Administrative Procedure 4991
BOUNDARY STUDIES

Responsibility: Coordinating Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board

Legal References: Education Act, subsections 33(1), 33(6), 35(1), 36(1) 39, and 40
Education Act, subsection 171 (1) par. 7
Planning Act

Related References: Board Policy 3002 - Elementary School Size and Configuration
Board Policy 4000 - Pupil Accommodation Review
Board Policy 4012 - School Attendance Areas
Administrative Procedure 1030 – Student Out of Boundary Requests – Secondary Schools (Grades 9-12)
Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary Schools
Administrative Procedure 4260 - Student Transportation
Administrative Procedure 4860 - Pupil Accommodation Review
Administrative Procedure 4992 - Temporary Student Accommodation for Development Areas
Ministry of Education Memorandum 2009:B7 Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline

Revisions: March 2019
Reviewed: June 2016, November 2017

1. Preamble

1.1 The procedures that follow provide guidelines and expectations concerning the review of school attendance areas by the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), the Boundary Study Working Group membership and Terms of Reference of the Boundary Study Working Group.

1.2 This procedure is to serve as a guideline in reviewing school attendance areas outside of the Pupil Accommodation Review Process.

2. Procedures

2.1 Identification of Study Area

2.1.1 On an annual basis (or more frequently as necessary), the Planning Department will review enrolment and student accommodations to identify areas that warrant further investigation. Based on this information, a study area and schools recommended for a boundary study will be proposed to Coordinating Council.

2.1.2 Staff will prepare a report to the Board of Trustees identifying a group of schools, where circumstances are such that there is a need to consider changes to school attendance areas. The report may include the following elements, as deemed appropriate by Administration:
- Analysis of current attendance areas and related issues
- Current school utilization
- Enrolment projections
- Local development activity
- Preliminary goals of the boundary study
- Estimated time frame for study completion
- Alternative accommodation options
2.1.3 Board of Trustee approval is required for the commencement of a boundary study.

2.2 Boundary Study Process

2.2.1 Upon approval for the commencement of a boundary study, a Boundary Study Working Group will be formed.

2.2.2 School communities will be informed of the boundary study approval at minimum through the WRDSB or school’s website and School Council.

2.2.3 The Boundary Study Working Group, using the Terms of Reference, will develop and analyze accommodation options in consultation with the appropriate educational and community bodies.

2.2.4 At least one public consultation session will be held to share the Boundary Study Working Group’s proposal(s) and to gather input.

2.3 Report and Recommendations

2.3.1 In consultation with Coordinating Council, staff will prepare a report with recommendations. Recommendations may include continuing operations (status quo), boundary changes, program changes, and/or other options as deemed appropriate, provided they align with the WRDSB’s strategic direction, including the alignment of educational and operating goals. Where recommendations differ significantly from the WRDSB’s strategic direction, or current practice, rationale for the recommendations must be provided.

2.4 Implementation

2.4.1 Students affected by the final WRDSB-approved recommendations will be informed by their school with information regarding how and when changes will take place.

2.4.2 WRDSB administration will initiate actions to carry out the decisions of the Board of Trustees based on the timelines as approved.

3. Terms of Reference of the Boundary Study Working Group

3.1 In establishing a Boundary Study Working Group, the WRDSB is inviting the participation of:
- Up to two parent/guardian representatives from the school, or schools in the Study Area (may be chosen by School Council or school administration)
- Study Area municipal representation
- The Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being responsible for the Study Area schools
- The Principal and/or Vice Principal of the Study Area schools
- Planning Department staff (Planning staff to act as Chair)
- Other representatives of the WRDSB as necessary

3.2 Appointments to the Boundary Study Working Group will be for the duration of the boundary study.

3.3 The purpose of the Boundary Study Working Group is to conduct a boundary study and to:
- Represent the interests of the students in the Study Area
- Review background information and public input
- Identify issues
- Confirm study goals
- Determine study objectives
- Develop evaluating scenarios
- Develop recommendations
3.4 At minimum, members of the working group
   • Attend meetings regularly
   • Maintain an open mind regarding other views
   • Work as a team member
   • Focus on the “big picture”
   • Participate collaboratively in group decision making

3.5 In establishing goals, objectives and evaluating possible attendance area changes, wherever possible, the following reference criteria should be used:

3.5.1 Grade configuration
   • Refer to Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration

3.5.2 School utilization
   • Optimizing the use of existing school facilities, while ensuring that students are accommodated to the extent possible in permanent school facilities
   • Minimize the use of portable classrooms or temporary structures whenever possible, except during the establishment phases of new communities and throughout peak enrolment phases of schools
   • Minimize overcrowding in schools (Refer to Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration)

3.5.3 Program offerings
   • Maintain viable enrolments and educational program(s) at all schools
   • Optimize school enrolments to ensure a cost-effective range of programs can be delivered to respond to student needs
   • Consider access to and equity of program offerings (e.g., Instrumental Music, French Immersion, Special Education, etc.)

3.5.4 Transportation
   • Maximize the number of students within a school boundary who are within walking distance (refer to Board Policy 4009 – Student Transportation)
   • To the extent possible and in accordance with Board Policy 4009 – Student Transportation, optimize the cost-effective use of school transportation

3.5.5 Transitions
   • To the extent possible, provide options that prevent the need for students to change schools multiple times in a short time period (by WRDSB decision)
   • Where possible, provide options that allow siblings to attend the same school

3.5.6 Community schools
   • Where possible, attendance areas should provide continuity to feeder schools
   • Whenever possible, students should be assigned to the closest school with the appropriate grade offerings

4. **Working Group Meeting Procedures**

4.1 An initial meeting schedule will be established by WRDSB staff; changes to meetings, including adding or cancelling may be made by the Working Group.

4.2 Working Group meetings are not public meetings. Non-members may attend meetings provided they are invited by the Working Group.

4.3 Minutes and secretarial support for the Working Group will be provided by the WRDSB’s Planning Department. Minutes will be taken at each meeting and approved at subsequent Working Group meetings.

4.4 An agenda for the Working Group will be prepared by the WRDSB’s Planning Department and sent to the Working Group members prior to each meeting.
4.5 Minutes and presentation materials will be posted on the WRDSB’s website (specific link for each Boundary Study).

5. Public Consultation

5.1 Input from parents/guardians, students, staff and the community at large is endorsed and welcomed throughout the boundary study process.

5.2 The purpose of public consultation is to:
- Share/gather information
- Provide information about the process
- Discuss limiting factors
- Have meaningful dialogue about the alternatives

5.3 Public consultation may be conducted in several different ways, including, but not limited to:
- Town hall format public meetings and presentations
- Open house/drop-in format public meetings
- Focus groups/World Café style meetings
- Charrettes
- Tours
- Surveys
- Comment forms/email submissions to boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.ca

5.4 Information regarding the boundary study and public consultation opportunities will be provided in several different ways, including, but not limited:
- WRDSB and school websites
- Posters
- Signs at study area schools
- Flyers/advertisements
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Fact sheets/FAQ’s
- Email

6. Decisions

6.1 The Board of Trustees will make the final decision regarding the changes to school attendance areas.

6.2 Final recommendations are presented to the Board of Trustees. Actions approved by the Board of Trustees at a Committee of the Whole meeting will be presented at a Board Meeting for formal consideration. Delegations may present at Committee of the Whole and Board meetings in accordance with Board Policies and Procedures.

6.3 Decisions regarding changes to attendance areas affecting existing students should not be made after February 28th for implementation in the next school year.

6.4 Final decisions will be communicated to all affected parties through the schools.

7. Transition Planning

7.1 Following a decision by the Board of Trustees to change school attendance areas, an internal transition planning team will be set up to work through the transitions required for staff, students and resources.