



## Staff Report to the Committee of the Whole

May 6, 2026

### BOARD POLICY – ACADEMIES

Adrian Johnson, Secretary Treasurer

#### OVERVIEW

The Secretary Treasurer will support Trustees in developing a draft policy during the Committee of the Whole meeting.

This report provides background information and questions to consider to inform dialogue and draft policy development at the Committee of the Whole.

#### EXISTING BOARD POLICY

Board Policy 360, District Specialty Programs, considers Speciality Academies and Programs of Choice together. Academies are very different in nature from Programs of Choice, and so staff recommend the Board repeals this policy, replacing it with two separate policies that enable proper governance over these two distinct entities.

#### SCHOOL ACT REQUIREMENTS

The School Act has detailed rules about speciality academies.

#### SCHOOL ACT SECTION 82.1

The School Act prescribes the scope of academies and the Board can establish fees, as follows:

- 1) *In this section, "specialty academy" means an educational program that emphasizes a particular sport, activity or subject area and meets the prescribed criteria set out in the regulations.*
- 2) *A board may offer a specialty academy if*
  - a) *the board has consulted with the parents' advisory council for the school where the board proposes to offer the specialty academy, and*
  - b) *the board is of the opinion that there is sufficient demand for the specialty academy.*
- 3) *A board that offers a specialty academy must*
  - a) *make available sufficient instruction for students enrolled in the specialty academy to meet the general requirements for graduation, and*
  - b) *continue to offer a standard educational program in the school district.*
- 4) *Despite section 82, but subject to section 82.4, a board may charge a student enrolled in a specialty academy fees relating to the direct costs incurred by the board in providing the specialty academy that are in addition to the costs of providing a standard educational program.*
- 5) *On or before July 1 of each school year, a board that offers a specialty academy must*
  - a) *establish a schedule of fees to be charged under subsection (4), and*
  - b) *make the schedule of fees available to the public.*
- 6) *Before establishing a schedule of fees under subsection (5), a board must*
  - a) *consult with the parents' advisory council for the school where the specialty academy is offered, and*

- b) obtain the approval of that parents' advisory council for the schedule of fees.

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## SCHOOL ACT SPECIALTY ACADEMY CRITERIA REGULATION

This School Act Regulation specifies criteria that an academy must meet, as follows:

### **1 Specialty academy criteria**

For the purposes of the definition of "**specialty academy**" in section 82.1 of the [School Act](#), the criteria set out in sections 2, 3 and 4 are prescribed criteria for a specialty academy.

### **2 Additional learning outcomes**

The specialty academy must meet learning outcomes that:

- a) are in addition to the learning outcomes that a standard educational program must meet, and
- b) reflect an emphasis on a particular sport, activity or subject area.

### **3 Minimum hours of instruction**

- 1) In this section, "**credit**" has the same meaning as in Ministerial Order 302/2004, the Graduation Program Order.
- 2) In respect of the particular sport, activity or subject area being emphasized in the specialty academy
  - a) a one-year specialty academy must include
    - i) a minimum of 240 hours of instruction, or
    - ii) sufficient hours of instruction to enable a student to earn 8 credits in the school year, and
  - b) a multi-year specialty academy must include
    - i) a minimum of 120 hours of instruction, or
    - ii) sufficient hours of instruction to enable a student to earn 4 credits in each school year.

### **4 Emphasis on particular subject area**

If the specialty academy emphasizes a particular subject area, the subject area must be

- 1) Applied Skills,
- 2) Fine Arts,
- 3) Language Arts,
- 4) Mathematics,
- 5) Physical Education,
- 6) Science, or
- 7) Social Studies.

## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Board policy 5, 'Advocacy – Championing Change Beyond SD22' states '*The Board will advocate for a high-quality, locally governed, inclusive, accessible, publicly funded education system with a focus on children of all ages residing in the District*'.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to support fee-paying educational programs that operate within school hours?

**Example:** The Superintendent will [not] allow third parties to operate specialty academies [of a standard acceptable to the Superintendent] during the school day and the Board may charge students a fee to participate.

The School Act and Regulation provide significant constraints on academies and requires fees to be approved by a parent advisory council. The Board may be satisfied that those constraints are sufficient.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to approve academies? If so, how will the Board ensure academy programs keep a certain standard? If the Board limits the Superintendent's ability to approve or deny academy programs, is it reasonable to expect the Superintendent to be accountable for the quality of each academy?

**Example:** The Superintendent will allow the following specialty academies to operate:

- [list academy names and providers]

The Board shall annually review each academy's activities to consider whether the specialty academy remains of a standard satisfactory to the Board.

## RECOMMENDATION

*That it be recommended to the Board of Education that new Board Policy 2.8, Academies, and the repeal of Board Policy 360, District Specialty Programs, be distributed for comments and further input in accordance with Board Policy 4.3.*