

DATE: January 17, 2012

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee Leslie Cleary, Chair, 2010 – 2011 Policy Review Committee
Trustee Michael Janz, 2010 – 2011 Policy Review Committee
Trustee Catherine Ripley, 2010 – 2011 Policy Review Committee

SUBJECT: Review of Board Policy IC.BP - Student Accommodation

ORIGINATOR: Brian Smith, Executive Director, Finance and Infrastructure

RESOURCE STAFF: Leanne Fedor, Roland Labbe, Ann Parker, Lorne Parker, Jim Ray

REFERENCE: IC.BP – Student Accommodation

ISSUE

Board Policy IC.BP – Student Accommodation was last reviewed in 2002. Administration proposes to amend the existing board policy.

RECOMMENDATION

That revised Board Policy IC.BP – Student Accommodation (Attachment I) be considered for the third time and approved.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the amendments to Board Policy IC.BP – Student Accommodation is to include the addition of statements reflecting the guiding principles in regard to the creation and review of attendance areas and receiving schools. This policy identifies the accommodation of students within Edmonton Public Schools (Attachment II).

Attendance boundaries and receiving schools are a means of both facilitating choice of school while guarding against overcrowding. The boundary system also ensures that every student in the District has a school that is designated to accommodate them. The proposed additions to Board Policy IC.BP - Student Accommodation are based on these notions while supporting the Board’s mandate that every student residing inside the City of Edmonton shall have a school that is responsible for accommodating the student.

While reviewing this policy, the administration was requested to research the possibility of adopting a radius approach for determining attendance areas (Attachment III). Some of the challenges this method of defining attendance areas creates includes:

- Multiple overlapping attendance areas resulting in students designated to multiple schools
- Splitting City of Edmonton defined neighbourhoods
- Geographic or natural boundaries are not recognized
- Some areas of the city would not be included in any attendance area
- Does not align with current policy stating that “every student residing inside the City of Edmonton shall have a school that is responsible for accommodating the student or ensuring a student’s placement elsewhere”

- Difficult for the parent or stakeholders to comprehend
- The issue of families residing just outside the boundary will not be resolved

RELATED FACTS

A policy review web-survey was conducted in accordance with board policy review procedures and was open for input from September 6 to October 4, 2011. Key stakeholder organizations and partners were notified of the policy review process and survey.

A total of 24 responses were received: seven from parents, four from community members, eight from principal/decision unit administrators, five from staff members, zero response from community/professional organizations. The majority of the respondents (62.5 per cent) do not believe that the policy requires clarification.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The majority of the comments and suggestions were not relevant to the policy. The following options have been considered as they are deemed the most admissible:

- There was concern expressed that the policy needs to state who will conduct the review of school attendance areas
- There were concerns surrounding the right of the Board to direct a student to any school in the district. It was suggested that this clause nullifies the entire policy.

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

Board Policy IC.BP has been amended to state that attendance area reviews are the work of EPSB administration.

The item in the policy that refers to the Board's right to direct a student to any school in the district is in direct response to Section 45, subsection (2) of the Alberta *School Act* stating that "a board shall direct a resident student of the board to enroll in and attend a particular school operated by the board." The Board delegates this authority to the Superintendent of Schools and the Administration. The policy has been amended to reflect this delegation of authority.

A change relating to student residence was requested during the first and second readings by legal counsel to reflect wording in the current *School Act*, and permit alignment with any changes that may occur in future amendments to the Act.

NEXT STEPS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

- Attachment I - New Board Policy IC.BP - Student Accommodation
- Attachment II - Revised Board Policy IC.BP - Student Accommodation
- Attachment III - Map - 1.6 km Buffer Around Each Elementary and Junior High School

JR:sa

Revised Board Policy

Edmonton Public Schools

Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: IC.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE:

TOPIC: Student Accommodation

ISSUE DATE:

REVIEW DATE:

1. Every resident student shall have a school that is responsible for accommodating the student or ensuring the student's placement elsewhere.
2. Attendance Areas shall be established to identify which school is responsible for the accommodation of the student. Guiding principles which serve as the foundation for the development and review of school attendance areas shall include:
 - a. Regulating enrolment size at each district school
 - b. Balancing the attendance area student population with the capacity of a given school
 - c. When school attendance areas are revised, existing students have the option to continue attendance at their current school
3. In accordance with the guiding principles, consideration will be given to the following criteria when creating or modifying attendance areas. These criteria include but are not limited to, school feeder patterns, walking distance, major roads, public transit routes, natural barriers, commuter patterns, infrastructure, proximity of schools to one another and schools with available space to accommodate additional students.
4. School attendance areas will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the Board will be informed of any modifications to attendance areas.
5. The Superintendent reserves the right to direct a student to any school in the district.
6. Subject to the Superintendent's authority to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the district,
 - a. The board supports the concept of open boundaries and of parents and students having a choice of schools,
 - b. The board expects students to complete high school within three years,
 - c. There is an expectation that all high schools will accommodate students with mild and moderate special needs and those with severe emotional/behavioural disabilities enrolled at the school.
7. Preference shall be given to limiting a school's enrolment rather than adding space to the school to accommodate students from outside the attendance area.

Reference(s):

EEA.AR - Transportation Services

IEC.BR - Student Admission to the District

IB.AR - Student Placement

School Act Sections 8, 13, 44 and 60(3)(b)

Revised Board Policy

Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: IC.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12-03-2002

TOPIC: Student Accommodation

ISSUE DATE: 15-03-2002

REVIEW DATE: 03-2007

1. ~~While recognizing the uniqueness of neighbourhoods, e~~Every student residing ~~resident student inside the City of Edmonton~~ shall have a school that is responsible for accommodating the student or ensuring the student's placement elsewhere.
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1.6 km Buffer Around Each
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