
POLICY 4.51 SCHOOL CLOSURE

The Board of Education is responsible under the *School Act* for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the district. The Board may close schools for reasons including but not limited to:

- declining enrollment resulting in a school no longer being educationally, operationally, or economically viable;
- restructuring of educational programs, consolidation of operations, relocation of students to other schools, or similar, such that the school is deemed surplus to the district's educational needs; and
- replacement of a school with a newly constructed school.

The permanent closure of a school is a significant issue of public interest and therefore the Board will follow a process that provides for sufficient consultation with those who may be affected prior to any decision being made.

Guidelines

1. Considering School Closures

- 1.1. At a regular open meeting of the Board, and with no less than two weeks' notice to the public of the matter to be considered, the Board may pass a resolution determining that it will consider the closure of a school or schools in the district.
- 1.2. If such a resolution is passed by the Board, the Board will commence a consultation process, as set out herein, prior to making a decision with respect to the possible closure(s).

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1. The consultation process will provide an opportunity for the community and relevant constituencies, and particularly those who will be affected by a proposed closure including parents, students, First Nations, employee groups and community members, to provide input, information and opinion to the Board. The Board will give fair consideration to such public input prior to making any final decision regarding closure of a school or schools.



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- 2.2. The consultation process will last at least sixty days measured from the date the Board passes a resolution providing for the consideration of a school closure or closures.
- 2.3. To enable the public to effectively participate in the consultation process, the Board will make available to the public, in advance of any consultation meetings described in this policy, disclosure of facts and information that will be considered by the Board in respect of the school closure(s) under consideration. Such disclosure may include:
- the specific school(s) for which closure is being considered;
 - the reasons for the potential closure of the school(s);
 - the general effect of the potential closure(s) on surrounding schools;
 - the number of students potentially affected at both the closed school(s) and surrounding schools;
 - the effect of the potential closure(s) on student transportation;
 - educational program implications for any affected students;
 - the proposed date of the closure(s);
 - financial considerations;
 - impact on the Board's capital plan;
 - proposed use of the closed school(s); and
 - any other relevant information which will be considered by the Board.
- 2.4. Members of the public may, at any time prior to the conclusion of the consultation process, provide written submissions to the Board in respect of a potential school closure. Information and directions regarding the provision of such submissions to the Board will be provided to the public within twenty days of the Board passing a resolution or bylaw providing for the consideration of school closure(s). The information and directions will advise potential correspondents that their written response may be referred to and made public as part of the consultation process, unless the correspondent specifically states in the written response that the correspondent wishes their name and address to remain confidential.
- 2.5. The Board will hold at least one public consultation meeting to hear representations concerning the potential school closure(s), and the Board may hold additional public meetings to hear further representations.
- 2.6. The time and location of such public consultation meeting(s) will be appropriately advertised to the public to ensure adequate advance notice to the community and relevant constituencies. This will include written notification to students and parents/guardians of students currently attending the school(s) considered for closure and public notice in local print or online newspapers and/or electronic postings on the

Board's website. Specific notice will also be provided to affected or potentially affected First Nations.

2.7. At such public meeting(s) the Board will welcome input on all matters relating to the potential closure decision, including the following:

- the implications or consequences of the potential school closure;
- implementation plans including the timing of the potential closure;
- options that the Board should consider as alternatives to the potential closure;
- the possibility of future enrolment growth in the area of the potential closure;
- possible future uses for the school building or property; and
- other relevant written submissions provided to the Board by members of the public.

2.8. Minutes will be kept of any such public consultation meeting(s). The Board will also maintain the following consultation records: advertising, agendas, dates of consultations, working group and public community consultation meeting submissions, names of trustees/district staff who attended these meetings, a record of individuals attending public community consultation meetings, a record of questions asked and responses given, and any other related correspondence to and from the Board.

3. Decision

3.1. The information gathered during the consultation process will be considered by the Board prior to making a final decision. The Board may vote to close the school, not to close the school, or make another decision, based on the results of the consultation process, which may include engaging in further consultation on options other than the school closure(s) under consideration.

3.2. A decision to effect a school closure must be effected by bylaw.

4. Notification of the Minister

4.1. If the Board decides to proceed with a school closure or closures pursuant to section 73 of the *School Act*, the Board will, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision containing the following information:

- the school's name,
- the school's facility number,
- the school's address, and
- the date on which the school will close

5. Opportunities for Students Displaced by School Closure(s):

- 5.1. The Board will ensure that any students displaced by a school closure will have opportunities to receive an appropriate educational experience in another school in the district or otherwise. The registration of displaced students will be subject to the guidelines contained in School Choice Policy and the School Act.