

2320 School Closure

Policy 2320

STATUS: ADOPTED

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Adopted: May 16, 2001

Last Revised: May 20, 2009

Description:

The Board of Education recognizes that it is responsible for the provision of school facilities that allow for operational efficiency and effectiveness, health and safety of all occupants and program effectiveness for students. In addressing this responsibility the Board may have to consider, on occasion, closure or consolidation of schools.

With regard to school closure, the Board has developed regulations consistent with Ministerial Order 194/08 (M194.08) (School Opening and Closure order: Ministry of Education).

The Board recognizes that permanent school closure decisions require that persons in the community who could be significantly affected be given sufficient opportunity to provide input on any proposed closures, before final decisions are made.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Adopted: November 12, 2003

Last Revised: May 20, 2009

Description:

The following regulation applies in cases of permanent school closures where, consistent with Ministerial Order 194/08 (M194.08) (School Opening and Closure order: Ministry of Education), permanent means that for a period of more than 12 months, the building will not be used to provide educational programs to students. This regulation does not apply where the Board intends to reopen the school following renovations, repairs or additions.

When considering the closure of any school, the Board will consider information including:

- impact on students
- number of students affected
- financial and operational impact of the closure
- physical age and condition of the school
- available alternative accommodations
- education/course/program implication for affected students
- safety
- enrolment projections
- the effect of the closure on other schools
- communication to parents, guardians and staff

Any proposed closure of a school will be raised at a regular open meeting of the Board

Public Consultation:

- 1) The process of consultation for school closure shall be at least 60 days commencing from the date when the Board provides public notice as to which specific schools(s) are proposed for closure. This notice will occur through First Reading and Second Reading of a bylaw proposing school closure. A separate bylaw will be required for each school the District is proposing to close.
- 2) First and Second Readings of the bylaw are typically done upon announcement, with debate occurring after Second reading.
- 3) Third and final reading is delayed until at least 60 days have been made available for public consultation. Third reading will determine the future of the school(s) proposed to close.
- 4) The process of consultation should provide an opportunity for those who will be affected by a proposed closure to participate in the process. Such participation should include trustees, parents, community members, district staff, and school staff.
- 5) The period for public consultation will be completed by the Board prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure of a school.

- 6) The Board will take the following steps to ensure that public consultation has taken place:
- i) make available, in writing, a full disclosure of all facts and information being considered by the school board with respect to a proposed school closure, including:
 - (a) reasons for the proposed school closure
 - (b) which specific school(s) are being considered for closure
 - (c) how the proposed closure would affect the current catchment area for each school
 - (d) the general effect on surrounding schools
 - (e) the number of students who would be affected at both the closed school(s) and surrounding schools
 - (f) the effect of proposed closures on board-provided student transportation
 - (g) education program/course implications for the affected students
 - (h) the proposed effective date of the closure(s)
 - (i) financial considerations
 - (j) proposed use of the closed school(s) including potential lease or sale
 - ii) provide an adequate opportunity for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closure and information and directions on how to submit a written response to the Board. The information and directions should advise potential correspondents that their written response may be referred to at subsequent public forums respecting the closure, unless the correspondent specifically states in their written response that they wish their name and address to remain confidential
 - iii) hold at least one public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and listen to community concerns and proposed options
 - iv) maintain records of all consultation, including agenda, minutes, dates of consultation working group and public community consultation meetings, copies of information provided at these meetings; names of trustee/district staff who attended these meetings, a record of individuals attending public community consultation meetings, record of questions asked, and a record of transition plans/activities identified for parent/staff/students at both the school considered for closure and the school to which the students would be moved

Public Meeting

The time and place of the public meeting will be advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons in the community. Generally, this will mean a letter to students and parents of students currently attending the school, and a clearly visible notice in a local newspaper.

The Board will 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.

Discussions should include the following:

- i. implications of the closure
- ii. implementation plans, including timing of the closure
- iii. options that the Board considered as alternatives to closure

- iv. possible future community growth in the area of the school
- v. contents of written submissions presented to the Board by members of the community

The Board will keep minutes of the public meeting which include a record of concerns or options raised to the proposal.

Following the public meeting, the Board will give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision.

Written notice should go to the homes of the students to inform parents/guardians of the decision of the Board.