has been provided to ALL Industrial Arts and Home Economics classrooms this year.

Projections for continued enrollment growth suggest that additional facility space will be required in 4 - 5 years for these vocational areas. This will entail not just new facilities, but the capital investment in equipment to deliver services within expanded programs.

While it is felt that the Industrial Arts program seems to be reasonably resourced with respect to instructional budget allocations, the Foods and Nutrition programs are struggling with the cost of food particularly against the fact that most of the resources have a defined shelf life unlike Industrial Arts. It was suggested that a doubling of the budget would support the program more appropriately.

Administrators and teachers generally commented on and agreed that divisional bussing would tighten the schedules up for these programs and support students who have difficulty accessing the Brandon Transit system. Additionally, divisional bussing would reduce the amount of time lost to family/student transportation and possibly allow the reclaiming of instructional time at home schools.

Divisional bussing would indeed alter the current model significantly. In addition to the costs associated directly with bussing, additional staffing would be needed to be provided to offset the cost to home schools as students would be onsite for additional time. Consideration of this model would require that the Industrial Arts and Home Economics programs would need to be divisionally staffed and current staff allocations which are transferred to support the students' participation in the programs could, proportionately, remain at the home schools.

Band Program

Band programs are operating at maximum student capacity. The current two site model puts stress on the host facilities as with the addition of additional staffing over the past several years instructional programs have been able to respond to demand, but also utilize additional classroom resources in the host school. Consideration should be given to developing additional program delivery sites, or an entirely new delivery model. New program delivery models should give consideration to the range of ability of students participating in the Band programs.

Principals, teachers and students agree that the Band program does address students' needs. The principals note that music is a valuable skill to learn and helps to develop well-rounded students. Principals made consistent comment on the student costs associated with the program that discourage students from choosing Band as a legitimate “option”.

Curricular Considerations

Industrial Arts and Home Economics

The Industrial Arts curriculum emphasizes that learning is an active-interactive process. So these programs should allow and encourage students to create construct and extend their knowledge. The curriculum further explains that these programs provide students with the knowledge and opportunities to learn daily living skills through theory and practical experiences. Moreover, the programs teach and emphasize safe working habits. Furthermore, this program also introduces students to different career paths.

The Home Economics curriculum emphasizes that learning is an active-interactive process. So these programs (Clothing and Textiles and Foods and Nutrition) should allow and encourage students to create, construct, and extend their knowledge. The curriculum further explains that these programs provide students with the knowledge and opportunities to learn daily living skills through theory and practical experiences. Moreover, the programs teach and emphasize safe working habits. Students identified that Foods and Nutrition was more closely connected to their world than Clothing and Textiles.

The Home Economics programs are a resource for families insofar as they teach daily living skills that students may need. In order for society to function and flourish, the basic family unit needs to be able to function well. Moreover, these programs introduce students to different career paths.

Industrial Arts and Home Economics teachers acknowledge that EAL students have proven to be a challenge within their programs. Consideration needs to be given to developing language support models that ensure students' safety, but collaterally provide solid learning opportunities for the EAL students in their programs.

Industrial Arts teachers express disappointment that there is no direct continuation of woodworking in high school for students.

All principals who send grade seven and grade eight students to the option programs completed a survey. The themes that emerged from the qualitative and quantitative responses in the questionnaire about the Industrial Arts program are listed below:

- The principals acknowledged that some students' needs are being addressed (especially with the hands-on component),
- The principals acknowledged that some valuable skills are being taught (safety with tools),
- The principals noted that some students are really engaged, but not all students are engaged,
- The principals agreed that the time block works well (once for three hours in a six day cycle).

The concerns that host and home principals raised included:

- safety,
- the lack of additional options,
- the need for more contemporary and or life oriented delivery models .

Band and Art

The Band program attracts students who have never pursued music before and wish to try, students who want to further their musical knowledge, students who wish to avoid the other option (Art), as

well as students whose parent/guardian thinks it would benefit them. These students reported they learn:

- to play an instrument, which includes learning to read music, learning about rhythm, learning about phrasing etc,;
- to take care of their instrument;
- to be a member of a team;
- to be responsible for practicing at home.

Some students did not see the Band program helping them even though they enjoyed it. Some students did not enjoy the Band program at all.

As previously mentioned, new program delivery models should be considered that address the range of ability of students participating in the Band programs.

EAL students are frequently excluded from Band programs primarily because many students do not register for a traditional September entry. While some Grade 7 students do gain access, many do not and because of the sequential design of the program they are excluded at the Grade 8 level. Program delivery models that address the diversity in students' musical ability should give strong consideration to accommodating EAL students' needs.

Alexander and O'Kelly schools do not access the Band program because of their rural setting. Effective program development should give consideration to developing a model to provide Band programs for Alexander and O'Kelly.

French

The purpose of Basic French is to teach students to communicate in French. The program integrates communication/experience, culture, language, and general language education. Ultimately the teachers are to provide students opportunities to practice communicating in French.

When students were asked why they took Basic French, many of the students acknowledged and respected the importance and benefits of knowing a second language, especially French in Canada. Additionally they identified some believed it will help them get a job (enhance their resume) and some believed it will help them if they travel.

Students explained that they learn vocabulary words, verbs, to read and write in French, and to be able to have a conversation with others in French.

Student and principal feedback indicated that the Brandon School Division should continue to look at ways to rejuvenate the Basic French program. One program identified by principals that would be worthy of further exploration is the Teaching Proficiency through reading and storytelling Method (TPRS Method).

Of concern to the administrators was the option offered opposite to Basic French. It should be divisionally mandated and as rigorous as the Basic French program. Schools seem to struggle with what to offer opposite Basic French. The Brandon School Division ought to consider developing a division-wide course to offer opposite Basic French.

Administrative Considerations

The survey process garnered feedback from host principals, sending principals and teachers of the key option areas. Of key significance is the frequent request for direct program supervision by an administrator with program development responsibility. This has never been a reality and with the evolving complexities in individual school communities, direct linkages to host schools have waned.

Industrial Arts and Home Economics

Principals and some teachers raised a number of considerations for these programs:

- Capital funding costs for Band there are such items as music stands and Band chairs, as well as building storage (shelving, cages) for the instruments;
- Capital Funding with Home Economic and Industrial Arts as the replacement costs of the machines was mentioned as a concern;
- Incidental costs of hosting a divisional program – such as photocopying or just having a photocopier for the divisional programs (particularly at Earl Oxford that hosts three divisional programs);
- Supervision of the students from other schools;
- Concerns with effective support for EAL students;
- Communication is difficult and sometimes lacking between host schools and sending schools;
- Climate concerns between staff of the school and staff of the divisional programs;
- Transportation concerns with Industrial Arts and Home Economics.

Band and Art

Teachers primarily commented on the diversity of students participating in Band programs from a “skills” perspective. The diversity of ability provides many challenges on an ongoing basis. This is more notable in a group performance setting where individual skills impact on the performance of the group. This is an aspect not present in a general classroom setting. The development of new delivery models needs to set this as a priority consideration.

While principals did reinforce some of the teachers concerns, they also raised a number of big picture concerns with regard to the impact of the Band program on their school through scheduling and the Band – Art dynamic. Their comments included:

- Students who choose to take Art are not getting the specialized education that their counterpart, Band, gets in terms of specialized instruction
- the loss of instructional time with bussing time (15 minutes for the student to go from the classroom to the Band classroom and 15 minutes going from the Band classroom to return to the classroom in their home school) being added to the 50 minute time block of Band three times a week;
- that grade seven and grade eight students from the same school do not go to Band at the same time;
- many of the principals wrote that there may need to be more options for the students, for example chorale and drama;
- the principals of the schools that do not offer the Band program wrote that they are concerned because such a program is not offered to their students;
- timetabling;
- the imbalance between Art and Band.

French

The French program generally is well regarded, though it is recognized that instructional models need to be updated. Schools individually have moved away from French specialists and recruited classroom teachers with French as a teachable area to ease scheduling difficulties. This trend may need to be reviewed and school administrators should consider having "specialists" in the Basic French program so as to have teachers who are strong teachers of Basic French and want to teach Basic French. This program is acknowledged as highly dependent on the teacher in front of the class and it seems evident that continued rejuvenation of this program is needed.

Summary

The primary purposes of program and service reviews are to (a) improve student achievement; (b) review curricula implementation and delivery; (c) ensure appropriate utilization of resources; and (d) recommend increase, decrease, or maintenance of instructional programs and services (Brandon School Division, Policy 4050).

With regard to student achievement, if the Brandon School Division wishes to continue with the vocational focus in the programming (which students seem agreeable to), then there does seem to be a need for different focuses within each of the programs (or more vocational-focused options) so as to engage more students, and thus to increase student achievement.

In terms of curriculum implementation and delivery there seems to be a need to continue with (and in some programs increase the amount of) hands-on learning. The students, principals, and teachers all agree that these programs (particularly the Industrial Arts program, Home Economics program, and Band program) engage students in a different type of learning (practical/hands-on learning), which students really appreciate. With regard to Basic French, a similar approach may be taken insofar as students want to learn how to communicate in French and not focus so much on vocabulary and verbs (want the practical use of a second language).

With regard to the use of resources, the amount of money given to the Foods and Nutrition program for food needs to be revisited. Similarly, the incidental costs to the hosts schools, especially those schools with more than one program, needs to be reviewed. Further consideration could be given to a different transportation model. Finally the capital funding for the programs needs to be reviewed to ensure that the amount of money given to each program is reflective of today's market and the materials that the program needs.

The number one concern for the Brandon School Division is to improve student achievement in a responsible manner (both considering their fiscal responsibilities as well as the responsibilities to ensure the curriculum is met). This program review has provided a significant background material on the Brandon School Division's middle year's program options to continue to develop effective responses for several years to come.