

Policy 14 – School Reviews

Initial Approval:	September 4, 2018		
References:	The Education Act, 1995, Sections 85, 87, 347; The School Division Administration Regulations, 2017, Parts 8, 10, Division 1 (54-64)		
Date Revised:		Motion:	13381

The Board, in its efforts to provide meaningful learning experiences that reflect what is best for students and to assist students in developing their full potential, recognizes that it needs to maintain viable schools and classrooms within the context of the entire Division.

In order to ensure quality education for its students, the Board may, from time to time, review the operation of its schools and consider discontinuing one (1) or more grades or programs offered in a school; or closing schools.

School Review

A Catholic School Community Council may initiate the review process by recommending to the Board that the school they represent be reviewed according to this policy.

Therefore, the Board will adhere to the following guidelines of operation with regard to determining the possible review status of a school. The Director is required to provide timely viability reports well before required Board decisions. Review status is an opportunity to explore the facts; it does not necessarily mean the school will be closed. These guidelines will provide a process and procedure so that school review can be clearly predicted, giving people assurance as to how and when a decision process might be initiated.

Specifically,

1. Legislative Conditions for Review

The process and criteria around school reviews for closure or grade discontinuance have been set out in *The Education Regulations*.

Pursuant to *The Education Regulations*, the Board may only carry out a review of a school if specific conditions are met, among these conditions are those related to projected enrolments, which are as follows:

- 1.1. Projected enrolment for the school under review for the following school year is less than:
 - 1.1.1. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 4 only, twenty-five (25) students;
 - 1.1.2. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 5 only, thirty (30) students;
 - 1.1.3. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 6 only, thirty-seven (37) students;
 - 1.1.4. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 7 only, forty-four (44) students;
 - 1.1.5. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 8 only, fifty-one (51) students;

- 1.1.6. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 9 only, fifty-eight (58) students;
- 1.1.7. For a school offering kindergarten to Grade 12 only, eighty-eight (88) students.

2. School Review Criteria

Pursuant to Section 95.81 of *The Education Regulations*, in carrying out a review of a school, the Board shall consider the following:

- 2.1. Physical condition of the school;
- 2.2. Operational cost per student;
- 2.3. Number of grades combined in each classroom;
- 2.4. Distribution of enrolments by grade level;
- 2.5. Projected enrolments;
- 2.6. Condition and capacity of potential receiving school(s);
- 2.7. Transportation implications to the potential receiving school(s); and
- 2.8. Availability of educational programming.

Each of the above criteria will be considered in the context of best interest of students, the school, the Division and communities.

3. Process for Placing a School in Review

- 3.1. Enrolments for all schools will be monitored and reported to the Board on a regular basis. Schools with September enrolments that fall below, or are projected to fall below, the thresholds set in legislation will be identified to the Board annually.
- 3.2. For schools that meet the Legislative Conditions for Review, the Director will compile a report on the School Review Criteria and report to the Board with a recommendation as to the review status of the school(s) following the timeline in Appendix A – School Reviews Calendar Guidelines.
- 3.3. The Board will consider the information and, if the Board wishes to place a school into the review process, will pass a motion to that effect.

4. Review Process

4.1. Consultation Process with Catholic School Community Council

Once a school is placed in review status, the Board will consult with the Catholic School Community Council and the community in accordance with the process set out in *The Education Act, 1995*.

- 4.1.1. If the Catholic School Community Council consents to closure or grade discontinuance, the Board will make the appropriate motion.
- 4.1.2. If the Catholic School Community Council does not agree to the closure or grade discontinuance, the process continues as outlined below.

4.2. Information and Analysis

As per *The Education Regulations*, the Board will establish a School Review Committee, which will provide the following information to the Catholic School Community Council by November 1:

- 4.2.1. Enrolment history of the school for the past five (5) years.
- 4.2.2. Projected enrolment for the school for the following five (5) school years, and the source of this data.
- 4.2.3. Current number of teaching and non-teaching staff at the school.
- 4.2.4. Projected number of teaching staff based on:
 - 4.2.4.1. Projected enrolment outlined in clause 4.2.2; and
 - 4.2.4.2. Board policy.
- 4.2.5. Information respecting the physical condition of the school.
- 4.2.6. Any other information that the Board plans to consider in reviewing the school.

4.3. Decision by the Board to Consider Possible Closure or Grade Discontinuance

- 4.3.1. The information and data collected by the School Review Committee and the Director will be considered by the Board.
- 4.3.2. If the Board decides to consider the closure of any school that has been the subject of a review, the Board must, no later than February 1, pass a motion to consider the possible closure of the school or discontinuance of one (1) or more grades or years taught in the school stating the effective date of the possible closure or discontinuance.
- 4.3.3. The Board must notify the public of the motion passed.

4.4. Public Meeting

The Board, not later than March 31 of the year in which the potential closure of the school or discontinuance of grades or years taught in the school is to come into effect, must hold a meeting of electors as per *The Education Regulations*.

5. Decision Regarding Closure or Grade Discontinuance

- 5.1. After a thorough review of the information gathered and considering the consultations with the community, if the Board decides to close a school or to discontinue one (1) or more grades or years taught in the school, the Board must pass a motion to that effect by April 30 and provide notice as required under *The Education Regulations*.

6. School Closures or Grade Reduction and Integration Process

In schools where the Board has passed a motion approving a school closure or grade discontinuance, the Director shall, in consultation with the Catholic School Community Council, develop and implement a Transition Plan that includes:

- 6.1. Notifying the parents/guardians of the students attending the school affected.

- 6.2. Consulting with the Catholic School Community Council.
- 6.3. Consulting with all affected staff, parents/guardians and community.
- 6.4. Preparing an implementation schedule.
- 6.5. Ensuring that a familiarization program for new students and their parents/guardians is offered at the receiving school(s).
- 6.6. Redistribution of division assets shall not be done until after the conclusion of the school year.

Appendix A SCHOOL REVIEWS CALENDAR GUIDELINE

The following calendar serves as a guideline only. Timelines can be adjusted depending on circumstances. Provisions of *The Education Regulations* must be followed.

October (school year prior to Board deciding whether to place school in review status)

Director collects September enrolment data and identifies school(s) meeting or close to meeting the conditions as set out in Board Policy 14 – Schools Reviews.

February (school year prior to Board deciding whether to place school in review status)

Director prepares long-term enrolment projections by school and identifies school(s) meeting or projected to meet the conditions as set out in Board Policy 14.

By October 15

Director collects primary information as per Board Policy 14 and recommends to the Board the placing of a school or schools in review status. The Board decides whether or not a school is placed in review status.

October

Establishment of School Review Committee by November 1.

Appointment of members to School Review Committee by Catholic School Community Council

Inform School Community Council of each school placed in review status.

November – January

Ongoing opportunity for parents/guardians and residents to present comments and recommendations.

Catholic School Community Council and other community groups may present to the Board.

School Review Committee presents information.

By February 1

The information and data collected by the School Review Committee and the Director will be considered by the Board as outlined in Board Policy 14.

Board reviews recommendations and passes motions to consider closure or discontinuance.

By March 31

Begin ongoing provision of information to parents/guardians and residents and arrange for elector meeting(s) according to *The Education Act, 1995*.

At public meeting(s) distribute information and data collected and establish format for further feedback and response.

February – April

Board revisits information adding in parents/guardians and residents feedback to make final decision.

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By April 30

Board decides whether or not to close school.

Board passes motions of school closures, or grade discontinuation to take effect after June 30 of the present school year.

May

Develop a Transition Plan in consultation with the Catholic School Community Council.

By June 15

Complete the preparation of the Transition plan.

After June 30 and Before Beginning of Next School Year

Grade reduction, school amalgamation or closure occurs.