

Staff Report to the Committee of the Whole

June 3, 2026

POLICY – PROGRAMS OF CHOICE

Adrian Johnson, Secretary Treasurer

BACKGROUND

The Committee of the Whole considered policy matters about Programs of Choice at the May 6, 2026 Committee meeting. The Committee deferred further discussion for the June Committee meeting, indicating a desire for information on other School District's policies and a clearer draft of policy as a starting point.

OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

Many school districts do not have policy regarding programs of choice. This implies that the existence, location and grades of programs of choice are at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Some examples from school districts that do have policy are presented below.

School District	Link to Policy	Notes
West Vancouver Schools	Board-Policy-16-Programs-of-Choice.pdf	Generally procedural in nature. Board approves creation of new programs of choice. No direction given regarding location and grades. An annual review is required to ensure each program remains economically viable – no consideration of educational quality is described.
Saanich Schools	Policy 24 Saanich Schools	Requires Board approval to create new programs. French Immersion is explicitly recognised in the policy. No direction given regarding location, grades or educational quality.
Surrey Schools	Policy 8450 - French Immersion Policy 8320 - Community-Initiated Programs	Requires French Immersion to be offered. Requires Board approval for community-initiated programs.

POLICY OPTIONS

Included in the agenda package are three policy options for the Committee to consider as a starting point.

Option 1 With this policy, the Superintendent can create, alter and end programs of choice within the broader context of other policy statements on ethics, achievement of Board goals etc. However, it requires the Superintendent to correct and possibly terminate a program of choice if they reasonably do not believe that the program is of a suitable educational standard or is of a disproportionate cost.

Option 2 specifies which programs of choice the school district must offer and gives the Superintendent discretion over the grades and the locations. It requires the Superintendent to take corrective action if they reasonably do not believe that the program is of a suitable educational standard or is of a disproportionate cost.

Option 3 specifies which programs the school district must offer, the grades and the locations. This reflects specific school community attachment to certain programs. This prescriptive nature does not leave scope for the Superintendent to apply judgment regarding quality, cost and location of the program. Should the Superintendent have concerns about the location, educational quality, or cost of the program, that cannot be addressed within the policy language (for example, a lack of qualified teachers or low enrolment) and the Superintendent would need to seek a change to Board Policy to address their concerns.

RECOMMENDATION

That it be recommended to the Board of Education that new Board Policy 2.9, Programs of Choice, as presented in Option #, be distributed for comments and further input in accordance with Board Policy 4.3.