

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 67 (OKANAGAN SKAHA)**

**POLICY**

**POLICY #750 School Closure and/or Reconfiguration**

**RATIONALE**

The *School Act* and the ministerial orders that support the Act place the responsibility for school closure on the local Board of Education. The Board of Education recognizes that factors such as, but not limited to, declining and shifting student populations; inadequate resources; educational opportunities; high costs of maintenance; or health and safety concerns may necessitate the consolidation, reconfiguration and/or closure of schools from time to time. Any or all of these circumstances could make it difficult to provide quality instructional programs in a cost efficient manner. It is the intent of this Board to make its policies and regulations on school closure and/or reconfiguration clear to all concerned and to support a process that provides opportunity for those who will be affected to be involved before a final decision is made.

**POLICY**

The Board of Education of School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) recognizes its responsibility under the *School Act* for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district.

The School Closure and/or Reconfiguration Policy applies when the Board is considering the permanent closure of a school. Closing a school permanently means the closing, for a period exceeding 12 months, of a school building used for the purposes of providing an educational program to students. School reconfiguration may or may not result in a school closure.

Though there may be many reasons for closing and/or reconfiguring a school, the Board of Education commits to a complete public consultation process with all members of the affected communities prior to any final decision being made.

ADOPTED: September 8, 2003

Reviewed/Revised: September 10, 2007

February 6, 2017

Statutory Reference: *School Act*

## **REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

**POLICY #750 School Closure and/or Reconfiguration**

There are five distinct steps involved in this process: 1) Identification of potential school(s) for consideration for closure and/or reconfiguration; 2) Inform all affected and set a consultation schedule; 3) the consultation process; 4) final decision on closure and/or reconfiguration; 5) and ministry notification of school closure.

### **1. Identification of Potential School(s) to be Considered for Closure and/or Reconfiguration**

The superintendent, in consultation with the secretary-treasurer, will determine whether school(s) should be evaluated for closure and/or reconfiguration based on the following criteria:

- Educational effectiveness
- Enrolment projections
- Geographic location
- Financial impact
- Other factors relevant to whether the particular school(s) should be considered for closure and/or reconfiguration.
- Suggested timeline for the closure and/or reconfiguration
- Suggestions with regard to alternate community use

Upon completion, the superintendent and/or secretary-treasurer will, in a closed meeting, report to the Board of Education on the results of this analysis. The Board of Education will then identify which school(s), if any, will be considered for closure and/or reconfiguration.

### **2. Informing Affected Parties and the Public**

Upon the decision of the Board to move forward with the school(s) identified as being considered for possible closure and/or reconfiguration in the closed meeting, the superintendent and/or the secretary-treasurer will:

- a) Notify, in writing, the affected school(s) principal(s) and PAC president(s) and/or executive(s). It will be the responsibility of the school principal to inform his/her staff.
- b) Notify, in writing, the Okanagan Skaha Teacher's union and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 523.
- c) After having informed the above stakeholders, a media release will be made informing the public of the Board's decision and that further information regarding a public consultation process and schedule will follow.
- d) A meeting will be set up with the affected school principal and PAC executive to review the supporting documentation that will be shared at a public meeting(s).
- e) Local governments, including First Nations, will be specifically notified in writing which will include an invitation to provide input through the consultation process.

### **3. Consultation Process**

Public consultation will be undertaken by the Board prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure and/or reconfiguration of a school(s).

- a) The process of consultation for school closure and/or reconfiguration shall require at least 60 calendar days, commencing the first day after the public meeting
- b) The consultation process will follow guidelines provided by the *School Act* s.73 and Ministerial Order 194/08.
- c) The process of consultation will:
  - i. Include at least one (1) public meeting that will be advertised in the following manners, but will not be limited to: the media, school newsletters, the district website, individual invitation (local governments) or any other effective manner.
  - ii. One (1) meeting for the staff(s) of affected schools either as a school grouping or by union groupings.
  - iii. Make available to the public, at a public meeting, in writing, the facts and information received by the Board with respect to the initial decision to 'consider a school for closure and/or reconfiguration' as outlined in Step 1. This information will be made available after the public meeting for those who were unable to attend.
  - iiii. Provide an adequate opportunity for persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closure and/or reconfiguration with adequate information and directions on how to submit a written response to the Board. The information and directions will advise potential correspondents that their written response will be made public with respect to the closure and/or reconfiguration. The deadline for written submissions will not be earlier than 7 calendar days prior to the day of the Board's decision regarding school closure and/or reconfiguration.
- d) For the purposes of this policy, consultation is defined as "The seeking and giving of advice, information, and/or opinion, involving a consideration." All information received in the consultation process will be considered by each trustee individually in making the final decision.

### **4. Final Decision on Closure and/or Reconfiguration**

Following the public meeting(s) and review of written submissions, the Board will give fair consideration to all input prior to making its final decision with respect to any proposed school closure and/or reconfiguration(s).

The final decision of the Board on a school closure and/or a reconfiguration that involves a school closure shall be by Board Bylaw. The first and second readings of the school closure bylaw will be at the public board meeting immediately upon the Board motion to close a school. The third and final reading of the bylaw will be at least fourteen (14) days following the second reading.

The final decision of the Board on a school reconfiguration that does not include a school closure will be by Board motion at a public Board meeting.

Upon the completion of the meeting regarding school reconfiguration and/or the third and final reading of the school closure bylaw, the decision is final and the matter of consultation will be considered closed and no further information will be accepted.

**5. Written Notification of School Closure to the Minister**

If the Board decides to permanently close a school under Section 73 of the *School Act*, the Board will, 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.

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