

POLICY 15

SCHOOL AND GRADE DIVISION CLOSURES

In respect to school closure, the Board believes that an orderly and fair process should be in place to provide the Board appropriate information prior to any decision being made. This policy sets out the process leading to the consideration of school or grade division closure.

Specifically:

1. Hutterite Colony schools shall not be subject to this policy.
2. When the Superintendent determines that circumstances exist which support the closure of a school or grade division, a report shall be presented to the Board at its October meeting describing these circumstances and recommending that the Board study the need to close the school and/or grade division. The factors to be considered shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas as described in the School Act regulations:
 - 2.1 Student access to a quality basic education program
 - 2.2 The economic viability of the school operation
 - 2.3 The existence of a safe physical environment for students
 - 2.4 Utilization of the school building(s)
 - 2.5 The best interest of the overall management of the school system
 - 2.6 Proximity to other schools relative to busing
 - 2.7 Enrolment trends
 - 2.8 Population demographics in the local community
3. If the Board agrees that the above factors warrant consideration of a school or grade division closure, it shall arrange for a committee of the Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, Board chair, and local trustee(s) to meet with the School Council Executive to review the above factors and obtain input from the School Council Executive. The committee shall report back to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
4. When the Board is considering the closure of a school or grade division, the Board shall:
 - 4.1 Raise the matter through a notice of motion at a regular meeting of the Board; and
 - 4.2 In writing, notify the parents of every child and student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the Board, will be significantly affected by the closure of the school and/or a particular grade division.

5. A notice referred to in subsection 4.2 shall set out the following:
 - 5.1 How the closure or grade division reduction would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 5.2 How the closure or grade division reduction would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 5.3 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure or grade reduction division;
 - 5.4 The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 5.5 Program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 5.6 The educational and financial impact of closing the school or the grade division reduction, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - 5.7 The educational and financial impact if the school or grade division were to remain open;
 - 5.8 The time and location of the public meeting referred to in sub-section 6.1.
6. When the Board is considering the closure of a school or grade division reduction, the Board:
 - 6.1 Shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing:
 - 6.1.1 The closure/grade division reduction and the implications for the students, for the community and for the school system, and all information provided in the notice referred to in Clause 5 above.
 - 6.1.2 Implementation plans for the closure or grade division reduction.
 - 6.1.3 Alternatives to the closure or grade division reduction.
 - 6.2 Shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located to provide a statement to the Board of the impact the closure or graded division reduction may have on the community, and
 - 6.3 May hold other meetings with respect to the closure or grade division reduction at times and places as the Board may determine.
7. The date and place of the public meeting referred to in subsection 6.1 shall be:
 - 7.1 Posted in five or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure or grade division reduction, for a period of at least 14 days before the date of the public meeting; and
 - 7.2 Advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure or grade division

reduction, on at least two occasions as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting.

8. At least two trustees of the Board shall attend the public meeting referred to in subsection 6.1.
9. The Board shall ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.
10. The Board shall not make a final decision on the proposed closure or grade division reduction until at least three weeks have passed since the date of the public meeting referred to in sub-section 6.1.
11. The Board shall give due consideration to any submissions on the proposed closure or grade division reduction that it receives after the public meeting referred to in sub-section 6.1.
12. The Board:
 - 12.1 Shall by resolution decide whether to close the school or implement the grade division reduction; and
 - 12.2 If the decision is to close the school or reduce a grade division, shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
13. All school closure, grade division reduction procedures shall be initiated and completed within the school year in which the decision to close the school or reduce the grade divisions in the site is made. However the board may make a written request of the Minister asking that the school closure procedures be extended beyond one school year.

Legal Reference: Section 58, 200, 201, School Act
Alberta Education Regulation 257/2003
Closure of Schools Regulation 238/97

Adopted: August 2004

Revised: November 2015