

AP 2402: Specialty Programs/Academies

Background

Districts are permitted to establish specialty academies under section 82.1 of the [School Act](#). A specialty academy is an educational program that emphasizes a particular sport, activity or subject area and meets the prescribed criteria set out in the regulations to the *School Act*.

A district may offer a specialty academy if the board has consulted with the parents' advisory council (PAC) for the school where the board proposes to offer the specialty academy and the board is of the opinion that there is sufficient demand for the specialty academy.

Procedures

1. Students enrolled in a specialty academy must have available sufficient instruction to meet the general requirements for graduation. Students enrolled in specialty academies take a course or courses to fulfill a part of their graduation program that requires additional learning outcomes beyond those required by the standard educational program.
2. The district may levy fees to students enrolled in specialty academies to offset the additional costs incurred by the district (costs that are in addition to the costs of providing a standard educational program).
3. Before a school can offer a specialty academy:
 - 3.1. Consultation with the school Parent Advisory Council (PAC) must occur.
 - 3.2. The schedule of fees for the specialty academy must be approved by the PAC.
4. The PAC of the school where the specialty academy is to be offered must provide the Superintendent of the need for the specialty academy prior to January 31 of each school year.
5. For review of a specialty academy, the PAC must include a review that includes:
 - 5.1. A description of the specialty academy;
 - 5.2. The course(s) required to complete the academic requirements of the specialty academy;
 - 5.3. The course hours of any specialty academy courses required in [Specialty Academy Criteria Regulation 219/08](#);
 - 5.4. A mission statement accompanied by the goals and objectives for the program;
 - 5.5. A statement that sets out the educational soundness of the program for the district,

including how the proposal is distinct from existing educational programs and/or fills a particular educational need not currently offered in the district;

- 5.6. A clear indication of the intended school population to be served, including ages, grade levels, learner characteristics and number of students (including students from neighbourhood communities);
 - 5.7. A clear understanding of the qualifications and nature of professional staff and support staff required to offer the program;
 - 5.8. A clear understanding of the facilities required for offering the program, both immediately and long term;
 - 5.9. Evidence of community support for the program, indicating that the parents have an understanding of the proposal and have or will have children who will enrol in the program; A description of how students register for the program; and,
 - 5.10. Evidence of such programs' success if they are operating in other districts
 - 5.11. Confirmation of the process of consultation with the PAC of the school where the specialty academy is to be offered; and
 - 5.12. The schedule of fees.
6. The Superintendent or designate shall review the proposal and may conduct an independent review of the specialty program to ensure its alignment to the School Act and to ensure it is feasible.
 7. Prior to April 30 of each school year, the Superintendent will present to the Board for approval any new specialty academy.
 - 7.1. The Board will approve a schedule of fees for each specialty academy offered in the district and must make the schedule of fees available to the public as per [Policy 430: Fees, Deposits and Financial Hardship](#)
 8. Once the Board has granted approval for a specialty academy, subsequent consultation with the PAC or approval by the Board is not required unless the specialty academy has not been offered for three consecutive school terms. In accordance with sections 3 and 5 above, an approved schedule of fees for a specialty academy is required annually