

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
School District #33 (Chilliwack)**

**806.1
BOARD REGULATION
Opening and Closing of Schools**

OPENING OF A SCHOOL:

The capital funding approval for construction of a new school is determined by the Ministry of Education based on the Board's requests through the Five-Year Capital Plan.

The recommended maximum school size (nominal capacity *) is as follows:

*** Nominal Capacity (Ministry of Education definition)**

- ***of, being, or relating to a designated or theoretical size that may vary from the actual: approximate***

Elementary	450 (grades 1-6) + 80 kindergarten ½ time
Middle	750 (grades 7-9)
Secondary	1,200 (grades 10-12)

Portables may be used to temporarily increase the capacity of a school pending approval of the construction of a new school or addition.

Consideration for requesting Ministry of Education approval for a new school will be given when the enrolment for the new school is projected to be at least:

Elementary	175 (grades 1-6) + 40 kindergarten ½ time
Middle	450 (grades 7-9)
Secondary	650 (grades 10-12)

A combined school of appropriate size may be opened to address current specific needs with a strategy for the long term school requirements

The Board may re-open an existing school when the enrolment projections match the requirements for a new school or when the available space satisfies other educational program needs.

Following a final decision to officially open a new school or to re-open 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.

1. The name of the school.
2. The facility number of the school.
3. The address of the school.
4. The date the school will open or re-open.

Superintendent will recommend changes to the catchment areas* and develop a public consultation process prior to implementing the changes.

*** catchment area (SD 33 Admissions & Choice Regulation)**

- ***The location of a student's normal residence will usually determine the catchment area school for enrolment purposes.***

An official ceremony may be held to celebrate the opening or re-opening of a school building or district facility or the opening of a major addition or renovation to an existing school or facility.

CLOSING OF A SCHOOL:

The closing of a school has a significant impact on the community therefore the Board will follow a process that provides adequate time and opportunity to consult with those that may be affected prior to any decision being made.

The key reasons for closing a school are:

1. a declining enrolment
2. restructuring of educational programs, or
3. replacement by new construction

The Board will be informed through the Five-Year Capital Planning process as to changing demographics and district facility needs.

Should the Board adopt a recommendation for "Consideration for Closure" of a particular school, the Board shall advise the school staff, parents of students in the school and the general public that closure is being considered. The Board will also announce the timeline of events including the public forum, various decision points and the process for input from all relevant parties.

The Board shall allow a period for public consultation to take place between the time that the "Consideration for Closure" announcement is made and the final decision. This period of time shall not be less than 60 days. A longer time frame for public consultation may be desirable.

The “Consideration for Closure” motion shall be raised, discussed and decided upon at a public meeting of the Board.

The Board shall take the following steps to ensure that open, meaningful public consultation will take place:

1. Board announces at a public meeting the school being considered for closure.
2. Make available, in writing, pertinent facts and information considered by the Board with respect to school closure, including but not limited to:
 - a) the specific school that is being considered for closure
 - b) how the proposed closure would effect the catchment areas of effected schools
 - c) the general effect on surrounding schools
 - d) the number of students who would be affected at both the closed school and surrounding schools
 - e) the effect of the proposed closure on district provided student transportation
 - f) educational program/course implications for the affected students
 - g) the proposed effective date for the closure
 - h) financial considerations
 - i) impact on the Board’s capital plan
 - j) enrolment projections
 - k) future enrolment growth including persons less than school age and adult
3. Provide an opportunity and directions for affected persons to submit written responses regarding the proposed school closure. It should be noted that submissions may become public.
4. Hold at least one public forum to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions and listen to community concerns and proposed options.
5. The time and location of the public forum shall be broadly advertised giving at least 7 days notice to ensure adequate notification to affected persons or groups in the community. Written notification will be provided to students and parents of students currently attending the school, to stakeholder/partner groups, to local government, to First Nations, and to other schools affected by the proposed closure including current and potential tenants and user groups. Also, a clearly visible notice will be included in the local newspaper and posted on the district’s website.

6. The Board should present the following at the beginning of the public forum:
 - a) implications of the proposed closure
 - b) implementation plans, including the timing of the proposed closure
 - c) options that the Board considered as alternatives to the proposed closure
 - d) possible future community growth in the area of the school
 - e) contents of written submission presented to the Board by members of the community
 - f) any new information received since the initial announcement
 - g) options the Board has considered as alternatives to the proposed closure
 - h) alternative potential uses of the building or demolition
 - i) parental and community support
 - j) written or oral input received
 - k) consultation with staff
7. Summary will be kept of the public forum to record concerns or options raised regarding the proposed closure.
8. 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. Fair consideration includes the possibility that the Board's proposal to close a school could be changed.
9. The closure of a school should not normally take effect until the end of the school year following the final decision. The decision should be made as soon as possible during the preceding school year. This will give parents, students and school staff time to make alternative arrangements.

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. The Board may not give a bylaw more than 2 readings at any one meeting unless the Board unanimously agrees to give all 3 readings as per Robert's Rules of Order.