POLICY:	PUPIL ACCOMMODATION			#	305
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APPROVAL/REVISION DATE:	September 1, 2022	EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 20, 2022	REVIEW DATE:	September 2027
CROSS REFERENCE:					

A. POLICY

1. In accordance with Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines, the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board recognizes its responsibility
   - to provide adequate accommodation and instruction for all pupils attending its schools;
   - to undertake long-term capital planning;
   - to operate its schools economically and efficiently, while taking into account the best education of their pupils, within the limits of the Board's available resources;
   - to explore opportunities for effective, sustainable partnerships; and
   - to maintain communication with stakeholders and potential partners concerning possible changes in status of a school or of school boundaries.

2. The Board acknowledges that the consolidation or closure of schools may be required to meet the above objectives. The Board is committed to providing student accommodation in a responsible and organized manner considering reasonable and just alternatives.

3. The consolidation, closure, or relocation of a school(s) will be subject to an accommodation review in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and this policy.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. Initial Staff Report

1.1 Prior to establishing a pupil accommodation review, an Initial Staff Report will be presented to the Board identifying a school or group of schools in which accommodation issues have been identified.

1.2 A school or group of schools may be considered for study if one or more of the following conditions apply:

   a. The school or group of schools is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;

   b. The school or group of schools has experienced or will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment;

   c. Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;

   d. Teaching/learning spaces are not suitable to provide the programs needed to serve the community and retrofitting may not be possible;

   e. Under normal staffing allocation practices, it would be necessary to assign three grades to one class in one or more of the schools;

f. The school has an average of less than 20 students per grade in an elementary school or 150 students per grade in a secondary school;
g. The student population of a school is less than 75% of the capacity of a school as defined by the Ministry of Education;
h. One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements;
i. In respect of one or more of the schools there are safety and/or environmental concerns attached to the building, the school site and its locality;
j. The consolidation of schools is in the best interest of the overall school system;
k. It has been no less than five years since the inception of a previous 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.

1.3 The Initial Staff Report to the Board will contain one or more options to address the accommodation issue(s). Each option will include a supporting rationale and timeline for implementation. If more than one option is presented, a recommended option will be identified. The Initial Staff Report will also include information on actions taken by school board staff prior to establishing the pupil accommodation review process and supporting rationale as to any actions taken or not taken.

1.4 The options to address the accommodation issue(s) in the Initial Staff Report must include the following:

a. summary of accommodation issue(s) for the school(s) under review;
b. where students would be accommodated;
c. proposed changes to existing facility or facilities if 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 change(s) takes place;
f. new capital investment if 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
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.

1.5 The Initial Staff Report will be accompanied by School Information Profiles (SIPs) which are updated for each school under review. The SIP will focus on the following considerations: value to the student, and value to the Board. The SIP is intended to provide

background information in order to foster a better understanding of the facilities under review. Items to be included in the SIP are attached as Appendix 1.

1.6 After reviewing the initial report, the Board may choose to undertake a pupil accommodation review to address the accommodation issues in the school(s) under review.

2. Notice of Initiation of an Accommodation Review

2.1 Upon the Board of Trustees' approval to initiate an accommodation review the TBCDSB shall give Notice of Initiation within five (5) business days to the following:

a. affected school Principal(s), Catholic School Council(s), school community; staff of the school(s) under review;

a. community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review;

b. affected First Nations;

c. affected single- and upper-tier municipalities, through the Office of the City Clerk (or equivalent);

d. Director(s) of Education of the coterminous school board(s);

e. the Ministry of Education through the Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister.

2.2 Notice of Initiation shall be given in the following manner:

a. Posting on the Board web-site
b. Mail or email to the partners on the notification list outlined in 2.1.

2.3 Individuals from the school(s) under review and the broader community will be invited to participate in the pupil accommodation review consultation. The pupil accommodation review process will consist of the following methods of consultation:

a. Accommodation Review Committee;

b. consultation with municipal governments local to the affected school(s);

c. public meetings; and

d. public delegations.

2.4 Administration will meet with representatives of the affected federations and unions.

3. Establishment of the Accommodation Review Committee

3.1 The Board will direct the formation of an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) for a group of schools or for a single school. The ARC will include membership from the school community and supporting board office staff.

3.2 The ARC will consist of the following members:

a. the school Superintendent(s) from the affected school(s)

b. from each school under review:
   - school Principal or designate
   - one teacher chosen by the Principal
   - one non-teaching staff member chosen by the Principal

c. the Catholic School Council Chair or another member of the Catholic School Council chosen by the Council from each school under review;

d. a representative from the Special Education Advisory Committee;

e. a representative from the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee;

f. a student representative in the case of a secondary school chosen by the Principal;

g. a School Board Trustee who will monitor the process as an ad hoc member; and

h. Board Office staff.

3.3 Alternate members will be designated for each member of the ARC. Alternate members will attend ARC meetings in the event that the regular member is unavailable.

3.4 The Board will invite ARC members to an orientation session that will describe the mandate, roles and responsibilities, and procedures of the ARC.

3.5 The School Superintendent or designate shall:

a. Coordinate appointments to the ARC;

b. Ensure that TBCDSB staff resources are available to the ARC to compile feedback and provide support;

c. Interpret and ensure compliance with this Accommodation Review Policy;

d. Ensure meeting records are kept;

e. Ensure attendance registers are filed for all meetings; and,

f. Organize and chair all ARC and public meetings. If more than one School Superintendent is a member of the ARC, the Board of Trustees will designate which School Superintendent will be the Chairperson.

3.6 The Committee will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all of the listed members are willing and able to participate.

4. Terms of Reference for the Accommodation Review Committee

4.1 The role and responsibility of the ARC is to represent the schools under review and to act as the official conduit for information sharing between the School Board and school communities. The ARC:

a. will review the Initial Staff Report and other information presented by staff;
b. may provide feedback on the Initial Staff Report options;
c. may seek clarification of the Initial Staff Report;
d. may provide other accommodation options with supporting rationale;
e. does not need to achieve a consensus regarding information provided to Trustees;
f. may request clarification about information provided in a School Information Profile Report, but has no role in approving the Report;
g. may provide other accommodation options and supporting rationale, than those in the Initial Staff Report.

4.2 The ARC shall hold a minimum of two public consultation meetings in the geographic review area to receive input or comments from the public on the accommodation review and the Initial Staff Report.

4.3 The ARC shall hold a minimum of two working meetings, and may hold as many working meetings as it deems necessary within the timelines established in Section 9 – Public Meetings and Timelines.

4.4 Minutes of ARC meetings will be recorded.

4.5 In carrying out its duties the ARC shall have regard for the following matters:

a. value of the school(s) to the student and to the School Board;
b. there is a full range of actions that can be recommended to the Board of Trustees, including school closure, boundary changes, changes in the grade organization of schools, construction of replacement facilities, facility upgrades and renovations, program changes, etc.;
c. ARC members shall refrain from any discussions about specific personnel, property or legal matters;
d. ARC working meetings and public consultation meetings should be held at a school(s) in the review area or, if necessary, at another community facility if physical accessibility cannot be provided at a school(s); and

e. the ARC will be informed at the beginning of the process about partnership opportunities or lack thereof identified as part of the Board's long term planning process.

4.6 Feedback from the ARC, as well as the broader public consultation, will be compiled into a Community Consultation section of the Final Staff Report that will be prepared by TBCDSB staff.

5. Optional Modified Accommodation Review Process

5.1 The Board may find it appropriate to conduct a modified accommodation review process in circumstances where potential accommodation options are less complex. The optional modified accommodation review process may only be undertaken where two or more of the following criteria apply to one or more school(s) within a group of schools:

a. Enrolment:

i) An elementary school with an enrolment of less than 150 students for the current year and which is projected to remain below 150 for the next two years.

ii) A secondary school with an enrolment of less than 350 students for the current year and which is projected to remain below 350 for the next two years.

b. A school with a utilization rate of 65% or lower. Utilization will be determined by dividing the school's enrolment by the on-the-ground capacity (OTG) of the school building.

c. A school facility that is physically not suitable to serve the school community and:

iii) where retrofitting may involve major capital investment; or

iv) where the Facility Condition Index (FCI) deems the school prohibitive to repair.

5.2 Distance to nearest available accommodation:

a. in the case of an elementary school review where the nearest available accommodation option is 10 km or less from the school(s) under review; and

b. in the case of a secondary school review where the nearest available accommodation option is 20 km or less from the school(s) under review.

5.3 The relocation of a program or grades where the enrolment constitutes 50% or more of the school's enrolment. The enrolment will be based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation or the first phase of relocation carried over a number of years.

5.4 The modified accommodation review process is implemented in accordance with the remainder of this policy document except for the following:

a. the Initial Staff Report must provide rationale for exempting the school(s) from the standard accommodation review process;

b. no ARC is required to be established; and,

c. a minimum of one public meeting must be held no fewer than 30 business days following the decision to conduct a modified accommodation review.

6. Consultation with Local Municipal Governments

6.1 Following the Board of Trustees' approval to undertake a pupil accommodation review, the Board shall 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.

6.2 The invitation for this meeting will be provided through a written notice, and will be directed through the Clerk's Department (or equivalent) for the affected single and upper-tier municipalities.

6.3 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. The Board must provide them with advance notice of when the final public meeting is scheduled to take place.

6.4 The Board must document its 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.

7. Completing the Accommodation Review

7.1 At the conclusion of the accommodation review process (after the final public meeting) TBCDSB staff will submit a Final Staff Report to the Board of Trustees.

7.2 The Final Staff Report should build on information provided in the Initial Staff Report and through the accommodation review process, and must include the following:

a. recommended option(s) which may be amended from the Initial Staff Report;

b. a proposed accommodation plan which contains a timeline for implementation; and,

c. a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from the ARC, any public consultations, and any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the accommodation review process.

7.3 The Final Staff Report must be available to the public and posted on the TBCDSB website.

7.4 After the Final Staff Report is submitted to the Board of Trustees, members of the public must be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on the Final Staff Report through public delegations to the Board of Trustees.

7.5 After any public delegations, TBCDSB staff will compile feedback which will be presented to the Board of Trustees as an addendum to the Final Staff Report. Any changes to the Final Staff Report as a result of public delegations will be detailed in the addendum.

7.6 The final decision regarding the future of a school or group of schools under the accommodation review rests solely with the Board of Trustees.

7.7 In making its decision the Board of Trustees will consider the Final Staff Report along with the addendum from public delegations.

7.8 The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) of the Final Staff Report as presented, modify the recommendation(s), or approve a different outcome.

7.9 Should the Board of Trustees vote to close a school or schools the Board must provide clear timelines regarding the closure(s) and ensure that a transition plan is provided to all affected school communities.

7.10 Board of Trustee decisions on an accommodation review should not be made during the school summer holiday period.

8. Public Meetings and Timelines

8.1 A minimum of two public meetings must be held for a (standard) accommodation review process and a minimum of one public meeting must be held for a modified accommodation review process to receive broader community input and comment on the Initial Staff Report. Staff are expected to facilitate the public meetings to solicit broader community feedback on the recommended options contained in the Initial Staff Report

8.2 The Notice of Public Meetings shall be given in the same manner as outlined in section 2.2 of this policy.

8.3 There must be no fewer than 30 business days between the date of the Board of Trustees' approval to initiate the accommodation review and the first public meeting

8.4 The first public meeting, at a minimum, shall include the following:

a. an overview of the ARC orientation session;

b. the Initial Staff Report with recommended option(s); and

c. a presentation of the School Information Profile Report.

8.5 There must be no fewer than 40 business days between the first and final public meeting.

8.6 The Final Staff Report must be publicly posted no fewer than 10 business days after the final public meeting.

8.7 From the public posting of the Final Staff Report there must be no fewer than 10 business days before public delegations.

8.8 There must be a minimum of 10 business days between public delegations and the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

9. Transition Planning

9.1 In situations where the Board approves a recommendation to close a school, a Transition Team shall be established to facilitate the closing process.

9.2 The Transition Team should include the Principals, parents, and staff representatives of the affected schools, student representatives in the case of a secondary school closure, the Superintendent of Schools for the review area, other appropriate Board staff and a School Board Trustee. The Superintendent of Schools for the review area shall act as Chair of the Transition Team.

9.3 The Transition Team will identify the issues, needs, and responsibilities related to the implementation of the school closure. It will monitor progress on transition activities and the well- being of students affected by the school closure, and communicate this information to stakeholders on a regular basis.

9.4 Normally, resource materials will move with students to their new school location(s).

10. Exemptions

10.1 The Ministry of Education's Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines provide a number of exceptions where School Boards are not required to undertake an accommodation review process. These include:

a. where a replacement school is to be built by the Board on the existing site or located within the existing attendance boundary as identified through the Board's policies;

b. where a replacement school is to be built by the Board on the existing site or located within the existing attendance boundary, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students and staff during reconstruction as identified through the Board's policies;

c. when the Board is considering the relocation of grades or programs where the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the enrolment of the school. The enrolment will be based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation or the first phase of relocation carried over a number of years;

d. when the Board is repairing or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;

e. where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is under construction or repair;

f. when a lease is terminated;

g. where an accommodation proposal does not involve a school offering elementary or secondary regular day school programs;

h. where there are no students enrolled at the school at any time throughout the school year.

10.2 Although an accommodation review is not required in the above situations, the Board should provide appropriate notice of decisions where the accommodation circumstances of students will be affected.