

Public Schools Branch

BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY

SCHOOL CHANGE	
<i>Policy Section</i> Governance Process	<i>Policy Number</i> GP 14
Pages 11	<i>Approved Date</i> September 19, 2016
<i>Reviewed Date</i>	<i>Effective Date</i> September 19, 2016
Replaces: ELSB GP 14 School Change – October 27, 2015	

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Public Schools Branch is committed to
 - (a) ensuring that its students have access to quality educational programs and services;
 - (b) maintaining healthy, safe and effective learning environments; and
 - (c) maximizing the use of available resources
- 1.2 The Public Schools Branch recognizes that schools are interconnected with the communities that surround them and close relationships between home, school and community positively affect public education.
- 1.3 The Board of Directors (Board) recognizes that the achievement of the objectives in section 1.1 may, from time to time, require changes that will affect the interests of students, parents, and other stakeholders. Consequently, where the Board is considering making a school change, the Board will ensure that these groups:
 - (a) are given fair notice of any such proposed change;
 - (b) are advised of the decision-making process that will be followed;
 - (c) receive the information they need in order to provide meaningful input; and
 - (d) are given a reasonable opportunity to make submissions before the Board makes a decision on any such proposed change, and to have those submissions fairly considered by the Board.
- 1.4 A school change covered by this policy may be initiated due to factors including but not limited to:
 - (a) branch-wide efforts to support student achievement;
 - (b) declining student enrollment;
 - (c) increasing student enrollment;
 - (d) maximizing resources; and/or
 - (e) opening of a new school.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 In this policy and section:
 - (a) “Day” means a calendar day (but excludes Days during the Christmas, March, and Summer breaks prescribed by the *School Calendar Regulations*);

- (b) “Municipal Authority” means the Town of Cornwall, the Town of Stratford, the City of Summerside, the City of Charlottetown or a town or village under the *Municipalities Act*, RSPEI 1988, c M-13, that has jurisdiction in an area of the Province which will likely be affected by a school change.
- (c) “Parent” means a “parent” as defined in section 1(1)(v) of the *Education Act*;
- (d) “Review of Schools” means a written document prepared by the Director pursuant to section 4.1 which identifies a school that:
 - (i) is currently experiencing substantial challenges in providing quality educational programs and services; or
 - (ii) will likely encounter such challenges within the next 5 years;
- (e) “Publicly Available” means available to the public by:
 - (i) making copies available for review at Public Schools Branch offices or other locations convenient for the public without charge,
 - (ii) providing a reasonable number of copies to interested persons either without charge or at a price not greater than the cost of printing the report, or
 - (ii) making a copy available on the Public Schools Branch website.
- (f) “Public Notice” means a notice that is:
 - (i) posted on the Public Schools Branch website; and
 - (ii) published in a newspaper with general circulation within the area of the Province that will likely be affected by a school change;
- (g) “Resolution” means a resolution passed by a quorum of the Board of Directors at a regular public or special meeting;
- (h) “Study Report” means a written report prepared for the Board;
- (i) “Working Day” means an instructional day as defined in the *Education Act*.

2.2 In this policy “Director” includes the Director or a person designated by the Director of the Public Schools Branch to fulfill the Director’s role and duties as specified in this policy.

3. APPLICATION

3.1 This policy establishes a framework for addressing two categories of school change – a ‘Category I Change’, and a ‘Category II Change’, to a school. For the purposes of this policy:

- (a) A Category I Change means:
 - (i) any change in a school attendance zone, or any reconfiguration of the grades in a school, which would involve the relocation of 20 percent or less of a school’s enrolment to another school;
- (b) A Category II Change means:
 - (i) any change in school attendance zones, or reconfiguration of grades in a school, which would involve the relocation of more than 20 percent of a school’s enrolment to another school; or
 - (ii) The permanent closure of a school.

3.2 For the purposes of 3.1, the enrollment in a school shall be determined by the Director on the basis of the most recent student enrolment information provided by a school principal to the Director.

3.3 Notwithstanding section 3.1, this policy does not apply to the following school changes:

- (a) the Board is building a replacement school on the existing school’s site, or one that is located within the existing school’s attendance zone;

- (b) the Board is remediating, repairing, rebuilding or renovating a school, and the students must be temporarily relocated to ensure their health or safety during the renovations;
- (c) the Board is reducing the size of a school building;
- (d) a facility has been serving as a temporary school for students whose permanent school is under construction or repair;
- (e) any discontinuance of a regular, alternative, or special needs program at a particular school or relocation to another school;
- (f) a school closure that is authorized by section 16 or 21 the Education Authority Regulations or by any other enactment; or
- (g) any other change not identified in section 3.1.

4. REVIEW OF SCHOOLS

- 4.1 The Director may conduct a Review of Schools once every five years or more frequently on his/her own initiative, or on direction from the Board.
- 4.2 A Review of Schools should include an overview of the nature of the challenges faced by each school which is being reviewed. They may, for example, arise from:
 - (a) physical Issues – e.g. health, safety, environmental issues, or other deficiencies relating to the physical condition of a school building, site, or location which cannot be rectified, repaired or upgraded in a cost effective manner, or for which funding is or may not be available;
 - (b) program issues – e.g. a school has difficulty providing students with equitable access to appropriate educational programs or services;
 - (c) capacity issues – e.g. underutilization of, or overcrowding in, a school;
 - (d) financial issues – e.g. a school's operating or maintenance costs are substantially higher than the average per student cost in other schools;
 - (e) demographic issues – e.g. projected increase or decrease in the population or student population in an area; and
 - (f) such other issues as the Director deems relevant.
- 4.3 In a Review of Schools, the Director may, for each identified school, recommend to the Board that:
 - (a) the status quo at the school be maintained;
 - (b) the status quo be maintained, but that the situation at the school be monitored; or
 - (c) a more in-depth study of the school be done, and that options for a Category I and/or Category II Change be explored.

Board's Review of Schools Decision

- 4.4 The Board may, by Resolution, accept or reject a recommendation made by the Director under section 4.3, or may make such other decision as it deems appropriate.
- 4.5 If, by a Resolution made under section 4.4:
 - (a) the Board decides that only Category I Change(s) to a school(s) should be considered, the Board will follow the process outlined in Category I of this policy;
 - (b) the Board decides that any Category II Change to a school(s) should be considered, the Board will follow the process outlined in Category II of this policy with respect to all changes to be considered.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding section 4.5, the Board may decide, by Resolution, that the Category I Change or the Category II Change process will be used to consider a particular school change, except a permanent school closure which requires the Category II Change process, if it deems it appropriate to do so.

CATEGORY I

PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING CATEGORY I SCHOOL CHANGES

5. RESOLUTION DIRECTING STUDY

5.1 Category I Study and Study Report

- 5.1.1 Where a Resolution to consider a Category I Change to a school is passed under section 4.5(a), the Director will conduct a Category I Study, and will prepare a Category I Study Report.
- 5.1.2 Upon commencement of the Category I Study, the Director will prepare a consultation plan in the form set out in Appendix "A", and will communicate that plan to the stakeholders identified in that plan in the manner specified in that plan.
- 5.1.3 In conducting the Category I Study and preparing the Category I Study Report, the Director will consider the School Review Factors outlined in Appendix "B", if and to the extent they are relevant in the particular circumstances.
- 5.1.4 In a Category I Study Report, the Director may recommend that:
 - (a) the status quo at a school be maintained;
 - (b) the status quo be maintained, but that the situation at a school be monitored; and/or
 - (c) that a Category I Change be made to a school.
- 5.1.5 Upon completion of the Category I Study Report, the Director will present it to the Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting.

5.2 Board's Decision on Category I Study Report

- 5.2.1 The Board may, by Resolution, accept or reject a recommendation made by the Director under section 5.1.4. That Resolution shall specify the effective date of any Category I Change to be made.
- 5.2.2 Notice of the Board's decision under section 5.2.1 shall be given to all stakeholders identified in the consultation plan in accordance with that plan.

CATEGORY II

PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING CATEGORY II SCHOOL CHANGES

6. RESOLUTION DIRECTING STUDY

- 6.1 Within 5 Working Days of the passage of a Resolution referenced in section 4.5(b), the Board will:
- (a) provide a copy of that Resolution to the principal of each likely affected school who shall, in turn, provide a copy of that Resolution as soon as practicable to;
 - (i) all staff at that school;
 - (ii) the parents of students attending that school;
 - (iii) all adult students attending that school; and
 - (iv) the president or chair of the school's school council/home and school association/parent advisory group.
 - (b) provide a copy of that Resolution to:
 - (i) any union representing likely affected staff;
 - (ii) any First Nation Bands situated in the area of each likely affected school;
 - (iii) the appropriate student representative in each likely affected high school;
 - (iv) the Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation;
 - (v) the District Advisory Council;
 - (vi) the Principals Council; and
 - (c) make copies of the Resolution and information about the Category II Study Process Publicly Available.

Public Notice of Resolution Directing Category II Study

- 6.2 The Board will also give Public Notice of any Resolution made under section 4.5(b) within 10 Working Days.
- 6.3 Following a Resolution made under section 4.5(b), the Director will conduct a Category II Study, and prepare a Category II Study Report.

7. CONDUCT OF THE CATEGORY II STUDY

- 7.1 The Director may:
- (a) with the approval of the Board, hire an outside consultant to assist in gathering of data and information, analyzing and developing options for change for consideration by the Director, and in conducting the Study consultation process; and/or
 - (b) delegate some or all those duties to staff.
- 7.2 During the Category II Study process, the Director will give interested persons and affected parties a reasonable opportunity to discuss factors to be considered, their application in the particular circumstances, to exchange data and information, and to explore available options for change.
- 7.3 Consultations under this section are intended to be informal, and may be conducted orally or in writing. The Director will determine the form, process, place, time and length of such consultations.
- 7.4 The Director may also meet with a Municipal Authority in the area of any likely affected school.
- 7.5 The Director may consult with such other persons and groups in the manner as the Director considers appropriate.

- 7.6 The Director will ensure that a summary of the consultations held under this section is prepared and retained.

8. CONTENT OF CATEGORY II STUDY REPORT

- 8.1 Following completion of the Category II Study, the Director will prepare a Category II Study Report.
- 8.2 The content of the Category II Study Report will address the factors identified in section 17(2) of the Education Authority Regulations and, to the extent they are relevant to the particular circumstances as determined by the Director, any additional factors identified in Appendix B.
- 8.3 In preparing the Category II Study Report, the Director will consider the factors identified in section 17(2) of the Education Authority Regulations and, to the extent they are relevant to the particular circumstances as determined by the Director, any additional factors identified in Appendix B.
- 8.4 The Category II Study Report should include a copy of the summaries mentioned in section 7.6 (except those pertaining to discussions held with principals, staff, and their unions).
- 8.5 In preparing the Category II Study Report, the Director should:
- (a) consider all relevant factual and other information collected during the Study;
 - (b) take reasonable steps to verify the accuracy of the factual data being relied upon in the Category II Study Report;
 - (c) analyze all reasonably viable options for change;
 - (d) examine the implications of each such option;
 - (e) formulate a recommendation on those options; and
 - (f) develop a consultation plan that is consistent with this policy and the requirements of the Education Authority Regulations.
- 8.6 In the Category II Study Report, the Director may recommend to the Board that:
- (a) no change be made;
 - (b) consideration be given to addressing the situation with a Category I Change;
 - (c) consideration be given to addressing the situation with a Category II Change; or
 - (d) consideration be given to a change that is not covered by section 3.1 of this policy.
- 8.7 Upon its completion, the Category II Study Report will be presented to the Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting.
- 8.8 The report shall be tabled at a public Board meeting and released for public input in accordance with this policy and the Education Authority Regulations.

9. PUBLIC RELEASE OF REPORT AND PUBLIC INPUT

- 9.1 Following the tabling of the Category II Study Report, the Board shall:
- (a) by Public Notice, provide notice of the report within 10 working days which will include:
 - (i) the nature of the change(s) being considered;
 - (ii) that a public consultation process on those change(s) will be taking place;
 - (iii) that public input will be received for 60 Days;
 - (iv) how further information about the proposed change and process can be obtained;
 - (b) ensure that the report is Publicly available within 5 Working Days; and

- (c) receive written briefs or public input by the following means: email to a designated Board email address, survey, newsletter, handout, information session or workshop.
- 9.2 During the public input period set out in section 9.1(a)(iii), the Board will receive and respond to any reasonable questions and reasonable requests for information that it may receive, in a timely manner.
- 9.3 The Board may, as part of that public consultation process, invite a Municipal Authority to make oral and/or written submissions about the nature and extent of the impact of a proposed change on the municipality.
- 9.4 The Board will also hold at least one meeting which is open to all members of the public. Public Notice of that meeting should be given not less than 7 Days before the meeting or forum.

10. BOARD'S FINAL DECISION ON CATEGORY II STUDY REPORT

- 10.1 Within 60 Days of the end of the period prescribed in section 9.1 for public input, the Board will, by Resolution, make a decision with respect to whether a change to a school should be made and, if so, the nature of the change that the Board considers appropriate.
- 10.2 If, under a Resolution made pursuant to section 10.1, the Board decides to proceed with a change to a school it:
 - (a) will make its final decision regarding whether to request the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to permanently close a school no later than June 30 of the school year immediately preceding the school year in which the school change will take place;
 - (b) will determine a reasonable effective date of the change; and
 - (c) may make such other decisions that need to be made to implement that decision (such as relocating students to another school, and making any appropriate changes to school attendance zone boundaries).
- 10.3 If the Board decides to request prior approval from Lieutenant Governor in Council to permanently close a school, the Board shall send a certified copy of the Resolution to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for approval, as required by the Education Authority *Regulations*.
- 10.4 Upon receipt of approval from Lieutenant Governor in Council to permanently close a school, the Board will proceed to implement the permanent school closure.
- 10.5 After the Board permanently closes a school, the Director shall prepare a report respecting the effects of the permanent closure of the school. The Director shall submit the report to the Board not later than December 31 following the permanent closure of the school.
- 10.6 If, under a Resolution passed pursuant to section 10.1, the Board decides not to proceed with a particular change to a school, it may make such other decision respecting the school as it considers appropriate. It may, for example, defer its decision on that change for a reasonable time.

Notice of Board's Final Decision on Category II Study Report

- 10.7 Within 5 Working Days of a Resolution under section 10.1, the Board will:
 - (a) provide a copy of that Resolution to the principal of each likely affected school who shall, in turn, provide a copy of that Resolution as soon as practicable to;
 - (i) all staff at that school;
 - (ii) the parents of students attending that school;

- (iii) all adult students attending that school;
 - (iv) the president or chair of the school's school council/home and school association/parent advisory group.
 - (b) provide a copy of that Resolution to:
 - (i) any union representing likely affected staff;
 - (ii) any First Nation Bands situated in the area of each likely affected school;
 - (iii) the appropriate student representative in each likely affected high school;
 - (iv) the Prince Edward Island Home and School Federation;
 - (v) the District Advisory Council;
 - (vi) the Principals Council; and
 - (c) make copies of that Resolution Publicly Available.
- 10.8 Within 10 Working Days of a Resolution under section 10.1, the Board will also give Public Notice of that Resolution.

11. TRANSITION

- 11.1 If any Resolution made by the Board under this policy requires the relocation of students and staff to another school, the Director will immediately establish a committee which will be responsible for planning and implementing the positive transition of affected students and staff.
- 11.2 The Transition Committee will consist of the following persons:
- (a) the Director;
 - (b) two Public Schools Branch staff representatives designated by the Director;
 - (c) the school principal from each affected school;
 - (d) such other personnel as the Director may require.
- 11.3 A parent representative(s) will be invited to work with the Transition Committee where appropriate.
- 11.4 The Transition Committee will operate within any timelines set out in the Board's decision and will meet as often as required.
- 11.5 The Transition Committee will report to the Director, and through the Director, to the Board.

12. GENERAL

- 12.1 If any procedural matter arises which is not dealt with in this policy, the Board may, by Resolution, determine the procedure to be followed.
- 12.2 Any notice to an individual or organization required by this policy or a Consultation Plan and timeline may be given by mail or email to the last known address that the Board has for the recipient and, if mailed, shall be deemed to be received 5 Days after it is posted.
- 12.3 The Board, by Resolution, may decide to extend or abridge any time period prescribed by this policy (with the exception of section 12.2) on such terms as it deems appropriate.
- 12.4 If the procedure provided for in this policy cannot proceed on schedule at any point in time for any reason, the Board may decide to continue the process within a reasonable time, and it will not be necessary for the Board to repeat any step already taken.
- 12.5 No proceeding under this policy will be rendered invalid by any defect in form or technical irregularity.
- 12.6 The Director may delegate his/her role and duties as specified in this policy to an employee of the Public Schools Branch or to another person.

CONSULTATION PLAN

APPENDIX "A"

Matter:

Date:

WHO WILL BE CONSULTED? (Key stakeholders) (Check all that apply)

PSB Educational

Community

- ☐ Students
- ☐ Parents/guardians
- ☐ School council(s)
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Other

Internal to PSB

- ☐ Directors
- ☐ Principals and/or Vice-principals
- ☐ PSB staff
- ☐ Other

**External/Other
(please identify)**

- ☐ Agencies/associations
- ☐ Community groups
- ☐ Municipal Authorities
- ☐ French Lang. School Board
- ☐ Other

Additional Notes:

HOW WILL STAKEHOLDERS BE MADE AWARE OF THIS CONSULTATION PROCESS? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Media advertisement (print and/or radio)
- ☐ Email distribution
- ☐ Letter distribution
- ☐ School Posting
- ☐ School council(s)
- ☐ School newsletter
- ☐ PSB Website
- ☐ Other

Additional Notes:

HOW WILL THE CONSULTATION BE CARRIED OUT? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Mail-out email
- ☐ Circulation
- ☐ Open houses/workshops
- ☐ School councils(s)
- ☐ Public meetings
- ☐ Survey/questionnaire
- ☐ Web-based notice/Web-based comments
- ☐ Other

Additional Notes:

CONSULTATION TIMELINE:

TARGETED DATE FOR RECOMMENDATION/FINAL DECISION:

PROJECTED DATE(S)	ACTIVITY/MILESTONE	NOTES

HOW WILL THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION AND THE FINAL DECISION BE COMMUNICATED TO CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PROCESS? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Media Advertisement (print and/or radio)
- ☐ Email circulation
- ☐ Letter distribution
- ☐ School Posting
- ☐ School/principal communications/newsletter
- ☐ PSB Website
- ☐ Other

STUDY REPORT

SCHOOL REVIEW FACTORS

APPENDIX “B”

Where consideration is being given to making a Category I or Category II Change to a school, the impact of the proposed change on each school and those who will likely be directly affected by any such change should be reviewed, having regard to all relevant factors and information that is reasonably available to the Public Schools Branch. The factors to be taken into account will differ in every case; however, the educational interests of the students will always be a key consideration. The following is an illustrative, non-exhaustive, list of factors that may be considered:

EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

1. School's ability to deliver the provincial school curriculum, programs, and services, including specialized services, and to accommodate any changes expected in those programs or services over the next 5 years;
2. Impact of the proposed change on students' educational achievement and opportunities;
3. The grade levels currently served by a school, and whether a grade reconfiguration would be appropriate;
4. Uniqueness of a school's educational program.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

5. Enrollment patterns over the last 5 to 10 years and projected enrollment trends over the next 5 years;
6. Population patterns over the past 5 to 10 years and projected population trends over the next 5 years;
7. Number of students enrolled in a school who live outside the school's attendance zone.

FACILITY FACTORS

8. School building's age, site, location, conditions, including:
 - (a) accessibility to students with disabilities;
 - (b) any health or safety concerns;
 - (c) energy efficiency and environmental sustainability; and
 - (d) the cost and funding of any renovations that are, or will be needed, in the next 5 years.
9. Number and type of rooms needed in order to deliver required school programs and services;
10. Any Board long-term capital plan;
11. Proximity of other schools and the availability of appropriate accommodation in those schools;
12. Availability and use of appropriate technology;
13. Current and potential uses of surplus space in a school for Public Schools Branch-related purposes.

FINANCIAL FACTORS

14. Funding provided by the Department of Education.
15. Efficient use and distribution of resources available to the Public Schools Branch, including school administrative, teaching and other staff;
16. School operating costs, including school's cost per student compared to the average;

17. An analysis of the projected cost savings or increases associated with change.

TRANSPORTATION FACTORS

- 18. Distance and time students spend, and will spend, in transit;
- 19. Traffic flow in and around a school;
- 20. Any increase or decrease in transportation costs.

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS

- 21. Parental and community involvement in, and support of, school;
- 22. Impact of proposed change on parents, including parent engagement;
- 23. Development projects planned for the affected community which are likely to come to fruition within the next 5 to 10 years;
- 24. Existing community uses of school facilities;
- 25. Possible alternative uses of school facilities, or surplus school space, by the community;
- 26. Other facilities in the community available for use by the community;
- 27. Information submitted to the Public Schools Branch about:
 - (a) the economic impact of a change on the community; and
 - (b) the economic contribution the school makes to community.

Board Chair

Monitoring Method: Board Inspection
Monitoring Frequency: Annually