

# NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

AS 28.2  
2008 02 20

### POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to identify procedures whereby the Board may consolidate school enrolments through the closing of schools in those areas where declining enrolment makes such action educationally and economically advantageous.

Although it is recognized that small elementary schools have an importance to the community going beyond instruction, there may be instances where limited enrolment and inadequate staff resources create difficulties in the provision of a good instructional program. Some communities are served by more than one elementary school.

In the consolidation of school accommodation in those areas where declining enrolment makes the removing from inventory of available pupil places educationally and economically feasible, THE NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ENUNCIATES AS POLICY:

1. THAT where unrequired educational accommodation exists, unrequired accommodation be consolidated by parallel, compatible use and/or lease or sale;
2. THAT operating procedures, as attached, be adopted as procedure for consolidation of school accommodation;
3. THAT the time sequence model, as attached, be adopted as the model for implementation of the school consolidation policy and procedures;
4. THAT it be clearly understood that nothing in the present policy precludes:
  - a) the closing of classes or a class in a specific school or schools;
  - b) the twinning of schools for administrative purposes.

This Policy implements the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines released by the Ministry of Education on October 31, 2006. This Policy along with a copy of the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and the Ministry document entitled "Administrative Review of the Accommodation Review Process" will be posted on the Board website and will be made available at the Board's head office.

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### Scope

The Board's elementary schools are generally organized in groups, usually linked to a secondary school. The goal of providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities in a school or group of schools requires monitoring and active curriculum and programming decisions. Decisions that might require consolidation, closure or major program relocation will take into account the needs of all of the students in all of the schools in a particular group. There may, however, be circumstances in which a single school should be studied for closure or relocation.

Any decisions under this policy will take into account the Board's Long-Term Capital Plan.

### Application

The following are not actions to which this Policy applies:

- Where a replacement school is to be rebuilt by the Board on the existing site or located within the existing school attendance boundary as identified through the Board's existing policies; i.e., replacement of a rural school within its existing rural community;
- When a lease is terminated;
- When the Board is considering the relocation of a grade or grades, or a program,
- Where the enrolment in the grade or grades, or program, constitutes less than 50% of the enrolment of the school;
- When the Board is repairing or renovating a school, and the school community must be temporarily relocated to ensure the safety of students during the renovations;
- Where a facility has been serving as a holding school for a school community whose permanent school is under construction or repair.

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

The operating procedure relating to the school consolidation policy will consist of three (3) clearly defined stages, namely:

1. Identification;
2. Review and analysis and recommendations for consolidation;
3. Implementation.

### **STAGE 1 - IDENTIFICATION**

1. In September of each year the Director of Education in co-operation with the Superintendent of Business, will present a planning document which will include enrolments, accommodations, projections, statistical analysis and recommendations (boundaries, school names, capital expenditures, etc.) to the Committee of the Whole.

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The report will be based on a **five-year plan** with specific recommendations for the first school year and tentative recommendations for each of the succeeding four years.

2. This planning document will include identification of schools which conform to the following criteria:
  - schools where enrolment is 50% or less of M.E.T. capacity rating, and where projection analyses indicate a continuation of the present level of pupil population and/or a decrease in the present pupil population.

The schools that meet the above criteria will be identified by the Director of Education in consultation with the Superintendent of Business.

3. The September planning document will identify those schools which conform to Stage 1, Item 2, and will include recommendations from Administration.

### **STAGE II - REVIEW AND ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSOLIDATION**

#### **1. The Preliminary Report**

The Director will present a preliminary report to the Board identifying a school or group of schools in which challenges may be faced in providing a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students, and in respect of which these may be a need to consider the possible consolidation, closure or major program relocation in respect of one or more schools.

A school or group of schools may be considered for study if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- The school or group of schools is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
- The school or group of schools has experienced or will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment;
- Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;
- Teaching/learning spaces are not suitable to provide the programs needed to serve the community and retrofitting may be cost prohibitive;
- Under normal staffing allocation, it would be necessary to assign three grades to one class in one or more of the schools;
- One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance requirements than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements;

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- In respect of one or more of the schools there are safety and/or environmental concerns attached to the building, the school site or its locality;
- The consolidation of schools is in the best interests of the overall school system;
- It has been no less than five years since the inception of a study of the school by an Accommodation Review Committee, except where extenuating circumstances warrant, such as an unexpected economic or demographic shift, or a change in a school's physical condition.

**2. Establishing an Accommodation Review Committee ("ARC")**

After reviewing the Preliminary Report, the Board may direct the formation of an Accommodation Review Committee ("ARC") for a group of schools or for a single school.

Parents/guardians, staff and school council members of the affected schools will be informed within one week, in writing, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision to form an ARC and the decision will be posted on the Board's website.

**2.1 Mandate of the ARC**

The ARC will study, report and make recommendations on the accommodation options respecting the group of schools or single school referred to it in the manner set out below.

**2.2 Composition of the ARC**

The ARC will consist of the following persons:

- Superintendent of Education;
- Superintendent of Business;
- The Manager of Plant and Health & Safety;

From each affected school:

- The school Principal
- One teacher
- One non-teaching staff member
- Three parents, one of whom will be the Catholic School Council Chair or designate

Once the ARC is constituted, it will invite a municipal councilor or designate and a member of the business community to join the ARC. The ARC will be deemed to be properly constituted whether or not all of the listed members are willing and able to participate.

The ARC has the authority to co-opt additional members.

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### 2.3 Operation of the ARC

The Director will appoint a Chair of the ARC. The Chair will convene and chair meetings, and will ensure that the ARC successfully carries out its obligations under this Policy. The Manager of Plant and Health & Safety will function as secretary and resource person.

Other resource personnel can be requested to provide information to the ARC.

### 2.4 Meetings of the ARC

The ARC will complete its work within the timelines in this Policy.

The ARC Chair will call the first public meeting of the ARC no earlier than sixty (60) days after the date of its appointment, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

The ARC shall meet as often as required.

Prior to the first public meeting, the ARC will customize the Board's Generic School Valuation Framework included in the Appendix for application to the schools under review. The ARC may add factors but may not subtract or alter factors. The ARC will make the customized Generic School Valuation Framework public prior to its public meetings.

The ARC will hold at least four public meetings in accessible facilities:

- At the first public meeting, the ARC will describe its mandate, the Pupil Accommodation Review Process under this policy, review the basic information package and give the Public a briefing on the data and issues to be addressed. The ARC will also describe how the Generic School Valuation Framework has been customized. The ARC will receive community input.
- At the second public meeting, the ARC will present its draft school-specific valuation reports under the customized Generic School Valuation Framework for the schools under consideration to the public and will receive community input.
- At the third public meeting, the ARC will present to the community the accommodation options to be considered and will receive community input.
- At the fourth public meeting the ARC will present its draft School Valuation Report to the public and will receive community input. The ARC may make changes to the Report based on feedback at the meeting.

Public Notices of the public meetings will be provided via school newsletters, letters to the school community, parish bulletins, the Board's web site and advertisements in local community newspapers and shall include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number. Notice of the first public meeting will be provided no less than sixty (60) days in advance of the meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break. A minimum of two weeks notice will be provided in respect of the other public meetings.

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All Meetings of the ARC shall be open to the public.

Minutes reflecting the full range of opinions expressed at the ARC meetings are to be kept and made available on the Board's Website.

### 2.5 Information and Documentation

An information package necessary to permit the ARC to carry out its mandate will be provided no later than 48 hours in advance of the ARC's first public meeting. For each school under study the package will include the following with plain language explanations, which will also be made available to the public via posting on the Board's website and in print format at the Board's head office.

- The most recent Long Term Capital Plan of the Board to provide a context for the accommodation review;
- Background information regarding the schools located within the area of the accommodation review. This information is to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
  - Organization and programming information;
  - Historical and projected enrolments and On The Ground capacity information;
  - Portable data;
  - Transportation service data;
  - School boundary maps;
  - Pupil distribution data;
  - Range of extra-curricular activities and extent of student participation;
  - Parish boundary data/map;
  - Age of building;
  - Expenditures and revenues for each school with particular emphasis on school operations (i.e. heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance), school administration;
  - Projected ten year facility-renewal maintenance costs from ReCAPP database;
  - Tenant information/agreements and other relevant information.
  - Community use of school activity;
  - Alternate accommodation plans for the students in the school located within the area of the accommodation review including suggestions as to where the students could be accommodated, what changes to existing facilities might be required, what programs could be available to the students and associated transportation requirements.

The ARC will provide information to the affected school communities on an ongoing basis by posting it in a prominent location on the school board's website or making it available in print, upon request.

Board Staff will respond to reasonable requests for additional information from the ARC and will append responses to the minutes of the meetings at which the questions prompting the responses were raised, and will post the responses on the Board's website.

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### 2.6 The Work of the ARC

Attention should first be paid to the current educational situation in the school or group of schools and how it is likely to evolve if things are left as they are. Attention should then be paid to the potential for enhancing the learning environment for students. The questions set out below are intended to help the ARC to focus on common issues in order to reach a constructive and positive outcome. It is not possible, however, to avoid the assessment of individual schools.

In carrying out its mandate the ARC will weigh the value of the schools to the student above the other factors to be assessed.

### 2.7 The ARC School Valuation Report

In respect of the school or group of schools being studied, the ARC will prepare a School Valuation Report, addressing the questions set out below and those that it chooses to add.

In answering these questions, the ARC will consider the Generic School Valuation Framework, both in respect of the existing organization of the schools and any proposed organization, and may add factors to be addressed.

1. Does the school or group of schools currently provide the range of mandatory programs required to meet the Ministry of Education policies and ensure program quality for all the students of the District School Board who reside in the catchment area?
2. Does the school or group of schools currently provide the range of optional programs required to ensure an appropriate education and program quality for all the students? What optional programs cannot be offered currently that are available in other District School Board schools?
3. Is the operation of the schools or size of schools supported by the funding guidelines of the Funding Model or are there other sustainable sources of revenue to support the operation?
4. Do enrolment projections and development plans indicate that the enrolments will be high enough for the next five years to keep the current organization educationally and financially viable?
5. Is there a proposed organization of all or some of the existing schools that could result in each remaining school being able to provide the range of mandatory programs required to meet the Ministry of Education policies and ensure program quality for the Board's students who reside in the existing or proposed catchment area, and that could result in each remaining school being able to provide the range of optional programs required to ensure an appropriate education and equity for all the students? What optional programs could be offered in the proposed organization that are available in other District School Board schools?

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6. Can the proposed school organization result in an equivalent or improved environment for the students from a health and safety perspective?
7. What bussing would be required under the proposed organization? If there are increased bussing costs, can these be offset by reduced operating and administrative resource costs?
8. What are the financial benefits of the proposed school organization that would enable the Board to maintain or improve the student learning environment? Would the operation of the proposed school organization be supported by the funding guidelines of the Funding Model or are there other sustainable sources of revenue to support the operation of this organization?
9. What would the capital requirements of the proposed school organization be in terms of renewal, additions, new schools or program enhancements? Would they be supported by the funding guidelines of the Funding Model or are there other sustainable sources of revenue to support the capital requirements, such as the shared use of a building or site?
10. Do alternative organizations of all or some of the schools offer better long term opportunities to provide quality educational services and accommodation for students within current fiscal realities?
11. What effects would the proposed organization have on community activities of social, educational, cultural or recreational nature?
12. What are the possible alternative uses for any building recommended for consolidation or closure?

In answering these questions the ARC will also ensure that the following issues are addressed:

- The implications for the program for students both in the school under consideration for consolidation, closure or program relocation and in the school(s) where programs may be affected.
- The effects of consolidation, closure or program relocation on the following:
  - ▶ The attendance area defined for the schools
  - ▶ Attendance at other schools
  - ▶ The need and extent of bussing
- The financial effects of consolidating or not consolidating the school, including any capital implications
- Revenue implications as a result of the consolidation, closure or program relocation

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- Savings expected to be achieved as a result of the consolidation, closure or program relocation
  - School operations (heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance)
  - Expenditures to address school renewal issues which will no longer be required
- Additional expenditures, if any, at schools which will accommodate students displaced as a result of a consolidation, closure or program relocation decision taken by the board
  - School operations (heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance)
  - School administration
  - School renewal
  - Transportation
- Net savings/costs associated with:
  - Teaching staff
  - Paraprofessionals
  - Student transportation
- The possible alternative use or disposition of an empty building

The ARC will deliver its School Valuation Report to the Director of Education, together with recommendations, not earlier than ninety (90) days, and not later than ninety-five (95) days, after the beginning of the ARC's first public meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

In certain situations the ARC may choose to submit a majority report and a minority report.

The School Valuation Report(s) will be made accessible to Trustees and the Public in print format at the Board's head office.

### **3. Consideration of the ARC School Valuation Report**

#### **3.1 Director's Report to the Board**

Administrative Council will review the ARC's School Valuation Report and recommendations, minutes and all supporting documentation and staff will prepare the Director's report to the Board.

The Director's report will include as appendices the ARC's School Valuation Report, the information package provided to the ARC, minutes of the ARC meetings and any material received by the ARC or the Board from the public.

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The recommendation accompanying the Director's report will be one or more of the following:

- To maintain the schools and to continue to monitor them;
- To reorganize the schools, their programs or their grade structures;
- To change the boundaries of the schools;
- To consolidate and/or close one or more of the schools.

The Director's report and recommendations will be presented to the Board in public session at a regularly scheduled meeting not less than thirty (30) days after the ARC's School Valuation Report was delivered to the Director of Education. The Board of Trustees shall receive the report for information.

### 3.2 Board Meeting for Public Input

The Board will hold a meeting for public input no earlier than **twenty-one (21)** days after the Director's Report and recommendations are presented to the Board in public session, in order to provide an opportunity for the public to make formal presentations to the Board concerning the Director's report and the matters that are addressed in it and in the ARC's School Valuation Report. The public meeting may be scheduled as part of one of the Board's regularly scheduled meetings. On the date that the Board schedules the Meeting for public input, it will also schedule the Board meeting to consider school accommodation referred to in s.3.4 of this Policy.

A minimum of two weeks notice of the public Board meeting shall be provided via school newsletters, letters to the school community, parish bulletins, the Board Website, and advertisements in local community newspapers and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number.

Concise minutes shall be kept reflecting each delegates comments in response to the ARC package and the Director's Report.

The public may provide written input to the Director of Education at any time.

### 3.3 Director's Follow-Up Report to the Board

Following the Board meeting for public input, the Director will prepare a Follow-Up Report to the Board in which he/she will report on and respond to the representations made by the public, for the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Director may revise his/her earlier recommendations to the Board. The Director's Follow-Up Report will include copies of the presentations made by the public during the Board meeting for public input and those received directly, and minutes of the Board meeting for public input.

The Director's Follow-Up Report shall be released publicly with the agenda for the Board meeting as well as being posted on the Board's website.

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### 3.4 Board Meeting to Consider School Accommodations

The Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodations addressed in the ARC's School Valuation Report, Director's Report and Director's Follow-up Report to the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting, which will not occur sooner than sixty (60) days after the presentation of the Director's Report to the Board, thirty (30) days after the Board meeting for public input and fifteen (15) days after the Director's Follow-up Report is released publicly.

Public notice of the meeting at which the Board will make its decision regarding the school accommodation will be provided through school newsletters, letters to the school community, parish bulletins, the Board's website and advertisements in local community newspapers and will include date, time, location, purpose, contact name and number at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of the Board meeting, excluding from the calculation school holidays such as summer vacation, Christmas break and Spring break.

The Board may make any accommodation decision that it deems advisable in relation to the schools under review by an ARC despite an ARC recommendation to the contrary.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Staff and Catholic School Council Members will be informed within one week, in writing, through their respective schools, of the Board's decision which will also be posted on the Board's website.

If the Board decision is consolidation, closure or program relocation, the decision will outline clear timelines.

### 3.5 Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process

An administrative review of an accommodation review process undertaken by the Board is subject to the procedure established by the Ministry document entitled "Administrative Review of the Accommodation Review Process" which is posted on the Board website and available at the Board's head office.

## STAGE III - IMPLEMENTATION

1. If the decision at Stage II involves the closure of a school, the following procedure shall occur:
  - a) The Director of Education shall notify, in writing, the staff of the school to be closed, the parents of the pupils in the school, other members of the community and appropriate media that the Board has passed the specific resolution to close the school at the end of the school year.

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- b) The Director of Education or designate shall attend a meeting of members of the community for the purpose of providing the Board rationale used to arrive at the decision to close and of the formation of an Advisory Committee pursuant to section 3, below. A local trustee will be Chairperson of this\these public presentation(s).
2. Subsequently, the Director of Education or designate shall form the Advisory Committee under the following terms of reference:
- a) **Membership**
- Director of Education or designate;
  - Principal of the school;
  - one teacher;
  - \* four (4) parents of pupils present in the school;
  - \* one parent of a pre-school pupil resident in the school attendance area;
  - principal(s) of the school(s) to which pupils may be transferred;
  - trustee(s) from the affected areas.
- \* (as selected by the Catholic School Council)
- A local trustee will be Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.
- b) **Purpose**
- involving parents and staff in the implementation of the Board decision;
  - assuring the academic, social and emotional welfare of pupils and staff;
  - allaying concerns of pupils, parents and staff;
  - reviewing location of homes or pupils in relation to possible receiving schools;
  - formulating suggestions regarding any transportation which may be required within existing Board policy.
3. The Director of Education, in cooperation with the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, shall present to the Board, at its **May** meeting, any recommendation originating from the Advisory Committee related to the accommodation / transportation plan for the pupils being assigned to a receiving school or to new schools.

## **PROPOSAL FOR DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS SCHOOLS**

Should the Board determine to close schools, a number of possibilities are available to the Board in dealing with the disposal of facilities which are deemed "surplus to requirements". All variations, however, come under the general heading Lease, Sell, Maintain or Demolish.

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<p>a) <b><u>Lease or Sell:</u></b></p> <p>as per Ontario Regulation 497/97 or any revision thereof</p> <p>b) <b><u>Maintain:</u></b></p> <p>Schools will be closed with a minimum of expenditure where no buyer or tenant is available. It would be possible to allow use by the community during the day and in the evening on a permit fee basis. School grounds would be available for use by the community. In fact, it may be possible for the Parks and Recreation Department to maintain and operate some of the surplus facilities.</p> <p>c) <b><u>Demolish:</u></b></p> <p>In situations where it would not be possible to either LEASE or SELL the property and it was deemed to be too expensive to MAINTAIN, the Board may decide to DEMOLISH the buildings. This could be particularly applicable to older sections of some schools which have become surplus and are not required for community use and may be expensive to maintain because of their age. Although demolition costs may be equivalent to the maintenance costs for one or two years, the long-term savings may justify consideration of this ultimate option.</p>	

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### Accommodation Review - Summary of Timelines

<i>Policy Provision</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>By Whom</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1	Presentation of the Preliminary Report to the Board	Director	Discretion
2	Board decision to establish an ARC	Board	Discretion
2	Notice of Board decision to establish an ARC	Principals	Within one week of decision
2.4	Notice of first ARC Public Meeting	ARC	At least 60 days prior to the meeting
2.7	Delivery of Information Package to ARC	Staff	No later than ARC's first public meeting
2.4	First ARC Public Meeting	ARC	As scheduled by ARC
2.4	Notice of second ARC Public Meeting	ARC	At least two weeks prior to the meeting
2.4	Second ARC Public Meeting	ARC	As scheduled by ARC
2.4	Notice of third ARC Public Meeting	ARC	At least two weeks prior to the meeting
2.4	Third ARC Public Meeting	ARC	As scheduled by ARC
2.4	Notice of the fourth ARC Public Meeting	ARC	At least two weeks prior to the meeting
2.4	Fourth ARC Public Meeting	ARC	As scheduled by ARC

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<i>Policy Provision</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>By Whom</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
2.8	Delivery of ARC School Valuation Report	ARC	Not earlier than 90 days after the beginning and not later than 95 days after the beginning of ARC's first public meeting
3.1	Staffs Report and recommendations	Staff	Not less than 30 days after the ARC report was delivered to the Director of Education
3.2	Board sets dates for Board meeting for public input, and for Board meeting to decide accommodation	Board	As scheduled by the Board
3.2	Notice of Board Meeting for Public Input	Board	A minimum of two weeks notice of the Public Meeting.
3.2	Board Meeting for Public Input	Board	As scheduled by the Board but not sooner than 30 days after Staffs Report and recommendations are presented to the Board in public session.
3.3	Staffs follow-up report on accommodation	Staff	Next regularly scheduled Board meeting
3.4	Notice of Board Meeting to decide accommodation	Board	60 days prior to the Board meeting.*
3.4	Board Meeting to decide accommodation	Board	At a regularly scheduled meeting which will not occur sooner than 60 days after the presentation of Staffs Report, 30 days after the Board Meeting for public input and 15 days after Staffs follow-up report as released publicly
3.4	Notice of decision on accommodation	Principal s	Within one week of decision

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### Glossary of Terms

1. Consolidation means an action where two or more schools are combined into one or more schools.
2. Closure means a school has been closed as a result of the consolidation process.
3. Ministry means the Ontario Ministry of Education.
4. ARC means an Accommodation Review Committee appointed by the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to conduct a public accommodation review of a particular school or schools. Each ARC must include membership drawn from the school community and the broader community.
5. Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines is a Ministry document that provides direction to school boards regarding public accommodation reviews undertaken to determine the future of a school or group of schools.
6. Administrative Review of Accommodation Review Process is a Ministry document that sets out the requirements that must be met in order for the Ministry to conduct a review of a school board's accommodation review process.
7. Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) means the calculation of the number of students enrolled in a school based on two count dates, October 31st and March 31st, with equal weight given to each count date and with Junior and Senior Kindergarten students being recognized as half-time students.
8. Operating costs encompass all the expenditures required to operate and maintain the Board and its facilities including but not limited to heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance and administrative costs.
9. On the Ground Capacity (OTG) means the rated capacity for a facility as indicated on the Ministry of Education School Facilities Inventory System.