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STUDENT ENROLMENT/SCHOOL CAPACITY: PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

1) PURPOSE

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB) is committed to providing the best educational opportunities while ensuring fiscal responsibility and to enhancing the learning environment in its schools for all students.

The Board will consider from time to time, the need to consolidate, close or relocate a school(s) due to changes in curriculum, program demands, student enrolment, community demographics and other factors. In some circumstances these considerations may result in the need to carry out an accommodation review for a school or group of schools. This policy describes the process for conducting a standard or modified accommodation review, and is based on the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline, 2015, included as Appendix A.

2) GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Board is committed to the following:

- a) Student achievement and well-being.
- b) Effective stewardship of school board resources.
- c) Student curriculum and program needs, as well as funding and renewal needs, will drive facility planning.
- d) Upgrades to the condition of facilities will occur where feasible.
- e) The Board will comply with Ministry of Education guidelines for school consolidation and closure decisions.
- f) The Board will exemplify open decision-making, Board oversight and public participation in capital planning.

3) CONTEXT

HPEDSB's elementary schools are organized in groups linked to a secondary school. The goal of providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities in a school or group of schools requires monitoring and active curriculum and programming decisions. Decisions that might require consolidation, closure or program relocation will take into account the needs of all of the students in all of the schools in a particular school group or groups of schools. There may, however, be circumstances in which a single school should be studied for closure or relocation.

Decisions under this policy will take into account the school board's long-term capital and accommodation plan, informed by any relevant information from local municipal governments and other community partners.

4) DEFINITIONS

Accommodation Review: A process undertaken by the school board to determine the future of a school or group of schools.

Accommodation Review Committee (ARC): A committee established by the school board that represents the affected schools(s) of an accommodation review. The ARC acts as an official conduit for information shared between the school board and the school communities.

ARC Working Meeting: A meeting of the ARC members to discuss an accommodation review, inclusive of a meeting held by the ARC to solicit feedback from the affected school communities of an accommodation review.

Board: Refers to all Board members.

Business Day: A calendar day that is not a weekend or statutory holiday. It also does not include calendar days that fall within the Christmas, March and summer breaks.

Consultation: The sharing of relevant information as well as providing the opportunity for municipalities and other community partners, the public and affected school communities to be heard.

Public Delegation: A regular meeting of the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee where presentations by groups or individuals can have their concerns heard directly by Board members.

Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline: Established by the Ministry of Education to provide a framework of minimum standards for school boards to undertake pupil accommodation reviews to determine the future of a school or group of schools, and included as Appendix A.

School Information Profile (SIP): An orientation document developed by administration, with point-in-time data for each of the schools under an accommodation review, to help the ARC and community understand the context surrounding the decision to include the specific school(s) in the review. Data contained in the profiles considers value of the school to the student and the school board, based on criteria contained in the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline. Administration may introduce additional items that could be used to reflect local circumstances and priorities that may help to further understand the school(s) under review.

Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee (SE/SCC): Established as a committee of all Board members to establish a long-term capital and accommodation plan, review school accommodation data and prepare recommendations for formal Board approval.

Terms of Reference: Objectives and criteria prepared by administration that clarifies the mandate of the ARC and describes the roles and responsible and procedures of the ARC.

Timelines: Where referred to in this document, all time calculations are based on five business days per week, excluding statutory holidays and defined school holidays for the Christmas break, March break and the summer vacation period.

5) PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

- a) Following the assessment of the school board's long-term capital and accommodation needs and options, a school or group of schools may be considered for an accommodation review if one or more of the following conditions apply:
 - i) The school or group of schools is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students.

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- ii) The school or group of schools has experienced or will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment.
 - iii) Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students.
 - iv) Teaching/learning spaces are not suitable to provide the programs needed to serve the community and retrofitting may be cost prohibitive.
 - v) Under normal staffing allocation practices, it would be necessary to assign multiple (more than two) grades to one class in one or more of the schools.
 - vi) One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance or renewal expenses than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements.
 - vii) 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.
 - viii) It has been no less than five years since the inception of a study of the school by an Accommodation Review Committee, except where extenuating circumstances warrant, such as an unexpected economic or demographic shift, or a change in a school's physical condition.
 - ix) One or more of the schools cannot be operated effectively within the Ministry of Education funding guidelines.
- b) The Board is not obligated to conduct an accommodation review under the following circumstances:
- i) replacement school is to be built on the same site or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary;
 - ii) replacement school is to be built on the same site, or built or acquired within the existing school boundary, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students and staff during the reconstruction;
 - iii) the lease for the school is terminated;
 - iv) planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of grades or programs, in which the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the enrolment of the school;
 - v) temporary relocation of students to perform major renovations in a building to ensure the safety of students during renovations;
 - vi) the facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is over-capacity and/or is under construction or repair; or
 - vii) there are no students enrolled at the school any time throughout the school year.
- c) In the above circumstances, where an accommodation review is not required, the affected school communities will be informed about proposed accommodation plans for students before a decision is made by the Board.
- d) Following the decision of the Board, the director of education or designate will provide written notice, no fewer than five business days after the decision to proceed with an exception, to the following:
- i) affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerk's Department (or equivalent);
 - ii) other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the exemption;
 - iii) coterminous school boards in the area(s) of the affected schools(s); and
 - iv) Ministry of Education through the Assistant Deputy Minister of Financial Policy and Business Development.
- e) A transition plan will be put in place following the Board's decision to consolidate, close or move a school or students in accordance with this section.

6) ESTABLISHING AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

- a) Following the assessment of the school board's long-term capital and accommodation needs and options, administration will present an initial report to the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee (SE/SCC). The report will contain one or more options that address the accommodation issue(s) related to a school or group of schools. Each option must have supporting rationale and include a timeline for implementation. The report must include:
 - i) a recommended option if more than one option is presented;
 - ii) information on actions taken by school board staff prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review; and
 - iii) supporting rationale as to any actions taken or not taken.
- b) The options presented must address the following:
 - i) summary of accommodation issues(s) for the school(s) under review;
 - ii) where students would be accommodated;
 - iii) if proposed changes to existing facility/facilities are required as a result of the accommodation review;
 - iv) identify any program changes as a result of the proposed option;
 - v) how student transportation would be affected if changes take place;
 - vi) if new capital investment is required as a result of the pupil accommodation review, how the school board intends to fund this, as well as a proposal on how students would be accommodated if funding does not become available; and
 - vii) any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to the commencement of the accommodation review, including any confirmed interest in using underutilized space.
- c) Every effort will be made to include the completed School Information Profile (SIP) for each school in the review area as part of the initial report. The SIPs will be available no later than the first public meeting of the accommodation review process.
- d) After reviewing the preliminary report, the SE/SCC may recommend that the Board direct administration to conduct an accommodation review for a group of schools or for a single school.
- e) Following the Board's decision to proceed with an accommodation review, the initial report from administration will be posted on the board website.
- f) Within five business days following the Board's decision, the director of education will, in writing:
 - i) inform parents, guardians, employees and school council members of the identified school(s) of the accommodation review;
 - ii) invite municipalities and other community partners to discuss and comment on the recommended options; and
 - iii) notify the directors of education of the coterminous boards and the Ministry of Education.
- g) The accommodation review process will consist of the following methods of consultation:
 - i) Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)
 - ii) Consultation with municipal governments local to the affected school(s)
 - iii) Public meetings
 - iv) Public delegations
- h) All information relevant to the accommodation review process will be documented and posted on the board website.

7) ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC)

- a) An Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) will be formed following the Board's consideration of the initial report from administration but prior to the first public meeting.
- i) The ARC will represent the school(s) under review and acts as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the school communities.
 - ii) The ARC will be provided with terms of reference that describes the ARC's mandate and clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities and procedures of the ARC. The terms of reference will outline the minimum number of working meetings of the ARC. The ARC meetings will be chaired by the school group superintendent.
 - iii) The ARC will be provided with information necessary to permit the ARC to carry out its mandate. The package will include:
 - (1) School Information Profile (SIP) for each school in the review area. The SIPs provide an understanding of and familiarity with the school facilities under review. The SIPs contain data for the following two considerations: value to school and value to the board. The specific requirements for information contained in the SIPs are found in Appendix A;
 - (2) educational and accommodation criteria for examining the schools under review and accommodation options;
 - (3) support materials and analysis; and
 - (4) partnership opportunities, or lack thereof, identified in the board's long-term planning and accommodation process, and as discussed with municipalities and community partners.
 - iv) The ARC will provide feedback and seek clarification on the initial report from administration and the SIPs.
 - v) The ARC may provide other accommodation options than those in the report from administration however it must include supporting rationale for any such option.
 - vi) The school board's employee resource assigned to the ARC will compile feedback from the ARC to be presented to the Board with the final report from administration.
 - vii) The ARC does not need to achieve consensus regarding the information provided to the Board. Members do not vote on feedback related to the report from administration or the alternate options presented to Board for consideration.
- b) Composition of the ARC**
- i) The ARC will consist of the following persons:
 - The appropriate school superintendent;
 - From each affected school:
 - the school principal or designate;
 - one teacher;
 - one non-teaching staff member;
 - three parents, one of whom will be the school council chair or designate;
 - two municipal/business/community members; and
 - one intermediate or secondary student.
 - ii) Other school board officials may attend ARC meetings and act as resource support to the ARC.
 - iii) Board members may be ad hoc members to monitor the ARC process.

- iv) The committee will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all of the listed members are willing and able to participate, but must include at least one member from the school community and one member from the broader community.

c) Process for selecting ARC members

- i) Selection of parents/guardians
The principal of the school will call a meeting of parents/guardians with students attending the school. The selection of the parents/guardians for the ARC will follow nomination and voting procedures with the successful selected parent(s)/guardian(s) being those who receive the greatest number of votes from those parents present.
- ii) Selection of municipal, business and community members
Advertisements will be placed in the local media and on the school board website inviting municipal, business and community members within the municipalities included in the school's attendance area to apply through the director of education. The names of interested persons will be received up to a specified date.

Selection of persons for the ARC will consider the person's qualifications, knowledge of issues related to public education, knowledge of the community, expressed interest in serving on the ARC, and other factors as determined by the SE/SCC. The SE/SCC may request municipal councils to appoint a representative.

- iii) Selection of student representatives (secondary and intermediate only)
The student representative will be from Grade 7 and above. The student body will recommend a student representative to the principal for confirmation.
- iv) Selection of staff
The selection of teaching and non-teaching staff representatives will be identified by each school included in the review and follow nomination and voting procedures.

8) CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS/COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- a) Within five business days following the Board's decision to conduct an accommodation review, the director of education or designate will invite the affected single and upper-tier municipality and other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the accommodation review to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the initial report from administration.
- b) The invitation for this meeting will be provided through a written notice, and will be directed through the Clerk's Department (or equivalent) for the affected single and upper-tier municipalities.
- c) The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as the other community partners that expressed interest prior to the accommodation review, must provide their response on the recommended options(s) presented in the initial report from administration before the final public meeting.
- d) The school board will provide advance notice of when the final public meeting will take place.
- e) The school board will document all efforts to meet with the single and upper-tier municipalities and community partners that expressed interested prior to the accommodation review, and provide any relevant information from this meeting as part of the final report from administration to the Board.

9) PUBLIC MEETINGS

- a) Following the initiation of an accommodation review, the school board will hold a minimum of two public meetings for broader consultation on the initial report from administration.
- b) The meetings will be facilitated by school board staff in order to solicit broader community feedback on the recommended option(s) contained in the initial report, and will include the ARC.
- c) Notice of the public meetings will be provided, no later than 10 business days prior to the meeting, through school newsletters, letters to the school community, the school board website and advertisements in local community newspapers and will include date, time location, purpose, contact name and number.
- d) The first public meeting will be held no fewer than 30 business days following the Board's decision to conduct an accommodation review, and will include:
 - i) an overview of the ARC orientation session;
 - ii) review of the initial report from administration with recommended option(s); and
 - iii) a presentation of the School Information Profiles (SIPs). The SIPs will help to provide an understanding of the context surrounding the decision to include a specific school or school(s) in an accommodation review.
- e) There must be a minimum of 40 business days between the first and last public meeting.
- f) The last public meeting must occur no fewer than 10 business days prior to the presentation of administration's final report to the SE/SCC.

10) COMPLETING THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

- a) **Final Report from Administration to the SE/SCC**
 - i) At the conclusion of the accommodation review process, and no fewer than 10 business days following the final public meeting, administration will prepare and present its final report to the SE/SCC in public session.
 - ii) The final report from administration must include a community consultation section that contains feedback from the ARC and any public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from the municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the accommodation review.
 - iii) Administration may choose to amend their proposed option(s) included in their initial report. The recommended options must also include a proposed accommodation plan, prepared for decision of the Board, which contains a timeline for implementation.
- b) **SE/SCC meeting for public delegation**
 - i) The SE/SCC will hold a meeting, no fewer than 10 business days following presentation of the final report from administration, to allow an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback on the final report from administration.
 - ii) Notice of the SE/SCC meeting for public input will be provided through school newsletters, letters to the school community, the district website and advertisements in the local community newspapers and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number.

c) SE/SCC follow-up meeting

- i) Administration will compile feedback from the SE/SCC meeting for public input and present to the SE/SCC, with the final report from administration, no fewer than 10 business days following the SE/SCC meeting for public input.
- ii) The SE/SCC will review the final report from administration and public input and prepare its recommendation to the Board. The recommendation will be based on the final report and recommendations from administration, and feedback compiled from the public delegation. The SE/SCC has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) as presented by administration or to recommend a different outcome for Board consideration.

d) Board meeting to consider school accommodation

- i) The Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodation recommendations from the SE/SCC.
- ii) Public notice of the meeting regarding the school accommodation recommendations will be provided through school newsletters, letters to the school community, the school board website and advertisements in local community newspapers.
- iii) Final accommodation review decisions will not be made during the summer holiday period.
- iv) Parents, guardians, employees and school council members will be informed within five business days in writing, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision, which will also be posted on the school board website.

11) TRANSITION PLANNING

It is important that the transition of students and staff into their new school(s) is achieved in a way that is positive and supportive for the students and parents/guardians of the respective school communities. The transition of students should be carried out in consultation with parents/guardians and staff.

12) MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

- a) In certain circumstances, where the accommodation review options available are deemed by the school board to be less complex, the school board may find it appropriate to undertake a modified accommodation review process.
- b) The conditions for conducting a modified accommodation review process shall be based on two or more of the following factors:
 - i) distance to the nearest available school is less than 15 kilometres for elementary and less than 20 kilometres for secondary;
 - ii) utilization rate of the facility is less than or equal to 65%;
 - iii) number of students enrolled is fewer than 300 for elementary and fewer than 750 for secondary; or
 - iv) when planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of years) of a program, in which the enrolment constitutes more than or equal to 50% of the school's enrolment. This calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of relocation, or the first phase of relocation carried over a number of school years.
- c) Even when the criteria for a modified accommodation review are met, the Board may choose to use the standard accommodation review process.

- d) The modified accommodation review process will consist of consultation with municipal governments and community partners, a public meeting for information sharing and public delegations, but does not include an Accommodation Review Committee.
- e) The modified accommodation review process will be implemented in accordance with relevant sections of this policy, and as described below.
- f) The initial report from administration will be prepared and presented to the SE/SCC in accordance with Section 6. The report will also include the rationale for exempting the school(s) from the standard accommodation review process.
- g) The director of education or designate will inform the school and broader community, of the Board's decision, and provide an opportunity for input from municipal and community partners as described in Section 8.
- h) School board administration will hold one public meeting to solicit broader community feedback on the recommended option(s) contained in the initial report.
- i) Following the public meeting, school board administration will present a final report to the SE/SCC, in accordance with Section 10.
 - i) A second SE/SCC meeting will be held for public input into the final report from administration.
 - ii) Administration will compile feedback from the SE/SCC meeting for public input and present to the SE/SCC.
 - iii) The SE/SCC will review the final report from administration and public input and prepare its recommendation to the Board.
 - iv) The Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodation recommendations from the SE/SCC.

14) TIMELINES: STANDARD AND MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

Action	Standard	Modified	When	Responsibility	Reference Section
Presentation of initial report from administration to the SE/SCC	✓	✓	Discretion	Administration	6a)
Board decision to conduct an accommodation review	✓	✓	Discretion, at regular meeting of the Board	Board	6e)
Notice of Board decision to conduct an accommodation review to parents/guardians, school and broader community	✓	✓	Within five business days of the Board's decision	Director or designate	6f) 8a) & b)
Formation of Accommodation Review Committee	✓		Prior to first public meeting	Administration	7
Consultation meetings with municipal and community partners	✓	✓	As required, prior to final public accommodation review meeting	Administration	8
Notice of the first public accommodation review meeting to school and broader community.	✓	✓	At least 10 business days prior to the meeting	Director or designate	9c)
Public accommodation review meeting	✓	✓	No sooner than 30 business days following the Board's decision	Administration	9
Information package prepared for ARC	✓		No later than first working meeting of the ARC	Administration	7a) iii)
Working meetings of the ARC	✓		As scheduled by ARC, after the first public meeting, prior to final public meeting	Superintendent ARC	7a) ii)
Notice of final public accommodation review meeting to school and broader community.	✓		At least 10 business days prior to the meeting	Director or designate	9c)
Public accommodation review meeting	✓		No sooner than 40 business days following the first public meeting	Administration	9b), e), f)
Final report from administration posted on website; SE/SCC meeting to receive report	✓	✓	No less than 10 business days following final public meeting.	Administration Board members	10a)
SE/SCC meeting for public delegations/input	✓	✓	No less than 10 days following presentation of report from administration to SE/SCC	Administration Board members	10b)
SE/SCC follow-up meeting to prepare recommendation to Board	✓	✓	No less than 10 business days following the SE/SCC meeting for public input.	Board members	10c)
Public Board meeting to determine accommodation recommendations	✓	✓	Regularly scheduled Board meeting, following the SE/SCC follow-up meeting, prior to summer break.	Board members	10d)

Legal References:

- *Education Act, paragraph 8 (1)26 School Closings; paragraph 171 (1) 7 Power of Boards to Close Schools; sections 194-196 Disposal or Purchase of a School Site*
- Ontario Regulation 444/98 Disposition of Surplus Real Property
- [Ministry of Education Accommodation Reviews](#)

Board References:

- Board Policy No. 1: Board Mission and Goals
- Board Policy No. 4: Corporate Board Job Description
- Board Policy No. 5: Director of Education Job Description
- Board Policy No. 11: Committees of the Board
- Administrative Procedure 178: Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)
- Administrative Procedure 187: School Openings, Closings and Rededications
- Administrative Procedure 555: Maximizing Use of School Space
- Administrative Procedure 560 Disposal of Real Property
- Administrative Procedure 570: Community Planning and Partnerships

APPENDIX A



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW GUIDELINE

March 2015

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PREAMBLE

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.

One aspect of a school board's capital and accommodation planning is reviewing schools that have underutilized space. These are schools where the student capacity of the school is greater than the number of students enrolled. When a school board identifies a school that is projected to have long-term excess space, a school board would typically look at a number of options such as:

- moving attendance boundaries and programs to balance enrolment between over and underutilized schools;
- offering to lease underutilized space within a school to a coterminous school board;
- finding community partners who can pay the full cost of operating the underutilized space; and/or
- decommissioning or demolishing a section of the school that is not required for student use to reduce operating costs.

If none of these options are deemed viable by a school board, the board may determine that a pupil accommodation review process take place which could lead to possible school consolidations and closures. These decisions are made within the context of supporting the school board's student achievement and well-being strategy and to make the most effective use of its school buildings and funding.

The Ministry of Education expects school boards to work with their community partners when undertaking capital planning, including when a school board is beginning to develop options to address underutilized space in schools. The Ministry of Education's *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline* (CPPG) outlines requirements for school boards to reach out to their local municipalities and other community partners to share planning related information and to explore potential partnership opportunities. This version of the *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* (the "*Guideline*") builds upon the CPPG by providing requirements for school boards to share information with and seek feedback from their local municipalities and other community partners related to any pupil accommodation reviews a school board initiates.

If a pupil accommodation review results in a school closure decision, a school board will then need to decide whether to declare that school as surplus, potentially leading to the future sale of the property. These sales are governed by provincial regulation. Alternately, a school board may decide to use a closed school for other school board purposes, or hold the property as a strategic long-term asset of the school board due to a projected need for the facility in the

future. Each school board decides when it is appropriate to review its strategic property holdings to determine if these properties are still required to be held or should be considered surplus to the school board's needs and considered for a future sale.

This document provides direction to school boards on one component of their capital planning - the pupil accommodation review process. It provides the minimum standards the province requires school boards to follow when undertaking a pupil accommodation review. It is important to note that school boards have flexibility to modify their pupil accommodation review policies to meet their local needs, and can develop policies that exceed the provincial minimum standards outlined in this document.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Guideline* is to provide a framework of minimum standards for school boards to undertake pupil accommodation reviews to determine the future of a school or group of schools. This *Guideline* ensures that where a decision is taken by a school board regarding the future of a school, that decision is made with the involvement of an informed local community and is based on a broad range of criteria regarding the quality of the learning experience for students.

This *Guideline* is effective upon release and replaces the previous *Guideline* of June 2009.

II. INTRODUCTION

Ontario's school boards are responsible for deciding the most appropriate pupil accommodation arrangements for the delivery of their elementary and secondary programs. These decisions are made by school board trustees in the context of carrying out their primary responsibilities of fostering student achievement and well-being, and ensuring effective stewardship of school board resources. In some cases, to address changing student populations, this requires school boards to consider undertaking pupil accommodation reviews that may lead to school consolidations and closures.

Under paragraph 26, subsection 8 (1) of the *Education Act*, the Minister of Education may issue guidelines with respect to school boards' school closure policies.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The *Guideline* has been established to align with the Ministry of Education's vision and as such, focuses on student well-being; academic achievement; and school board financial viability/sustainability.

All school board pupil accommodation review policies should be designed to align with these guiding principles.

IV. SCHOOL BOARD ACCOMMODATION REVIEW POLICIES

School boards are responsible for creating and implementing a policy to address pupil accommodation reviews to serve their local needs. The Ministry of Education expects school boards to consult with local communities prior to adopting or subsequently amending their pupil accommodation review policies.

All pupil accommodation review policies must be clear in stipulating that the final decision regarding the future of a school or group of schools rests solely with the Board of Trustees. If the Board of Trustees votes to close a school or schools in accordance with their policy, the school board must provide clear timelines regarding the closure(s) and ensure that a transition plan is communicated to all affected school communities within the school board.

It is important to note that this *Guideline* is intended as a **minimum** requirement for school boards in developing their policies. School boards are responsible for establishing and complying with their pupil accommodation review policies to serve their local needs.

A copy of the school board's pupil accommodation review policy, the government's *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* and the *Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process* documents are to be made available to the public as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website.

The *Guideline* recognizes that pupil accommodation reviews include a school or group of schools to facilitate the development of viable solutions for pupil accommodation that support the guiding principles.

School board pupil accommodation review policies will include statements that encourage the sharing of relevant information as well as providing the opportunity for the public and affected school communities to be heard.

The Ministry of Education recommends that, wherever possible, schools should only be subject to a pupil accommodation review once in a five-year period, unless there are circumstances determined by the school board, such as a significant change in enrolment.

V. SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING PRIOR TO AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

As described in the *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline*, school boards must undertake long-term capital and accommodation planning, informed

by any relevant information obtained from local municipal governments and other community partners, which takes into consideration long-term enrolment projections and planning opportunities for the effective use of excess space in all area schools.

School boards must document their efforts to obtain information from local municipal governments as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review; and provide any relevant information from municipalities and other community partners as part of the initial staff report (see Section VI).

VI. ESTABLISHING AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

School boards may proceed to establish a pupil accommodation review only after undertaking the necessary assessment of long-term capital and accommodation planning options for the school(s).

Initial Staff Report

Prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review, the initial staff report to the Board of Trustees must contain one or more options to address the accommodation issue(s). Each option must have a supporting rationale. There must be a recommended option if more than one option is presented. The initial staff report must also include information on actions taken by school board staff prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review process and supporting rationale as to any actions taken or not taken.

The option(s) included in the initial staff report must address the following:

- summary of accommodation issue(s) for the school(s) under review;
- where students would be accommodated;
- if proposed changes to existing facility or facilities are required as a result of the pupil accommodation review;
- identify any program changes as a result of the proposed option;
- how student transportation would be affected if changes take place;
- if new capital investment is required as a result of the pupil accommodation review, how the school board intends to fund this, as well as a proposal on how students would be accommodated if funding does not become available; and
- any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to the commencement of the pupil accommodation review, including any confirmed interest in using the underutilized space.

Each recommended option must also include a timeline for implementation.

The initial staff report and School Information Profiles (SIPs) (see Section VIII) will be made available to the public, as determined in the school board's policy,

and posted on the school board's website following the decision to proceed with a pupil accommodation review by the Board of Trustees.

School boards must ensure that individuals from the school(s) under review and the broader community are invited to participate in the pupil accommodation review consultation. At a minimum, the pupil accommodation review process must consist of the following methods of consultation:

- Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) (see Section VII);
- consultation with municipal governments local to the affected school(s) (see Section IX);
- public meetings (see Section X); and
- public delegations (see Section XI).

VII. THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Role

School boards must establish an ARC that represents the school(s) under review and acts as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the school communities. The ARC may comment on the initial staff report and may, throughout the pupil accommodation review process, seek clarification of the initial staff report. The ARC may provide other accommodation options than those in the initial staff report; however, it must include supporting rationale for any such option.

The ARC members do not need to achieve consensus regarding the information provided to the Board of Trustees.

The school board's staff resources assigned to the ARC are required to compile feedback from the ARC as well as the broader community in the Community Consultation section of the final staff report (see Section XI) to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

Membership

The membership of the ARC should include, at a minimum, parent/guardian representatives from each of the schools under review, chosen by their respective school communities.

Where established by a school board's pupil accommodation review policy, there may also be the option to include students and representation from the broader community. For example, a school board's policy may include a requirement for specific representation from the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities. In addition, school board trustees may be ad hoc ARC members to monitor the ARC progress.

Formation

The ARC should be formed following the Board of Trustees' consideration of the initial staff report but prior to the first public meeting. The school board will invite ARC members from the school(s) under review to an orientation session that will describe the mandate, roles and responsibilities, and procedures of the ARC.

Terms of Reference

School boards will provide the ARC with Terms of Reference that describe the ARC's mandate. The mandate will refer to the school board's education and accommodation objectives in undertaking the ARC and reflect the school board's strategy for supporting student achievement and well-being.

The Terms of Reference will also clearly outline the school board's expectations of the roles and responsibilities of the ARC; and describe the procedures of the ARC. At a minimum, the ARC will provide feedback on the initial staff report option(s).

The Terms of Reference will outline the minimum number of working meetings of the ARC.

Meetings of the Accommodation Review Committee

The ARC will meet to review materials presented by school board staff. It is recommended that the ARC hold as many working meetings as is deemed necessary within the timelines established in their school board's pupil accommodation review policy.

VIII. SCHOOL INFORMATION PROFILE

School board staff are required to develop School Information Profiles (SIPs) as orientation documents to help the ARC and the community understand the context surrounding the decision to include the specific school(s) in a pupil accommodation review. The SIP provides an understanding of and familiarity with the facilities under review.

The SIP is expected to include data for each of the following two considerations about the school(s) under review:

- value to the student; and
- value to the school board.

A SIP will be completed by school board staff for each of the schools under review. The following are the minimum data requirements and factors that are to be included in the SIP:

- Facility Profile:
 - School name and address.
 - Site plan and floor plan(s) (or space template) of the school with the date of school construction and any subsequent additions.
 - School attendance area (boundary) map.
 - Context map (or air photo) of the school indicating the existing land uses surrounding the school.
 - Planning map of the school with zoning, Official Plan or secondary plan land use designations.
 - Size of the school site (acres or hectares).
 - Building area (square feet or square metres).
 - Number of portable classrooms.
 - Number and type of instructional rooms as well as specialized classroom teaching spaces (e.g., science lab, tech shop, gymnasium, etc.).
 - Area of hard surfaced outdoor play area and/or green space, the number of play fields, and the presence of outdoor facilities (e.g., tracks, courts for basketball, tennis, etc.).
 - Ten-year history of major facility improvements (item and cost).
 - Projected five-year facility renewal needs of school (item and cost).
 - Current Facility Condition Index (FCI) with a definition of what the index represents.
 - A measure of proximity of the students to their existing school, and the average distance to the school for students.
 - Percentage of students that are and are not eligible for transportation under the school board policy, and the length of bus ride to the school (longest, shortest, and average length of bus ride times).
 - School utility costs (totals, per square foot, and per student).
 - Number of parking spaces on site at the school, an assessment of the adequacy of parking, and bus/car access and egress.
 - Measures that the school board has identified and/or addressed for accessibility of the school for students, staff, and the public with disabilities (i.e., barrier-free).
 - On-the-ground (OTG) capacity, and surplus/shortage of pupil places.

- Instructional Profile:
 - Describe the number and type of teaching staff, non-teaching staff, support staff, itinerant staff, and administrative staff at the school.
 - Describe the course and program offerings at the school.
 - Describe the specialized service offerings at the school (e.g., cooperative placements, guidance counseling, etc.).
 - Current grade configuration of the school (e.g., junior kindergarten to Grade 6, junior kindergarten to Grade 12, etc.).
 - Current grade organization of the school (e.g., number of combined grades, etc.).
 - Number of out of area students.
 - Utilization factor/classroom usage.

- Summary of five previous years' enrolment and 10-year enrolment projection by grade and program.
- Current extracurricular activities.
- Other School Use Profile:
 - Current non-school programs or services resident at or co-located with the school as well as any revenue from these non-school programs or services and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
 - Current facility partnerships as well as any revenue from the facility partnerships and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
 - Community use of the school as well as any revenue from the community use of the school and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
 - Availability of before and after school programs or services (e.g., child care) as well as any revenue from the before and after school programs and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
 - Lease terms at the school as well as any revenue from the lease and whether or not it is at full cost recovery.
 - Description of the school's suitability for facility partnerships.

School boards may introduce additional items that could be used to reflect local circumstances and priorities which may help to further understand the school(s) under review.

Each school under review will have a SIP completed at the same point-in-time for comparison purposes. The Ministry of Education expects school boards to prepare SIPs that are complete and accurate, to the best of the school board's ability, prior to the commencement of a pupil accommodation review.

While the ARC may request clarification about information provided in the SIP, it is not the role of the ARC to approve the SIP.

IX. CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

Following the Board of Trustees' approval to undertake a pupil accommodation review, school boards must invite affected single and upper-tier municipalities as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the school board's initial staff report.

The invitation for this meeting will be provided through a written notice, and will be directed through the Clerks Department (or equivalent) for the affected single and upper-tier municipalities.

The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the recommended option(s) in the school board's initial staff report before the final public meeting. School boards must provide

them with advance notice of when the final public meeting is scheduled to take place.

School boards must document their efforts to meet with the affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review; and provide any relevant information from this meeting as part of the final staff report to the Board of Trustees (see Section XI).

X. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Once a school board has received an initial staff report and has approved the initiation of a pupil accommodation review, the school board must arrange to hold a minimum of two public meetings for broader community consultation on the initial staff report. School board staff are expected to facilitate the public meetings to solicit broader community feedback on the recommended option(s) contained in the initial staff report.

The public meetings are to be announced and advertised publicly by the school board through an appropriate range of media as determined by the school board.

At a minimum, the first public meeting must include the following:

- an overview of the ARC orientation session;
- the initial staff report with recommended option(s); and
- a presentation of the SIPs.

XI. COMPLETING THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

Final Staff Report

At the conclusion of the pupil accommodation review process, school board staff will submit a final staff report to the Board of Trustees which must be available to the public as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website.

The final staff report must include a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from the ARC and any public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the pupil accommodation review.

School board staff may choose to amend their proposed option(s) included in the initial staff report. The recommended option(s) must also include a proposed accommodation plan, prepared for the decision of the Board of Trustees, which contains a timeline for implementation.

Delegations to the Board of Trustees Meeting

Once school board staff submits the final staff report to the Board of Trustees, the school board must allow an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback on the final staff report through public delegations to the Board of Trustees. Notice of the public delegation opportunities will be provided based on school board policy.

After the public delegations, school board staff will compile feedback from the public delegations which will be presented to the Board of Trustees with the final staff report.

Decision of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will be provided with the final staff report, including the compiled feedback from the public delegations, when making its final decision regarding the pupil accommodation review.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) of the final staff report as presented, modify the recommendation(s) of the final staff report, or to approve a different outcome.

The Ministry encourages school boards not to make final pupil accommodation review decisions during the summer holiday period (typically from July 1 to the day after Labour Day).

XII. TRANSITION PLANNING

The transition of students should be carried out in consultation with parents/guardians and staff. Following the decision to consolidate and/or close a school, the school board is expected to establish a separate committee to address the transition for students and staff.

XIII. TIMELINES FOR THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

The pupil accommodation review process must comply with the following minimum timelines:

- Following the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a pupil accommodation review, the school board will provide written notice of the Board of Trustees' decision within 5 business days to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department (or equivalent), other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review; and include an invitation for a meeting to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the school board's

initial staff report. School boards must also notify the Director(s) of Education of their coterminous school boards and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division.

- The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the recommended option(s) in the school board's initial staff report before the final public meeting.
- Beginning with the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a pupil accommodation review, there must be no fewer than 30 business days before the first public meeting is held.
- There must be a minimum period of 40 business days between the first and final public meetings.
- The final staff report must be publicly posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.
- From the posting of the final staff report, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- There must be no fewer than 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

XIV. MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

In certain circumstances, where the potential pupil accommodation options available are deemed by the school board to be less complex, school boards may find it appropriate to undertake a modified pupil accommodation review process. The *Guideline* permits a school board to include an optional modified pupil accommodation review process in its pupil accommodation review policy.

A school board's pupil accommodation review policy must clearly outline the conditions where a modified pupil accommodation review process could be initiated by explicitly defining the factors that would allow the school board the option to conduct a modified pupil accommodation review process. The conditions for conducting a modified pupil accommodation review process need to be based on two or more of the following factors:

- distance to the nearest available accommodation;
- utilization rate of the facility;
- number of students enrolled at the school; or
- when a school board is planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of a program, in which the enrolment constitutes more than or equal to 50% of the school's enrolment (this

calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation, or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of school years).

School boards may consider additional factors that are defined in their pupil accommodation review policy to qualify for the modified pupil accommodation review process. Multiple factors may be developed by the school board to appropriately reflect varying conditions across the board (e.g., urban, rural, elementary panel, secondary panel, etc.). The Board of Trustees must approve these explicitly defined factors, after community consultation, in order to adopt a modified pupil accommodation review process as part of their school board's pupil accommodation review policy.

The guiding principles of this *Guideline* apply to the modified pupil accommodation review process.

Even when the criteria for a modified pupil accommodation review are met, a school board may choose to use the standard pupil accommodation review process.

Implementing the Modified Accommodation Review Process

The initial staff report will explain the rationale for exempting the school(s) from the standard pupil accommodation review process, in accordance with the school board's pupil accommodation review policy.

The initial staff report and SIPs must be made available to the public, as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website.

A public meeting will be announced and advertised through an appropriate range of media as determined by the school board.

Following the public meeting, school board staff will submit a final staff report to the Board of Trustees which must be available to the public as determined in the school board's policy, and posted on the school board's website. The final staff report must include a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from any public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the modified pupil accommodation review.

Once school board staff submit the final staff report to the Board of Trustees, the school board must allow an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback through public delegations to the Board of Trustees. Notice of the public delegation opportunities will be provided based on school board policy.

After the public delegations, school board staff will compile feedback from the public delegations which will be presented to the Board of Trustees with the final staff report.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) of the final staff report as presented, modify the recommendation(s) of the final staff report, or to approve a different outcome.

The Ministry encourages school boards not to make final pupil accommodation review decisions during the summer holiday period (typically from July 1 to the day after Labour Day).

A transition plan will be put in place following the decision to consolidate and/or close a school.

Timelines for the Modified Accommodation Review Process

The modified pupil accommodation review process must comply with the following minimum timelines:

- Following the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a modified pupil accommodation review, the school board will provide written notice of the Board of Trustees' decision within 5 business days to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department (or equivalent), other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the modified pupil accommodation review; and include an invitation for a meeting to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the school board's initial staff report. School boards must also notify the Director(s) of Education of their coterminous school boards and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division.
- The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the modified pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the recommended option(s) in the school board's initial staff report before the final public meeting.
- The school board must hold at least one public meeting. Beginning with the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to conduct a modified pupil accommodation review, there must be no fewer than 30 business days before this public meeting is held.
- The final staff report must be publicly posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.
- From the posting of the final staff report, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- There must be no fewer than 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

XV. EXEMPTIONS

This *Guideline* applies to schools offering elementary or secondary programs. However, there are specific circumstances where school boards are not obligated to undertake a pupil accommodation review. These include:

- where a replacement school is to be built by the school board on the existing site, or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary, as identified through the school board's policy;
- where a replacement school is to be built by the school board on the existing site, or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students and staff during the reconstruction, as identified through the school board's policy;
- when a lease for the school is terminated;
- when a school board is planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of grades or programs, in which the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the school's enrolment (this calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation, or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of school years);
- when a school 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 over-capacity and/or is under construction or repair; or
- where there are no students enrolled at the school at any time throughout the school year.

In the above circumstances, a school board is expected to inform school communities about proposed accommodation plans for students before a decision is made by the Board of Trustees. The school board will also provide written notice to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department (or equivalent), as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the exemption, and their coterminous school boards in the areas of the affected school(s) through the Director of Education, and to the Ministry of Education through the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division no fewer than 5 business days after the decision to proceed with an exemption.

A transition plan will be put in place following the Board of Trustees' decision to consolidate, close or move a school or students in accordance with this section.

XVI. DEFINITIONS

Accommodation review: A process, as defined in a school board pupil accommodation review policy, undertaken by a school board to determine the future of a school or group of schools.

Accommodation Review Committee (ARC): A committee, established by a school board that represents the affected school(s) of a pupil accommodation review, which acts as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the affected school communities.

ARC working meeting: A meeting of ARC members to discuss a pupil accommodation review, and includes a meeting held by the ARC to solicit feedback from the affected school communities of a pupil accommodation review.

Business day: A calendar day that is not a weekend or statutory holiday. It also does not include calendar days that fall within school boards' Christmas, spring, and summer break. For schools with a year-round calendar, any break that is five calendar days or longer is not a business day.

Consultation: The sharing of relevant information as well as providing the opportunity for municipalities and other community partners, the public and affected school communities to be heard.

Facility Condition Index (FCI): A building condition as determined by the Ministry of Education by calculating the ratio between the five-year renewal needs and the replacement value for each facility.

On-the-ground (OTG) capacity: The capacity of the school as determined by the Ministry of Education by loading all instructional spaces within the facility to current Ministry standards for class size requirements and room areas.

Public delegation: A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees where presentations by groups or individuals can have their concerns heard directly by the school board trustees.

Public meeting: An open meeting held by the school board to solicit broader community feedback on a pupil accommodation review.

School Information Profile (SIP): An orientation document with point-in-time data for each of the schools under a pupil accommodation review to help the ARC and the community understand the context surrounding the decision to include the specific school(s) in a pupil accommodation review.

Space template: A Ministry of Education template used by a school board to determine the number and type of instructional areas to be included within a new school, and the size of the required operational and circulation areas within that school.