
Subject: Closure of Schools
Effective: September 1998
Revised: June 1994; May 10, 2002

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy defines the parameters for processes in relation to school closures.

This policy replaces the school closure procedures stated in Policy 409 – *Effective Use of School Facilities*.

2.0 APPLICATION

This policy applies whenever a public school is to be studied for possible closure.

The policy does not apply when:

- a facility has been destroyed or damaged as a result of emergency circumstances (e.g. fire, structural failure); or
- affected parents agree to a proposed school closure.

In these two circumstances, a school may be closed without following the steps defined in this policy.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Procedural fairness refers to the duty of administrative bodies to employ decision-making processes that provide real opportunity, to persons whose interests and privileges may be affected, to influence the decisions being made.

4.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY

[Education Act](#)

s.3.1 A District Education Council may, with the approval of the Minister, close a school established by the District Education Council under subsection 2(1) or any school for which responsibility is transferred to the District Education Council under subsection 3(2).

s.6(b.2) The Minister ... may establish provincial policies and guidelines related to public education within the scope of this Act ...

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s.6.1(a) A District Education Council may, in accordance with the needs of the pupils and the resources of the school district for which the District Education Council is established and in accordance with any provincial policies established by the Minister, subject to the approval of the Minister, provide for the development and delivery of instructional programs, services and courses unique to the character and economy of the community.

5.0 GOALS / PRINCIPLES

- 5.1** To ensure school closures reflect the Department of Education's commitment to providing New Brunswick pupils with equitable educational services.
- 5.2** To ensure school closures occur in a manner which respects the principles of procedural fairness.

6.0 REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS

- 6.1** A District Education Council (DEC) shall advise the Minister of Education when it intends to study the possible closure of a school.
- 6.2** District Education Councils shall establish policy outlining the steps to be followed when school closure is proposed. DEC policy will ensure that, prior to an official decision by the DEC, persons affected by a possible school closure (i.e. parents of students attending a school being considered for closure, and schools likely to receive students in the event of a closure):
- are given sufficient notice and are fully informed of the steps to be followed, as set out in DEC policy;
 - are provided with documents relevant to the proposed closure, such as internal and external studies and/or other documents prepared by the DEC;
 - have adequate time to consider the information provided, seek advice, and consult with experts, should they wish to; and
 - have adequate time to prepare and make a presentation to the DEC, and are heard impartially.
- 6.3** After reasonable public consultation, as outlined in section 6.2, the DEC shall make a decision regarding the proposed closure. Subsequently, the DEC shall inform the persons affected and the Minister of its decision stating its reasons, the results of the public consultation, and the plan of action if any.
- 6.4** When notified of an intended school closure, the Minister will review the DEC's decision in relation to the principles of procedural fairness, with consideration of whether all pertinent factors have been taken into account in the DEC's decision, and with regard to the interests of the public education system. The Minister may withhold approval if, in the

opinion of the Minister, procedural fairness has not been applied. The Minister will respond within 30 days.

6.5 When it is determined that the closure of a school will proceed, the DEC shall inform parents of pertinent reassignments of students. Sufficient notice must be provided to permit reassigned students and their families to participate fully in the programs and activities offered in their new schools. Students/families are not to be denied participation in such things as French immersion, Parent School Support Committees and other parent committees, extracurricular activities, due to application deadlines falling prior to receipt of the notice of reassignment.

6.6 A school which is approved for closure is deemed surplus and, upon closure, becomes the responsibility of the Minister. The DEC shall contact the Department to arrange a mutually agreeable date for the transfer of responsibility for the asset.

7.0 GUIDELINES / RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations for School Closure

In making a recommendation that a school be considered for possible closure, the following variables should be considered, both for the school considered for closure and the school(s) which would receive the students in the event of closure. The variables listed are examples of the type of information which may be used to evaluate a school's overall standing compared with provincial norms when available. The goal of making such comparisons is to ensure pupils are provided with equitable educational services across the province.

Health and Safety (examples)

- structural integrity of the building
- indoor air quality and water quality
- fire safety systems
- safety and security of school grounds / play area
- amount of time pupils spend in transit

Quality of Education (examples)

- appropriateness of facilities for curriculum delivery
- increased educational opportunities as a result of consolidation (this would include availability of facilities and diversity of educational programs)
- enrolment per grade or multi-level class and pupil-teacher ratio at both the sending and receiving schools
- ability to meet the needs of all pupils, including exceptional pupils, currently enrolled at the sending school and the potential for service at the receiving school

Financial Considerations (examples)

- operating costs including staffing, utilities and transportation costs
- condition of the building, considering short and long-term capital costs
- modifications required to the receiving school(s) to accommodate transferred pupils

Community (examples)

- parental involvement and feasibility of continued parental involvement, particularly for elementary pupils
- community support (this could include sponsorships, donations, support of co-op programs, involvement in nutrition program, etc.)
- availability of, and pupil access to, extracurricular activities at the sending and receiving schools taking bussing considerations into account
- effects on culture and language
- the school's role in the community

8.0 DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL POLICY-MAKING

8.1 District Education Council policy will further define the steps to be taken when a school is considered for closure.

8.2 District Education Councils will establish policy on placement of pupils and the organization of the schools in the district.

9.0 REFERENCES

None

10.0 CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Department of Education – Educational Facilities Branch
(506) 453-2242

Department of Education – Policy and Planning Branch
(506) 453-3090

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