

School Boundary Review Policy

Policy Overview

This policy describes how the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) meets its responsibility for reviewing school boundaries, including establishing or revising catchment areas for civic addresses assigned to each school.

The HRSB Long-Range Outlook (LRO) is the foundation for information that is used to determine school boundaries being recommended for review. This policy aligns the Boundary Review process and associated Boundary Review Committee to the provincial School Review Policy and associated School Options Committee.

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Policy and Procedures History

The *Creating School Populations Policy B.003* originally included processes for the School Boundary Review and Student Registration. Given that these two processes are managed by separate departments, the *Creating Schools Population Policy* was revised to create two separate policies - the *Student Registration Policy* and this *School Boundary Review Policy*.

- Policy approved – *Creating School Populations Policy B.003*, approved April 1997, revised February 24, 2010.
- Policy approved – *Student Registration Policy B.028*, approved February 2014.

1.0 Legislative Context

The School Boundary Review Policy will align and comply with the following:

- 1.1 *Nova Scotia Education Act and Regulations;*

- 1.2 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development *School Review Policy*;
- 1.3 HRSB Policy F.005 *Student Transportation*;
- 1.4 HRSB Policy B.028 *Student Registration*;
- 1.5 HRSB Policy B.025 *School Advisory Councils*.

2.0 Principles

- 2.1 HRSB is committed to:
 - 2.1.1 Prioritizing student safety and achievement;
 - 2.1.2 Ensuring an informed, comprehensive process when revising school boundaries so that full and deliberate care is taken to ensure the interests of students, community, and the overall board are considered;
 - 2.1.3 Communicating with the community;
 - 2.1.4 Communicating with School Advisory Councils in support of Long Range Planning;
 - 2.1.5 Providing students with equitable learning opportunities;
 - 2.1.6 Ensuring a transition process is in place to support students, families and staff when there are changes to school boundaries.
- 2.2 HRSB has a responsibility to manage resources effectively and efficiently.

3.0 Recommendation for a Boundary Review

- 3.1 The Superintendent is responsible to recommend schools to be considered for a boundary review to the Governing Board.
- 3.2 A boundary review may be recommended by the Superintendent to the Governing Board for the following reasons or circumstances:
 - 3.2.1 Changes in enrollment;
 - 3.2.2 To enhance program or learning opportunities for students;
 - 3.2.3 To optimize the use of school facilities across the school board;

- 3.2.4 Grade reconfiguration of schools;
- 3.2.5 The permanent closure of a school(s);
- 3.2.6 New school construction;
- 3.2.7 Addition and alteration to a school (significant renovation);
- 3.2.8 Other extraordinary or unusual circumstances as identified by the Superintendent.

4.0 Approval for a Boundary Review

- 4.1 The Governing Board approves a boundary review and decides which schools are included.

5.0 Authorization

The Superintendent is authorized to:

- 5.1 assign new streets and civic addresses to schools, and
- 5.2 develop and implement procedures in support of this policy.

6.0 Policy Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years or on an as needed basis.

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1.0 Recommendation for a Boundary Review

The Superintendent may recommend a boundary review which will include the following:

- 1.1 Appropriate reason or circumstance from section 3.0 of the School Boundary Review policy;
- 1.2 Information to support the reason or circumstance;
- 1.3 A map showing the location of streets, all schools in the family of schools and the current boundaries;
- 1.4 A proposed alternative to the current boundaries with reference to enrolment and grade reconfiguration;
- 1.5 Terms of Reference for the Boundary Review Committee to be approved by the Governing Board.

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2.0 Exceptions to a Boundary Review

- 2.1 New streets and civic addresses are assigned to schools by HRSB staff.
- 2.2 The assignment of new streets and civic addresses to schools is reported annually to the Governing Board for information.
- 2.3 Changes resulting from new streets and civic addresses will be reported annually to the Governing Board for information.

3.0 Formation of the Boundary Review Committee

- 3.1 The Superintendent will establish a Boundary Review Committee.
- 3.2 The Superintendent will appoint a Facilitator for the Boundary Review Committee.
- 3.3 The Superintendent will request that the School Advisory Councils from each of the schools named in the boundary review appoint one member to the Boundary Review Committee. This representative cannot be an employee of HRSB.
- 3.4 Where, in the opinion of the Superintendent, an additional committee member(s) is required to represent schools or perspectives not represented by the School Advisory Council, the Superintendent may appoint additional member(s). This representative(s) cannot be an employee(s) of HRSB.
- 3.5 The Superintendent will assign staff to support the Boundary Review Committee.
 - 3.5.1 The primary role of staff is to provide information;
 - 3.5.2 Staff may include central office employees and Principals (or designates) of schools involved in the boundary review;
 - 3.5.3 All HRSB employees assigned to support the boundary review process are non-voting members of the Boundary Review Committee.

4.0 Duties and Responsibilities

- 4.1 **The Boundary Review Committee Facilitator** is responsible for:
 - 4.1.1 Overall facilitation of the Boundary Review Committee from the formation of the committee to final reporting to the Governing Board;
 - 4.1.2 Acting as a liaison between the Boundary Review Committee and the school board;

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- 4.1.3 Reviewing the Superintendent's report that recommended the Boundary Review with the Boundary Review Committee including boundary scenario(s) as prepared by HRSB staff;
 - 4.1.4 Reviewing the School Boundary Review Policy and Procedures with the Committee;
 - 4.1.5 Finalizing the Terms of Reference with the Boundary Review Committee;
 - 4.1.6 Facilitating the election of a Chair of the Boundary Review Committee;
 - 4.1.7 Reviewing information with the Boundary Review Committee that is received in response to requests;
 - 4.1.8 Assisting in the development of alternate boundary scenario(s) by the Boundary Review Committee;
 - 4.1.9 Chairing all public meetings.
- 4.2 The **Boundary Review Committee Chair** is responsible for:
- 4.2.1 Chairing the Boundary Review Committee meetings;
 - 4.2.2 Chairing the election of the Boundary Review Committee Vice-chair;
 - 4.2.3 Working with the Facilitator to establish and facilitate meeting protocols with the Boundary Review Committee (*See Appendix D - Sample Boundary Review Committee - Meeting Protocols*);
 - 4.2.4 Ensuring that the established norms and protocols are maintained;
 - 4.2.5 Ensuring that the Boundary Review Committee follows the meeting agenda;
 - 4.2.6 Employing strategies to ensure all members of the Boundary Review Committee are able to contribute to constructive problem-solving to meet the requirements in the Terms of Reference;
 - 4.2.7 Ensuring minutes (action sheet) and attendance are recorded for each meeting of the Boundary Review Committee;
 - 4.2.8 Working with the Facilitator to ensure requests for information needed by the Boundary Review Committee are forwarded to the Superintendent;
 - 4.2.9 Presenting inquiries from the public to the Boundary Review Committee;

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4.2.10 Working with the Facilitator to submit the Boundary Review committee Final Report and Recommendations to the Superintendent.

4.2.10.1 The Final Report and Recommendations will outline the work of the Boundary Review Committee and make recommendations consistent with the instructions in the Terms of Reference.

4.3 The **Boundary Review Vice-chair** is responsible to act as Chair in the absence of the Chair.

4.4 **Boundary Review Committee Members** are responsible for:

4.4.1 Following the Boundary Review Policy and Procedures;

4.4.2 Following the Terms of Reference;

4.4.3 Establishing and following meeting protocols for the Boundary Review Committee;

4.4.4 Electing a chair and vice-chair;

4.4.5 Reviewing proposed boundary review scenario(s);

4.4.6 Developing boundary scenario(s) which are viable solutions to the mandate and objective given by the Governing Board in the Terms of Reference;

4.4.7 Participating in community engagement and communication opportunities organized to encourage meaningful dialogue with all members of the school community.

5.0 Deliberations of the Boundary Review Committee

5.1 Boundary Review Committee meetings are working meetings and will be closed to attendance by the public.

5.2 The Boundary Review Committee Facilitator or Chair may invite individuals to the working meetings in order to assist the committee in its work.

5.3 Minutes of key decisions and key actions will be taken at each meeting and approved at the subsequent meeting.

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6.0 Community Engagement and Communication

6.1 Community engagement and communication opportunities will be organized to encourage all members of the school community to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Boundary Review Committee. These community engagement meetings are open to the public.

6.1.1 Following approval of the Boundary Review by the Governing Board, the HRSB will communicate as outlined in *Appendix B – Communication Plan: Boundary Review*

6.1.2 Minutes will be posted on the school board’s website as soon as they have been approved, along with the presentation material provided to or by the Boundary Review Committee.

7.0 Final Report to the Governing Board from the Boundary Review Committee

7.1 Recommendations resulting from a Boundary Review will be reported by the Boundary Review Committee Facilitator and Chair to the Governing Board for decision.

8.0 Staff Technical Report

8.1 A staff report to clarify implications of the Boundary Review Committee’s recommendations may be prepared.

9.0 Process Timelines

9.1 A recommendation from the Superintendent for a boundary review may be made at any time; it does not have to coincide with a particular calendar date or deadline.

9.2 Upon approval by the Governing Board, the Boundary Review Committee will be established within 30 days. Boundary Review Committee meetings will only be scheduled during the school year calendar (September to June).

9.3 Upon its formation, the Boundary Review Committee has a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 150 calendar days to conduct the review including public consultation. (See *Appendix E- School Boundary Review Process*)

10.0 Transition Committee

- 10.1 In the event that the Governing Board decides to change school boundaries, a transition committee will be established by the Superintendent.
- 10.2 The transition committee will consist of:
 - 10.2.1 School Administration Supervisor(s);
 - 10.2.2 School principal(s);
 - 10.2.3 SAC representative(s) (parent) from each school identified in the Terms of Reference;
 - 10.2.4 Students, as appropriate;
 - 10.2.5 Other school and board staff as deemed necessary.
- 10.3 The transition committee will develop a plan which reflects the scope of change and include consideration of students, staff and communities.
 - 10.3.1 The plan will address all relevant factors, as identified by the committee (programming, transportation, facilities, learning resources, human resources, etc);
 - 10.3.2 The plan will establish a practical timeline for transition based on the factors to be addressed;
 - 10.3.3 The plan will include on-going communication with students, staff and communities;
 - 10.3.4 The plan will identify opportunities for relationship building among students who will form the future school communities;
 - 10.3.5 The plan will include a follow-up meeting of the Boundary Review Committee after completion for debrief and lessons learned.

Appendix A Definitions

Boundary	The limits which describes the perimeter of a geographic area, or catchment area, assigned to a specific school.
Boundary Review Committee	A multi-stakeholder committee formed to support the school board in conducting a boundary review.
Capacity*	Total student enrolment based on the full occupancy of spaces that a school building can accommodate, in order to deliver the public school program.
Catchment Area	All streets and civic addresses assigned within a school boundary.
Facilitator	Third party consultant assigned by the Superintendent to lead the Boundary Review Process.
Governing Board	Elected and appointed members of the Halifax Regional School Board.
Grade Configuration	The grades assigned to a school. Example “Grade Primary to Grade 5” or “Grades 10-12”.
Long Range Outlook*	A document prepared by school boards in accordance with the provision in the Education Act which provides a broad picture of the school board and an overview of all schools within the jurisdiction.
School Community	School staff, students, parents and others living and operating business within the area served by the neighbourhood school.
School Options Committee*	A multi-stakeholder committee formed to support the school board in conducting a school review; its work is governed by a mandate given to it by the school board.
Staff Technical Report*	A report written by school board staff (Superintendent) that comments on the Boundary Review Committee Report and Recommendation. The Staff Technical Report is not mandatory.
Terms of Reference	The Terms of Reference are directions and instructions from the Governing Board to the Boundary Review Committee. These include a mandate, objectives and reference criteria for the work of the Boundary Review Committee. (<i>See Appendix C - Sample Boundary Review Committee - Terms of Reference.</i>)

*The definitions of the terms with an asterisk are taken from the provincial School Review Policy, October 2014.

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Appendix B

Communication Plan: Boundary Review

- 1.0 Following a decision of the Governing Board to conduct a Boundary Review of a school or schools, the HRSB will:
 - 1.1 Provide notification to the schools included in the boundary review;
 - 1.2 Announce the decision on the HRSB website and Twitter account;
 - 1.3 Inform parents/guardians in the schools included in the boundary review.
- 2.0 The communication will include:
 - 2.1 The list of schools included in the boundary review;
 - 2.2 The timeline and mandate of the Boundary Review Committee;
 - 2.3 Notification that there will be opportunities for community engagement throughout the process.
- 3.0 Minutes from the meetings of the Boundary Review Committee will be posted on the HRSB website once approved at the subsequent meeting.
- 4.0 Three (3) public meetings will be scheduled, by the Boundary Review Committee.
 - 4.1 An initial public presentation meeting will be hosted by the Facilitator for the purpose of:
 - 4.1.1 Informing sharing, knowledge building and receiving initial feedback from the community;
 - 4.1.2 Introducing of Facilitator, Boundary Review Committee members and HRSB Staff;
 - 4.1.3 An explanation of the reasoning and process of the boundary review, including opportunities for public input.
 - 4.2 Two additional meetings will be held to:
 - 4.2.1 Present new relevant data that has been considered by the committee subsequent to the initial public presentation;
 - 4.2.2 Outline the scenario(s) proposed by the boundary review committee;
 - 4.2.3 Obtain additional feedback from the community.

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- 5.0 A summary of public feedback will be taken by the Boundary Review Committee at each public meeting and discussed at subsequent meetings.
- 6.0 A means of receiving electronic and print communication will be established for submissions from the public to the Boundary Review Committee.

Appendix C

Sample Boundary Review Committee – Terms of Reference

Mandate: *<Insert mandate from Governing Board>*

It is important that instructions to the Boundary Review Committee include specific reference to outcomes expected in the recommendations. These could include:

- *grade configurations, or reconfiguration (see no 7 below)*
- *class size and composition,*
- *access to and equity of programming,*
- *maximizing use of school facilities,*
- *making the best use of available resources (financial, labour and capital) across the board, or*
- *limiting factors such as transportation time limits, geographically isolated schools.>*

The Boundary Review Committee (BRC) reports to the Governing Board of HRSB. The Final Report with recommendations will be forwarded to the Halifax Regional School Board. The Governing Board will decide school boundaries and, in the case of changes, timelines for implementation.

Objective: The objective of the boundary review is to provide a viable solution(s) for the problem(s) identified in the Superintendent's report recommending a boundary review.
<add specifics as needed>

Schools involved: *<insert list of schools as decided by the Governing Board>*

Accessing Staff support: Requests for staff support will be submitted from the BRC Chair through the Boundary Review Facilitator to the Superintendent by submission of BRC Information Request form (Appendix F).

Accessing data: Requests for data will be submitted from the BRC Chair through the Boundary Review Facilitator to the Superintendent by submission of BRC Information Request form (Appendix F).

Timeline: *<insert timeline from Governing Board, with expectations for interim reporting to the Governing Board>*

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- Evaluation Criteria:** Criteria for evaluating the suitability of potential boundary review recommendation(s) includes:
1. Student transportation and safety
 2. Impact to student achievement and learning opportunities;
 3. The impact on the delivery of programs;
 4. Principles that value and support diversity and foster respect among members of the community.
 5. Viability of recommendation over a five (5) year term; including reference to enrolment growth or decline;
 6. Enrolment capacity and optimal utilization of facilities;
 7. The impact on the HRSB family of schools structure;
 8. Possible grade reconfiguration;
 9. Clarity and consistency of the recommendation;
 10. Community support.
- Meetings:** The Boundary Review Committee shall determine meeting schedules within the Meeting Protocols that provide for compliance with the required timelines.
- Quorum and Voting Procedure:** Whenever possible, decisions should be by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, a vote shall be taken to determine a decision.
- Quorum for voting purposes shall be a majority of voting members. A majority vote shall be considered 50% plus 1.
- The process for voting shall be in compliance with HRSB Governing Board procedures and shall be an open vote with the vote count noted in the meeting minutes.
- Facilitator:** The Superintendent will appoint a Facilitator to work with the Boundary Review Committee. Their duties and responsibilities are outlined in the procedures of the School Boundary Review Policy.
- Officers:** The Boundary Review Committee Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected from among the members of the Boundary Review Committee. Elections should take place at the first meeting.
- Attachment(s):** Superintendent's Report recommending a boundary review and Boundary Review Policy & Procedures
<These two documents should be attached to the Terms of Reference.>

Appendix D Sample Boundary Review Committee – Meeting Protocols

<These meeting protocols can be adapted and then adopted by the Boundary Review Committee.>

Meeting Dates & Times

Meetings will be held on *<date>*, from *<start time>* to *<end time>*, unless otherwise communicated to Committee Members by the Facilitator or Chair. The length of meeting will be based on the content of the agenda.

Location(s)

Meetings typically will be held at *<location>*.

Agenda

The Chair will prepare the agenda and will ensure the agenda is followed. The agenda will focus on planning, problem solving, and decision making agenda items over informational agenda items. The agenda will include:

1. Agenda review
 - recording attendance
2. Updates
 - follow up from previous action items
 - reviewing all Open Action Items
3. Agenda items
 - priority order
 - including an open period if time permits
4. Closure
 - Facilitator reviewing action items
 - preliminary agenda items for the next meeting
 - Facilitator sharing observations as process reporter
 - confirming time and location for the next meeting.

Minutes

A uniform template (action sheet) will be used to record action items (including a summary of the topic discussed, a decision/action to be taken, deadline/person responsible, action item completed) during each meeting. This sheet will constitute the minutes and will be placed in the team binder at the end of each meeting. When confirmed at subsequent meeting, an electronic copy will be sent by the Facilitator to the Director Operations Services as the official minutes.

<alternatively: Minutes of the meeting are due out to members within _____ day(s) of the meeting. Minutes of the meeting will be distributed to team members by e-mail. Minutes will also

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be filed in the team binder and the team's electronic folder. The Facilitator is responsible for ensuring that the minutes are distributed.>

Open Action Items List

The Chair is responsible for maintaining the list of Open Action Items from one meeting to the next. The items on the list are typically reviewed during the update portion of the committee meeting.

Decision Making

Decisions will be made according to the Terms of Reference provided by the Governing Board.

Confidentiality

Committee work (including discussions and opinions) shall stay within the team unless consensus to do otherwise is reached. Committee members are never to identify “who said what” outside the team meeting, unless agreed to by the team.

Meeting Cancellation

It may be the case that the committee requires time to read information they receive or prepare information for meetings. In such cases, the Chair in consultation with the Facilitator may cancel the meeting. All Committee Members will be contacted with sufficient notice.

Absenteeism

When a Committee Member is not able to attend a meeting, they is expected to notify the Chair or Facilitator and may identify a delegate. Chronic absenteeism is harmful to the team and will be discussed by the whole team if a member misses more than _____ meetings in a row. The Chair may request that the Superintendent replace a Committee Member for chronic absenteeism.

Norms for meetings

Meeting norms are to be generated by committee members. These are intended to be a list of things which help/hinder constructive team work.

Expectations for communication

The BRC shall establish a communication protocol with the Facilitator.

To send regrets...

Please contact *the BRC chair* at <XXX>

<School(s) Name(s)>
Boundary Review Committee Meeting
Action Sheet
<Date>, <Time>

Present: *<Name of committee members in attendance>*

Regrets: *<Name of committee members not in attendance>*

Facilitator: *<Name of Facilitator>*

Staff: *<Name of HRSB staff in attendance>*

Summary of Topics Discussed			
Decision Items			
Action Items			
Item	Responsible	Deadline	Status

Date of Next Meeting

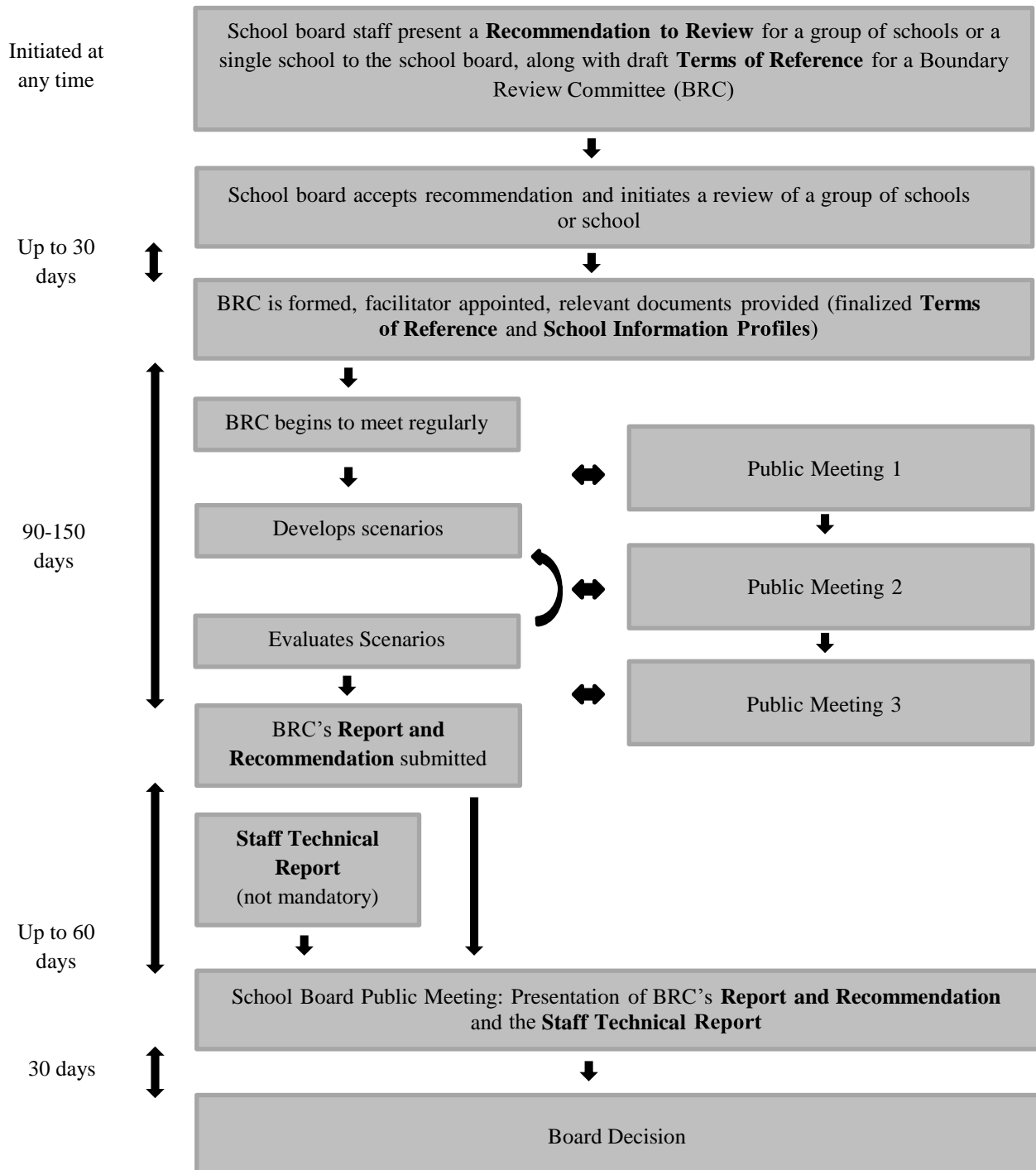
Boundary Review Committee Meeting –*<Date of next meeting>*

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Appendix E School Boundary Review Process



Appendix F
Boundary Review Committee (BRC)
Information Request

Date of Request: _____ **Boundary Review:** _____

Request #: _____

Type of Request:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation Report from staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Information report (advise how many if hard copy or if pdf preferred)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clarification of information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

Is information intended to be used for public presentation?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Specific description of request:

Preferred date of Receipt/Presentation: _____

BRC Facilitator: _____

Completed form to be submitted to Superintendent by the Boundary Review Facilitator