



**Date:** December 18, 2024 **Agenda Item:** 8.1

**To:** Board of Trustees

**From:** Shawna Warren, Superintendent

**Originator(s):** Jonathan Konrad, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services  
Dan Stephen, Division Principal

**Subject:** **Alternative Programs Report - December 2024**

**Background:**

Off-Campus, Work Experience, Dual Credit, Green Certificate, Outreach and Online programming allow students to learn in alternate settings and through experiences that align with their needs and interests. Offering these programs aligns with the Board’s mission to provide a well-rounded education and the value of ensuring learning choices exist for all students. This also aligns with the *Choice in Education Act* amendments to the *Education Act* in June 2020.

The Alternative Programs Report provides an overview of the wide variety of program options that students may access through the Sturgeon Public School Division.

**Status & Relationship to Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS):**

This report aligns with the [SLQS](#) in the following way:

**COMPETENCY:** (3) Visionary Leadership

**INDICATORS:**

- a. ensuring that the vision is informed by research on effective learning, teaching and leadership;
- b. promoting innovation and continuous improvement by building structures and developing strategies to support staff in professional collaboration; and
- c. promoting in the school community a common understanding of and support for the school authority’s goals, priorities and strategic initiatives.

**COMPETENCY:** (6) School Authority Operations and Resources

**INDICATORS:**

- e. establishing data-informed strategic planning and decision-making processes that are responsive to changing contexts; and
- f. respecting cultural diversity and appreciating differing perspectives expressed in the school community.

<b>COMPETENCY:</b>	(7) Supporting Effective Governance
<b>INDICATORS:</b>	c. ensuring that all students in the school authority have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister of Education; and d. ensuring that the board's plans, resource allocations, strategies and procedures lead to the achievement of its goals and priorities.

**Governance Implications:**[Education Act](#)

## Preamble

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of enabling high quality and socially engaging learning opportunities with flexible timing and pacing through a range of learning environments to meet diverse student needs and to maximize student success.

## Diversity and respect

16(1) All courses or programs of study and instructional materials used in a school must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans.

## Alternative programs

19 (4) A board that offers an alternative program shall continue to offer an education program consistent with the requirements of this Act and the regulations to those students not enrolled in the alternative program.

## Off-campus education programs

22(1) A board may provide off-campus education programs for its students.

## Board responsibilities

33(1) A board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to  
(a) deliver appropriate education programming to meet the needs of all students enrolled in a school operated by the board and to enable their success.

[Policy 105: Vision, Mission and Values](#)

## VISION

Sturgeon Public School Division: where, through a well-rounded education, students are motivated and supported to pursue their unique path to future success.

## VALUES

Learning choices. One size does not fit all. We recognize that to prepare students for their futures, we must meet their diverse needs along the way.

## [Policy 110: Welcoming Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Environments](#)

The Board believes in the importance of, and is committed to, establishing, and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The Board believes that all members of the school community, including students, staff members, and community members, have the right to learn, work and volunteer in environments that respect: equity, diversity, inclusion, and human rights. Such environments create the conditions where everyone can prosper.

## [Policy 225: Role of the Board](#)

### Education Planning and Programming

The Board shall deliver appropriate education programming to meet the needs of all students enrolled in a school operated by the Board and to enable their success.

### Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

8. Make informed decisions that consider community values and represent the interests of the entire Division.

9. Promote the schools' programs which reflect the needs and desires of the community.

## [Administrative Procedure 845: Off-Campus Education](#)

### PURPOSE

Sturgeon Public Schools supports and promotes off-campus education programs and believes that school/community partnerships provide opportunities for students to gain practical workplace experiences that enable successful transition from school to careers.

## [Administrative Procedure 855: Alternate Programming and Learning Opportunities](#)

### PURPOSE

While the instructional needs for most students are accommodated within the Division's schools, the learning needs of some students may be provided in an alternate learning environment or program.

Decisions regarding student placement shall involve the parent/guardian and student, teacher, the school Principal and the Director, Learning Support, and shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:

- Programming needs of the student;
- Programming options available, and
- Student and parent/guardian preferences.



Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the December 18, 2024, Public Board meeting.

**Attachment(s):**

1. Alternative Program Report December 2024



# Alternative Programming Report 2024

[Off-Campus - WE/RAP](#)

[Connection with Careers The Next Generation](#)

[Dual Credit](#)

[Successes with Dual Credit](#)

[Green Certification](#)

[Program Expansion and Partnership Growth](#)

[Community Outreach Plan](#)

[Off-Campus Program Expansion](#)

[Summer School \(2024\)](#)

[Sturgeon Learning Centres and Sturgeon Public Virtual Academy](#)

## Off-Campus - Work Experience (WE)/Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)

Students can earn credits while they are employed during the school year, and in the summer months. Students register with the off-campus coordinator for work experience credits when they have secured employment. Together with the employer, and student, the coordinator develops the learning plan for the student. The employer provides mentoring, guidance and supervision for the student while they learn on the job.

The Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) is an excellent option for students interested in a career in the trades. RAP allows high school students to begin an apprenticeship training program as early as Grade 10. These students earn credit toward a high school diploma and an apprenticeship program at the same time.

### Program Staffing

- 0.3 FTE Off-Campus School Coordinator at SCHS

### Current Off-Campus Enrolment

- 57 Work Experience students during the year so far.
- 17 RAP students so far

These numbers will increase in the second semester

### Summer School Off-Campus Enrolment

- 49 students (32 - Work Experience, 17 RAP)





There are varying types of job placements throughout the county and municipalities. (ie: mechanic shops, hair stylists, restaurants, grocery stores, landscaping, butcher shops, industries including Pembina, Dow, golf courses, hospitals, retail shops, family farms, oil change shops, and recreation centers)

## Connection with Careers The Next Generation

### Secondment

The Off-Campus Coordinator at Redwater School is on a 0.2 FTE, part-time secondment to Careers The Next Generation. Through this partnership, Sturgeon Public School Division (SPS) has access to training, communities of practice, and the Workforce Website - which contains placements for students posted by employers throughout the province. A student can register on the website and should a placement come up, then the school works in coordination with the Careers coordinator, and the student to ensure the student submits an application and is well suited for the position. Students compete for these jobs with other students from the region including Fort Saskatchewan and St. Albert.

## Dual Credit

Sturgeon Public Schools students can earn high school credits and post-secondary education credits while attending high school. The Division is excited to partner with Olds College, Lakeland College, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), Northern Lakes College, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and Norquest College for programming in the 2024-25 school year. The Division is offering Dual Credit courses where students can take part in live online instruction and/or self-paced learning with college instructors.

Taking a post-secondary course in high school gives students many advantages going forward in their educational journey. It gives students the confidence and motivation to transition from high school to post-secondary education. Dual Credit instruction gives students opportunities to try potential post-secondary programs with little or no risk in the familiarity of their high school. This helps in career development and life-long learning.

### Alberta Education Dual Credit Grants

There are two types of grants available for Dual credit funding.

1. Dual Credit Start Up Grant (program specific)  
2024-25 SPS received \$50,000 - this goes to pay tuition and facilitate implementation of new programming (Culinary Arts - SAIT). If not used in the first year, the remaining funds are carried over to continue growth in the program.
2. Dual Credit Enhancement Grant - purchase of new equipment or upgrade facilities to meet industry standards and better connect students to today's workforce.





2024-25 SPS received \$100,000 - a large portion to be used to enhance the Automotives shop at SCHS, as well as continue the Dual credit Welding 1000 program through NAIT, and support student tuition for courses within the current agreements.

## Successes with Dual Credit

### **Partnership with NAIT and Welding Cohort**

The first cohort began in February of the 2022-23 school year. The cohort has continued through this school year and the 5th group of students will start on February 4th. This will mean the program will have had 75 students thus far registered in the cohort.

### **Collaboration with Other School Divisions**

Through inquiries and connections made through Careers and community engagements, the Division has connected with two neighbouring school divisions (St. Albert Public and Elk Island Public) to broaden the course offerings for students in each division.

## Green Certification

SPS offers the Green Certificate program for students interested in agriculture business. Offered at the high school level, students can acquire the attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the agricultural sector. Students learn through actively participating under the direction of experienced farm personnel. Students may earn a level 1 (Technician) Green Certificate and up to 16 credits by completing a series of three courses in one of the following areas:

- Bee Keeper Production
- Cow-Calf Beef Production
- Dairy Production
- Equine Certificate
- Feedlot Beef Production
- Irrigated Field Crop Production
- Field Crop Production
- Greenhouse Production
- Sheep Production
- Swine Production

Enrolment: Last year, there were 4 students enrolled in Green Certificate. So far this year, there are five students enrolled in the Green Certificate Program. The off-campus team has been working on ways to entice students into enrolling. External testing takes place with this certificate. The Division is connected with Lakeland College which is assigned to the region for the testing. Most of the testing takes place in Westlock. Parents commit to ensuring transportation for this.

Students who are in 4-H can also register in the Green Certificate 4H Projects each fall.





The program is flexible and students can register at any time during the school year. There are ample opportunities for high school credit with this program and we will work to make it more accessible to students.

## Program Expansion and Partnership Growth

### Community Outreach Plan

The Division Principal is working to enhance and expand the Off-Campus program. This includes internships and apprenticeships. To ensure connections with local businesses and communities, they are engaged in attending Chamber of Commerce groups, and in seeking meetings with Mayors and municipality representatives. Past or planned meetings:

- September - St. Albert Chamber
- November 2024 February 2025 - meetings with the Town of Redwater, Sturgeon County, and regional businesses either directly or through career fairs.

### Off-Campus Program Expansion

#### **Building Futures Foundation of Alberta**

Building Futures Foundation of Alberta is a not-for-profit organization that works with schools and home builders to allow students to experience a variety of trades through the construction of a house from start to finish. Classes are set up in the garage for core subjects and students work in groups with tradespeople on site. Currently, the program is in operation in Rocky View School Division, Parkland School Division and St. Albert Public Schools.

Building Future Foundation of Alberta has been able to find a builder to partner up with Sturgeon Public Schools for this exciting venture. Recruitment for the program will start in January 2025 with the first cohort of students starting in September 2025. The plan is for 24 Sturgeon Public Students to be completing their Grade 10 school year on site while building a home.

## Summer School (2024)

Sturgeon Public Schools offers a robust summer school program each year. Students may choose to take courses during the summer for a variety of reasons, including to improve academic results, achieve needed credits toward graduation, or create room for other courses during the year. All courses are done through modules and Google Classroom, with students able to connect with teachers at Sturgeon Composite High School for support. An







exception to this is the Physical Education offerings, which are in-person and field trip-based.

### Student Enrolment

Year	Total Number
2023-2024	354
2022-2023	336
2021-2022	244

### Student Course Enrolment

Year	Total Number	Total Credits Earned
2023-2024	561	1416
2022-2023	499	1592
2021-2022	377	1252

## Sturgeon Learning Centres and Sturgeon Public Virtual Academy

### Learning Centres

Outreach Programs cater to students who may feel that traditional school offerings do not adequately address their requirements. Sturgeon Public Schools offers two Learning Center campuses offering Outreach programming, encouraging students to continue through school and earn their high school diploma. In addition to academic assistance, the Learning Centres deliver supplementary services including personal and career counselling, conflict resolution, anger management techniques, time management and study skills. These initiatives are aimed at ensuring a well-rounded and supportive environment for students to thrive academically and personally.

### Sturgeon Public Virtual Academy

Online learning offers a valuable option for many junior high students, providing various benefits such as access to a broader array of courses and the flexibility to learn at their own speed. It's essential for parents to recognize the distinctions between online and traditional face-to-face learning and to ensure that their children possess the necessary skills and tools for success before deciding on online education.



**Enrolment for 2024 - 2025**

SLC - 132 (Grade 8 - 1, Grade 9 - 2, Grade 10 - 11, Grade 11 - 23, Grade 12 - 95)

SPVA - 7 (Grade 8 - 3, Grade 9 - 4)

Home School - 19

**Concurrent Enrolment in Learning Centres**

Students who are in need of a course at Redwater High School or Sturgeon Composite High School can arrange to register at either learning centre. Students may require courses for varying reasons for example, the student did not complete the course successfully in the previous term or year, conflicts in scheduling, personal matters (away from school for medical reasons, bereavement, involved in a high level of sports). The enrolment in concurrent courses changes throughout the year. Current concurrent registration:

- Redwater
  - 12 students with a total of 14 course enrolments (13 unique courses)
- SCHS
  - 19 students with a total of 20 course enrolments (15 unique courses)

These numbers usually increase in the second semester

**Staffing Program Staffing**

1 Administrative Assistant  
0.8FTE Educational Assistant

3.75 Teachers  
0.3 Counselor  
1 Principal

**Successes**

The program focuses on establishing strong relationships with students, staff, and families as a foundation for success. Surveys consistently show that students experience a high sense of belonging, leading to reduced anxiety levels. The Division provides a valuable opportunity for adult students to complete high school courses, offering an alternative learning environment tailored to those facing challenges in traditional schools, including medical concerns, behavioural issues, mental health considerations, and demanding athletic schedules.

Staff undergoes continuous development, receiving training in Universal Design for Learning, and outcome-based reporting. The flexibility of programming allows for one-on-one meetings with students and parents at their convenience, though the team acknowledges the challenge posed by the significant ratio of students to staff. The Division takes pride in its adaptability, ensuring that the flexible programming meets students where they are in their academic journey.

**Challenges**

A significant hurdle is managing the number of courses assigned to each teacher, spanning both junior high and high school levels. Staff assignments become a complex task due to the fluctuating number of courses and students, requiring careful tracking of concurrent students and the handling of bulk submissions.



**Other Comments on Learning Centres:**

The Division proudly celebrates the achievements of graduates, recognizing the substantial impact of earning a high school diploma or certificate of high school achievement with Sturgeon Public Schools. While the graduation rates are modest, these milestones are significant for each individual.

The Learning Centres are the preferred choice for many high school students, offering a range of options, from the entire high school experience to specific grades or semesters. Sturgeon Public Schools provide a unique style of education in a safe and inclusive environment, accommodating diverse needs.

The Division understands the challenges some students face, such as those with sports commitments or adult learners looking to complete their high school education while working. Sturgeon Public's commitment is to create a positive and empowering learning environment, making a real difference in the lives of students.

