

POLICY 3711

PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

The Board is entrusted with ensuring the responsible and efficient use of resources and of the district's school space. This policy refers to school closure when it occurs during a school year, in future years or through a process of no kindergarten registration. It also refers to a significant realignment of educational programs. Should it be necessary to consider a school for closure due to budgetary reasons, declining enrolment in the district or other such factors, the Board will ensure that persons in the community who could be significantly affected, that is, the school community as well as interested members of the public, will be given an adequate opportunity to provide input on the proposal before a final decision is made.

The following principles shall be used as a foundation:

Principles:

1. Enhancing student learning opportunities is paramount.
2. Equity of opportunity for all students is critical to their education.
3. Students' social environments and transitions are critical elements of their school life.
4. Schools have meaningful and structured links to their community.
5. Efficient use of resources maximizes student learning opportunities.

These principles shall be reviewed by Board committee on an annual basis.

The following criteria will be used as a "filter" in the designation of schools identified for possible closure:

Criteria:

The decision to close a school should:

1. Not be considered for a school that has a high level of structured involvement in the community.
2. Not be considered unless the receiving school has sufficient room in the immediate and near future.

3. Be based on minimizing the number of students disrupted in the immediate and near future.
4. Not result in the closure of two adjacent schools (defined as closest schools).
5. Not be considered unless the resulting walk routes are safe and the resulting walking distances are reasonable.
6. Result in a reasonable amount of immediate and/or future savings allowing for the age, condition and capital investment required of the school building.
7. Not be considered if the enrolment in the general area is increasing significantly.
8. Not be considered if the receiving school requires major capital costs in order to accommodate the students being relocated.

These criteria shall be reviewed by Board committee on an annual basis.

The Board shall consider the information provided regarding the above and will decide whether it will then consider the school for closure. If a school is identified for possible closure, a process of consultation will ensue.

The Public Consultation Process

This process of consultation will be in accordance with Policy 1163 *The Process of Consultation*:

- public notice through the media of the possibility of school closure in the district with the names of schools being considered;
- notice to the staff and parents of a school; and to other schools in the district, particularly those who will be receiving students;
- a public meeting at schools that allow for all relevant information to be provided by trustees and appropriate staff that would include reasons for the proposed closure, which schools and for when. Parents, staff and students will have the opportunity to ask questions, provide input including written submissions and suggest other options where possible. Opportunity for further information will be provided should further questions occur;
- a public meeting to which members of the public are also invited to provide input on possible school closure.

The Board will give fair consideration to all public input including written submissions prior to making its final decision with respect to any school closure. The final decision will be made by bylaw at an open meeting of the Board.

Following a board decision to permanently close a school, the Secretary-Treasurer will promptly notify the Minister of Education, including the school name, facility number, address and date of closure.

Greater Victoria School District

Modification to this document is not permitted without prior written consent from the Greater Victoria School District.

Approved: March 2003

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