



# Board Policy #463.0 Student Accommodation Review

Document Integration Project Format

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## **Policy Statement**

The York Region District School Board is committed to providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities in York Region public schools. This requires the Board to consider the curriculum and programming needs for all students within York Region. Decisions might require consolidation, closure or major program relocation. Wherever possible, an accommodation review should focus on a group of schools within a planning area, although there may be circumstances where a single school may be studied for consolidation, closure or relocation. Any decisions under this policy will be made in the context of the Board's Capital Strategy, and in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (Revised June 2009) and the Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process

## **Application of Policy**

This policy does not apply:

- 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;
- when a lease is terminated;
- when the Board is considering the relocation in any school year or over a number of school years 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 with such calculation being based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation. If the relocation is to be phased over a number of school years, then the calculation shall be based on the enrolment as of the first phase of the relocation.
- when the Board is repairing or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;
- where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is under construction or repair. In these circumstances, although the Board is not obligated to undertake a full accommodation review, where appropriate, the Board will provide advance notice of decisions that would affect the accommodation situation of students.

## **Legislative Context**

*Education Act*

## **Responsibilities**

*The Board of Trustees is responsible for:*

- determining the situations in which an accommodation review committee (ARC) should be formed to address possible consolidation, closure, or major program relocation
- ensuring trustee observers for any ARC; and
- holding public meetings in accordance with student accommodation review timelines.
- making the final accommodation decision on whether to consolidate, close or relocate a program for those schools under review by an ARC.

*The Director of Education is responsible for:*

- presenting a preliminary report to the Board identifying a school or group of schools where there may be a need to consider possible consolidation, closure or major program relocation in order to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students or to address issues related to major capital and operating costs; and
- ensuring that an Integration Committee is established should the Board make a final decision to consolidate close or relocate a major program.

## **Definitions**

### *Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)*

An accommodation review committee is an advisory committee which is formed to study, report and make recommendations to the Board on the accommodation options it identifies for a group of schools or single school in accordance with the application of this policy

### *Integration Committee*

The Integration Committee is a committee that will plan for and implement the positive integration of students and staff affected by consolidation, closure or program relocation into their new school environment. The committee consists of the appropriate superintendent, and from each affected school the school principal, the school council chair or designate, and any additional members it sees appropriate to participate.

### *Major Program Relocation*

Major program relocation refers to those programs that constitute greater than 50% of a school's enrolment.

## **Department**

Planning and Property Development Services

## **Policy History**

Approved 2008

Replaces: Section 6.8 of Policy #462.0, Student Accommodation

Revised 2010

*It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.*



# Board Procedure #463.0

## Student Accommodation Review

Document Integration Project Format

This procedure outlines the process for considering consolidation, closure or major program relocations for York Region public schools.

### **Responsibilities**

*The Board of Trustees shall:*

- determine the situations in which an accommodation review committee should be formed to address possible consolidation, closure, or major program relocation, based on the recommendation of the Director of Education;
- ensure that recommendations made in the Board report and in the ARC accommodation report are presented to the Board in public session, and that the public is given an opportunity to make formal presentations to the Board concerning the reports and the matters that are addressed in them;
- hold a public meeting of the Board of Trustees for the public to make presentations, no sooner than 30 days after the Board report and recommendations are presented to the Board in public session;
- make its decision regarding the school accommodation recommendations in the ARC report, the Board report and the Board's follow-up report at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, which will not occur sooner than 60 days after the presentation of the Board report, 30 days after the public meeting of the Board of Trustees for public input and 15 days after the Board's follow-up report is released publicly;
- appoint one or more trustees to act as observers on the ARC, one of whom should be the trustee for the area;
- decide to make any accommodation decision that it deems advisable in relation to the schools under review by an ARC notwithstanding an ARC recommendation or a staff recommendation.
- decide timelines if the Board's decision is consolidation, closure or program relocation
- disband the ARC once the ARC Accommodation Report has been submitted to the Board

*The Director of Education shall:*

- present a preliminary report to the Board identifying a school or group of schools where there may be a need to consider possible consolidation, closure or major program relocation in order to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students or to address issues related to major capital and operating costs; such preliminary report shall be developed with the involvement of Board staff responsible for a school or group of schools;
- establish an Integration Committee, should the Board make a final decision to consolidate, close or relocate a major program, to ensure that parents and students are consulted on the integration of students and staff into their new school(s) in order to ensure a positive and supportive process for the students and parents of the respective school communities; and
- receive written input from the public at any time during the accommodation review process.

*The Manager of Trustee Services shall:*

- ensure that scheduling for both the date for public input to the Board and the Board meeting to consider school accommodation is consistent with Board policy;
- ensure that a minimum of two weeks notice of a public meeting of the Board of Trustees for input is given to the public; and
- ensure that public notice of the meeting at which the Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodation recommendations in the ARC accommodation report, staff's Board report and staff's follow-up report to the Board is provided to the public at least 60 days prior to the date of the Board meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

*The Coordinating Superintendents of Education shall:*

- on behalf of the Director of Education, present a preliminary report to the Board identifying a school or group of schools in which challenges may be faced in providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students, where there may be a need to consider the possible consolidation, closure or major program relocation in respect of one or more schools, based on one or more of the following considerations:
  - the school or group of schools is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students,
  - the school or group of schools has experienced or will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment,
  - reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students,
  - teaching/learning spaces are not suitable to provide the programs needed to serve the community and retrofitting may be cost prohibitive,
  - one or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements,
  - in respect of one or more of the schools there are safety and/or environmental concerns attached to the building, the school site or its locality,
  - the consolidation of schools is in the best interests of the overall school system, and/or
  - it has been no less than five years since the inception of a study of the school by the ARC, except where extenuating circumstances warrant, such as an unexpected economic or demographic shift, or a change in a school's physical condition;
- identify the ARC members, ensuring that the committee consists of the superintendent(s) of education for the area of study (one of whom shall act as Chair of the ARC, as appointed by the Coordinating Superintendent of Education), staff from Planning and Property Development Services, a secretary for the ARC, administrative support staff, staff from each affected school, including the principal, and three parents (one of whom may be the school council chair);
- determine, in consultation with the ARC, if other persons external to the Board should be requested to provide information to the ARC;
- inform the ARC about whether or not partnership opportunities with groups and agencies external to the Board are available.
- prepare a terms of reference for the ARC which includes the mandate of the ARC; reference criteria that frame the parameters of the ARC discussion and that guide the development of accommodation options; membership, role and responsibilities of ARC members including Board staff; procedures for the ARC and the material to be produced by the ARC
- ensure that the public is given sufficient notice of public meetings through a variety of means (e.g. school newsletters, letters to the school community, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers, including date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number);
- ensure that notice of the first public meeting is provided no less than thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting (excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break);
- ensure that a minimum of two weeks notice is provided for the other public meetings;
- ensure that an information package is provided to the ARC, no later than at the commencement of the ARC's first public meeting, in order to permit the committee to carry out its mandate;
- ensure that Board staff present to the ARC at least one alternative accommodation option at such time as the ARC is discussing alternative options available. It should address where students would be accommodated; what changes to existing facilities may be required; what programs would be available to students; transportation implications; and availability of funding;
- ensure that Board staff respond to reasonable requests for additional information from the ARC and will append responses to the minutes of the meetings at which the questions prompting the responses were raised;
- develop with the ARC a School Information Profile for each of the schools under review. If multiple schools within the same planning area are being reviewed together, the same Profile must be used for each school.
- ensure that detailed minutes of the ARC meetings and other information such as the information package for the ARC, are posted on the Board's website;
- ensure that a review of the ARC recommendations is completed and a Board report is prepared and submitted to trustees

- ensure that the Board report includes a recommendation of one or more of the following:
  - to maintain the schools and to continue to monitor them,
  - to reorganize the schools, their programs or their grade structures,
  - to change the boundaries of the schools, and/or
  - to consolidate and/or close one or more of the schools;
- ensure that the Board report and recommendations are presented to the Board in public session not less than 30 days after the ARC Accommodation Report is delivered to the Director of Education;
- ensure that a follow-up Board report (summarizing presentations made by the public at the Board meeting, responding to the presentations and including the staff recommendations) is prepared for the next regularly scheduled Board meeting following the public input to the Board;
- ensure that the follow-up Board report includes copies of the presentations made by the public during the Board meeting for public input and those received directly, and minutes of the Board meeting for public input;
- plan for and implement the Board's decision during the following school year should the Board decide to consolidate, close or relocate a program, except when the Board's decision set clear timelines otherwise; and
- ensure that all public information on the application of this policy and procedure is made available to the public through a variety of means (e.g. school newsletters, letters to the school community, the Board's website).

*Superintendent(s) of Education shall:*

- within one week of the Board's decision to form an ARC, inform through a variety of means (e.g. school newsletters, letters to the school community, the Board's website), parents, staff and school council members of the affected schools;
- if appointed, assume the position of Chair of the ARC;
- if appointed, assume the position of Chair of the integration committee; and
- identify a secretary and resource person(s) for the integration committee.

*The Accommodation Review Committee shall:*

- once constituted, invite community members to become members of the ARC (the ARC will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all of the listed members are willing and able to participate);;
- ensure that timelines are adhered to;
- meet as often as required;
- continue to hold meetings and conduct business whether or not a quorum of members is present;
- continue to conduct regular business with a full understanding that consensus may not always be reached with respect to decisions within the ARC's mandate;
- prior to the first public meeting, ensure that the School Information Profile(s) is modified as required in order to be made applicable to the school(s) under review
- make public the specific School Information Profile (s) prior to its public meetings;
- have the opportunity to create alternative accommodation options, other than those previously identified by Board staff, based on the final School Information Profile(s) and the Terms of Reference
- hold at least four public meetings in accessible facilities;
  - at the first public meeting, describe its mandate, outline its study process, give the public a briefing on the data and issues to be addressed,
  - describe how the School Information Profile has been customized,
  - receive community input,
  - at the second, third and fourth public meetings, present its completed school information profile(s), accommodation options and draft ARC accommodation report to the public and receive community input,
  - consider making changes to the draft ARC accommodation report based on feedback at the meeting;
- provide information to the affected school communities on an ongoing basis;
- work actively against any inclination for individual school communities to divide into adversarial groups;
- initially, take into consideration the current educational situation in the school or group of schools and how it is likely to evolve if things are left as they are, followed by the potential for enhancing the learning environment for students;

- weigh the value of the schools to the student above the other factors to be assessed;
- prepare an accommodation report addressing the School Information Profile(s) and the accommodation options;
- in the event of committee member disagreement on the recommendations in the accommodation report, then one or more minority reports can be prepared; any minority report shall be limited to providing alternate recommendations to those found in the accommodation report;
- deliver its accommodation report and any minority reports to the Director of Education (not earlier than 90 days and not later than 95 days) after the beginning of the ARC's first public meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.
- Submit and/or present its accommodation report and, if necessary, one or more minority reports, to the Board of Trustees.

*The Chair of the Accommodation Review Committee shall:*

- convene and chair meetings;
- in cooperation with the Coordinating Superintendent of Education, ensure that the ARC successfully carries out its obligations; and
- call the first public meeting of the ARC no earlier than thirty (30) days after the date of its appointment, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and spring break.

*Principals of the affected schools shall:*

- participate in the ARC process as required;
- inform parents, staff and school council within one week, in writing, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision; and
- contact the Associate Director of Business Services to make the necessary financial arrangements and obtain a budget allocation (up to \$250) should a closing ceremony be recommended by the integration committee.

*The Integration Committee shall:*

- plan for and implement the positive integration of students and staff affected by consolidation, closure or program relocation into their new school environment;
- operate within the timelines specified and as often as required;
- determine whether a school closing ceremony is appropriate;
- design the format and program, if a closing ceremony is recommended; and
- report to the Director and through the Director to the Board on the progress of integration planning,.

## **Procedure History**

Approved 2008  
Revised 2010

*It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.*