
HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION**POLICY HANDBOOK**

Policy Code: FL
Policy Title: School Closure
Cross Reference: BBA, FD
Legal Reference: *Education Act*, S.10, 62, & 192,
Real Property Governance Act,
Disposition of
Property Regulation
Adoption Date: December 18, 1996
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POLICY

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION RECOGNIZES THAT UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PERMANENTLY OR TEMPORARILY CLOSE A SCHOOL, OR TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM ONE SCHOOL BUILDING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL BUILDING.

DEFINITIONS

School closure means closing, for a period exceeding twelve (12) consecutive months, a school or school building for the purposes of providing educational programming to students. For greater clarity, this policy does not apply to the following decisions:

1. the closure of a school due to emergency, health, or safety reasons;
2. designation or re-designation of students to a school pursuant to section 10 of the Education Act; and/or
3. The closure of a school for renovations, modernizations or major maintenance if the Board intends to reopen the building upon completion of repairs, renovations or major maintenance.

GUIDELINES

1. This policy does not necessarily apply where the Minister directs a board to dispose of a school building pursuant to section 192 of the Education Act.
2. The board may, pursuant to section 62 of the Education Act and only by resolution, permanently or temporarily,
 - 2.1. close a school, or
 - 2.2. transfer students from one school building to another school building.
3. The Board will fulfill its fiduciary duties, and act consistent with the board's values and beliefs, when making decisions regarding school closures and student transfers.

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4. The board may opt to explore school closure or student transfers upon a formal board motion. Such a motion may be made by a trustee upon:
 - 4.1. a trustee's individual decision to make such a motion;
 - 4.2. a recommendation from the Superintendent of Schools; or
 - 4.3. a recommendation from the School Council.
 - 4.3.1. See Appendix A for recommended school council procedure to make a recommendation.
5. The process to permanently close a school must provide for:
 - 5.1. adequate opportunity for the public to respond to the board's proposal to permanently close a school;
 - 5.2. a process by which the board shall fairly consider responses provided under 5.1;
 - 5.3. consideration of future growth or decline in student enrolment; and
 - 5.4. consideration of possible alternative educational or community uses for all or part of the school building.
6. The disposition of a school once closed shall be as per policy FD: Disposition of Division Property.

REGULATIONS

1. When the board is considering an action referred to in guideline 2, the board shall,
 - 1.1. consider and make a decision on a proposed school closure or transfer of students from one school to another over two public meetings of the Board. At the first meeting the Board shall consider a resolution to commence public input into the proposed closure or transfer process; and
 - 1.2. shall not make the final decision to close a school, or transfer students until after the Board has provided an opportunity for public input and has given fair consideration to the public's input.
 - 1.3. When students are being transferred or a school is being closed due to a modernization or new construction, the board may by resolution forgo the opportunity for public input.
2. The Board shall provide a minimum of 60 calendar days for public input before making a final decision. The period for public input commences the day after the first public Board meeting at which a motion is passed in support of considering the proposed school closure or student transfer.
3. The Board may shorten the period for public input, including timelines for written input, if the Board is satisfied that there is a pressing need for a shorter time-period.
 - 3.1. A decision to shorten the 60-day period must be made by motion at a public meeting of the Board.
4. If the Board passes a motion to commence the public input process, the Board shall in writing, notify
 - 4.1. the parents of every student enrolled in the school, and

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- 4.2. any other person, municipality or community organization as determined by the board.
5. Such notice shall include:
 - 5.1. where individuals can access information about the proposed school closure and/or student transfer;
 - 5.2. process, method and timelines, for parents and other interested persons to provide written responses into the proposed decision;
 - 5.2.1. All written input must be received at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the date and time that the Board will deliberate and debate its decision to close a school and/or transfer students.
 - 5.3. the date and time of the meeting of the Board of Trustees where the matter will be deliberated; and
 - 5.4. any other information that the Board believes is relevant in the circumstances.
6. The Board shall at minimum engage in the following:
 - 6.1. organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of allowing public input into the decision;
 - 6.1.1. The entire Board shall endeavour to be present at the public meeting
 - 6.1.2. The date, time and place of the public input meeting will be advertised through a variety of methods. This will include sharing information with parents of students in the affected schools, school councils, employees, and by posting information on the Division and school websites, and by any other means that are likely to bring the matter to the attention of affected persons or groups as determined by the Board.
 - 6.1.3. The public meeting will include:
 - 6.1.3.1. a presentation setting out the rationale for the proposed closure and/or student transfer, including the pertinent facts and information, set out in the report prepared in support of the proposed closure and/or student transfer; and
 - 6.1.3.2. sharing information on the timing of the proposed closure and/or transfer, the accommodation plan for students affected by the closure and/or transfer, and information about possible future uses of the school building; and
 - 6.1.3.3. a means for the attendees to offer comment and questions.
7. When considering school closures and/or transfer of students to another school, the board should consider a variety of factors such as:
 - 7.1. Current student enrolment;
 - 7.2. Considerations of future growth or decline in student enrollment;

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- 7.3. The impact on educational programming offered to students;
 - 7.4. The impact on attendance areas, transportation services, and the proximity of receiving schools;
 - 7.5. Community, parent, student, and staff feedback;
 - 7.6. Facility condition and the impact, if any, on the Division's long-term capital plan.
 - 7.7. consideration of possible alternative educational or community uses for all or part the school building; and
 - 7.8. Financial considerations including community financial contributions, cost savings, and future disposition;
8. Where the board decides to close a school permanently, the board shall notify the Minister in writing forthwith and include
- 8.1. the name of the school, and
 - 8.2. the effective date of the closure.
9. The Board will notify parents of students in the school, affected staff, municipality and/or community groups of the decision, where in the opinion of the Board that municipality or community group warrants knowledge of the Board's decision, and provide the effective date of the decision, and any other information it deems relevant to support implementation of the decision.

Appendix A

Recommended Process for School Council Recommendation to Close a School and/or Transfer Students

1. School closure and/or transfer of students to another school placed on school council agenda
2. Agenda is broadly shared prior to the meeting with all parent, staff, and school council members
3. School council discusses whether to make recommendation to the Board regarding school closure and/or transfer of students to another school
4. School council members present at the school council meeting decide whether to seek broader school parent, staff, and/or student input and whether to conduct survey regarding whether to make a recommendation to close the school and/or transfer students to another school
5. Collaboration with the superintendent to
 - 5.1. develop a survey questions
 - 5.2. develop background information to accompanies the survey
 - 5.3. select survey administration tool (e.g. online, paper, etc)
 - 5.4. determine time frame to response to the survey
 - 5.5. determine response rate threshold to act on survey results
 - 5.6. determine response threshold to act on survey results
6. Survey is administered
7. School council determines whether threshold is met to make recommendation
8. School council writes recommendation to the Board via the Superintendent