

# Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR598

Title: **ACCOMMODATION AND PROGRAM REVIEW**

Adopted: October 27, 2009

Authorization: Executive Council

## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide instructions to staff regarding accommodation reviews

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

*Accommodation Review* means a Ministry-mandated process to determine the future of a school or group of schools

*Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)* means a committee established by the Board to conduct a community-based review regarding the future of a school or group of schools. The review considers the value of the identified school(s) to the student, the community, the Board, and the local economy with a focus on the quality of the learning experience of the students.

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Director, Strategy and Planning

## 4.0 PROCEDURES

### 4.1. Scope

This procedure applies to schools offering elementary or secondary regular day-school programs.

An Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) shall be established where changes under consideration include consolidation of two or more schools; closure of a school; or relocation of a grade, grades, or program where the change would affect more than 50% of the enrolment of a school.<sup>1</sup>

Whenever possible, a small, manageable group of schools rather than a single school shall be part of a review.

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<sup>1</sup> Some exceptions apply. These exceptions are set out in the “Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines” of the Ministry of Education.

4.2. Process to Establish an Accommodation Review Committee

A local feasibility study shall be led by the superintendent of education before an accommodation review shall be considered. The local feasibility study shall involve the principals of the schools, local trustees, and Planning department staff. If staff determines that an accommodation review is required, staff will present a report to the Board.

The establishment of an ARC must be approved by the Board.

4.3. Membership of an Accommodation Review Committee

Each ARC shall include members from the school community and the broader community.

The size of the ARC shall not normally exceed 30 members.

The selection process shall be coordinated by the superintendent of education leading the ARC.

Membership shall include:

- Superintendent(s) of education for the schools included in the review;
- Two parents from each school included in the review (appointed by the School Council in collaboration with the Principal);
- Two secondary school students (appointed by SuperCouncil);
- Community person (must be independent and not have children or grandchildren attending the schools included in the review and must be public school supporter – appointed by the Director of Education or a designate);
- Principal of each school included in the review;
- Principal from outside the area of schools included in the review (appointed by the Toronto Schools Administrators Association);
- Local trustee(s) for schools included in the review; and
- City Councillor representing ward of schools included in the review.

Members are expected to attend all meetings. Substitutes cannot be sent to ARC meetings to represent absent members.

Members who resign shall not be replaced.

Others who participate as part of a support pool to the ARC as required but are not ARC members include:

- A facilitator;
- Central board staff to provide information, analysis, and resource support; and
- Any other support deemed appropriate by the chair.

#### 4.4. Decision Making

The ARC shall make decisions by reaching consensus among all members. If consensus cannot be reached, a vote will occur. Only voting members (listed below) shall be allowed to participate in a vote. The definition of consensus, quorum, the determination of voting procedure (e.g. by ballot or show of hands), and the process to be followed in the event of a tie vote shall be established by the committee at its first meeting.

Voting members shall include:

- Parents
- Students
- Community member
- Principal from outside of ARC area

Non-voting members shall include:

- Superintendent of education(s)
- Principals
- Local trustee(s)
- City Councillor

#### 4.5. Chair of ARC

The superintendent of education shall chair the ARC. If two superintendents of education are involved in an ARC, both will serve as co-chairs.

The chair, in addition to other duties, shall:

- Lead all ARC meetings including public meetings;

- Clarify the role each member of the ARC performs;
- Review and adopt norms for meetings;
- Ensure Board staff's accommodation options for the students of the school(s) are communicated as part of the review process;
- Ensure the Board's Accommodation and Program Review policy and the Ministry of Education's *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* are followed;
- Ensure adherence to the ARC's mandate and terms of reference including the parameters and reference criteria that will guide the development and recommendation of accommodation options;
- Set all ARC working meeting and public meeting dates and ensure that details are effectively communicated;
- Maintain integrity of meetings;
- Maintain a focus on the best interests of students;
- Determine the process required to reach consensus;
- Coordinate staff engagement and deputations from the public; and
- Ensure tasks of the ARC are completed including the submission of the ARC's report.

The superintendent of education shall provide information to the ARC concerning the review process and the ARC's role. He/she shall articulate the terms of reference, reference criteria, and any program, planning, financial, and policy constraints that may impact the ARC's recommendations.

#### 4.6. Mandate of ARC

The superintendent of education shall inform the ARC that its role is advisory. It shall make recommendations to the Board, not decisions. The Board may support the ARC's recommendations or it may make a different decision. The ARC's report with its recommendations shall be provided to the Board without filtering or editing by Board staff.

The ARC shall have a minimum of one meeting with ARC members only before any public meetings occur.

At this meeting, the following must occur:

- Clarification of each member's role on the ARC;
- Determination of consensus, quorum, and the determination of voting procedure; and
- Setting dates of all ARC meetings (including public ones).

The mandate of the ARC is to study, report, and make recommendations on the accommodation options regarding the school(s) under review.

The ARC shall have a minimum of four public meetings and shall inform the public about the meeting details.

The ARC shall present early in its public meeting any program, planning, financial, and policy constraints that might impact decision making.

The ARC shall consider a full range of options. Staff shall develop options for consideration of the ARC and identify at least one option that staff considers to be advisable.

Not all of the ARC's meetings shall be held in public. The committee can choose to hold some meetings with ARC members only.

#### 4.7. Community Participation

There shall be a minimum of four public meeting to allow for active engagement of the community. After the Board has announced the creation of the ARC, there shall be no less than 30 days prior to the first public meeting.

Beginning with the first public meeting, the public consultation period should be no less than 90 days.

Following the submission of the ARC's final report to the Board, there shall be no less than 60 days notice of the meeting where the Board considers the ARC's recommendations.

Attendance at public meetings shall be recorded to track participation during the ARC process. All participants shall sign the attendance sheet when entering the meeting. At a minimum, each participant's name, full address including postal code, relationship to the school (e.g. parent/guardian of student, resident, or community agency representative), and signature are required.

There shall be a formal process for interested members of the public to ask questions and submit comments to the ARC during the review process. Questions shall be responded to by the chair of the ARC.

Questions/comments from the public shall be submitted using one of the following methods:

- Submitted by e-mail to the *Better Schools Brighter Futures* office;
- Submitted in writing at a public meeting; or
- Submitted as a deputation for presentation at a public meeting. Deputations shall follow the same process as for the Board's standing committees. Deputations shall be submitted in writing to the superintendent chairing the ARC by 4 p.m., two days before the day of the public meeting.

Requests must include:

- the topic that will be addressed;
- the name of the speaker;
- address of the speaker;
- contact information for the speaker (phone, fax, e-mail); and
- the name of the organization representing (if applicable).

Each person deputing shall be given five minutes to speak at designated public meetings.

There shall be practical limits within which questions shall be addressed. For example, requests for information that is not relevant can be denied, and questions that have already been addressed can be referred to previous responses.

Members of the public shall not be allowed to ask questions from the floor at public meetings.

#### 4.8. School Staff Engagement

The superintendent of education shall meet with staff of school(s) under review as soon as practicable after the Board approves the establishment of the ARC. He/she shall explain the reasons for the accommodation review and the ways in which staff will be informed and engaged.

The superintendent of education shall contact union representatives for the employee groups working at the schools involved in the review and explain the process for obtaining input from staff. Staff shall submit comments and/or questions in writing to their union office and then the union office shall send the written correspondence to the superintendent. All written correspondence shall then be provided to ARC members at the next ARC meeting. Every ARC meeting shall include an agenda item where all written correspondence received since the last ARC meeting is received. The written correspondence shall also be posted on the Board's website.

The superintendent of education shall involve staff from Employee Services early in the review process to provide support at meetings with staff of the schools under review.

Throughout the process, staff shall be provided ready access to the information that is provided to the ARC. The superintendent of education shall communicate the process for staff to seek information and make comments.

Before the final public meeting of the ARC, the superintendent of education shall meet with the staff of the schools under review to explain the options under consideration by the ARC. In collaboration with Employee Services, the superintendent of education shall ensure that staff are provided with comprehensive information concerning transfer and placement of any affected staff, and provide opportunities for staff to ask questions and seek clarification.

All meetings with school staff shall occur separately from the public ARC meetings.

Staff of the school(s) under review shall be permitted to attend public meetings of the ARC but shall not be allowed to depute at public meetings.

#### 4.9. Communication

Information about the accommodation review shall be posted on the TDSB's external website and shall be updated regularly throughout the ARC process. Information shall include the names of ARC members, the names of the schools involved in the review, dates and times of public meetings, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, the ARC's report, and any printed matter produced and received by the ARC. Information shall be translated as required.

Other communication methods that shall be used include written notices sent to parents at schools involved in the review and to members of the school community.

The superintendent of education shall contact members of the ARC and the school community to provide information concerning the staff report and the date of the standing committee and Board meeting to consider the recommendations, and details concerning how to make deputations to the Board.

#### 4.10. ARC Report

The ARC shall submit a final written report including recommendations to the Director of Education.

The report shall be posted on the TDSB's public website, and shall be made available in hard copy upon request.

A staff report shall cover the ARC's report and shall be presented to the Board for receipt.

After considering the ARC's recommendations, staff shall develop its own recommendations and present them in a staff report to the Board.

## **5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Policy P068, Accommodation and Program Review

Ministry of Education's "Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline"