

SCHOOL CLOSURES

The Board believes that the students of the Division must have the opportunity to receive educational programs that are characterized by excellence, equity and efficiency. In achieving this objective it may be necessary to close a school or a portion of a school's educational program for operational and/or financial reasons.

Specifically

1. The Board recognizes that there are certain critical factors that must be met by a school in order to exist as a viable educational institution.
 - 1.1 A combination of the following critical factors shall be the measures used in the Division as the signal for the need to review the viability of a school.
 - 1.1.1 Critical program factors
 - 1.1.1.1 The number of grades or courses in one (1) classroom is three (3);
 - 1.1.1.2 School-based personnel deliver less than one-half of the educational program;
 - 1.1.1.3 The Division cannot provide staff with adequate background to teach the range of subjects necessary for the student's program of studies.
 - 1.1.2 Critical minimum enrolment
 - 1.1.2.1 Elementary – thirty (30) students in any three (3) consecutive grades;
 - 1.1.2.2 Junior High – thirty (30) students in grades 7, 8 and 9;
 - 1.1.2.3 High School – seventy-five (75) students in grades 10, 11, 12.
 - 1.1.3 Critical minimum revenue
 - 1.1.3.1 The staff as determined by the Division student/teacher ratio factor as set out in the annual budget is not achievable;
 - 1.1.3.2 The school budget cannot support the required support staff;
 - 1.1.3.3 The school budget cannot support the identified percentage of the combined teacher and support staff budget for operations.
2. The Board will undertake any school closure in compliance with the terms of the School Act and Alberta Regulation 238/1997 with amendments up to and including Alberta Regulation 231/2012 – Closure of Schools Regulation.
 - 2.1 The following criteria shall be utilized in considering the closure of a school:
 - 2.1.1 Student enrolments;

- 2.1.2 Location and suitability of alternative school accommodation for the students affected;
 - 2.1.3 Program implications for students currently in the schools to which a transfer of students could be effected and the implications for those who could be transferred;
 - 2.1.4 Program implications for other schools to which students could be transferred;
 - 2.1.5 Transportation needs of all students potentially affected and the implications on both a local and Division basis;
 - 2.1.6 Factors related to the school building which include but are not limited to:
 - 2.1.6.1 The age and expected life of the building;
 - 2.1.6.2 Building modernization requirements; and,
 - 2.1.6.3 Educational program needs.
 - 2.1.7 The educational and financial impact of closure and non-closure which will include, but is not limited to, on both a local and a Division basis:
 - 2.1.7.1 The effect upon operational costs; and,
 - 2.1.7.2 Capital implications.
 - 2.1.8 The capital needs of the school or the schools which may experience increased enrollments as a result of a transfer of students.
- 2.2 Where the Board is considering a closure, there shall be a notice of motion, at a regular meeting of the Board, proposing that specific schools, a school or a portion of a school, be closed.
3. There will be effective communication to parent(s) of students attending the school and the electors in the attendance area of a school being considered for closure.
- 3.1 The Board shall communicate information and implications of the possible school closure, in writing, to the parent(s) 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.
- Such communication shall set out the following:
- 3.1.1 How the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - 3.1.2 How the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - 3.1.3 Information on the Board's long-range capital plan;
 - 3.1.4 The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - 3.1.5 The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - 3.1.6 Program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - 3.1.7 The educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - 3.1.8 The educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - 3.1.9 The time and location of the public meeting referred to in procedure 3.2.1.

- 3.1.10 The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure, and
 - 3.1.11 The possible uses of the school building or space in the school building if:
 - 3.1.11.1 The entire school is being closed, or
 - 3.1.11.2 Three (3) or more consecutive grades in the school are being closed entirely.
 - 3.2 Where the Board is considering the closure of a school, the Board:
 - 3.2.1 Shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing:
 - 3.2.1.1 The closure and the implications of the closure for the students, for the community and for the school system;
 - 3.2.1.2 Implementation plans for the closure; and
 - 3.2.1.3 Alternatives to the closure.
 - 3.2.2 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 may have on the community, and
 - 3.2.3 May hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the Board may determine.
 - 3.3 The date and time of the public meeting referred to in clause 3.2.1 shall be:
 - 3.3.1 Posted in five (5) or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the public meeting; and,
 - 3.3.2 Advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least two (2) occasions as close to as is practicable to the date of the meeting.
 - 3.4 At least two (2) trustees of the Board shall attend the public meeting referred to in clause 3.2.1.
 - 3.5 The Board will ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.
 - 3.6 Following the meeting referred to in clause 3.2.1, there shall be a minimum of three (3) weeks for electors to present to the Board further responses, including preferred alternatives, to the possible closure.
 - 3.7 The Board shall give due consideration to any submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting referred to in clause 3.2.1.
 - 3.8 The final debate by the Board and the vote upon the resolution shall occur only after clauses 3.1 through 3.7 have been completed.
4. The Board may:
- 4.1 Close a school permanently or for a specified period of time;
 - 4.2 Close entirely three (3) or more consecutive grades in a school; or
 - 4.3 Transfer all students from one (1) school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent basis.

5. All school closure procedures shall be initiated and completed within the school year in which the decision to close the school is made.
 - 5.1 Notwithstanding the statement in section 5 above, on the written request of the Board, the Minister may extend the school closure procedures beyond one school year.
6. The Board may close a school for the purpose of transferring a school building to another Board if the school building will continue to be used for the instruction or accommodation of students of that Board (referred to as a “closure/transfer decision”).
 - 6.1 Clauses 1.1 to 3.8 and the checklist in Policy 15 – Appendix A–do not apply to a school closure/transfer decision. The Board may make any decision about school closure/ transfer that, in its opinion, is reasonable in the circumstances.
 - 6.2 If the decision of the Board is to close/transfer the school, the Board shall forthwith notify the Minister in writing of the decision.
 - 6.3 A school closure/transfer decision must be made at a meeting in the school year in which the decision to close/transfer the school is made.

Legal Reference: Section 45, 45.1, 58, 60, 113, 200, 201, 270, 271 School Act
Alberta Regulation 238/1997 – Closure of Schools Regulation with amendments up to and including Alberta Regulation 231/2012

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