

POLICY 660 CONSOLIDATION OR CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

The Board recognizes that declining or shifting student populations may necessitate the consolidation and/or closure of schools

Guidelines

1. The closing or consolidation 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.
2. The key reasons for closing or consolidating a school are:
 - 2.1. a declining enrolment
 - 2.2. restructuring of educational programs, or
 - 2.3. replacement by new construction
3. The Board will be informed through the Long-Range Facilities Plan as to changing demographics and district facility needs.
4. Should the Board adopt a recommendation for “Consideration for Consolidation / Closure” of a particular school, the Board shall advise the school staff, parents/guardians 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.
5. The Board shall allow a period for public consultation to take place between the time that the “Consideration for Consolidation / 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 determined.
6. The “Consideration for Consolidation / Closure” motion shall be raised, discussed and decided upon at a public meeting of the Board.
7. The Board shall take the following steps to ensure that open, meaningful public consultation will take place:
 - 7.1. Board announces at a public meeting the school being considered for consolidation or closure.
 - 7.2. Make available, in writing, pertinent facts and information considered by the Board with respect to school consolidation or closure, including but not limited to:
 - 7.2.1. the specific school that is being considered for consolidation or closure

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- 7.2.2. how the proposed consolidation or closure would effect the catchment areas of effected schools
 - 7.2.3. the general effect on surrounding schools
 - 7.2.4. the number of students who would be affected
 - 7.2.5. the effect of the proposed consolidation or closure on district provided student transportation
 - 7.2.6. educational program/course implications for the affected students
 - 7.2.7. the proposed effective date for the consolidation or closure
 - 7.2.8. financial considerations
 - 7.2.9. impact on the Board's capital plan
 - 7.2.10. enrolment projections
 - 7.2.11. future enrolment growth including persons less than school age and adult
- 7.3. Provide an opportunity and directions for affected persons to submit written responses regarding the proposed school consolidation or closure. It should be noted that submissions may become public.
- 7.4. Hold at least one public forum to discuss the proposed consolidation or closure, summarize written submissions and listen to community concerns and proposed options.
- 7.5. 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. The Board should present the following at the beginning of the public forum:
- 7.5.1. implications of the proposed consolidation or closure
 - 7.5.2. implementation plans, including the timing
 - 7.5.3. options that the Board considered as alternatives
 - 7.5.4. possible future community growth in the area of the school
 - 7.5.5. contents of written submission presented to the Board by members of the community
 - 7.5.6. any new information received since the initial announcement
 - 7.5.7. alternative potential uses of the building
 - 7.5.8. parental and community support
 - 7.5.9. written or oral input received
 - 7.5.10. consultation with staff
- 7.6. Summary will be kept of the public forum to record concerns or options raised.

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- 7.7. Following the public forum, the Board will give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision. Fair consideration includes the possibility that the Board's proposal could be changed.
 - 7.8. The consolidation or 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.
8. The final decision on a school consolidation or closure will be made by bylaw.