

Project Plan | Recommendation to Commence the Public Input Process for the Proposed Closure of the All Boys Program



Calgary Board
of Education

dialogue)))

Feb. 7, 2024

1. CONTEXT

The All Boys Program is a stand-alone K-6 program within Sir James Lougheed School offering single-gendered programming for boys. The program has seen low and declining enrolment and, as such, was first identified in the CBE Three-Year System Student Accommodation Plan (SSAP) in the 2018-19 school year. All Boys families received an update letter in January 2022 informing them that the school was continuing to be included in the SSAP due to declining student enrolment.

The All Boys Program has been an alternative program in the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) since 2012. The intended outcome was identified as providing active involvement in a single-gender program to increase self-confidence and develop caring relationships through coaching and mentorship. Meeting the program outcomes has been challenging due to declining enrolment, increasing student complexity and financial implications.

A program evaluation was conducted in the 2022-23 school year to evaluate the outcomes for this program and the impact on student achievement and well-being. The evaluation gathered perspectives from staff and families, assessed educational outcomes and considered the financial impact on our system based on student demographics, enrolment and utilization rate of the facility.

The evaluation assessed several factors including:

- **Educational outcomes:** The educational outcomes intended for this program are not being met with analysis of report card and PAT results indicating similar or lower levels of achievement when compared to their peers.
- **Enrolment:** Enrolment in the program is low and declining, and the school remains on the System Student Accommodation Plan. Registration decreased 50 per cent between 2018 (127 students) and 2023 (64 students) and attrition rates increased close to threefold in the same period. There have been no kindergarten registrations in the past two years.
- **Special education coding:** Based on 2022-23 CBE Special Education data, the system-wide percentage of students with special education coding is 19.4 per cent. Given this reference point, the All Boys Program can be considered to have significantly higher rates of students requiring special education coding. The rate of student complexity over the past five years has ranged from 51 to 61 per cent and in the last three years has been within 2 percentage points.
- **Staffing:** Additional financial support is required to support necessary program supports through staffing.
- **Cost per student:** The overall cost per student in the All Boys Program, including school-based budget (RAM) and other sources of funding redirected from the global budget is 60 per cent above the regular per student cost in comparison with other elementary schools.
- **Facility costs:** The combined Operation & Maintenance (O&M) and deferred maintenance cost per student is ~\$59K/student. This compares to the elementary school average of ~\$13K. Operations and Maintenance cost per student without deferred maintenance is \$2.7K/student. This compares to the elementary school average of ~\$850.
- **Utilization rates:** Utilization of Sir James Lougheed School has declined every year and stood at 39 per cent for the 2022-23 school year, well below the 85 per cent utilization required for maximum operational and maintenance funding from the provincial government.

Given this assessment, the evaluation included a recommendation that the program be considered for closure or relocation to an existing school to maximize economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Since the program evaluation, the CBE has concluded that moving the program is not a feasible option for the following reasons:

First and foremost, **students' learning needs can be met equally well in a regular program setting**. The program's low and declining enrolment and increasing classroom complexity may create challenges in meeting program and learning outcomes regardless of location. Within a regular program environment with appropriate supports for identified special education needs, outcomes may be more effectively met.

Additionally, continuation of the program is **neither affordable nor equitable**. From a system perspective, even if facility costs for the program could be reduced by moving it to a school alongside an existing program, the overall cost per student (school-based and global funding) would continue to be approximately 60 per cent above the regular per student cost at other elementary schools. This additional cost is not affordable, sustainable or equitable.

After careful consideration, the CBE has decided to move forward with a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to commence the public input process on the proposed closure of the All Boys Program. A report recommending the commencement of the public input process will be presented to the Board of Trustees in the fall of 2024. If the Board approves the recommendation, they will provide time for public input before a final decision is made. It is expected that decision would be made by December 2024. The decision about whether or not to close the All Boys Program will be made by the Board of Trustees in alignment with [GC-3E\(2\): Closure of Schools Procedure](#).

If this recommendation is approved, students would then attend their designated school or chosen alternative program starting in the 2025-26 school year. The CBE would work very closely with students and their families to ensure as smooth a transition as possible to their chosen program. A transition plan would be developed for each student that addresses their unique needs.

2. [WHAT IS TO BE DECIDED](#)

By September 2024, CBE Administration will present a recommendation to the CBE Board of Trustees to commence the public input process for the proposed closure of the All Boys Program. The details of the recommendation will be informed by perspectives gathered from All Boys school staff, students and families.

If the Board of Trustees approves commencement of the public input process for the proposed closure, the Board will decide whether or not to close the All Boys Program and communicate to impacted staff, students and families by December 2024. If the Board of Trustees approves the closure of the All Boys Program after the public input period, the decision will be implemented at the end of the 2024-25 school year and students will be welcomed to their new school in September 2025, in accordance with their individualized transition plan.

3. [DECISION MAKER\(S\)](#)

The decision to submit the recommendation to commence the public input process for the proposed closure of the All Boys Program to the CBE Board of Trustees will be made by the Chief Superintendent of Schools. The decision on whether or not to close the All Boys Program will be made by the CBE Board of Trustees at the conclusion of the Board's public input process, should they proceed with this process.

4. [PROJECT PLANNING TEAM](#)

- Education Director, Area 4 and Alternative Programs
- Education Director, Area 7 and Well-Being
- Education Director, Area 1 and Teaching and Learning with Technology
- Director, Planning

- Manager, Community Engagement
- Community Engagement Advisor

5. OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS

The potential closure of the All Boys Program is a significant change for a small number of impacted staff, students and families. It is important to communicate the rationale for the recommendation for consideration of closure clearly and transparently. It is equally important to facilitate conversations related to each student's transition requirements to ensure families are aware of the programming options available to them. It is understood that perspectives and needs will be varied and that it is important to balance all considerations to deliver equitable learning opportunities to CBE students as a whole.

6. IMPACTS ON STAFF, STUDENTS & FAMILIES

The impact of implementing the proposed program closure will differ depending on whether staff, students and families are connected to the All Boys Program. In some cases, some may see the impact as being positive and some will see the same impact as negative.

The public is not impacted by the proposed closure. The plan to close the program with students attending their designated school or chosen alternative program will result in a more effective use of space and resources overall. Community members living in the vicinity of Sir James Loughheed School may be concerned about what happens to the empty school building, should the program close, and they will have an opportunity to learn more and share thoughts about plans at a public information session, should the Board of Trustees approve the commencement of the public input process for the proposed closure in the fall of 2024.

7. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Communication will be clear, direct and transparent.
- Information about this initiative will be available on the CBE website and shared with staff and families through email, social media and school websites.
- Information will be shared in advance, when possible.
- The principal of the All Boys Program will play an important role in sharing information with the school community.
- Perspectives will be gathered via online and in-person opportunities.
- Perspectives gathered throughout this project will be summarized in the recommendation to the Board of Trustees to commence the public input process on the proposed closure of the All Boys Program.
- This project will take place prior to and be separate from the Board of Trustees process in alignment with [GC-3E\(2\): Closure of Schools Procedure](#). Should the Board subsequently choose to proceed with the public input process and later the possibility of closure, All Boys Program staff will work with families in a more targeted and individualized way to ensure a strong transition for each student.

8. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The project objectives are:

- To *inform and communicate* with affected staff, students and families about the decision-making process and timing of the potential program closure.
- To *inform and communicate* with affected staff, students and families about how students will be supported throughout the process.
- To *gather perspectives* on effective ways to provide a smooth transition for staff, students and families.

9. PROJECT TIMELINE

This timeline may require adjustments as we progress through this process. When required, an updated project plan will be posted to the CBE website.

Feb. 7	Communicate recommendation to All Boys staff and families and share project plan and evaluation summary. Presentation to staff from the Education Director followed by an email to parents at end of day with link to the project webpage and information posted to school website.
Feb. 8	In-class discussions with students about plans.
Feb. 26	Presentation and discussion with All Boys staff.
Feb. 27	Hold in-person session showcasing programming options, special education supports, etc. CES to organize.
March 5 - 22	Online public boards open for families to ask questions and share perspectives on student supports and considerations in transition planning.
March 5 - 22	Online survey for All Boys staff.
Mid-March to Mid-April	One-on-one conversations with All Boys families.
March 20	Project update at school council meeting.
Sept. 2024 public board meeting (date TBC)	Board of Trustees decides whether or not to commence the public input process on the proposed closure in alignment with GC-3E(2): Closure of Schools Procedure
Sept. - early Oct. 2024	If the public input process is initiated, the Board of Trustees will hold a public input session.
By Dec. 2024	If the public input process is initiated, the final decision about the recommendation will be made by the Board of Trustees and communicated to those affected.
Dec. 2024 - June 2025	If the Board decides to close the program, work will take place to prepare students and families for the transition.
Sept. 2025	If the Board decides to close the program, students attend their designated school or chosen alternative program.

10. MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

We will measure the success of this project by asking session and survey evaluation questions and summarizing and evaluating responses.