

NUMBER:	<i>To be determined</i>
TOPIC	School Boundary Reviews
EFFECTIVE:	September 2010
CROSS-REFERENCE:	Program and Accommodation Review Committee Policy
REVIEW/REVISION DATE:	September 2011
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education Superintendent of Business Services

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board is committed to providing the best educational opportunities and learning environment for its students. Changes in student enrolment, program demands, new school construction and other factors may result in the need for changes in school boundaries.

Curriculum and programming decisions that might require school boundary changes or program relocation must take into account the needs of all of the students in all of the schools in a particular area. The Board will ensure that communities affected by boundary changes have a clear understanding of the process and the level of consultation that will take place.

The Halton District School Board is committed to a transparent process for decision-making related to program, accommodation and school boundary reviews. This Administrative Procedure outlines a framework for managing the complex issue of school boundary reviews. School boundary review processes will vary somewhat to be responsive to the unique characteristics of the review area and the needs and expectations of the community.

Long-Term Accommodation Plan

School boards are required to develop and maintain multi-year capital plans as a condition of funding for accommodation needs. Each year the Halton District School Board develops a Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP). The LTAP verifies, continues and revises the implementation of new school capital projects. The plan outlines the impact of these new capital projects on existing school communities, and the need to undertake school boundary studies. The LTAP also identifies review areas and schools where enrolment pressures will occur within the immediate future, and the need to undertake associated boundary studies.

The LTAP is a public document that is presented through a public consultation process and is key to ensuring that staff, trustees and community are aware of possible boundary reviews.

School boards must implement a public consultation process before the LTAP receives final approval by the board. Public consultation is an integral component in the preparation of a LTAP. A public consultation process serves to inform, and receive comments from school communities including parents/guardians, students, teachers and school administrators, as well as community groups and organizations, and other interested parties. Once public consultation has occurred and the trustees approve the LTAP the plan is forwarded to the Ministry of Education. School boards are required to ensure these plans reflect up-to-date enrolment projections for their schools, which identify future trends.

The LTAP will continue to be a fluid document, which will be reviewed annually in order to monitor changing enrolments, address provincial policy initiatives, and implement new capital projects.

Boundary Review Steering Committee

A Boundary Review Steering Committee is established to lead the school boundary review process. This committee may consist of but is not limited to the Family of Schools Superintendent(s) of all affected areas, Superintendent of Program, Superintendent of Business, Manager from Planning Department, and the Trustee(s) for all of the affected areas. The committee will be chaired by the school Superintendent. The Boundary Review Steering Committee will review school enrolments, school capacities and school programs. The Boundary Review Steering Committee does not make the final decision regarding boundaries. The mandate of this committee is to generate initial boundary options for consideration by a larger Boundary Review Committee. The Boundary Review Steering Committee will ultimately make a recommendation to Administrative Council and the Director to present to the Board for decision.

Boundary Review Committee

A Boundary Review Committee is established to examine the initial options generated by the Boundary Review Steering Committee and to have the opportunity to give feedback. The Boundary Review Committee will be jointly chaired by a Superintendent and a Trustee. The Boundary Review Committee will include the members of the Steering Committee as well as parent representatives from all affected communities. The Boundary Review Committee will use criteria to measure the impact and effectiveness of boundary options. Possible criteria could include but should not be limited to:

- Balance of overall enrolment in each school in the review area to maximize student access to programs, resources, and extra-curricular opportunities.
- Continuity of placement and possible relocation of regional programs within the review area
- Expansion and placement of new ministry or board programs
- Viable numbers in a dual track school to support both English and French programs
- Proximity to schools (walking distances, safe school routes, natural boundaries)
- Accommodation of students in permanent school facilities and minimal use of portable classrooms
- Stable, long-term boundaries
- Cost effectiveness of transportation
- Fiscal responsibilities
- The grand parenting of students in the graduating class
- The number of school moves students have experienced
- Keeping cohorts together
- Other criteria recommended by committee or community members

The Boundary Review Committee will review the options generated by the Boundary Review Steering Committee and will offer suggestions and revisions or suggest new options to be considered. (*see Step Two on the flowchart*) The Boundary Review Steering Committee will receive and review the feedback from the Boundary Review Committee and consider revisions or other options. (*Step Three, flow chart*).

The Boundary Review Steering Committee will decide to either inform the community of the recommended option(s) or to consult the community regarding the recommended option(s).

Informing The Community

The Boundary Review Steering Committee may decide to inform the community of the recommended option(s).

It is important to inform all stakeholders in the community. The community includes stakeholders who will be directly affected (e.g. families with children in affected schools). The community also includes stakeholders who are not directly affected but may be interested. (e.g. neighbours, daycare providers, local businesses).

Information regarding the selected option will be shared through a combination of methods: community meetings, letters to the community, website postings, school newsletters, and media releases. The Halton District School Board Planning Department maintains a question and answer forum on the Halton District School Board website related to school boundary reviews.

Consultation With The Community

The Boundary Review Steering Committee may decide to consult with the community re: the recommended option(s).

The Boundary Review Steering Committee will establish community meetings. Communication of these meetings will be provided through school newsletters, letters to the school community, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers, and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number.

The Boundary Review Steering Committee will present to the community, the preferred option(s) being considered. The community will have the opportunity to give feedback on the impact of each option. The community may suggest revisions to the criteria used to assess options or offer revisions to options presented or suggest new scenarios for the Boundary Review Steering Committee to consider.

Feedback will be requested through a combination of methods: community meetings, focus groups, website questions and answers, private and public e-mail and telephone communication with members of the committee.

The Boundary Review Committee will be invited to review feedback and consider revisions and options suggested by the community, and submit their revised recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may then amend the preferred option(s), blend components of several options or generate a new option(s). (*Step Four – flow chart*)

The Superintendent responsible for the boundary review will, on behalf of the Steering Committee, write a report with the recommended option(s). Administrative Council will review this report, and the Director will present a report to the Board for decision. The Director's report will consider the recommendation of the Boundary Review Committee, but the Director's recommendation will not be limited to those recommended by the committee. As per Board policy, delegations to the Board would occur to receive community opinion on the recommendation within the timelines outlined in the policy.

Considerations For Establishing A Consultation Process

- Which stakeholders should be involved in the consultation process?
- How will stakeholders be informed of the consultation process?
- Who will be facilitating the consultation process?
- What facilitation strategies will be used?
- What information do stakeholders require before and during the consultation process?
- What mechanisms will be used to convey information and respond to questions from community stakeholders?
- What are the barriers to participation and communication and the means to overcome those barriers?

Considerations For Consultation Meetings

- Share the current challenge facing the Board and the community.
- Share the objectives of the consultation process.
- Discuss the working rules for ensuring full participation and thorough discussion.
- Encourage all community members to work actively against any inclination for individual school communities to divide into adversarial groups.
- Share the consultation process and timelines.
- Share the assumptions and parameters upon which Planning Department generated enrolments and projections
- Share enrolment and projection data.
- Share the criteria used to assess options generated by staff.
- Share the boundary options reviewed and the benefits and challenges of each option.
- Seek input from stakeholders as to the criteria being used and the impact of each of the options.
- Seek revisions to options presented or new ideas from the community.
- Share timelines and processes for further community input, information sharing and decision-making.
- Ensure community members understand roles and responsibilities within this process e.g. superintendents, planning managers, community representatives, director and trustee.
- Clarify the decision-making process (e.g. boundary review decisions are not made at consultation meetings; are not made by one trustee but through collective discussion and decision-making at Board meetings).

Integration

It is important 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 and neighbourhoods. This process of integration should be carried out in consultation with parents and staff. The Superintendent will establish an Integration Committee immediately following the final decision on school boundaries and program placement.

The Integration Committee will plan for and implement the positive integration of students and staff affected by the boundary decision and a relocation into their new school environment. The appropriate Superintendent of Education would act as the Chair of the Integration Committee.

The Integration Committee will consist of the following persons:

- the appropriate School Superintendent;
- the school principals from affected schools
- the trustee
- the school council chair or designate
- other members the committee feels are required.
- other resource personnel can be invited to assist the committee