



OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

APPROVED: 1978.01.24

REVISED: 1982.08.09

1999.12.14

2003.01.28

2009.02.24

POLICY

The Board of Education may decide to open a new school or to reopen a closed school and must provide written notification to the Minister of Education. Following a public input process, the Board may also decide to permanently close a school and must provide written notification to the Minister of Education.

DEFINITIONS:

“Alternative community use” is use by a community agency or organization of land or improvements, other than for the educational purposes of the Board of Education, e.g. health care, therapy services, social services, etc.

“Closure of a school” and **“permanent closure of a school”** in this policy mean closure for a period exceeding 12 months.

Responsibility Centre: Secretary-Treasurer

References: *School Act*, Sections 73 and 168

Ministerial Order M194/08 – School Opening and Closure Order

Ministerial Order 193/08 – Disposal of Land or Improvements Order



OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

PREAMBLE

The *School Act* and the ministerial orders that support the act place the responsibility for school openings and closures on the Board of Education. In particular, permanent closures, those being of greater than 12 months' duration, require the Board to allow for meaningful input and fair consideration of any concerns or options raised by the community before a final decision is made.

Approved: 1999.12.14

Revised: 2003.01.28, 2009.02.24



OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

REGULATIONS:

1. An official ceremony may be held to celebrate the opening or reopening of a school building or district facility or the opening of a major addition or renovation to an existing school or facility.
2. The Board shall allow a period of not less than 60 days for public consultation to take place between the time that a potential permanent closure of a school is announced and the final decision is made.
 - 2.1. The Board must provide for public consultation that includes:
 - 2.1.1. A fair consideration of the input from the affected community and provision of opportunities for that community to respond to the Board's proposal to close a school permanently.
 - 2.1.2. Consideration of future enrolment growth in the school district, of persons of school age, persons of less than school age, and adults.
 - 2.1.3. Consideration of possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.
3. All persons or groups in the community who could be affected by a school closure should be made aware of the Board's proposal to close the school.
4. A public forum will be held to deal with the proposed school closure and shall form part of the public consultation process.
5. Consultation will be meaningful, and fair consideration will be given to all public input prior to the Board making its final decision. Fair consideration includes the concept that the Board's proposal to close a school could be changed or reversed.
6. The closure of a school should not normally take place until the September following the final decision. This will give parents, students and school staff time to make alternative arrangements.
7. The final decision to permanently close a school will be done by bylaw.
8. Following a final decision to close a school, the Board will provide, without delay, written notification to the Minister of Education of the decisions and will include the following information:
 - 8.1. The name of the school.
 - 8.2. The facility number of the school.



OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

- 8.3. The address of the school.
- 8.4. The date the school will permanently close.
- 9. Following a final decision to open a new school or to reopen a previously closed school, the Board will provide, without delay, written notification to the Minister of Education of the decision and will include the following information:
 - 9.1. The name of the school.
 - 9.2. The facility number of the school.
 - 9.3. The address of the school.
 - 9.4. The date the school will open or reopen.

Approved: 1978.01.24

Revised: 1982.08.09, 1999.12.14, 2003.01.28, 2009.02.24



OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

1. The proposal to close a school shall be raised, discussed and decided upon at a public meeting of the Board.
2. The Board shall take the following steps to ensure that an open, meaningful public consultation will take place:
 - 2.1 Make available, in writing, pertinent facts and information considered by the Board with respect to school closure, including, but not limited to:
 - 2.1.1 Reasons for the proposed school closure.
 - 2.1.2 The specific school that is being considered for closure.
 - 2.1.3 How the proposed closure would affect the catchment areas of affected schools.
 - 2.1.4 The general effect on surrounding schools.
 - 2.1.5 The number of students who would be affected, at both the closed school and surrounding schools.
 - 2.1.6 The effect of the proposed closure on district-provided student transportation.
 - 2.1.7 Educational program/course implications for the affected students.
 - 2.1.8 The proposed effective date for the closure.
 - 2.1.9 Financial considerations.
 - 2.1.10 Impact on the Board's capital plan.
 - 2.1.11 Enrolment projections for the school being considered for closure.
 - 2.2 Provide an opportunity for affected persons to submit written responses to the proposed school closure and information and directions on how to submit the written responses to the Board.
 - 2.3 Hold at least one public forum to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions and listen to community concerns and proposed options.



OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

- 2.4 The time and location of the public forum shall be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons or groups in the community. This will mean written notification to students and parents of students currently attending the school, a clearly visible notice in the local newspaper and electronic posting on the district's website.
 - 2.5 The Board should present the following at the beginning of the public forum:
 - 2.5.1 Implications of the proposed closure.
 - 2.5.2 Implementation plans, including the timing of the proposed closure.
 - 2.5.3 Options that the Board considered as alternatives to the proposed closure.
 - 2.5.4 Possible future community growth in the area of the school.
 - 2.5.5 Contents of written submissions presented to the Board by members of the community.
 - 2.6 Minutes will be kept of the public forum to record concerns or options raised regarding the proposed closure.
 - 2.7 Following the public forum, the Board will give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision with respect to the school closure.
3. The final decision on a school closure will be made by giving first, second, third and final reading of a bylaw at a public Board meeting.

Approved: 2003.01.28

Revised: 2009.02.24

