

## SCHOOL CLOSURE AND PROGRAM REDUCTION

### Background

The Board of Trustees recognizes that due to changes in enrolment, shifts in demographics or fiscal constraints, it may be necessary to close a school or modify the programs offered in a school or schools under its jurisdiction.

### Guidelines

#### 1. School closures and program reductions: Specifics

- 1.1. The authority of the Board is derived from and must comply with Section 62 of the *Education Act* and the Disposition of Property Regulation, which provides that a board may, only by resolution, permanently or temporarily:
  - 1.1.1. close a school; or
  - 1.1.2. transfer students from one school building to another school building.
- 1.2. The Board may review school programs and school operations to determine the future of such schools when:
  - 1.2.1. the Board believes such a review will improve the availability of programs or the efficiency of operations;
  - 1.2.2. the school determines enrolments and consequent funding threaten the viability of the school program;
  - 1.2.3. operating, maintenance, renovation or transportation costs place excessive demands on the Division's budget; or
  - 1.2.4. recommended by the Superintendent.
- 1.3. Where the Board is considering the closure of a school or transfer of students from one school building to another school building, the Board shall:
  - 1.3.1. notify in writing the parents and guardians of every student enrolled in the school that may be affected; and
  - 1.3.2. notify in writing any other person, municipality or community organization who may be significantly affected.

#### 2. School closure

For the purpose of school closure only, the Board shall:

- 2.1. Provide adequate opportunity for the public to respond to the Board's proposal to close the school.
- 2.2. Establish a process for the Board to consider public feedback.
- 2.3. Request of administration a report that shall be presented at a public board meeting, which sets out the following:
  - 2.3.1. how the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
  - 2.3.2. how the closure would affect attendance at other schools;
  - 2.3.3. information on the Board's long-range capital plan;

- 2.3.4. the number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
- 2.3.5. the need for, and extent of, busing;
- 2.3.6. program implications for other schools and the students when they are attending other schools;
- 2.3.7. the educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications; and
- 2.3.8. the educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open.

### **3. Building use: After a school closure**

The Board shall use the following process and criteria to determine whether it has use for a school building that has been closed.

- 3.1. The Board shall direct the administration to prepare a recommendation report that shall contain the following contents:
  - 3.1.1. a review of demographic factors relating to the school in the context of the overall Division;
  - 3.1.2. the length of time that the school building has been closed;
  - 3.1.3. consideration of the potential for other public educational uses for the school building, and the estimated cost;
  - 3.1.4. consideration of the potential for other levels of government or private entities to take ownership and operate the building for the public good; and
  - 3.1.5. any other criteria or issues that the administration considers relevant to the Board's decision.

### **4. School space availability**

- 4.1. When, in the opinion of the Education Minister, space is available in a school building, the Minister may direct the Board to make space available to another board.
- 4.2. The Board shall use the following process and criteria to determine, for the purposes of the *Municipal Government Act*, whether its interest in school reserve, municipal and school reserve, or municipal reserve is surplus to the Board's needs. As such, the Board shall direct the administration to prepare a recommendation report that shall contain the following contents:
  - 4.2.1. review of enrolment trends within the area intended to be served by the school reserve, municipal and school reserve, or municipal reserve;
  - 4.2.2. consideration of student accommodation and transportation issues;
  - 4.2.3. whether a school on the school reserve, municipal and school reserve, or municipal reserve is included in the Board's capital plan;
  - 4.2.4. the length of time the school reserve, municipal and school reserve, or municipal reserve has existed and has not been needed by the Board;
  - 4.2.5. a summary of the consultation, if any, with other boards with respect to their needs for the school reserve, municipal and school reserve, or municipal reserve; and

- 4.2.6. any other criteria or issues that the administration considers relevant to the Board's decision.

## References

Sections 11, 33, 53, 62, 192, 194, 222, 248, 249 *Education Act*

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Dec. 14, 2015	Feb. 18, 2016
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