



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: June 29, 2015

From: Serena Lusk
Senior Manager, Recreation and Sport

File: 01-0155-02/2015-Vol 01

Re: **Discontinuance of Fee Paying Programs by Richmond School District**

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "Discontinuance of Fee Paying Programs by Richmond School District," dated June 29, 2015, from the Senior Manager, Recreation and Sport be received for information.

Serena Lusk
Senior Manager, Recreation and Sport
(604-233-3344)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Arts, Culture & Heritage Community Social Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

At the March 16, 2015, Closed General Purposes Committee meeting, staff received the following referral:

That the issues arising out of the upcoming Richmond School District Discontinuance of Fee Paying Programs be referred to staff for: (1) review and monitoring of potential impacts to the City of Richmond programs; (2) review and monitoring of potential impacts to the Richmond Public Library; (3) review and monitoring of potential impacts to the community; and (4) referral to City of Richmond Advisory Committees as necessary.

The purpose of this report is to respond to this referral by providing an update and additional information about the discontinuance of fee paying programs by the Richmond School District. As this issue has now been considered in open meetings of the Richmond Board of Education, the referral response can also be in an open meeting.

Analysis

Background

At the March 11, 2014, Closed Council/Board Liaison Committee meeting, School District 38 (SD38) staff shared information about an upcoming decision to discontinue providing fee-paying continuing education programs. SD38 staff shared the following information:

1. Fee-paying continuing education programs are ones that are not funded by some other source such as the Ministry of Education or the Federal Government.
2. Many school districts have discontinued offering fee-paying programs.
3. Fee-paying programs in SD38 have experienced a decrease in enrolment of 30 per cent over the past ten years.
4. Some of the reasons for this decline in enrolment may include the increased availability of personal interest programs online or through private service providers.
5. Fee-paying programs are not financially viable for SD38.

At its April 7, 2015, meeting, the Richmond Board of Education confirmed its decision to discontinue fee paying programs in two stages:

- June 2015 – Discontinuance of adult personal interest programs such as arts and crafts, computer, language and career preparation.
- June 2016 – Discontinuance of personal interest programs for children and youth, mandarin language programs and early childhood educator certificate.

Since that time, there has been some reconsideration of this decision and on May 19, 2015, the Board of Education decided to continue with the following programs:

1. Personal interest programs for children and youth; and
2. Mandarin Language Programs for school age students and some adults.

These programs will continue to be offered along with the following continuing education programs:

- Adult Secondary Completion (BC Ministry of Education funded program);
- Summer Learning (BC Ministry of Education funded program);
- Summer Camps (Fees charged, 4 week camps, 2 hours per day, typically enrolled by elementary students who are limited to one Summer Learning course (4 week course, 2 hours per day);
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (Federally funded program); and
- Online courses (Fee charged, personal interest, non-credit courses).

SD38 Continuing Education staff have met with City staff from Recreation, the library, and Arts, Culture & Heritage to review the programs being discontinued. Many of the personal interest programs being discontinued had low enrolment and thus low need or demand in the community. Others are ones which overlapped with programs already offered by other service providers including the library or community recreation. Given these circumstances, there is no viable business case for the City to undertake these programs.

SD38 staff have provided City staff contact information to instructors of discontinued programs in order to allow them the opportunity to see if there is a match for their services in current City programming.

Referral Response

In the context of the background information above, staff provide the following responses:

1. Review and monitoring of potential impacts to the City of Richmond programs – There has been no positive or negative impact to City of Richmond programs.
2. Review and monitoring of potential impacts to the Richmond Public Library – There has been no positive or negative impact to Richmond Public Library programs.
3. Review and monitoring of potential impacts to the community – No impact has been observed; in response to community concerns, the Richmond Board of Education altered the programs it was discontinuing such as Mandarin language programs and special interest programs; and
4. Referral to City of Richmond Advisory Committees as necessary – as there has been no observed impact to City programs or the community, no referral to advisory committees

is required. However, a copy of this report will be shared with the Richmond Public Library and the Child Care Advisory Committee for their information.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The Richmond Board of Education discontinued its adult special interest programs in June 2015 as these programs were declining in enrollment and no longer financially viable. There has been no observable impact of this decision on the community. The Board of Education's decision to continue with certain fee-paying programs such as Mandarin language programs was in response to the community and these programs will continue to meet a need in Richmond.



Serena Lusk
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