

BOARD OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 35 (LANGLEY)

POLICY MANUAL

Policy No. 5029

SUBJECT: SCHOOL CLOSURE

Date 03 03 25 14 03 11

The Board is responsible under the School Act for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district.

The Board has the authority to permanently close a school (permanently meaning for a period exceeding 12 months) for reasons which include:

- declining student enrolment such that the school is no longer economically or operationally viable;
- restructuring of educational programs, consolidation of operations and relocation of students to other schools in the school district which results in the school being deemed surplus to the districts educational needs;
- the school is being replaced with a newly constructed school.

The permanent closure of schools is a significant issue of public concern and therefore the Board will follow a process that provides adequate time and opportunity to consult with those who will be affected prior to any decision being made.

Procedures:**A. Public Board Meeting**

In the event that the Board intends to consider a motion which proposes the permanent closure of any school, pursuant to the School Building Closure and Disposal Policy and Ministerial Order M194/08 (School Opening and Closure Order), it shall first serve notice of such intent at a Regular open meeting of the Board.

B. Criteria for considering school closure:

A school may be considered for closure when there is sufficient space to accommodate the students in neighbouring schools. In addition the following factors need to be considered:

- a. the present and three to five year enrolment projection;
- b. the number of the children in the catchment area that do not attend the school;
- c. the number of the children attending the school from outside the catchment area;
- d. the operating cost per student;
- e. the condition of the facility and the need for capital expenditures to keep the building operational;
- f. the limitations of the facility that restrict appropriate education programming;
- g. the overall excess capacity of a geographically defined District sub-region;
- h. the District's Five-Year Capital Plan and capital funding requirements.

C. Public Consultation:

In the event the Board has served notice of the proposed permanent closure of any school, it shall undertake a comprehensive public consultation process.

1. The process of consultation for school closure shall require at least 60 days commencing from the time when the Board provides public notice as to which specific school(s) are being considered for closure.
2. 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, students, community members, district staff, and school staff.

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C. Public Consultation (con'd):

3. The Board should take the following steps to ensure that an open and meaningful public consultation has taken place:
 - make available, in writing, a full disclosure of all facts and information considered by the board with respect to any proposed school closure, including:
 - i) detailed reasons for the proposed school closure;
 - ii) which specific school(s) are being considered for closure;
 - iii) how the proposed closure would affect the current catchment area for each school;
 - iv) the general effect on surrounding schools;
 - v) the number of students who would be affected at both the closed school(s) and surrounding schools;
 - vi) the future enrolment growth in the district of persons of school age, persons of less than school age, and adults;
 - vii) the effect of proposed closures on board-provided student transportation;
 - viii) educational program/course implications for the affected students;
 - ix) the proposed effective date of the closure(s);
 - x) financial considerations;
 - xi) impact on the Board's five year capital plan;
 - xii) consideration of alternative community use for all or part of the school;
 - xiii) proposed use of the closed school(s) including potential lease or sale.
 - 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 the correspondent wishes his or her name and address to remain confidential.
 - hold at least one public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and listen to community concerns and proposed options;
 - 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 trustees/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.

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D. Public Meeting

The time and place of the public meeting should be appropriately 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 should 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:

- a. implications of the closure;
- b. implementation plans, including timing of the closure;
- c. options that the Board considered as alternatives to closure;
- d. possible future community growth in the area of the school;
- e. contents of written submissions presented to the Board by members of the community.

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

E. Final Consideration

Following the public meeting, the Board should give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision with respect to any proposed school closures.

The final decision to permanently close a school or make alternate use of it shall be exercised only by a bylaw passed at a Regular meeting of the Board.

F. Notification to the Minister

If the Board decides to permanently close a school under Section 73 of the School Act, the Board must, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision containing the following information:

- a. the school's name
- b. the school's facility number
- c. the school's address, and
- d. the date on which the school will close.

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G. Readjustment of the School Community

The district recognizes that a school closure necessitates a significant amount of planning for the movement of students, staff, programs and materials. The district will make every reasonable effort to undertake the closure process in a manner that will allow for a timely readjustment of the individuals and property involved.

H. Opportunities for Students Displaced by School Closure

The district will ensure that all district students displaced by a school closure will have opportunities to receive an appropriate educational experience in another school in the district. The registration of displaced students will be subject to the guidelines contained in Student Registration Policy 7008 and the *School Act*.