



## Questions and answers about the accommodation review process

Last updated March, 23, 2017

NOTE: Questions asked at meetings are contained in the meeting notes which [are posted online](#). Once there, choose Belleville, Centre Hastings or Prince Edward County at the top of the page.

### 1. Why do school boards consolidate and close schools?

- A. School boards generally consolidate and close schools to enable improved educational options and opportunities for students. By bringing students together through a school consolidation, school boards are often able to offer a better educational experience.

When a school has excess space because of low enrolment, the excess space still costs money to staff, maintain and operate. One of the key responsibilities of school boards is to ensure that funding is focused on the students who are in classrooms, and not on maintaining empty classrooms. The board must make decisions about the best accommodation and program options for students relative to the funds that are available.

Some of the potential improvements may include:

- The range of programming and courses available
- The availability of specialized support services for individual students or small groups
- Specialized facilities, such as gyms, libraries, design and technology, music and science rooms
- Sufficient enrolment to support sports teams and other extracurricular activities
- A school building in better condition than the one that is to close
- Accessibility features with respect to entry, movement within the facility and outdoor play space

Source: [Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews](#), Ministry of Education.

### 2. What do school boards consider before proposing school closures and/or consolidations?

- A. School boards are responsible for providing their students with the best possible educational experience. Their job is to put the needs of students first. To maximize their investment in students, boards work to keep education funds focused on the classroom. Factor including programming options, declining enrolment, surplus space, facility renewal needs and community hubs are considered.

### 3. What is the role of school board trustees in the accommodation review process?

- A. Trustees may attend accommodation review meetings to monitor the ARC process. A staff report and final recommendation are provided to the Board of Trustees which must include information from the Accommodation Review Committee feedback. The public will have an opportunity to provide comments directly to the Board of Trustees through public delegations at the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee meeting following the release of the final staff recommendation. The Board of Trustees makes the final decision regarding the future of a school or group of schools.



Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board  
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education

**4. What happens to playground equipment if a school is closed?**

A. Playground equipment that is in good, safe condition may be considered for relocation to the new school if it is needed there.

**5. Will transportation to the new school be available if a school is closed and students are relocated?**

A. Transportation distances for students to and from schools will be considered through the normal process with Tri-Board Student Transportation Services. The principle business of Tri-Board is to provide safe, secure, on-time, cost effective transportation. School board [Policy 17: Transportation of Students](#) identifies walking distances for students as shown below.

Walking Distances for Students		
Grade	Distance to School	Distance to Bus Pick-up
JK-6	1.6 km	0.8 km
Grade 7-8	3.2 km	0.8 km
Grade 9-12	3.2 km	1.6 km

**6. Based on the initial recommendation to close some schools in June and move into other schools in September, is there enough time to prepare the receiving school(s)?**

A. It's important that all students feel welcome at school each and every day. That includes when/if students move to a different school. The receiving schools in the initial recommendation have surplus space that can be made ready over the summer to accommodate the incoming students. Alterations would then be planned to further renovate the spaces. A transition plan will be presented to the accommodation review committees.

**7. What is planned for students with Special Education needs?**

A. Consideration will be given to creating inclusive educational experiences to address the needs of all learners. Specialized or regional special education programs will be considered. Student Services personnel will assess student needs and work with students and their families to ensure support are in place, as required.

**8. What happens after an accommodation review is completed?**

A. When the decision is made to close a school, students must be transferred to a different school. School boards want students to feel welcome at their receiving school, and they develop a transition plan to make the move to a different school culture as smooth as possible. The transition plan organizes the transfer of students, program materials, equipment and school memorabilia from the closing school to the receiving school or schools. The transition process is generally planned in consultation with parents and staff.

Should the school board decide that a closed school is no longer needed for the purposes of the board, the facility can be declared "surplus to the needs of the board." The Board can then proceed to lease or sell the surplus property to other organizations, according to the process required in the *Education Act*.



Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board  
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education

**9. How will the issues of split classes be addressed in our rural schools should the recommendation not be approved?**

- A. Combined classes (split classes) exist in almost all schools. Schools are organized in compliance with Ministry of Education expectations related to class size caps and averages. Programming for students in split classes is appropriate for the grade, just as in single grade classrooms. School organization and staffing implications may be affected by declining enrolment and class size requirements. These may include combined or multiple grades, as well as combined course programming in secondary. Schools will continue to program for students in combined classes and courses.

Opportunities to consolidate schools maximizes the ability to address school staffing and organization needs, and where possible, reduce combined grades. In addition, programming opportunities are enhanced when schools are consolidated and teachers are able to plan collaboratively with grade/subject partners.

**10. As a taxpayer, I'm concerned about the amount of money being spent on empty rooms and spaces, and on the maintenance and operations for buildings not in full use. What is the school board doing about this?**

- A. The school board is responsible and accountable to the public, with a responsibility for good governance through the effective management of all resources. The [Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline](#) provides school boards with specific direction regarding the management of capital assets by stating "School boards are responsible for managing their school capital assets in an effective manner. They must respond to changing demographics and program needs while ensuring continued student achievement and well-being, and the financial viability/sustainability of the school board."

*When a school has excess space because of low enrolment, the excess space still costs money to staff, maintain and operate. One of the key responsibilities of school boards is to ensure that funding is focused on the students who are in classrooms, and not on maintaining empty classrooms. The board must make decisions about the best accommodation and program options for students relative to the funds that are available."*

Source: [Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews](#), Ministry of Education

**11. How does a community hub/community use in a school improve programming for students?**

- A. School boards are open to considering partnerships with our community agencies that align with and support the school board vision, mission and priorities. The primary focus and responsibility of the Board and each school is to set the conditions necessary to support student achievement and well-being. *Community hubs in schools may benefit from the utilization of available space and create an opportunity for families to access agency resources. However, the school remains responsible for school organization, staffing, programming, student achievement and well-being. School boards manage program needs first, then they identify the school's eligibility for other options, such as facility partnerships or hubs.* HPEDSB is committed to being a community partner to engage with all community members -- from our youngest learners to people of all ages.

Source: [Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews](#), Ministry of Education



## Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board

Possibilities  
TODAY & TOMORROW

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board  
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education

### **12. Should the recommendation for Prince Edward County be approved, will the school be 100% complete in all areas for K-12 students?**

- A. The school would be ready to welcome all students into classrooms and learning spaces for September 2017. However, like any consolidation, additional work will be completed on the building over the next couple of years. All schools have work done continuously as a normal part of operations. Additional renewal needs maybe required as the space is repurposed and as staff and students settle in. These areas can be examined and requests brought to Facility Services through the regular ongoing renewal processes.

### **13. How will students be supported in adjusting to the new spaces in schools?**

- A. Our school and system employees are dedicated to creating welcoming, safe, inclusive spaces for all students. Our secretaries, educational assistants, child and youth counsellors, custodians, teachers, early childhood educators, library technicians, administrators, board personnel and community partners work together to support students each day and will continue to do so through any of the proposed changes.

HPEDSB has significant experience in transitioning and supporting staff and students, such as at Athol-South Marysburgh Public School in Prince Edward County, Stirling Public School, Tweed Elementary School, York River Public School in Bancroft and the new Trent River Public School in Trenton. At secondary, Bayside, Centennial and Moira secondary schools have hosted Grade 7-8 students as a part of the school community.



Hastings and Prince Edward  
District School Board

Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board  
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education

Possibilities  
TODAY & TOMORROW