

Administrative Procedure 220

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

Background

Parents, the child's first and most influential teachers, have a life long interest in their child and a right and responsibility to make decisions about their child's education. In order to exercise that right and responsibility, parents need to have choices in the kind of education their child will receive.

Alternative programs, pursuant to the School Act, Section 21, that emphasize a particular language, culture, religion or subject-matter or that use a particular teaching philosophy should be made available where numbers warrant and when financially feasible.

The Division is responsible to ensure that all students have an opportunity to meet the standards set by the Minister and to achieve the educational outcomes determined by the Division; therefore, the Division is responsible for student outcomes, for assessing student achievement, and for monitoring results in all programs.

Procedures

1. A School Council or an organization of parents and/or community members may request that the Division provide an alternative program.
2. Written applications shall be made to the Division in writing no later than February 1 in the school year prior to program commencement. The application shall provide:
 - 2.1 Details about the proposed alternative program.
 - 2.2 Projected enrollment.
 - 2.3 Information regarding services and resources being requested.
 - 2.4 Proposed arrangements for student accommodation.
 - 2.5 Any transportation requirements.
3. Alternative program requests which, in effect, seek to circumvent or limit the governance authority of the Board will be rejected.
4. The Division may designate an alternative program to operate within a school building where regular educational programs are offered or in a separate building.
5. Where an alternative program is offered within a school, the Division shall maintain the integrity and viability of the regular education program.
6. The Division may restrict enrollment in an alternative program to maintain the integrity of the regular education program or if there is insufficient space in that school.

7. Any alternative programs authorized by the Division shall be under the direction of the Principal operating the regular education program.
8. The Principal of an alternative program shall ensure that the alternative program is operated in accordance with the requirements of the School Act, Alberta Education policy and regulations, and Division procedures.
9. An alternative program advisory body (as approved by the Division) may be maintained to work with and advise the Principal in matters related to the alternative program. This body will work through the School Council in matters not specified in this Administrative Procedure and are to endeavour to have a representative on the School Council executive.
10. The Division will seek the recommendation of the alternative program advisory body regarding the employment and assignment of staff to an alternative program.
11. All staff employed or assigned to teach or work in an alternative program shall be employees of the Division, and shall:
 - 11.1 Enjoy the same privileges and benefits extended to all other employees through Division policies, procedures and applicable collective agreements.
 - 11.2 Be subject to all Division policies, procedures and the requirements of the School Act.
12. Alternative programs shall provide courses of study and education programs prescribed by the Minister or approved by the Division and may not use any course, education program or instructional materials prohibited by the Minister or the Division.
 - 12.1 The alternative program advisory body, in consultation with the Principal, shall be responsible for selecting curriculum resources, acceptable to the Minister and to the Division, to be used in the program.
13. For budget purposes, the students enrolled in an alternative program shall be considered to be part of the general school population.
14. The Division may charge parents a fee for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of:
 - 14.1 Any non-instructional costs that may be incurred by the Division in offering an alternative program.
 - 14.2 Any instructional material costs that are in addition to the costs incurred by the Division in providing its regular education program.
15. Parents of students wishing to enroll in an alternative program must become familiar with the program philosophy and rules established by the Division and the alternative program advisory body.

Reference: Section 18, 22, 52, 53, 54 Education Act
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Knowledge and Employability Handbook
Personal Information Protection Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
ATA Code of Professional Conduct