



## Staff Report to the Committee of the Whole

May 6, 2026

### BOARD POLICY – ADMISSION AND PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS

Adrian Johnson, Secretary Treasurer

#### OVERVIEW

The Secretary Treasurer will support Trustees in developing a draft policy during the Committee of the Whole meeting.

This report provides background information and questions to consider to inform dialogue and draft policy development at the Committee of the Whole.

#### EXISTING BOARD POLICY

The Board has two related policies, 310 – Admission of Students and 311 – Student Placement. Staff recommend that the Board repeal these two policies, replacing them with a combined operational expectations policy that provides clear governance direction and removes repetition of School Act requirements.

#### TRUSTEE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

At the February 19, 2025, Regular Board Meeting, the Board adopted the following motion:

*That the Superintendent or delegate prepare policy options for the Board to consider at a Committee of the Whole meeting regarding facilitating the admission of students with precarious immigration status.*

The School Act section 2 (1) states that ‘... a person is entitled to enrol in an educational program provided by the board of a school district if the person (a) is of school age, and (b) is resident in that school district.’

Immigration status is not a factor in deciding whether to admit a student. However, the Board may charge a tuition fee if provincial legislation and policy does not consider the student to be ‘ordinarily resident’. Current practice is that staff require students to pay tuition fees equivalent to those charged by the Board’s International Program if they are not ordinarily resident in BC. If the fee is not paid, staff do not admit the student.

#### SCHOOL ACT REQUIREMENTS

[School Act section 74.1](#), *Enrolment in an educational program*, outlines the legislative requirements the Board must follow when determining student placement.

Broadly speaking, the Act requires the Board to place students in the educational program the child registers for. If space and facilities are not available to accommodate all students who register (for example, the school is full), then the Act requires the following descending order of priority (74.1(6)):

- a) a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;
- b) a catchment area child;
- c) a non-catchment area child;

d) a non-school district child.

School Act section 74.2, *First Nation Schools of Choice*, requires the Board to prioritize placement of students who are resident on OKIB reserve at an elementary or secondary school designated by Okanagan Indian Band.

Much of the existing [Board Policy 311, Student Placement](#), reproduces these School Act requirements.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to reproduce the requirements of the School Act in policy? If so, which ones?

**Example,** which does not reproduce School Act requirements: ‘The Superintendent shall establish and publish fair and transparent procedures for the placement of students in an educational program.

In addition to the child placement requirements outlined in the School Act, the Superintendent shall ... [example statements from next sections]:”

## ELEMENTARY TO SECONDARY TRANSITION

In addition, the Act allows, but does not require, the Board to prioritise the placement of children who attend an Elementary School in their feeder Secondary School, regardless of where the student lives. Staff procedure is to prioritize placement in this manner.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to require the Superintendent to prioritize student placement in this manner (policy statement needed), or leave it to the Superintendent’s discretion (no policy statement needed)?

**Example:** ‘The Superintendent shall prioritize the placement of elementary school students [living in-district] in their feeder secondary school, regardless of where the student lives.’

## SIBLING PLACEMENT

The School Act also allows, but does not require, the Board to prioritize placement of children at the school their sibling attends. Existing Board Policy references sibling priority for programs of choice, and does not address it for schools.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to require the Superintendent to prioritize placing siblings in this manner (policy statement needed), or leave it to the Superintendent’s discretion (no policy statement needed)?

**Example:** ‘The Superintendent shall prioritize placing [living in-district] children at the school their sibling attends.’

## CATCHMENT AREAS

[School Act section 75.1](#) requires the School District to establish catchment areas for each school. Existing Board [Policy 310, Admission of Students](#) requires the Superintendent to establish and annually review school catchment areas, informing the Board of major changes.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to approve changes to catchment areas (policy statement needed), or leave it in the hands of the Superintendent (no policy statement needed)?

**Example:** ‘The Superintendent shall only adjust catchment areas with Board approval, by motion.’

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to grandparent in students [and their siblings] attending their legacy catchment school after a catchment boundary change?

**Example:** ‘The Superintendent shall consider, unless the parent chooses otherwise, a student [and their pre-kindergarten siblings] residing an area impacted by a catchment boundary change and attending their legacy catchment school at the time of change as residing in the catchment of that school for as long as the child continues to attend that school.’

## TIE-BREAKING

School Act section 74.1 (8) states ‘*A board must establish rules for determining priority between 2 or more persons having the same priority ...*’.

Current Board policy states that such tie breakers are decided, for Programs of Choice, by lottery. Policy does not restrict how to decide tiebreakers for placement in regular school programs. Procedural practice is to use the time stamp of when the family made the enrolment application.

In exceptional circumstances, the Superintendent will prioritize the placement of a student with inclusion needs at a school which can accommodate those needs.

**Policy question:** Does the Board wish to prescribe how tiebreakers are determined, or leave it in the hands of the Superintendent?

**Example:** ‘The Superintendent shall, after considering specific inclusion needs and the ability of an educational program or school to accommodate that need, then decide priority between two or more children having the same priority:

- for programs of choice, by lottery; and
- for all other educational programs, by time of application.’

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*That it be recommended to the Board of Education that new Board Policy 2.10, Placement of Students, and the repeal of Board Policy 310, Admission of Students, and the repeal of Board Policy 311, Student Placement, be distributed for comments and further input in accordance with Board Policy 4.3.*