

KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT

Section: Business and Administrative Services

- **Administrative Operation**

**Policy: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW:
SCHOOL CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION**

**Policy Code: BA-1.2
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The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board aims to provide educational programs and services of the highest quality, in facilities conducive to a stimulating learning environment and designed to meet the needs of all pupils, within fiscal parameters.

In addition to facilitating the delivery of our Board mission, the Board will endeavour to optimize the use of its facilities. Various factors beyond the control of the Board impact on this commitment. These factors include declining, increasing, and shifting populations, current funding and operational realities, new provincial legislation and policy, changing educational objectives and physical limitations of buildings.

In order to maintain our commitment, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate all schools on a regular basis. Where enrolment is increasing, the Board must provide adequate student accommodations through boundary changes, and/or additional classroom space, temporary or permanent, and/or blending arrangements. Where enrolment is limited and decreasing, the consequent impact of financial resources, staff, learning resources and program creates difficulties in providing adequate educational programs for students. Under these conditions, the Board will consider boundary changes, blending arrangements, consolidation, closure, alternate use of surplus space or other measures. All reviews of consolidations and/or closures will be conducted within the guidelines and expectations of the Ministry of Education.

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board is aware that changes in any school's student accommodation or other status has an impact beyond the school and therefore maintains that the detailed review of any school have a district-wide perspective and include public consultation.

1. Annual Pupil Accommodation Report

- 1.1 Senior staff responsible for student accommodations will maintain and present major updates regarding enrolment trends and accommodation needs based on the Board's capital planning process.
- 1.2 Annually, the senior staff responsible for accommodations, in consultation with the Superintendent of Business and Corporate Services, shall prepare a report for Board consideration addressing upcoming accommodation needs and provisions. This report will be presented to the Board by June 30 of each school year and is available to the public on the Board website.

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2. Criteria for Identifying an Accommodation Review in the Capital Needs Assessment

2.1 Administration shall bring to the attention of the Board, through the Capital Needs Assessment update in the annual enrolment and accommodation needs report, those schools that fall under one or more of the following categories:

2.1.1 Program Viability

Any school, or group of schools, which is deemed not able to offer a viable program in terms of enrolment, class sizes and/or grade configurations. This includes schools that under the normal staffing allocation would require the assignment of more than two grades to one class in elementary schools and multigrade/level/subjects to one class in secondary schools. Schools that are unable to provide an equitable range of learning opportunities for students will also be identified.

2.1.2 Overcrowded

Any school, or group of schools whose Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) exceeds, or is projected to exceed its pupil places as designated by the On The Ground Capacity allocation by 15% or more shall be identified.

2.1.3 Operating/Maintenance Costs

Any school, or group of schools, which is/are deemed to have extraordinary operating and maintenance costs which affect efficiency within the grants provided by the Ministry to the Board. Any school that is experiencing higher building maintenance expense than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements shall be identified.

2.1.4 Underutilized

Any school, or group of schools whose Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) falls, or is projected to fall below 85% of the pupil places as designated by the On The Ground Capacity allocation.

2.1.5 Other

Any school, group of schools or area which, in the opinion of administration should be considered due to exceptional circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances can include but are not limited to:

2.1.5.1 the school is destroyed by fire or other catastrophe;

2.1.5.2 the school is unusable due to environmental hazard;

2.1.5.3 the school is unusable due to a health hazard.

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Any school, or group of schools, impacted by the above criteria, may be identified for consideration in an individual or group accommodation review.

3. Administration will prepare a full report for schools individually or in groups that are recommended to be considered for the review.

4. Identification of Schools for the Accommodation Review Process

4.1 The Board shall consider the reports of schools that are presented by administration for the review process and decide whether the school(s) proceed in the process by identifying the school(s) specifically for review. The initial staff report will contain one or more options to address the accommodation issue(s). There must be a recommended option if more than one is presented.

4.2 Where the Board identifies a school(s) for the review process, it shall also establish an Accommodation Review Committee to provide input and recommendations.

4.3 Where the Board identifies a school(s) for review and establishes a committee in respect of same, the Director or designate shall release to the media and give notice to:

4.3.1 the principal(s), staff, students, and parents of the identified school(s);

4.3.2 the chairperson(s) of the school council(s) of the identified school(s);

4.3.3 the community, by posting a notice on the Board's website, and by such other means, including print media, as the Director or designate deems appropriate;

4.3.4 Alderville First Nation, and/or Curve Lake First Nation, and/or Hiawatha First Nation, in the event that the First Nation is within the catchment area of the school(s) under review;

4.3.5 the principal, staff, students and parents of each identified school(s) not under review but that could potentially receive students from the school under review after the completion of the accommodation review process; and

4.3.6 any other person or body as the Board may direct or the Director may determine;

and shall deliver or otherwise make available a copy of this policy to the said principal(s), chairperson(s) of the school council(s) and other affected parties.

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5. Terms of Reference for the Accommodation Review Committee

5.1 Role

The role of the committee is to act as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the school communities. The Accommodation Review Committee may comment on the initial staff report and may, throughout the pupil accommodation review process, seek clarification of the initial staff report. The Accommodation Review Committee may provide other accommodation options than those in the initial staff report; however, it must include supporting rationale for any such option. The Accommodation Review Committee members do not need to achieve consensus regarding the information provided to the Board of Trustees.

5.2 Mandate

5.2.1 The Accommodation Review Committee shall review the Board's educational and accommodation expectations as outlined in the introduction of this policy and use them as the guiding principles for discussions.

The Accommodation Review Committee shall consider the report and recommendation(s) prepared by administration, and provide input to staff in preparing the final staff report. The information report will be posted on the Board's website to inform the public.

5.2.2 All meetings of the committee shall be open to the public. The committee will consult with school and community groups including school councils, parents, guardians, students, teachers, local community and other interested parties.

5.2.3 Any member of the public may make written submissions to the committee one week prior to a scheduled meeting or advise of their intention to make a presentation. Public delegations will be permitted during a minimum of two and maximum of three Accommodation Review Committee meetings held for that purpose but will not be permitted during Accommodation Review Committee working meetings. The meeting framework is further outlined in section 5.5. The committee shall acknowledge and consider all submissions received but need not reply to any such submissions or other representations in writing or at all.

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5.2.4 The committee shall use the School Information Profile(s) and the information received during the public meetings as well as any other information it deems pertinent to provide input to the final staff report.

5.2.5 The committee is dissolved by Board motion.

5.3 Membership

The composition of the committee shall be determined by the Board and shall include, at least:

5.3.1 two senior staff, one being the appropriate supervisory officer for the identified school(s) and one, or both, of whom will act as chairperson(s) of the committee;

5.3.2 two school council representatives selected by the school council of each identified school(s);

5.3.3 two secondary students, when the review involves secondary schools, as selected by the principal in consultation with the student leadership group in the identified school and staff; ideally, these students would be identified through a selection process and be representative of a cross-section of the student population for each school identified for the review process;

5.3.4 the principal(s) of the identified school(s) and one staff member from each school;

5.3.5 wherever possible, a community member and one each of business and municipal leaders; and

5.3.6 a representative from Alderville First Nation, and/or Curve Lake First Nation, and/or Hiawatha First Nation where students of the First Nation reside in the catchment area of the school(s) under review.

(The local trustee(s) and one other trustee shall act as ex officio members of the Accommodation Review Committee to monitor the progress of the committee.)

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Additional committee members may be determined at the sole discretion of the Board and may include:

- 5.3.7 one or two school council representatives selected by the school council of each identified area school(s) not under review but that could potentially receive students from the school under review after the completion of the accommodation review process;
- 5.3.8 a principal and staff member from each school(s) not under review but that could potentially receive students from the school under review after the completion of the accommodation review process;
- 5.3.9 one or two secondary students, when the review involves secondary schools, from each school(s) not under review but that could potentially receive students from the school under review after the completion of the accommodation review process. The students will be selected by the principal in consultation with the student leadership group in the school and staff; ideally, these students would be identified through a selection process and be representative of a cross-section of the student population for each school identified for the review process.

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.4.1 Senior staff will be responsible for facilitating the work of the Accommodation Review Committee, including providing Terms of Reference that describe the Accommodation Review Committee's mandate. The mandate will refer to the school board's education and accommodation objectives in undertaking the Accommodation Review Committee and reflect the school board's strategy for supporting student achievement and well-being. The Terms of Reference will also clearly outline the school board's expectations of the roles and responsibilities of the Accommodation Review Committee; and describe the procedures of the Accommodation Review Committee. School Information Profiles will be provided to the Accommodation Review Committee members already populated with data prior to the first Accommodation Review Committee meeting.
- 5.4.2 The Board will ensure there is support provided to the committee to take minutes. Committee minutes will be provided on the Board's website.

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5.4.3 Emerging questions that arise before, during and after the Accommodation Review Committee process will be addressed in the following manner:

5.4.3.1 A section of the Board website will be created for emerging/frequently asked questions from the Accommodation Review Committee.

5.4.3.2 Questions that arise during Accommodation Review Committee meetings from Accommodation Review Committee members and the public will be recorded and answered in a timely manner utilizing the Board website. The responses to the questions will also be provided to all Accommodation Review Committee members individually.

5.4.4 Unless the Board decides otherwise, where any person appointed to the committee is unable or unwilling to participate in the work of the committee, or where the school council of the identified school is unable or unwilling to appoint one or more of its representatives in accordance with sections above, the committee shall continue to act and perform its duties under this policy despite the absence of that member(s), and no act or duty performed by the committee shall be deemed invalid by reason only of the absence of that member(s).

5.4.5 Administration will meet with representatives of the affected federations and unions and issue a statement before the process begins, clarifying the roles of staff during the accommodation review and after the Board has made its decision.

5.5 Meeting Framework

5.5.1 The Accommodation Review Committee shall meet on a minimum of two, maximum of three occasions for the purpose of seeking input and community feedback to consider options for accommodating students who may be affected by a school closure or consolidation. Working meetings of the Accommodation Review Committee may also be held. These working meetings of the committee will not entertain delegations but will be public. (*A maximum of one working meeting is permissible following the last meeting at which public delegations to the committee are received.)

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5.5.2 A pre-Accommodation Review Committee orientation session will be scheduled prior to the first Accommodation Review Committee meeting. This session will be led by the chairperson(s) of the committee. The meeting will address Board policy, any preliminary questions about the mandate of the Accommodation Review Committee, the rules of engagement during the Accommodation Review Committee's deliberations and the general content, format and timetable of the process. Other background information will be provided including the expectations of applicable provincial guidelines.

5.5.3 Where appropriate space allows, meetings of the committee will be held in the school(s) affected by the review.

5.5.4 A minimum of 14 calendar days' notice of the date and location of all public meetings shall be given to the community. The secretary of the committee shall ensure that notification of the public meetings is posted on the Board's website and may determine if further notice should be given.

5.6 Meeting Agenda and Protocols

The Accommodation Review Committee will use the procedures outlined in the administrative regulations supporting this policy for meetings.

6. School Accommodation Review Procedures

6.1 Accommodation reviews may be introduced at any time during the year, however, timelines and procedures will be determined as outlined in the administrative regulation accompanying this policy.

6.2 Trustees will review the final staff report which will include a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from the Accommodation Review Committee and any public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the pupil accommodation review. School board staff may choose to amend their proposed option(s) included in the initial staff report. The recommended option(s) must also include a proposed accommodation plan, prepared for the decision of the Board of Trustees, which contains a timeline for implementation. Public delegations will be received at the next Board meeting following the posting of the final staff report on the Board's website. Input from these delegations will be compiled and presented along with the final staff report at the

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next Board meeting. Decisions by the Board concerning the recommendations outlined in the final staff report shall be made at that meeting of the full Board in open session.

- 6.3 Where the Board decides to close the identified school(s), the closure shall usually be effective as of September 1 of the next school year in which the Board makes such decision, unless the Board, in its sole discretion, determines otherwise.
- 6.4 Where a school has been identified for the review process pursuant to this policy and where any step remaining in the process contemplated by this policy has been prevented by reason of any extraneous circumstances or other events, such that the school cannot be closed by September 1 of the next school year in which it was identified for review leading to closure, the Board may decide, in its sole discretion, to continue the process in the subsequent school year and, in that event, the Board may decide, in its sole discretion, not to repeat any step in the process already conducted; provided that all steps contemplated by this policy shall be completed before the closure of the school.
- 6.5 Where the Board decides to close the identified school(s), notice of the Board's decisions shall be released to the media and notice given to:
- 6.5.1 the principal(s), staff, students and parents of the identified and receiving school(s);
 - 6.5.2 the chairperson(s) of the school council(s) of the identified and receiving school(s); and
 - 6.5.3 the community, by posting a notice on the Board's website, and by such other means, as the Director or designate deems appropriate.
- 6.6 Where the Board decides to close the identified school(s), the Board will authorize a Transition Committee consisting of a local trustee, local superintendent, principal(s), teachers, students of secondary schools, school council members, parents and a community member, to plan and implement appropriate procedures for a smooth transition for students, staff and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- 6.7 Where the Board decides not to close the identified school(s), the Board shall determine the actions, if any, required.

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7. School Closure in Extreme Circumstances

Despite any other provision in this policy or any policy of the Board, in unusual and extreme circumstances such as problems with safe use of a facility, the Board may close a school and forthwith advise the public of its decision and the reasons therefore.

8. Miscellaneous

8.1 Where the time limited by this policy for doing anything expires or falls on a school holiday within the meaning of Regulation 304 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990, the time so limited extends to the next day following that is not a school holiday. When calculating the timeframe for the review process, December/Christmas, March breaks and summer holidays shall not be included in the calculations.

8.2 The Board may decide to extend any time period prescribed by this policy on such terms as it deems appropriate, by formal motion.

8.3 Secondary schools identified for closure may need to remain open for a year in addition to the above due to the schedules for the completion of option sheets and collective agreement staffing data.

8.4 A copy of this policy shall be posted on the Board's website along with the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process.

8.5 It would be expected, in normal circumstances, that once a school was reviewed, it would not be reviewed again for five years.

9. When a school that has no identifiable school community is to be identified for review, an Accommodation Review Committee will be formed consisting of:

9.1 two senior staff, one being the appropriate superintendent; and

9.2 an attempt will be made to include members of the former school community as well as business and municipal leaders.

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10. Modified Accommodation Review Process

- 10.1 Under the following circumstances a modified accommodation review process may be held:
- where the average daily enrolment of the school is less than 125 students
AND
 - the school is less than 20 km. from the nearest school of the same panel
AND/OR
 - the utilization rate of the school is less than 60%
AND/OR
 - where the school is to remain open but more than 50% of the students are to be moved as a result of the relocation of a program.
- 10.2 In the case of a modified accommodation review, the initial staff report will explain the rationale for exempting the school(s) from the standard pupil accommodation review process. The initial staff report and School Information Profile(s) will be made available to the public, and posted on the Board website.
- 10.3 One public meeting to receive public input on the staff report will be announced and advertised at least 14 days in advance. Following the public meeting, school board staff will submit a final staff report to the Board of Trustees, and post the report on the school board's website. The final staff report must include a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from any public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the modified pupil accommodation review.
- 10.4 Public delegations following Board policy will be received at the Board meeting when the final staff report is presented. Input from these delegations will be compiled and presented along with the final staff report at the next Board meeting. Decisions by the Board concerning the recommendations outlined in the final staff report shall be made at that meeting of the full Board in open session.

11. Application of Accommodation Review Guidelines

The Ministry of Education Accommodation Review Guidelines and Board policy regarding School Reviews do not apply in the following circumstances:

- 11.1 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;

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- 11.2 When a lease is terminated;
- 11.3 When a 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. This calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of years;
- 11.4 When a board is repairing or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;
- 11.5 Where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is over capacity and/or under construction or repair; and/or
- 11.6 Where there are no students enrolled at the school at any time throughout the school year.

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