

# YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



| BOARD POLICY   |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <i>Policy Section</i><br><b>Facilities</b>                         | <i>Policy Number</i><br><b>713</b> |
| <i>Former Policy #</i>   | <i>Page</i><br><b>1 of 14</b>      |
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## Policy Title: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

### SECTION A:

#### 1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board recognizes its responsibility to provide effective and appropriate accommodation for the pupils of the Board. In keeping with this obligation, the Board, staff, and members of our Catholic Learning Community must consistently be aware of best education practices, assess the effectiveness of current situations, and make appropriate decisions to ensure suitable and equitable learning environments for all students. There may be times when it is appropriate to consider consolidation of schools or programs, closure of a school(s) or relocation of a major program in order to provide an optimum learning opportunity. Subject to the Parameters set out below, when any of the above actions are to be considered, the Board requires maximum participation and input into the process from all stakeholders and adherence to the guidelines outlined in this policy. The Board will make available through the web or in hard copy at the Catholic Education Centre, copies of the *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines* released by the Ministry of Education on October 31, 2006 and the companion document: *Administrative Review of the Accommodation Review Process*.

#### 2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board that reviews of pupil accommodation will conform to the expectations of this policy and the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines of the Ministry of Education.

#### 3. PARAMETERS

All decisions under this policy will take into account the Board's Long-Term Capital Plan.

The following are actions to which this Policy does not apply:

- 3.1 Where a replacement school is to be rebuilt by the Board on the existing site or located within the existing school attendance boundary as identified through the Board's existing policies; i.e., replacement of a rural school within its existing rural community;
- 3.3 When a lease is terminated;
- 3.4 When the Board is considering the relocation of a grade or grades, or a program, where the enrolment in the grade or grades, or program, constitutes less than 50% of the enrolment of the school;

- 3.5 When the Board is repairing, rebuilding or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;
- 3.6 Where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is under construction or repair.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The specific responsibilities of various stakeholders are described in Section B - Guidelines and summarized below:

- 4.1 Director of Education and Associate Directors – Sections 1.0 and 3.1
- 4.2 Superintendents – Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 4.0
- 4.3 Principal, staff, students and parents – Sections 2.2 and 4.0
- 4.4 Recording secretary and resource staff – Sections 2.7, 3.0 and 3.3
- 4.5 The Board – Sections 3.2 and 3.4

#### **5. CROSS REFERENCES**

Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines

Ministry document: Administrative Review of the Accommodation Review Process

Generic School Valuation Framework

# **PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

## **SECTION B**

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **1. PRELIMINARY REPORT**

The Director of Education will present a preliminary report to the Board identifying a school or group of schools in which challenges may be faced in providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students, and in respect of which there may be a need to consider the possible consolidation, closure or major program relocation in respect of one or more schools.

A school or group of schools may be considered for study if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- 1.1 The school or group of schools is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
- 1.2 The school or group of schools has experienced or will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment;
- 1.3 Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;
- 1.4 Teaching/learning spaces are not suitable to provide the programs needed to serve the community and retrofitting may be cost prohibitive;
- 1.5 Under normal staffing allocation practices, it would be necessary to assign three grades to one class in one or more of the schools;
- 1.6 One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements or has been classified as prohibitive to Repair by the ministry;
- 1.7 In respect of one or more of the schools there are safety and/or environmental concerns attached to the building, the school site or its locality;
- 1.8 The consolidation of schools is in the best interests of the overall school system;
- 1.9 It has been no less than five years since the inception of a study of the school by a Program and Accommodation Review Committee, except where extenuating circumstances warrant, such as an unexpected economic or demographic shift, or a change in a school's physical condition;
- 1.10 Other triggers.

#### **2. ESTABLISHING AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

After reviewing the Preliminary Report, the Board may direct the formation of an Accommodation Review Committee ("ARC") for a group of schools or for a single school.

Parents/guardians, staff and school council members of the affected schools will be informed within one week, in writing, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision to form an ARC and the decision will be posted on the Board's website.

##### **2.1 MANDATE OF THE ARC**

The ARC will study, report and make recommendations on the accommodation options respecting the group of schools or single school referred to it in the manner set out below.

## **2.2 COMPOSITION OF THE ARC**

The ARC will consist of the following persons:

- Appropriate Superintendent of Education;
- From each affected school:
  - the school principal or designate
  - one teacher
  - one non-teaching staff member
  - three parents - one of whom will be the school council chair or designate;

The ARC will also invite the following to join the ARC:

- a parish representative,
- municipal councilor or designate and
- a member of the business community

The ARC will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all of the listed members are willing and able to participate.

The ARC has the authority to co-opt additional members.

## **2.3 OPERATION OF THE ARC**

The Board will appoint the Chair of the ARC. The Chair will convene and chair meetings, and will, in cooperation with the identified board staff persons, ensure that the ARC successfully carries out its obligations under this Policy.

The Superintendent of Education, Schools will function as secretary and resource person.

Other resource personnel can be requested to provide information to the ARC including employees or consultants for third party private and public bodies such as municipalities, post-secondary institutions and coterminous school boards.

Where an ARC cannot reach consensus on an issue, a voting mechanism may be introduced in accordance with Section C.

## **2.4 MEETINGS OF THE ARC**

The ARC will complete its work within the timelines in this Policy.

The ARC Chair will call the first public meeting of the ARC no earlier than sixty (60) days after the date of its appointment, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

The ARC will meet as often as required.

Prior to the first public meeting, the ARC will customize the Board's generic School Valuation Framework and the School-specific Valuation Factors referred to in the Appendix for application to the schools under review. The ARC may add factors to both but may not subtract or alter factors. The ARC will make the customized School Valuation Framework and the School Valuation Factors public prior to its public meetings.

The ARC will hold at least four public meetings: in accessible facilities:

- a) At the first public meeting, the ARC will describe its mandate, outline its study process, and give the public a briefing on the data and issues to be addressed. The ARC will also describe how the School Valuation Framework and the School-specific Valuation Factors referred to in the Appendix have been customized. The ARC will receive community input.
- b) At the second public meeting, the ARC will present its draft school-specific valuation reports applying the School Valuation Factors listed in the Appendix to the schools under consideration to the public and will receive community input.
- c) At the third public meeting, the ARC will receive community input on the accommodation options to be considered and will receive community input.
- d) At the fourth public meeting, the ARC will present its draft School Valuation Report and recommendations to the public and will receive community input. The ARC may make changes to the report based on feedback at the meeting.

Public notice of the public meetings will be provided through school newsletters, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers, and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number. Notice of the first public meeting will be provided no less than sixty (60) days in advance of the meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break. A minimum of two weeks notice will be provided in respect of the other public meetings.

Meetings of the ARC will be open to the public as observers.

Detailed minutes will be kept of the ARC meetings and will be posted on the Board's website.

The ARC will provide information to the affected school communities on an ongoing basis.

## **2.5 THE WORK OF THE ARC**

As noted above, the York Catholic District School Board is committed to providing the best educational opportunities for its resident pupils. Active curriculum and programming decisions that might require school consolidation, closure or program relocation must take into account the needs of all of the students in all of the schools in a particular group, recognizing that the schools form a community and have a common set of interests. The Board encourages ARCs to work actively against any inclination for individual school communities to divide into adversarial groups.

Attention should first be paid to the current educational situation in the school or group of schools and how it is likely to evolve if things are left as they are. Attention should then be paid to the potential for enhancing the learning environment for students. The questions set out below are intended to help the ARC to focus on common issues in order to reach a constructive and positive outcome. It is not possible, however, to avoid the assessment of individual schools.

In carrying out its mandate the ARC will weigh the value of the schools to the student above the other factors to be assessed.

## **2.6 ARC SCHOOL VALUATION REPORT FRAMEWORK**

In respect of the school or group of schools being studied, the ARC will consider the questions set out in the ARC Report Framework, and may consider such additional questions as it determines to be relevant.

In answering these questions, the ARC will consider the School Valuation Factors listed in the Appendix, both in respect of the existing organization of the schools and any proposed organization, and may add factors to be addressed:

- a. Does the school or group of schools currently provide the range of mandatory programs required to meet the Ministry of Education policies and ensure program quality for all the students of the District School Board who reside in the catchment area?
- b. Does the school or group of schools currently provide the range of optional programs required to ensure an appropriate education and program quality for all the students? What optional programs cannot be offered currently that are available in other District School Board schools?
- c. Is the operation of the schools or size of schools supported by the funding guidelines of the Student-Focused Funding Model or are there other sustainable sources of revenue to support the operation?
- d. Do enrolment projections and development plans indicate that the enrolments will be high enough for the next five years to keep the current organization educationally and financially viable?
- e. Is there a proposed organization of all or some of the existing schools that could result in each remaining school being able to provide the range of mandatory programs required to meet the Ministry of Education policies and ensure program quality for the Board's students who reside in the existing or proposed catchment area, and that could result in each remaining school being able to provide the range of optional programs required to ensure an appropriate education and equity for all the students? What optional programs could be offered in the proposed organization that are available in other District School Board schools?
- f. Can the proposed school organization result in an equivalent or improved environment for the students from a health and safety perspective?
- g. What bussing would be required under the proposed organization? If there are increased bussing costs, can these be offset by reduced operating and administrative resource costs?
- h. What are the financial benefits of the proposed school organization that would enable the Board to maintain or improve the student learning environment? Would the operation of the proposed school organization be supported by the funding guidelines of the Student-Focused Funding Model or are there other sustainable sources of revenue to support the operation of this organization?
- i. What are the capital requirements of the proposed school organization be in terms of renewal, additions, new schools or program enhancements? Would they be supported by the funding guidelines of the Student-Focused Funding Model or are there other sustainable sources of revenue to support the capital requirements, such as the shared use of a building or site?
- j. Do alternative organizations of all or some of the schools offer better long term opportunities to provide quality educational services and accommodation for students within current fiscal realities?
- k. What effects would the proposed organization have on community activities of social, educational, cultural or recreational nature?
- l. What are the possible alternative uses for any building recommended for consolidation or closure?

## **2.7 Information and Documentation**

An information package necessary to permit the ARC to carry out its mandate will be provided no later than at the commencement of the ARC's first public meeting.

The package will include the following with plain language explanations, which will also be made available to the public via posting on the Board's website and in print format at the Catholic Education Centre:

- a) The most recent Long Term Capital Plan of the Board to provide a context for the accommodation review;
- b) Background information regarding the schools located within the area of the accommodation review. This information is to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
  - a. Organization and programming information for each school under study
  - b. Maps of area
  - c. Enrolment and capacity information for each school in the review area;
  - d. Information outlining where students attending each school in the review area reside;
  - e. Demographic projections concerning future enrolments at schools within the review area;
  - f. Information on transportation
  - g. Floor plans of schools under study
  - h. Site plans of schools under study
  - i. Data on portables
  - j. Expenditures and revenues for each school in the review area with particular emphasis on school operations (ie heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance), school administration and staffing;
  - k. Information regarding renewal needs of each school in the review area; and
  - l. Information regarding the current community use of each school in the review area.
  - i. Tenant information/agreements and other relevant information.

Board Staff will respond to reasonable requests for additional information from the ARC, as directed by the chair and will append responses to the minutes of the meetings at which the questions prompting the responses were raised, and will post the responses on the Board's website.

## **2.8 THE ARC SCHOOL VALUATION REPORT**

The ARC will prepare a School Valuation Report addressing the questions set out earlier in this policy and those that it chooses to add, and will provide its advice to Staff and the Board on the matters to be addressed in Staff's report to the Board. The ARC will also ensure that the following issues are addressed:

- a) The implications for the program for students both in the school under consideration for consolidation, closure or program relocation and in the school(s) where programs may be affected.
- b) The effects of consolidation, closure or program relocation on the following:
  - The attendance area defined for the schools;
  - Attendance at other schools;
  - The need and extent of bussing.
- c) The financial effects of consolidating or not consolidating the school, including any capital implications.
- d) Revenue implications as a result of the consolidation, closure or program relocation.

- e) Savings expected to be achieved as a result of the consolidation, closure or program relocation:
  - School operations (heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance)
  - Expenditures to address school renewal issues which will not longer be required.
- f) Additional expenditures, if any, at schools which will accommodate students displaced as a result of a consolidation, closure or program relocation decision taken by the board:
  - School operations (heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance);
  - School administration;
  - School renewal;
  - Transportation.
- g) Net savings/costs associated with:
  - Teaching staff;
  - Paraprofessionals;
  - Student transportation.
- h) The possible alternative use or disposition of an empty building.

The ARC and any minority groups of the ARC will deliver its (their) School Valuation Report(s) to the Director of Education not earlier than ninety (90) days and not later than 120 days after the beginning of the ARC's first public meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

### **3. CONSIDERATION OF THE ARC SCHOOL VALUATION REPORT**

#### **3.1 STAFF'S REPORT TO THE BOARD**

The Director will review the recommendations of the ARC and prepare a staff report to the Board.

Staff's report will include as appendices the ARC's School Valuation Report and recommendations, the information package provided to the ARC, minutes of the ARC meetings and any material received by the ARC or the Board from the public.

The recommendation accompanying Staff's report will be one or more of the following:

- To maintain the schools and to continue to monitor them;
- To reorganize the schools, their programs or their grade structures;
- To change the boundaries of the schools;
- To consolidate and/or close one or more of the schools.

Staff's report and recommendations will be presented to the Board in public session at a regularly scheduled meeting not less than thirty (30) days after the ARC School Valuation Report was delivered to the Director of Education.

#### **3.2 BOARD MEETING FOR PUBLIC INPUT**

The Board will hold a meeting for public input no sooner than thirty (30) days after Staff's report and recommendations are presented to the Board in public session, in order to provide an opportunity for the public to make formal presentations to the Board concerning Staff's report and the matters that are addressed in it and in the ARC School Valuation Report. The public meeting may be scheduled as part of one of the Board's regularly scheduled meetings. On the date that the Board schedules the Meeting for public input, it will also schedule the Board meeting to consider school accommodation referred to in s. 3.4 of this Policy.

A minimum of two weeks notice of the public Board meeting for input will be provided via school newsletters, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number.

The public may provide written input to the Director of Education at any time, prior to the public Board meeting.

### **3.3 STAFF'S FOLLOW UP REPORT TO THE BOARD**

Following the Board meeting for public input, Staff will prepare a report to the Board in which it will report on and respond to the representations made by the public, for the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Staff may revise its earlier recommendations to the Board.

Staff's follow-up report will include copies of the presentations made by the public during the board meeting for public input and those received directly, and minutes of the Board meeting for public input.

Staff's follow-up report will be released publicly and be posted on the Board's website.

### **3.4 BOARD MEETING TO CONSIDER SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION**

The Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodation recommendations in the ARC Report, Staff's Report and Staff's Follow-up Report to the Board at a scheduled meeting, which will not occur sooner than sixty (60) days after the presentation of the Staff's Report, thirty (30) days after the Board meeting for public input and fifteen (15) days after the Staff's Follow-up Report is released publicly.

Public notice of the meeting at which the Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodation recommendations in the ARC School Valuation Report, Staff's Report and Staff's Follow-up Report to the Board will be provided through school newsletters, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers, and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of the Board meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

Parents/Guardians, Staff and School Council members will be informed, in writing, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision, which will also be posted on the Board's website.

The Board may make any accommodation decision that it deems advisable in relation to the schools under review by an ARC despite an ARC recommendation to the contrary.

If the Board decision is consolidation, closure or program relocation, the following school year will be used to plan for and implement the Board's decision, except where the Board and the affected community believe that earlier action is required. The Board decision will set clear timelines.

### **3.5 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**

An administrative review of an accommodation review process undertaken by the Board may be available under the Ministry document entitled "**Administrative Review of the Accommodation Review Process**" posted on the Board website and available at the head office of the Board.

## **4. THE SCHOOL INTEGRATION PROCESS**

It is important the integration of students and staff into their new school(s) is achieved in a way that is positive and supportive for the students and parents of the respective school communities. This process of integration should be carried out in consultation with parents and staff. The Director will establish this committee immediately following the final decision to close a school.

### **4.1 MANDATE OF THE INTEGRATION COMMITTEE**

The Integration Committee will plan for and implement the positive integration of students and staff affected by consolidation, closure or program relocation into their new school environment.



## TABLE OF TIMELINES

| <b>Action</b>  | <b>By Whom</b> | <b>When</b>  | <b>Provision</b> |
|--|----------------|--|------------------|
| Presentation of the Preliminary Report to the Board  | Director       | Discretion   | 1                |
| Board decision to establish an ARC   | Board          | Discretion   | 2                |
| Notice of Board decision to establish an ARC   | Principals     | Within one week of decision  | 2                |
| Notice of first ARC Public Meeting   | ARC            | At least 60 days prior to the meeting.*  | 2.4              |
| Delivery of Information Package to ARC   | Staff          | No later than ARC's first public meeting   | 2.7              |
| First ARC Public Meeting   | ARC            | As scheduled by ARC.   | 2.4              |
| Notice of second ARC Public Meeting  | ARC            | At least two weeks prior to the meeting  | 2.4              |
| Second ARC Public Meeting  | ARC            | As scheduled by ARC  | 2.4              |
| Notice of third ARC Public Meeting   | ARC            | At least two weeks prior to the meeting  | 2.4              |
| Third ARC Public Meeting   | ARC            | As scheduled by ARC  | 2.4              |
| Notice of the fourth ARC Public Meeting  | ARC            | At least two weeks prior to the meeting  | 2.4              |
| Fourth ARC Public Meeting  | ARC            | As scheduled by ARC  | 2.4              |
| Delivery of ARC School Valuation Report  | ARC            | Not earlier than 90 days after the beginning and not later than 95 days after the beginning of ARC's first public meeting.*                  | 2.8              |
| Staff's Report and recommendations   | Staff          | Not less than 30 days after the ARC report was delivered to the Director of Education  | 3.1              |
| Board sets dates for Board meeting for public input, and for Board meeting to decide accommodation | Board          | As scheduled by the Board  | 3.2              |
| Notice of Board Meeting for Public Input   | Board          | A minimum of two weeks notice of the Public Meeting.   | 3.2              |
| Board Meeting for Public Input   | Board          | As scheduled by the Board but not sooner than 30 days after Staff's Report and recommendations are presented to the Board in public session. | 3.2              |

| <b>Action</b>                                       | <b>By Whom</b>        | <b>When</b>  | <b>Provision</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--|------------------|
| Staff's follow-up report on accommodation           | Staff                 | Next regularly scheduled Board meeting   | 3.3              |
| Notice of Board Meeting to decide accommodation     | Board                 | 60 days prior to the Board meeting.*   | 3.4              |
| Board Meeting to decide accommodation               | Board                 | At a regularly scheduled meeting which will not occur sooner than 60 days after the presentation of Staff's Report, 30 days after the Board Meeting for public input and 15 days after Staff's follow-up report as released publicly | 3.4              |
| Notice of decision on accommodation                 | Principals            | Within one week of decision  | 3.4              |
| Appointment of the Integration Committee            | Director              | Within one week of Board decision  | 4                |
| First Integration Committee Report to the Director  | Integration Committee | February of the school's last year of operation and consolidation occurs Board as determined by the Board  | 4.6              |
| Consolidation occurs                                | Board                 | As determined by Board   | 3.4              |
| Second Integration Committee Report to the Director | Integration Committee | Within six months of the implementation of the consolidation decision  | 4.6              |

\* Excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

### **School-specific Valuation Factors**

These School-specific Valuation Factors are to be applied to each individual school in the group of schools being studied. The ARC will weigh the value of the schools to the student above the other factors to be assessed.

The Board will in accordance with *Ministry Guidelines* develop and approve a *Generic School Valuation Framework* which will be used in conjunction with the *Pupil Accommodation Review Policy*. The School Valuation Framework will contain validation factors for each of the following categories:

1. Value to the Students
2. Value to the School System
3. Value to the Community
4. Value to the Local Economy

## **Accommodation Review Committee Voting Guidelines**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The structure of the ministry accommodation review guidelines and board policies do not require committee voting or even consensus. The intent of the process is to ensure that all affected parties are able to participate and to have their views heard and considered.

The ultimate decision (voting) to consolidate or close a school lies only with the board of trustees, and therefore voting by an arc is not recommended. However in some situations, particularly with large arc's, voting may be used as a tool to assist the group in keeping on task, but also ensuring all members' concerns are appropriately addressed.

The purpose of this guideline is to provide arc chairs with some guidance in circumstances where committee voting may be required.

### **FAIRNESS**

Any voting mechanism must ensure fairness.

In order to maintain fairness it is important that the person who participates should be there for the entire discussion of the matter in order to exercise some independent judgment. A person who heard only part of the discussion before voting would not be exercising fair and complete judgment.

Voting members must be present for the entire discussion on a particular matter or a particular recommendation. In addition, the majority should be based on those who are actually present for the meeting. It is important to note that there is no quorum requirement in the policy, and that is to ensure that the ARC meetings will occur even if all individuals do not attend.

### **VOTING**

If the ARC believes that a voting mechanism is needed, the voting mechanism should only be used in respect of two issues. The first is to facilitate the process by permitting the committee to decide that there had been enough discussion on an issue and move on. The second concerns the adoption of recommendations by the ARC.

It is also recommended that the Chair of the ARC utilize a 2/3 vote as a way of balancing the need to pay due respect to the views of the individuals involved in the ARC with the need to accomplish the work in a reasonable period of time.

The use of a simple majority of members of the ARC would be too low a threshold, and might limit discussion too much and cause people to feel that they were not given an adequate opportunity to make their views known.

Finally it is recommended that neither the Chair of the ARC, nor the secretary of the committee, or other board resource staff to the ARC, should be permitted to vote. All other members would be permitted to vote in accordance with the fairness provisions outlined above.