

FACILITIES

Policy 704-R **(previously Policy 904-R)**

School Closure and/or Consolidation

At the request of the Board and/or Superintendent of Schools, and/or as a result of a concern for the educational program(s) in the school(s), staff will investigate the need to consolidate and/or close schools. To assist staff the following school closure process must be adhered to:

1. A school may be considered for closure when there is sufficient space to accommodate the students in neighboring schools. An initial report identifying potential closures shall be prepared, considering the following factors:
 - a) Present and future enrolment projections;
 - b) the number of children in the catchment area who do not attend the school;
 - c) the number of children attending the school from outside the catchment area;
 - d) The operating cost per student;
 - e) The need for significant capital expenditures to keep the building operational, and the availability of funding for this purpose;
 - f) The appropriateness of the facilities for educational programming and staff;
 - g) consideration of possible alternative community uses for all or part of the school.
2. Upon completion, the initial report shall be presented to the Senior Management Team.
3. After considering the initial report, and any other relevant information, the Senior Management Team shall decide whether to make a preliminary recommendation to the Board regarding potential closures.
4. In the event the Senior Management Team decide to proceed, a report, including preliminary recommendation(s), will be prepared and presented to the Board of Education (Richmond) in a public meeting. The community shall be informed that this report is being presented to the Board, and provided access to its contents. (See Board Policies and Regulations in the 802 sequence). The report should include:
 - a) Detailed reasons for the proposed school closure, with reference to the criteria outlined in 1(a) to (g) above.
 - b) Identification of the specific school(s) being considered for closure.

- c) How the proposed closure would affect the current catchment area for each school.
 - d) The general effect on surrounding schools
 - e) The number of students who would be affected at both the closed school(s) and surrounding schools
 - f) The effect of proposed closures on Board-provided student transportation
 - g) Educational program/course implications for the affected students
 - h) The proposed effective date of the closure(s)
 - i) Financial considerations.
 - j) Impact on the Board's capital plan
 - k) Proposed use of the closed school(s) including potential lease or sale.
 - l) Consideration of possible alternative community uses for all or part of the school.
 - m) Future enrolment growth of persons less than school age as well as adults in the community.
5. Upon receipt and consideration of the Senior Management Team's report, the Board will determine whether or not to approve the report and preliminary recommendation(s), in principle, for the purposes of public consultation.
6. In the event the preliminary recommendations are approved in principle, the Board will engage in a public consultation process. At a minimum, the following steps shall be taken to ensure that an open, meaningful public consultation will take place prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure:
- a) The Board shall make the report and preliminary recommendations publically available, together with any other relevant supporting materials and data.
 - b) The period of consultation must not be less than two (2) calendar months in duration.
 - c) The Board shall provide an adequate opportunity for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closures. Information will be provided on how to submit a written response to the Board. This information should advise potential correspondents that their written response may be referred to at a public meeting respecting the closure, unless the correspondent specifically states in their written response that he/she wishes their name to remain confidential.

Regulation

- d) The Board shall inform employees potentially impacted by any proposed closure or consolidation and shall provide them with relevant information and an opportunity to provide input during the consultation process.
 - e) The Board shall maintain records of all consultation, including any consultation meetings, information provided at these meetings; names of trustees/District staff who attended these meetings, a record of individuals, community agencies and organizations attending public community consultation meetings, and a record of questions asked and responses provided.
 - f) The Board will hold at least one public meeting to discuss the proposed school closure(s), present relevant information, and listen to community concerns and proposed options. The time and location of the public meeting shall be appropriately advertised to ensure at least thirty (30) days' advance notification to affected persons or groups in the community. This will include written notification to students and parents of students currently attending the school. In addition, a clearly visible notice will be placed in local newspapers and on the District's website.
 - g) At the beginning of the public meeting, the Board will present all written, pertinent facts and information related to the proposed school closure, as well as a summary of the input received from members of the community. Minutes will be kept of the public meeting to record concerns or options raised regarding the proposed closure.
- 7. Following the public meeting, the Board will give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision with respect to the school closure.
 - 8. A decision by the Board to permanently close a school will be made by bylaw.
 - 9. The Superintendent of Schools will be responsible for implementing any recommendation(s) adopted by the Board of Education (Richmond) and shall ensure that disruptions are minimized during any transitions required as a result of the implementation of the recommendation(s) adopted. The time from the adoption date to the implementation date will be no less than three full months.