



Memorandum

Date: March 6, 2020
To: Board of Education
From: Education and Student Services Committee
Action Item: **Proposal for Substantive Change - Equine Learning Academy
(Rutland Senior Secondary School)**

1.0 ISSUE STATEMENT

A substantive change proposal for an Equine Learning Academy at Rutland Senior Secondary School has been developed for approval by the Board of Education.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The 2004 Graduation Program Order authorizes Boards of Education to offer locally relevant courses and academies to meet the needs of schools and their communities, while providing choice and flexibility for students.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

The Equine Learning Academy is open to students in Grades 10-12 and provides learners with the opportunity to develop life skills, employment skills, relationship building skills and communication skills through an experiential approach to working with horses. This unique academy proposal at Rutland Senior Secondary supports the development of increased skills of empathy, resilience, and confidence and enables students to follow a passion and pursue learning while developing healthy lifestyle habits for life.

Courses offered in the Academy include:

- Equine Learning 12 (pending Board of Education approval)
- BAA Resiliency 11
- Independent Directed Studies (IDS) 12 – Equine Learning

4.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This new opportunity was presented at the Rutland Senior Secondary Parent Advisory Council Meeting held on January 21st, 2020. The parents present at this meeting strongly endorsed the offering of this academy at Rutland Senior Secondary School.

5.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

- a) Approve the Proposal for Substantive Change - Equine Learning Academy (Rutland Senior Secondary School).
- b) Amend the Proposal for Substantive Change - Equine Learning Academy (Rutland Senior Secondary School).
- c) Request additional information on the Proposal for Substantive Change - Equine Learning Academy (Rutland Senior Secondary School).

6.0 NEXT STEPS

If the Board of Education approves the substantive change proposal, registration will open for students to enroll in the Equine Learning Academy for January of 2021 at Rutland Senior Secondary School.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT: The Board of Education approve the Proposal for Substantive Change – Equine Learning Academy (Rutland Senior Secondary School) as attached to the Agenda, and as presented at the March 11, 2020 Public Board of Education Meeting.

8.0 APPENDIX

A. Proposal for Substantive Change – Equine Learning Academy (Rutland Senior Secondary School)



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

Together We Learn

PROPOSAL FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

December 5, 2019

Rutland Senior Secondary School

Equine Learning Academy

Rutland Senior Secondary



Voodoos

Rutland Senior School Planning Council

Chris Tayler – PAC President

Teresa Banka – PAC Vice President

Kim Ito – PAC Member

Angela Kendall - Teacher

Hugh Alexander – Principal

VISION:

Students in Grades 10-12 will work in the classroom and with horses in unmounted sessions, to improve their own personal development, employment and life skills. This is not mounted instruction. Horses are unique because they provide amazing accurate feedback for youth that enhances learning and growth and the building block learning model helps effectively guide youth through lessons in an experiential learning environment. Along with the skills learned in the lessons, other additional advantages to the program are the development of enhanced empathy, resilience, confidence, empowerment and improved emotional stability.

COURSES OFFERED IN ACADEMY

Equine Learning 12

The Equine Learning course will be added to the Academy upon receiving Board Authority Authorization.

Equine Learning 12

BAA Resiliency 11

Independent Directed Studies (IDS) 12 – Equine Learning

The goal of the Equine Learning Academy is to help provide **life skills, employment skills, relationship-building skills, communication skills**, increased empathy, and resilience, reduce anxiety and increase self-confidence for high school students in SD#23. By focusing on these skills and using hands on, interactive activities with the animals, students will **reduce anxiety** and **increase self-confidence**, allowing them to be more **successful and confident** moving forward in their educational careers within SD23 and all future post-secondary endeavors. Equine learning is an innovative form of experiential learning – where students develop new insight and learn new skills via relational experiences with horses. This academy will be offered in semester two with Resiliency 11 and Independent Studies embedded in the program. Through an Independent Directed Studies structure, students are empowered to extend their learning by developing personal goals for learning associated with the Equine Course.

RATIONALE:

At Rutland Senior Secondary School, staff endeavor to provide an opportunity for students to participate in learning opportunities that foster active living to help promote their own personal well-being. Equine Learning is a learner established educational, experiential program facilitated within a group format and focuses on ground activities rather than horseback riding. More specifically, Equine Learning is a hands-on course, which promotes individual and/or group growth. Participants participate in objectively driven exercises/activities with the animals and find themselves learning valuable life skills in a fun, safe and exciting atmosphere. Equine Learning has been developed to be beneficial, strong, positive, educational, and creative. An Equine Learning program highlights a curriculum of 12 weeks of contact with the horses and includes 15 + exercises of facilitating life skills through positively augmented interaction with horses. The remainder of the course is classroom and community based for a total of 120 hours.

The animals' role is to speak to the student through their bodies to help bring about the changes the students need to make. Exercises are developed to encourage self-confidence through validated, hands-on experiences. Students are permitted to find answers to their own lives and move forward with newly acquired skills. Equine Learning functions uniquely because in this situation, the horses are the teachers.

Target audience – All students in Grades 10-12 including students with anxiety, students who need to build self-confidence those needing life skills, and coping mechanisms for stressful situations. This opportunity reaches across all students who may have an interest in learning more about themselves and/or horses. This opportunity can open the door for future careers working in the horse industry and in helping others.

Core Competencies - A course like this touches ALL aspects of the new core competencies, including communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, social responsibility, personal and cultural self-identity, personal awareness and responsibility.

SUMMARY

The following outlines a proposal for a substantive change with the addition of an Equine Learning Academy at Rutland Senior Secondary School. This program is intended to provide students with an opportunity to experience the unique learning opportunity that experiential learning through horses offers.

When students are able to pursue their personal interests, it can provide:

- improved self-confidence, resilience, empathy and self esteem
- higher academic achievement
- improved leadership and employment skills
- increased connection to the school
- a sense of responsibility to the community

The addition of an Equine Academy will provide our students with:

- a valuable set of life and employment skills
- an opportunity to develop their own confidence, communication and relationship building skills.
- an understanding of the value of animals as teachers

The addition of the Equine Learning Academy will benefit our students by providing more choice to focus on their own personal well-being and enjoy the benefits of an active outdoor lifestyle, improving their physical well-being also. It will also benefit the community by encouraging students to care for their personal well-being. Helping students develop themselves into healthy, strong individuals will foster a stronger, productive and healthier community.

OPERATIONS

Students will enroll in the Equine Learning Academy Program as an elective course. A minimum of 20 students will be required to offer the program with one block of teaching time allocated per semester. To ensure a high quality program, a qualified Equine Assisted Learning Facilitator and a classroom teacher will provide instruction for the program. Participants in the Equine Learning Academy will receive instruction and learning both on and off the school campus with instruction provided during the school day. Students will enroll in the Equine Learning Academy as they would for a regular elective class. Rutland Senior Secondary is able to accommodate the Equine Learning Academy within the existing facility and require no upgrades for implementation.

Instruction for the Equine Learning Academy will be provided in an experience, reflect, analyze, and apply format. As students will have varied skill levels, the teaching professionals will differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each learner.

All non-school district personnel involved in this program will be required to obtain a criminal record check.

EXPECTATIONS

The following benefits are expected because of implementing the Equine Learning Academy:

1. improved school climate as a result of meeting the needs of individual learners
2. improved attendance as a result of enhancing connections between students and their school
3. increased number of students involved in 'active living' through healthy choices
4. increased level of community involvement as volunteers, instructors, and role models
5. increased parent involvement and parent satisfaction with the variety of courses offered

IMPACT ANALYSIS

All students enrolling in the Equine Learning Academy will be attending Rutland Senior Secondary School during the 2020/21 school year as a full time RSS student, or a cross-enrolled student from another Central Okanagan Public Schools secondary school. The program will be open to any student in grades 10 through 12. A minimum of 20 participants will be required per section.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (approximate)

Expenditures for Equine Learning Academy:

Huckleberry Hollow Horse Co. (20 students x \$45/session x 12 sessions)	\$10,800
Transportation via school bus (12 trips)	\$ 1,800
Ancillary costs (clothing, journals and workbooks)	\$ 1,400

Total Expenditures \$14,000

Revenue - 20 students x \$700 per participant

Total Revenue \$14,000

The Equine Learning Academy is an equity-based program and will provide access to students who cannot meet the costs of the program. Families will be made aware of the District's Policy and Procedure 'Regulation - 425R Student Fees Regulations Section 8 - Financial Hardship' at parent information meetings and in the Rutland Senior Secondary School Course Selection Handbook. Any future increase in fee structure will need to be forwarded to the Board of Education for approval.

CONSULTATION/PROMOTION

Rutland Senior Secondary School has put considerable time and effort towards consultation with teacher Angela Kendall from Rutland Senior Secondary and Mary Anderson from Huckleberry Hollow Horse Co, in an effort to provide a unique program geared towards students who want to pursue their own personal well-being and personal growth through an Equine Learning Academy.

The Equine Learning Academy proposal was discussed at the January 21st, 2020 Rutland Senior Secondary Parent Advisory Council meeting. The Parent Advisory Council supports the Equine Learning Academy and supports the Academy beginning in January of 2021 at Rutland Senior Secondary School, pending Board of Education approval. The Equine Learning Academy will be promoted through parent information evenings, and the Course Selection Handbook, once approved by the Board of Education. Information will also be included on the school's website and in the school newsletter.

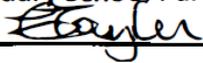
EVALUATION

The success and continuation of the program will be reviewed annually based on the following:

- a) feedback from staff, participants, parents and community
- b) enrollment within the Academy
- c) the impact of cost / expenses for the program
- d) the number of students who pursue volunteering, work, and participation in the equine community as a result of their experience in the program

CONSULTATION

The Equine Learning Academy was discussed and unanimously endorsed at the Jan 21, 2020, Rutland Secondary School Parent Advisory Council meeting. Approval from the PAC was received at that meeting.



_____, Rutland Senior Secondary, Parent Advisory Council

Chris Tayler