Burnaby Schools

Programs of Choice Review

Report

Prepared for The Board of Education

and the Superintendent of Schools

By: Nancy B[redacted]

BOARD OF EDUCATION
BURNABY

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Executive Summary

The Purpose

The Programs of Choice Review was initiated in 2020 as part of the Burnaby School District's Strategic Plan (2019-2024). The impetus for this review stems from the Plan's strategic priority 1, "Thriving Students":

- Engage students in individualized, relevant and innovative learning opportunities
  - Expand program options that meet the needs and interests of our student population
- Implement a strength-based approach to inclusion that meets the diverse needs of all students
  - Review, identify and implement adjustments within program and service options to meet the needs and interests of our diverse student population.

The Process

The Burnaby School District offers a wide variety of Programs of Choice throughout the district. The following programs were selected for the purposes of the review:

At the elementary level:

- French Immersion (Early and Late)
- Mandarin Language Arts
- Multi-Age Cluster Class (MACC)
- The Challenge Program

At the secondary level:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Capstone
- BETA Mini-School
- French Immersion
- DigiPen Game Development Academy
- Microsoft Office Specialist
- Volleyball Academy
- Lacrosse Academy

The key areas of focus of the review were:

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- Examination of cus/TT3 8 m71 0 11.349 (.)-15 -1.15.8.1 (am)-1e8TJEMC /Span AMCI1 Tw 1.61 (us7.8012.3 (n of)-11

- Change the admissions process for MACC students entering BETA and require them to follow the same application process as all other applicants.

Additional Items to Consider

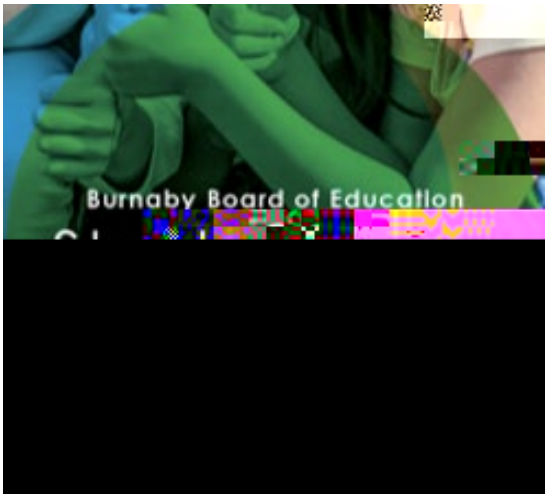
- According to survey responses, the other most frequently noted Programs of Choice that the district may want to explore include:

    - Outdoor education at both the elementary and secondary levels
    - Programs with an Indigenous focus at both the elementary and secondary levels
    - International Baccalaureate at the secondary level
    - Montessori at the elementary level
    - STEM programs at the elementary level
    - Other sports academies (tennis, basketball, baseball)
    - More Fine Arts options

- Also, according to the surveys, many respondents feel that the placement and locations of programs was heavily weighted towards schools in the North end of Burnaby.

The Burnaby School District Strategic Plan 2019-2024

https://burnabyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/StrategicPlan2019-24_Detailed_Web.pdf



The Burnaby School District's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan was developed over a series of sessions conducted between January and June 2019. The Plan represents the cumulative input, experience and vision of the Board, the Senior Management and its 130+ member Burnaby Leadership Team, as well as recognizing the voice and vision of its constituents and community. As a result of this consultative process and the extensive contributions and guidance brought forward, the Board and Senior Management are confident in the vision and well-founded direction it sets outs out for the duration of the plan.

The Burnaby School District Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision: A premier learning community where we engage and innovate to inspire global citizenship.

Our Mission: To engage and empower a caring, inclusive community of learners for the opportunities of today and tomorrow.

Our Values:

- Students Come First: Learners are at the centre of what we do. We focus on their lives within our schools, support them in their lives away from our schools, and keep in mind the lives they will lead in the future, recognizing that their time with us will be key in shaping their futures.

- The Power of Diversity: Burnaby is one of the most diverse cities in the world, and we recognize this as a privilege and a strength. We meaningfully involve all learners and respect and value the infinitely variable characteristics that make them unique human beings.

- Equity, Access, Inclusion: Our schools are for everyone. We recognize that barriers exist and seek to identify and remove them. We encourage our learners to speak honestly, and we uphold the rights of individuals, families and organizations within our schools and our community. We value and respect everyone's contributions.

- Collaboration and Partnership: We strive for trusting, respectful, collaborative relationships, and we work together to ensure we make the best decisions. The learning environment includes our learners, teachers, all staff, families and the community. We work with and encourage the participation of all.

- Curiosity, Innovation, Discovery: The world we live in is complex and rapidly changing. We, our students, and the world itself are beneficiaries when questions are asked, experiments undertaken, ventures launched, and challenges embraced. Our classrooms and school communities foster curiosity, innovation, and discovery.

- Excellence, Success, Improvement: We challenge ourselves and our learners to make their highest contributions, and we foster opportunities to make this possible. We celebrate success and recognize that there are many ways to define and achieve it. Working collaboratively, we challenge ourselves and our

Relevant Policies

Provincial

Programming of any kind in school districts across the province of British Columbia is guided by a variety of

(7) Social Studies.

District

In addition to the goals and objectives outlined in the District's Strategic Plan, SD 41's Policy No. 6.35.00 "Program and School Consolidation" (https://burnabyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/63500.pdf) and accompanying Administrative Procedure outline the district's beliefs and expectations regarding the maintenance, growth and resource allocation for all instructional programs, including Programs of Choice:

"The planning and organization of instructional programs involves the ongoing process of allocating and re-allocating resources. Changes in the size, nature, and location of student populations require adjustments in programs and, sometimes, in their relocation.

In allocating and re-allocating resources for programs or for the relocation of programs, the board shall base its decision on the most cost effective utilization of resources for the maintenance of viable education programs in schools.

Objectives

1. To ensure that all existing programs in the District maintain their viability
2. To ensure that the relocation of programs is done on a fair and rational basis taking into account costs, the interests of all parties affected, and the educational viability and value of programs.
3. To ensure that funds are allocated or re-allocated on a fair and rational basis for all parties affected, taking into account the educational value of all programs offered in the District."

The accompanying administrative regulations and procedures include the following information:

1. The Superintendent, or designate, shall maintain a data base from which cost-effectiveness studies on educational programs shall be conducted.
2. In determining the viability of programs in effect in the District, the Superintendent, or designate, shall supervise and evaluate them in terms of the following factors:

    1. Instructional Program: Is it broad enough to meet the provisions of the core curriculum, the curriculum, the extracurriculum, and enrichment options?
    2. Staff Utilization: Are there enough staff to provide a sound program? To ensure professional development of other staff?
    3. School Organization: Are grades, classes, and instructional groups organized in a manner appropriate to student needs? Does the organization minimize inappropriate or awkward multi-grade groupings?
    4. Student Support Services: Is there adequate support for students with special needs? Is there adequate support for students who encounter difficulty?
    5. School Support Services: Are there appropriate time allotments for secretarial, custodial, and instructional support staff?

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Trades:

- Automotive Collision and Refinishing Technician
- Auto Service Technician
- Baker - Pastry Arts
- CNC Machinist Technician
- Cabinetmaker/Joiner
- Carpenter
- Construction Electrician
- Hairstylist
- Heavy Duty Equipment Technician
- Horticulturist, Landscape
- Metal Fabricator
- Millwright
- Motorcycle Mechanic
- Painter & Decorator
- Plumber
- Professional Cook
- Welder

- Trades & Technologies Exploration Program
- Youth Work in Trades Apprenticeship Program

Given the large number of program offerings in the district, the following programs of choice were selected as those which would be the focus of this review.

At the elementary level:

- French Immersion (Early and Late)
- Mandarin Language Arts
- MACC
- The Challenge Program

At the secondary level:

- AP Capstone
- BETA Mini-School
- French Immersion
- DigiPen Game Development Academy
- Microsoft Office Specialist
- Volleyball Academy
- Lacrosse Academy

- Burnaby Teacher's Association Executive (3 of 7 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- Burnaby Principals and Vice-Principals' Association (10 of 12 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- Capitol Hill MACC Parents (1 of 3 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- Suncrest MACC Parents (4 of 6 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- Forest Grove Mandarin Language Arts Program Parents (3 of 5 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- Burnaby Mountain Mandarin Parents (3 of 4 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- BETA Mini-School Parents (5 of 8 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- BETA Mini-School Students (5 of 5 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
- French Immersion Parent Representatives
    - Early French Immersion North (4 of 8 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
    - Early French Immersion South (5 of 6 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
    - Late French Immersion (4 of 5 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)
    - Secondary French Immersion (1 of 2 of the individuals registered for the focus group participated)

As noted above, participation in the focus groups varied greatly. While there were typically 6 to 8 people registered to attend, not all would log in for the meetings. Nevertheless, the conversations generated during these meetings were fulsome and were very helpful to the review.

In addition, 20 different online surveys https://burnabyschools.ca/your-feedback-improving-student-opportunities/ were created to [illegible] (t)1 (e)]TJ0 Tc 0 Tw (.007f0 Tc 0 Tw 9.8001 Tw [Nro)4.2 (v)3.3 (t)-6 (i)7.6 (e)-

Programs of Choice in Burnaby and Neighbouring School Districts

District	Burnaby (SD 41)	Surrey (SD 36)	Delta

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SECONDARY PROGRAMS OF CHOICE
(Digi-Pen Game Development Academy, Microsoft Office

Microsoft Office Specialist Academy (3 responses received)

- 2 of 3 parents agree or strongly agree with the statement “My child is engaged in their learning in this program.”
- 2 of 3 parents agree or strongly agree with the statement “This program challenges my child and allows them to further improve their skills and knowledge.”
- 100% of parents agree or strongly agree with the statement “My child’s participation in this program will be helpful to their future school or career plans.”
- 100% of parents would recommend this program to other families.

Lacrosse Academy (0 responses received)

What is working well?

- Programs of Choice such as the DigiPen Game Development Academy, and the various Sports An Gsth tsuctt

Staff Survey Comments:

- “Too many students (and teachers) are unaware of the options available.”
- “At the start of each school year - as a Grade 7 teacher -

FRENCH IMMERSION
(Elementary and Secondary, Early and Late French Immersion)

Survey Results:

Parents of E lementary French Immersion Students (185

K Intake		
School	Classes	Students
Aubrey	1	20
Brantford	1	20
Inman	2	40
Marlborough	2	40
Seaforth	1	20
Sperling	2	40
Westridge	1	20
Total Intake	10	200

x In addition, it is evident that there is consistent demand across the years for the EFI program. Application numbers have remained relatively constant:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Applications *	513	565	541	505	518

all school districts could offer more Early French Immersion classes, it is not currently possible in Burnaby, or most other school districts for that matter. This is due primarily to a shortage of French Immersion teachers in BC as well as a lack of the

Class size limits at the Grade 6 and 7 levels are 30 students per class, meaning that there is space for a total of 90 Grade 6 Late French Immersion students across the district, yet there are not enough applicants to fill all three classes.

The numbers are even lower in the Grade 7 classes. Where there is space for 180 students (6 classes total, one grade 6 and one Grade 7 per school), the total number over the last 5 years has been between 110 and 120 Grade 6/7 Late French Immersion students. School-based administrators say that this may be because the program is not promoted across the district to all students in Grade 5. Indeed, when speaking with the Late French Immersion Parent Focus group, every parent there was aware of the program and decided to enroll their child in LFI because they were already attending that school in the English program. Also, some parents commented on the survey that they were not aware of Late French Immersion and would request some additional information.

Staff Survey Comments:

- ¾ "I wish Late French Immersion was better promoted. Having taught it and early immersion I have noticed that there is absolutely no push for it at other schools where there are lots of potential candidates."

- ¾ "Very few parents and students from other schools are aware of the Late French Immersion program, which makes it difficult to promote if teachers are unable to go to other schools to spread the word to other students from other neighbouring schools".

x Although almost 80% of parents of elementary-aged French Immersion (Early and Late) students shou n t d9294.321 ef3

The reasons given by parents and students for this high rate of attrition are varied and include:

- The secondary French Immersion site that the student was expected to attend was too far away and transportation was an issue
- Students in French Immersion at the secondary level did not have access to some of the same courses that English students did
- The courses offered at another secondary school were more appealing to the student
- A concern that to continue in French at Secondary would have a negative impact on the student's

parents about how they would have liked to be able to participate in an Honours Math class in French, or how if

MANDARIN LANGUAGE ARTS

Survey Results

Parents of Elementary Mandarin Language Arts Students (41 survey responses received):

- ™ 62.5 % of parents of students in the elementary Mandarin Language Arts Program agree or strongly agree that “The program’s expectations for oral and written language learning at each grade level are appropriate and attainable.”
- ™ 75% of parents of students in the elementary Mandarin Language Arts Program agree or strongly agree that “My child’s academic needs are being met in this program.”
- ™ 80% of parents of students in the elementary Mandarin Language Arts Program agree or strongly agree that “My child enjoys learning and speaking Mandarin and is proud of their learning.”
- ™ 97% of parents of students in the elementary Mandarin Language Arts Program agree or strongly agree that “It is my intention that my child will continue to take Mandarin language at the secondary level.”
- ™ 95% of parents of students in the elementary Mandarin Language Arts Program say that they would recommend this program to other families.

Parents of Secondary Mandarin Language Students* : (4 survey responses received)

- ™ 2 of the 4 secondary parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree that “The expectation for oral and written language learning at the secondary level is appropriate and attainable.”
- ™ 1 of the 4 secondary parents who responded to the survey agree that “I am satisfied with the cultural component of the curriculum that is taught in the Mandarin language class.”
- ™ 1 of the 4 secondary parents who responded to the survey agree that “This program meets my child's academic needs.”
- ™ 3 of the 4 secondary parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree that “My child is engaged in their learning in this program.”
- ™ 2 of the 4 secondary parents who responded to the survey would recommend this program to other families.

Grade 6/7 Mandarin Language S tudents *: (4 survey responses received)

- ™ 3 of the 4 Gr. 6/7 Mandarin students who responded to the survey agree that “This program challenges me and improves my skills and knowledge.”
- ™ 1 of the 4 Gr. 6/7 Mandarin students who responded to the survey agree that “I am engaged in my learning in this program.”
- ™ 2 of the 4 Gr. 6/7 Mandarin students who responded to the survey agree that “This program meets my academic needs.”
- ™ All 4 of the Gr. 6/7 Mandarin students who responded to the survey sa“.1 (w)-12.1 (s)-8 (t)-1.2 (udent)-1.1 (s)-8.1 (w)

What is working well?

x Overall, there appears to be strong community support for the idea of a Mandarin Language Program offered in the Burnaby School District. With the exception of the 2018-19 school year, the number of applications for placement in the Mandarin Kindergarten class usually exceeds the number of available spaces (20).

Mandarin Language Arts	

- ¾ “The Mandarin Language Arts program is an excellent program and I wish other schools in Burnaby would offer it. I also wish the program could be expanded into Mandarin Immersion if not at Forest Grove, then at another school in Burnaby.”

- ¾ “Overall we have been quite happy with the program and the teachers involved!”

What are some of the challenges and obstacles?

- x Although 83% of the elementary parents who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I understand the intent of the Mandarin Language Arts Program and the expected learning outcomes for students”, some of those same parents express disappointment that there is not more Mandarin taught in the classroom and comment that they would prefer a more immersive setting such as is found in a French Immersion classroom.

The parents who participated in both of the Zoom focus groups (elementary and secondary) stated that they did

Staff Survey Comments:

- ¾ “1. Regular collab time covered by TOC,2. Funds for resources, 3. Cross-district collaborations”

x Many of the parents of those students who went on to study Mandarin at the secondary level were extremely dissatisfied with both the transition from elementary to secondary school as well as the experience that their students had in the secondary program. While it was assumed by most parents that students who had completed the K-7 program should be able to enter tnt o en6.dT (h)-12.38 (t)-142(ar)-6.3 umed -8 (tupTc 0 (f (dar)-6. (he)-

X As part of the clarity of intended outcomes mentioned earlier, a crucial piece to the puzzle is a clear path for students from the Mandarin Language Arts program once they enter secondary school. Parents say that they want to know the expected outcomes for Mandarin, and that those outcomes must be achievable and consistent.

A positive step was work that was done this year by the Mandarin staff at Forest Grove (with support from a secondary Mandarin teacher) to augment the year-end assessment with a more fulsome three-part test (reading, writing and oral) that was administered to the Grade 7 students in May. This in-depth assessment provides a clearer picture of the students' abilities at the end of their elementary experience.

Examine the feasibility and appropriateness of offering a Mandarin 9/10 combined class at the secondary level. This would require additional staffing FTE at the secondary school. While it is understood that each year

™ 90% of parents would recommend this program to other families.

AP Capstone Students: (24 surveys received)

™ 58% of students chose to enroll in the program because they felt it would be helpful to their post-secondary plans

™ 92% of students agree or strongly agree that “This program challenges me and improves my skills and knowledge.”

™ 88% of students agree or strongly agree that “I am engaged in my learning in this program.”

™ 79% of students agree or strongly agree that “This program meets my academic needs.”

™ 88% of students would recommend this program to other students.

89% of 3 -07 -1BT1/SpanTd <0099>43 /TT3 1 -TJ 0 Tc 0 Tw 1.6759.96-1.1 -9.96-92-143507.48 TmT(897 0 Td (r)-6.[((nt)-1.1 (s)-8 (v

topic of their choosing. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher on the AP Seminar and AP Research exams and scores of 3 or higher on four AP exams of their choosing will receive the AP Capstone Diploma™"

- The program is skills, rather than content-based and is structured to enable inquiry-based learning where students pursue research that is specific to their passions and interests across the curriculum. The students who enroll in AP Capstone are highly motivated students, many looking to develop their research skills in preparation for university. AP Capstone encourages a focus on the learning, not on the letter grade.

Student Survey Comments:

- "AP Capstone is an amazing program but should be offered in more schools."
- "I have an excellent teacher who is able to keep me engaged even in the early mornings."

Staff Survey Comments:

- "The Capstone program has been an excellent addition to the "inventory" of programs in Burnaby and I hope it continues to receive the full support of the District in the years ahead. Students who have taken the program over the past 7 years frequently email from their post-secondary institutions to tell us how significantly prepared they were for university, and how the skills they learned and developed have helped them transition successfully into their higher-level education."
- "The cornerstone of this program is differentiated instruction and personalized learning. Students Capstone projects are varied both in topic and methods. It's amazing to see the work each student produces and the journeys they go on. "

<u>BETA</u>

- At every opportunity provided (surveys, focus group meetings and letters of support), the parents of students enrolled in the BETA ("Bringing Exceptional Thoughts Alive") Mini-School provided very strong and positive feedback regarding the benefits they believe that their children have received from the program. These include:
  - Learning in a cohort with their intellectual peers
  - The inquiry-based approach of the program
  - The train0 Td( )Tjs ofe90.24 Tmatudentou85 Td0.0093Tj/TT4 1 Tiny

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Year	Grade

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Grades 2-5 (60 spaces for Gr 2/3, 60 spaces Gr 4/5)			
Grade	Year	Applicants	Accepted

Parent Survey Comments:

- “Do not fully understand the selection process and how children are being selected.”
- I

Below is a table that outlines the number of applications to BETA received over the past few years. The class size limit is 28 and those students applying who are not already in the MACC program must meet the following criteria:

Considerations:

Grade 10 portion of the Graduation Program (Grades 10-12) has the largest number of courses required for graduation. They are:

- Physical and Health Education 10
- Science 10
- Social Studies 10
- Math 10
- Language Arts 10

While it may be possible to schedule all former BETA students into the same Math, Social Studies or Science class, it is probably not possible for the English 10 class, because there are 5 different options offered at Alpha at the Grade 10 level:

- Eng. 10: Composition
- Eng. 10: Creative Writing
- Eng. 10: Film Studies
- Eng. 10: New Media – Lab(a)-12.3 ( )]T N

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

x When asked about other Programs of Choice that parents, staff, and students would like to see the Burnaby School District consider for the future, the most frequent suggestions included:

- Outdoor education at both the elementary and secondary levels
- Programs with an Indigenous focus at both the elementary and secondary levels
- International Baccalaureate at the secondary level
- Montessori at the elementary level
- STEM programs at the elementary level
- Other sports academies (tennis, basketball, baseball)
- More Fine Arts options

Parent Survey Comments:

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- “Consider offering programs of choice in south Burnaby.”
- “Programs are offered disproportionately; certain areas having the bulk of the programs while others having none.”
- “I highly appreciate programs of choice offered at Burnaby School District, but it would be great if they were more evenly distributed among schools and schools with easy access to public transport should have more programs of choice.”
- “The programs should be expanded so that families all across Burnaby will have access in their neighborhoods.”
- “Please have programs of choice available in different areas of Burnaby! Ie. Mandarin available only in North Burnaby.”
- “Nothing is offered in my community near Edmonds.”

Staff Survey Comments:

- “Programs of choice help bring variety to schools. However- not all schools get choice programs and many are in North side schools, so South side school students do not have access or have limited access as they can't be taken to different programs due to transportation and before/after school care needs.”
- “We need more programs of choice like Challenge in south side schools so students here have the chance to get to them. Choice programs need to be more socio-economic and geographically fair for all students that could participate.”

With Gratitude

The information provided in this report is intended to support the Burnaby Board of Education and Senior Staff when making decisions regarding both existing Programs of Choice and any new program offerings that may be contemplated in the future.

The reviewer would like to acknowledge and thank the many staff, students and parents who took part in the Burnaby School District’s Programs of Choice Review. The participants were open, honest, and welcoming. Despite the many pressures of a regular busy day in schools, to say nothing of the additional stress and restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic, each participant gave willingly of their time to ensure that a complete picture of their schools, their programs, their beliefs, and their thoughts were shared.

I would also like to commend the school and district staff who work in all Burnaby schools for their obvious dedication to student success and wellness. This dedication was evident in my observations during the review and in their thoughtful responses and suggestions during our conversations and meetings.