



<b>ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE</b>	
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<i>Contact Person/Department</i> <b>Director of Education</b>	<i>Identification</i> <b>OP-6006</b>

## **PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW GUIDELINES**

### **PURPOSE**

Trillium Lakelands District School Board recognizes responsibility for providing schools and facilities for students, and for operating and maintaining schools as effectively and efficiently as possible to support student achievement and well-being. In recognition of the important role schools play in strengthening rural and urban communities and the importance of a healthy community for student success, the value of a school or group of schools to the community will be considered when making any decision to close a school.

The Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines ensure that where a decision is made by the Board regarding the future of a school, that decision is made with the full involvement of an informed local community and is based on a broad range of criteria.

### **2.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- 2.1. The Education Act and Regulations;
- 2.2. Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (March 2015) (5.1 Appendix A);
- 2.3. School Information Profile Template (5.2 Appendix B);
- 2.4. Ministry of Education Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process (5.3 Appendix C).
  - 2.4.1. Ministry of Education Community Planning and Partnerships Guidelines(March 2015)
- 2.5. Procedural Bylaw 16 – Delegations to the Board

### **3.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

- 3.1. ARC – Accommodation Review Committee – committee established by the Board of Trustees to examine an accommodation review area;

- 3.2. ACCOMMODATION REVIEW AREA – the one or more educational facilities and/or schools which are identified for study, by geographic proximity, major physical and arterial divisions or type and/or organization;
- 3.3. ATTENDANCE AREA – the area enclosed by the defined boundaries;
- 3.4. COMMUNITY MEMBER – an individual residing in the area being reviewed;
- 3.5. EDUCATIONAL FACILITY – a building accommodating one or more schools;
- 3.6. UNDERUTILIZATION - normally defined as underutilization of the school by students in the school catchment area;
- 3.7. THE BOARD – for the purpose of this procedure means the Board of Trustees. A school board is a body that operates the province’s publicly funded schools. The school board is governed by its publicly elected board members (trustees).

#### **4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**

##### **4.1 INITIATION OF A SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

The Director of Education shall prepare a report for consideration by the Board of Trustees identifying a school or group of schools in which challenges may be faced in providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students, and where there may be a need to consider the possible consolidation, closure, or program relocation of one or more schools. A school or group of schools may be considered for study if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- 4.1.1 The school or group of schools is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
- 4.1.2 The school or group of schools has experienced an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment;
- 4.1.3 Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;
- 4.1.4 Teaching/learning spaces are not suitable to provide the program needed to serve the community and retrofitting may be cost prohibitive;
- 4.1.5 One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses and/or is in need of major capital improvements;

- 4.1.6 One or more of the schools is operating in a leased facility;
- 4.1.7 There are safety and/or environmental concerns related to the building, the school site, or its location;
- 4.1.8 The consolidation of schools is in the best interests of the overall school system;
- 4.1.9 It has been 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;
- 4.1.10 Underutilization – normally defined as underutilization of the school by students in the school catchment area;
- 4.1.11 Any other condition as identified by the Board for consideration of a review.

#### 4.2 ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC)

Prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review the Director of Education will present to the Board an initial staff report which contains one or more options to address the accommodation issues(s). If more than one option is presented in the report, there must be a recommended option identified.

- 4.2.1 The report will include information on the actions taken by board staff prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review process, as well as supporting rationale for any actions taken or not taken.
- 4.2.2 The option(s) included in the initial staff report will address the following:
  - a) summary of accommodation issue(s) for the school(s) under review;
  - b) where students would be accommodated;
  - c) if proposed changes to an existing facility or facilities are required as a result of the pupil accommodation review;
  - d) identify any program changes as a result of the proposed option;
  - e) how student transportation would be affected if changes take place;

- f) if new capital investment is required as a result of the pupil accommodation review, how the Board would fund this as well as a proposal on how students would be accommodated if funding does not become available;
  - g) 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;
  - h) each recommended option will include a timeline for implementation.
- 4.2.2 The initial staff report and School Information Profile(s) will be made available to the public as per Section 4.5.2 and posted on the Board's website following the decision by the Board to proceed with a pupil accommodation review.
- 4.2.3 After considering the staff report, the Board may approve the establishment of an ARC for each area approved for accommodation review. Parents/guardians, staff, school council members, and the broader community of the affected schools shall be informed, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision to form an ARC, and to participate in the pupil accommodation review consultation.
- 4.2.4 The pupil accommodation review process will consist of the following methods of consultation:
- a) Accommodation Review Committee;
  - b) Consultation with the municipal governments local to affected areas;
  - c) Public meetings, and
  - d) Public Delegations
- 4.3 MANDATE / TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC)
- 4.3.1 The mandate of each ARC established is to act as a conduit for information between the Board and the affected school communities.
- 4.3.2 The ARC may comment on the initial staff report and may, throughout the pupil accommodation process, seek clarification of the initial staff report.

- 4.3.3 The ARC may provide other accommodation options than those in the initial staff report; however, it must include supporting rationale for any such option.
- 4.3.4 The ARC is not required to achieve consensus regarding the information provided to the trustees.
- 4.3.5 Board staff resources assigned to the ARC will compile feedback from the ARC as well as the broader community in the Community Consultation section of the final staff report to be presented to the Board.
- 4.3.6 The ARC will at a minimum, provide feedback on the initial staff report option(s).
- 4.3.7 There will be at least two working meetings of the ARC convened.

#### 4.4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ARC

- 4.4.1 Each ARC appointed by the Board will include, at a minimum, parent/guardian representatives from each of the schools under review, chosen by their respective school communities, as well as one student representative from each secondary school being studied.
- 4.4.2 The local trustee(s) for the school(s) being studied are expected to attend all ARC meetings but are not members of the Accommodation Review Committee.
- 4.4.3 The ARC will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all the listed members are willing and able to participate.

#### 4.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD

##### 4.5.1 School Information Profile

- a) A School Information Profile (SIP) (Appendix 2) shall be completed by board administration for each school being studied, for the same point in time for comparison purposes.
- b) The ARC may request clarification about the information provided in the SIP, however it is not the role of the ARC to approve the SIP.
- c) The School Information Profile shall include the following two considerations: value to the student and value to the school Board.

- d) The School Information Profile shall be made public by the Board prior to public consultations.
- e) The Board's initial report will include one or more options, including a recommended option, with supporting rationale for each option.

#### 4.5.2 Public Information and Access

- a) The Board shall ensure that all information relevant to the accommodation review is made public and available in advance of public consultations, on the Board website and in print on request.
- b) The Board shall provide information to the affected school communities on an ongoing basis.
- c) The Board shall ensure that information that is technical in nature be provided/explained in plain language.
- d) The ARC shall be provided with all relevant data in the possession of the Board in order to carry out its mandate. This shall include background information regarding the schools located within the area of the accommodation review.

#### 4.5.3 Community Consultation and Public Meetings

- a) The ARC shall ensure that a wide range of school and community groups are consulted, such as school councils, parents/guardians, school staff/administration, students of secondary schools, and the local community.
- b) A copy of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board Accommodation Review policy, the Ontario Government Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and the Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process documents shall be made available by administration at Trillium Lakelands District School Board offices and posted on the Trillium Lakelands District School Board website and at each school being studied.
- c) Affected single and upper-tier municipalities as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review will be invited to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) presented in the Board's initial staff report. The invitation will be provided through a written notice and will be directed through the Clerk's Department of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities.

- d) 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) before the final public meeting. Advance notice of when the final public meeting is scheduled to take place will be provided.
- e) The Board will 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.
- f) Once the Board has received an initial staff report and has approved the initiation of a pupil accommodation review, a minimum of two public meetings for broader community consultation on the initial staff report will be arranged. Staff will facilitate the broader community feedback on the recommended option(s) contained in the initial staff report.
- g) At a minimum there will be two public meetings for broader community consultation on the initial staff report. At a minimum, the first public meeting will include:
  - i) an overview of the ARC orientation session;
  - ii) the initial staff report with recommended option(s); and
  - iii) a presentation of the School Information Profile(s).

#### 4.6 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.6.1 The ARC is to prepare an accommodation report that will, at a minimum, provide feedback on the initial staff report option(s). If the ARC so desires, options developed by committee members, with supporting rationale, may be included. The ARC would not vote or come to a consensus on a final recommendation(s).

#### 4.7 TIMELINES FOR AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

- 4.7.1 Following the date of the Board's approval to conduct a pupil accommodation review, the Board will provide written notice of the decision within 5 business days to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department, other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review. This notice will include an invitation for a meeting to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the Board's initial staff report. In addition the Board will also notify the Director(s) of Education of the coterminous school boards and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division.

- 4.7.2 The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as any other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review, must provide their response on the recommended option(s) in the Board's initial staff report before the final public meeting.
- 4.7.3 Beginning with the date of the Board's approval to conduct a pupil accommodation review, there must be no fewer than 30 business days before the first public meeting is held.
- 4.7.4 There will be a minimum period of 40 business days between the first and final public meetings.
- 4.7.5 The final staff report must be publically posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.
- 4.7.6 From the posting of the final staff report, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before the public delegations.
- 4.7.7 There must be no fewer than 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board.
- 4.7.8 The Board will attempt to make the final pupil accommodation review decisions on dates other than the summer holiday period (i.e. July 1 to the day after Labour Day.)

#### 4.8 APPLICATION OF ACCOMMODATION REVIEW GUIDELINES

- 4.8.1 The Accommodation Review Guidelines procedure shall apply to schools offering elementary or secondary regular day-school programs.
- 4.8.2 This procedure shall not apply under the following circumstances:
  - a) Where a replacement school is to be built on the same site or on a site located within the existing school attendance boundary;
  - b) When a lease is terminated;
  - c) Where a relocation of one or more grades or programs, where the enrolment in such grade(s) or program accounts for less than 50 per cent of the school enrolment;
  - d) Where temporary accommodation of school enrolment off-site is needed while a school is being repaired or renovated;
  - e) Where facilities serve as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is under construction or repair;



- f) Where a replacement school is to be built on the same site or on a site located 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 in board policy;
  - g) Where there are no students enrolled at the school at any time throughout the school year.
- 4.8.3 In the above circumstances, the Board will inform the school communities about the proposed accommodation plans before a decision is made by the Board. The Board will also provide written notice of their decision within 5 business days to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department, 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 Board's initial staff report. In addition the Board will also notify the Director(s) of Education of the coterminous school boards and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division. A transition plan will be put into place following the decision to consolidate or close a school under this section.
- 4.8.4 This procedure shall not apply when the Modified Accommodation Review Process as determined in Section 4.14 applies.
- 4.9 COMPLETING THE ACCOMODATION REVIEW
- 4.9.1 FINAL STAFF REPORT
- a) At the conclusion of the pupil accommodation review process, staff will submit a final staff report to the Board which will be available to the public as outlined in Section 4.5.2 on Public Information and Access.
  - b) 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
  - c) 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, which contains a timeline for implementation.

#### 4.10 DELEGATIONS TO THE BOARD

- 4.10.1 The Board will allow an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback of the final staff report through public delegations to the Board. Notice of the public delegation opportunities will be provided as referenced in section 4.5.2. Public Information and Access.
- 4.10.2 Board staff will compile feedback following the public delegations which will be presented to the Board with the final staff report.
- 4.10.3 The Director of Education's Administrative Analysis and Recommendations report will be publicly available in advance of the presentation to the Board of Trustees stated above.
- 4.10.4 The Board of Trustees will make the final decision regarding the future of the school(s) at a board meeting, by secret ballot.
- 4.10.5 If the Board of Trustees votes to close a school or schools, the Board must outline clear timelines around when the school(s) will close.

#### 4.11 DECISION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- 4.11.1 The Board 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.
- 4.11.2 The Board 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.
- 4.11.3 The Board will attempt to make the final pupil accommodation review decisions on dates other than the summer holiday period (i.e. July 1 to the day after Labour Day.)

#### 4.12 TRANSITION PLANNING

Following the decision to consolidate and/or close a school, the Board will establish a separate committee to address the transition for students and staff.

#### 4.13 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

If a review of the Board's accommodation review process is requested, the Board shall follow the requirements of the Ministry of Education's Administrative Review of Accommodation Review (Appendix 3).

#### 4.14 MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

An accommodation review will not be required if two or more of the following parameters are present when any of the schools being considered:

- 4.14.1 has an enrolment of less than
  - a) Elementary – 50 students
  - b) Secondary – 300 students;
- 4.14.2 has a utilization of 60 percent or less of the school capacity;
- 4.14.3 are within 15 kilometers of another school;
- 4.14.4 has a combined unused capacity that is greater than 400 students in cases where more than one school is being considered;
- 4.14.5 does not have an independent MIDENT number;
- 4.14.6 Or when the Board is planning the relocation of a program (in any school year or over a number of school years) in which the enrolment constitutes 50 percent or more of the school's enrolment.

#### 4.15 IMPLEMENTATION OF MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

- 4.15.1 The initial staff report will identify the rationale for exempting the school(s) from the standard pupil accommodation review process.
- 4.15.2 The initial staff report and SIP's will be made available to the public, as per Section 4.5.2, and posted on the Board's website.
- 4.15.3 A public meeting will be announced and advertised through an appropriate range of media as referenced in section 4.5.2.
- 4.15.4 Following the public meeting, board staff will submit a final report to the Board, which will be available to the public as referenced in section 4.5.2, and posted on the Board website.
- 4.15.5 The final staff report will 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 process.
- 4.15.6 Once a final staff report is submitted to the Board, a feedback opportunity will be provided for members of the public through public delegations to the Board. Notice of the public delegation opportunities will be provided based on board policy.

- 4.15.7 After the public delegations, staff will compile feedback from the public delegations which will be presented to the Board with the final staff report.
- 4.15.8 The Board 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.
- 4.15.9 The Board will attempt to make the final pupil accommodation review decisions on dates other than the summer holiday period (i.e. July 1 to the day after Labour Day.)
- 4.15.10 A transition plan will be put into place following the decision to consolidate or close a school.
- 4.16 TIMELINES FOR THE MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS
- 4.16.1 Written notice will be provided within 5 business days of the Board decision to conduct a modified public accommodation review.
- a) The notice will be provided to each of the affected single and upper-tier municipalities through the Clerks Department and other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the modified pupil accommodation review.
  - b) The notice will include an invitation for a meeting to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the Board's initial staff report.
- 4.16.2 The Board will notify the Director(s) of Education of coterminous school boards and the Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division.
- 4.16.3 The affected single and upper-tier municipalities, as well as any 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 Board's initial staff report before the final public meeting.
- 4.16.4 The Board will hold at least one public meeting, which will be scheduled no fewer than 30 business days from the date of board approval of a modified pupil accommodation review. The final staff report must be publically posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.
- 4.16.5 From the posting of the final staff report, there must be no fewer than 10 business days before public delegations.
- 4.16.6 There must be no fewer than 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board.

## 5.0 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines, March 2015
- 5.2 Appendix 2 – School Information Profile Template
- 5.3 Appendix 3 – Ministry of Education Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process



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

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.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION PROFILE TEMPLATE (sample)

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 meters);
  - 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. co-operative placements, guidance counselling, 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;
    - Available of before and after school programs or services (e.g. child care) as well as any revenue from 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.

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

A review of a school Board's accommodation review process may be sought if the following conditions are met.

### **An individual or individuals must:**

- Submit a copy of the Board's accommodation review policy highlighting how the accommodation review process was not compliant with the school Board's accommodation review policy;
- Demonstrate the support of a portion of the school community through the completion of a petition signed by a number of supporters equal to at least 30% of the affected school's student headcount (e.g., if the headcount is 150, then 45 signatures would be required). Parents/guardians of students and/or other individuals that participated in the accommodation review process are eligible to sign the petition<sup>1</sup>;
- The petition should clearly provide a space for individuals to print and sign their name; address (street name and postal code); and to indicate whether they are a parent/guardian of a student attending the school subject to the accommodation review, or an individual who has participated in the review process;
- Submit the petition and justification to the school Board and the Minister of Education within thirty (30) days of the Board's closure resolution.

### **The school Board would be required to:**

- Confirm to the Minister of Education that the names on the petition are parents/guardians of students enrolled at the affected school and/or individuals who participated in the review process;
- Prepare a response to the individual's or individuals' submission regarding the process and forward the Board's response to the Minister of Education within thirty (30) days of receiving the petition.

### **If the conditions set out above have been met, the Ministry would be required to:**

- Undertake a review by appointing a facilitator to determine whether the school Board accommodation review process was undertaken in a manner consistent with the Board's accommodation review policy within thirty (30) days of receiving the school Board's response.

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<sup>1</sup> Information contained in the petition is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990*.