

Policy Number and Name: 323 Viable Schools

Policy Section: 300 Board Governance

Effective Date: November 23, 2023

Revised Date: October 15, 2025

Purpose:

The Board, in its efforts to provide meaningful learning experiences that reflect what is best for students and to assist students in developing their full potential, recognizes that it needs to maintain viable schools and classrooms within the context of the entire Division.

In order to ensure quality education for its students, the Board may review the operation of any of its schools and consider discontinuing grade(s) or closing schools.

A School Community Council may initiate the review process by recommending to the Board that the school they represent be reviewed according to this Policy.

Review status is an opportunity to explore the facts; it does not necessarily mean the school will be closed or grades discontinued. This policy provides guidelines so that school reviews can be clearly predicted, giving the public assurance as to how and when a decision process might be initiated.

1) Legislative Conditions for Review

The Education Act, 1995 and *The School Division Administration Regulations* (“the Regulations”) set out the process and criteria around school reviews for closure or grade discontinuance.

Pursuant to *The School Division Administration Regulations*, the Board may only carry out a review of a school if the following conditions are met:

- a) For students in kindergarten to Grade 8 who are enrolled in the school:
 - i) the nearest school is not more than forty (40) kilometers from the school under review, based on the shortest route by regularly maintained roads;
 - ii) at least ninety per cent (90%) of those students live within seventy-five (75) minutes of the nearest school if travelling by motor vehicle under normal driving conditions; and
 - iii) the Board arranges for alternative transportation that minimizes the transportation time for those students who live more than seventy-five (75) minutes from the nearest school.

- b) Projected enrolment for the school under review for the following school year is less than:
 - i) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 4 only, twenty-five (25) students;
 - ii) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 5 only, thirty (30) students;
 - iii) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 6 only, thirty-seven (37) students;
 - iv) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 7 only, forty-four (44) students;
 - v) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 8 only, fifty-one (51) students;
 - vi) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 9 only, fifty-eight (58) students;
 - vii) for a school offering kindergarten to Grade 12 only, eighty-eight (88) students.

2) School Review Criteria

Pursuant to The School Division Administration Regulations, in carrying out a review of a school, the Board may consider the following:

- a) the physical condition of the school;
- b) the operational cost per pupil;
- c) the number of grades combined in each classroom;
- d) any additional criteria that the board of education considers relevant to the review.

3) Process for Placing a School in Review

- a) Enrolments for all schools will be monitored and reported to the Board on a regular basis. Schools with September enrolments that fall below, or are projected to fall below, the thresholds set the Regulations will be identified to the Board annually.
- b) For schools that meet the conditions for review, the Director will compile a report on the School Review criteria and report to the Board with a recommendation as to the review status of the school(s) following the timeline in Board Policy - Appendix J.
- c) The Board will consider the information and, if the Board wishes to place a school into the review process, will pass a motion to that effect by October 15.

4) Review Process

a) Consultation Process with School Community Council

Once a school is placed in review status, the Board will consult with the School Community Council and the community in accordance with the process set out in the Regulations.

- i) if the School Community Council consents to closure or grade discontinuance, the Board will make the appropriate motion;
- ii) if the School Community Council does not agree to the closure or grade discontinuance, the process continues as outlined below.

b) Information and Analysis

As per the Regulations, the Board will establish a School Review Committee and provide the following information to the School Review Committee and School Community Council by November 1 of the year in which the School Review Committee is established:

- i) the enrolment history of the school since January 1, 2006;
- ii) projected enrolment for the school for the following five (5) school years, and the source of this data;
- iii) current number of teaching and non-teaching staff at the school;
- iv) projected number of teaching staff based on projected enrolment and Board policy;
- v) information respecting the physical condition of the school; and
- vi) any other information that the Board plans to consider in reviewing the school.

c) Decision by the Board to Consider Possible Closure or Grade Discontinuance

- i) The information and data collected by the School Review Committee and the Director will be considered by the Board of Education.
- ii) If the Board decides to consider the closure of a school or the discontinuance of one or more grades taught at the school that has been the subject of a review, the Board must pass a motion, not later than February 1, to consider the possible closure of the school or discontinuance of one or more grades in the school, stating the effective date of the possible closure or discontinuance.

iii) The Board must inform the public of the motion passed.

d) Public meeting

The Board, not later than March 31 of the year in which the potential closure of the school or discontinuance of grades taught in the school is to come into effect, must hold a meeting of the electors of the School Community Council to advise the electors of the motion passed by the Board pursuant to *The School Division Administration Regulations*.

5) Decision Regarding Closure or Grade Discontinuance

a) After a thorough review of the information gathered and considering the consultations with the community, if the Board decides to close a school or to discontinue of one (1) or more grades taught in the school, the Board must pass a motion to that effect:

i) by no later than April 30 of the year in which the closure of the school or the discontinuance of grades taught in the school is to come into effect; and

ii) stating the effective date of the closure or discontinuance, determined in accordance with *The Regulations*.

b) In accordance with *The Regulations*, the Board must notify the public of the motion passed.

6) School Closures or Grade Reduction and Integration Process

In schools where the Board has passed a motion approving a school closure or grade discontinuance, the Director shall, in consultation with the School Community Council, develop and implement a Transition Plan by not later than June 15 of the year in which these changes are to come into effect that includes:

a) notifying the parents of the students attending the school affected;

b) consulting with the School Community Council;

c) consulting with all affected staff, parents, and community;

d) preparing an implementation schedule; and

e) ensuring that a familiarization program for new students and their parents is offered at the receiving school(s).

Reference:

The Education Act, 1995, Sections 85, 87, 347

The School Division Regulations, 2017, part 10