

CONSOLIDATION AND CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

The Board of Education recognizes that declining and shifting student populations may necessitate closure of schools. Before any decision is made, the Board will make its proposed plans regarding closure clear to all concerned, provide ample lead time and support a process that provides an opportunity for consultation with those who will be affected.

Specifically, the Board recognizes that the number and location of schools must be balanced with educational program needs and operational efficiency. This must be considered within available resources. If, at any time on its own initiative or upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board intends to consider a motion which proposes the closure of any school, the Board shall give notice of its intent to do so at a Regular open meeting of the Board, undertake a full and comprehensive consultation process of no less than ninety days, discuss and make a decision on the closure at a subsequent open meeting of the Board.

1. Consolidation and/or Closure Process

- 1.1 The Board, by resolution at an open meeting of the Board, may give notice that it intends to close a school.
- 1.2 As early as possible in the calendar year, the Superintendent shall present to the Board at a Regular open meeting, an analysis of schools using the criteria set out below, and make any recommendations for the closure of schools:
 - 1.2.1 Student achievement and education programs
 - 1.2.2 Capacity and usage of the school
 - 1.2.3 Present and three to five-year enrolment projections
 - 1.2.4 Impact on transportation
 - 1.2.5 Condition of the facility and the need for capital expenditures to keep the building operational
 - 1.2.6 Other financial considerations
 - 1.2.7 Impact on the community
 - 1.2.8 Any additional information considered pertinent
- 1.3 The Board will consider the information provided by the Superintendent and either,
 - 1.3.1 Conclude that no action or further study is required; or,
 - 1.3.2 Begin the consultation process.

2. **Public Consultation Process**

- 2.1 Whether the decision to consider the possible closure of a school is on the Board's initiative or upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the consultation period shall be no less than 90 days and shall consist of the procedures set out below.
- 2.2 One of the purposes of the public consultation process is to afford the Board, at a public information meeting, an opportunity to:
 - 2.2.1 Present its reasons for proposing the closure of a school; or,
 - 2.2.2 Hear the Superintendent's reasons for recommending the closure of a school and at a separate public forum to be conducted at a later date;
 - 2.2.3 Receive the responses of those concerned.
- 2.3 All trustees are expected to adopt a position of neutrality throughout the consultation process. They are to attend the public information meeting, the individual meetings with invited community leaders and the public forum, a description of each of which follows.
- 2.4 The Board Chair shall notify the parents in writing that the school has been identified for possible closure. The Board Chair shall indicate the purposes, dates and venues of the public information meeting the public forum as well as the date of the Board Meeting at which a decision on school closure will be made.
- 2.5 The Superintendent will notify the school Principal and the Parents' Advisory Council Executive in writing that the school has been identified for possible closure and shall indicate the purposes, dates and venues of the public information meeting and the public forum, as well as the date of the Board Meeting at which a decision on school closure will be made.
- 2.6 The Board Chair will advise the following groups and individuals in writing that the school has been identified for possible closure and of the purposes, dates and venues of the public information meeting and the public forum, as well as issue an individual invitation to meet with the Board:
 - 2.6.1 The Vancouver Island West Teachers' Union
 - 2.6.2 The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2769
 - 2.6.3 The Member of the Legislative Assembly
 - 2.6.4 Municipal Government Leaders
 - 2.6.5 First Nations' Chiefs and Council

The Board shall use the local media and the District's website to advertise the purposes, dates and venues of the public information meeting and the public forum, in sufficient time to enable individuals or community groups to respond.

3. **Public Information Meeting**

The Superintendent shall make available at a public information meeting facts and information with respect to the proposed school closure, including:

- 3.1 Student achievement and education programs
- 3.2 Capacity and usage of the school
- 3.3 Present and three to five-year enrolment projections
- 3.4 Impact on transportation
- 3.5 Condition of the facility and the need for capital expenditures to keep the building operational
- 3.6 Other financial considerations
- 3.7 Impact on the community
- 3.8 Any additional information considered pertinent
- 3.9 Options considered as alternatives to the proposed closure
- 3.10 Implementation plans including the proposed effective date of the closure
- 3.11 Date of the meeting at which the Board will make a decision on closure of the school
- 3.12 An opportunity shall be provided for a question period at the public information meeting.

4. **Written Responses**

The Board shall provide an adequate opportunity for individuals and representatives of community groups to submit written responses to the school closure information presented at the public information meeting, with directions as to how to submit written responses and the closure date for receipt of written responses including petitions, seven clear days before the meeting at which the Board will make a decision on the closure of the school.

5. **Individual Meetings with Community Leaders**

The Board shall conduct individual meetings with the community leaders and representatives of the groups identified in this policy. The Board will hear responses and answer questions regarding the proposed closure of the school. The meetings shall be open to the public with the exception of Closed meetings that may be requested by partner groups or community leaders. The Board will keep a public record of Closed meetings.

6. **Public Forum**

The Board shall host a public forum at which individuals and representatives of community groups may address the Board on the proposed school closure.

7. **Public Record**

The Board shall keep a public record of the school closure consultation process, including copies of all correspondence from the Board Chair and the Superintendent dates, advertising, names of attendees, agendas and minutes of the public information meeting, the individual meetings with community leaders and the public forum; and all written correspondence received by individual trustees and the Board.

8. **Board Decision**

At the end of the ninety day consultation period, the Board, at an open meeting, shall consider the information provided during the consultation process and by adopting a bylaw, make a final decision as to whether the school will be closed.

9. **Notification of the Minister**

If the Board decides to permanently close a school under Section 73 of the *School Act*, the Board shall, without delay, notify the Minister in writing of the decision and the following information:

1. The school's name, facility number and address;
2. The date on which the school will close.

Legal Reference: Section 73, 168, *School Act*