



POLICY 15 SCHOOL CLOSURES

Approved: 2024 11 14

BACKGROUND

The Board recognizes that the facility planning processes are designed to ensure the provision of well maintained and highly utilized school facilities that effectively accommodate student learning needs. Changes in enrolment, shifts in demographics, or fiscal constraints, may necessitate a closure of a school under its jurisdiction. When considering the possible closure of a school, the Board will engage with parents, staff and the broader community.

GUIDELINES

1. The authority of the Board is derived from and must comply with section 62 of the Education Act and the Disposition of Property Regulation, which provides that a board may, only by resolution, permanently or temporarily:
 - 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 determines 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 the Board is considering the closure of a school, or transfer of students from one school building to another school building, the Board shall:
 - 3.1. notify in writing the parents of every student enrolled in the school that may be affected; and
 - 3.2. notify in writing any other person, municipality or community organization who may be significantly affected.
4. For the purpose of school closure only, the Board shall:
 - 4.1. provide adequate opportunity for the public to respond to the Board's proposal to close the school;
 - 4.2. establish a process for the Board to consider public feedback;

- 4.3. consider future growth or decline in student enrolment;
- 4.4. consider possible alternative educational or community uses for all or part of the school building; and
- 4.5. request of administration a report which shall be presented at a public board meeting which sets out the following:
 - 4.5.1. how the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 4.5.2. how the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 4.5.3. information on the Board's long-range capital plan;
 - 4.5.4. the number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - 4.5.5. the need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 4.5.6. program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 4.5.7. the educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications; and
 - 4.5.8. the educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open.
5. The Board shall use the following process and criteria to determine whether it has use for a school building that has been closed:
 - 5.1. The Board shall direct the administration to prepare a recommendation report that shall contain the following contents:
 - 5.1.1. a review of demographic factors relating to the school in context of the overall Division;
 - 5.1.2. the length of time that the school building has been closed;
 - 5.1.3. consideration of the potential for other levels of government or private entities to take ownership and operate the building for the public good; and
 - 5.1.4. any other criteria or issues that the administration considers relevant to the Board's decision.
6. When, in the opinion of the Minister, space is available in a school building, the Minister may direct the Board to make space available to another board.
7. The Board shall use the following process and criteria to determine, for the purposes of the Municipal Government Act, whether its interest in school reserve, municipal and school reserve, or municipal reserve is surplus to the Boards needs:

- 7.1. The Board shall direct the administration to prepare a recommendation report that shall contain the following contents:
- 7.1.1. review of enrolment trends within the area intended to be served by the school reserve, municipal and school reserve or municipal reserve;
 - 7.1.2. consideration of student accommodation and transportation issues;
 - 7.1.3. whether a school on the school reserve, municipal and school reserve or municipal reserve is included in the Board's capital plan;
 - 7.1.4. the length of time the school reserve, municipal and school reserve or municipal reserve has existed and has not been needed by the Board;
 - 7.1.5. a summary of the consultation, if any, with other boards with respect to their needs for the school reserve, municipal and school reserve or municipal reserve; and
 - 7.1.6. any other criteria or issues that the administration considers relevant to the Board's decision.

Legal Reference:

- Section 11, 33, 53, 62, 192, 194, 222, 248, 249 Education Act