

School District 50: Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte

Policy Subject: SCHOOL CLOSURE-

Date Passed: January 2004

Date Amended: NA

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Policy No. 6030

Date Approved: January, 2004

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POLICY

The Board of School Trustees is responsible under the School Act for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district. To this end, the Board has the authority to close a school for reasons which result in the school being deemed surplus to the districts educational needs.

The permanent closure of a school is a significant issue of public concern and therefore the Board will follow a process that provides for sufficient consultation with those whom will be affected prior to any decision being made.

PROCEDURE

A. Public Board Meeting:

Any proposed closure of a school shall first be raised at a regular open meeting of the Board.

B. Criteria for considering school closure:

A school may be considered for closure when there is sufficient space to accommodate the students in neighbouring schools. In addition the following factors need to be considered:

- a. the present and three to five year enrolment projection;
- b. the number of the children in the catchment area that do not attend the school;
- c. the number of the children attending the school from outside the catchment area;
- d. the operating cost per student;
- e. the condition of the facility and the need for capital expenditures to keep the building operational;
- f. the limitations of the facility that restrict appropriate education programming;
- g. the total enrolment of a school;
- h. effects of closure on length of school bus runs;
- i. availability of alternate local facilities for community recreation and education;
- j. cost of mothballing the facility for up to five years;

C. Opportunities for Students Displaced by School Closure:

The district will ensure that all district students displaced by a school closure will have opportunities to receive an appropriate educational experience in another school in the district. The registration of displaced students will be subject to the guidelines contained in School Choice Policy and School Act.

D. Public Consultation:

1. The process of consultation for school closure shall require at least sixty (60) days commencing from the time when the Board provides public notice as to which specific school(s) are being considered for closure.
2. The process of consultation shall provide an opportunity for those who will be affected by a proposed closure to participate in the process. Such participation should include trustees, parents, Band Councils, Haida Education Council, community members, district staff, and school staff.
3. Public consultation shall be undertaken by the Board prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure of a school.
4. The Board shall make available, in writing, a full disclosure of all facts with respect to any proposed school closure, including:

- i. detailed reasons for the proposed school closure;
- ii. specific school(s) being considered for closure;
- iii. the general effect on surrounding schools;
- iv. the number of students affected at both the closed school(s) and surrounding schools;
- v. the effect of proposed closures on student transportation;
- vi. educational program implications for the affected students;
- vii. the proposed date of the closure(s);
- viii. financial considerations;
- ix. impact on the Board's capital plan;
- x. proposed use of the closed school(s);

5. The Board shall provide an adequate opportunity for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closure. Written responses may be referred to at subsequent public forums respecting the closure.

6. The Board shall hold at least one public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and listen to community concerns and proposed options;

7. The Board shall maintain records of all consultation meetings.

E. Public Meeting:

The time and place of the public meeting shall be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons in the community.

Generally, this will mean a letter to students and parents of students currently attending the school, and a clearly visible notice in the community newspaper.

Discussions shall include a full disclosure of all facts with respect to any proposed school closure, including:

- a. implications of the closure;
- b. implementation plans, including timing of the closure;

- c. options that the Board considered as alternatives to closure;
- d. possible future community growth in the area of the school;
- e. contents of written submissions presented to the Board by members of the community.

Following the public meeting, the Board shall give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision with respect to any proposed school closures.

F. Notification to the Minister:

If the Board decides to permanently close a school under Section 73 of the School Act, the Board must, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision containing the following information:

- a. the school's name
- b. the school's facility number
- c. the school's address, and
- d. the date on which the school will close.