

SCHOOL AND PROGRAM VIABILITY

The Board of Trustees (the Board) supports the education of students within their community where possible, but it recognizes that, in the interests of effectiveness and efficiency of instruction, the closure of an entire school or an instructional division within it (senior high, junior high, elementary) may be required. It is the intent of the Division to follow a fair and reasonable process in arriving at such closure or program alteration decisions.

The authority to close an entire school or an instructional division in a school rest with the Board.

For this purpose, the following criteria and processes are established.

Specifically

1. The Board may

- 1.1. Close a school permanently or for a specified period of time and transfer all students to one or more other schools,
- 1.2. Close the entire junior high school program and/or the entire high school program within a school and transfer students to one or more other schools,
- 1.3. Alter any grade configuration within one or more schools.

2. Criteria

- 2.1. One (1) or more of the following criteria may lead the Board to initiate a school or program viability review.
 - 2.1.1. The costs incurred by the Division in maintaining the school and educational program are extreme and it is viable to transport students to another school.
 - 2.1.1.1. The cost of keeping the school in operable condition or restoring it to operable condition is deemed to be unreasonably high,
 - 2.1.1.2. The fiscal health of the Division can be significantly improved by more efficient use of school space and/or resources for the provision of programming.
 - 2.1.2. The ability to provide an acceptable educational program to the students in attendance.
 - 2.1.2.1. Student enrolment numbers in a school do not allow for effective and efficient programming,
 - 2.1.2.2. Enrolment projections indicate the possibility that future enrolment numbers in the school may not allow for programming, which is effective, efficient and viable,
 - 2.1.2.3. Inability to appropriately staff the school for all necessary operations.

- 2.1.3. The safety or integrity of the physical structure.
 - 2.1.3.1. Keeping the school open is deemed to pose a threat to the health or welfare of students, staff, or the public.
- 2.2. When any of the criteria for a school or program viability review have occurred or appear as a likelihood, the Superintendent shall advise the Board at a regular meeting of the Board.
 - 2.2.1. The decision to continue with further gathering of information and the initiation of a school and program viability review shall be made by Board motion.
 - 2.2.2. All school closure or program alteration procedures shall be initiated and completed within the same school year of which the decision is to be made between October 1st and April 30th.

3. Viability Report

- 3.1. When a Board motion has been made to continue with a school and program viability review the Superintendent shall:
 - 3.1.1. Conduct a meeting with the entire staff of the school to inform them of the board motion and to answer questions about the policy and procedures,
 - 3.1.2. Conduct a meeting of the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Trustee(s) representing the ward and the Board Chair, administrator(s) of the school, executive of the school council to inform them of the board motion and to answer questions about the policy and procedures.
- 3.2. The Superintendent will present a report to the Board at a scheduled meeting of the Board addressing the following:
 - 3.2.1. Enrollment history and projections,
 - 3.2.2. Alberta Education Funding Model,
 - 3.2.3. Operations,
 - 3.2.4. Transportation,
 - 3.2.5. Comparison of current situation and proposals with change.
- 3.3. Based on the information provided in the school and program viability report the decision to proceed with consideration of any school closure or program alteration shall be made by Board motion.

4. Consideration of Closure/Alteration

- 4.1. When a Board motion has been made to consider any school closure or program alteration the Board shall:
 - 4.1.1. Provide written notice that includes,
 - 4.1.1.1. Reference to this policy via PRSD website and an alternative means to obtain the policy,
 - 4.1.1.2. Reference to the viability report via PRSD website and an alternative means to obtain the report,
 - 4.1.1.3. Methods of submitting feedback,

- 4.1.1.4. Notice of public meeting and procedures of the meeting,
 - 4.1.1.5. Timeline of the procedures for this policy.
- 4.2. The written notice shall be distributed to:
 - 4.2.1. The parents/guardians of every child enrolled in the school,
 - 4.2.2. The parents/guardians of students residing in the school attendance area,
 - 4.2.3. Anyone covered by an education service agreement,
 - 4.2.4. All municipalities within our division.
- 4.3. Establish procedures and timelines for gathering feedback from stakeholders to present to the Board either in writing or by delegation.
- 4.4. Organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of distributing the results of the viability report and answering questions.
 - 4.4.1. The date, time, location, and procedures for the public meeting shall be posted in 5 or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least 7 days before the date of the public meeting; and,
 - 4.4.2. Advertised on social media and any other local communications within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, for a period of at least 7 days before the date of the public meeting.
- 4.5. The Board may hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the Board may determine.
- 4.6. The Board's debate shall take place only after all procedures in the timeline have been completed and at a scheduled meeting of the Board. At the end of the timeline, based on information and feedback provided, the decision to proceed with one of the following options shall be made by Board motion
 - 4.6.1. Close a school permanently or for a specified period of time and transfer all students to one or more other schools,
 - 4.6.2. Close the entire junior high school program and/or the entire high school program within a school and transfer students to one or more other schools,
 - 4.6.3. Alteration of any grade configuration within one or more schools,
 - 4.6.4. Not proceed with any action by the Board.

Legal Reference: Section 11, 33, 53, 62, 222, 192, 193, 222, 248, 249 Education Act
Alberta Regulation 328/197 (consolidated to 231/2012)

Adopted/Revised/Reviewed: JUN 2016/JUN 2018/NOV2019/JAN 2024