

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Guidelines for a recommendation document to the Minister

In accordance with section 6.4 and 6.5 of Policy 409, the steps below must be followed when a District Education Council (DEC) recommends studying the viability of a school:

<p>1) Notice of the DEC to the Minister Section 6.4.4</p>	<p>The DEC must advise the Minister in writing when it intends to study a school's sustainability.</p>
<p>2) Communication concerning the study Section 6.4.5</p>	<p>The DEC informs the affected persons of the intention to study the viability of the school, the timeframe for consultation (day, time, location) and the name of the school district's contact person from whom they can obtain other information and clarifications. In particular, DEC's should consider the following options to facilitate communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Letter to the parents of the students concerned (e.g., a note sent to the home); b) Public meeting called by the DEC; c) Meeting of the Parent School Support Committee; d) Publication of ads in local newspapers; e) Districts' websites or Facebook page or other social media; f) School's website or Facebook page or other social media.
<p>3) Public consultation (Section 6.6)</p>	<p>First meeting: It is intended to inform the persons affected of the DEC's intention and to provide information relevant to the proposal and the steps to be followed throughout the study. The persons affected are the individuals, including the parents of the students currently attending the school and of the students who are transferring from a feeder school to the school in question, who are affected by the potential results of a study on the viability of a school.</p> <p>The following elements must be included in the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The objective of the first meeting (informing people); b) The reason the study is being done (why study the school's viability?); c) An explanation of the process the DEC will follow, including the roles and responsibilities of the DEC and the Minister; d) The outcomes that could arise from the study (status quo, closure, merger, etc.); e) An explanation of the proposal(s) envisaged by the DEC; f) Relevant information. It is recommended that the eight mandatory criteria set out in section 6.5.1 of Policy 409 be used as headings in the presentation and that the information

	<p>available to the district on each of them be provided. Other criteria may be added. If no information is available about a criterion, simply say that this information will be collected as part of the public consultation process.</p>
<p>3) Public consultation (Section 6.6)</p>	<p>Second meeting: It aims to provide affected persons with the opportunity to make a presentation to the DEC. Here are some precisions. For example, the second meeting must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide sufficient preparation time - a minimal timeframe of one month between the first and second meeting is recommended; b) Ensure that the affected persons have the chance to express their views and they are heard impartially (in writing or orally); c) Record remarks made at the meeting or received as part of the consultation, collect copies of presentations, letters, speeches, etc. <p>The DEC may need to hold as many meetings as necessary to properly consult the public regarding a school sustainability study.</p> <p>Third meeting: It is designed to provide the public with the results of the consultation process and the recommendation submitted to the Minister. The presentation must reflect the eight criteria deemed mandatory in section 6.5.1.</p>
<p>4) DEC's recommendation concerning the closure of a school, for the Minister's approval (Section 6.7)</p>	<p>If a DEC recommends closing a school, the DEC submits its recommendation in writing to the Minister, based on the results of the consultation.</p> <p>The Minister reviews the DEC's recommendation and responds to it.</p> <p>If the Minister approves the school closure, the DEC informs parents of the relocation of students and passes on any other relevant information.</p>
<p>5) Declaration of a surplus property (Section 6.7.7)</p>	<p>If the district does not intend to use the closed and unoccupied school for other purposes, it shall be deemed surplus by motion of the DEC and then is transferred to the Minister.</p>

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In accordance with section 6.8 of Policy 409, the following steps must be followed when a DEC proposes a grade reconfiguration at a school:

A. The DEC informs the Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Section 6.8.1 – the DEC informs the Minister in writing of its intention to reconfigure grades.
B. Public consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The school district consults the parents concerned.
C. The DEC informs the Minister of the final decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The DEC informs the Minister in writing of the final decision to reconfigure grades. •The superintendent informs parents of the relocation of students and passes on any other relevant information.

The DEC shall use the template below to inform the Minister in writing of a recommendation to close a school, in accordance with section 6.7 of Policy 409. The DEC must demonstrate to the Minister that the requirements of Policy 409 have been applied in the process and the resulting recommendation, including:

- that the eight criteria established under section 6.5.1 were taken into consideration;
- that the principles of procedural fairness were applied in accordance with section 6.6;
- that the relevant educational options were considered.

To the extent possible, the DEC must include examples of information (e.g., copies of minutes of meetings, presentations received, the schedule of public and closed-door meeting, etc.).

The DEC may use the following checklist to recommend the closure of a school to the Minister:

Description	Elements to document in the presentation to the Minister	Yes	No	N/A
Part I – Summary				
Summary (less than one page)	a) Overview of the review process that was used.			
	b) Proposal presented to the school community.			
	c) General procedure and tone of the public consultation.			
	d) DEC recommendation.			

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Description	Elements to document in the presentation to the Minister	Yes	No	N/A
Part II – Public consultation (application of the principles of procedural fairness)				
First public meeting of the DEC	a) How and when the affected persons were informed that a study was being conducted.			
	b) Information provided to the affected persons (copies of presentations, documents, etc.).			
	c) The information must include a header for each of the eight minimum criteria as well as the information provided about each of the affected persons. If no information is available about a particular criterion, indicate what was explained to the public.			
Second public meeting of the DEC	a) Summary of the opportunities offered to the affected persons to express their opinion (in writing or orally).			
	b) Copy of the minutes of the second meeting, including an overview of the main concerns or comments of the public according to the eight required criteria, and any additional criteria, if applicable.			
	c) Copies of presentations, letters, documents, etc., provided to the DEC for review by the affected persons.			
Third public meeting of the DEC	a) Summary of the results of the consultation, including the documentation of the report on the eight criteria listed in 6.5.1 provided by the DEC, which was presented to the public at the third meeting.			
	b) Copy of the minutes of the meeting, including the DEC's motion recommending the closure.			

Part III – Communication with the public				
Public notice	Details on how the persons affected were informed by means of a public notice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include copies of the notices, notes, ads, etc. 			
Part IV – Additional information				
Other factors taken into consideration by the DEC with regard to the local situation	If applicable, provide additional details about the factors that informed the decision.			