

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Background

The Board of Trustees recognizes that the enrolment of a school could decline to the point at which continued operation of certain grade levels, or the entire school must be examined. The Board has established criteria by which to analyze the continued operation of some or all grade levels of a school and the procedures by which discontinuance or term-specific suspension of operation could be implemented.

Discontinuance of School or Grade Levels Operation

1. The Board may discontinue grade levels or pursue closure of a school whenever a school has reached its critical minimum enrolment. The critical minimum enrolment of a school is the point below which closure of the school or grade levels must be considered. The critical minimum enrolment of a school has been reached when enrolment has been reduced to:
 - 1.1. 60 students in Grades One to Six
 - 1.2. 45 students in Grades Seven to Nine
 - 1.3. 45 students in Grades Ten to Twelve
 - 1.4. critical minimum enrolment numbers do not apply to Outreach schools
2. Each year, prior to December, the Board will review all schools whose enrolment has reached the critical minimum enrolment and decide whether or not to pursue discontinuance of operations. The review will be based on:
 - 2.1. present and projected enrolment;
 - 2.2. population trend in the attendance area;
 - 2.3. education program being offered;
 - 2.4. availability of classroom space at the receiving school;
 - 2.5. distance involved in transporting students to the receiving school;
 - 2.6. cost of operating the school;
 - 2.7. the Division's financial constraints and priorities;
 - 2.8. the age and condition of the building; and
 - 2.9. input from the community.
3. If the Board decides to not pursue the discontinuance of operation the Board will communicate in writing to the parent/guardian of every child in the school the fact that a critical enrolment situation exists but that the school will operate in the subsequent school year.
4. If the Board decides to pursue discontinuance of operation, the Board will proceed with a notice of motion, at a regular meeting of the school board, proposing that a specific school or grade levels be closed.
5. Immediately following notice of motion, the Board will communicate, in writing, to the parent/guardian of every child in the school the facts and implications of the notice of motion and address how the closure will affect the following:
 - 5.1. how the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 5.2. how the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 5.3. the number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - 5.4. the need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 5.5. program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 5.6. the educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - 5.7. the educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - 5.8. the capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure;
 - 5.9. if the entire school is to be closed, the proposed use of the school building; and,
 - 5.10. the time and location of the public meeting referred to in section 6.

6. The Board:
 - 6.1. shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing:
 - 6.1.1. the closure and implications of the closure for the students, for the community, and for the school system;
 - 6.1.2. the implementation plans for the closure; and
 - 6.1.3. alternatives to the closure.
 - 6.2. shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located, and the local First Nation(s) and Metis Settlements to provide a statement to the board of the impact the closure may have on the community.
 - 6.3. may hold other meetings with respect to the closure at the times and places as the board may determine.
 - 6.4. The date and place of the public meeting referred to shall be:
 - 6.4.1. posted in 5 or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least 14 days before the date of the public meeting; and
 - 6.4.2. advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least 2 occasions as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting.
 - 6.5. At least a quorum of the Board shall be in attendance at this public meeting, but it is preferable that all trustees attend.
7. The Board shall ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.
8. Following this public meeting parents/guardians and concerned electors will be given thirty (30) days to prepare a response (or responses) to the notice of motion; response(s) will include preferred alternatives.
9. Representatives of parents/guardians and concerned electors will be given the opportunity to meet with the School Board, to present their response(s), to comment upon the response(s) and the notice of motion and to answer questions.
10. The Board of Trustees will debate and the vote upon the notice of motion will take place only after the above minimum criteria have been met.
11. Following the review process, should the Board decide to continue to operate the school, there will not be a critical minimum enrolment review in the subsequent school year unless there is a substantial alteration in the circumstances outlined in this policy.
12. Notwithstanding this policy, the Board may commence action to discontinue a school or grade level operation, regardless of critical minimum enrolments, at any time during the school year in order to appropriately meet extraordinary emergent situations that significantly reduce student numbers or affect the Board's financial circumstances or will enable more rational delivery of regional educational services. In these rare instances all steps indicated in this policy will be followed with as much adherence to time schedules as is practical.
13. When an assessment indicates that decreased enrolments are temporary the above procedure will be followed to temporarily suspend operations of grade levels or schools.
14. The Board:
 - 14.1. shall by resolution decide whether to close the school, and
 - 14.2. if the decision is to close the school, shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
15. All school closure procedures shall be initiated and completed within the school year in which the decision to close the school is made.

Legal References

Education Act, Section 62

Approval Date

February 2006, 2007, 2008, 2012, April 2015, June 2017, May 2020, April 2023

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February 2007, April 2023