

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS **Significant Change Draft April 2018**

Background

The evaluation and designation of attendance area boundaries is the responsibility of District administration with final approval for the establishment of school boundaries being the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, as per Board Policy.

It is recognized that the establishment of attendance areas for each District school is the best method of determining student placement within a school. One factor that must be taken into account is the concept of 'District Utilization rates'. Alberta Infrastructure considers a school to be 'full' when the enrollment reaches 85% of the official capacity. The District is obligated to ensure a balanced enrollment across the District in order to be able to advocate for capital projects, including new schools, modernizations and the addition of modular classrooms. If a school is determined to be 'over-capacity' and a neighbouring school is 'under-capacity', new projects will not be considered by the Government. It is the responsibility of the District to ensure that all facilities are used as effectively as possible.

It is recognized that boundaries need to be evaluated on an ongoing basis as neighbourhood demographics change over time and population patterns shift throughout the city. Attendance area boundaries are established based on the best available information at the time.

Procedures

- 1. The establishment of attendance boundaries will:**
 - Support the creation of neighbourhood schools
 - Maintain neighbourhood/school cohorts
 - Maintain safety of students and limit bussing
 - Reduce the number of students in modular classrooms
 - Consider space for programs of choice and special programming for student

- 2. In establishing attendance area boundaries, consideration will be given to:**
 - Student population projections
 - Known economic impacts
 - Established geographic landmarks and neighbourhoods
 - Ongoing input from District administration, school-based administration, and the community.

- 3. Attendance area boundaries will be designated with long-term stability as a consideration at all times.**

3.1. Attendance area boundaries should be established with a target of a minimum period of 5 years of stability per site.

3.2. This can be impacted by announcements of new schools or shifting programming requirements.

4. Changes to Attendance Area Boundaries (setting new boundaries or adjusting existing boundaries)

4.1. The Superintendent will establish a committee for the purpose of evaluating existing boundaries, identifying impacting factors, and recommending new attendance area boundaries in accordance with the criteria established in the Administrative Procedure.

4.2. The committee will incorporate data from a variety of sources in determining attendance area boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to, current enrollment information, data from enrollment projection software, input from site-based sources, known neighbourhood and community impactors, Workforce Planning data, Baragar Systems data etc.

4.3. Where it is possible to develop more than one attendance area scenario that meets the criteria established in this Administrative Procedure, the committee will ensure scenarios are developed and shared with all stakeholders.

4.4. Proposed attendance area scenarios will be reviewed with operations staff to review transportation and safety implications.

4.5. Proposed attendance area scenarios will be reviewed and refined by the District leadership team prior to presenting scenarios to the Board of Trustees.

4.6. Proposed attendance area scenarios will be presented to the Board of Trustees prior to commencing community engagement meetings.

4.7. The District commits to holding community engagement meetings as early as possible in the school year.

4.7.1. An initial public meeting with impacted parents/ communities should be held no later than December 1 of the year prior to the proposed changes coming into effect.

4.7.2. If required, a follow-up public meeting with impacted parents/ communities to review proposed changes should be held no later than February 1 of the year prior to proposed changes coming into effect.

4.7.3. Following the public meetings, the committee will evaluate the scenarios and make a recommendation to the Board no later than February 28 of the year prior to the proposed changes coming into effect.

4.8. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be communicated to impacted parents, community, and staff in a timely manner.

5. Dealing with Emergent issues

5.1. It is recognized that emergent issues may arise that will require adjustments to attendance area boundaries outside of the schedule outlined in this Administrative Procedure.

5.2. Where this is required, the District will engage in a review process that reflects the spirit of this Administrative Procedure wherever possible.

6. Grandfathering of Students

6.1. A grandfather policy is “a provision in which an old rule continues to apply to some existing situations while a new rule will apply to all future cases”. In this context the term defines a practice that would allow students to remain in a specific school after the boundary change process has designated a new boundary area.

6.2. Grandfathering of students will be limited to students at key transition times.

6.2.1. In the context of a K-7 school, grade 7 is considered to be the transitional year.

6.2.2. In a 8-12 school, grade 12 is considered to be the transitional year.

6.2.3. Students entering their grade 8 or grade 12 year will be permitted to remain at their original school site for their ‘key transition’ year.

6.3. Students permitted to attend school outside of their designated attendance area due to the application of the grandfather policy are responsible for transportation to the site.

6.4. Siblings: Grandfathering is permitted on a student-by-student basis and is not considered to apply to whole families; Siblings of grandfathered students are required to enroll in their designated boundary school.

7. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to make changes to attendance areas outside of the schedule established.

8. The Boundary Exemption Process is addressed in Administrative Procedure 306.

Reference: Section 13, 44, 45, 51, 52, 60, School Act
Amended April 2018