

**ATTENDANCE AREA REVIEW**

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

300 – Schools/Students

Policy No 301.3

Adopted Date: June 23, 1998

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: February 3, 2026

PREAMBLE

The Niagara Catholic District School Board is committed to providing, operating, and maintaining school facilities in an effective and efficient manner, while ensuring the delivery of quality Catholic educational programs to all students.

To support informed decision-making regarding student accommodation and capital planning, the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services, or designate, shall maintain accurate and up-to-date information on school facility capacities, current and projected student enrolment, attendance areas, and out-of-area student placements.

The Board's long-term student accommodation needs and capital planning priorities will be outlined in the Long-Term Accommodation Plan. This report includes data on current and projected facility utilization, identifies potential attendance area reviews, establish holding areas where appropriate, and outlines other strategic planning measures to ensure optimal use of school space across the system.

An attendance area review may be initiated in response to changing demographics, the opening of a new school, completion of a school addition, a school closure, or recommendations arising from a pupil accommodation review. As part of this process, the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, or designate, will present a recommendation to the Board of Trustees through a Technical Information Report.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Administrative Operational Procedures, the following definitions shall apply:

Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee (AAARC): A committee established to support the attendance area review process, composed of voting and non-voting members, with defined responsibilities and terms of reference.

Attendance Area: An area defined by a geographic boundary which determines, in part, students' designation to a particular School or program (e.g., French Immersion), based on primary address. Each school has a defined attendance area. Attendance areas may be subject to change based on enrolment trends, construction of new schools, program changes, and alignment of elementary and secondary boundaries.

Family of Schools: A group of schools identified for their relation to the Catholic secondary school and may be utilized for their inclusion in an attendance area review, typically based on geographic proximity or administrative alignment.

Final Report: A comprehensive document summarizing the attendance area review process, technical analyses, public consultation results, and final recommendations for Board approval.

Holding Area: An area defined by a geographic boundary and removed from an existing Attendance Area for redirection from the designated school. A holding area may be established where there is planned or respective residential development, or where substantial enrolment growth is occurring. A holding area may be created to assist with enrolment management or student accommodation planning.

Holding School: A holding school is the designated school where students within a holding area are assigned to attend for an interim period or until a long-term accommodation is available.

Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP): A strategic guiding document outlining current and projected rates of school facility utilization, potential attendance area reviews, and strategic action plans for student accommodation and capital planning.

Modified Attendance Area Review: A streamlined review process considered for minor impacts on student enrolment or urgent attendance area adjustments.

Operational Implementation and Transition Plan: A plan included in the final report, detailing the steps and timeline for implementing the recommendations of an attendance area review.

Overflow Accommodations Protocol: A set of actions implemented to address urgent or critical student enrolment pressures, potentially involving redirection of new or existing students.

Public Information Session: A meeting held to engage the public, provide context and awareness of the attendance area review, and gather feedback.

Technical Information Report: A report prepared by the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, or designate that informs the Board of Trustees about the proposed attendance area review, highlighting accommodation issues, rationale, and enrolment projections.

ATTENDANCE AREA REVIEWS

All attendance area reviews shall be conducted in accordance with Niagara Catholic District School Board Policy No. 301.3, as amended. Depending on the scope and nature of the review, the process may be supported by an Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee with a defined Terms of Reference, or proceed through a Modified Attendance Area Review process.

Technical Information Report

As part of the attendance area review process, the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, , in collaboration with Senior Administration or designate, shall prepare a Technical Information Report for submission to the Board of Trustees. The purpose of this report is to provide the necessary background and rationale to support the initiation of a formal review process.

The Technical Information Report shall:

- identify the student accommodation challenges prompting the review and articulate the overall objectives of the proposed attendance area review;
- present a rationale supported by technical analysis and relevant enrolment and facility data;
- define the affected Family of Schools and specify the schools to be included within the scope of the review;
- indicate whether the formation of an Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee is recommended, and, if so, identify the Trustee representatives who would serve as voting members;
- provide supporting data including enrolment projections, facility utilization rates, and relevant references to the Long-Term Accommodation Plan.

The Technical Information Report shall not include detailed accommodation scenarios or proposed boundary changes. Instead, it shall include a recommendation for one of the following courses of action:

- 1) That the Board of Trustees initiate the attendance area review and establish an Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee; or
- 2) That the Board of Trustees proceed through a modified attendance area review process.

If the Board of Trustees does not approve either recommendation, the attendance area review shall not proceed.

Details regarding the composition and responsibilities of the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee are provided in Appendix A.

Upon approval of an attendance area review, all schools within one or more affected Family of Schools' will be included in the scope of the review. This comprehensive approach ensures that a full range of student accommodation options can be explored. As the review progresses, the scope may be refined to focus on a specific geographic area or a subset of schools, as appropriate.

MODIFIED ATTENDANCE AREA REVIEWS

A modified attendance area review process may be considered where the scope of the proposed changes is limited and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Fewer than 10% of the student population, to a maximum of 25 students at any affected school, would be impacted;
- The adjustments are technical or administrative in nature and would not affect current students;
- Immediate or urgent changes to attendance areas are required to address time-sensitive accommodation issues.

PROCESS FOR ATTENDANCE AREA REVIEWS

Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee

When the Board of Trustees approves the initiation of an attendance area review and the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee, the Trustee representatives serving as voting members shall be confirmed in accordance with the composition guidelines outlined in Appendix A. Once appointed, Trustees are expected to participate for the full duration of the review to ensure continuity and informed decision-making.

The Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee will establish a meeting schedule and convene regularly throughout the course of the review. Participation in these meetings is by invitation only and not open to the general public unless otherwise agreed upon by consensus of the Committee. Meeting materials shall be made publicly available within five (5) business days following each meeting. Meeting minutes shall be recorded by a non-voting Committee member and made available upon request.

The primary function of the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee is to provide informed analysis and insight, drawing upon local context, school familiarity, and system-wide experience. Committee members are responsible for identifying and discussing relevant school and neighbourhood considerations and sharing these during the review process. The Committee may request additional data, alternative options, or further analysis, which will be provided where a consensus is achieved.

Public engagement is a key component of the attendance area review process. At least one opportunity for public participation shall be provided as part of each review. The timing of public engagement activities will be determined by the Committee. These sessions are intended to provide context, collect feedback, and increase transparency with affected school communities.

At the conclusion of the Committee's deliberations, the Chair shall provide a written summary outlining the preferred option(s) and/or scenarios identified during the review. This summary must reflect the consensus of the Committee and should include a record of public engagement outcomes and how those inputs influenced the Committee's recommendations. Where consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall consult with the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, or designate for guidance.

Final Report

A draft Final Report shall be prepared by the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, in collaboration with Senior Administration or designate, and will include:

- The written summary of preferred options and/or scenarios provided by the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee;
- Additional technical considerations as identified through the review process;
- A summary of public consultation and engagement outcomes;
- Final recommendations regarding the proposed attendance area changes, along with the rationale; and
- Any other supporting information deemed relevant.

The draft Final Report shall be made publicly available for a minimum of ten (10) business days prior to its presentation to the Committee of the Whole. At the discretion of the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services or designate, an additional opportunity for public input may be provided before the report is formally presented.

The Final Report will be brought forward to the Committee of the Whole for information and consideration. At that time, the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services or designate will present an overview of the attendance area review process, summarize the contributions of the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee, and outline the final recommendations. Trustees may ask questions of clarification. The Final Report shall also include an operational implementation and transition plan to support the approved changes.

The final decision regarding any changes to attendance areas rests with the Board of Trustees. Following discussion by the Committee of the Whole, the item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for approval by the Board.

PROCESS FOR MODIFIED ATTENDANCE AREA REVIEWS

Where the criteria outlined in this policy are met, a Modified Attendance Area Review may be appropriate. While this process follows a similar structure to a full attendance area review, it is streamlined in scope and does not require the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee.

Following the presentation of the Technical Information Report, the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services, in collaboration with Senior Administration or designate, shall facilitate a public information session. This session will engage the school community, neighbourhood, and/or broader community potentially affected by the proposed changes. Feedback received through this session, such as comments and questions, will be reviewed and responded to by Administration or designate. An operational implementation and transition plan will also be developed as part of this process.

A final report shall be prepared by the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, or designate, and presented to the Committee of the Whole for information and consideration. This report will include the proposed recommendations, rationale, summary of community engagement, and the implementation plan. Prior to a final decision, Trustees may invite delegations to present their views on the matter.

The final decision on a modified attendance area review rests with Senior Administration. Following the review by the Senior Administration, the item will be brought forward to the Board for information.

LIMITATIONS

Following the completion of an attendance area review or modified attendance area review, an implementation period shall commence to bring the approved recommendations into effect. During this period, the attendance areas of the affected schools shall be considered closed to further changes for three (3) years once the attendance area has been implemented.

The closed status of these Attendance Areas is intended to support the integrity of the approved boundary changes and shall restrict the admission of students from outside the designated Attendance Areas. In addition, the introduction of new program offerings or the expansion of existing programs at schools included in the review shall be limited during the implementation period, unless otherwise directed by the Board of Trustees or the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services or designate.

This restriction also applies to the opening of new school facilities. Unless explicitly authorized, newly opened schools shall not admit students from outside of their defined attendance area or introduce new program options until enrolment has stabilized and sufficient data is available to assess long-term accommodation impacts.

EXCEPTIONS

In specific circumstances, the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services or designate, in consultation with Senior Administration or designate, may undertake minor technical or administrative adjustments to attendance areas without proceeding through a full or modified attendance area review process. These adjustments are intended to address operational or programmatic needs and are subject to the following criteria:

- Technical adjustments may be made where changes are required to correct or refine established attendance area boundaries for alignment with updated municipal mapping or property data. Such changes must not impact any existing students.
- Administrative adjustments may be made where the proposed changes would affect ten (10) or fewer existing students. In these instances, Administration shall consult with affected families and school communities in advance of implementing any adjustments.
- Attendance area changes that affect the location of optional or specialized programs, such as magnet programs or other unique offerings may also be undertaken under this provision. Where existing students may be impacted, consultation with affected families and school communities is required. A transition plan shall be developed and communicated as part of the implementation.
- Adjustments related to alternative, adult, or continuing education programs may also be made outside of a formal review process, at the discretion of the Associate Director of Education – Corporate Services or designate, based on program needs and enrolment considerations.

INTERMITTENT MEASURES FOR STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Holding Areas and Holding Schools

As external factors continue to influence population growth and student enrolment, the Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes that rapid shifts in student accommodation needs may arise. In response to emerging enrolment pressures, overutilization of school facilities, or other significant accommodation challenges, the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, in collaboration with Senior Administration or designate, may recommend the establishment of a Holding Area and associated Holding School as an interim or temporary accommodation strategy.

Where deemed advisable, one or more Holding Areas and corresponding Holding Schools may be proposed through a formal report to the Board of Trustees. This report shall include supporting data, analysis, and rationale for the proposed recommendations. At minimum, the report will:

- assess the impact of redirecting students from the proposed Holding Area on the facility utilization and functional use of the proposed Holding School(s);
- identify any additional temporary accommodation measures required, such as portable classrooms or alternative classroom space;

- confirm the capacity and program suitability of the Holding School(s) to accommodate both projected enrolment from the Holding Area and existing enrolment; and
- provide a summary of the student yields from any existing Holding Areas.

Where no students currently reside in the Holding Area, and new enrolment is not anticipated in the upcoming school year, the area may be identified as “To Be Designated” and subject to annual review.

The authority to establish or dissolve a Holding Area rests with the Senior Administration. Senior Administration may approve the recommendations as presented or direct Staff to return with alternative options for further consideration.

Overflow Accommodations

In exceptional circumstances where urgent or critical student accommodation pressures arise and immediate action is required, the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, in collaboration with Senior Administration or designate, may implement an overflow accommodation protocol to alleviate pressure on existing school facilities.

This protocol may involve:

- Redirecting new kindergarten registrants within a specific attendance area to a designated Holding School;
- Redirecting new registrants in other grades from a specific attendance area to a Holding School;
- Redirecting existing students in specific grades or optional programs to a Holding School or alternate program location to address short-term capacity constraints.

Where such authority is exercised, the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, in collaboration with Senior Administration or designate shall report to the Board of Trustees as soon as reasonably possible. The report will outline the urgent accommodation challenge, the actions taken, and any proposed transition or long-term accommodation strategies. All overflow accommodation protocols implemented under exceptional circumstances will be presented to the Board for information.

IMPLEMENTATION

The timing of decisions related to attendance area reviews, along with the corresponding implementation schedule, must align with the operational and administrative timelines of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. These timelines are essential to ensuring smooth transitions for students, families, and school communities, and to supporting effective planning across all departments.

In cases where approved attendance area changes are not intended to take effect in the subsequent school year, or where no existing students will be impacted by the changes, the implementation schedule shall be determined with consideration to the Board’s broader operational planning cycles and resource requirements.

Following the approval of an attendance area review by the Board of Trustees, a system transition planning team shall be established. This team will be responsible for coordinating the implementation process and providing support to students, staff, and affected school communities to ensure a smooth and well-communicated transition.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Composition of the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee
 Appendix B: Attendance Area Review Process and Milestones and Flowcharts

Adopted Date:	June 23, 1998
Revision History:	November 9, 1999 September 12, 2000 September 19, 2001 June 16, 2009 October 23, 2012 April 28, 2020 February 3, 2026

Composition of the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Committee

The Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee (AAARC) shall be composed of both voting and non-voting members. Voting members represent school communities and play an active role in discussion and decision-making. Non-voting members serve in an advisory capacity, providing technical expertise and administrative support. A quorum—defined as 50% plus one of voting members, including a minimum of two (2) Trustee representatives—is required for any AAARC meeting to proceed.

Voting Membership

The voting members of the AAARC shall include:

- Three (3) Trustees, appointed by the Chair of the Board, including the local Trustee representing the geographic area under review.
- The principal(s) of each school included in the attendance area review.
- One (1) Catholic School Council Chair, or designate, selected by the Catholic School Council of each identified school.

Non-Voting Membership

Non-voting members shall include:

- The Superintendent of Education responsible for the Family of Schools under review shall serve as Chair of the Committee and will be supported by their administrative assistant.
- The Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services, or designate, shall participate in the Committee and will be supported by their administrative assistant.

NSTS, Communications Staff and Program Staff and other staff as needed will be consulted to provide input to the committee as necessary.

Responsibilities and Meeting Structure

The AAARC is established to support the attendance area review process and facilitate informed, community-based discussion. The Committee provides local insights, helps identify school and neighbourhood considerations, and contributes to the functional review of technical recommendations.

At its first meeting, the Committee shall establish a schedule and is expected to hold a minimum of three (3) formal meetings:

- **Meeting 1:** Introductions and review of the Technical Information Report.
- **Meeting 2:** Presentation of initial options and facilitated Committee discussion and feedback.
- **Meeting 3:** Reflection on public input and identification of preferred options or scenarios.

The Committee may identify additional or alternative options throughout the process. These should be supported by functional rationale and informed by members' understanding of local context. Options should align with the following considerations:

Alternative options or scenarios identified by the AAARC should align with the following functional considerations:

- Active transportation routes and neighbourhood connectivity;
- Availability of before and after school programs and other community supports;
- Access to and continuity of academic programming;

- Unique community or student needs;
- Recent or anticipated changes within the local area;
- Physical limitations of school facilities, including space, staffing, and program delivery;
- Practicality of implementation.

Administration will provide all relevant data and technical analysis to support the Committee's review and evaluation of proposed or alternative options.

The AAARC is expected to consider feedback received through the public consultation process. At the conclusion of its work, the Chair of the AAARC shall prepare a written summary outlining the Committee's preferred options and/or scenarios. This summary should highlight the influence of public input on Committee deliberations and reflect the consensus of Committee members.

Attendance Area Review Process and Milestones

The following outlines the key steps and milestones associated with both the Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee (AAARC) process and the Modified Attendance Area Review process.

Step 1: Recommendation through the Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP)

The need for an attendance area review is first identified through the LTAP, which provides a system-wide analysis of enrolment trends, facility utilization, and accommodation pressures.

Step 2: Preparation of Technical Background Report

Administration prepares a Technical Background Report outlining the rationale for the proposed review, enrolment data, facility utilization, and recommended next steps.

Step 3: Board Direction on Review Process

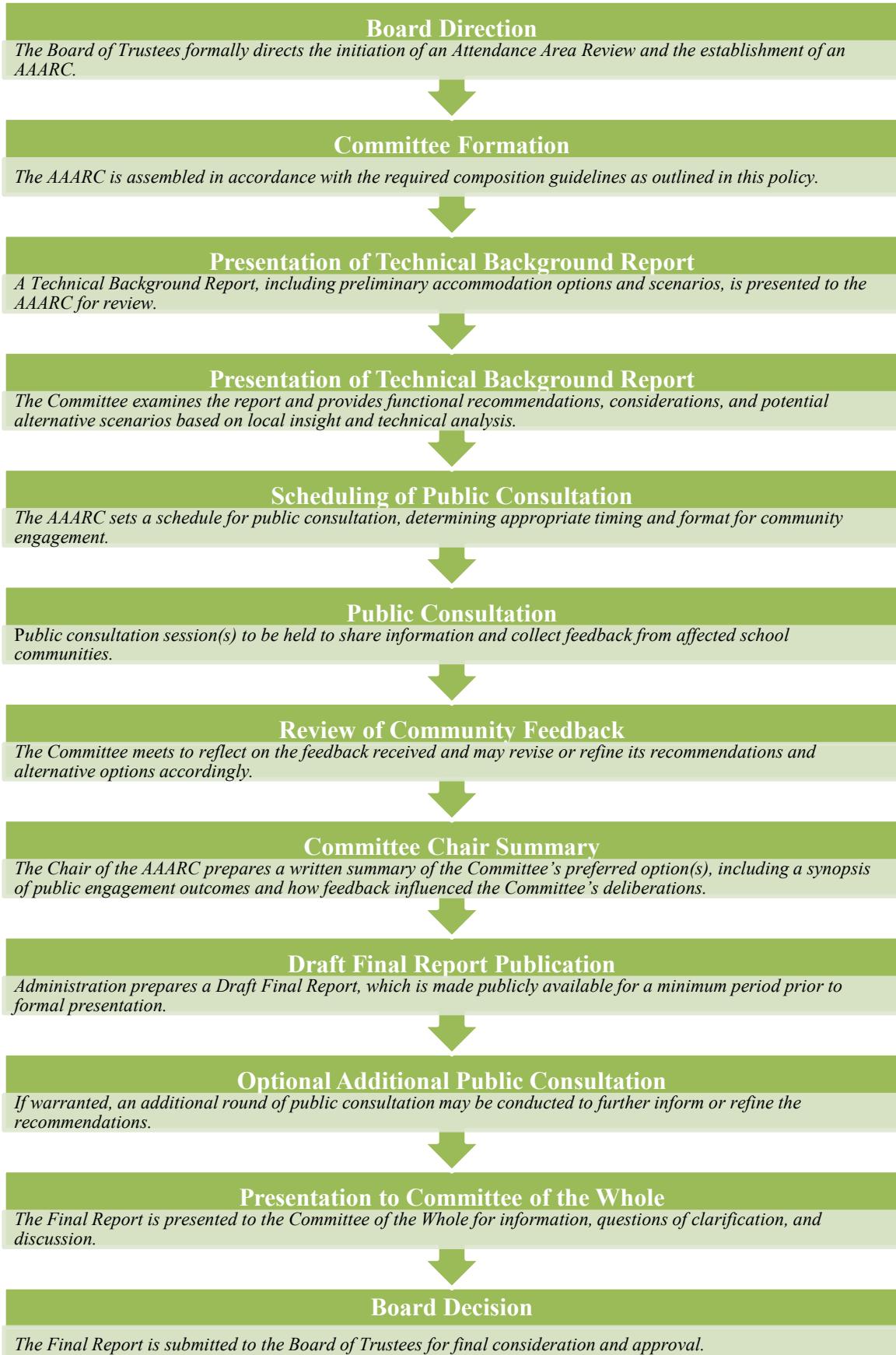
Based on the Technical Background Report, the Board of Trustees shall determine one of the following courses of action:

- Initiate an attendance area review and establish an Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee (AAARC);
- Proceed through a modified attendance area review process; or
- Decide not to proceed with an attendance area review at that time.

Timelines

Regardless of the review model applied, the process should be completed within one calendar school year to support timely decision-making and implementation.

Ad-Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee (AAARC) Flow Chart



Modified Attendance Area Review Process

