

<b>Policy Statement</b>	
	<b>Commission scolaire Western Québec</b> <b>Western Québec School Board</b>
<b>Policy No. C-25</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Continued Operation or Closure of Schools and Other Changes Made to the Educational Services Provided in a School</b>
<b>Approval Date:</b> December 13, 2000	<b>Resolution No:</b> C-00/01-107
<b>Revision Date:</b> January 11, 2012	<b>Resolution No:</b> C-11/12-254
<b>Revision Date:</b> September 23, 2014	<b>Resolution No:</b> C-14/15-19
<b>Origin:</b> Corporate Committee	

### 1. OBJECTIVE

As required by Section 212 of the *Education Act* (Annex A), this policy is adopted to establish a public consultation process relating to:

- a) The continued operation or closure of schools
- b) Changes to the level of instruction provided by a school, or to cycles or parts of cycles of the level of instruction, and on the cessation of preschool education services provided by a school (herein described as a “major change”)

### 2. POLICY

The School Board’s primary mandate is to provide educational programmes and services in suitable facilities. Furthermore, the Board shall implement the consolidation of school enrolment where reorganization is considered to be educationally advantageous and economically viable. Where a consolidation of school enrolment results in the possibility of school closure(s), the Board shall consider alternatives. These alternatives may include realignment of school structures and programmes, and a consideration of all possible funding sources.

### 3. DIRECTIVES

#### Planning Review

At the request of the Board, a Planning and Review Committee shall be established.

The Planning and Review Committee shall ensure that a planning review is undertaken of any or all of the Board’s school facilities.

The Planning and Review Committee shall be composed of all elected commissioners of the Board who volunteer to be a member of the Committee when it is formed, including the Chair. All commissioners will be entitled to attend meetings of the Planning and Review Committee.

The Board Chair will also chair the meetings of the Planning and Review Committee. All rules of conduct that apply for Board meetings will also apply for meetings of the Planning and Review Committee.

The Planning and Review Committee may, at any time, invite members of the public, members of governing boards potentially affected, and any other body to attend any of its meetings to assist it in its decision-making process.

The planning review shall include, but not be limited to, the following general considerations:

- a) **Demographic Projections** - As provided by the MELS for the Board, and their financial implications for the Board.
- b) **Programme Viability** – Declining enrolment is jeopardizing the school’s ability to meet the educational programme needs of its students.
- c) **Low Occupancy** - The enrolment of a school has fallen below capacity and enrolment projections confirm little, no, or declining growth patterns.
- d) **Structural Condition** – Economic factors require a study of the school’s long-term operation (e.g., fire safety requirements, mechanical condition, absence of programme facilities, etc.).
- e) **Logistical Considerations - Practical Alternatives** – The distance students would have to travel in the event of the closure of a community school and the availability of space in neighboring schools.

The planning review may recommend that a school or schools should be identified for potential closure or major change based on a review of all, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- a) Continuing declining or low enrolment
- b) Existing facilities for specialized activities available to the school
- c) Per-pupil operating and maintenance costs
- d) Need to organize classes containing more than one year level and/or difficulty level in order to preserve courses
- e) Based on school population, when there is insufficient staff allocation to provide the required secondary school programming, and to meet contractual teaching and supervision requirements

### **Process (See Annex B)**

- 1) In the event that the Planning and Review Committee recommends that a school or school(s) be identified for potential closure or major change, it shall make that recommendation at a meeting of the Council of Commissioners. Such recommendation shall request that specific school(s) be identified for potential closure or major change and that a report be prepared by the Planning and Review Committee to consider the ramifications of such proposed closure or major change.

- 2) If the Board identifies a school for potential closure or major change, a public consultation process will be initiated by a public notice of at least one consultation meeting, to be issued:
  - a) Between January 1 and July 1 of the year preceding the year during which the school would be closed, (e.g., if a school is to be closed for the 2025-2026 school year, the notice must be issued prior to July 1, 2024), or
  - b) Between January 1 and April 1 of the year preceding the year during which a major change would be made, (e.g., if there is a proposed major change for the 2025-2026 school year, the notice must be issued prior to April 1, 2025).

The public notice will indicate the place where relevant information on the project particularly its budgetary and educational impact may be consulted and additional information be obtained.

The Chair of the Board and the commissioner of the electoral division concerned shall be present at the public consultation meeting(s).

It shall be the responsibility of the Director General to:

- a) Ensure that the Principal(s), staff, staff associations, Parents' Committee, Governing Board(s), Municipal Bodies, and parents of all children and students of full age that would be affected by the proposed closure or major change, are informed of the public consultation meeting(s).
  - b) Make arrangements for the public consultation meeting(s) and ensure that appropriate members of Senior Administration are present to review the recommendations and explain the procedures as they relate to school closures or major changes.
- 3) The Planning and Review Committee shall consider specifically, but is not limited to, the following factors in preparing its report to the Board:
    - a) The effects the proposed closure or major change could have on students
    - b) Course selection and program implications for each of the schools involved
    - c) School boundaries
    - d) Enrolment projections
    - e) The need for and extent of transportation
    - f) The effect on the social environment of the community
    - g) The financial impact, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications
    - h) The capital needs of other schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of closure or modified organization
    - i) The effects on staffing
    - j) Opportunities for alternative use of facilities
  - 4) The Planning and Review Committee will have the responsibility and the authority to review all appropriate data. The Planning and Review Committee:
    - a) Shall receive briefs and/or delegations of concerned citizens regarding the school(s) identified by the Board as candidate (s) for potential closure or major change, and

- b) Shall present its final report to the Board within sixty (60) days of the last public consultation meeting and, based on the factors outlined in section 3), indicate whether or not the school(s) identified for potential closure or major change should be closed or made subject to major change, specifying the reasons for such recommendations.
- 5) The Chair of the Board, as recommended by the Planning and Review Committee, shall give notice of motion of the action recommended. The Board shall establish the date of a Special Board meeting, to be held between the 15th and the 30th day following the notice of motion, to consider the action(s) recommended by the Planning and Review Committee.

It shall be the responsibility of the Director General to advise in writing the Principal(s), staff, staff associations, Parents' Committee, Governing Board(s), Municipal Bodies, and parents of all children and students of full age that would be affected by the proposed closure or major change of the date of the Special Board meeting, at which time the Board will receive any concerned member of the public who wishes to address the Board on the matter.

- 6) The Board, at the Special Meeting convened for that purpose, shall consider the Planning and Review Committee's report and recommendations, and take one of the following actions with respect to each school identified for potential closure or major change:
  - a) That the school be scheduled for closure or major change
  - b) That the school be removed from consideration for closure or major change
- 7) If the Board determines that a school is to be closed, or that a major change is to occur, it shall be the responsibility of the Director General to take all steps required to implement the Board's decision.

*Education Act*

**212.** Subject to any policy directions the Minister may establish and after holding a public consultation and consulting the parents' committee, the school board shall adopt a policy on:

- (1) the continued operation or closure of schools; and
- (2) changes to the level of instruction provided by a school, or to cycles or parts of cycles of the level of instruction, and on the cessation of preschool education services provided by a school.

The policy must include a public consultation process, to take place prior to any change, which must provide for:

- (1) the consultation timetable;
- (2) the manner in which the public, and more particularly the parents and the students of full age concerned, are to be informed, including the place where relevant information on the project, particularly its budgetary and educational impact, may be consulted by any person interested, and the place where additional information may be obtained;
- (3) at least one public consultation meeting and the related procedure; and
- (4) the presence at the consultation meetings of the chairman of the school board and the commissioner of the electoral division concerned.

The policy must also specify that the public consultation process must start with a public notice of the consultation meeting, to be issued

- (1) not later than 1 July of the year preceding the year during which the school would be closed; or
- (2) not later than 1 April of the year preceding the year during which a change under subparagraph 2 of the first paragraph would be made.

*(Last modified 2006, c. 51, s. 100)*

# PLANNING AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (PRC)

## Process for identification of schools for closure or major change

