

DATE: April 4, 2023

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to Request for Information #013
Information on Pilot Projects Underway or Recently Completed

ORIGINATOR: Todd Burnstad, Chief Financial Officer

**RESOURCE
STAFF:** Andrea Cooper, Ann Parker, Nancy Petersen

ISSUE

At the February 7, 2022, Board Meeting, Trustee Kusiek noted that the Division has a number of pilot projects underway or that have been recently completed. The following information has been requested: Provide further information on pilots that the Division advises would be ideal to continue, but that ongoing funding is a barrier to doing so and include the following:

1. Information on both projects initiated by the Division and those funded directly by the Province
 - a. the name of the pilot project
 - b. brief description
 - c. sources of initial funding and duration
 - d. approximate number of students served by this pilot
 - e. approximate annual dollar value to move the pilot to a standard program of support within Edmonton Public Schools.

BACKGROUND

The below pilot projects were funded by accessing the Division's accumulated operating surplus.

1. Online resource development (\$2M, 2021-2022)

Beginning in March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and direction from the Province to suspend in-person learning, the Division transitioned to an online delivery model for teaching and learning. Throughout 2020-2021, the Division created online instructional videos, and accompanying plans and resources for subjects across various grade levels.

2. Anti-Racism & Equity Action Plan (\$1M, 2021-2022 & \$500K, 2022-2023)

This initiative, to support the collection of extended student demographic data, is a necessary step in working to dismantle systemic racism and racial discrimination in Edmonton Public Schools. This work included:

- the hiring of a psychometrician to support the development of a model to collect extended student demographics
- professional learning around anti-racism and equity
- hosting stakeholder engagement sessions
- contracting external expertise to support specific areas or initiatives of the Division's Anti-Racism and Equity Action Plan.

3. **September Actual Enrolment vs Projected Enrolment relief (\$5M, 2021-2022 & \$5M, 2022-2023)**
 With the implementation of the new funding framework and the weighted moving average, funding is provided to school Divisions based on historical enrolment as well as projected enrolment for the upcoming school year. To match this methodology, school budgets are completed in April with allocations being calculated using the individual school's projected enrolment. Surplus funds are required to support schools in the fall where there is a gap between their projected enrolment and the actual number and composition of students.
4. **Equity Achievement Project (\$6.5M, 2021-2022 & \$2M, 2022-2023)**
 This initiative focuses on an evidence-and research-based approach to supporting academic growth and achievement in schools serving our most socially vulnerable communities. The pilot is focused around early intervention, high quality literacy and numeracy instruction, social-emotional well-being, school nutrition and critical enrichment programming.
5. **Menstrual Products Initiative (\$2.5M (\$1M Infrastructure requirements, \$1.5M product), 2021-2022)**
 The Division recognizes that menstrual products are a basic need and is providing these essential products in our washrooms free of charge. In order to accommodate this, an initial investment was required to outfit each washroom with a dispensing mechanism. For the first year of this initiative, the cost of providing the products was covered through access to surplus funds. Following the first year, the cost of these products was covered through the individual school budgets. The Division continues to look for opportunities like partnerships or bulk purchase orders that may reduce the total cost of this initiative in order to maximize the amount of education dollars that can be directed towards instruction.
6. **Solar Strategy (\$3M Capital Reserve - Net of Gov't matching, 2021-2022)**
 Funding for this project was net drawdown of capital reserve funds which was matched by an equal contribution from the government towards installation of solar panels. The maximum amount of the grant matching was approximately \$3 million.
7. **New School Startup Costs (\$1M, 2022-2023)**
 Although the 2022-2023 funding manual references a new school start-up grant, neither Dr. Anne Anderson nor Joey Moss school qualified for this funding. However, both schools required an allocation to help with start-up costs, such as furniture, equipment, textbooks, etc.
8. **Growth Accommodation / Purchase of Portables (\$5.8M Capital Reserve, 2021-2022, \$4.9M Capital Reserve, 2022-2023)**
 Due to the timing and nature of construction, site work and invoicing timelines resulted in a need to carry forward approved funds into the current year. Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant delays in portable construction.

While some relief in K-9 schools will be provided through portables, work will still likely be required in schools to accommodate growth. Work in high school spaces will also be required over the next several years to accommodate student enrolment growth. At this time, the Division is also uncertain of the number of portables the Province will approve for 2022-2023 and future years.

The following pilot projects were funded within the Division's operating budget through the use of education funding where the Division has the discretion on how the funding could be used.

9. **Mental Health (\$460K)**
 - a. **Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health (CASA) Mental Health Classroom**
 The Division and CASA are working collaboratively to launch a mental health classroom at J.A. Fife School with an anticipated opening date of September, 2023. CASA will be providing mental health and cross-disciplinary supports and the Division has committed to providing the teacher

and a full-time educational assistant. The CASA classroom will operate on a two semester system serving up to 24 Grade 4 to Grade 6 students throughout the school year.

The Division unit costs associated with the provision of a full-time teacher and a full-time educational assistant for J.A. Fife School is \$159,847 annually. It is anticipated that this will be a multi-year collaborative initiative with the possibility of expansion to other schools based on resources available through CASA and the Division.

b. Division Mental Health Classroom - Aldergrove School

The Division has opened a mental health classroom at Aldergrove School beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. Current resources through Hospital School Campuses and Specialized Learning Supports are providing mental health and cross-disciplinary supports for students enrolled in the class. The Aldergrove mental health classroom operates on a tri-semester system with a 12-week student rotation. This classroom will serve up to 30 Grade 4 to Grade 6 students throughout the school year.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the teacher and educational assistant assigned to the mental health classroom at Aldergrove School will be hired through Hospital School Campuses. The Division unit costs associated with the provision of a full-time teacher and a full-time educational assistant is \$159,847 annually. It is anticipated that this will be a multi-year initiative with the possibility of expansion to other schools based on availability of resources.

c. Hospital School Campuses Mental Health Team

As part of the Division's Coordinated Approach to Mental Health, effective for the 2022-2023 school year, a Mental Health Team administered through Hospital School Campuses has been created. This cross-disciplinary team streamlines and utilizes existing resources available through Hospital School Campuses and Specialized Learning Supports to respond to school requests for mental health supports and services for students and families. A new assistant principal position was created during the 2022-2023 school year dedicated to supporting the administration of the Mental Health Team. An ongoing allocation of \$141,062 to Hospital School Campuses is required to ensure the continuation of the administrative support necessary for the operation and coordination of this team. This initiative is currently funded through the Division's budget. To date, the Mental Health Team has responded to approximately 400 requests for service and/or supports from schools.

10. First Nations Métis and Inuit High School Completion Coaches (\$1M)

For the 2022-2023 school year, the First Nations Métis and Inuit High School Completion Coach initiative is offered at three Division high schools: Eastglen, Jasper Place and Queen Elizabeth. The high school completion coaches work with and support 577 self-identified students across the three schools.

This initiative is coordinated through Curriculum and Learning Supports (CLS) and funded through the Division's budget, specifically the First Nations Métis, and Inuit Grant funding. All staffing, supplies, equipment and resource costs for this initiative are funded through the allocation provided to CLS. The CLS allocation receives funds to cover the costs associated with the current model through two mechanisms:

- The school's First Nations, Métis and Inuit allocation is redirected to CLS to support the unit costs of the high school completion coaches assigned to the school
- The First Nations Métis, and Inuit budget allocation provided to CLS

The costs of the current First Nations, Métis and Inuit High School Completion Coach model are provided in the table below:

Location	Position	FTE	Cost	School FNMI Allocation Redirected to CLS	Funds from CLS FNMI budget allocation
CLS	Supervisor	1.0	\$ 150,026	\$ -	
Eastglen	Cultural Liaison	0.20	\$ 15,546	\$ -	
Jasper Place	Cultural Liaison	0.20	\$ 15,546	\$ -	
Queen Elizabeth	Cultural Liaison	0.20	\$ 15,546	\$ -	
Eastglen	High School Completion Coach	2.00	\$ 192,802	\$ 198,829	
Jasper Place	High School Completion Coach	4.00	\$ 385,604	\$ 310,814	
Queen Elizabeth	High School Completion Coach	3.00	\$ 289,203	\$ 137,124	
Total		9.60	\$ 1,064,274	\$ 646,767	\$417,507

It is anticipated this will be a multi-year initiative with the possibility of expansion to other Division schools.

11. Virtual School (\$1M for the next two years)

Virtual School is a new initiative of the Bennett-Argyll-Metro (BAM) Centres. It is a re-imagined model for public education within the Edmonton Public School Division that will provide student-centered, blended, hybrid (asynchronous/synchronous) learning to students across the Division. There is potential to offer this programming to students across Alberta. This blended or hybrid approach will deliver virtual learning and local in-person opportunities for those who would like access to enriched experiences.

Virtual School rethinks the purpose of school, acknowledging that current traditional conceptions of schools and online learning are hindered by a largely Eurocentric worldview, privileging certain students over others. In order to address issues of systemic racism and the unnecessary marginalization of groups of students within our learning communities, Virtual School will center curriculum and pedagogies around Indigenous, holistic, digital, and place based practices. Indigenous teaching and learning practices will go beyond the stand-alone, one-off cultural experiences that are often presented as solutions to the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This project anticipates intergenerational teachings and learning for students, teachers, school administrators, and interested community partners. The Virtual School project builds on BAM's successful legacy of providing online and home education services for students across Alberta and delivering new iterative approaches to teaching and learning. It responds to growing interest in online schooling and addresses challenges students might

experience in the existing traditional public education system (anxiety, mental health, poverty, transiency, cultural responsiveness of curricula and pedagogy). Additionally, space in Division high schools is nearing capacity.

The Virtual School project, built by educators, allows us to create a responsive system to the evolving needs of students that also addresses the many barriers to access to virtual learning that exist in current models.

- Virtual school focuses on the specific tasks, skills, and knowledge outcomes of the various division 3 and 4 subjects rather than the siloed courses themselves. This way, students are empowered to design projects based on their interests, while also discovering and building new interests and passions.

Partial grant funding of \$12,000 was received from Alberta Social Innovation: Community Catalyst Fund from March 2020 to October 2020. This allowed the creation of a Virtual School roadmapping report to explore our partnership and prototype with Animikii as lead community partner on the Virtual School Project.

Approximately 200 students will be served by this pilot in year one, with growth planned for following years.

12. Reaching Out for Junior High (\$0.5M)

Reaching Out is an alternative outreach/inreach education program with the goal of trying to remove barriers that impede students from experiencing positive school success. Reaching Out is a hybrid learning program that combines online learning with in-person learning aimed to create an accessible experience for students. Through the partnership of Argyll Centre and EPSB schools, Reaching Out supports students who, for various reasons, have stopped attending or are inconsistently attending school. A teacher from Argyll Centre works within various junior high schools to provide individualized-small group support to students. Students work in a hybrid model where they complete asynchronous lessons and assignments but have in-person support from a teacher a few times a week. The teacher works closely with the students and their families to rebuild their accessibility and relationship to their school and their learning. The instructional focus is on relationship building, celebrating success and providing students with multiple opportunities to succeed. Students are enrolled into the program by the administration at their sites and the administration at Argyll Centre. The program is scheduled, coordinated and supported by administration at Argyll Centre.

- 2019-2020 - four schools, 1.0 FTE
- 2020-2021 - no program offering during this year (COVID-19)
- 2021-2022 - eight junior high schools, 2.0 FTE
- 2022-2023 - 22 junior high schools across the division, 4.0 FTE
 - Started the year with FTE 2.0 (two teachers)
 - These two teachers started the year by going to one of the sites we work with to spend September in those buildings to form connections with students and staff
 - Schools chosen through social vulnerability data

Funding for Reaching Out has been at no cost to the partner schools. Argyll Centre provides concurrent programming to Jr High students across the division.

Number of students served by this pilot:

- 2019-2020 - 38 students through four junior high schools
- 2020-2021 - not offered due to COVID Safety Plan

- 2021-2022 - 90 students through eight junior high schools
- 2022-2023 - 150 students (as of March 13) through 22 junior high schools. It is estimated this will continue to increase.

13. All in for Youth

All in for Youth is a community partnership that provides wrap-around supports in eight of Edmonton's most socially vulnerable schools, with the goal of removing barriers that impact school and life well-being and success. The partnership was initiated in 2016 and includes school nutrition, mentoring, success coach, mental health, Roots and Wings and after school programming supports for students and their families. The majority of these supports are co-located within the school community, with agency and school staff taking a shared responsibility for the well-being and success of students. The All in for Youth approach is grounded in evidence-based practices and uses a strength-based approach in working alongside students and their families.

The model is supported by a group of community partners, with both the Division and Edmonton Catholic Schools participating as well. The community partners include the following service providers and funders: Boys and Girls, Big Brothers Big Sisters Edmonton Area, The Family Centre , E4C, The Edmonton Community Foundation, The City of Edmonton, The United Way, Reach Edmonton and the Community University Partnership.

In the absence of a predictable, sustainable funding source, the model's viability has been maintained year to year through the contributions of the All in for Youth partners, grants and various community donors. The Division provides \$182,000 annually towards the initiative, as well as in-kind leadership support for stewardship and evaluation. Since 2016, the Division has, on multiple occasions, provided bridge funding when annual fund raising targets were not met and service to students and families was at risk of being reduced mid-school year. The annual All in for Youth operating budget for the eight schools sits around \$3.5 million dollars.

All in for Youth is currently in place in the following Division schools and St. Alphonsus of Edmonton Catholic Schools:

- Abbott
- Delton
- Eastglen
- Ivor Dent
- John A. McDougall
- Norwood
- Spruce Avenue

The long-term goal of All in for Youth is to achieve a predictable, sustainable funding source that would support ongoing programming in the current group of eight schools and would enable the model to be expanded into more high socially complex schools within the Edmonton area.

TB/ja