



Memorandum

Date: March 6, 2020
To: Board of Education
From: Education and Student Services Committee
Action Item: **Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Course Proposal – Equine Learning 12**

1.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

A new Board/Authority Authorized Course - Equine Learning 12 has been developed for approval by the Board of Education.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education's updated Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) course policy and procedures came into effect July 1, 2018. The new BAA requirements reflect the new graduation program.

3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

The Equine Learning 12 course, open to students in Grades 10-12, 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 course supports the development of increased skills of empathy, resilience, and confidence. Taking Equine Learning 12 enables students to follow a passion and pursue learning while developing healthy lifestyle habits for life.

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 course at Rutland Senior Secondary School.

5.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

- a) Approve the new BAA Equine Learning 12 course as presented.
- b) Amend the proposed BAA Equine Learning 12 course.
- c) Request additional information on the proposed BAA Equine Learning 12 course.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

If the Board of Education approves the proposed BAA Equine Learning 12 course, schools wishing to offer the BAA Equine Learning 12 course in the 2020/2021 school year must follow the 2018 Graduation Program Board/Authority Authorized Courses: Requirements and Procedures.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT: The Board of Education approve the Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Course Proposal – Equine Learning 12 (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. Board/Authority Authorized Course Equine Learning 12



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**
Together We Learn

Board/Authority Authorized Course Equine Learning 12

School District/Independent School Authority Name: Central Okanagan Public Schools	School District/Independent School Authority Number (e.g. SD43, Authority #432): SD#23
Developed by: Angela Kendall	Date Developed: December 2, 2019
School Name: Rutland Senior Secondary	Principal's Name: Mr. Hugh Alexander
Superintendent Approval Date (for School Districts only):	Superintendent Signature (for School Districts only):
Board/Authority Approval Date:	Board/Authority Chair Signature:
Course Name: RSS Equine Learning	Grade Level of Course: Grade 12
Number of Course Credits: 4	Number of Hours of Instruction: 120

Board/Authority Prerequisite(s): n/a

Special Training, Facilities or Equipment Required:

Equine Learning 12 requires a classroom within a secondary school coupled with land-based learning at a local Equine Learning facility. A supervising teacher and certified equine learning facilitator is also needed for this course.

Course Synopsis: Students will work on their own personal development, employment and life skills through learning activities with the horses at the equine center. This is not mounted instruction. Equine learning includes basic background knowledge about horses including, safety protocols and procedures, grooming, leading, parts of the horse, veterinary care, and equipment and tack. Horses also provide feedback for youth that enhances learning and growth. The building block learning model helps effectively guide youth through lessons in an engaging experiential learning environment. Along with the skills learned in the lessons, other additional advantages to the program are enhanced empathy, resilience, confidence, empowerment and improved emotional stability.

Goals and Rationale:

Equine Learning 12 is an innovative and unique form of experiential learning, where students develop new insight and learn new skills via relational experiences with horses. The goal of the Equine Learning 12 course 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. 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 current educational studies and future post-secondary endeavors.

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. Students participate in objectively driven exercises/activities with the animals and find themselves learning valuable life skills in an outdoor atmosphere. Equine Learning is useful, 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' job is speaking to the student through their bodies to help bring about the changes the students need to make. The activities and 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 the horses are the teachers.

Target audience - Students with anxiety, students who need to build self-confidence, those needing life skills, coping mechanisms for stressful situations, resources students, ADD/ADHD students, and autistic students. 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, positive personal and cultural self-identity, personal awareness and responsibility. For example, students will use skills and processes to ask questions, gather, interpret and analyze situations and issues with the horses and course facilitators. Students will communicate findings and decisions through conversations, journaling and observation of their activities with the animals. Students will assess and compare their previous self-knowledge with their present self after a session with the horses, analyze the continuities and changes in their skill sets, build relationship skills and communication skills, listen actively in a variety of situations, practice empathy with humans and animals and practice effective communication skills, with the horses, teachers and course facilitators. Students will also explain how the horses in the program help guide their learning. They will develop conflict resolution awareness and skills with the horses, practice critical thinking and decision-making skills, and conduct themselves with empathy, maturity and responsibility.

Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives:

The First Peoples Principles of Learning are woven explicitly throughout the fabric of this course.

Declaration of Indigenous Principle of Learning:

- The learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors. Through the developing relationship with the horses, students create connection to the land and increase their own well-being. This supports the development of self in support of connecting with others.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational because of the hands on nature of this experience and learning.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge through learning and understanding the relationship with horses.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history and story. Students relate equine history and connect to their own lives.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity and personal identity development through their relationships with the horses. This program involves learning from mentors (horses and humans).

Declaration of Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives:

- The First Peoples Principles of Learning are inherent in the aspects included in Equine Assisted Learning. These are inseparable from connectedness and relationships; specifically:
 - Community involvement (process and protocols)
 - The power of story
 - Experiential learning
 - Flexibility
 - Leadership and teamwork
 - A positive learner centered approach
 - The role of teacher (leader) and students (learner)

BIG IDEAS

Self Confidence is key to personal development and takes time to build, foster and improve.

Resiliency is a foundational skill for life and must be taught, developed and practiced in order to be effective.

Strong Life and Employment Skills are developed over time and must be updated and improved upon. Leadership and teamwork are the building blocks.

Healthy Relationship Building is a skill that must be developed, practiced and continually revisited in order for healthy skills to be practiced successfully.

Good Communication is a critical skill that must be taught and practiced. It is at the forefront of human and animal interaction.

Learning Standards

Curricular Competencies	Content
<p><i>Students are expected to do the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use skills and processes to ask questions, gather, interpret and analyze situations and issues Communicate findings and decisions Assess and compare their previous self-knowledge with their present self Analyze the continuities and changes in their skill sets, relationship skills and communication skills Listen actively in a variety of situations Practice empathy with humans and animals Practice effective communication skills Explain how the horses in the program help guide their learning Conflict resolution awareness Practice critical thinking and decision making skills Conduct themselves with empathy, maturity and responsibility 	<p><i>Students are expected to know the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic anatomy of the horse Basic horse handling skills and how to conduct themselves safely around horses Understand basic body language and communication with the horses Basic grooming, feeding and veterinary care of the horses and occasionally other farm animals Understand their own personality, self-awareness (personality testing) How to increase and improve their own confidence and self esteem How to navigate interpersonal relationships with increased confidence Have a practical skill set that will help with team building and leadership skills How to access and develop the skills in reading body language and posture of both human and equine partners

Big Ideas – Elaborations

1. **Self Confidence** is key to personal development and takes time to build, foster and improve. Working with horses develops this naturally. Students can see the progression of their learning as they learn more and move through the course.
2. **Resiliency** is a foundational skill for life and must be taught, developed and practiced in order to be effective. Working with animals, in particularly horses, teaches students to observe, learn and try again. (Horses forgive mistakes easily and help us learn how to rebound from failure on a daily basis.)
3. **Life and Employment Skills** are developed over time, and must be continually updated, and improved upon in order to grow. Leadership and teamwork are the building blocks of this skill set. This course will provide students with the opportunity to develop practical skills through experiential learning, team building and leadership roles. Students will learn to communicate effectively and problem solve through challenging situations. Students will develop their sense of work ethic and empathy, learning responsibility for other people and animals.
4. **Healthy Relationship Building** is a skill that must be taught, developed and continually revisited in order for healthy skills to be practiced successfully. Drawing boundaries, developing empathy and understanding of body language and horse psychology are examples. Parallels between human-to-horse and human-to-human relationships will be explored to achieve course objectives.
5. **Communication** is a critical life skill that must be taught and practiced. It is at the forefront of healthy human and animal interaction. Practice of basic communication skills with the horses is a unique way to develop skills that will follow students through their lifetime. (For example, we place an emphasis on the roll that body language plays in communication. Horses communicate through body language. Through group activities, there will be optimal opportunity for all students to practice active communication skills.)

Curricular Competencies – Elaborations

1. **Communication** – Students practice relationship building with horses, develop empathy, sympathy, compassion, communication skills effectively and organically. Reading the **body language** of the horses amplifies these skills and their development.
2. **Creative and Critical Thinking** – Students develop creative and critical thinking skills as the students use problem solving, leadership, reading body language, and team work to accomplish tasks and reach goals with the horses.
 - a) **Creative thinking** – Students are continually creating and innovating, generating and incubating ideas and questions, evaluating and developing their thinking. Students must think "outside the box" to be successful in some challenges with the horses.
 - b) **Critical and Reflective thinking** – Students practice analyzing, critiquing, questioning, investigating, developing, reflecting, and assessing their thinking skills. Students will see development of their abilities through their work with the horses.
3. **Social Responsibilities** – Students practice and learn about the care of animals. These skills have the potential to translate later to family members and friends. Students show responsibility to care for others, to maintain balance in their own life and the environment around them. They develop awareness of sustainability, ethics, and resource management. Students examine the moral belief where we as individuals have a responsibility toward society and not just our own well-being. Being socially responsible is about all **individuals behaving ethically and sensitively towards social, economic and environmental issues.**
4. **Positive Personal and Cultural Self Identity** – Students are able to develop their own personal courage, self-care, and self-awareness. Students will learn to work through their insecurities and experience success through the **experiential learning with the horses.** Challenges that students work through with the horses will help them understand the importance of courage and self-care and self-awareness. Students are able to develop their understanding of relationships, cultural contexts, personal values and choices, identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
5. **Personal Awareness and Responsibility** – Horses are excellent teachers and help students become **self-advocating, self-regulating** and improve their **overall well-being.** Students who are personally aware and responsible have a sense of self-worth and a growing confidence in a variety of situations. They value themselves, their ideas, and their accomplishments. They are able to express their needs and seek help when needed, find purpose and motivation, act on decisions and advocate for themselves.

Content – Elaborations

Classroom Sessions

Students will gain knowledge and understanding about:

Basic Horsemanship and handling skills

- Basic background knowledge about horses
- Basic safety protocols and procedures
- Basic grooming, leading, parts of the horse
- Basic veterinary care
- Knowledge of basic horse equipment and tack

Personal self-awareness and well-being

- Personality tests
- Self reflection
- Personal self development, self confidence, reduce anxiety, increased empathy, resilience, empowerment and emotional stability
- Development of practical life skills (i.e: communication and relationship building)

Equine Assisted Learning Sessions:

1. Orientation - Objective: **Understanding the teachers** (the horses)
Students learn about the horses, how to work around them. Safety guidelines are comprehensive and enforced.
2. Starting the Journey - Objective: **Building Relationships**
Students practice creating a relationship and building trust with the horses.
3. Circuit Training - Objective: **Skill Development**
Students will work on increasing and developing their horsemanship skills and handling a horse safely, including listening and practicing how to safely approach horses.
4. Push Me Pull You – Objective: **Communication**
Students practice communicating with the horses through a variety of obstacles and activities.
5. Common Sense - Objective: **Problem Solving**
Students work through a series of problems with the horses to develop their problem solving skills.
6. Silent Communication - Objective: **Body Language**
Students learn, "How do we speak without using our voice?"
7. Red Light Green Light - Objective: **Focus**
Students will work through a course simulating road hazards found in every day life and they will be challenged to follow the rules of the road. Their horses become their vehicles, which they had to navigate through roadway obstacles as a team.

Content – Elaborations

8. Match that Horse - Objective: **Negotiation**
Students learn how to work with the horse to achieve a common goal.
9. It's All Up To You - Objective: **Choices**
Students learn to make choices for themselves and with the horses to achieve a goal.
10. Horse in the Pocket – Objective: **Leadership**
This exercise is about working together as a team using leadership skills, plan formulation and communication.
11. Building your own course – Objective: **Team Building and Leadership**
Students will be challenged to work together to construct and deliver an Equine learning exercise; this team building project encourages discovering the increased effectiveness teams experience when they value and utilize each member's strengths.

Recommended Instructional Components:

- Direct instruction
- Demonstrations
- Modelling
- Simulations
- Student in role
- Peer teaching
- Experiential learning
- Reflective writing

Recommended Assessment Components:

- Daily Self-Assessment
- Self-Reflection and assessment
- Daily work ethic self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Quizzes
- Oral presentations
- Research assignment

Learning Resources for classroom:

BC, Horse. "HCBC Basic Horse Care Booklet". *Issuu*, 2019, https://issuu.com/hcbcmarketing/docs/bhcb_-_online_edition. Accessed 2 Dec 2019.

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Academic research and supporting literature for Equine Learning

Bravehorse.ca, 2019, <http://bravehorse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Helping-Horse.pdf>. Accessed 4 Dec 2019.

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"Equine Connection | Home - Equine Connection". *Equineconnection.ca*, 2019, <https://www.equineconnection.ca/>. Accessed 4 Dec 2019.

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Hannah Louise Burgon (2011) 'Queen of the world': experiences of 'at-risk' young people participating in equine-assisted learning/therapy, *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 25:02, 165-183, DOI: [10.1080/02650533.2011.561304](https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2011.561304)

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<https://www.robinrisso.org/New%20age%20or%20old%20sage%20A%20review%20of%20equine%20assisted%20psychotherapy.pdf>.

Accessed 4 Dec 2019.

"The First Dance". *Integrative Horsemanship*, 2019, https://integrativehorsemanship.wordpress.com/2019/05/13/the-first-dance/?fbclid=IwAR0niPv6zy_SVR47q-Erbdyx1wSVhyFX1gio0gDixV0kSNhiqUaFol7TQVU. Accessed 4 Dec 2019.