



Policy 14 – Permanent Closing of Schools

Background

Pursuant to the *School Act* and *School Opening and Closure Order*, Ministerial Order 194/08, the Board of Education of School District No. 36 (the “Board”) can open, close, or reopen a school permanently or for a specified period of time.

The Board recognizes and understands that permanent school closure decisions affect and impact many families and community members, and said groups must be afforded an adequate opportunity to provide input on the proposal prior to a final decision being rendered.

Prior to rendering a final decision on a permanent school closure, the Board will consider the future enrolment and general population in the community.

The Board further acknowledges that, prior to rendering a final decision on a permanent school closure, it will consider possible alternative community uses for all or part of the school and will provide notice to the community to allow for an adequate opportunity to provide input.

Process

1. Scope
 - a. This policy does not apply to the operation of any specialized programs, off-site programs, or other educational services operating in schools or at any other Surrey School District No. 36 (the “District”) or non-District sites.
2. Public Board Meeting
 - a. Any proposed school closure shall be first announced at a regular Board meeting.
3. Public Consultation
 - a. The process of consultation for a school closure shall require at least 60 days commencing from the time when the Board provides public notice as to which specific school(s) are being considered for closure or consideration of possible “alternative community use” for all or part of the school, as defined by Ministerial Order 194/08.
 - b. The process of consultation shall provide an opportunity for those who will be affected by a proposed closure or alternative community use(s) of part or all of a school(s) to participate in the process. Such participation shall include parents, students, and community members.

- c. The Board shall take the following steps to ensure that an open and meaningful public consultation has taken place:
 - i. Make available the following information:
 - 1. Detailed reasons for the proposed school closure;
 - 2. How the proposed closure would affect the current catchment area for other schools, if applicable;
 - 3. The number of students who would be affected at the closed school(s);
 - 4. The effect of the proposed closures on Board provided student transportation;
 - 5. The proposed effective date of the school closure;
 - 6. Financial considerations;
 - 7. Impact on the Board's five-year capital plan;
 - 8. Proposed use of the closed school(s), including, potential lease or sale, if known at the time of a school closure; and
 - 9. Future enrolment growth of persons less than school age as well as adults in the community.
 - ii. Provide an opportunity for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closure, and information and directions on how to submit the written response to the Board.
 - iii. Hold at least one public meeting for affected persons to receive information, ask questions, and provide written feedback. The time and place of the public meeting shall be made known to the community.

4. Closure Decisions

- a. A decision by the Board to permanently close a school shall be made by Bylaw at a public Board meeting.
- b. Notification to the Minister
 - i. If the Board decides to permanently close a school under section 73 of the *School Act*, the Board must, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision containing the following information:
 - 1. The school's name;
 - 2. The school's facility number;
 - 3. The school's address; and
 - 4. The date on which the school will close.
- c. Criteria for Considering School Closure
 - i. A school may be considered for closure when there is sufficient space to accommodate the students in neighboring schools. In addition, the following factors must be considered:
 - 1. Future enrolment growth in the District of persons of school age, persons of less than school age, and adults;
 - 2. The operating cost;
 - 3. The condition of the facility and the need for capital expenditures to keep the building operational; and

4. The limitations of the facility that restrict appropriate education programming.
5. Opportunities for Students Displaced by School Closure
 - a. The District shall ensure that all District students displaced by a school closure have opportunities to receive an appropriate educational experience in another school in the District. The registration of displaced students shall be subject to the administrative procedure governing registration and placement of students.

References

School Act, R.S.B.C., 1996, c. 412.

School Opening and Closure Order, Ministerial Order 194/08.

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