

Policy 18 – School Catchment Areas

The Board will establish school catchment areas and outline attendance provisions for neighbourhood schools, district-wide programs/schools, and the provisions for non-catchment attendance.

The Board is committed to long-range planning to establish school catchment areas that will minimize the need for boundary changes.

When establishing school catchment areas and school locations, primary consideration is given to:

1. minimizing walking distances and safety hazards;
2. using natural barriers and arterial roads for boundaries where possible;
3. the student capacities of each school and its neighbouring school with a view to minimizing the use of portables.

The Board also recognizes certain conditions may require a change to a school catchment area, which could include:

1. the opening of a new school or closing of an existing school;
2. an overcrowded or underutilized condition in an existing school;
3. the development of new residential areas;
4. a decline in population within an established area;
5. a change in the school grade configuration model used by the district;
6. establishment of a choice program or school.

The Board values the “neighbourhood school” and strives to maintain the integrity of student placement in neighbourhood schools.

However, the Board recognizes and provides for certain exceptions such as:

1. a student who has been accepted into a district-wide program and/or school;
2. a student whose catchment school does not have the capacity, necessary resources, or educational program to meet the student’s needs, as determined by the Superintendent of Schools or designate.

Note: The Board is not obligated to provide transportation services to students attending non-catchment schools or district programs.

1. Registration Priorities

- 1.1 Section 74.1 of the *School Act* establishes priorities for enrolment in public schools. Section 74.2 of the *School Act* allows a first nation, a treaty first nation or the Nisga'a Nation to designate a school of choice in a school district.
- 1.2 Parents are advised that acceptance into a non-catchment school is subject to annual approval based on the availability of space and facilities at the school.
- 1.3 Subject to 1.1, the following priorities are in effect to determine the acceptance of students in a particular school or program.
 - 1.3.1 Catchment area students who attended the school during the previous school year.
 - 1.3.2 New catchment area students.
 - 1.3.3 Non-catchment who attended the school during the previous school year.
 - 1.3.4 Non-catchment students.
 - 1.3.5 Non-district students – did not previously attend school in the district.

Provided application deadlines and other requirements have been met, priorities within the above categories will be by date and time of receipt of application.

2. Registration Dates

2.1 Neighbourhood Schools

If space and facilities are determined to be available, the following registration periods will apply.

2.1.1 First Registration Period (Kindergarten only)

Registration for Kindergarten students will commence the third Monday of January until the end of the first week of the following school year. Seats will be assigned based on the registration priorities listed above.

2.1.2 Second Registration Period (Grades 1-12)

Registration applications will be received at the school the first Monday of February and the end of the first week of the following school year. Seats will be assigned based on the priorities under Registration Priorities.

2.1.3 Third Registration Period

Applications received after the end of the first week of the school year will be accepted as they are received, if space, facilities and class composition are deemed appropriate.

2.2 District Programs and Schools

Programs/schools that are established by the Board as district programs, academies and/or schools, (e.g. Traditional Schools, Integrated Arts Schools), shall have the entire district as their catchment area. Placements in district programs are awarded based on a lottery system or application or are automatically transitioned from a current district program to the next level of school.

2.2.1 First Registration Period Kindergarten and Late French Immersion

The application will commence the fourth Monday of January, until the fourth Friday of January each year. Seats will be assigned during the second week of February on a proportional basis by catchment area, via a random selection process.

2.2.2 Registration for all other district programs will follow the registration periods outlined in Section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. Application for Academies will commence the first Monday of February, and seats will be assigned the first week of May, based on the registration priorities in Section 2.1 and on the guidelines established by the program.

Note: The French Immersion schools have defined catchment areas for each school.

3 **Placement of Students**

The district reserves the right to restrict and redirect student placement in a manner which limits inefficiencies in the use of space, resources and educational programs.

A student who is placed in a school other than their catchment school, may return to his/her catchment school as soon as circumstances (i.e., school capacity, program requirements) allow.

4 **Out of Catchment Students**

Enrolment of students from outside their local catchment area will be subject to the availability of space and facilities at the school. The school district endeavors to provide facilities to meet the educational needs of catchment students. A school must not enrol out-of-catchment students unless there is sufficient capacity after reserving places for in-catchment students, taking into account siblings of current students, students who move into the catchment during the year and future enrolment growth.

Reference

AP336 – Student Registration & Catchment Areas