

Board Motion 20 December 2016 and Summary of Related Reports on Giftedness

At the Board meeting on 20 December 2016, the Board approved the following motion related to the gifted review:

- A. THAT staff work with SEAC and an Advisory Group that would include SEAC representation to expand options to be presented to the public to improve the effectiveness of services for Gifted students and to increase equity of access for under-represented groups;
- B. THAT the Congregated Gifted Program, transition to a specialized class location model using geographically defined catchment areas (Geographic Model);
- C. THAT staff bring forward an interim report on the development of options by the end of May 2017 and a final report including a plan for the Geographic Model transition, including costing, no later than the end of December 2017;
- D. THAT staff bring forward a report with a plan, including costing, of implementing a universal screening tool, once the Ministry of Education has released the new gifted definition, or no later than end of October 2017; and
- E. THAT staff bring forward a plan including costing for professional development/coaching support for school based staff working in the regular class with elementary gifted students no later than March 2017.

Summary of Reports to Committee of the Whole and Board

The Board has received the following reports and updates at Committee of the Whole (COW):

Report No. 17-053: Gifted Program Review Update (20 June 2017) provided an update on the five elements of the Board motion and an overview of the work of the Gifted Advisory Group including a commitment to the development of a pilot based on a Renzulli type approach to supporting students with giftedness.

Report No. 17-073: Universal Screening Tool for Giftedness (21 November 2017) was presented for discussion of the use of a universal screening tool for giftedness. Information was shared about practices from across the province as well as some of the benefits and challenges associated with a single screening tool. In addition to the costs for the universal screening tool itself, estimated costs were provided for additional testing materials as well as increases to staffing allocations which would be required for full implementation. A recommendation was not brought forward at this time due to the delay in receiving the updated Ministry definition for giftedness.

Report No. 17-092 Gifted Geographic Model Transition (16 January 2018) highlighted some of the complexities associated with shifting the gifted specialized program classes to the geographic model. At the elementary level, there were sufficient numbers of classes to warrant classes in three geographic zones. However, considering the work of the Gifted Advisory Group, the fact that there was a delay in receiving an updated definition of Giftedness from the Ministry of Education, and the risk of causing multiple transitions for many students resulted in the recommendation that the gifted specialized program classes not be shifted to the geographic model at this time.

At the secondary level, complexities were noted as a result of declining enrolment at Merivale High School and Glebe Collegiate Institute as well as the introduction of a second International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Merivale High School. In addition, enrolment pressures at other secondary specialized program sites resulted in the need for deeper discussion about the shift to the geographic model.

Report No. 18-041: Secondary Gifted Specialized Program Class Transition to the Geographic Model (17 April 2018) highlighted the concerns regarding enrolment pressures at Merivale High School and Glebe Collegiate Institute. Staff recommended shifting the secondary gifted specialized program class to the geographic model at two sites (i.e., East and West zones). The report sought Board approval to move forward with a consultation process on the proposed changes.

As a result of the COW discussion on 17 April 2018, staff presented *Report No. 18-067: Update of the Secondary Gifted Specialized Program Class Transition to the Geographic Model (19 June 2018)*. The report reiterated the challenge of the critically low enrolment at Merivale High School. Further, staff would proceed with a plan to phase out the gifted specialized program class at Merivale High School and develop gifted specialized program class boundaries to direct incoming students one of the other secondary gifted specialized program sites. This brought the secondary gifted review to an end.