



**DATE:** September 28, 2022

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Shawna Warren, Superintendent

**ORIGINATOR:** Jonathan Konrad, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services  
Shelley Greenwood, Director, Learning Services

**GOVERNANCE POLICY:** [Policy 700 – Superintendent of Schools](#)

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCE:** [AP240 – System, School and Program Evaluation](#)  
[AP535 – Learning Support Services](#)

**SUBJECT:** Renaming of GOALS Program

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**PURPOSE:**

For information.

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the course of the 2021-2022 school year the Division completed an audit of the GOALS (Growth, Opportunities, and Life Skills) Program because families were choosing to leave the program, division or asking for tuitioned placements. Originally, the program was designed to meet the needs of a specific group of students with special education needs. This program was focused on life skill development. The results of this audit have had a direct impact on how Sturgeon Public meets the needs of students and led to a change of name from GOALS to Specialized Programming to reflect the revisions made to the program.

The shift in name will support a shift in mindset, that all students can be successful in any setting, with the appropriate programming and the opportunity to access what they need. Specialized Programming removes the GOALS label related to rigid criteria, allows for student-centered goals, and is fluid, individualized, and responsive to student needs. It also aligns with the practices of Universal Design for Learning and strength-based programming. The Division no longer considers students with special education needs in terms of what do we need to fix, but rather what environment and supports are needed for students to reach their full potential.

In Redwater School, Namao School, and Sturgeon Composite High School, highly trained and specialized staff in Inclusive Education guide the Specialized Programming, ensuring that students have access to a plethora of supports that not only meet their learning needs but enhance their growth, opportunities, and life skills. The Division will continue to offer these site-based environments which provide more accessibility, specific supports, and a framework to respond to the needs of students beyond foundational classroom instruction.

Historical Background:

1. Students who wanted to access GOALS could not attend their neighborhood schools as GOALS was designated to specific sites. Even if they were being supported in their neighborhood



school successfully, some parents/guardians saw this as a “no” to getting supports. Specialized programming is not attached to a setting.

2. Programs are designed for specific outcomes and populations, while these do serve important functions in education, it can be a barrier for families and the students who do not meet specific criteria, making the program more exclusionary rather than inclusive.
3. Not all families want their child with special education needs in a program that focuses on life skills. There can be a stigma and feeling that you are either “in” or “out”.
4. Resources are limited in education. If we isolate to specific programs, the Division will duplicate these services or resources in other programs.

Specialized Programming offers Sturgeon Public students, families, and staff more options and it makes a statement to potential SPS families that we do not just say we value inclusion. We live it.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the September 28, 2022, Public Board meeting.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Specialized Programming Updates

## Specialized Programming Updates

- Currently, the Division has students accessing specialized programming at Ochre Park, Four Winds, and Sturgeon Heights in addition to our specialized sites at Namao, SCHS, and Redwater School. In total, the Division has 39 students, 6 teachers, and 17 EAs, bringing student to teacher ratio down, as well as giving more access to teachers. Which are key to better programming.
- Division safety-related incidents are down. This is due to an increase in staff, making sure all staff have appropriate training (NVCII) and are provided professional development.
- The Division has had students return to the division to access specialized programming.
- The division has invested in flexible spaces to meet all student needs, not just students in specialized programming.
- Learning Profiles and programming goals were developed to support staff in determining who should access specialized programming.
- New referrals and consents were developed.
- Developed a teaching cohort to ensure consistency, alignment and provide targeted professional development.
- Programming vision, mission and structures were created with all stakeholder input and aligned with division values.
- New division calendar for specialized programming that includes built-in time for school-based team meetings, staggered entry, IPP planning days, transition timeline and cohort meetings. This allows for the collaboration needed to support this level of programming.
- Communication guidelines were created to support teachers and families.
- Hired LPN's to support the medical needs of students.
- Programming decisions are made on Purpose, Peers, Place, Planning for all, and Presuming Competence (Moore, 2021).