

310: SCHOOL CLOSURE/RECONFIGURATION (P)

Approved: 87 03 24
Amended: 14 11 25

POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that it has a responsibility to its community for the effective and efficient operation of schools within the district. The Board realizes that from time to time it may be necessary to consider individual schools for changes in grade configurations and/or permanent closure.

The Board's final decisions will be based upon the collection and analysis of relevant data which would support such major changes should reconfigurations and/or permanent closures be considered. In each case a process will be developed which provides for public discussion, including consultation with parents, students and staff and the community in accordance with the regulations associated with this policy.

REGULATIONS

1.0 PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

If the Board intends to consider a motion which proposes a closure or reconfiguration of any district school, pursuant to the School Closure/Reconfiguration Policy, it shall serve first notice of such intent at a regular open meeting of the Board.

2.0 CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERING SCHOOL CLOSURE(S)/RECONFIGURATION(S)

A school may be considered for closure/reconfiguration for educational, fiscal or demographic reasons such as declining enrolment if there is sufficient space to accommodate the students in neighboring schools or a replacement school has been built.

The following factors should also be considered:

- i) enrolment projections are to include persons less than school age and adults, as well as school age enrollment;
- ii) potential enrollment of 3-5 year olds and space requirements for their possible programs;
- iii) the operating cost per student;
- iv) the condition of the facility and the need for capital expenditures to keep the building operational;

- v) the limitations of the facility that restrict appropriate education programming;
- vi) best practice with respect to school grade configurations;
- vii) impact on students, programs and communities;
- viii) possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.

3.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The process of consultation for school closure(s)/reconfiguration(s) shall require at least 60 calendar days commencing from the time when the Board provides public notice as to which specific schools are being considered.
- 3.2 Public consultation will be undertaken by the Board prior to making a final decision on any proposed school closure and/or reconfiguration, and will provide an opportunity for those who will be affected by a proposed closure/reconfiguration to participate in the process. Those to be notified must include parents, students, staff, local governments, local First Nations, community organizations and any group which it is known would be interested in using space at the school.
- 3.3 At least one public meeting will be held to discuss the proposed closure/reconfiguration preferably at or close to the site(s) to be affected prior to the final decision being made by the Board.
- 3.4 The Board will make available, in writing, an accounting of all information considered by the Board with respect to the proposed closure/reconfiguration, including:
 - i) detailed reasons for the proposed closure/reconfiguration;
 - ii) specific school(s) being considered;
 - iii) how the proposed closure/reconfiguration would affect the current catchment area for each school in the district;
 - iv) the number of students who would be affected at both the closed/reconfigured school(s) and surrounding schools;
 - v) the effect of proposed closure(s) on board provided student transportation;
 - vi) educational program/course implications for the affected students;
 - vii) the proposed effective dates of the closure(s)/reconfiguration(s);
 - viii) financial considerations;
 - ix) impact on the board's five-year capital plan;
 - x) proposed use of the closed school(s).
- 3.5 The Board should create records of all consultations, including agenda, minutes, dates of consultations, copies of information provided at meetings, names of

trustees/district staff, who attended consultations, names of members of the public who attended consultations, records of questions asked and a record of transition plans/activities identified for students and staff at any schools considered for closure and/or reconfiguration.

4.0 PUBLIC MEETING

- 4.1 The time and place of any public meeting should be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notice to affected persons in the community. Generally, this will include a letter to students and parents of students currently attending the school(s) and a clearly visible notice in a local newspaper or appropriate media outlet.
- 4.2 The Board should also specifically notify, in writing, any potentially affected local governments, First Nations, business associations or community associations of the time and place of the public meeting.
- 4.3 Discussion at the public meeting should include the following:
 - i) implications of the closure(s)/reconfiguration(s);
 - ii) implementation plans, including timing of the closure(s)/reconfiguration(s);
 - iii) options that the Board considered as alternatives to closure(s)/reconfiguration(s);
 - iv) possible future community growth predictions in the area of the school(s);
 - v) contents of written submissions presented to the Board by members of the community.
- 4.4 The Board should keep minutes of the public meeting to include a record of concerns or options raised to the proposal(s).
- 4.5 Prior to the end of the public meeting the Board should indicate when and where it intends to have its final public discussion regarding the proposed closure(s)/reconfiguration(s).
- 4.6 A decision on the issue should be made by bylaw, in public, by the Board at the final meeting.

Legal References:

School Act-Sections 22, 65, 73, 85, 96 &100
Ombudsman Act – Section 23
School Opening and Closure Order – September 2008