

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 51 (BOUNDARY)

P O L I C Y

SECTION	TITLE	NO.
GOVERNANCE/COMMUNICATIONS	<u>School Closure</u>	

DATE ADOPTED: April 14, 2009

DATE AMENDED:

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

The Board may consider closing schools for a variety of reasons, some of which include:

- a. declining student enrolment such that the school is no longer educationally, economically or operationally viable;
- b. 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 district's educational needs; or
- c. the school is being replaced on a new site with a newly constructed school.

The closure of schools has significant impact and therefore the Board will follow a process that provides adequate opportunity to consult with those who will be affected prior to any final decision being made.

REGULATIONS

1. Process

- 1.1. A proposal to consider closure of one or more schools will be voted on at an open meeting of the board, of which parents, staff and the community have received at least two weeks notice including this agenda item.
- 1.2. A decision to consider a school closure will be followed by a public consultation period of at least 60 days undertaken by the Board and the Board will give fair consideration to public input prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure of a school. The purpose of the consultative process is to ensure that all points of view and viable options are considered. Fair consideration includes the concept that the proposal to close a school could be changed or reversed.

- 1.3. The final decision on a school closure will be voted on by giving first, second, third and final reading of a bylaw at one or more open Board meetings

2. Public Consultation

- 2.1. The consultation process should provide an opportunity for those who will be affected by a proposed closure to participate in the process.

- 2.1.1. The time and place of public meetings should be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons in the community. Fourteen (14) days advance notification shall be provided. Generally, this will mean a letter will be sent to homes of students in both the school being considered for closure and the school(s) receiving new students by student couriers and via Canada Post . A notice shall be placed in a local newspaper as well as notice to local governments and to all users of the school space who have ongoing written agreements of leases.

- 2.1.2. At least one (1) public meeting shall be located at the school designated for closure.

- 2.2. The Board should take the following steps to ensure that an open and meaningful public consultation has taken place:

- 2.2.1. Make available at a public meeting, a full disclosure of all facts and information considered by the school board with respect to any proposed school closure including:

- a. which specific school(s) are being considered for closure;
- b. the proposed effective date of the closure(s);
- c. reasons and implications for the proposed school closure
- d. how the proposed closure would affect the current catchment area for each school;
- e. the general effect on surrounding schools;
- f. the number of students who would be affected at both the closed school(s) and surrounding schools;
- g. consideration of future enrolment growth of persons of school age, of less than school age and adults;
- h. the effect of proposed closures on board-provided student transportation;
- i. educational program/course implications for the affected students;
- j. financial considerations;
- k. impact on the Board's five-year capital plan;
- l. possible alternative community use of all or part of the school;
- m. proposed use of the closed school(s) including potential lease or sale.

- 2.2.2 Provide an adequate opportunity (no less than 21 calendar days) for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school

closure; information and directions on how to submit a written response to the Board shall be articulated. 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 the written response that the correspondent wishes his or her name and address to remain confidential.

- 2.2.3 Hold a second public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and listen to community concerns and proposed options.
- 2.2.4 Maintain records of all consultation, including: advertising, agenda, minutes, dates of consultations, 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, a record of questions asked, and responses given and any other related correspondence to and from the Board.
- 2.2.5 The information gathered during the consultative process will be considered prior to making a final decision. The Board may vote to close the school, not to close the school, or on an alternate option, based on the results of the consultative process. Additional consultation may be undertaken if the recommendations on closure are substantially different from those originally proposed.

3. Notification to the Minister

- 3.1 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