

CLOSURE OF SCHOOL

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. This policy does not include emergency situations: for example, inclement weather, flooding, or wildfire situations. Please see AP 132, *Emergency Closure of Schools and/or School Bus Transportation* for information regarding short-term school closures.

Changing programs within a school, such as grade configurations, and the courses available to students within the school, is an operational decision that lies within the purview of the school principal, as per Section 197 of the *Education Act*, and supported by AP 105, *Site-Based Decision Making*.

In terms of the Closure of School, as per the *Education Act*, Section 62:

- (1) A board may, only by resolution, permanently or temporarily:
 - (a) close a school, or
 - (b) transfer students from one school building to another school building.
- (2) A board shall establish, implement, and make publicly available policies respecting the actions referred to in subsection (1).
- (3) A policy established pursuant to subsection (2) must be consistent with any regulations made by the Minister under this section.
- (4) Where a board is considering an action referred to in subsection (1), the board shall, in writing, notify:
 - (a) the parents of every student enrolled in the school that may be affected by the action considered under subsection (1), and
 - (b) any other person, municipality, or community organization who, in the opinion of the board, may be significantly affected.
- (5) A policy established pursuant to subsection (2) related to the permanent closure of a school must provide for:
 - (a) adequate opportunity for the public to respond to the board's proposal to permanently close a school,
 - (b) a process by which the board shall fairly consider responses provided under clause (a),
 - (c) consideration of future growth or decline in student enrolment, and
 - (d) consideration of possible alternative educational or community uses for all or part of the school building.
- (6) Where a board decides to close a school permanently, the board shall notify the Minister in writing forthwith and include:
 - (a) the name of the school, and
 - (b) the effective date of the closure.
- (7) This section does not apply where the Minister directs a board to dispose of a school building pursuant to Section 192.
- (8) The Minister may make regulations with respect to the permanent or temporary closure of schools by a board.

Specifically

1. The Board will undertake any school closure in compliance with Section 62 of the *Education Act* and provide for the following:
 - 1.1 Public feedback will be collected via online surveys, focus groups, and in-person community engagement events.
 - 1.2 The public's response to the board's proposal will be fairly considered ensuring a range of perspectives are included; the board will consider both immediate, mid-range, and long-range implications to the proposed action.
2. Information relevant to Board for the proposed action will include the following:
 - 2.1 Current and historical enrolment data;
 - 2.2 Budget implications of low student enrolment;
 - 2.3 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:
 - 2.3.1 The effect upon operational costs; and,
 - 2.3.2 Capital implications such as, but not limited to:
 - 2.3.2.1 The age and expected life of the building;
 - 2.3.2.2 Building modernization requirements; and,
 - 2.3.2.3 Educational program needs.
 - 2.3.3 Options to address the students impacted by the proposal, including:
 - 2.3.3.1 Location(s) and suitability of alternative school accommodation for the students affected;
 - 2.3.3.2 Implications for those students who could be transferred;
 - 2.3.4 Program implications for the schools to which students could be transferred;
 - 2.3.5 The capital needs of the school or the schools which may experience increased enrolments as a result of a transfer of students.
3. Transportation needs of all students potentially affected and the implications on both a local and Division basis.
4. 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.
 - 4.1 The Board will 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 will set out the following:
 - 4.1.1 How the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 4.1.2 How the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 4.1.3 Information on the Board's long-range capital plan;
 - 4.1.4 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - 4.1.5 The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 4.1.6 Program implications for other schools;
 - 4.1.7 The educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;

- 4.1.8 The educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open.
- 4.1.9 The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure;
- 4.1.10 The possible uses of the school building or space.

5. Where a Board is to close the school permanently:

- 5.1 The Board will forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
- 5.2 The Board will 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

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