

## Consultation on Proposed Changes to Senior Years Programs and Graduation Requirements: Summary Report 2006

### **Spring 2005 Consultation**

In the spring of 2005, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth requested feedback from superintendents of education on three proposed changes to Senior Years programs that would better support the educational needs of students. The three proposed changes were:

- The elimination of the Senior Years Technology Education Program diploma.
- The institution of a new provincial Specialty Certificate for students achieving the minimum of 8 credits in a provincially approved technology education cluster.
- The institution of a Certificate of School Completion.

The results of the written responses received by the Department on these three proposed changes suggested that a more in-depth and broader consultation was warranted to provide the Department with comprehensive feedback from school divisions and partner organizations.

#### **Spring 2006 Consultation**

Technology Education Program diploma and the institution of a new provincial Specialty Certificate—would be part of the consultation process slated for April 2006. Added to these two questions was a third question resulting from the requirement for two new compulsory Physical Education and Health Education (PE/HE) credits at Grades 11 and 12 (S3 and S4). The Department requested input to determine whether graduation requirements for the provincial Senior Years diploma should remain at the present 28 credits or be increased to 30 credits.

School divisions and partner organizations were invited to attend one of three sessions held in Brandon (April 13), Winnipeg (April 20), and The Pas (April 26). They were encouraged to send representative teams of four members and provide written feedback as a team.

Representatives from the Department have since compiled this feedback and prepared a summary report outlining what was shared by the participants at these sessions. This summary report follows.

Readers will note that the frequency of responses for the question dealing with the number of credits required for graduation is greater than the frequency of responses for the elimination of the Senior Years Technology Education Program diploma and the institution of a new provincial Specialty Certificate. This reflects the fact that the issue dealing with the number of credits is of interest to all school divisions, whereas the other two issues only affect school divisions with a Technology Education Program.

# Eliminate Senior Years Technology Education Program Diploma

Program diploma was that the change would help counteract any perceived stigma of a lesser status attached to the SYTE Program diploma as compared to the English, Français, or French Immersion Program diplomas. In many instances, students meet the requirements for both the English and the SYTE Program diplomas. Participants were asked to indicate their preference on the question of the elimination of the SYTE diploma on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Results indicate that there is no clear consensus on the issue of eliminating the SYTE diploma, with 11 school division teams strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the proposal and 12 teams strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal. Below is a breakdown of the results:

Summary of Response Ratings n=34							
1 (strongly disagree)	5						
2	6						
3	2						
4	5						
5 (strongly agree)	7						
No answer, local decision, neutral or undecided	9						

Team Feedback Submitted on Summary Response Form	Frequency of Comment
Requirements for students to acquire a Grade 11 (S3) Social Studies credit and write the ELA standards test would be positive and attainable additions (many already do earn dual diploma).	12
Grade 11 (S3) Social Studies—additional hurdle?	9
Perception in some areas is that Technology Education diploma is an extra, not a lesser credential. Don't see stigma of a "lesser diploma." Is this notion outdated? There is merit in keeping the diploma.	7
Grade 11 (S3) Social Studies and Grades 11 and 12 (S3/S4) PE/HE requirements add 3 credits to diploma—leaves little choice for optional courses. Requirement for ELA standards test also narrows options.	5
Province should "beef up" credibility, promote and raise diploma's status.	5
Eliminate "two tier" system. Improve public and student perception of diploma.	5
Standards test on ELA—challenge for students?	4
Why "devalue" technology education in light of the Technical Vocational Initiative, labour market needs, etc.? (Diploma is an important gateway to educational and employment opportunities.)	3
Staffing issues for Grade 11 (S3) Social Studies.	3
What about post-secondary institutions—their reaction to elimination of SYTE diploma?	1

## **Institute a Provincial Specialty Certificate**

Participants were asked for feedback about instituting a provincial Specialty Certificate to recognize particular skills students would have acquired in technology education programs. Students who achieve the minimum of 8 credits in a provincially approved technology education cluster would be awarded a certificate that demonstrates their competence in a specialty area. Below is a breakdown of the results:

Summary of Response Ratings n=34								
1 (strongly disagree)	10							
2	3							
3	3							
4	4							
5 (strongly agree)	7							
No answer, local decision, neutral or undecided	7							

Team Feedback Submitted on Summary Response Form	Frequency of Comment
Recognition for specializing in a cluster of technology education courses (8+ credits) or in areas other than technology education should also be considered.	10
Will such a certificate be seen as an alternative to a diploma? Encourage a "quick exit?" It would be a poor substitute for a diploma.	8
Community/industry/post-secondary education/parental recognition Will groups distinguish between a certificate and a diploma?	6
Certificate could benefit those who do not graduate.	5
Indicate the specialty earned by student on his/her provincial diploma rather than issue a new or accompanying certificate.	5
Should be a local decision or initiative.	4
Transcripts remain the documents that reflect results and courses of study.	2
Credibility in the workplace/consistency in programming will have to happen for this certificate to be meaningful.	2

# Maintain the Present 28 Credits or Adopt a 30 Credit Graduation Requirement

School divisions and partner organizations were asked to indicate their preference between remaining at 28 credits for graduation or adopting a 30 credit graduation requirement. From the comments that were shared on the response forms, it is clear that the issue of Grades 11 and 12 (S3 and S4) PE/HE credits was still at the centre of discussions and greatly influenced the feedback provided. While it is difficult to separate the issues, many questions were raised and different viewpoints were expressed around the impacts. Participants from school divisions and partner organizations indicated their preference, as summarized below:

Summary of Response Ratings n=34							
Remain at 28 credits	10						
Adopt a 30 credit graduation requirement	13						
Undecided, divided, need information or not indicated	10						
Proposal of 29 credits	1						

Team Feedback Submitted on Summary Response Form	Frequency of Comment
In both a 28 or 30 credit scenario, adding two compulsory PE/HE credits would have various impacts:	
• Staffing (including availability of qualified PE/HE teachers—need to clarify the scope of the instructional day).	32
Available infrastructure, equipment, and resources in the school or community.	24
<ul> <li>Scheduling and timetabling for programming in:         <ul> <li>Technology Education</li> <li>Français and French Immersion (minimum of 29 credits, some schools well beyond this number because of local requirements)</li> <li>International Baccalaureate (example: 36 credits presently in Français and French Immersion Programs; 2 more credits in PE/HE overwhelming)</li> <li>Work experience</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	22
• Financial.	21
<ul> <li>Could increase school transportation costs (depending on requirements of PE/HE curriculum).</li> </ul>	8
Moving to 30 credits gives struggling students an added obstacle or challenge to graduation.	24
A 28 credit scenario would restrict optional course choice.	18
Equity for special needs; disadvantaged; ethnic and cultural considerations; access issues (rural/urban, small/large schools), etc.	14
Assessment issues and issues related to supervision of students if activities are outside school.	13
Liability/security issues for off-site activities/issues related to governance and responsibility.	10

Will the new Grade 12 (S4) PE/HE credits be considered for admission at post-secondary education institutions?	9
Is there evidence or research that this approach will have an impact on health/fitness? Are there baseline data to compare with future results?	8
Many students already graduate with 30 or more credits.	8
Two new compulsory credits go against increasing choice and flexibility.	5
Consulting on addition of PE/HE credits was a crucial step that was missed—consultations still needed to address all issues related to PE/HE.	4
Impact on student employment and/or work education opportunities.	4
Parental support in delivery of PE/HE credits?	4
Difficult choice (28 vs. 30) until it is clear what the curriculum for the two additional PE/HE credits looks like.	4
Proliferation of medical exemptions (PE/HE) and substitution of credits will occur.	3
PE/HE in Grades 11 and 12 (S3/S4) will have much less impact than it would with students at younger ages or family-centred activities.	3
Grades 11 and 12 (S3/S4) PE/HE credits could promote health/fitness.	3
A course credit presently is 110 hours of instructional time. Will there be impacts? Changes to the length of the school day?	2
Would 29 credits be considered?—advantages: flexibility, electives, resource allocation	2