



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR)?

A Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) is an open and transparent process of public consultation where a school closure and/or consolidation is being considered to address changing demographics, enrolment, programming, and/or facility condition challenges facing a school or schools in a particular area under review. Pupil Accommodation Reviews are governed by prescribed Ministry of Education Guidelines and follow Board approved policy and process.

What does the Pupil Accommodation Review process entail?

The Pupil Accommodation Review process is outlined in the Board's Pupil Accommodation Review Policy 701.2. The policy identifies two different review options: a "standard" Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) and a modified Pupil Accommodation Review (MPAR). Both types of reviews focus on notification and public consultation on the Board's pupil accommodation plans for a specific community. Both processes include a number of common requirements however there are a few key differences:

Standard Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR)

- A minimum of two (2) public meetings are required
- The formation of a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) is required

Modified Pupil Accommodation Review (MPAR)

- Only one (1) public meeting is required
- Does not require a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC)

When would a modified Pupil Accommodation Review (MPAR) process be used?

An MPAR process could be selected for a particular review area if Board thinks the potential accommodation option(s) are less complex. An MPAR may be approved and initiated by the Board where there are **two (2) or more** factors such as but no limited to: low enrolment and utilization, the school is prohibitive to repair or has higher than average operating and maintenance costs or when the Board is planning to relocate program in which the projected enrolment constitutes more than or equal to 50% of the school's enrolment. A full list of factors can be found in the Pupil Accommodation Review Policy 701.2.

How are schools in a particular area selected for a Pupil Accommodation Review?

One of the key responsibilities of the Board is to ensure that funding is focused on the students who are in classrooms, not on maintaining empty classrooms. Through the Niagara Catholic District School Board Long Term Accommodation Plan 2016-2021, changing demographics

using enrolment information was reviewed and a plan outlining potential short, medium and long term strategies was approved by Trustees. An area becomes a focus if there are schools that have an enrolment below 65 per cent of the Ministry of Education's "on-the-ground" (OTG) capacity (the rated student capacity for a facility) and if the ten year enrolment projections indicate a decline with little or no anticipated future growth.

Why was as "preferred option" included in the Initial Staff Report?

Staff are required by Ministry of Education's Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline and Board Policy to include a preferred option in the Initial Staff Report. In instances where there is more than one option identified, staff are required to identify a "preferred option".

Has a decision already been made?

No, a decision has not been made. Board staff has simply identified a preferred accommodation option based on current and available information to address accommodation pressures in a particular review area. The Board of Trustees will make a final decision following community consultation which is a part of the Pupil Accommodation Review process.

Who makes the final decision in the Pupil Accommodation Review process?

The final decision regarding pupil accommodations rests with the Board of Trustees of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. The Board makes a decision after a review of the Final Staff Report which contains feedback from community.

If a decision is made to close or consolidate a school, how quickly will it happen?

The proposed timeline for a school closure and consolidation is June 2020 or earlier contingent on Board approval of a recommendation and Ministry of Education approval of the business case submission for adequate capital funding.

If a decision is made to close a school, a Transition Planning Committee that would include Board and school staff, parents and students would be established and a very thorough and collaborative transition plan would be put into place to ensure a smooth transition for students and staff.

How will the Board communicate information and updates?

The Pupil Accommodation Review section on the Board website at <http://www.niagaracatholic.ca/accommodation-planning/pupil-accommodation-review/> will be an important source of information and will have the latest updates on Pupil Accommodation Reviews including public meeting and delegation dates, meeting minutes, etc. Up to date information will also be shared via SchoolConnects email and phone messages, letters and advertising in local newspapers.

Does a Pupil Accommodation Review mean my child’s school will close?

Not necessarily. The Board's approval of the Initial Staff Report starts a community consultation process. During that process, parents/guardians and community members will have opportunities to provide input and feedback on the proposed accommodation option for the review area. Public feedback and input will be summarized and included in the Final Staff Report to the Board of Trustees for consideration and they will make the final a decision.

Should students still register at the schools that are part of this review?

Yes. While we understand there may be speculation throughout the process, we will continue to inform students and parents about all new developments from the accommodation review.

How can I get involved in the review process?

Public consultation is a key component of the Pupil Accommodation Review process. The Board encourages all parents and community members to attend public meeting(s) to learn about the process, to stay informed, to ask questions and to provide input/feedback. There will also be opportunities to participate in delegations to the Board during the review process. The public meeting and delegation dates will be shared with the community in advance through a range of media and posted on the Pupil Accommodation Review section of the Board website at <http://www.niagaracatholic.ca/accommodation-planning/pupil-accommodation-review/>.

What will happen to the property if a school is approved to close?

In the event the Board does decide to close a school in a review area, and the school is not required by the Board, it may dispose of the property through a process governed by the Province of Ontario. This process gives priority to other public agencies, including other school boards, the municipality, and the region prior to the site being offered on the open market.

If I have concerns about the outcome of a Pupil Accommodation Review once it is completed, what can I do?

A community is able to request an *Administrative Review* from the Ministry of Education of the Pupil Accommodation Review process, however **it is not a review of the Board decision but whether the Board complied with its Pupil Accommodation Review policy**. Visit the Ministry of Education website at: www.edu.gov.on.ca for more information on the Administrative Review process.

How can I find out more information about the Board’s Pupil Accommodation Review process, policy and procedures?

For more information throughout the Pupil Accommodation Review process, visit the Board website at www.niagaracatholic.com under Accommodation Planning.