

questions & answers

The Future of the National Sport School

National Sports School

What are the options for the future of the National Sport School (NSS)?

Option A: NSS Students are re-located

NSS students are re-located and operate out of a CBE high school, strong consideration is being given to Bowness High School). The programming will focus on students continuing to access high-quality teaching and flexible learning opportunities.

Within this option many conditions for success will be in place, some of these include:

- All current NSS students would be accommodated within a single site. Students may or may not be in the same classes, based on individual course requests.
- Programming for students would include a blended and flexible approach, where an online learning environment would be accessible.
- Opens up opportunity for greater course selection within complementary courses.
- Flexibility and consideration of attendance for time away for sports commitments would be accommodated.
- Some NSS staff would move with students to the CBE high school.
- Establishing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for all NSS students within their new school would be important within this transition, including TA support.
- Students have an opportunity to participate in high school clubs and extra-curricular options.

Other important factors for Option A:

- NSS students would remain at the same high school together. This includes students in Grade 9 as well as students from other school boards and communities.
- When programs move within CBE, it is typical for school leaders and teachers to develop a careful transition plan based on student needs.
- Teachers from NSS who move to Bowness High School as part of Option A would be available to support understanding of accommodations the student athletes require.
- No yellow school bus transportation would be provided. All travel, including to and from the school and WinSport, would be the responsibility of the family.
- Athletic fees would be determined by WinSport.
- School fees are course dependent.



Option B: NSS Program Closure; Students Return to Their Designated School

Option B involves closing the National Sport School and students returning to their designated high school based on the community in which they live. With this option, students would attend the same classes as other students in the school. The larger school environment would offer students a larger selection of courses, clubs, extracurricular activities and sports.

CBE students would continue to receive the flexibility and attendance accommodations for sport commitments. Students would also continue to work with staff to develop programming and scheduling that works best for their situation including a combination of online and classroom learning.

Why is this decision being made? Isn't the program successful?

We recognize students at NSS have achieved academic and sports excellence, and that students and parents are strong advocates for the program.

The NSS serves a relatively small population of Grade 9 – 12 students. Operating in leased space at WinSport, the school requires a principal, an assistant principal, a learning leader, office staff and a large teaching staff complement relative to the number of enrolled students.

The CBE provides an annual budget top-up for this program that is the equivalent of four teaching staff beyond what the number of students enrolled in the program would typically be allocated.

The cost of maintaining this program as it exists is no longer affordable for the CBE. It also creates a sense of inequity across our system, as every school would appreciate additional teaching staff to support student learning.

This cost is not only limited to the lease. All programs with low student enrolment relative to the cost of offering the program are under consideration as we look to balance the CBE budget for next year and into the future.

Why did you not engage on the options?

The costs of operating the NSS program in its current location with current staffing levels are not sustainable into the future.

Although we had initially approached WinSport about renewing the lease for a year, the mid-year changes to the CBE's budget mean we needed to look to all cost-cutting measures to balance our system budget this year. The two options identified at the November 18 meeting are the only ways the CBE has available to reduce costs of the program to affordable and equitable levels.

Our choices were limited due to the timeline of the lease expiry, financial restrictions due to our October 2019 budget, and our legal requirements as they pertain to school and program closures.

The CBE Dialogue Framework, built using the standards developed by the International Association for Public Participation, describes expectations for engagement with stakeholders on decisions that impact them. In this situation, we are proceeding with a “Gather Input” level of engagement.

<https://cbe.ab.ca/get-involved/public-engagement/Documents/Dialogue-Framework.pdf>

Why is the NSS listed on the CBE’s System Student Accommodation Plan?

The NSS is one of many schools on the System Student Accommodation Plan (SSAP). Schools are on this plan for a variety of reasons, such as monitoring the impact of new school openings on enrolment, program changes, facility infrastructure investments and operating costs, community re-designations and possible grade configuration changes. It was never the intention to operate the NSS program out of leased space on a permanent basis.

What is the cost of the lease? Who pays for the lease? If least costs are waived, can the program remain at WinSport?

The cost of the lease is approximately \$108,000 per year. The lease is paid by the Calgary Board of Education to WinSport.

Even if the cost of the lease could be waived, this cost is only one of many factors that must be considered in the total cost of this program. Per student costs for the program, as it operates today, are significantly higher than it would cost to deliver the program at a different CBE high school location. Moving the program would save approximately \$1 million a year.

Currently the program is being staffed with a principal, an assistant principal, a learning leader and 10 teachers, as well as office and technology support staff. A typical high school with this number of students would be allocated 6 or 7 teachers. At NSS 4 additional teachers are being provided by CBE funds beyond the typical high school teacher allocation.

Can the lease costs be donated? Can we fundraise to pay for the school?

The CBE is a public school system, and in Alberta, public schools are funded by the provincial government. Relying on donations from parents for operations creates operational risks and does not account for the need for the CBE to have

long-term, sustainable and viable funding for a program. We always appreciate the support of parent societies in enhancing schools consistent with the CBE's Administrative Regulation; however predicating programming on donations is not likely to be feasible.

Where do the fees paid by NSS families go?

Fees paid by students attending the NSS are paid to Calgary Olympic Development Association ("WinSport")—not to CBE. The NSS website provides the following information: "The WinSport fees charged to support unique programming for NSS students include, but are not limited to covering some of the following expenses:

- Facility rentals (meeting spaces for school assemblies and meetings, BNTC gymnasium, High Performance Training Centre, high ropes course, arenas, mountain biking, etc.)
- Membership to Bob Niven Training Centre
- External contractors (CSI staff: trainers, nutritionists, sports medicine etc.; WinSport staff: yoga instructor, athletic trainers, etc.). This is a major value added service unique to NSS.
- PE/AD Programs Experts/Programs: lacrosse, dance etc.
- Full time sports performance consultant
- Equipment (gym equipment, branded clothing, etc.)
- Staffing support for administration (limited total)
- Communications and marketing
- Technology supporting distributed learning (laptops, server etc. for student use)
- Guest Speaker honorariums
- Extracurricular Club Activities (Leadership, GSA and other clubs)
- Some school field trips are subsidized and/or paid through this fee
- Portion of fees for Team Building at Camp Chief Hector
- Discounted fee for Performance Training Centre

What is the NSS budget?

The NSS budget includes approximately \$1.8 million dollars allocated to the school from the CBE budget. This includes the lease costs and operations and maintenance costs for the program.

What is required for the NSS to be self-sustaining or able to function at the same funding level as other schools?

A reduction in per student cost to deliver this program is required. This is why we are proposing the options of relocating the program to another CBE school or having current NSS students attend their designated school. This would allow

the staffing costs and operations costs to align with high school per student funding across the CBE.

How many students would be required to make NSS viable?

The NSS program is very expensive on a cost per student basis in its current location with current teacher staffing levels. Efficiencies can only be gained by moving the program from its current location to an existing high school where the program does not require the cost of a separate principal, assistant principal, office staff and additional teaching staff. Increase in student enrolment at a standalone location will not make the program financially viable or sustainable.

Is the CBE cutting all specialized programs? High cost and low enrolment?

Given current budget constraints and our economic climate, the CBE will be reviewing schools/programs operating with low enrolments and high per student costs.

There are several schools with fewer than 200 students, how does their cost compare to ours?

Schools with fewer than 200 students are just one factor to be considered when reviewing schools/programs. For instance, a small elementary school with 200 or fewer students may be financially viable in that the facility capacity of the school may only be 200-250 students, and it is located in a facility with limited operational costs so the per student cost is low. Typically, the small school principal would also have some teaching assignment, and there would be no assistant principal allocated to the school. There would not be 4 additional teachers provided to the school that NSS currently receives.

Implementation Questions related to Option A

What happens to NSS Staff with Option A?

In situations where programs are moved from one school location to another, it is typical for a number of staff members to move with students. The NSS staff who are required under Option A to be relocated to Bowness High School based on programming have the option to move to the new location. If the teacher is not required as a specific program requirement, then these teachers would be part of the CBE's spring staffing process and placed in another school accordingly.

What will happen to non-resident students?

In option A, non-resident students can move with the program to Bowness High School. In option B, non-resident CBE students would be expected to return to their designated schools in their school jurisdictions based on their residential address.

Athletics related absences are unexcused, how will this be accommodated?

CBE schools and teachers support students who are away from the classroom for various reasons, including pursuing excellence in sports or art, when they are ill for extended periods of time, or need to be away from the school for personal reasons.

Will key NSS support structures such as a TA for each student and a sport psychologist on site still be in place in Option A?

We have heard from staff, students and parents that they value the support of mental health services. This support for students would be considered within option A. As we look at staffing and allocating resources, this would be a priority. Fees from parents could be allocated to activities and enhanced programming supports similar to what is currently happening at the WinSport location.

The High Performance Athlete Development (HPAD) Pathway program at Bowness High School currently has a relationship with Canadian Sport Institute Calgary, as well as national and provincial sport organizations, where a fee is charged which allows similar supports for students.

[HPAD Pathway at Bowness High School](#)

TA supports, in a variety of formats, are provided to students across all CBE high schools. The student-staff relationship is a core value of a personalized high school learning experience.

Will Bowness teachers receive special training on how to accommodate athletes, or is it up to athletes and parents to negotiate?

Flexible programs are in place across CBE high schools. When programs move within CBE, it is typical for school leaders and teachers to develop a careful transition plan based on student needs. Teachers from NSS who move to Bowness as part of Option A would be available to support understanding of accommodations the student athletes require. As professionals, CBE staff work with diverse learners in a variety of contexts. The demands of a student athlete can be accommodated within our commitment to personalized learning.

How does a May 2020 decision date impact student registration at the receiving high school?

We will provide equitable access to course choices for current NSS students for the 2020-21 school year.

Can the CBE accommodate final exam dates with a lease expiry date of June 20, 2020?

All exam schedules and timetables would be reviewed to determine how best to accommodate student needs.

How are special needs/IPPs accommodated?

All CBE high schools work through a similar process of developing IPPs for students through communication with parents, students and teachers. Resources are then put in place to respond to identified student goals, strategies and next steps.

Class sizes at Bowness High School are really big compared to NSS, how will this be managed?

Class sizes are dependent on the course and level of support required. Within any given high school, there are opportunities for students to access resources and work in smaller groups.

Can the school operate in its own wing of Bowness High School, rather than be integrated?

A school-within-a-school (NSS program operating separately from other programs in the building) is not one of the two options, because this would not generate the required cost savings.

Why can't you provide transportation?

We will continue to work with our partners including Calgary Transit and the sport associations as well as review any CBE cost neutral solutions once we know the decision regarding options in the spring.