

## **CREATING SCHOOL POPULATIONS**

### **POLICY**

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#### **PREAMBLE**

This policy is intended to address the Halifax Regional School Board's responsibility with respect to establishing individual school populations. The Halifax Regional School Board will be guided by the goal of creating the best possible learning environments for all students.

This policy is intended to address school placement for all students in all programs.

#### **1.0 ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES**

1.1 The Halifax Regional School Board will establish boundaries for each school neighbourhood. Residence, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as the residence of the student's parents or if the student has a legal guardian appointed, pursuant to an Order of the Court or by operation of law, then the residence of such guardian.

1.1.1 Every school has the responsibility to accommodate, whenever possible, all students whose residence is within the neighbourhood of the school as defined by the Halifax Regional School Board.

1.1.2 The Superintendent in consultation with the School Administration Department has the right to assign a student to any school located in the Halifax Regional School Board.

1.1.3 The Superintendent in consultation with the School Administration Department, may on application made by or on behalf of any student, deem such a student to be a resident in a place other than where the student's parent or legal guardian is a resident.

1.1.4 The board may periodically review any or all school boundaries.

## **2.0 STUDENT REGISTRATION**

- 2.1 All students living within the boundaries of the board must register at the school serving the neighbourhood in which they reside by March 1 of each calendar year for September of the next school year.
- 2.1.1 Subject to the *Education Act*, students must have reached their fifth birthday on or before December 31 to register for Grade Primary.
- 2.1.2 A child who registers for a French Immersion program at the neighbourhood school will be accommodated in the program, but not necessarily at the neighbourhood school.
- 2.1.2.1 All residents who live in an area of eligibility for the elementary level may register in the Early French Immersion program.
- 2.1.2.2 All residents who live in an area of eligibility for the junior high level may register in the Late French Immersion program.
- 2.1.3 At the request of parents and legal guardians, a student who moves into an area of eligibility for an Early French Immersion program will be placed in the program if:
- 2.1.3.1 The student has been enrolled in Grade Primary in the same or similar program in another board and has completed at least one full assessment period in that program; or
- 2.1.3.2 The student has successfully completed Grade 7 and Grade 8 of a Late French Immersion program and no Late French Immersion program is available; and
- 2.1.3.3 The school can accommodate the student.
- 2.2 Students may be assigned to other schools in the board.
- 2.2.1 Where a student registers for an Early or Late French Immersion program and cannot be accommodated at the designated French Immersion school, placement will be determined by the School Administration Department in consultation with school principals.
- 2.2.2 Where a principal requests an alternative placement for a student within the board, accommodation will be determined by the School Administration Department in consultation with school principals.
- 2.2.3 Where it is necessary to limit the enrollment or projected enrollment of a

school or schools to prevent excessive crowding, the capping of enrollment of these schools(s) may be required. When capping occurs, other school(s) will be identified as receiving school(s) to accommodate students.

2.2.4 The responsibility for transportation is in accordance with *A.011 Student Transportation Policy*.

### **3.0 OUT-OF-AREA REQUEST**

3.1 Parents and legal guardians may seek placements for students in a school outside their neighbourhood.

3.1.1 Students may be permitted to attend a school outside their neighbourhood if adequate accommodation is available.

3.1.2 Students will be responsible for their own transportation.

3.1.3 The board will not incur additional costs as a result of the placement.

3.1.4 Younger siblings of students who have been accepted for an out-of-area placement will be given priority.

### **4.0 OUT-OF-AREA REQUEST – OUTSIDE OF REGIONAL BOARD**

4.1 Students living outside the board, and wishing to attend school within the board may apply through the office of the Coordinator – School Administration prior to April 30.

4.2 The Superintendent in consultation with the School Administration Department may, under certain circumstances, negotiate the transfer of a student to another school board.

### **5.0 AUTHORIZATION**

5.1 The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement procedures in support of this policy.

## CREATING SCHOOL POPULATIONS

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#### 1.0 REPORT TO THE BOARD REGARDING ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES

- 1.1 As, where and when required, the Superintendent will recommend to the board schools to be considered for a boundary review.
- 1.2 Where the board approves a boundary review, the Superintendent will establish a Boundary Review Committee.
- 1.3 Where the board approves a review of a school, schools, or a designated area of schools for possible permanent closure, the Review Committee for Permanent Closure will also serve as a Boundary Review Committee.

#### 2.0 BASIS FOR THE BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 2.1 A boundary review process will be recommended for the following reasons:
  - 2.1.1 To respond to changes in demographics;

- 2.1.2 To respond to the permanent closure of a school;
- 2.1.3 To respond to new school construction and other conditions that may be identified by the Superintendent.

### **3.0 NOTICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

- 3.1 Subsequent to approval by the board of a boundary review, public notice will be given through an advertisement appearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the areas served by the potentially affected schools.
- 3.2 Such public notice will include:
  - 3.2.1 The schools potentially affected by the boundary review;
  - 3.2.2 The announcement of the formation of the Boundary Review Committee;
  - 3.2.3 The timeline and general parameters for the boundary review;
  - 3.2.4 Notification that the Boundary Review Committee will hold a public meeting at a future time and place for the purpose of receiving input from the public;
  - 3.2.5 A contact name and number for further information.

### **4.0 FORMATION OF THE BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 The Superintendent will appoint a Facilitator to work with the Boundary Review Committee throughout the boundary review process.
- 4.2 The Facilitator will initially serve as the interim Chair of the Boundary Review Committee for the first scheduled meeting and/or until such time as the Boundary Review Committee appoints a Chair from its membership.
- 4.3 Where the board has identified schools for a boundary review, the Superintendent will invite the School Advisory Councils from each of the schools potentially affected, to appoint one (1) member to the Boundary Review Committee, who is not an employee of the board, to act on behalf of the School Advisory Council.
- 4.4 Where, in the opinion of the Superintendent, additional committee members

are required to represent points of view not represented by the School Advisory Council, such appointees, who are not employees of the board, will be appointed to the Boundary Review Committee by the Superintendent.

- 4.5 Where, after initial Boundary Review Committee deliberations, the Boundary Review Committee expands the scope of its review to include schools not represented in the initial formation of the committee, the Superintendent will invite the School Advisory Council of the additional school/s to appoint one member/s to the Boundary Review Committee, who is not an employee of the board, to serve on the Boundary Review Committee.
- 4.6 Principals, or their designate, of schools potentially affected by the boundary review are members of the Boundary Review Committee.

## **5.0 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 The Chair will ensure that action notes and attendance are kept for each meeting of the Boundary Review Committee.
- 5.2 The Facilitator will provide the Boundary Review Committee with data on enrollment patterns, demographic trends, development prospects, transportation information, facility assessments, and any other data considered relevant by the Facilitator.
- 5.3 The Facilitator will present boundary scenarios for consideration by the Boundary Review Committee, as prepared by the Halifax Regional School Board Planning Department.
- 5.4 The Facilitator will assist in the development of additional scenarios suggested by the Boundary Review Committee.
- 5.5 The Boundary Review Committee members will individually evaluate the scenarios presented with reference to Section 6.0 below.
- 5.6 The combined evaluations will be used to determine the preferred scenario and this scenario will be the Interim Boundary Proposal.
- 5.7 The Chair, with the support of the Facilitator, will hold a public meeting for the purpose of explaining the Interim Boundary Proposal and providing opportunity for public input.
- 5.8 Adequate notice of the public meeting (minimum of six days) will be given through an advertisement appearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the areas served by the affected schools. Such public notice will include

the Interim Boundary Proposal.

- 5.9 Members of the public will be given opportunity by the Chair to respond to the Interim Boundary Proposal by addressing the public meeting and/or responding to the Boundary Review Committee in writing.
- 5.10 The Chair will reconvene the Boundary Review Committee to consider the public input. After consideration of the public input, if, in the view of the Boundary Review Committee, their Interim Boundary Proposal has been altered enough to warrant further public consultation, then the steps outlined in Sections 5.7 through 5.9 would be repeated.
- 5.11 The Boundary Review Committee will consider the input from the public, prepare its final report, and advance it to the Superintendent.
- 5.12 The Superintendent will refer the Boundary Review Committee's report to the board with a recommendation.
- 5.13 Upon receipt of the Boundary Review Committee's report and the Superintendent's recommendation, the board will determine boundaries for the affected schools.

## **6.0 DELIBERATIONS OF THE BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 When evaluating the various scenarios the Boundary Review Committee will reference:
  - 6.1.1 Long-term viability;
  - 6.1.2 Potential enrollment growth;
  - 6.1.3 Use of space that is disused due to enrollment decline;
  - 6.1.4 The optimum utilization of facilities;
  - 6.1.5 The board's policy *C.010 Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding, and Human Rights in Learning* that promotes principles that value and celebrate diversity;
  - 6.1.6 The impact on the affected students and communities;
  - 6.1.7 The impact on the delivery of programs;
  - 6.1.8 The Family of Schools structure of the board;
  - 6.1.9 The clarity and consistency of the proposed boundary;
  - 6.1.10 Student transportation and safety.

## **7.0 STUDENT REGISTRATION**

- 7.1 By February 1 of each school year, all principals will inform parents of registration guidelines.
- 7.2 By the end of the first week of February, advertisements will be placed in major local media.
- 7.3 At the time of registration for the Grade Primary, parents/guardians must present the child's birth certificate.
- 7.4 By the end of the first week of April, principals will inform parents/guardians as to the placement of students registered for French Immersion.

## **8.0 FRENCH IMMERSION REGISTRATION**

- 8.1 The entry point for the Early French Immersion program is Grade Primary.
- 8.2 The entry point for the Late French Immersion program is Grade 7.
- 8.3 Parents/guardians are directed to the principal of the neighbourhood school to register for the French Immersion program and to obtain information regarding eligibility for French Immersion (Early or Late) programs.
- 8.4 A student accommodated at a designated French Immersion school will return to the neighbourhood school upon the decision to move to the English program or has the option to apply to remain through the Out-of-Area process.
- 8.5 Students who register for French Immersion will be accommodated in the designated French Immersion school where enrollment permits.
- 8.6 When all registered students cannot be accommodated at their designated school for French Immersion, the place of residence and existing transportation routes will determine the placement of students in neighbouring French Immersion sites.

## **9.0 FRENCH IMMERSION REGISTRATION AFTER MARCH 1**

- 9.1 Parents/guardians are directed to the principal of their neighbourhood school to register for the English program and to obtain information regarding eligibility for French Immersion (Early or Late) programs.

- 9.2 If the parent/guardian's primary residence makes the student eligible for the French Immersion (Early or Late) program requested, the principal will forward information regarding the French Immersion placement requested to the School Administration Department. Placement for those students registering after March 1 is not guaranteed by board policy.
- 9.3 The School Administration Department will contact the principal of the neighbourhood school where the student is registered with the information regarding the placement.
- 9.4 If the student can be placed at this time, the principal of the neighbourhood school will provide the information to the parent/guardian and transfer the registration information to the principal of the designated French Immersion school.
- 9.5 The principal of the designated French Immersion school will register the student and, if the student is eligible for transportation under board policy, will provide the necessary information to the Co-ordinator – Pupil Transportation.
- 9.6 If the parent/guardian's primary residence does not make the student eligible for the French Immersion (Early or Late) program being requested, the parent/guardian can subsequently pursue the Out-of-Area Request process to attempt to access placement in a French Immersion program.

## **10.0 STUDENTS ENTERING PRIMARY FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

- 10.1 Students beginning public school following a year in private school need to be assessed to ascertain if appropriate placement is Grade Primary or Grade 1.
- 10.2 Identification takes place in January/February for a student who will have completed a year of schooling in a private school setting in June of same year.
- 10.3 Assessment of the student takes place during the month of May.
- 10.4 Final placement of the student by the school principal takes place in late May/early June in consultation with school personnel and parents taking into consideration the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of the student.

## **11.0 CAPPING SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

- 11.1 When a school's enrollment is capped, students new to the neighbourhood will be assigned to a receiving school. The receiving school will have sufficient space and facilities to provide its own students and additional students from another area with a complete program.
- 11.2 When a school's enrollment is capped, the Planning Department will notify, in writing, developers and realty companies affected by the capping action.
- 11.3 When a school has been designated as a receiving school, this will be communicated in an appropriate manner to the receiving school community.

## **12.0 STUDENTS CHANGING RESIDENCE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**

- 12.1 It is expected that students will transfer to their new neighbourhood school once they have re-located.
- 12.2 If there is a request to delay this transfer, it is the responsibility of the current principal to decide what is in the best interest of the student and to confirm the decision in writing to the parent(s) of the student involved.
- 12.3 In cases where a relocated student is permitted to remain to complete the year, the principal should forward this information to the receiving school's principal.

## **13.0 SEMESTERED SCHOOLS**

- 13.1 Student transfers to semestered schools at mid-year will be permitted on the recommendation of the sending and receiving principals.

## **14.0 OUT-OF-AREA REQUEST – WITHIN REGIONAL BOARD**

- 14.1 Parents must secure an Out-of-Area Request Form from the neighbourhood school at which the student is currently registered signed by the school principal.
- 14.2 Out-of-Area Request Forms must be forwarded by the parents/guardians to the school to which the transfer is requested on or after April 1.
- 14.3 The principal of the school to which the transfer is requested will process requests in the order in which they are received. All requests must be

processed by June 30 of the year of the transfer.

- 14.4 The transfer request will be considered by the principal of the school to which the transfer is requested based upon the nature of the receiving class and available resources in the school.
- 14.5 Once a student's Out-of-Area Request Form has been approved, re-application is not required for subsequent years.
- 14.6 Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation.

#### **15.0 OUT-OF-AREA REQUEST – OUTSIDE OF REGIONAL BOARD**

- 15.1 Out-of-Area Requests to the board must be made in writing by the parent/guardian to the Coordinator – School Administration by April 30 of each year.
- 15.2 Out-of-Area Requests to the board will be processed by June 30 of the year of the transfer.
- 15.3 Parents/guardians requesting a transfer are responsible for transportation.

#### **16.0 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- 16.1 Admission of international students will be accommodated by the board's protocols and procedures governing the admission of international students.