



### SCHOOL VIABILITY REVIEW

The Board of Education, in its efforts to provide meaningful learning opportunities that reflect that Board's vision, mission and commitments for student learning, recognizes that it needs to maintain viable schools, classrooms and programs. Consequently, the Board will, from time to time, need to consider grade discontinuance or school closure based on the learning needs of students and based on utilizing resources effectively and efficiently. The Board values collaboration and is committed to a process permitting input from community, staff, and parents to help inform its decision. Guidelines for school viability review will be the criteria used as factors when grade discontinuances or school closures are to be considered.

In the month of September, as part of its Yearly Agenda, the Board of Education will carry out an annual review of the schools in the North East School Division. This review will consider equity of access to effective learning opportunities for all students as reflected in the Board's strategic plan and goals. A Board motion to review for closure or grade discontinuance will occur, notwithstanding unforeseen circumstances, by October 15 in the school year of consideration.

The Board recognizes that, while a school or classroom may not meet the criteria of a viable school, the school or classroom may be allowed to continue to operate if in the opinion of the board the situation is temporary, or if the closure of the school or relocation of the classroom would result in students being picked up by bus at a time that is detrimental to their well-being. In situations where it is not feasible to transport students to another school for their learning opportunities, the Board will endeavor to use technology and/or other resources to ensure effective and efficient learning experiences.

Note: Currently, the school viability process does not apply to a Hutterite Colony School.

### PROCEDURES

#### **1. Request for Review**

Any decision concerning school viability will make provision for input and consideration of the wishes and concerns of the parents, students, staff, School Community Council and community within the attendance area under consideration. A school's viability will be reviewed if a written request for a review is received from a school's School Community Council, a group of at least five (5) families, or from the Director of Education.

#### **2. Dialogue with the School Community**

Dialogue with the staff and School Community Council will take place if any one or more of the following criteria apply to the school:

- a. If a school's enrolment in the next academic year is projected to be less than 90 for a K – 12 school; or the average number of students is six or less per grade at the elementary/middle years level in grades K – 9.
- b. If there are projected to be three or more grades, or more than three simultaneous course offerings in a classroom.
- c. If the projected enrolment would leave fewer than two students in a grade.



- d. If the projected enrolment is such that staffing allotment by formula will require consideration of more than triple grading.
- e. If the structural integrity of the school building presents safety or other concerns that would require a significant capital expenditure. (i.e. Facility Condition Index, Independent Engineering Report, Ministry Facility Audit)

### **3. Criteria for School Review**

A school's viability may be reviewed if **(a)** and any **one or more** of the following criteria apply to the school:

- a. If a school's enrolment in the next academic year is projected to be less than 80 for a K – 12 school; or less than 50 at the elementary/middle level in grades K – 9.
- b. If there are projected to be three or more grades, or more than three simultaneous course offerings in a classroom.
- c. If the projected enrolment would leave fewer than two students in a grade.
- d. If the projected enrolment is such that staffing allotment by formula will require consideration of more than triple grading.
- e. If the structural integrity of the school building presents safety or other concerns that would require a significant capital expenditure. (ie. Facility Condition Index, Independent Engineering Report, Ministry Facility Audit).

### **4. School Review Data Collection**

As part of the school review process the Director will provide the Board of Education with the following applicable information concerning any school under review:

- a. Projected enrolment in the school under review for at least five years, including number of students in each grade and the impact of grade-size on peer group opportunity and gender balance.
- b. Elective credits available to students in grades 10-12 in the school under review compared to the closest schools not under review.
- c. Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR), number of grades in combined classrooms and number of instructional groups in one classroom in the school under review and likely changes in these factors in the future.
- d. Capacity of staff and division staff to meet the learning needs of students in the school under review.
- e. Travel time (pick-up and drop-off times, total time spent on bus) of students in the school under review compared to travel time if they were attending the closest school not under review.
- f. Potential efficiencies if students in the school under review were re-located to the nearest school not under review and if staff were re-assigned or their positions were discontinued.



- g. Potential impacts on staff, program, facilities of nearest schools to which students in the school under review would be re-located.
- h. Anticipated future costs of maintaining the school's facilities and physical plant.

### **5. School Review Consultation Process**

Unless a request for a review is made of the Board of Education as outlined in this procedure the board will complete a school review process of a school meeting the review criteria only **once** during the third year of a four year mandate of the elected board. When the Board of Education makes a motion to review for discontinuation/school closure it will proceed according to relevant provincial legislation.

The specific steps in the relevant legislation will be outlined to the school community at the beginning of the consultation process following the Board's motion to review.

Reference: The Education Act, 1995, The Education Regulations, 1986.

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