

# 6

## Activity 6: School Board Trustees

### Making Tough Choices: Exploring the Issue of School Closures

#### Understanding the Process of School Closures: The Provincial Mandate

**School Board Trustees** play an important role as your community's representative and supporter of public education. Of the many decisions about education and schools that School Board Trustees make while serving in office, perhaps none is more controversial than dealing with the issue of **school closures**. The mandate, authority, guidelines and processes that need to be considered before a particular school is closed are provided by the **Ontario Ministry of Education's** "Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines" which can be found at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/reviewGuide.pdf>.

#### Reading Activity: Ontario Ministry of Education "Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines"

1. **Skim** the "Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines" and note the main ideas of what should be considered before school closures occur.
2. **Scan** the reading for **words that are unfamiliar** to you and create a personal list of them.
3. **Collaborate** in groups to create **master lists** of main ideas and unfamiliar words.
4. **Post** your group's master list to share and discuss with the class.
5. **Read the document** and answer the "**Three Level Questioning Guide**" to further your understanding of the roles of School Boards and citizens in the school closure process.

**Reading Activity: Ontario Ministry of Education “Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines**

**SKIM:** the reading and note the **main ideas** of what should be considered before school closures occur.

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**SCAN:** the reading for unfamiliar words and create a list of them.

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**GROUP MASTER LIST**

**A.** Note the **main ideas** of what should be considered before school closures occur.

A large rectangular area with rounded corners, containing 18 horizontal lines for writing.

**GROUP MASTER LIST**

**B. Create a list of unfamiliar words from the reading. Find definitions through group discussion.**

Word	Definition

Ontario Ministry of Education “Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines” Three-Level Questioning Guide: “Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines”	
Questions	Evidence from the Reading
<p><b>Level 1: On The Lines</b></p> <p>What does the document say about the role and powers of school boards and citizens with respect to school closures? Identify one main idea for each area.</p>	<p><b>School Board:</b></p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p><b>Citizens:</b></p> <p> </p> <p> </p>
<p><b>Level 2: Between The Lines</b></p> <p>What do you think the role and powers of school boards and citizens should be in school closures? Give a reason for each point you make.</p>	<p><b>School Board:</b></p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p><b>Citizens:</b></p> <p> </p> <p> </p>
<p><b>Level 3: Beyond The Lines</b></p> <p>What can you personally do to prevent a school from closing? Provide details about how you would go about it.</p> <p>(or)</p> <p>What can you personally do to help students and their families join your school community if their school has been closed?</p>	<p> </p> <p> </p>

## School Board Trustees Activity

### Making Tough Choices: Exploring the Issue of School Closures

#### Understanding the Process of School Closures: The Role of School Boards and Trustees

The provincial guidelines that govern school closures are interpreted and put into action at the municipal level by school boards who develop the processes through which decisions to close schools are undertaken. The Board of Trustees that serves the Toronto District School Board, for example, has developed a public consultation process for determining the future of individual or groups of schools. This is part of what is called an “Accommodation Review” and it is the process through which decisions to close schools are made. Information about the Accommodation Review can be found at the TDSB website at <http://www.tdsb.on.ca>

### Case Study

In order to better understand how the Accommodation Review process works, review the article from the Ridgetown Independent News: Administration Gives Recommendations to Trustees Concerning Area Schools. 5 May 2010. Volume 16 (#22), pp. 1 & 12.

### Jigsaw Activity

#### Toronto District School Board Accommodation Review Process

In groups, access the TDSB’s Accommodation Review FAQ web page and answer the questions provided on the jigsaw organizer for your particular expert group. Expert groups are divided as follows:

- **Group A: General Questions**
- **Group B: Process Part 1**
- **Group C: Process Part 2**
- **Group D: Parent and Community**
- **Group E: TDSB Staff and Board Decisions**

## Group A: General Questions

1. What is an Accommodation Review?

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2. Does an Accommodation Review mean a school will be closing?

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3. What is an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)?

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4. What is the purpose of an ARC?

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## Group B: Process Part 1

1. How can you deal with the fact your school might close?

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2. What can those who don't agree with the recommendations do?

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3. Why is the TDSB looking at selling schools when they are starting new specialized schools with programs of choice?

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4. How could TDSB staff's recommendations differ from those of the Accommodation Review Committee's (ARC)?

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## Group C: Process Part 2

1. What is the goal of the Accommodation Review Process?

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2. How can we be sure that funds for Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) school improvements will be available as promised?

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3. What is the membership of an ARC?

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4. How long will the ARC take to complete the review?

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### Group D: Parent and Community

1. How does a parent or community member get involved in an Accommodations Review Committee (ARC)?

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2. Do ARC members get paid to be part of this public engagement process?

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3. How does a parent or community member make a deputation or delegation?

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4. Does the community decide what happens to the schools during the review process?

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### Group E: TDSB Staff and Board Decisions

1. If a school closes as a result of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) recommendations, will there be staff layoffs?

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2. When will the Board make specific decisions about the Accommodation Reviews?

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3. Where is the Board getting the funding to move forward with these ARCs?

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## Making Tough Choices: Exploring the Issue of School Closures Activity

### (D)RAFT Activity: Saving Your School - Making a Meaningful Contribution to Your Community

Citizens can make a meaningful contribution to their community by being politically active. In this challenge, you are asked to help save your school from being closed by developing a lobbying strategy and presentation through a (D)RAFT activity. You are being given the opportunity to participate in the political process by persuading your School Board Trustee directly, or by indirect lobbying methods, to use his/her influence and power to keep your school open.

Your tasks are to:

1. **Choose** a **role**, **audience**, **format** and **topic** from the list provided and clear with your teacher.
2. **Utilize** the Saving Your School - Making a Meaningful Contribution graphic organizer to help guide your arguments.
3. **Write** a 250-300 word persuasive argument(s) designed to support your position OR
4. **Develop or Design** your final presentation following the format you have chosen.

Date	Role (Who you are)	Audience (Who you are presenting to)	Format (Method of delivery)	Topic (Reasons for school closures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present Date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/guardian</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Student</li> <li>• Local community members</li> <li>• ARC parent</li> <li>• ARC student representative</li> <li>• TDSB teachers union representative</li> <li>• School support staff</li> <li>• School Trustee</li> <li>• Member of the media</li> <li>• Other stakeholders (approval from teacher required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Board Chair</li> <li>• School Trustee</li> <li>• Parents/guardians</li> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Councillor</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Local community members</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Teachers union</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• General public</li> <li>• Other stakeholders (approval from teacher required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter</li> <li>• Editorial in local newspaper</li> <li>• Script or filmed interview for local television news station</li> <li>• Script or audio recording for local radio talk show</li> <li>• Brochure/Pamphlet to be distributed</li> <li>• Speech -deputation (to city council or school board)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging building</li> <li>• Decline in school enrolment</li> <li>• Quality of the learning environment</li> <li>• Lack of range of courses or programs offered</li> <li>• Student outcomes at the school</li> <li>• Alternative schools available</li> <li>• Close the other school because</li> <li>• Other?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Remember to stay in role</b> and make sure your <b>format</b> and <b>writing suits the specific audience</b> it is intended for!</p>				

## Saving Your School - Making a Meaningful Contribution to Your Community

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Ward: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Trustee: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the reasons for the recommendation that this school be closed?

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2. What characteristics does this school have that defines it?

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3. What are your solutions that will keep the school open?

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4. Who will benefit from these solutions? Why?

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5. Who do you think would be opposed to your solutions? Why?

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6. How will you win over your opponents and audience?

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