

# Pupil Accommodation Reviews

## Statement from the Minister

In June of this year, Ontario launched its [Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education](#). The feedback received from school board, municipal and community partners was central to the development of this plan.

As part of the plan, the Ministry of Education committed to revising its [Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline \(PARG\)](#) and Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG).

I am now requesting your support during the next phase of the plan's implementation.

While the government's rural and Northern education engagement focused primarily on rural and Northern communities, we heard that there is a need to strengthen the pupil accommodation review process for all school boards and to better encourage joint responsibility for integrated community planning across Ontario.

Through this process, we will make certain that:

- We are placing an emphasis on open and effective communication and partnership between school boards and communities;
- Decisions about the future of our schools consider a range of community and student impacts; and
- Boards work collaboratively to consider joint-use solutions where possible.

Your input will once again be invaluable to this effort, as we build on our work to support students and communities in Ontario.

Mitzie Hunter, MBA  
Minister

## **Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) / Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG)**

As part of the province's [\*Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education\*](#) the ministry committed to strengthening its PARG and to support improved co-ordination of community infrastructure planning, which includes revising the CPPG.

The plan responds to feedback received during the government's rural engagement in spring 2017 and aims to better support:

- Quality rural education;
- Sustainable use of school space in rural communities; and
- Decision-making around school closures.

The ministry's proposed revisions to the PARG aim to create a stronger, more collaborative process that better promotes student achievement and well-being and better recognizes the impact of school closures on rural communities. The ministry proposes to achieve this by considering the elements below.

Revising Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) timeframes:

- Extending the current minimum PAR timeframe beyond five months;
- Eliminating the minimum modified PAR timeframe of three months; and/or
- Further extending time-frames under specific circumstances, such as if new closure recommendations are added mid-way through the accommodation review process.

Introducing minimum requirements for the initial staff report by requiring school boards to include:

- At least three accommodation options (a recommended option, an alternative option and a status quo option).
- Information on how accommodation options will impact:
  - School board budget;
  - Student programming /achievement;
  - Student well-being; and
  - Community and/or economic impact.

Promoting community input in the PAR processes by requiring:

- School boards to invite elected municipal representatives and municipal staff to a meeting to discuss the initial staff report;
- School boards to disclose municipal participation / non-participation in PAR and Community Planning and Partnership (CPP) processes;
- A broader role for trustees throughout the PAR process, beyond ad hoc membership of Accommodation Review Committees, hearing public delegations and making the final decision; and
- A participatory role for secondary student representatives in PARs involving secondary schools.

Reforming the PAR administrative review process by:

- Extending the timeframe to submit an administrative review petition from 30 to 60 calendar days; and
- Reviewing the signature thresholds and requirements for launching an administrative review request.

Developing ministry supports, such as:

- A PAR toolkit to standardise type and format of initial staff report information;
- A template for use by community partners to engage boards with proposed alternatives to school closures or other proposals for community use of schools; and
- New support for the review and validation of initial staff report information and community proposals by independent third parties.

The ministry is also supporting improved co-ordination of community infrastructure planning by working with partner ministries and key stakeholders on the following three initiatives:

- Building upon the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' ongoing integrated local planning work to better facilitate local relationships and partnerships, including between school board and municipal governments, particularly in rural and northern communities.
- Revising the CPPG to:
- Better align with integrated local planning processes;

- Encourage joint responsibility for integrated community planning, with a focus on communication between school boards, municipal governments and community partners about boards' capital plans;
  - Highlight the potential for community use of open and underutilized schools; and
  - Require that boards disclose municipal participation and non-participation in CPPG meetings.
- Continuing its ongoing work with the Ministry of Infrastructure to support delivery of recommendations in *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan*, for example, by providing information to support:
    - [The Community Hubs Mapper/](#)
    - [The Community Hubs Surplus Property Transition Initiative](#)

## Discussion Questions

- Do you think the ministry's proposed revisions to the PARG will create a stronger, more collaborative process?
  - If not, why? Are there other elements the ministry should consider?
  - If yes, do you have suggested improvements or comments on the elements being proposed?
- Do you think the above measures to support improved coordination of community infrastructure planning will work to promote sustainable use of school space in communities?
  - If not, why? Are there other elements the ministry should consider?
  - If yes, do you have suggested improvements or comments on the elements being proposed?
- When making decisions about school infrastructure within communities, what measures could be conducive to fostering collaboration and cooperation between municipalities and school boards?

## Consultation Details

This public consultation on revising the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) and Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG) will be conducted in two phases:

## **Phase 1: Discussion Questions**

The first phase of the consultation will focus on collecting feedback on the areas of change listed above, as well as other proposed changes to the PARG and CPPG.

This phase will run from October 12, to December 6, 2017.

## **Phase 2: Revisions and Editing**

In January 2018, the ministry will post a draft of the revised pupil accommodation review guideline and community planning and partnerships guideline for further public feedback.

This draft will be informed by what we heard during Phase 1. The ministry will also post a summary of all Phase 1 feedback.

## **Contact Information**

To submit your thoughts and ideas on revising the PARG and CPPG please send your feedback with the subject line “Revising the PARG and CPPG” to [information.met@ontario.ca](mailto:information.met@ontario.ca).

## **Notice of Collection and Use of Personal Information**

To the extent that the response you provide contains your, or your child's, personal information, the ministry collects that information under the authority of paragraphs 1 and 3 of subsection 8.1(1) of the Education Act. The ministry will use the personal information contained in your response to inform revisions to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) and Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG). These guidelines provide a framework for school boards to use when developing their own PAR and CPP policies. The ministry will only use the personal information contained in your response if doing so is necessary for the purpose of informing revisions to the PARG and the CPPG. The ministry will protect your personal information in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you have any questions about this collection and use of personal information you may contact Yvonne Rollins, Senior Policy Analyst in the Capital and Business Support Division of the Ministry of Education at (416) 326-9932, 900 Bay Street, Floor 19 Mowat Block, Toronto ON, M7A 1N3, [yvonne.rollins@ontario.ca](mailto:yvonne.rollins@ontario.ca).

Please do not include anyone else's personal information in your response, including your child's personal information if your child is 16 years old or older.

## Accommodation Decisions at School Boards

Looking for an overview of the accommodation review process?

This [guide to pupil accommodation reviews](#) describes what happens when a school board is considering a school closure or consolidation.

On March 26, 2015, the Ministry of Education released a new *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* to help school boards make more efficient use of school space while continuing to ensure that communities have the opportunity to provide meaningful input.

The new *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* serves as a province-wide minimum standard that school boards must use to develop their own policies for pupil accommodation reviews. School boards are expected to amend their existing pupil accommodation review and facility partnerships policies to reflect the changes incorporated into the new *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* as well as the *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline* before announcing any new pupil accommodation reviews.

- [Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline, March 2015](#) (PDF, 82 KB)
- B-Memo – 2015 B09: [Release of New Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline and Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline](#) (PDF, 61 KB)
- [Information on Administrative Reviews](#)
- [The Accommodation Review Process](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Related: [Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline](#) (PDF, 140 KB)
- Related: [School consolidation experience studies](#)

Student accommodation decisions such as closing and consolidating schools are among the most important responsibilities of locally-elected school board trustees. The Ministry of Education cannot overrule or change these decisions.

Your school board will usually undertake a pupil accommodation review process – led by an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) – when it is contemplating closing a school. This process must follow the school board's policy that governs

accommodation reviews. The new Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline also outlines circumstances when a school board does not have to undertake a full accommodation review process.

The heart of this process is community consultation through representation on the ARC and through public meetings. The Ministry encourages students, parents and community members to get involved in the accommodation review process. For more information about accommodation reviews, please read the [Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews](#) or see our [frequently asked questions](#).

In addition, to promote closer cooperation and planning between school boards, municipalities and community organizations, the Ministry of Education released a new [Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline](#) (PDF, 140 KB), which updates and replaces the Facility Partnerships Guideline of 2010.

Informed by feedback from the education sector and community partners, the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline establishes a more formal consultation between school boards, municipal governments and other community partners about managing underutilized school space, as well as green space and parkland needs.