

CONSOLIDATION AND/OR CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

The Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) recognizes that, from time to time, circumstances may necessitate consideration of consolidation and/or closure of schools. The intent of any proposed consolidation and/or closure of facilities is to ensure that Board facilities are used as cost effectively as possible in order that educational resources are focused on programs and services that directly support students.

The Board of Education also recognizes that the number and location of schools must reflect a balance between education program needs and operational efficiency and must be considered within the available resources.

The Board will receive data pertinent to the educational and economic impact of declining and/or shifting enrollment on the organization of the schools. Should the data indicate an area to be studied for reorganization, the Board will initiate a process of discussion and consultation with parents, staff and the community in accordance with this policy. The Board will then make a decision on the reorganization of schools based on the preceding process so that any school closure or grade reconfiguration necessary would be effective June 30 of a particular year.

Specifically

1. The Superintendent may recommend to the Board at a meeting in October, consideration of schools for closure or grade reconfiguration.

The Superintendent, in making a recommendation for consideration for closure or grade reconfiguration will assess the following factors:

- 1.1 Breadth of programing possible;
- 1.2 Safety of access for students;
- 1.3 Class size;
- 1.4 Accommodation and suitability of program offerings available in nearby schools;
- 1.5 Decline in student enrollment projections;
- 1.6 Age, operation and maintenance costs of the facility, including the need for seismic upgrades;
- 1.7 Funding formula considerations;
- 1.8 Alternate potential uses of a facility that could create additional revenue for the District or could improve community services; and,
- 1.9 Parental and community support for the school.

In making its decision, the Board shall consider the aforementioned factors.

2. The Board will consider the information and recommendation provided by the Superintendent and either:
 - 2.1 Conclude that no action or further study is required, or
 - 2.2 Forward the information to the Operations Policy and Planning Committee.
3. The Operations Policy and Planning Committee shall review the materials and provide its recommendations to the Board no later than January 15 of the following calendar year.
4. The Board will review the recommendations from the Operations Policy and Planning Committee and either
 - 4.1 Conclude that no action or further study is required, or
 - 4.2 Initiate discussion and consultation with parents, staff and the community.

Public Consultation Process

Community awareness of possible school consolidations and/or closures is a priority of the Board.

5. Discussion and consultation must be initiated by February 1 and concluded not later than April 1 and will include the following provisions:
 - 5.1 As per Ministerial Order 194/08 (M194/08), the public consultation process shall include:
 - 5.1.1 A fair consideration of the community's input and adequate opportunity for the community to respond to a board's proposal to close the school permanently;
 - 5.1.2 Consideration of future enrolment growth in the district of persons of school age, persons of less than school age and adults; and
 - 5.1.3 Consideration of possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.
 - 5.2 The Board shall forward information initially provided by the Superintendent and an invitation to the NWTU and CUPE 409, the Parents' Advisory Council(s), and the New Westminister city council for their input.
 - 5.3 The Board shall inform the public through parent newsletters and notices, meetings with employees, notice to rental groups, notices in local newspapers, and information posted on the school district website. The school(s) being considered for consolidation and/or closure and the proposed effective date shall be specified.
 - 5.4 The proposed consolidation and/or closure will be addressed and discussed in a public meeting involving the affected communities. The time and location of the public meeting shall be widely advertised to notify affected persons or groups in the community. This will mean written notification to parents of students currently attending and registered to attend the school, a notice in the local newspaper, notices to neighboring schools, Parent Advisory Councils, DPAC, Board Committees, employee groups and information posted on the School District website.
 - 5.5 The Board will make available, in writing, the rationale for the proposed school consolidation and/or closure, including, but not limited to, the pertinent facts and information with respect to the following factors:

- 5.5.1 The number of students who would be affected at both the school to be consolidated and/or closed and the surrounding schools;
 - 5.5.2 Enrolment trends and utilization for the school and surrounding area;
 - 5.5.3 Availability of space at receiving schools;
 - 5.5.4 Proximity to potential receiving schools and the routes to schools;
 - 5.5.5 Educational program/course implications for the affected students;
 - 5.5.6 Financial considerations including anticipated cost savings and/or revenue generation, not excluding the possibility of sale or lease and
 - 5.5.7 Impact on the School District's annual five-year capital plan submitted to the Ministry of Education.
- 5.6 Minutes will be kept of the public meeting to record concerns or options raised regarding the proposed consolidation and/or closure. The Board shall provide an opportunity for affected persons to submit written responses to the Board regarding the proposed consolidation and/or closure. Following the public meetings and receipt of written submissions, the Board will give consideration to all input prior to making its final decision with respect to the school consolidation and/or closure, including:
- A fair consideration of the community's input;
 - Consideration of future enrolment growth in the district of persons of school age, persons of less than school age and adults and
 - Consideration of possible alternative use for all or part of the school.
6. The final decision on a school consolidation and/or closure will be made through the first, second and third (final) reading of a School Consolidation and/or Closure Bylaw at a public Board meeting.
7. If a 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:
- The schools' name,
 - The school's facility number,
 - The school's address and
 - The date on which the school will close.
8. The consolidation and/or closure of a school will normally take place in preparation for the commencement of the new school year.
9. By April 30, the Board will consider the information received and decide if a facility is to be closed or reorganized on June 30 for the following September.

*Legal Reference: Sections 22, 65, 73, 85, 96, 100 School Act
Section 23 Ombudsman Act
School Opening and Closure Order M320-02
Disposal of Land or Improvement Order M233/07*

SD No. 40 (New Westminster)

Adopted: May 30, 2017

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from SD No. 40 (New Westminster)