



Niagara Catholic District School Board

COMMUNITY PLANNING & PARTNERSHIPS

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

800 – Schools and Community Councils

No. 800.6

Adopted Date: May 25, 2010

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: March 22, 2022

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are Administrative Operational Procedures for Community Planning & Partnerships.

PREAMBLE

Niagara Catholic is committed to working with community partners who support Catholic education to make the best use of its facilities.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes its responsibility to provide, operate and maintain school facilities as effectively and efficiently as possible, while providing the best education of students, as well as recognizing the value of Catholic schools in fostering a spirit of cooperation between the home, the school and the church. Offering space in schools to partners can also strengthen the role of schools in communities, provide a place for programs and facilitate the coordination of, and improve access to, services for students and the wider community.

Any partnership arrangements must be consistent with the Board's mandate to provide learning environments in which the Gospel values and teachings of the Catholic Church are central to its vision and mission.

The Board will build its success with community partners by putting measures in place to increase the opportunities to expand the number of partnerships as well as long-term planning in a way that is well-informed, well-coordinated, transparent, sustainable and supportive of student achievement in its Catholic schools.

Where opportunities exist to share facilities with community partners that enhance Catholic Education and the partnership between the home, school, church and the broader community, the Niagara Catholic District School Board may enter into license or joint-use agreements for unused space in open and operating facilities, or may co-build a new school or addition with such partners.

BACKGROUND

The *Community Planning & Partnerships Administrative Operational Procedures* implements the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline released by the Ministry of Education in March 2015. A copy of the Procedures as well as a list of available space and/or co-building opportunities are posted on the Niagara Catholic District School Board website and available, through the Facilities Services Department, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, Ontario.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board, while supporting the achievement and safety of students, through community planning and partnerships, strives to:

- Reduce facility operating costs;
- Improve services and supports available to students;
- Strengthen relationship between the Board, community partners and the public;

- Maximize the use of public infrastructure through increased flexibility and utilization; and
- Provide a foundation for improved service delivery for communities.

The Board will continue to follow Ontario Regulation 444/98 – Disposition of Surplus Real Property regarding the lease or sale of surplus assets, to co-build facilities with other entities, and to enter into a variety of facility partnerships through a licence or a joint use agreement.

FACILITY PARTNERSHIPS AND BOARD PLANNING

The Niagara Catholic District School Board will undertake long-term capital and accommodation planning informed by relevant information obtained from local municipal governments and potential community partners. Long-term enrolment projections and planning opportunities for the effective use of excess space in all area schools will take into account opportunities for partnerships with other school boards and appropriate organizations. Such partnerships must be financially sustainable, safe for students and staff, and protect the core values and objectives of the Board.

The Controller of Facilities Services shall report annually to the Board identifying facilities that may be suitable for facility partnerships with respect to new construction and unused space in open and operating schools and administrative buildings.

The Board will share planning information with potential community partners in a timely manner to allow external entities sufficient time to respond to presented opportunities. These opportunities may include participation in a facility partnership or contribution to land-use or green space/park plans. The Board will include information related to the Community Planning and Partnerships Administrative Operational Procedures and discussions with community organizations in School Information Profiles when the Board is undertaking accommodation review processes.

SUITABILITY OF FACILITY PARTNERSHIPS

The suitability of facility partners shall be determined by criteria including the following:

- The use of facilities is consistent with the Board Mission, Vision and Values;
- The use of facilities is in compliance with the Education Act and Board policy;
- The health and safety of students and staff must be protected;
- The partnership must be appropriate for school setting; and
- The partnership must not compromise student achievement.

Entities that provide competing education services such as tutoring services, ELKP to Grade 12, private schools or private colleges and credit offering entities that are not government funded are not eligible partners.

The Board, in compliance with local bylaws, may consider both for-profit and non-profit entities.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Facilities

The Controller of Facilities Services or designate will post information on the website, under the Facilities tab, regarding its intention to build new schools and to undertake significant renovations, as well as information regarding unused space, in open and operating schools and administrative buildings, that is available for facility partnerships. This information will be updated at least once per year in the case of space in existing facilities, and as needed in the case of co-building opportunities. The Board will post the name and contact information of the staff member who will respond to questions regarding facility partnerships throughout the year.

Facilities – Surplus Space

For surplus space being offered for sale the Board will follow the circulation process outlined in O. Reg. 444/98.

Facilities – Non-Surplus Space

Where the unused space in open and operating schools is not surplus, but is available for partnership, or where the partnership opportunity involves new construction, the information will be provided to potential partners through the notification process outlined below. The notification should be supported by a Board resolution.

1. The Controller of Facilities Services will create a notification list of Potential Partners who will be notified when key information regarding community planning or facility partnerships is changed or updated. The notification list will address the following requirements:
 - Entities listed in Ontario Regulation 444/98 – Disposition of Surplus Real Property, and will include:
 - All applicable levels of municipal government (upper, lower tiers)
 - Consolidated Municipal Service Manager(s)
 - Public Health Boards, Local Health Integration Networks and Children’s Mental Health Centres
 - Child care operators or government-funded organizations, if requested
 - Other entities as determined by Board staff
2. The Board will provide information about the available space to the entities on the notification list including size, location, facility amenities and required renovations, if needed.
3. Entities may then express their interest in using the space. Senior Administrative Council will evaluate the expressions of interest to select partner(s) based on the Community Planning and Partnerships Administrative Operational Procedures. The Board may enter into a license or joint use agreement. Approval from the Minister of Education may be required depending on the provision under the Education Act allowing the transaction.

Public Meeting

The Controller of Facilities Services or designate will coordinate a public meeting at least once per year to discuss potential community partnership opportunities. The potential partners on the notification list and the general public will be notified about the meetings through the Board website and three (3) local newspapers: the St. Catharines Standard, the Niagara Falls Review, and the Welland Tribune. Additional staff level meetings may also be held if required.

During the annual meeting, Board staff will present all or a portion of the Board’s capital plan, details of any schools deemed eligible for community partnerships, relevant information available on the Board’s website and any supplementary community planning and partnership information. This information will be shared during the public meeting and any staff level meetings as appropriate.

When inviting entities on the notification list to the annual meeting and/or staff level meeting, Board staff will clearly request that organizations be prepared to share planning information including population projections, growth plans, community needs, land-use and green space/park requirements. The invitation list, the entities in attendance at the public meeting and any information exchanged will be formally documented by Board staff.

In addition to the annual Community Planning and Partnership meeting, the Board will continue discussions with affected municipalities and community organizations as it explores options to address underutilized space issues within specific areas of the Board. These discussions will inform proposals that Board staff may present to Trustees, including recommendations to undertake a pupil accommodation review process.

CO-BUILDING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

When considering building a new school or undertaking a significant addition or renovation, the Controller of Facilities Services will inform Potential Partners on the notification list one (1) to three (3) years prior to the potential construction start date. The notification must be supported by a Board resolution. An identified source of funding or Ministry approval is not required at this point. Senior Administrative Council will receive and evaluate expressions of interest to select partner(s) based on its Community Planning and Partnership Administrative Operational Procedures.

The Board has the authority to co-build schools with other entities and to enter into a variety of facility partnerships through a license or a joint use agreement as outlined in the Education Act, although Minister of Education approval may be required in some circumstances.

Partnership agreements cannot be finalized until the Board and the partner(s) have an approved source of funding. Prior to receiving Ministry of Education approval to proceed with new construction or major renovation projects, the Board will be required to demonstrate that potential partnerships have been considered.

SHARING UNUSED EXISTING SPACE WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Underutilized open and operating school and administrative facilities will be reviewed for their suitability for partnership, in alignment with the Board's mission, vision and values, based on the following criteria:

- The facility is 60 percent utilized (or less) for two years and/or have 200 or more unused pupil places;
- Space needs of existing educational programming and initiatives has been taken into consideration;
- Student and staff safety will not be compromised;
- Student achievement will not be compromised;
- Pupil accommodation has been taken into consideration;
- The partnership will be in compliance with zoning and site use restrictions;
- Facility condition is suitable, or will be addressed at the partner's cost;
- Configuration of existing space is suitable or will be altered at the partner's cost; and
- There is an ability to separate the student space from the partner space.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

The Board should not incur additional costs to support facility partnerships. On a cost-recovery basis, the fees charged to partners should cover the operations, administrative and capital cost to the Board of the space occupied by the partner.

In co-building, partners will be required to pay for and finance their share of construction, including a proportional share of joint-use or shared space. Construction is required to be within Ministry funding and space benchmarks for the Board portion of the facility.

The Director of Education shall ensure the provision of proper legal agreements to potential partners that respect the Education Act and protect the rights of the Board and will include clauses regarding but not limited to:

- Terms of the Agreement;
- Cost sharing;
- Hours of operation;
- Improvements to the building;
- Insurance and liability;
- Terms of termination;
- Mediation in event of conflict; and
- Other clauses as deemed applicable.

References

- [Ministry of Education – Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline \(March 2015\)](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 444/98 – Disposition of Surplus Real Property](#)
- **Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures**
 - [Attendance Areas Policy \(301.3\)](#)
 - [Pupil Accommodation Review Policy \(701.2\)](#)

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