



Policy 5.60 School Closure

The Board of Education is responsible under the *School Act* for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the School District.

The Board may consider closing schools for a variety of reasons, some of which include:

- declining student enrolment such that a school is no longer educationally, economically or operationally viable;
- restructuring of educational programs, consolidation of operations and relocation of students to other schools in the School District which results in a school being deemed surplus to the District's educational needs; or
- a school is being replaced on a new site with a newly constructed school.

The closure of schools can have significant impacts and therefore the Board will follow a process that provides adequate opportunity to consult with the community and relevant constituencies and those who will be affected prior to any final decision being made.

Guidelines

1. Process Initiation

- 1.1. The Board may, by resolution or bylaw passed at an open meeting of the Board, of which at least two weeks' notice to the public of the matter to be considered, determine to consider the closure of one or more schools. Should such a bylaw or resolution pass, the Board will embark on a consultation process to determine whether to move forward with a bylaw to close that or those schools.

2. Public Consultation

- 2.1. There shall be a public consultation period following a decision to consider the closure of a school but preceding the decision whether to close a school or not of at least 60 days undertaken by the Board and its staff. The Board will give fair consideration to public input prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure of a school. The final decision on a school closure will be made at one or more public meetings to consider three readings of a bylaw for that purpose.



- 2.2. The consultation process shall provide a meaningful opportunity for the community and relevant constituencies, including staff of affected schools, and particularly those who will be affected by a proposed closure to participate in the process.
- 2.3. The Board will make available to the public, in writing, pertinent facts and information that may be considered by the Board with respect to school closure, including but not limited to:
 - 2.3.1. reasons for the proposed school closure, including any relevant data;
 - 2.3.2. the specific school that is being considered for closure
 - 2.3.3. how the proposed closure would affect students attending the school, and any impact on surrounding schools;
 - 2.3.4. the effect of the proposed closure on district-provided student transportation;
 - 2.3.5. the proposed effective date for the closure
 - 2.3.6. financial considerations;
 - 2.3.7. impact on the Board's capital plan;
 - 2.3.8. possible alternative community use of all or part of the school; and
 - 2.3.9. proposed use of the closed school(s) including potential lease or sale.

3. Process for Consideration of a Closure

- 3.1. The Board shall follow the following process for considering the closure of a school, with such amendments as may be determined by the Board and its staff to be appropriate in the circumstances.
- 3.2. The Board will hold at least one public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions and listen to community concerns and proposed options.
- 3.3. The Board may hold a second public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and listen to community concerns and proposed options.
- 3.4. At least one (1) public meeting shall be located at the school designated for closure or a suitable facility in the community the school is located in.



- 3.5. The time and location of any public meeting will be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons or groups in the community. This will include written notification to students and/or parents/guardians of students currently attending a potentially closed school, a clearly visible notice in a local newspaper and electronic posting on the District's website.
- 3.6. At the beginning of any public forum, the Board will provide information regarding:
 - 3.6.1. the reasons for, and implications of, the proposed closure;
 - 3.6.2. plans for implementation, including any plans for future use of the school/property;
 - 3.6.3. any options that the Board considered as alternatives to the proposed closure;
 - 3.6.4. a summary of written submissions presented to the Board by members of the community;
 - 3.6.5. other information considered significant with respect to any school closure decision.
- 3.7. Minutes will be kept of any public meeting to record concerns or options raised regarding the proposed closure.
- 3.8. The Board will provide an adequate opportunity (no less than 21 calendar days) for members of the community to submit a written response to any proposed school closure. Information and directions on how to submit a written response to the Board shall be provided. The information and directions shall advise potential correspondents that their written response could be made public as part of the closure process, unless the correspondent specifically states in the written response that the correspondent wishes their name and address to remain confidential, and that is permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- 3.9. Records will be maintained of all consultation, including: advertising, agenda, minutes, dates of consultations, working group and public community consultation meetings, copies of information provided at these meetings, 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.



4. Decision

- 4.1. 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 other options other than the school closure under consideration.

5. Notification to the Minister

- 5.1. If the Board decides to permanently close a school under Section 73 of the School Act, the Board must, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision containing the following information:
- 5.1.1. the school's name;
 - 5.1.2. the school's facility number;
 - 5.1.3. the school's address; and
 - 5.1.4. the date on which the school will close.