

Ministry of Education

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Gabriel F. Sékaly
Assistant Deputy Minister
Financial Policy and Business Division

DATE: February 2, 2016

SUBJECT: Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews

In March 2015, the Ministry released the new Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) as part of the School Board Efficiencies and Modernization strategy to provide incentives and supports for school boards to make more efficient use of space. The new PARG allows boards to have a more effective tool to address their needs to close and consolidate facilities, while continuing to ensure that communities have the opportunity to provide meaningful input. It also responds to feedback received from boards, parents and guardians, and other community members about the challenges involved in undertaking the accommodation review process.

Notwithstanding this, the Ministry acknowledges that school closure decisions are among the most challenging for most school boards to make. For parents and guardians, students, and other members of the local community, attachment to a school can make the thought of change very difficult. Despite these challenges, boards have a responsibility to focus their resources to ensure that all of their students have access to a wide range of high quality educational programs and services. In some cases, this can only occur through a school closure or consolidation.

To support school boards in carrying out this important work, the Ministry is pleased to announce the release of the new **Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews** (“the Guide”). This document is intended to assist boards as they communicate with parents and guardians, students, and other community members about the accommodation review process.

In particular, the Guide addresses the following issues:

- Why do school boards consolidate and close schools?

- What do school boards consider before proposing school closures and/or consolidations?
- How does an accommodation review work?
- How does a parent, guardian, or other community member get involved?
- What happens after an accommodation review is completed?

The Guide follows on the Ministry's September 2015 release of three pilot School Consolidation Experience Studies, which shared helpful practices and insights to benefit future consolidations, and to give school communities a deeper understanding of the consolidation process. Together, these documents are meant to assist boards as they undertake the important work of making more efficient use of school space and ensuring an improved learning experience for all students.

Using this Guide

The Guide is intended for parents and guardians who are involved in or may soon be involved in an accommodation review. While this Guide was written with parents and guardians in mind, members of the community, community organizations and municipalities may also find this document to be informative.

The ***Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews***, available in English and French, is for school boards to use according to their needs. It can be posted on school board websites and/or printed and distributed to parents and other local stakeholders whenever required. The content of the Guide can also be excerpted, quoted and referenced in school board documents, as needed. The Guide is not a policy document, however, and does not comprise legal or policy instructions for school boards. The Ministry does not intend to distribute paper copies of the Guide. An electronic copy of the Guide is available on the Ministry's [website](#).

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the Ministry's Capital Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives from 15 school boards across the province, in developing this Guide.

If you have any questions regarding the ***Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews***, please contact Mathew Thomas, Manager, Capital Policy and Programs Branch at 416-326-9920 or Mathew.P.Thomas@ontario.ca.

Original signed by:

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cc: Superintendents of Business
Managers of Planning