

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA**

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020
LOCATION: REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM
TIME: 6:00 PM

The Richmond Board of Education acknowledges and thanks the First Peoples of the hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ (hun-ki-meen-um) language group on whose traditional and unceded territories we teach, learn and live.

1. ADOPT AGENDA

2. APPROVE MINUTES

Attachment: In-Camera minutes from meeting held October 21, 2020.

3. TRANSITIONAL LEARNING

- Elementary update
- Secondary update

4. HARRY JEROME PRESENTATION

- Presentation by Karina Reid

5. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ELL Consortium (Metro Boards)
- Richmond Sister Advisory Committee (City Committee)
- Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement Advisory Committee
- SOGI Advisory Committee
- Anti-Racism Committee

6. NEXT MEETING DATE - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2020 at 6:00 PM

7. ADJOURNMENT

REPORT TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE – PUBLIC

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2020

FROM: Christel Brautigam, Assistant Superintendent

SUBJECT: TRANSITIONAL LEARNING – ELEMENTARY UPDATE

TOPIC

Transitional learning in elementary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROCESS

In the late summer school districts across the province were tasked with developing a way to support learners whose families were not yet ready to return to in-person learning. At the time the options for families were;

- In-person instruction
- Distance learning
- Homeschooling

All but the first option above meant families would lose their placement in their home school. Richmond also does not currently have a distance learning option for elementary aged students, thus families would have needed to find a program offering elsewhere in the province, with very few spaces available.

Transitional learning was developed with the following guiding principles in mind;

- Maintain placement in ones' home school
- Maintain and foster connection between the home-school and families
- Provide a base level of instruction for students through a district program delivery of webinars and weekly plans in;
 - o Mathematics
 - o Science
 - o Social Studies
 - o Language Arts
 - o Arts
 - o French Immersion
- Provide a connection to the home school with small group check-ins via Zoom with school based staff
- Maintain staffing in schools without the need to downsize due to the fact that students are in transitional learning (keep school communities intact)
- Provide enough instruction and touch-ins so that the transition back to school is as seamless as possible

Transitional learning began with nearly 4000 students choosing this option. After Thanksgiving 2800 students remained in elementary transitional learning. Participation numbers in Transitional Learning for Quarter Two will be updated once that information is available.

Transitional learning has caused some organizational and operational challenges for school staffs. In order to minimize the contacts for non-enrolling teachers, schools staffs have organized themselves, where possible, into cohorts of three (two enrolling teachers and one non-enrolling teacher), where the three adults take responsibility for all the learners in the two classes, whether at school or at home. Additional staffing of 15 FTE were hired to support the cohort model and 18 FTE Learning Services staff were re-assigned to support the cohort model (10.5 FTE) and the district program delivery (7.5 FTE).

Challenges:

- While some families engage with the transitional learning program wholeheartedly, others are difficult to engage.
- Transitional Learning requires a certain degree of parental support. Some parents find the necessary time commitment to learn the content and support their children challenging, while others enjoy this time.
- Some teachers find assessment of transitional learners challenging. The District program delivery provides assessment notes, but assessing students when you don't see them in person has its challenges.
- The ongoing cost of the additional FTE and the loss of Learning Services staff to their regular roles causes a stress on the system.
- School staffs were already stressed about returning to work and the necessary health and safety precautions that are part of their daily routine. The addition of transitional learning added another stressor.
- Some teachers are not comfortable teaching in an online environment.
- Sharing the teaching/learning between in-school staff and in-school and at-home learners has its challenges.
- Learning Services staff engaging in the District Program Delivery find it challenging to prepare content for an "invisible" audience from whom it is difficult to gain feedback

CONCLUSION

The transitional learning program was originally designed to be transitional, so that families could have a longer time to gain comfort with returning to in-school instruction. It has allowed for continuity of supports for learners who are at home, kept all of our learners enrolled in their home schools, and school staffs intact. Teachers in schools and teachers providing the District Program Delivery have provided a strong program in challenging circumstances, and have maximized what they can do with the human resources available. However, there has been a cost to the district in terms of staffing costs, availability of supports for in-school learners, and staff and organizational challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

Christel Brautigam, Assistant Superintendent

REPORT TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE – PUBLIC

DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2020

FROM: Rob Laing, Executive Director – Learning and Business Technologies

SUBJECT: TRANSITIONAL LEARNING – SECONDARY UPDATE

TOPIC

Transitional learning in secondary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROCESS

In late August, the District submitted a 'Restart Plan' to the Ministry of Education based on the parameters that were in place at that time and extensive consultation with Secondary School Principals and Vice-Principals. This plan included:

- In-Person Learning:
 - Redesigned schedule to allow for increased cleaning protocols and less student to student contact
 - Classes offered in a quarter system (2 classes per day for 10 weeks) to reduce cohort size
 - Grade 8 & 9 students:
 - Arranged in cohort structures of 120 students maximum
 - Attend school full-time
 - Gr. 10 – 12 students:
 - Arranged in cohort structures of 120 students maximum
 - Classes divided in half to create smaller sizes
 - Students attend school for half day
- Distributed Learning (Richmond Virtual School or other DL programs)
 - Gr. 8 and 9 students who enroll in full-time studies with RVS or another DL program would be required to withdraw from their neighbourhood school
 - Gr. 10-12 students could enroll in DL classes through RVS to supplement their in-person course schedule
- Home Schooling

The educational landscape continued to change rapidly, and in early September, the Ministry of Education provided greater flexibility for school districts to create additional options for families for the 2020-2021 school year. In response to this increased flexibility and the feedback the District was receiving from the Richmond parent community, the following option was added:

- Grade 8/9 Remote Transition (Distributed Learning offered through Richmond Virtual School)

This new option provided a primarily online alternative to Gr. 8 and 9 students who were not ready to return to full-time in-person learning in their neighbourhood school, but they would retain their place in their neighbourhood school.

The Gr. 8/9 Remote Transition option was designed with the following guidelines:

- The program was intended to be a transitional program for quarter 1 and 2 only

- Students would retain enrolment in their neighbourhood school and/or district program of choice (e.g. French Immersion) in preparation for their return in quarter 3
- Students could choose to return to in-person learning in their neighbourhood school after quarter 1, or continue with Remote Transition until the end of quarter 2
- Students would engage in a combination of synchronous learning (virtual 'live' classes) and self-directed learning during quarter 1 and 2
- Each class would consist of a one-hour zoom meeting followed by one-hour of support/tutorial time
- Classes would be conducted through an online platform coordinated through Richmond Virtual School
- Students would be expected to participate in some face-to-face learning opportunities within their Remote Transition classes
- Remote course offerings would include: English, Social Studies, Math and Science
- When students return to their neighbourhood school for Q3/Q4, they may experience challenges aligning completed courses with course availability

The District distributed a new communication to all Gr. 8 and 9 parents to inform them of this new option. Parents were guided to sign up on the Richmond Virtual School website if they wanted their child to participate in this option.

The Gr. 8 and 9 Remote Transition Option started with 211 grade 8 students and 193 grade 9 students. 71 students have chosen to return to in-person learning in their neighbourhood school for quarter 2, while 322 students have opted to remain with Remote Transition learning for quarter 2.

Starting in quarter 2, students will be attending one in-person class every two weeks with their transition class. This will be hosted at Sea Island Elementary School.

Although this program has been a successful and positive learning experience for the students, it has not been without some challenges.

Challenges:

- The current model has required an additional 18.5 FTE of staffing coming at a cost of approximately \$950,000.
- Additional efforts and supports have been required to connect with students and families and to keep them engaged in their learning.
- Providing additional student learning support in a virtual environment comes with greater complexity, as does providing counselling services.
- It has been a learning curve for teachers to create engaging lessons and activities for remote instructions.
- There is great value in regular, timely, formative feedback and assessment. This is more challenging in a remote environment.
- Finding space for 18.5 FTE of staff to be able to work within the district was a challenge. Currently, this program has been using 5 classrooms, the gym, and office space at Sea Island Elementary School. This has impacted the ability for other user groups to access this space.
- Neighbourhood schools are continuing to hold space in classes for these Remote Transition students which has added increased complexity to secondary school scheduling.
- When these students return to their schools, they require custom scheduling and may not be able to get a typical Gr. 8 or 9 course load. In some cases, students may be required to repeat a course already taken or may not be able to enroll in an elective course they desire.

CONCLUSION

The remote transition option was designed to be temporary to provide students with additional time to transition to in-person learning in their neighbourhood school. Remote transition staff have worked hard to create a strong program that provides valuable learning opportunities and connections for students. School-based staff have also been working hard to welcome these students back into the school when they have felt ready to return. Feedback from remote transition students and parents has been positive and a sense of community has been created within these virtual classrooms. However, there has been additional challenges to the district in terms of staffing costs, program coordination, district space utilization, learning support and neighbourhood school scheduling integration.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Laing, Executive Director – Learning and Business Technologies