

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 12, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Alberta School Boards Association for Language Education (ASBALE) Survey

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE STAFF: Stuart Wachowicz

RECOMMENDATION

That the following district response to the ASBALE survey be approved for submission to ASBALE.

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TRUSTEE SERVICE REQUEST #352, PROVIDE THE ASBALE SURVEY RESULTS TO THE BOARD. Following is the proposed district response to the survey.

Question 1

How many students does your jurisdiction serve?
79,608 as of September 30, 2008

Question 2

Do you currently offer second language education in your division?
Yes (✓) No ()

If yes, do you offer:

French Immersion?
Yes (✓) No ()

French Language (grades 4-9)
Yes (✓) No ()

Language programs other than French?
Yes (✓) No ()

If yes, what other language program do you offer?
Edmonton Public Schools offers bilingual programs in seven languages: Arabic, American Sign Language (ASL), Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, Spanish and Ukrainian. The District also offers second language courses in: Arabic, ASL, Chinese, Cree, German, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish, and Ukrainian.

Question 3

Do you perceive a demand for additional language education in your division that you are currently unable to provide?

Yes (✓) No ()

If yes, what are your board's barrier(s) to providing it?

Availability of qualified teachers

Yes () No (✓)

Funding pressures

Yes () No (✓)

Timetable pressures

Yes (✓) No ()

Other, specify

There are occasionally requests for languages such as Russian, Hindi, Erdu and others which have a small demand, and a population that is dispersed throughout many district schools. Hence both the lack of a concentration of students that would make offering the language viable, together with a lack of specific curriculum and supporting resources are barriers.

Question 4

With all of the competing interests in your school system where does language education fit as a priority?

High (✓) Medium () Low ()

Question 5

The implementation for a province-wide daily 30 minute language learning requirement for Grades 4-9 students was to be mandated by Alberta Education in 2006. Could your school board presently support this mandate for second language education in Alberta?

Yes (✓) No ()

Comments:

It can be noted that the proposed provincial requirement did not include "daily" language instruction, but rather proposed second language courses be offered for 95 hours/year or 150 min/week.

Question 6

Does your school division have a second language learning policy?

Yes (✓) No ()

Question 7

Is your board a member board of ASBALE?

Yes (✓) No ()

If yes, are there other/additional areas that you would like to see as a priority for ASBALE for 2010?

One area where the ASBALE might focus some attention is in work to encourage Alberta Faculties of Education to place greater emphasis on the development of second language teachers. The current numbers of teacher graduating with a specialty in second language

instruction is below the number needed to accommodate a full provincial implementation of a second language requirement. Encouraging more scholarships, sponsoring foreign study and generally valuing pluralilingual capacity in the pre-service teachers would go a long way in supporting expanded quality second language instruction.

Secondly, faculties can be encouraged to provide more opportunity for teachers to take courses in second language pedagogy or second language development, without having to enroll in a graduate diploma or degree program. This could add convenient, cost effective and high quality professional development for teachers of second language or for those aspiring to become second language teachers.

SW:ja