



PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (Consolidation or Closure)

Legal References:	<i>Education Act, s.8 (1), paragraph 26</i>
Related References:	<i>Ministry of Education Memorandum 2009:B7 Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline;</i> <i>Administrative Procedure 4860 - Pupil Accommodation Review</i>
Effective Date:	<i>September 1998</i>
Revisions:	<i>June 2002</i> <i>May 2007</i> <i>November 2009</i>

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (the "Board") is committed to providing the best educational facilities and learning environments to support student participation and achievement while at the same time recognizing the need to manage its facilities in a fiscally responsible manner.
- 1.2 The Board acknowledges that changes in enrolment – declining, increasing and shifting population – funding and operational realities, educational policies and curriculum, provincial legislation and physical limitations of buildings and building infrastructures, may result in the need to consolidate, close or relocate a school or school program.
- 1.3 The Board recognizes meaningful community dialogue and participation to ensure a fair, open and constructive process.
- 1.4 The Policy:
 - 1.4.1 provides direction for trustees, staff, municipalities and the public for the conducting of pupil accommodation reviews to determine the future of a school or grouping of schools;
 - 1.4.2 establishes the process for undertaking such reviews, as required by the *Pupil Accommodation Guideline* issued by the Ministry of Education, dated June 26, 2009 (2009:B7);
 - 1.4.3 does not apply to boundary reviews undertaken to align enrolment with school capacity that will not result in a school closure (refer to Section 5 of this policy for Exceptions).

2. Pupil Accommodation Review (Consolidation or Closure) Process

- 2.1 A pupil accommodation review may be considered when one or more of the following circumstances exist:
 - 2.1.1 an emerging trend within an area under the jurisdiction of the Board to accommodate existing and projected students in fewer educational facilities;
 - 2.1.2 due to declining enrolment, a school or group of schools is unable, or projected to be unable, to:
 - provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
 - under normal staffing allocations, organize with split classes of no more than two grades;
 - 2.1.3 reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;

- 2.1.4 any combination of teaching or learning spaces or school site at a school or group of schools is not suitable to provide the programs and accessibility needed to serve the community, and retrofitting and/or enlarging the facility may be cost prohibitive;
 - 2.1.5 one or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements;
 - 2.1.6 safety and/or environmental concerns are associated with the building, the school site or its locality in one or more of the schools;
 - 2.1.7 the Board has received a formal request from a school community or communities requesting a review of their pupil accommodation facilities.
- 2.2 The Director of Education will present a report to the Board of Trustees identifying a school, or group of schools, where the circumstances are such that there is a need to consider the possible consolidation, closure or program relocation in respect of one or more of the subject schools.
- 2.3 The Board of Trustees may, upon consideration of the Director's report, authorize the undertaking of a pupil accommodation review for a school, or grouping of schools, in the area identified.
- 2.4 If a pupil accommodation review is approved, the Board of Trustees will direct the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC).
- 2.5 The pupil accommodation review is to be led by the ARC. Wherever possible, the pupil accommodation review will consider a group of schools within the Board's planning area, since their proximity with each other may facilitate viable and practical solutions.
- 2.6 The ARC and Board administration will be responsible for:
- 2.6.1 School Information Profile(s);
 - 2.6.2 public information and access;
 - 2.6.3 community consultation and public meetings;
 - 2.6.4 ARC Accommodation Report and recommendations.
- 2.7 The Board will provide the ARC with Terms of Reference that describe the ARC's mandate (Administrative Procedure 4860, Section 4). The Terms of Reference will contain Reference Criteria that frame the parameters of ARC discussion. The Reference Criteria include the education and accommodation criteria for examining schools under review and accommodation options. The Terms of Reference will also describe the procedures for the ARC, including: meetings, material, support, and analysis to be provided by Board administration, and the material to be produced by the ARC. The Board will inform the ARC at the beginning of the process about partnership opportunities, or lack thereof, as identified through the Board's Capital Plan.
- 2.8 Board administration will prepare School Information Profile(s) for the school(s) under review. If multiple schools within the same planning area are being reviewed together, the same Profile must be used for each school. The completed Profile(s) will be provided to the ARC to discuss, consult on, modify based on new or improved information, and finalize. The school Information Profile includes data for each of the following considerations about the school(s):
- 2.8.1 Value to the student
 - 2.8.2 Value to the school board
 - 2.8.3 Value to the community
 - 2.8.4 Value to the local economy
- 2.9 The ARC will deliver its Accommodation Report to the Board's Director of Education and present it to the Board of Trustees. The Director of Education will have the Accommodation Report posted on the Board's website. Board administration will examine the ARC Accommodation Report and present the administration analysis and

recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will make the final decision regarding the future of the school(s).

- 2.10 If the Board of Trustees votes to close a school or schools, it must outline clear timelines around when the school(s) will close. The Board's resolution will also outline specific timelines for approved actions. Those actions will be communicated to the parties affected, the broader community and the Ministry of Education, immediately following the decision.

3. Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)

- 3.1 In establishing an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) the Board is inviting the participation of:
- 3.1.1 Up to two parents from the school, or schools under consideration;
 - 3.1.2 The principal(s) from each school under consideration;
 - 3.1.3 The school area Superintendent(s) of Education;
 - 3.1.4 Facilities staff (Planning);
 - 3.1.5 Study area municipal representation;
 - 3.1.6 Up to two community representatives (may be, but not limited to, non-parent, business, municipal, community organization Waterloo Region Association of Public School Councils [WRAPSC], Special Education Advisory Committee [SEAC])

Other support staff may be called on as deemed appropriate. If circumstances warrant, and a majority of the abovementioned ARC members vote in favour, additional members may be added to the ARC.

- 3.2 The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) responsibilities

3.2.1 School Information Profile(s)

ARCs are to discuss and consult on the School Information Profile(s) prepared by Board administration for the schools(s) under review and modify the Profile(s) where appropriate. This discussion is intended to familiarize the ARC members and the community with the school(s) in light of the objectives and Reference Criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference. The final School Information Profile(s) and the Terms of Reference will provide the foundation for discussion and analysis of accommodation options.

3.2.2 Public Information and Access

The Board and the ARC are to ensure that all information relevant to the accommodation review, as defined by the ARC, is made public by posting it in a prominent location on the Board's website or making it available in print upon request. Where relevant information is technical in nature, it is to be explained in plain language.

3.2.3 Accommodation Options

The ARC may create alternative accommodation options, which should be consistent with the objectives and Reference Criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference. Board administration will provide necessary data to enable the ARC to examine options. This analysis will assist the ARC in finalizing the Accommodation Report.

ARCs may recommend accommodation options that include new capital investment. In these instances, Board administration will advise on the availability of funding. Where no funding exists, the ARC, with the support of the Board administration, will propose how students would be accommodated.

The option(s) will address where students would be accommodated; what changes to existing facilities may be required; what programs would be available to students; and transportation.

As the ARC considers the accommodation options, the needs of all students in the schools of the ARC are to be considered objectively and fairly, based on the School Information Profile(s) and the objectives and Reference Criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference.

3.2.4 Community Consultation and Public Meetings

Once an accommodation review has been initiated, the ARC must ensure that a wide range of school and community groups is invited to participate in the consultation. These groups may include the school(s)' councils, parents, guardians, students, school staff, the local community, and other interested parties.

The ARC will consult on the customized School Information Profile prepared by Board administration and may make changes as a result of the consultation. The ARC will also seek input and feedback on the accommodation options and the ARC's Accommodation Report to the Board. Discussions will be based on the School Information Profile(s) and the ARC's Terms of Reference.

Public meetings must be well publicized, in advance, through a range of methods and held at the school(s) under review, if possible, or in a nearby facility if physical accessibility cannot be provided at the school(s). Public meetings are to be structured to encourage an open and informed exchange of views.

Minutes reflecting the full range of opinions expressed at the meetings are to be kept, and made publicly available.

ARCs and Board administration are to respond to questions they consider relevant to the ARC and its analysis, at meetings or in writing appended to the minutes of the meeting and made available on the Board's website.

3.2.5 ARC Accommodation Report to the Board

The ARC will produce an Accommodation Report that will make accommodation recommendation(s) consistent with the objectives and Reference Criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference.

It will deliver its Accommodation Report to the Board's Director of Education, who will have the Accommodation Report posted on the Board's website. The ARC will present its Accommodation Report to the Board of Trustees.

4. Timelines for an Accommodation Review Process

- 4.1 After the Board has announced its intent to conduct an accommodation review of a school or schools, there must be no less than thirty (30) calendar days notice prior to the first of a minimum of four (4) public meetings.
- 4.2 Beginning with the first public meeting, the public consultation period must be no less than ninety (90) calendar days.
- 4.3 After the ARC completes its Accommodation Report, it is to make the document publicly available and submit the document to the Board's Director of Education. After the submission of the ARC Accommodation Report, there must be no less than sixty (60) calendar days notice prior to the meeting where the Board of Trustees will vote on the recommendations. Summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break, including adjacent weekends, must not be considered part of the 30, 60 or 90 calendar day periods.

5. Application of the Pupil Accommodation Review Policy

- 5.1 In accordance with the *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* established by the Ministry of Education, the Board is not obligated to undertake an accommodation review:
 - 5.1.1 where a replacement school is to be rebuilt by the Board on the existing site or rebuilt or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary as identified through the Board's existing policies
 - 5.1.2 when a lease is terminated;
 - 5.1.3 when the Board is planning the relocation in any school year or over a number of school years of a grade or grades, or a program, where the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the enrolment of the school; 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
 - 5.1.4 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;
 - 5.1.5 where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is over-capacity and/or under construction or repair.