

SCHOOL CLOSURE/GRADE DISCONTINUANCE

The Board believes that circumstances may arise that make it necessary to examine the viability and appropriateness of the continued operation of a school or selected grade levels within a school.

It is the intent of the Board to ensure that consideration of closure and the closure process complies in all respects with the *Education Act*, as amended from time to time.

Specifically

1. The Board may
 - 1.1 Close a school permanently or for a specified period of time;
 - 1.2 Discontinue one or more grades or years taught in a school;
2. The Board shall consider closure of a school when any one or more of the following conditions exists:
 - 2.1 In the opinion of the Director, student enrolment numbers in a school do not allow for programming which is effective and efficient, and which provides value for money spent;
 - 2.2 Enrolment projections indicate the possibility that future enrolment numbers in the school may not allow for programming which is effective and efficient, and which provides value for money spent;
 - 2.3 The cost of keeping the school in operable condition or restoring it to operable condition is deemed by the Board to be unreasonably high;
 - 2.4 Keeping the school open is deemed by the Board to pose a threat to the health or welfare of students, staff, or the public; or
 - 2.5 The fiscal health of the Division, in the opinion of the Board, can be significantly improved by making more efficient use of school space in the provision of programming.
3. After receiving information from the Director that conditions outlined in procedure 2 apply to a school, the Board at a regular meeting, shall provide details of the specific school or portion of the school that it has identified as a possible candidate for closure.
4. Once the Board has identified a school or portion thereof as a possible candidate for closure, it shall require the Director to prepare a facility viability report which shall address:
 - 4.1 How the closure or grade discontinuance would affect the attendance area defined for that school;

- 4.2 How the closure or grade discontinuance would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 4.3 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure or grade discontinuance;
 - 4.4 The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 4.5 Program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 4.6 The educational and financial impact of closing the school or discontinuing the grades, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - 4.7 The educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - 4.8 The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure or grade discontinuance;
 - 4.9 The proposed use of the school building, if the entire school is to be closed.
5. The Board will require the Director and/or designate(s) to consult the School Community Council prior to the completion of the facility viability report. The Director must determine whether there is consent by the School Community Council for the possible Board action.
 6. The Board will review the facility viability report and will use the information it contains to decide whether to proceed to formally consider the potential closure.
 7. Should the Board decide to pursue formal consideration of closure or grade discontinuance, a notice of motion of this intention will be made at a regular meeting of the Board.
 8. Following the notice of motion, the Board will communicate, in writing, to the parent of every child in the school the fact and the implications of the notice of motion. This communication shall address all of the items specified in procedure 4 above and the time and location of the public meeting referred to in procedure 9 below. Each of the items from procedure 4 will be specifically addressed under individual headings for each item.
 9. Where the Board is considering closure of a school or discontinuance of grades or year taught in a school, the Board
 - 9.1 shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing:
 - 9.1.1 The closure or discontinuance and implications of the closure or discontinuance for the students, for the community and for the school system;
 - 9.1.2 Implementation plans for the closure or discontinuance; and
 - 9.1.3 Alternatives to the closure or discontinuance.
 - 9.2 May hold other meetings with respect to the closure or discontinuance at times and places as the Board may determine.
 10. The date and place of the public meeting referred to in procedure 9 shall be

- 10.1 Posted in five or more widely-separated conspicuous places in the area the school affected by the proposed closure or discontinuance, for a period of at least ten days before the date of the public meeting;
 - 10.2 Posted in the Division office; and
 - 10.3 Advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area affected by the proposed closure or discontinuance, on at least one occasion, as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting.
11. The Board shall ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this policy are prepared.
 12. The Board shall give due consideration to any submissions on the proposed closure or discontinuance that it receives after the public meeting referred to in procedure 9. Submissions made against the proposed closure or discontinuance are to include preferred alternatives. Further, to the extent reasonably possible, the Board will facilitate persons making such submissions an opportunity to meet with the Board to present their response, and to discuss issues or ask questions of the Board.
 13. The Board shall not make a final decision on the proposed closure or discontinuance until at least three (3) months have passed since the date of the public meeting referred to in procedure 9.
 14. The Board shall, by resolution, decide whether to close the school.
 15. The Board's debate and vote on the Notice of Motion shall take place only after all procedures in this policy have been completed, and must occur at least three (3) months prior to the effective date of the closure or discontinuance. The effective date must occur during the summer break.
 16. In the event that the School Community Council has expressed consent for the possible Board action, the timeline outlined in procedure 13 may be shortened.

Legal Reference: Section 85, 87, 347 Education Act