

Title: School Boundaries Procedure

Adopted: May 19, 2026

Effective: May 19, 2026

Amended/Reviewed: N/A

This procedure must be interpreted, applied, and implemented in ways that uphold Indigenous and human rights and responsibilities, promote accessibility, and prevent and address (and do not reinforce) discrimination/discriminatory barriers.

1.0 RATIONALE

To provide a consistent, transparent, and equitable process for the establishment, review, and/or modification of school attendance boundaries. This model supports long-term and sustainable accommodation planning, program viability, community stability, and equitable access to education.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Attendance Boundary:** The geographic area from which a school draws its students. An attendance boundary is generally defined by the specific school program (i.e., English language, French Immersion). Where multiple programs are offered at a school, there will be attendance boundaries associated with an individual program.
- 2.2 Boundary Review:** A formal, time-bound process to establish or adjust attendance boundaries through public consultation resulting in a final recommendation for the Board of Trustees to consider.
- 2.3 Permanent Boundary Adjustment:** A long-term boundary change intended to be in place for three (3) years or more if projected enrolment and/or program offering remains stable.
- 2.4 Growth Boundary:** A geographic area of new residential development temporarily assigned to an existing school until a new school within the community is funded, constructed, and opened.
- 2.5 Partner School:** An existing school identified by DDSB to temporarily accommodate students residing within a growth boundary area until a new community school becomes operational.

2.6 Redesignation of Growth: An operational process that temporarily assigns students from new residential development areas to a partner school until a new community school is funded, constructed, and opened. Growth redesignations are reviewed annually based on enrolment and accommodation pressures and communicated to Trustees through an information report.

2.7 Pupil Accommodation Plan: Document guiding capital and accommodation planning. The document is updated annually.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 The Chief Executive Officer: responsible for the development and implementation of this procedure.

3.2 Property and Planning, Facilities Services: develop Board Information and Final Reports; manage consultation process; provide analysis of proposed option(s) or community-submitted options where sufficient information is available.

3.3 Inclusive Student Services (ISS): develop a transition plan focusing on student mental health and supports as well as family supports.

3.4 Early Years: identify child care service providers for purpose-built centres and before/after school care.

3.5 Superintendents of Education & System Leads: provide community support and advice on proposed options; address staffing and operations segments within reports with input at public meetings; lead development of FAQ sheet, if needed, for posting on DDSB's website.

3.6 Administrators of Affected Schools: provide school-level advice; support communication and implementation of the boundary review process; provide factual clarification to community members regarding proposed options, timelines, and established feedback channels; direct questions and feedback through the consultation channels established for the review; share community input received through school-level interactions with Property and Planning and Superintendents of Education/System Lead; provide transitional supports and resources to affected students and families; and refrain from organizing, promoting, or advocating for a particular boundary option or community position.

3.7 Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS): assess proposed boundaries and provide input on bell times, busing and financial implications for busing.

3.8 DDSB Communications Group: lead in the development and timely distribution of consistent messaging to DDSB staff, affected schools and community throughout the consultation process; publicize consultations via DDSB's and impacted schools' websites and social media.

3.9 Local Area Trustees: track consultation progress and represent the community by advocating for their concerns at public meetings. Throughout the process,

ensure local perspectives are integrated into the dialogue, evaluate final staff recommendations, and cast the deciding votes on boundary reviews.

3.10 All DDSB Staff Participating in Boundary Reviews: support a fair, accurate, and Board-led consultation process; provide factual information and clarification about the boundary review process, proposed options, timelines, and established feedback channels; direct questions and feedback through the consultation process established for the review; and refrain from organizing, promoting, or advocating for a particular boundary option or community position.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This School Boundary Procedure:

- Applies to elementary and secondary attendance boundaries for all DDSB-operated schools.
- Covers boundary reviews initiated by new school openings, realignment of existing attendance areas, enrolment pressures or declines, program changes, physical facility changes, demographic shifts, or transportation/safety considerations.
- Excludes the redesignation of growth which identifies specific geographic areas to temporarily attend a partner school until a new community school is funded and constructed.
- Excludes the temporary redirection of students during a school year when no more students can be accommodated within existing classes at a school. These students return to their home school in the following school year.
- Excludes school closures as they are governed by the Pupil Accommodation Review Process and are therefore not considered a Boundary Review.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Rationale for a Boundary Review

Boundary reviews may be initiated when one or more of the following conditions are present:

- Opening of a new school
- Sustained enrolment imbalance across schools (growth or decline)
- Program relocation, expansion, or introduction (French Immersion; Dual Track – English and French Immersion)
- Capital planning or facility constraints
- Emerging safety concerns or accessibility requirements related to student commute and site navigation

5.2 Boundary Design Criteria

Where feasible, boundary decisions should consider:

5.2.1 Student Wellbeing & Equity

- **Safety & Access:** Prioritizing student physical safety and safe, accessible routes.
- **Mental Health:** Transition planning that supports the wellness of students and families during changes
- **Equity:** Decisions will prioritize accessibility, equity and inclusion principles.

5.2.2 Community & Geography

- **Cohesion:** Maintaining neighborhood integrity and existing community connections.
- **Physical Borders:** Aligning boundaries with municipal borders and natural landmarks.

5.2.3 Capacity & Future Planning

- **Enrolment Trends:** Accounting for long-term growth and demographic shifts.
- **Facility Utilization:** Balancing program viability with the physical capacity of the building.
- **Growth Management:** Identifying partner schools and managing the impact of new residential developments.

5.2.4 Operational Infrastructure

- **Transportation:** Optimizing busing efficiency and managing associated costs.
- **Child Care:** Assessing demand for Before and After School Care and the impact on existing on-site child care centers.

5.3 Boundary Review Process

5.3.1 Existing Schools & Programs

When proposing a permanent boundary realignment for existing schools or programs, staff must present at least **two distinct options** to facilitate community consultation and input.

5.3.2 New Schools

- **Standard Process:** Consultations for new school boundaries will focus on growth areas previously assigned to partner schools via the **Redesignation of Growth** process.
- **Complex Boundary Changes:** If a new boundary involves both a growth area and the realignment of an existing boundary, staff will provide **two separate options** for community discussion and input.

5.3.3 Identification of Need and Plan Requirements.

The Pupil Accommodation Plan identifies needs through short and long-term enrolment analysis. Proposed consultation options must include:

- **Enrolment Projections:** An analysis of long-term growth or decline trends.
- **New School Timelines:** For new schools, permanent boundaries must be established by February of the scheduled opening year.
- **Transportation:** A broad outline of transportation impacts, with final routing confirmed upon boundary implementation.
- **Transition & Wellness:** A preliminary transition plan prioritizing student mental health and well-being. This plan is finalized following Board approval of the recommended attendance boundary and prior to implementation.
- **Child Care:** Preliminary information regarding existing or proposed child care centers and before/after-school programs at the affected locations.

5.3.4 Board Notification

Staff will submit an information report to the Board of Trustees outlining the rationale for the boundary review and the proposed consultation options.

5.3.5 Public Consultation Requirements

Consultation Timeline

- **Commencement:** Public consultation begins the day after the information report is submitted to the Board.
- **Duration:** The consultation period will remain open for at least 8 weeks.
- **Final Reporting:** A final recommendation report will be presented to the Board within 8 weeks of the consultation's closing date.

Meeting Formats & Protocols

All public meetings adhere to the [DDSB Code of Conduct](#).

- **In-Person Open House:** At least one session will be held (where feasible). Comment sheets will be provided, and all submissions will be included in the final recommendation report to the Board of Trustees.
- **Virtual Meeting:** Includes a formal presentation on the process and data.
 - **Q&A:** Questions must be submitted to Property and Planning **5 working days** in advance to be included in the Q&A portion of the Virtual Meeting.
 - **Responses:** Staff will group similar themes and read responses during the meeting. All Q&As will be documented in the final report to the Board of Trustees.

- **SCC Engagement:** Principals will facilitate initial meetings between Property and Planning staff, System Leads, and affected School Community Council (SCC) Executives.

Input Channels and Documentation

- **Feedback Methods:** Community input is collected via email, voicemail, online surveys, and an optional FAQ sheet as required.
- **Transparency:** All documents will be hosted at www.ddsb.ca and promoted via social media.
- **Final Assessment:** The final report to the Board of Trustees will include all community input and evaluate any viable alternative boundary solutions proposed by the public.

5.3.6 Staff will analyze and refine proposed options considering equity, transportation, student well-being, child care needs, operational impacts, and community feedback.

5.3.7 Staff will prepare a final recommendation report summarizing consultation findings and proposed recommendations for consideration by senior administration and approval by the Board of Trustees.

5.4 Management of Enrolment Growth Boundary Through a Temporary Redesignation of Growth

In areas of new residential development, staff may designate **Growth Boundaries** where students attend a temporary **partner school** until a new local school is opened.

- **Operational Adjustments:** Changes to partner school designations are operational and **do not require public consultation**.
- **Monitoring:** Partner school capacity is assessed annually. If a school exceeds capacity, a new partner school will be designated.
- **Reporting:** An annual information report will be submitted to the Board of Trustees identifying all growth boundaries and partner schools.
- **Transition to Permanent Boundaries:** Once Ministry of Education funding for a new school is approved, a formal boundary review as identified in Part 4, will be initiated incorporating impacted growth boundaries and associated partner schools or identified affected schools.
- **Funding Delays:** If funding is not approved, Staff maintain the flexibility to relocate a growth boundary as needed to address immediate accommodation requirements.

5.5 Implementation and Timing

Deadlines: Decisions to realign or establish boundaries must be finalized prior to the start of the applicable school year.

Effective Date: New attendance boundaries take effect at the beginning of the school year.

5.5.1 Elementary Schools

- **Standard Timeline:** Reviews typically begin in the **Fall**, with final decisions approved by **February** for the following academic year.
- **Adjustments:** The Chief Executive Officer may adjust this timeline as necessary.

5.5.2 Secondary Schools

- **Standard Timeline:** Reviews begin in **April** (two academic years prior to implementation).
- **Approval:** Final decisions are approved by **October** of the following academic year to allow for course selection and staffing.

5.5.3 Communication & Transition

- **Notification:** Approved boundary decisions will be communicated by the end of the approval week via the DDSB website, social media, and direct school messaging.
- **Transition Planning:** The final report must include a transition plan from the Superintendent(s) addressing student integration, transportation, and mental health supports.

5.6 Review, Monitoring and Communication

The School Boundary Policy and accompanying procedure shall be reviewed every five years or earlier if required, to ensure continued alignment with legislative requirements, accommodation planning needs, and operational effectiveness.

Boundary review information, decisions, timelines, and supporting materials will be communicated in accessible formats through DDSB communication channels, including the DDSB website and affected school communities.

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- DDSB P IND 01 Indigenous Education Policy
- DDSB P HRA 01 Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy
- DDSB Annual Pupil Accommodation Plan – Trends, Issues and Future Opportunities
- DDSB P HRA 02 Accessibility Policy