

# Policy 13

## SCHOOL CLOSURE

The Board understands the important role a school plays in the community. It also recognizes its responsibility in effectively accommodating and supporting student learning needs and programming and providing well-maintained and well-utilized school facilities. Consequently, the Board may consider the closure of one (1) or more schools.

In this case, the Division's facility planning processes and expertise in education guides the development of a school closure report to be tabled with the Board, including recommendations that necessitate the Board's consideration of the closure of one (1) or more schools.

When considering the possible closure of one (1) of more schools, the Board will consult and communicate with the parents and the broader community, as outlined in the [Education Act](#). A *School Closure Report* would require a school attendance area review as per Policy 14 - *Reconfiguration* and Administrative Procedure 305 - *School Attendance Areas*. These will occur concurrently.

### Specifically

In accordance with the Education Act, the Board may, only by resolution, close one (1) of more schools, permanently or temporarily.

1. Board decisions regarding the school closure will be determined by one (1) or more of the following governance responsibilities:
  - 1.1. Student Learning and Programming
  - 1.2. Stewardship of System Resources
  - 1.3. Staff and Student Health and Safety
2. These governance responsibilities will consider one (1) or more of the following:
  - 2.1. Consideration of future growth or decline in student enrolment;
  - 2.2. Trends and/or projections for enrolment in a school or within grades in a school;
  - 2.3. Feasibility of programming;
  - 2.4. Improving school facility utilization;
  - 2.5. Fiscal accountability, sustainability, and efficiency;
  - 2.6. Health and/or safety concerns;
  - 2.7. Community considerations.

## **School Closure Report**

The Superintendent may be requested to prepare a *School Closure Report* by the Board through a motion at a regular meeting of the Board. Alternatively, the Superintendent may bring forward a *School Closure Report* for the Board's consideration.

3. A *School Closure Report* prepared by the Superintendent shall include the following:
  - 3.1. Factors precipitating the proposed school closure;
  - 3.2. Consideration of future growth or decline in student enrolment;
    - 3.2.1. Effect on enrolment and attendance area of other impacted schools;
    - 3.2.2. Number of students to be relocated to another school or schools;
  - 3.3. Program implications for each impacted school;
  - 3.4. Effect on the Board's long-range capital plan;
  - 3.5. Transportation factors including ride times;
  - 3.6. Effect on system operations, specifically, comparing a school closure to a school remaining open (system level and school level);
  - 3.7. Consideration of possible alternative educational or community uses for all or part of the school building;
  - 3.8. A community engagement and consultation process and timeline.

Whether initiated by the Board or brought forward by the Superintendent, the *School Closure Report* will be received by the Board through a Notice of Motion at a regular meeting of the Board.

## **Notice of Motion – Proposed School Closure**

In the event that the Board decides to proceed with the proposed school closure following its review of the Superintendent's *School Closure Report*, 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 on the closure of one (1) or more schools.

No decision with respect to the proposed school closure will be made until the completion of the procedures outlined in sections 4, 5 and 6 of this policy and at least twelve (12) weeks have passed since the date of this Notice of Motion.

4. The Notice of Motion shall include:
  - 4.1. The school(s) affected by the proposed school closure;
  - 4.2. The date upon which the Board plans to vote on the motion, no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year in which the change is proposed to take place.

### **Notification of Proposed School Closure**

A proposed school closure will require a school attendance area review as per Policy 14 - *Reconfiguration* and Administrative Procedure 305 - *School Attendance Areas*.

Where a Notice of Motion is tabled to consider the proposed school(s) closure, the Board shall, in writing, notify the parents of every student enrolled in the school(s) and/or any affected school, and other person, municipality, or community organization, who, in the opinion of the Board, will be significantly affected by the closure.

5. The Notification shall provide the following information:

- 5.1. The *School Closure Report* prepared by the Superintendent pursuant to section 3 of this policy;
- 5.2. The community engagement and consultation timeline: the date, time, format and location of the public meeting(s) organized and convened by the Board for the purpose of discussing the information provided to the parents/guardians in the *School Closure Report*;
- 5.3. The date upon which the Board plans to vote on the motion.

### **Public Meeting(s) – Proposed School Closure**

6. Where a Notice of Motion is tabled to consider the closure of a school(s), the Board shall:

- 6.1. Organize and convene a public meeting(s) where the *School Closure Report* is presented by the Superintendent or designate;
- 6.2. Prioritize attending the meeting(s) with a minimum of three (3) trustees attending;
- 6.3. Ensure that minutes of the public meeting(s) are prepared;
- 6.4. 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;
- 6.5. Establish a date by which formal written submissions relating to the proposed school closure(s) will be received for its consideration;
- 6.6. Consider the meeting minutes and the formal written submissions related to the proposed school closure(s) that it receives throughout the engagement and consultation process.

### **Board Decision on Proposed School Closure**

The Board shall, by resolution, decide whether to proceed with school closure(s).

If the decision of the Board is to close the school the Board shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.

All school closure procedures shall be initiated and completed no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year in which the change is proposed to take place. The Board may extend the school closure procedures beyond one school year.

Legal Reference: Relevant Legislation & Guidelines