

SCHOOL CLOSURES

The Board believes that the students of the Division must have the opportunity to receive educational programs that are characterized by excellence, equity, and efficiency. In achieving this objective it may be necessary to close a school or a portion of a school's educational program for operational and/or financial reasons.

The Board also believes that an orderly and fair process must be in place to provide the Board appropriate information prior to any decision being made.

Specifically

1. The Board may:
 - 1.1. Close a school permanently, or for a specified period of time;
 - 1.2. Close entirely three (3) or more consecutive grades in a school; or
 - 1.3. Transfer students from one (1) school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent or temporary basis.

2. Review
 - 2.1. Prior to December 1 of each year, the Superintendent will bring to the Board for information the school(s), if any, for which a viability review will be undertaken to determine if further action needs to be taken on the matter of possible closure, or the nature of the educational program.
 - 2.1.1. Generally, the need for a viability study will be based on enrollment.
 - 2.1.2. The viability review shall be provided to the Board by the end of January of the following year.

3. The Board recognizes that there are certain critical factors that must be met by a school in order to exist as a viable educational institution:
 - 2.1 Program factors;
 - 2.2 Enrolment factors; and
 - 2.3 Revenue factors.

4. The Board will undertake any school closure in compliance with section 62 of the Education Act.
 - 4.1. The following criteria shall be utilized in considering the closure of a school:
 - 4.1.1. Student enrolment and trends;

- 4.1.2. Location and suitability of alternative school accommodation for the students affected;
- 4.1.3. Program implications for students currently in the schools to which a transfer of students could be affected and the implications for those students who could be transferred;
- 4.1.4. Program implications for other schools to which students could be transferred;
- 4.1.5. Transportation needs of all students potentially affected and the implications on both a local and Division basis;
- 4.1.6. Factors related to the school building which include but are not limited to:
 - 4.1.6.1. The age and expected life of the building;
 - 4.1.6.2. Building modernization requirements; and
 - 4.1.6.3. Education program needs.
- 4.1.7. The educational and financial impact of closure and non-closure which will include, but is not limited to, on both a local and a Division basis:
 - 4.1.7.1. The effect upon operational costs; and,
 - 4.1.7.2. Capital implications.
- 4.1.8. The capital needs of the school or the schools which may experience increased enrollments as a result of a transfer of students.
- 4.2. 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 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. 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 4.2
- 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 4.2 shall be:

- 5.3.1. Posted in five (5) or more conspicuous places in the area or 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 or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least two (2) occasions as close 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 4.2.
- 5.5. The Board will ensure that the minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.
- 5.6. Following the meeting referred to in clause 4.2, 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 submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting referred to in clause 4.2.1.
- 5.8. The final debate by the Board and the vote upon the resolution shall occur only after clauses 4.1 through 4.7 have been completed.
6. The Board may extend the school closure procedures beyond one school year.
7. If the decision of the Board is to close the school:
 - 7.1. The Board shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
 - 7.2. The Board shall identify alternative uses for the school or dispose of the property in accordance with section 192 of the Education Act.

Legal Reference: Section 11, 33, 53, 62, 192, 194, 222, 248, 249 Education Act
Disposition of Property Regulation