
Policy 14

SCHOOL CLOSURE

At times, the Board may consider permanent closure of schools.

Closing a school permanently means the closing, for a period exceeding twelve (12) months, of a school building used for the purposes of providing an educational program to students. The Board may decide to permanently close a school, following a school closure public consultation process, and must provide written notification to the Minister of Education.

The Board shall provide a public consultation process with respect to the permanent closure of a school prior to the Board making its final decision with respect to the closure of that school.

Following the consultation process, the Board will make a decision on the possible closure of the school.

Specifically

1. Senior Management may recommend to the Board at a public meeting consideration of schools for closure. Any such recommendation will also be communicated to the affected school communities.

Senior Management, in making a recommendation for consideration for closure may assess factors such as (some of which may not be applicable to a specific closure consideration):

- 1.1 Program offerings;
 - 1.2 Space available in nearby schools;
 - 1.3 Distances between schools
 - 1.4 Traffic and travel patterns and safety of access for students being relocated;
 - 1.5 Current and projected enrolment levels;
 - 1.6 Class size;
 - 1.7 Funding formula considerations;
 - 1.8 Age of the building, physical plant maintenance and operating costs of the facility, including the need for seismic upgrades;
 - 1.9 Potential re-uses of school facilities and sites;
 - 1.10 Other factors that may be applicable in the circumstances.
2. The Board will consider the information provided by the Superintendent and either:
 - 2.1 Conclude that no action or further study is required, or
 - 2.2 Forward the information to the Facilities Planning Committee.

3. The Facilities Planning Committee shall review the materials and provide its recommendations to the Board.
 4. The Board will review the recommendations from the Facilities Planning Committee and either
 - 4.1 Conclude that no action or further study is required, or
 - 4.2 Initiate a public consultation process by passing a motion at a public meeting of the Board.
 5. The Superintendent will notify the Principal(s) and the Parent Advisory Council(s) in writing that the school has been identified for possible closure. The Board will notify the school community and the public about the school closure public consultation process through various means including parent newsletters and information posted on the District website.
 6. The Board shall allow a period of at least sixty (60) days for public consultation process to take place.
 7. The Board shall take the following steps to ensure that public consultation will take place:
 - 7.1 Make available, in writing, the rationale for the proposed school closure considered by the Board, including, but not limited to information with respect to the following factors:
 - 7.1.1 The number of students who would be affected, at both the school to be closed and surrounding schools;
 - 7.1.2 Enrolment trends and utilization for the school and surrounding area;
 - 7.1.3 Availability of space at receiving schools;
 - 7.1.4 Proximity to possible receiving schools and the routes to schools;
 - 7.1.5 Financial considerations including anticipated cost savings;
 - 7.1.6 Facility age and condition;
 - 7.1.7 District Choice and Special Education programs offered at the school;
 - 7.1.8 Impacts on surrounding schools;
 - 7.1.9 Impacts on community users operating in the schools offered at the school.
 8. Once a school closure public consultation process has been initiated, at least one (1) public consultation meeting will be held to discuss the proposed closure.
 9. The time and location of the school closure public consultation meeting(s) shall be advertised to notify the community at least 14 days in advance. This may include signage at the school, written notification to parents/guardians of students currently attending and registered to attend the school, notices to neighbouring schools, Parent Advisory Councils, employee groups and information posted on the District website and to social media.
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10. The Board shall present the following at the beginning of the public meeting:
 - 10.1 Rationale for the proposed closure, including, but not limited to the pertinent facts and information related to the factors identified within the policy;
 - 10.2 The timing of the proposed closure and the implications for the placement of students;
 - 10.3 Possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.

11. Notes will be kept of the public meeting to record concerns or options raised regarding the proposed closure. Following the public meeting(s), the Board will give consideration to all input prior to making its final decision with respect to the school closure.
 - 11.1 The Board shall provide an opportunity for written responses to the Board regarding the proposed school closure. The Board will provide information and directions on how to submit the written responses. Written submissions will be summarized and will be acknowledged as received.

12. The final decision on a school closure will be made through the first, second, and third and final reading of a School Closure Bylaw at a public Board meeting. Following a decision to close a school, the Board will provide, without delay, written notification to the Minister of Education of its decision containing the following information:
 - 12.1 The school's name,
 - 12.2 The school's facility number,
 - 12.3 The school's address, and
 - 12.4 The date on which the school will permanently close.

13. Alternate use of a closed facility will be determined by the Board after receiving a recommendation from the Superintendent.

Legal Reference: Sections 73, 85, School Act
 School Opening and Closure Order M194/08
 Disposal of Land or Improvement Order M 193/08

Adopted: Sept 24, 2018