



**LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
POLICY #15**

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## **PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

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### **OBJECTIVE**

The Limestone District School Board (LDSB) is committed to providing the best educational opportunities and to enhancing the learning environment in its schools for the children and young people of the Limestone District School Board.

### **CONTEXT**

The Board's elementary schools are organized in groups linked to a secondary school (school families). The goal of providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities in a school or group of schools requires monitoring and active curriculum and programming decisions. From time to time, changes in curriculum, program demands, student enrolment and other factors may result in the need to consolidate, close or relocate a school. There may, however, be circumstances in which a single school should be studied for closure or relocation.

The Board is committed to the following tenets:

- Student curriculum and program needs will drive facilities planning;
- Upgrades to the condition of facilities will occur where possible;
- The Board will comply with Ministry of Education guidelines for school consolidation and closure decisions;
- The Board will pursue capital grants when available;
- The Board will exemplify open decision-making, board oversight and public consultation in capital planning.

This policy implements the *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines* released by the Ministry of Education in March 2015. A copy of this guideline and the Ministry document entitled *Administrative Review of the Accommodation Review Process* will be posted on the LDSB website and will be made available at the head office of the Board, upon request.

## DEFINITIONS

**Accommodation review:** A process, as defined in a school board pupil accommodation review policy, undertaken by a school board to determine the future of a school or group of schools.

**Business day:** A calendar day that is not a weekend or statutory holiday. It also does not include calendar days that fall within school boards' Christmas, spring, and summer break.

**Consultation:** The sharing of relevant information as well as providing the opportunity for municipalities and other community partners, the public and affected school communities to be heard.

**Ministry Administrative Review** - Established by the Ministry of Education to allow for the review of the Board's accommodation review process by the Ministry and is included in Appendix B.

**Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC):** A committee, established by a school board that represents the affected school(s) of a pupil accommodation review, which acts as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the affected school communities.

**PARC working meeting:** A meeting of Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) members to discuss a pupil accommodation review, and includes a meeting held by the PARC to solicit feedback from the affected school communities of a pupil accommodation review.

**Public meeting:** An open meeting held by the school board to solicit broader community feedback on a pupil accommodation review.

**Public delegation:** A meeting of the Board of Trustees where presentations by groups or individuals can have their concerns heard directly by the school board trustees. (The LDSB will hold a special meeting for this purpose. See Section 4.2 of this policy. For additional delegations see *LDSB Policy #9: Board Operations; Section 17: Delegations and Submissions*)

**Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG)** - Established by the Ministry of Education to guide boards in preparation of a pupil accommodation policy and is included in Appendix A.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board** - Established as a committee of all trustees to review school accommodation data and prepare recommendations for formal Board approval.

**School Information Profile (SIP):** An orientation document with point-in-time data for each of the schools under a pupil accommodation review to help the ARC and the community understand the context surrounding the decision to include the specific school(s) in a pupil accommodation review.

**School Utilization Rate:** Based on the portion of the school's enrolment to its capacity as determined by the current Ministry standards for class size requirements and room areas [on-the-ground capacity (OTG)].

## PROCEDURES

### 1. School Board Planning Prior to Considering a Program and Accommodation Review

#### 1.1 Community Planning and Partnership Procedures

As outlined in *Policy #20 Community Planning and Partnerships* the Limestone District School Board supports and encourages cooperative and collaborative partnerships for Facility Sharing as part of the foundation of a strong, vibrant and sustainable publicly funded education system. To this end the Board outlines in the *LDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan* the condition and utilization of current facilities, and possible accommodation solutions designed to enhance student achievement. The Board shares this information with community partners and the public annually and when the information changes. The procedures outlined in *Policy #20 Community Planning and Partnerships* are implemented prior to considering a Program and Accommodation Review.

#### 1.2 Exploring Options

School Board staff will discuss options with appropriate municipalities and potential partners from the *List of Partners* established through *Policy #20 Community Planning and Partnerships*. Information will also be gathered from the municipalities and partners concerning any development or plans that may impact the school area(s) under consideration.

Options to be explored include the following:

- moving attendance boundaries and programs to balance enrolment between over and underutilized schools;
- offering to lease underutilized space within a school to a coterminous school board;
- finding community partners who can pay the full cost of operating the underutilized space; and/or
- decommissioning or demolishing a section of the school that is not required for student use to reduce operating costs.

#### 1.3 Initial Senior Staff Report to the Board of Trustees

In the event that staff deem a Program and Accommodation Review necessary, staff will prepare an Initial Staff Report to present to Trustees for consideration.

The Initial Staff Report must contain one or more options to address the accommodation issue(s) at the affected school(s). Each option must have a supporting rationale. There must be a recommended option if more than one option is presented. The Initial Staff Report must also include information on actions taken by staff prior to recommending a Program and Accommodation Review, and supporting rationale as to any actions taken or not taken.

The option(s) included in the initial staff report must address the following:

- summary of accommodation issue(s) for the school(s) under review;
- where students would be accommodated;
- if proposed changes to existing facility or facilities are required as a result of the pupil accommodation review;
- identify any program changes as a result of the proposed option;
- how student transportation would be affected if changes take place;
- if new capital investment is 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
- 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.

Each recommended option must also include a timeline for implementation.

The Board Staff will present the Initial Staff Report to the Board of Trustees at a Committee of the Whole Board meeting.

The Initial Staff Report will be available to the public at the Committee meeting and posted on the Board's website on or before the commencement of the Committee meeting.

## **2. Establishing a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC)**

After reviewing the Initial Staff Report, the Board may direct the formation of a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) for a group of schools or for a single school.

### **2.1 Notification of Approval to Form a PARC**

If the Board of Trustees approves the undertaking of a pupil accommodation review, the Director, on behalf of the Board, will inform the following groups, of the decision:

- The parents and staff of the affected schools;
- The affected single and upper-tier municipalities as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review of the Board's approval;
- The Director(s) of Education of their coterminous school boards and
- The Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division.

The communication concerning the approval of the accommodation review will be provided in writing within 5 business days.

Parents/guardians, staff and school council members of the affected schools will be informed through a letter provided to the schools and sent home via the students. The decision will be posted on the Board's website and provided as a news item to the local newspapers and social media sites by the Communication Department.

## **2.2 Terms of Reference of the Pupil Accommodation Committee**

### **2.2.1 The Mandate of the PARC**

The PARC is the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the school communities. It may comment on the initial staff report and may, throughout the pupil accommodation review process, seek clarification of the initial staff report. The PARC may provide other accommodation options than those in the initial staff report; however, it must include supporting rationale for any such option.

The PARC members do not need to achieve consensus regarding the information provided to the Board of Trustees.

The school board's staff resources assigned to the PARC are required to compile feedback from the PARC as well as the broader community in the Community Consultation section of the final staff report to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

### **2.2.2 Composition of the PARC**

The following persons will be invited to be participants on a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC):

- The Area Trustee(s) will serve as ad hoc PARC members to monitor the PARC progress;
- A school superintendent/supervising principal or designate, at the discretion of the Director of Education will chair the PARC;
- From each affected school:
  - i. The school principal;
  - ii. One teacher;
  - iii. One non-teaching staff member;
  - iv. Three parents/guardians, chosen by their respective school councils, one of whom will be the school council chair or designate and
  - v. One secondary school student representative if a secondary school is included in the affected area.

The membership of the PARC will include, at a minimum, a parent/guardian representative from each of the schools under review. The committee will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all of the listed members are willing and able to participate.

### 2.2.3 Operation of the PARC

The PARC will be formed following the Board of Trustees' consideration of the initial staff report but prior to the first public meeting.

Prior to the first Public Meeting the PARC Chair, on behalf of the Board will invite PARC members to an orientation session that will describe the mandate, roles and responsibilities, and procedures of the PARC. An information package necessary to permit the PARC to carry out its mandate will be provided. The information package will include the Initial Staff Report and the School Information Profile (SIP) for each affected school.

Board staff will respond to reasonable requests for additional information from the PARC. Requests for additional information will be considered at Working Committee Meetings and must be agreed to by a majority of the members attending the meeting.

Through invitation by the Chair of the PARC other resource personnel may be called to provide information to the PARC including third party private and public bodies such as municipalities, post-secondary institutions and coterminous school boards.

### 2.2.4 Meetings of the PARC

The PARC will operate within the timelines set forth in this policy.

The Chair of the PARC will call the first public meeting of the PARC no earlier than thirty business days after the Board decision to form the PARC.

The PARC will meet as often as is deemed necessary by the majority members of the PARC, however the work of the PARC will usually be completed within a 6 month period commencing with Working Meeting #1. There will be a minimum of 4 Working Committee Meetings.

An example of a meeting schedule follows:

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	AGENDA FOCUS
Prior to First Public Meeting First week of October	Working Meeting #1 (PARC Orientation)	Review Board Policy 15, PARC Terms of Reference and Mandate, Staff present SIP's and Initial Staff Report
At Least 30 business days after formation of PARC Last week of November	Public Meeting #1	Present Board Policy 15; PARC Terms of Reference & Mandate; School Information Profiles; Initial Staff Report; Seek public feedback.
December to end of February	Working Meeting #2	Review feedback from Public Meeting #1 PARC;
	Working Meeting #3	Seek clarification of the Staff Report and the SIPs as needed;
	Additional Working Meetings if necessary	Provide feedback on the Initial Staff Report; PARC may discuss potential alternative options and required information.

At Least 40 business days following Public Meeting #1 <b>Early March</b>	Public meeting #2	Review Initial Staff Report; Present the proposed feedback from the PARC to the Board; Seek public feedback.
Following Public Meeting #2 <b>Late March</b>	Working Meeting #4	Review public feedback from Public Meeting #2; Possibly make revisions to the proposed PARC feedback to the Board

All meetings of the PARC will be open to the public and advertised on the Board's website.

Notice of the Public meetings will be provided through school newsletters, notices to parents sent home via the students, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers. The notices will include the date, time, location, and purpose of the meeting as well as a contact name and number. The notices of the public meetings will be provided at least 2 weeks in advance of the planned meeting date.

Meeting notes will be kept of all PARC meetings and will be posted on the Board's website.

### **3. Consultation with Local Municipal Governments**

Following the Board of Trustees' approval to undertake a pupil accommodation review, the affected single and upper-tier municipalities as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review will be invited to a meeting to discuss and comment on the recommended option(s) in the Senior Staff's Initial Report.

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

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. Board Staff will provide advance notice of when the final public meeting is scheduled to take place.

School Board Staff will document their 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

### **4. Completing the Program and Accommodation Review**

#### **4.1 Final Senior Staff Report**

At the conclusion of the PARC review process, Board Staff will submit a final staff report to the Board of Trustees at a Committee of the Whole Board meeting.

The final staff report will include a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from the PARC and any public consultations as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the pupil accommodation review.

School board staff may choose to amend their proposed option(s) included in the initial staff report. The recommended option(s) must also include a proposed accommodation plan, prepared for the decision of the Board of Trustees, which contains a timeline for implementation.

The Senior Staff's report will include as appendices the feedback from the PARC, the information package provided to the PARC, summary notes of the PARC meetings, material received by the PARC from the public discussions with affected municipalities and appropriate interested partners.

The Senior Staff's Final Report will be presented to a Committee of the Whole Board in public session not less than 10 business days after the Final Public Meeting of the PARC.

The Final Staff Report will be available to the public at the Committee meeting and posted on the Board's website on or before the commencement of the Committee meeting.

#### **4.2 Board Meeting for Public Input**

A Committee of the Whole Board will hold a meeting for public input no sooner than 10 business days following the presentation of the Senior Staff's Final Report to a Committee of the Whole Board. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the public to make formal delegations to the Board concerning the Senior Staff's Final Report. The public meeting will be scheduled at one of the affected schools.

A minimum notice of two weeks prior to the public meeting will be provided via school newsletters, letters to the school community, the Board's website and advertisements in the local community newspapers and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number.

The public may provide written input to the Director of Education, as Secretary of the Board, at any time.

#### **4.3 Decision of the Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees will be provided with the final staff report, including the compiled feedback from the public delegations, when making its final decision regarding the pupil accommodation review.

There must be no fewer than 10 business days between the public delegations and the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the recommendation(s) of the final staff report as presented, modify the recommendation(s) of the final staff report, or to approve a different outcome.

The Board will not usually make a final pupil accommodation review decision during the summer holiday period (typically from July 1 to the day after Labour Day).



## **5. The School Integration Process**

It is important that the integration of students and staff into their new school(s) is achieved in a way that is positive and supportive for the students and parents of the respective school communities. This process of integration will be carried out in consultation with parents and staff. The Director of Education will establish the Integration Committee.

### **5.1 Mandate of the Integration Committee**

The Integration Committee will plan for and implement the positive integration of students and staff affected by consolidation, closure or program relocation into their new school environment.

### **5.2 Composition of the Integration Committee**

The Integration Committee will consist of the following persons:

- A school superintendent/supervising principal;
- From each affected school:
  - i. The school principal
  - ii. The school council chairperson or designate

The Integration Committee has the authority to co-opt additional members.

### **5.3 Operation of the Integration Committee**

The Chair of the Board will appoint one trustee as the Chair of the Integration Committee. The Superintendent/Supervising Principal will function as secretary and resource person. Other resource personnel can be called upon to assist the Integration Committee.

### **5.4 Meetings of the Integration Committee**

The Integration Committee will meet as often as required.

### **5.5 School closure ceremony and funding**

The Integration Committee will determine whether a school closing ceremony is appropriate. If a closing ceremony is recommended, the Integration Committee will design the format and program.

The Principal will contact the Superintendent of Business Services to make the necessary financial arrangements and obtain a budget allocation. The Board will provide funds to schools on a case by case basis.

### **5.6 Timelines**

The Integration Committee will report to the Director of Education and through the Director to the Board of Trustees no later than February of the final year of a school on the progress of integration planning, and again no later than six months after the implementation of the consolidation.

## **MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**

In certain circumstances, where the potential pupil accommodation options available are deemed by the school board to be less complex, school boards may find it appropriate to

undertake a modified pupil accommodation review process.

The conditions for conducting a modified pupil accommodation review process need to be based on two or more of the following factors:

- distance to the nearest available school is less than 15 kilometers for elementary and less than 20 kilometers for secondary;
- utilization rate of the facility is equal to or less than 60%;
- number of students enrolled at the school is fewer than 150 for elementary schools and fewer than 350 for secondary schools; or
- when planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of a program, in which the enrolment constitutes more than or equal to 50% of the school's enrolment (this calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation, or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of school years).

Even when the criteria for a modified accommodation review are met, the Board may choose to use the standard accommodation review process.

The Limestone District School Board will follow the guiding principles and specific direction of the Ministry of Education *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines* should the Board decide to implement a modified review process.

### **EXEMPTIONS TO THE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS**

The Boards may decide not to undertake a pupil accommodation review under the following circumstances:

- where a replacement school is to be built by the school board on the existing site, or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary, as identified through the school board's policy;
- where a replacement school is to be built by the school board on the existing site, or built or acquired within the existing school attendance boundary and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students and staff during the reconstruction, as identified through the school board's policy;
- when a lease for the school is terminated;
- when a school board is planning the relocation (in any school year or over a number of school years) of grades or programs, in which the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the school's enrolment (this calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation, or the first phase of a relocation carried over a number of school years);
- when a school board is repairing or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;
- where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is over-capacity and/or is under construction or repair; or
- where there are no students enrolled at the school at any time throughout the school year.

In the above circumstances, the Limestone District School Board will provide written notice

about the proposed accommodation plans for students before a decision is made by the Board of Trustees. The Board will also hold a public meeting in the affected school to inform the community about the plans and rationale as well as receive feedback from the community prior to the decision.

Within 5 days following a decision to proceed with an exemption, notice about the approval of the exemption will be provided in writing to:

- The parents and staff of the affected school;
- The affected single and upper-tier municipalities as well as other community partners that expressed an interest prior to the pupil accommodation review of the Board's approval;
- The Director(s) of Education of their coterminous school boards and
- The Ministry of Education through the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Financial Policy and Business Division.

An integration/transition plan will be put in place following the Board of Trustees' decision to consolidate, close or move a school or students even though no Pupil Accommodation Review has been undertaken.

**APPENDIX A:** Ontario Ministry of Education, *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines*; March 2015

**APPENDIX B:** Ontario Ministry of Education, *Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process*

**Legal References:**

*Education Act, Section 8(1)26 School Closings;*  
*Section 171(1)7 Power of Boards to Close Schools;*  
*Sections 194-196 Disposal or Purchase of a School Site;*  
*Ontario Regulations 444/98 Disposition of Surplus Real Property;*  
*Ministry Guidelines: Loading Capacity*

Revised April 2017