



SCHOOL SIZE AND CONFIGURATION

Legal References:	<i>Education Act, R.S.O., 1990, c.E.2, O. Reg. 20/98: EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CHARGES - GENERAL</i>
Related References:	<i>Board Policy 1011 – Community Planning and Facility Partnerships Board Policy 4000 – Pupil Accommodation Review (Consolidation or Closure) Administrative Procedure 4991 – Boundary Studies Administrative Procedure 4860 - Pupil Accommodation Review (Consolidation or Closure) Administrative Procedure 4992 – Temporary Student Accommodation for Development Areas Board Policy 4009 - Student Transportation Board Policy 4012 - School Attendance Areas</i>
Effective Date:	<i>November 2020</i>
Revisions:	

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (the “WRDSB”) believes that schools should be welcoming and secure places, supporting achievement and well-being for all students and staff within an operational and organizational framework that is efficient and effective.
 - 1.1.1 Every student should have the opportunity to attain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) through a variety of core program pathways through their designated school(s).
 - 1.1.2 The WRDSB believes that school size (i.e., enrolment) contributes to achieving these outcomes.
- 1.2 The WRDSB believes that school attendance areas are the most significant influence on the size and configuration of schools.

2. Definitions

2.1 On-the-Ground (OTG) capacity

In determining capacity, the Ministry of Education identifies categories of elementary and secondary instructional spaces. Each category has a capacity associated with class sizes. The sum of a school’s room capacity ratings is the on-the-ground (OTG) capacity. The OTG capacity of a school changes if class sizes change or alterations are made to the building. This number does not include temporary accommodation facilities (i.e., portables or portapaks).

2.2 Optimal utilization

Optimal utilization rates of school facilities is in the range of 85 to 110 per cent, calculated as total enrolment divided by OTG, multiplied by 100 per cent.

2.3 Over-utilization

School facilities are considered over-utilized if the utilization rate is over 130 per cent (calculated as total enrolment divided by OTG, multiplied by 100 per cent), or there are more than 12 classrooms in temporary accommodation.

2.4 Under-utilization

School facilities are considered under-utilized if they are operating at 60 percent capacity or less (calculated as total enrolment divided by OTG, multiplied by 100 per cent), or more than 200 unused pupil places.

2.5 Natural boundary

The natural boundary around a school is understood to encompass those areas that maximize active and safe routes to school. Where this does not apply, the natural boundary will be understood to reflect a balance between WRDSB accommodation needs and the local neighbourhoods that identify with that school.

2.6 Development Area

A Development Area is a geographically defined area, usually a new residential area that is designated by the WRDSB and thereby removed from all permanent school attendance areas by Board motion. By definition, Development Areas do not have a home school and are temporarily assigned to Holding Schools, pending their assignment to a home school (once constructed).

3. Policy

3.1 School size and configuration, pupil accommodation reviews and boundary studies shall be subject to the board of trustees' approval.

3.1.1 Planning for and changes to school configurations will consider minimizing the transition of students between schools and cohorts where practical.

3.1.2 All school configurations will have high academic and behavioural expectations.

3.1.3 School attendance areas should reflect a natural boundary around the facility.

3.2 The WRDSB supports a variety of school configurations. The determination of school configurations is dependent on facility design, construction, condition, location, programming needs, and the best interests of students. Decisions regarding school size and configuration are informed by the following planning studies, which are reviewed and approved by the Board.

- Education Development Charges By-Law and Background Study;
- Long-term Accommodation Plan; and
- Capital Priorities

3.2.1 The OTG capacity of schools will reflect the projected long-term optimal utilization of the facility. Temporary accommodation (e.g, portable classrooms and development area assignments) will be used to address short- to medium-term over-utilization. Boundary studies, accommodation reviews and facility partnerships will be used to address under-utilization.