

Ministry of Education

**Capital Policy and
Programs Branch**

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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March 12, 2015

Kristina Laperle
fslactoronto@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Laperle,

Thank you for sharing your feedback about the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline. I appreciate the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Minister of Education.

School boards are expected to regularly undertake capital planning exercises as they review their facilities. Before undertaking a review, boards are advised to first look at the viability of partnership opportunities in underutilized schools. If a partnership is feasible, the board should seek out opportunities with their municipality or a third party as a way to make better use of empty space alongside viable school programs. If a board is unable to maintain a viable school program through a partnership, it may need to undertake an accommodation review.

The ministry's Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline provides a consultation framework for school boards to work with their communities to explore the best options for sustainable places to learn, and is currently being reviewed.

A key objective of revising the guideline is to create a more flexible and efficient accommodation review process while ensuring communities have the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback. Another objective is to establish a more formal role for municipal input. Decisions on land-use planning are best made when municipalities and school boards work together. The revised guideline is expected to be released in the coming weeks and will be posted on the ministry's website.

Since the guideline was last revised in 2009, the ministry has received valuable feedback on the ministry's Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline and the accommodation review process from various stakeholders, including the ministry's education partners, school board associations, trustee associations, parent groups, and municipal associations on the best way to move forward.

It is important to note that the ministry's guideline only sets the minimum provincial requirements, and each school board may choose to amend their own board policy to reflect the revised standards. School boards will have the flexibility to establish and amend their own accommodation review policies at a local level to reflect the needs of their schools and communities. At that point, school boards will have the opportunity to consult with their local communities on changes to their local policies and procedures within the framework of the ministry's revised guideline.

The ministry recognizes the unique circumstances faced by schools in isolated areas that may need to remain open despite being underutilized. The ministry will continue to provide funding enhancements to school boards to help them adjust to declining enrolment and to support underutilized and rural schools to provide an equal opportunity for excellent education.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write. I trust this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Osborn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Grant Osborn
Director