



PROCEDURE

PR-009

SECONDARY PROGRAMS OF CHOICE

Superintendent Responsible: Superintendent of Education, Secondary Schools	Initial Effective Date: 2021/06/21
Last Updated: 2023/06/29	Next Review Date: 2027/04/20

Purpose

To support non-ministry mandated innovative programs within Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) secondary schools and enhance student achievement by being responsive to student needs.

Programs of Choice will endeavor to:

- Support the Grand Erie vision and mission statement
- Support student learning and well-being
- Offer high quality, diverse and innovative educational programs in focused areas
- Attract, retain and engage students with differing educational interests and needs
- Retain and engage staff with interest, specialized knowledge, skills and training
- Increase student and family involvement and satisfaction

Guiding Principles

1.0 Programs of Choice will:

- Adhere to high standards for programming excellence
- Strategically align with Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan
- Adhere to Grand Erie's commitment to the principles of equity and accessibility, through inclusive programming, services and operations
- Have a Grade 9 entry point
- Contain a minimum of seven (7) course credits in program offerings
- Adhere to specific admission criteria for the identified program
- Conform to the Education Act, board policies, collective agreements and approved implementation procedure plan

2.0 Intended Outcomes

- Provide students with opportunities for rich learning experiences that enable them to discover their passions and achieve their highest potential
- Meet diverse needs and interest of communities through dynamic programming
- Result in students earning a certificate indicating successful completion of the program

3.0 Application Components

3.1 Required

- Application with checklist
- Teacher and/or community recommendation/reference
- Student impact statement/questionnaire/response
- Program of Choice - Course Selection Sheet
- Report card(s) as indicated
- Grand Erie Registration Form for Out of Board Applicants
- Follow procedures set out in SO121: Request to Attend a School Outside the Home School Area, if applicable
- Program fee, if applicable
- Admission Assessment, if applicable

NOTE: For a student attending a school outside the home school area, transportation will not be provided for Programs of Choice. Transportation will be provided for Extended French and French Immersion students within the program boundary.

3.2 Unique Programs of Choice Requirements

- Each program will have standard requirements for admission and continuation.
- A student will return to their home school if they leave the Program of Choice.
- Students may only be registered in ONE Program of Choice.

3.3 Acceptance/Timelines

- Deadline: end of January
- Application Outcome: notification by the end of February
- Selection Criteria Prioritization: Based Upon Set Caps in the Program
 - In-board students (within boundary)
 - In-board students (out of area – SO121)
 - Out-of-board students

Note: A randomized selection process will be used if cap sizes have not been reached following any of these steps

4.0 **Program Review Cycle**

Existing programs will be reviewed over a three-year cycle by the Superintendent of Program K-12 (Teaching and Learning) who will share the outcome with the Senior Team.

If the program has met program goals, and student achievement outcomes, then the program will be considered viable and continue. If the program has not satisfactorily met the above indicators, then the Superintendent of Program K-12 (Teaching and Learning) and Senior Team will have the option to continue the program with additional criteria or move to dissolve the program.

5.0 **New Program Proposals**

The school principal will submit a written proposal including:

- Rationale/program focus
- Purpose and goals
- Proposed course package
- Student voice/student council input
- School council input
- Community input
- Available community resources
- Available community facilities
- Available partnership opportunities
- Available certifications or accreditation
- Budget requirements

Process: The Administrator(s) will meet with their respective Superintendent of Education to discuss the proposal; a minimum full school year of planning is required prior to implementation of a new program. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent of Program K-12 (Teaching and Learning) and Senior Team; the proposed concept must meet the definition of a Program of Choice.

In making this determination, the Superintendent of Program K-12 (Teaching and Learning) shall consider the following factors including:

- Grand Erie's priorities in alignment with the Multi-Year Plan
- The geographic location of the potential program
- Any demographic changes (e.g., declining enrolment)

- The suitability and condition of the potential facility
- The impact that implementing the program may have on the potential location
- The potential for creating an enhanced diverse and inclusive school environment
- Relevant achievement data
- Any budgetary impact (capital costs, start-up costs and ongoing annual costs)

Definitions:

Programs of Choice: unique, innovative learning programs in focused areas designed to engage students who have differing educational interests. These programs will complement courses consistent with the Ontario Curriculum and offer specialized learning opportunities that develop skills with greater depth and intensity.

Special Course Bundles: refers to programs within a school with a specific focus (1-4 courses) that are available to students registered at that school. No application process is required as an internal student. Magnet programs in Brant/Brantford allow for cross-enrolment, whereby students from other schools may attend the bundled courses and are chosen through the course selection process.

NOTE: Special Course Bundles are distinct from Programs of Choice and are not subject to this procedure.

Reference(s):

- Student Transportation (FT-06)
- School Initiated Facility Upgrades (FT-111)
- Request to Attend a School Outside the Home School Area (SO-121)