

Policy 15 - School Closure or Program Reduction

The Board recognizes that from time to time, due to changes in enrollment, demographic changes, or fiscal constraints, it may be necessary to modify the programs offered in a school or schools under its jurisdiction.

Specifically

1. The authority of the Board is derived from and must comply with the *Education Act*, which provides that the Board may:
 - 1.1. Close a school, or
 - 1.2. Transfer students from one school building to another school building.
2. The Board may review school programs and school operations to determine the future of such schools when:
 - 2.1. The Board believes such a review will improve the availability of programs or efficiency of operations;
 - 2.2. The school and community determine enrolments and consequent funding threaten the viability of the school program;
 - 2.3. Operating/maintenance/renovation/transportation costs place excessive demands on the Division's budget; or
 - 2.4. Recommended by the Superintendent.
3. Where considering the closure of a school the Board shall consider the following criteria:
 - 3.1 The educational impact on students in the school;
 - 3.2 The enrolment of the school and programs within the school;
 - 3.3 The population and demographic data;
 - 3.4 The amount and cost of excess space in the school;
 - 3.5 The cost to staff and operate the educational program at the school;
 - 3.6 The cost to maintain the facility in operable condition or to restore the facility to operable condition;
 - 3.7 The location and accessibility of the school and its proximity to, and impact on, other schools;

- 3.8 The necessity to safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, and public;
 - 3.9 The need to consolidate or relocate existing programs;
 - 3.10 The impact of closing the school on the community, taking into account existing or proposed development plans;
 - 3.11 Transportation routes and costs;
 - 3.12 Capital plan;
 - 3.13 Costs associated with the transition; and
 - 3.14 Other relevant factors.
4. Where the Board is considering a closure, there shall be a notice of motion at a regular meeting of the Board, proposing that specific schools, a school or a portion of a school, be closed.
5. There will be effective communication to the parent(s) of students attending the school and the electors in the attendance area of a school being considered for closure:
- 5.1. The Board shall communicate information and implications of the possible school closure, in writing, to the parent(s) of every child and student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the Board, will be significantly affected by the closure of the school. Such communication shall set out the following:
 - 5.1.1 How the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 5.1.2 How the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 5.1.3 Information on the Board's long-range capital plan;
 - 5.1.4 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - 5.1.5 The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 5.1.6 The program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 5.1.7 The educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - 5.1.8 The educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - 5.1.9 The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure;
 - 5.1.10 The possible uses of the school building or space in the school building if:
 - 5.1.10.1 The entire school is being closed; or
 - 5.1.10.2 Three (3) or more consecutive grades in the school are being closed entirely
 - 5.1.11 The time and location of the public meeting referred to in clause 5.2.1
 - 5.2. Where the Board is considering the closure of a school, the Board:
 - 5.2.1 Shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing:
 - 5.2.1.1 The closure and the implications of the closure for the students, for the community and for the school system;

- 5.2.1.2 Implementation plans for the closure; and
 - 5.2.1.3 Alternatives to the closure.
 - 5.2.2 Shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located to provide a statement to the Board of the impact the closure may have on the community, and
 - 5.2.3 May hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the Board may determine
 - 5.3. The date and time of the public meeting referred to in clause 5.2.1 shall be:
 - 5.3.1 Posted in five (5) or more conspicuous places in the area of areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the public meeting; and
 - 5.3.2 Advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area of areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least two (2) occasions as close to as is practicable to the date of the meeting.
 - 5.4. At least two (2) trustees of the Board shall attend the public meeting referred to in clause 5.2.1.
 - 5.5. The Board will ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.
 - 5.6. Following the meeting referred to in clause 5.2.1, there shall be a minimum of three (3) weeks for electors to present to the Board further responses, including preferred alternatives, to the possible closure.
 - 5.7. The Board shall give due consideration to any submission on the proposed closure that it received after the public meeting referred to in clause 5.2.1.
 - 5.8. The final debate by the Board and the vote upon the resolution shall occur only after clauses 5.1 through 5.7 have been completed.
6. If the decision of the Board is to close the school:
- 6.1. The Board shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
 - 6.2. The Board shall identify alternative uses for the school or dispose of the property in accordance with section 192 of the Education Act.

Reference: Section 33, 51, 52, 53, 62, 192, 222, 248, 249 Education Act
Petitions and Public Notices Regulation

Effective: April 20, 2011
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