

School Boundary Review(s)

Administrative Procedure

Topic:	School Boundary Review(s)
Status:	Active
Effective:	September 2016
Revision Date:	June 2024
Review Date:	September 2026
Responsibility:	General Manager of Planning Superintendent of Facility Services and Planning

1. INTENDED PURPOSE:

When the Board anticipates that a school facility will exceed its maximum capacity, or there is a need to accommodate fluctuations in student enrollment or program demands, the Board must consider a change in a school's boundaries, program boundaries, and/or a temporary redirection of students.

This Administrative Procedure is intended to outline the process by which the Board will determine school boundaries and attendance areas, in accordance with its authority under Section 171 (1)7 of the Education Act¹.

The Board is committed to undertaking boundary reviews and temporary redirections in a fair and transparent manner, as outlined in the paragraphs that follow.

¹ "A Board may ...(7) determine the number and kind of schools to be established and maintained and the attendance area for each school, and close schools in accordance with policies established by the board from guidelines issued by the Minister."

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2. REQUIREMENTS, TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

A. Boundary Review Process

A Boundary Review Process is initiated following the Board of Trustee approval of a staff recommendation that a school boundary review is necessary, and involves a formal review of a school's or multiple schools' catchment area(s) and/or a formal review of a program catchment area, and may result in a boundary realignment to re-balance enrolment and overall facility utilization. A Boundary Review Process may proceed by one of two pathways, each of which is described below.

B. Boundary Review Steering Committee ("BRSC")

A Boundary Review Process commences with the formation of a BRSC. The role of a BRSC is to review and discuss the information and data generated by Board staff relating to the affected school areas.

A BRSC shall make recommendations to the Director regarding the following:

1. Whether the Boundary Review Process should proceed by either:
 - 1.1. **Pathway #1:** Establishment of a Boundary Review Committee to engage in community consultation prior to a recommendation to the Director, presentation to Board and opportunities for community delegations, and final approval by the Board of Trustees; or
 - 1.2. **Pathway #2:** A BRSC recommendation to the Director, presentation to Board and opportunities for community delegations, and final approval by the Board of Trustees.
2. Which schools should be part of the Boundary Review Process; and
3. The BRSC's final preferred option(s) for a boundary change.

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A BRSC does not make any final decisions, but in developing recommendations for the Director and in providing support to a Pathway #1 Boundary Review Committee, it will consider:

1. school historical and projected school enrolments;
2. facility statistics;
3. school program offerings;
4. transportation requirements;
5. temporary accommodation needs;
6. future planning and school initiatives;
7. municipal planning initiatives that may impact local neighbourhoods; and,
8. preliminary school boundary options developed by Facility Services and Planning.

BRSC membership is outlined in **Appendix A**.

C. Boundary Review Committee ("BRC")

A Boundary Review Committee shall be established if the Director determines that a Pathway #1 process should be undertaken.

A BRC's role is to:

1. Examine the initial boundary options generated by the BRSC;
2. Provide detailed feedback to the BRSC on the initial options, request modifications if necessary from the BRSC, and/or request additional options for review;
3. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of each option presented by the BRSC, taking into account the Boundary Review Criteria outlined below, and any additional criteria considered appropriate under the circumstances;

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4. Participate in the community consultation process, as further described below;
5. Model consensus decision-making and constructive discussion and debate; and,
6. Identify one or more preferred options, based on community input, and submit to the BRSC to be considered for recommendation to the Director of Education.

BRC membership is outlined in **Appendix B**.

D. Boundary Review Criteria

A BRSC and BRC must consider the following criteria when identifying options for a boundary change:

1. **Geographic Area and Barriers:** Can boundaries comprised of multiple Zones that are geographically contiguous be created, taking into account any physical barriers (natural or constructed)?
2. **Viability of Program:** Can the number of students required to offer and maintain a program in an educationally sound and fiscally responsible way be maintained?
3. **Proximity to schools:** Are there opportunities for maximizing walk-to schools, safe school routes, and incorporating natural boundaries into the proposed options? Can transportation requirements and costs be minimized?
4. **Balance of overall enrolment:** Is student access to programs, resources, and extracurricular opportunities optimal? Is over and underutilization of buildings avoided to the extent possible, reducing where possible the use of portable classrooms in the short, medium and/or long-term?

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5. **Stable, long-term boundaries:** Do the projections show long-term stability and result in avoiding the need for additional boundary changes in the short term?
6. **Student Experience:** Can the number of school moves students have experienced be minimized? Can cohorts/families be kept together? What strategies can be employed to improve the transition of students resulting from a boundary review process?
7. **Other:** Any other criteria recommended by the BRSC or BRC.

E. Catchment Areas/School Boundaries

A school catchment area, and its boundary, is a delineated geographical area that represents the official attendance boundary for a particular school and/or program identifying where students are to receive their educational instruction.

F. Holding Area

A holding area is a newly developing neighbourhood, still under construction, where some students have begun to reside. The holding area acts as a temporary school boundary. Students are directed to attend a Holding School pending construction of a new school.

G. Holding School

A school may be designated as a Holding School where students within a Holding Area attend temporarily, until such time as the permanent home school in the community is constructed or ready to accommodate them.

H. Long Term Accommodation Plan ("LTAP")

The LTAP is an annually reviewed planning tool that provides enrolment projections and school facility information to guide accommodation planning

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needs and actions over a 15-year time period. The LTAP is approved by the Board of Trustees in principle, and may include recommendations for boundary reviews, temporary community redirections, future space reduction initiatives, and/or program reviews.

I. Regional, Municipal, Alternative, & Special Education Programs:

Regional, Municipal, and Alternative Programs, serve students throughout the jurisdiction of the HDSB. The location of these programs and the determination of their catchment areas/boundaries are an operational matter determined by Administrative Council.

The determination of catchment areas/boundaries are not subject to the Boundary Review processes and pathways, but instead are an operational matter determined by the Administrative Council. Decisions on these programs are based on the recommendations of the Superintendents responsible for the program on their preferred and optimal location and their overall catchment areas.

Note that Special Education Self Contained programs are governed by the ["Self-Contained Classes"](#) Administrative Procedure.

J. Temporary Redirection

A Temporary Redirection of students to schools outside of their local catchment areas is triggered when a particular school or multiple schools have reached capacity and cannot accommodate more students, or an unanticipated event occurs which affects the capacity of a school. A Temporary Redirection is not a Boundary Review Process.

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K. Zones

Delineated geographical areas within a school boundary, determined by neighbourhood, geographic boundaries, and/or physical boundaries, may be designated as Zones for planning purposes, to aid in the creation of school boundary options.

3. BOUNDARY REVIEW PATHWAYS

Following the Board of Trustee approval of the initiation of a Boundary Review Process, the Director shall establish a BRSC and appoint committee members, as outlined at Appendix A.

The BRSC shall determine which schools shall be included in the Boundary Review Process, and whether a Pathway #1 or Pathway #2 process is most appropriate.

A. Pathway #1: Consultation with the Community

A BRSC shall recommend a Pathway #1 process when the scope of a boundary review is complex, requires consideration of several viable options, and/or will impact a number of students and/or school communities, and it would not be appropriate to make a decision without public consultation.

If a Pathway #1 process is to be employed, a Boundary Review Committee shall be established, in accordance with Appendix B. The BRC shall consider the boundary realignment options proposed by the BRSC, and may make recommendations to the BRSC regarding the preferred options that will be presented for community consultation.

The BRC will host at least one Public Information Meeting ("PIM") to present the option(s) and solicit community feedback. Public feedback will be also

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collected through an online feedback survey developed by Board staff, and through a temporary email address created for the purpose.

The BRC will review the community input gathered from the PIM survey, the email address, and the public meeting(s), and consider whether any proposed revisions to the option(s) should be adopted. The BRC will then present its recommendations to the BRSC.

The BRSC will consider the BRC's recommendations and will present its final preferred option to the Director, who may adopt or amend the recommended option.

The Director in consultation with Administrative Council will develop a final recommendation for approval by the Board of Trustees.

Notwithstanding the PIM and other means of community input, the public may in addition delegate at a Regular Meeting of the Board, in accordance with the Board's Delegation Policy.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the option as presented by the Director or make adjustments based on the information available to them from the Boundary Review Process and/or the community.

B. Pathway #2: Informing the Community

Pathway #2 exists for unique circumstances when there are limited possible boundary options to review, and a lesser impact on school communities as a result of the contemplated boundary changes. Pathway #2 is not designed for use in establishing a boundary for a newly constructed school.

In a Pathway #2 process, the BRSC will review the data, Boundary Review Criteria and initial options prepared by Facility Services and Planning Staff, and may request modifications and or additional options for consideration. Once

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the BRSC has developed a recommended option, it will be presented to the Director, who will consult with Administrative Counsel.

The Director's recommendation will be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration and final approval. For clarification, the Director has the authority to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees that is not consistent with what is preferred by the BRSC.

Members of the public may delegate to the Board of Trustees at a Regular Meeting of the Board regarding the recommended option, in accordance with the Board's Delegation Policy.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to approve the option presented by the Director, or an alternate version thereof.

4. TEMPORARY REDIRECTION

A Temporary Redirection process is initiated by Facility Services and Planning and the affected Family of Schools Superintendent, in consultation with school administration, Halton Student Transportation Services, and Human Resources staff.

A Temporary Redirection shall be considered when:

1. Time is of the essence and a full boundary review cannot be undertaken in the time span required due to the school reaching maximum capacity;
2. A short-term need prior to the anticipated completion of a formal boundary review process and/or the opening of a new school community;
3. An act of nature and/or an incident has impacted a school's ability to accommodate students; and/or

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4. Other circumstances have occurred that prevent a school from accommodating additional student enrolment.

Only students registering for the first time at the school, or attempting to transfer back to the school, (e.g. demitting from French Immersion and returning to the redirected English boundary) will be affected by a Temporary Redirection, except where safety concerns must be taken into account. Transportation will be provided based on the Board's current Transportation Policy.

The Family of Schools Superintendent of affected school communities, in collaboration with the General Manager of Planning, shall prepare a report with a recommended option to the Director of Education for consideration and approval.

The Director of Education, in consultation with the Administrative Council is responsible for determining whether a Temporary Redirection is necessary. The Director's decision shall be presented to the Board of Trustees for information, and affected communities shall be notified of the changes.

A Temporary Redirection will end when the impacted school can accommodate its local population and/or a formal boundary review occurs. Note that in some instances, the status of a Temporary Redirections may change, where they can be amended, suspended, and/or reinstated as they are reviewed annually.

5. CHANGES TO REGIONAL, MUNICIPAL, AND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM CATCHMENT AREAS/BOUNDARIES

Changes to catchment areas/boundaries of Regional, Municipal and/or Alternative Programs are an operational matter initiated by the Superintendents responsible for the program(s), and are presented to the

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Administrative Council as information and/or approval, pending the requirements of other in-effect Administrative Procedures.

If Administrative Council approval is required for catchment area/boundary changes, the Superintendent of the affected program(s), shall prepare a report with a recommended option to the Director of Education for consideration and approval.

The responsible Superintendents, or the Director of Education in consultation with the Administrative Council, is responsible for determining whether to implement proposed changes. Affected communities shall be notified of the changes once implemented.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Communication regarding a Boundary Review Process will be shared through a combination of methods including, but not limited to: website posts, notification banners, media news releases, social media posts, and Home Notification systems (School Messenger).

The Board shall notify the following individuals that a Boundary Review Process or Temporary Redirection has been initiated:

1. Those who may be directly affected (e.g., families with children in affected schools);
2. Those who may not be directly affected but may have expressed an interest in the outcome of the review process (e.g., daycare/before and after care providers, feeder schools, local community groups); and,

Where possible, the development community shall also be apprised of a Boundary Review Process and the final approved boundaries and/or Temporary Redirections.

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Facility Services and Planning will create, maintain and update a dedicated Boundary Review Process website page, which will include the following:

1. Board report recommending the boundary review;
2. This Administrative Procedure;
3. Communication releases;
4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs);
5. All options reviewed by the Boundary Review Committee;
6. Preferred and recommended options;
7. Transportation Eligibility Distance maps for affected schools;
8. Presentations made to the BRC and Public Meetings, and meeting notes;
9. Timelines and upcoming milestones; and,
10. Final Board Report and Recommendation.

The above noted content will be retained on the Board website for no less than five (5) years from the date of the full implementation of the Board's decision.

7. MEETING PROTOCOLS

Meetings for the BRSC, BRC, and Public Information Meetings may be held in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format, as the respective committee may determine.

A meeting is considered properly constituted if a majority of committee members are present, in person and/or by electronic means.

Only BRSC members may attend BRSC meetings, except as invited by the Chair.

Only BRC members may participate in BRC meetings, but interested members of the public may view in person through video recordings posted at a later

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time, or if the meeting is virtual, may view the live stream (if one is available), or access the recorded video that will be available on the Boundary Review Website.²

A member of the Facility Services and Planning team will provide an agenda and complete minutes of BRC meetings, which shall also be posted on the Board's Boundary Review website page once approved by the BRC.

The following norms shall prevail during meetings:

1. Respect the consensus decision-making model;
2. Recognize individual views and beliefs;
3. Balance advocacy for a position with inquiry to understanding another point of view;
4. Communicate ideas positively – be hard on the issues but soft on the people;
5. Trust the intentions and integrity of others;
6. Engage in a collaborative process;
7. Build a safe and inclusive “risk-free” environment.

PIM's shall be open to the public. The co-chairs of the BRC and invited presenters, including the parent members of the BRC, may address the following topics:

1. Background of the study
2. The process undertaken to date
3. Introduction of BRSC and BRC members
4. The preferred option(s) proposed by the BRC

² Note that observers will not have the ability to view breakout sessions among the BRC members, but after breakout sessions are completed, each group will provide a recap of their discussions. Breakout summaries will also make up part of the minutes of the meeting, which are shared publicly.

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5. Questions as submitted by the public
6. Feedback Survey information
7. Next Steps

Parent members of the BRC will be encouraged to share their perspective on the Boundary Review Process and the work of the committee, including its analysis of the proposed options.

8. INTEGRATION COMMITTEE

Following every decision to relocate students, an Integration Committee will be struck, and will be responsible for planning and executing the successful integration of students and staff who will be moving to a new school. The Superintendent(s) of Education for the family of schools where the students will be moving will serve as the Chair(s) of the Integration Committee.

The Integration Committee may consist of the following:

1. The affected School Superintendent(s), who shall serve as Chair;
2. The school administrators of the affected schools;
3. The trustee(s) for the affected schools;
4. The school council chair(s) or designate(s) from affected schools;
5. Additional members, at the discretion of the Integration Committee
6. Board staff may act as a resource to support the work of the Integration Committee.

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Reference number: Pending

Cross-Reference:

Legislation

[Ontario Education Act](#)

Ministry Policy & Program Memoranda

N/A

Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols

[Program and Accommodation Review Policy](#)

[School Naming Governance Procedure](#)

[Self-Contained Classes Administrative Procedure](#)

Revision History

- June 2024: Administrative Procedure Update Report 24090
- September 2023
- September 2019

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APPENDIX A

Boundary Review Steering Committee Membership

A BRSC will consist of the following members:

1. Family of Schools Superintendent(s) of affected study area under review, who shall act as co-chair.
2. Family of Schools Superintendent of a non-affected study area, appointed by the Director of Education.
3. Trustee(s) from each of the affected study areas.
4. One Trustee of a non-affected study area, appointed by the Board of Trustees
5. General Manager of Planning Services, who shall act as co-chair, and additional Planning Staff as appropriate to the circumstances.
6. A representative from Halton Student Transportation Services (HSTS)

The committee may also invite input and contributions from the following superintendents and/or designates:

1. Superintendent of Learning & Achievement (K-12)
2. Superintendent of Business Services & Treasurer of the Board
3. Superintendent of Facility Services and Planning
4. Superintendent of Special Education Services

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APPENDIX B

BRC Membership

A BRC will consist of the following members:

1. Members of the Boundary Review Steering Committee;
2. Between one (1) and two (2) Parent representatives from each affected school community.

The Family of Schools Superintendent of a non-affected study area and the General Manager of Planning will co-chair the BRC.

At the invitation of the Family of Schools Superintendent, the Principals of affected schools may attend BRC meetings to provide additional information and expertise.

Parent representatives shall be invited to become members by their respective school principals, in consultation with the School Council. Where possible, parent representatives should reside in an area that could be affected by a boundary change or relocation. Parent representatives are expected to speak on behalf of all students.

In the event a parent representative cannot be retained in time for the start of the Boundary Review Committee meeting schedule, the BRSC will need to make a decision whether to proceed until such a time a parent representative is retained.