



Durham District
School Board

Procedure: Pupil Accommodation Review

1.0 Statement:

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing a full range of educational opportunities and to enhancing the learning environment in its schools.

The Board recognizes that various accommodation factors, including changing demographic patterns, student enrolment, changes in curriculum and facility conditions, affect its ability to deliver educational services efficiently and effectively. The Planning Department within the Facilities Services department is continuously engaged in the short and long term study of these accommodation factors. One or a combination of these factors may trigger the need to develop alternative solutions to student accommodation including the closure of a school or schools and/or the consolidation of two or more schools. All alternate solutions to student accommodation shall consider the accommodation needs of all schools within the Board.

The Board supports the concept of school valuation being central to Board and community decision making about school closures and consolidations.

This policy implements the requirements of the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education on October 31, 2006.

2.0 Annual Review of School Accommodation:

2.1 Staff shall prepare a report for the Board of Trustees analyzing student enrolments in schools and other relevant factors, in order to determine whether there is a need to consider possible closure and/or consolidations of a school or group of schools.

2.2 Prior to making a decision to close a school, the Board will undertake a thorough review of all relevant information and options. Such reviews will include a determination of the value of the school to the students, the community, the school system and the local community. The Board will consult with all interested stakeholders in the review process and will provide opportunities for public input with ample notice given.

3.0 Establishment of Accommodation Review Committee:

3.1 Following consideration of the staff report, the Board must establish an Accommodation Review Committee (“ARC”) that will be charged with reviewing and making recommendations on the accommodation options available for the school or group(s) of schools referred to it for study. A separate ARC shall be established for each group of schools.

3.2 Within twenty five days of its decision to establish an ARC, the Board shall provide written notice of this decision to the parents of the students and the staff of the affected schools and the clerk of the area municipality. Notice of the decision shall also be posted on the Board's website.

Notwithstanding the maximum time of twenty-five days notice, the Board shall make every effort to provide written notice within five days.

3.3 The membership of the ARC shall include, but not be limited to, the members of the school community and the community at large.

3.4 Wherever possible, the accommodation review process should focus on a group of schools within a planning area, rather than a single school, in an effort to develop viable and practical solutions for the accommodation of students within such planning area.

3.5 The ARC's assessment of the school or group of schools under review shall be based on the following four principle factors that will be reflected in the Board's standard school valuation framework:

- (a) value to the student;
- (b) value to the community;
- (c) value to the school board;
- (d) value to the local economy.

3.6 The first factor, the value of the school to the student, shall be weighed above the other considerations.

3.7 The ARC shall customize the Board's standard school valuation framework in order to ensure that it is relevant to the schools under review and has regard for local issues and concerns. The ARC shall make the customized school valuation framework available to the public prior to the Public Consultation.

3.8 The ARC shall complete a school valuation report for each school reviewed using the customized school valuation framework.

4.0 Information to be Provided to the Accommodation Review Committee:

4.1 Within three months of the Board's decision establishing the ARC, Board staff shall provide members of the ARC with information relating to the specifics of operation for each of the schools alternative Accommodation Plan.

4.2 The Board's staff shall submit to the ARC for its consideration, the alternate accommodation plans for the students of the schools under review.

4.3 The information to be supplied to the ARC shall also be posted on the Board's website and made available to the general public in printed form. Such plans shall address the following:

- (a) Where the students would be accommodated.
- (b) What changes to the existing facilities may be required.
- (c) What program would be available to the students.
- (d) Transportation issues.

5.0 Public Meetings of the Accommodation Review Committee:

5.1 Within four months of the Board's decision to establish an ARC, the ARC shall give notice that it will be convening the first of four public meetings in connection with the accommodation review process. The ARC shall give at least sixty days notice of the first public meeting, excluding school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break. Written notice of the public meetings shall be provided to the parents of the students and the staff of the affected schools, the clerk of the area municipality and all trustees. Notice of the public meetings shall also be advertised in the local newspaper(s) and posted on the Board's website.

5.2 The ARC shall conduct the public meetings in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) the meetings will be held in one of the affected schools or an alternate facility within the local community;
- (b) the meetings shall be open to all members of the public;
- (c) the ARC shall afford persons who attend the public meetings the opportunity to ask questions, to request additional information and to express their views;
- (d) Board staff shall prepare minutes which record the full range of opinions expressed at the public meetings. The minutes shall be published on the Board's website. Written copies of the minutes shall also be available upon request;
- (e) additional information requested at the public meetings will be posted on the Board's website and appended to the minutes of the meeting.

5.3 At the first public meeting the ARC shall explain its mandate, describe the purpose of the school valuation framework, and brief the public on the data to be considered and the issues to be addressed. The ARC shall also receive public input at the meeting.

5.4 The ARC shall convene three additional public meetings in order to secure input from the community in regard to the school valuation report which will address, among other things, proposed school accommodation and closure options. The public consultation process shall conform to the following:

- (a) the period of the public consultation process shall be at least ninety days calculated from the date of the first public meeting, excluding school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break;
- (b) unless otherwise approved by the Board, the ARC shall conduct the three additional public meetings within a period of 120 days following the first public meeting, excluding school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break;
- (c) at the final public meeting the ARC shall present its draft school valuation report and receive input from the public.

5.5 Within thirty days of the final public meeting of the ARC, or as soon as practicable, the ARC shall submit to the Board its final school valuation report including recommendations concerning school accommodation and closures. The Board shall post the ARC's school valuation report on its website and make copies available to the public in written form.

6.0 Staff Analysis and Board Consideration of the School Valuation Report:

6.1 Board staff shall review and analyze the ARC's final school valuation report. Following such a review, Board staff shall prepare a report to the Board detailing the findings and recommendations of the school valuation report. The staff report shall also provide staff's analysis and recommendations in regard to the accommodation issues considered by the ARC.

6.2 The Board shall notify the public that it will be considering the ARC's school valuation report together with the staff report at a public meeting and that members of the public shall be afforded an opportunity to present their views and comments to the Board in regard to the accommodation review. The notice shall also advise that the Board will not be adopting recommendations at this meeting nor otherwise deciding the outcome of the accommodation review. Written notice of the Board meeting shall be sent to the parents of the students and the staff of the affected schools, the clerk of the area municipality and all trustees. Notice of the Board meeting shall also be advertised in the local newspaper(s) and posted on the Board's website.

6.3 Following the Board meeting to evaluate the ARC's report, the Board shall provide at least sixty days notice of a second public meeting at which the Board shall vote on recommendations related to the accommodation review. The sixty day notice period shall exclude school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break. Written notice of the Board meeting shall be sent to the parents of the students and the staff of the affected schools, the clerk of the area municipality and all trustees. Notice of the Board meeting shall also be advertised in the local newspaper(s) and posted on the Board's website.

6.4 If the Board adopts a resolution to close a school, the Board shall establish timelines that will govern the closure of such school.

Appendix:

None

Document Links:

Effective Date

05/07/2007

Amended

Approved by

Distribution