



**DIVISION: BOARD**

**Policy #: Gov-104**

**POLICY NAME**  
SCHOOL REVIEW

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Board of Trustees (“Board”) for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (“District”) is mandated to organize and administer primary, elementary and secondary education in the District. In doing so the Board strives to make the best use of school infrastructure, financial and human resources for all of the students in the Province. Through its capital priorities planning process, the Board may initiate a school review, in order to maximize resources in a particular area and to assess the sustainability of a school facility and its educational programming.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The Board administers over 250 schools for approximately 67,000 students. Many of the schools were constructed to accommodate the large number of children born in the fifties and sixties. The K-12 student population has been consistently declining across the Province for many years, except for a few urban areas. Today the Board is coping with aging infrastructure that frequently accommodates significantly smaller numbers of students than the schools were built to accommodate. Alternately, the District is coping with capacity issues in schools in certain areas of the Province experiencing population growth.

The Board has also been steadily improving educational outcomes for students and has a strong focus on numeracy, literacy and the use of technology for teaching and learning. The Board is focused on the efficient and effective use of resources in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students in our system.

The school review process is conducted by the Board when there are areas of concern related to student enrollment, program delivery and/or facilities.

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## SCOPE

This policy will apply when the Board decides that a school review is in order, and where a grade reconfiguration, catchment reconfiguration or school closure are possible outcomes.

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## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

### *GRADE CONFIGURATION*

Grade configuration refers to the grade groupings established for a school or school system (e.g. K-3, K-12).

### *CATCHMENT CONFIGURATION*

Catchment configuration refers to the geographic zone for a school or school system. Students within a specific catchment area register for the relevant school located in/designated for that catchment area.

### *NOTICE OF MOTION*

A notice of motion refers to the notice given at a school board meeting that a matter will be discussed and voted on at a future meeting.

### *AFFECTED STAKEHOLDER*

Affected stakeholders refer to individuals or groups impacted by the potential outcome of a school review, including parents/guardians of students currently attending school and agencies located in a school such as a library or Family Resource Centre.

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## POLICY DIRECTIVES

1. A school review may be initiated, based on one or more of the following considerations:
  - Declining enrollment creates excess physical capacity in a school building;
  - The school is in need of significant capital improvements and/or there are safety/environmental concerns associated with the school;
  - There are potential opportunities to enhance program delivery through reconfiguration of schools and/or catchment areas;
  - Changing demographics require catchment reconfiguration;
  - The school population creates capacity challenges (e.g. exceeds optimal capacity); and/or
  - Other circumstances that, in the opinion of the Board, merits a review of existing school facilities.

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2. As part of the District’s capital priority planning process, district staff may identify schools for potential review by the Board, based on the considerations outlined in Policy Directive #1.
3. The Board determines that a school review is in order and district staff begin compiling all relevant information.
4. A school review will be conducted in a manner that respects the principles of procedural fairness, and provides the opportunity for parents/guardians, and where appropriate, other affected stakeholders, to be informed about the review and to have input.
5. When a school review is conducted the options to be considered by the Board are:
  - Maintain status quo;
  - Modify or replace facility and/or enhance programs;
  - Reconfigure the grades in a school;
  - Reconfigure the catchment area for the school; or,
  - Close the school.
6. A School Review Profile (SRP) will be developed. When schools are being reviewed for potential closure information will be developed and considered for six areas:
  1. Student enrollment
  2. Programming and services
  3. Facility
  4. Transportation
  5. Finances
  6. School(s) where students will be transferred.

***(See Appendix A for more details)***
7. The general process for conducting a school review is as follows:
  - Based on capital priority planning information and input from staff, the Board will decide that a school review is in order and provide direction to the Director of Education to compile relevant information.
  - A timeline for the review will be determined, allowing reasonable time for consultation.
  - Notice is provided to parents/guardians and members of the school community.
  - Meetings are scheduled with school council(s) at the affected schools. The meetings will include an overview of the school review and solicit feedback from the councils.
  - Meetings are scheduled with other stakeholders as determined necessary by the Board, and follow a similar format.
  - Various methods of obtaining feedback from parents/guardians and the school community will be utilized, including online tools.

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- District staff will compile relevant information as outlined in the SRP.
  - The Board will review information compiled for a school review and make a determination as to how to proceed.
8. Consultation Process – Grade or Catchment Area Reconfiguration:
- If the Board decides to propose a grade or catchment area reconfiguration, the consultation process and timelines may be less onerous than those for a school closure. The Board will determine the extent of the consultation process on a case by case basis, but it will include prior notice to parents/guardians and, where appropriate, other affected stakeholders; making information available from the School Review; and, allowing reasonable time for feedback.
  - The Board will approve a reconfiguration by way of motion at a public board meeting.
9. Consultation Process – School Closure:
- If the Board decides to propose a school closure, the Board will make a Notice of Motion at a public board meeting.
  - Public notice will be given immediately after the board meeting of the proposal to close the school, and information from the School Review will be made available to parents/guardians and, where appropriate, other affected stakeholders.
  - Parents/guardians and other stakeholders will be able to make submissions in writing through email, fax, regular mail, online sources or by dropping submissions off at the school.
  - When the Board decides to propose a school closure, at least one public meeting will be held where parents/guardians and other stakeholders are provided the opportunity to make presentations to the Board. The meeting will be held not less than 30 days after the Notice of Motion.
- (See Appendix B for additional details)***
10. If the Board votes to reconfigure or close a school, notice will be provided to parents/guardians and other stakeholders.
11. If the Board votes to reconfigure or close a school, a transition planning process will be initiated to address programming, staffing, infrastructure, transportation and other factors. This will be done in consultation with school councils, parents/guardians, staff/relevant unions.
12. The school review and public consultation process does not apply when a facility has been destroyed or significantly damaged by fire, structural failure or circumstances that present a significant and immediate health or safety threat or when those affected agree to a school reconfiguration or closure.

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# APPENDIX A

## School Review Profile (SRP)

*(This will be used by staff as a guideline for preparing information on a school under review. This is a guideline only and not all information outlined below will be compiled for all schools under review. Relevant information for the SRP will be determined on a school by school basis.)*

### 1. STUDENT ENROLLMENT

- Historic and current student enrollment figures for the school and individual grade levels as well as available projections.
- Grade configuration
- Class size
- School system description

### 2. PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

- Impact on a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students due to declining enrollment.
- Reorganization potential to enhance learning opportunities for students.
- Class composition
- Core curriculum
- Kindergarten
- French
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular programming
- Staffing
- CDLI
- Optional programming
- Specialist spaces and resources (e.g. Music, Art)
- Student Support Services
- Community programs in school (e.g. library, childcare, breakfast program)

### 3. FACILITY

- Geography
- Age of facility
- Capital projects/repairs carried out in recent years
- Capital projects/repairs required
- Health/environmental concerns
- Infrastructure to support programming
- Capacity and utilization

### 4. TRANSPORTATION

- Transportation description and resources required
- Distance to proposed school
- Potential challenges and opportunities with transportation to proposed school

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5. FINANCES

- School operating costs
- Transportation costs
- Funds required for capital projects/repairs

6. SCHOOL(S) WHERE STUDENTS WILL BE TRANSFERRED

- What is the capacity of the proposed school to accommodate the students?
- What changes and associated costs will be required at the school to accommodate the students?
- How will programming be maintained or enhanced for the incoming students?
- Other relevant information?

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## APPENDIX B

### Consultation Protocol for School Review

1. District staff develop initial information on schools for potential review, based on the criteria outlined in Policy Directive #1.
2. The Board determines that a school review is in order. This will normally be determined in a closed session. District staff begin compiling all relevant information. School administrators will be immediately advised of the decision and be requested to notify school staff and the school council.
3. Following the notification of the school administrator, staff and school council, the Board will make the information regarding the school review available to the public. Notice will be provided to parents/guardians and other stakeholders that a school review will take place. The notice will be provided in a variety of ways including through:
  - a) Memo home;
  - b) District website;
  - c) Other media.
4. Meetings will be scheduled with school council(s) at the affected schools. The meetings will include an overview of the school review and solicit feedback from the councils.
5. Meetings will be scheduled with other stakeholders as determined necessary by the Board, and follow a similar format.
6. Parents/guardians and other stakeholders will be able to submit commentary on the school review through various means including via the District's public website.

#### SCHOOL/CATCHMENT AREA RECONFIGURATION

7. If the Board decides to propose a grade or catchment area reconfiguration, the consultation process and timelines may be less onerous than those for a school closure. The Board will determine the extent of the consultation process on a case by case basis, but it will include prior notice to parents/guardians and, where appropriate, other affected stakeholders; making information available from the School Review; and, allowing reasonable time for feedback.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURE

8. If the Board decides to propose a school closure, the Board will provide public notice through a variety of ways that the motion to close will be voted on at a specific date at a public board meeting.

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9. At least one public meeting will be held to allow parents/guardians and other stakeholders the opportunity to make presentations to the Board. Presentations must be pre-scheduled through the Director's Office. The Board reserves the right to limit the time for each presentation, typically ten minutes. A group must designate one spokesperson to speak on its behalf. Those presenting can also provide copies of their submissions to the Board. The public meeting will be held not less than 30 days from the Notice of Motion. Public meetings will normally be recorded.
10. The Executive Committee of the Board will review and potentially modify the in-person attendance of trustees at the public meeting on a case by case basis. All trustees will have the option of attending the meeting through electronic means where possible and will be provided access to a video recording for their review.
11. Parents/guardians will be able to provide feedback until three days before the vote.
12. Feedback will be summarized and provided to the Board.
13. Information used to make the decision to re-configure or close a school, including the feedback summary, will be made available to stakeholders.

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