



FL Closure Facilities and Programs

Adopted: October 3, 1994

Amended: January 26, 2010

Policy

The Board recognizes that the closure of schools and programs is a reasonable alternative in ensuring the responsible use of the resources placed in its trust, and making efficient use of the District's school space in the provision of programming, and safeguarding the health and welfare of students, staff and public.

Procedures

Closure of One or Two Grades

Following a decision by the Board (at a public meeting) to pursue a transfer of one or two grades or a program in one or two grades, the following will occur:

1. The Superintendent or designate through a meeting called at the school(s) concerned will discuss the necessity and implications of such a change with the principal(s) and school staff(s) and provide necessary information in response to their inquiries.
2. Following a two week period from the first meeting a further meeting will be held with the school staff(s) to finalize input in the decision making process.
3. A Board Committee and the Superintendent will meet with the parents and discuss the necessity and implications of such a transfer. They will provide all necessary information and respond to all inquiries.
4. The School Council through the principal will inform all parents in writing of the proposed transfer.
5. A decision to transfer a program, grade or division from one school to another, in order to provide the most effective educational programming possible within the resources of the District, will be made by the Board as soon as possible after the final meeting with the parents.
6. This decision will be made as early as possible prior to May 15th of the school year during which the transfer is being considered.
7. This decision will be communicated immediately to the school staffs, the School Council and each parent affected by the decision.

Closure of a School or Three Grades

The Board may consider closure of a school, or a division (3 grades or more) when any one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. Total enrolment as of September 30 in the current school year is below the following levels:
 - a. Primary division enrolment (grades one through three) in either English or French Immersion is below 50;
 - b. Elementary division enrolment (grades four through six) in either English or French Immersion is below 50;
 - c. Junior high division enrolment (grades seven and eight) in either English or French Immersion is below 50;
 - d. Senior high enrolment (grades nine through twelve) is below 400;
 - e. Enrolment in a special needs program is less than 75% of its maximum enrolment; and
 - f. Total school enrolment (ECS-8) is below 250.
2. The space utilization rate (as defined by Alberta Education) as of September 30 in the current school year is less than 50 per cent.
3. The cost of keeping the school in operable condition or restoring it to operable condition is unreasonably high.
4. Keeping the school open poses a threat to the health or welfare of students, staff or the public.
5. The fiscal health of the District can be significantly improved by making more efficient use of the District's school space.

When school, program or division closure is to be considered

The following steps shall be followed:

1. At a public meeting in January or earlier, the Board is notified of specific school, program or division closures to be considered for the next school year and the specific condition or conditions that require the Board to consider closure for the next school year.
2. A trustee shall give Notice of Motion at the first meeting in February (or earlier) of the current school year that a motion will

be made at a specified future Board meeting, not later than the Board's first regularly scheduled meeting in May to close each of the schools, programs or divisions identified under Step 1. A separate Notice of Motion shall be made with reference to each school, program or division.

3. The Board shall communicate the Notice of Motion and the date (no later than March 31) and place of a public meeting to discuss the possible closure, in writing, to the parents of every student enrolled in the school, program or division identified for possible closure. Such communication shall identify the criteria for considering school, program or division closure generally and those that specifically relate to the proposed closure. The communication shall also address how the closure would affect the following:
 - a. The attendance area defined for that school;
 - b. The attendance at other schools, including the number of students re-located by virtue of the school closure;
 - c. The need for, and extent of, busing;
 - d. Program implications for other schools;
 - e. Program implications for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - f. The educational and financial impact of closing the school, program or division including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - g. The financial and educational impact of not closing the school, program or division;
 - h. The capital needs of other schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure;
 - i. The proposed disposal of the school if the entire school is to be closed; and
 - j. The anticipated effect on the social environment of the community.

There shall be a meeting with the staff in the school(s), programs or divisions identified for possible closure to discuss the notice of motion and its implications for students and staff.

4. A public meeting with at least two Trustees, and the Superintendent or designate present shall be held at each of the schools identified in a Notice of Motion. This meeting will be held no later than March 31. Notice of this meeting shall be communicated by letter distributed through the identified school(s). In addition this meeting will be advertised once a week for at least two weeks prior to the meeting through local media. Notice of Meeting will be posted in five (5) or more conspicuous places including schools at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

At this meeting, the Superintendent or designate shall indicate that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the possible closure; its implications for the students, the community and the school system; implementation plans and other alternatives that had been or will be considered. The matters identified in Step 3 shall be addressed.

The assembly shall be informed that:

- a. The Board has reached no conclusion related to the closure recommendation(s);
 - b. The Board wishes to receive input from staff, parents, students and the community before making a decision. All input will be considered before a decision is made;
 - c. At a future meeting, to be held no sooner than 3 weeks following this meeting, staff, parents, students and community members will have the opportunity to make presentations related to the closure recommendations; and
 - d. Written submissions will be accepted up until the date of the Board meeting at which a decision will be made.
5. A public Board meeting attended by at least a quorum of the Board shall be convened at least three (3) weeks after the initial public meeting(s) and no later than the end of April. At this meeting any interested person may appear to make a representation with respect to the proposed closure of the schools, divisions or programs.
6. Following presentations under Step 5 the Board at its next public meeting shall render a decision with reference to the Notice(s) of Motion.
7. Should the decision of the Board be in favor of closure the Board shall forthwith request approval from the Minister in order to proceed with the closure.
8. Within one week of the Board's decision, the parents or guardians of the students attending the schools, divisions or programs identified for closure shall be notified in writing, by notice distributed through the school(s), of the decision of the Board.

References

Legal Reference: Alberta School Act: Sections, 58

Cross Reference: BCF Advisory Committees to the Board – School Councils