

**POLICY 15**

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**SCHOOL CLOSURE**

The Board's facility planning processes are designed to ensure the provision of well maintained and highly utilized school facilities that effectively accommodate student-learning needs. A variety of facility planning considerations may necessitate the closure or reconfiguration of a school.

This policy is designed to ensure Division compliance with the requirements of the Education Act on school closure.

**Definitions**

Closure means to close a school permanently or for a specified period of time; close entirely three (3) or more consecutive grades in a school; or transfer all students from one (1) school building to one (1) or more other school buildings on a permanent basis.

Reconfiguration means the addition or removal of one (1) or more grades to or from a school.

**Specifically****1. Facility Planning Principles**

Three principles guide the Division's facility planning processes:

- 1.1 All Division students are to have reasonable access to quality educational programs and services;
- 1.2 School facilities are to be well maintained and highly utilized; and
- 1.3 Bus ride times are to be as reasonable as possible.

**2. School Closure/Reconfiguration Factors**

One (1) or more of the following consideration factors may lead the Superintendent to submit a school closure/reconfiguration proposal to the Board.

- 2.1 Increasing enrolments;
- 2.2 Decreasing enrolments;
- 2.3 Continuing low enrolments in a school or within grades in a school;
- 2.4 Enhancing the effectiveness of program delivery;

- 2.5 Improving school facility utilization;
- 2.6 Improving cost effectiveness; and
- 2.7 Threats to health and/or safety.

A proposal for school closure or reconfiguration may also be initiated at the request of the Board.

### 3. School Closure/Reconfiguration Proposal

A school closure/reconfiguration proposal prepared by the Superintendent shall include the following:

- 3.1 The consideration factors precipitating the proposed school closure or reconfiguration;
- 3.2 How the reconfiguration or closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
- 3.3 How the reconfiguration or closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
- 3.4 Information on the Board's long-range capital plan;
- 3.5 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure or reconfiguration;
- 3.6 The need for, and extent of, busing;
- 3.7 Program implications for other schools for the students when they are attending other schools;
- 3.8 The educational and financial impact of closing or reconfiguring the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
- 3.9 The educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open, or, if the reconfiguration were not to occur;
- 3.10 The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure or reconfiguration; and
- 3.11 Possible uses of the school building or space if the entire school is being closed, or three (3) or more consecutive grades in the school are being closed entirely.

### 4. Notice of Motion – Proposed School Closure/Reconfiguration

In the event that the Board decides to proceed with the proposed school closure or reconfiguration process following its review of the Superintendent's school closure/reconfiguration proposal, the matter shall be raised by way of a Notice of Motion made at a regular meeting of the Board.

The Notice of Motion signals the beginning of the Division's public consultation process. No decision with respect to the school closure or reconfiguration will be made until the completion of the procedures outlined in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this policy and at least twelve (12) weeks have passed since the date of this Notice of Motion.

The Notice of Motion shall include:

- 4.1 The school and grades affected by the proposed school closure or reconfiguration; and
- 4.2 The date upon which the Board plans to vote on the motion to close or reconfigure the school.

## 5. Notification of Proposed School Closure/Reconfiguration

Where a Notice of Motion is tabled to consider the closure or reconfiguration of a school, the Board shall, in writing, notify the parents of every student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the Board, will be significantly affected by the closure or reconfiguration.

This written parental notification shall provide the following information:

- 5.1 The school closure/reconfiguration proposal prepared by the Superintendent pursuant to section 4 of this policy;
- 5.2 The date, time, format and location of the public meeting organized and convened by the Board for the purpose of discussing the information provided to the parents in the school closure/reconfiguration proposal; and
- 5.3 The date upon which the Board plans to vote on the motion to close or reconfigure the school.

## 6. Public Meeting – Proposed School Closure/Reconfiguration

Where a Notice of Motion is tabled to consider the closure or reconfiguration of a school, the Board shall:

- 6.1 Organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the information provided to the parents in the school closure/reconfiguration proposal;
- 6.2 Post the time and place of the public meeting in five (5) or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure or reconfiguration for a period of at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the public meeting;
- 6.3 Advertise the time and place of the public meeting in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure or reconfiguration, on at least two (2) occasions as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting;
- 6.4 Ensure that at least two (2) Trustees shall be in attendance at the meeting;

- 6.5 Ensure that the minutes of the public meeting are prepared;
  - 6.6 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 or reconfiguration may have on the community; and
  - 6.7 Establish a date, by which written submissions relating to the proposed school closure or reconfiguration will be received for consideration following the meeting.
7. Following the public meeting referred to in section 6, there shall be a minimum period of three (3) weeks for electors to present to the Board further responses, including preferred alternatives, to the possible closure.
    - 7.1 The Board shall give due consideration to any submissions on the proposed closure subsequent to the public meeting referenced in section 6.
    - 7.2 The final debate by the Board and the vote upon the resolution shall only occur after all aspects of sections 6 and 7 have been completed.
  8. The Board may extend the school closure discussions beyond one school year.
  9. If the decision by the Board is to close the school:
    - 9.1 The Board shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
    - 9.2 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 33, 51, 52, 53, 62, 192, 194, 222, 248, 249 Education Act  
Disposition of Property Regulation 86/2019  
Petition and Public Notices Regulation 91/2019