

High School Flexibility Enhancement Pilot Project

In response to input from those in the educational field, Alberta Education has embarked on an exciting project with sixteen high schools throughout the province. The purpose of the four-year High School Flexibility Enhancement Project is to provide participating high schools with the opportunity to organize their schools with the removal of the current 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per course credit restriction.

Facilitated by the Project Manager, Gerry Fijal, these sixteen pilot high schools will work closely with the students, parents and staff of their school communities to develop an approach to school organization that does not necessarily equate time with credit. This will potentially lead to several alternatives for high school delivery and organization that will support Alberta students' learning, improve completion rates and enhance student achievement. The project will result in recommendations made to the Executive Team of Alberta Education for their consideration in determining if the 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per course credit should be maintained.

The High School Flexibility Enhancement Project is informed by and linked to several initiatives in Alberta Education including: The *Distributed Learning Strategy*, *High School Completion*, *Speak Out*, *Setting the Direction* and others.

Throughout the duration of the project, from the 2009-10 school year to the 2012-13 school year, key education stakeholders will be updated on progress and provide input to the Project Manager through an External Advisory Committee and an Internal Advisory Team from branches of Alberta Education. These two advisory bodies will help to ensure that input from key education stakeholders helps to guide the project. The advisory committees include representation from various branches of Alberta Education, ATA, ASBA, CASS, ASCA and ASBOA as well as FNMI, parent and student representatives.

A high school from each of the jurisdictions below will be participating in this project:

- Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73
- Grande Prairie School District No. 2357
- Christ the Redeemer Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 3
- St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6
- Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 1
- Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 4
- Edmonton School District No. 7
- Prairie Land Regional Division No. 25
- Calgary School District #19
- Parkland School Division #70
- Living Waters Catholic Schools Regional Division #42
- Clearview School Division #71
- Peace Wapiti School Division #76
- Conseil Scolaire Catholique et Francophone du Sud de l'Alberta
- Aspen View Schools Regional Division #19
- Edmonton Catholic Separate School District #7

Any further information or questions should be directed to:

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HIGH SCHOOL FLEXIBILITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is the purpose of this project?

A. Due to the recent Distributed Learning initiatives and in response to feedback from the field, Alberta Education is leading a four year pilot project to determine if the requirement of students to have access to 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per course credit should be maintained. The project is limited to exploration of the merits and implications of eliminating the 25 hours of face-to-face instruction provided to students and timetabled for teachers.

Q. How many schools were chosen to participate in the pilot project?

A. Sixteen pilot high schools from across the province are being given the flexibility to provide programming that does not have the 25 hour/credit requirement.

Q. How were the pilot high schools selected?

A. Criteria for the selection of the jurisdictions and schools will ensure representation from school jurisdictions, from each zone in the province, size of community, and performance on the High School completion rate (3 year) and Diploma Exam participation rate (4+ exams) indicators of the Accountability Pillar.

Q. Were Francophone high schools considered when selecting the nine pilot schools?

A. All school jurisdiction high schools were considered for the nine pilot high schools.

Q. Will the pilot schools be required to follow the Alberta Program of Studies?

A. Throughout the pilot students will be taught the Program of Studies, are evaluated on the mandated learner objectives, and are provided with the supports they need to be successful.

Q. Will pilot schools receive more funding from Alberta Education?

A. No. There will be no increase in funding for pilot schools beyond what is allocated to all school jurisdictions through the *Funding Framework*.

Q. Is the delivery of all high school courses open to the variation of time?

A. No, Work Experience, RAP, K & E practicum courses, Special Projects, and Green Certificate will maintain their current time requirements.

Q. Will pilot schools be working on the same initiative?

A. Selected high schools in the pilot project will submit programming proposals for approval. Each high school's proposal may be independent of the others. Each high school will be submitting a proposal for the 2009/10 transitional year in March 2009. A second proposal for the following three-year project will be submitted in December of 2009.

Q. How will parents and students know that they are in a pilot school?

A. Each pilot school must inform their parents, students, teachers, and communities regarding the pilot and their involvement. They will keep their students, parents, and staff informed of their participation throughout the pilot. Alberta Education will also include parents in the pilot project by inviting them to join an external advisory committee.

Q. Will grade 12 students still write diploma exams?

A. Grade 12 students must meet all the requirements of Alberta Education to receive a high school diploma including the writing of diploma exams. Throughout the project pilot schools must report on their ongoing assessment of students.

Q. How involved will Alberta Education be with the pilot schools?

A. Schools will work with Alberta Education through the project manager. Alberta Education is creating an external advisory committee consisting of representatives from school jurisdictions involved in the pilot, members of stakeholder organizations and clients of the education system (e.g., students, parents, community members) who will be providing advice and feedback on each pilot school's progress. Participating pilot high schools will also be monitored by Alberta Education to ensure the project's enhanced flexibility is benefiting students' learning and success.

Q. What is the anticipated outcome of this project?

A. Upon conclusion of this pilot project, a recommendation will be made to Executive Team of Alberta Education regarding the requirement for 25 hours of face-to-face instruction.

Q. How will information on the progress of the project be communicated?

A. Updates on the progress of the pilot project will be posted on the Alberta Education Web site.