

**DATE:** September 27, 2011

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Alberta Education's High School Flexibility Enhancement Project

**ORIGINATOR:** Ron MacNeil, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Kathy Muhlethaler, Principal of M.E. LaZerte High School

**REFERENCE:** <http://ideas.education.alberta.ca/hsc/current-projects/flexibility-enhancement-pilot>

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### **ISSUE**

Alberta Education has been leading a pilot project (2009 – 2013) to determine if the requirements of students to have access to 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per course credit should be maintained.

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the four-year High School Flexibility Enhancement Project is to provide participating high schools with the opportunity to organize their schools with the removal of the current 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per course credit restriction. M.E. LaZerte has been fortunate to have been selected by Alberta Education to be one of the 16 high schools in Alberta to participate in the High School Flexibility Project. Criteria for the selection of jurisdictions and schools ensured representations from each zone in the province, size of community, public and separate, and performance on key indicators of the Accountability Pillar. The project has adopted the following four goals:

1. To explore the implications of high school organization and programming free of the 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per credit requirement.
2. To positively impact student achievement and engagement and student, parent and teacher satisfaction in participating schools through the exploration of alternative organizational and delivery structures.
3. To recommend the elimination or maintenance of the requirement for 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per credit.
4. To develop an accountability model that will include school organization, instructional delivery of the Programs of Study, and achievement of learner outcomes.

An evaluation plan has been accepted by all participating pilot schools which track a series of measures throughout the life of the project. These measures include student achievement and engagement measures as well as satisfaction surveys of all members of the school community.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

M.E. LaZerte's High School Flexibility Pilot Project addresses the seven foundational principles of high school redesign: mastery learning, rigorous and relevant curriculum, personalization, flexible learning environments, educator roles and responsibilities, meaningful relationships, and home and community involvement. Through collaboration with members of the school community, organization and programming models were discussed, resulting in initiatives including a school wide assessment plan, alternative course delivery and programming, self-directed learning opportunities, tutorial block, and a modified school calendar.

**KEY POINTS**

The project is in alignment with our district plan, specifically as it pertains to facilitating flexible, innovative, and personalized approaches to learning by creating environments that engage all students in compelling and authentic work. Over the past two years of implementation, there have been positive results in the following project measures:

- Increase in high school completion rates
- Increase in course completion rates
- Decrease in dropout rates
- Decrease in student migration
- Increase in parent satisfaction with the quality of education and teaching at school

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