



EDUCATIONAL CHANGE DUE TO EMERGENCIES

Context:

Increasing globalization, climate change or other factors such as natural disasters, pandemics or epidemics may from time to time require emergency changes to how education is delivered. An example of this is the world-wide pandemic caused by COVID 19 which occurred in 2020. The Board will need to deal with those situations with as much forethought as possible.

Policy Statement:

1. In responding to educational changes related to any emergency, the Board will use an evidence-based approach that follows the advice or direction of experts and is responsive to requirements established by government or emergency response authorities.
2. The Board's priority in such an emergency, whether short term or of extended duration, is to ensure the health and safety of learners and employees.

Guidelines:

1. The Board is committed to ensuring clear, calm and honest communication in as much detail and in as timely a way as possible.
2. The Board will ensure all activities and interactions are as kind, calm and considerate as possible.
3. The Board will focus on continuity of authentic education as much as possible.
4. The Board will give high priority to equity and support for vulnerable learners.
5. Agile decision-making may be required; therefore, all members of management and the Board will be ready for timely and effective decision-making.
6. The Board will act together and in a supportive way throughout the emergency.
7. Where there are challenges related to language in collective agreements the Board is committed to thorough consultation with union representatives.

Definitions:

1. World-wide, federal and provincial emergencies are those announced by United Nations bodies, such as the World Health Organization, and the federal and provincial governments. This policy is limited to said emergencies that cause disruption to the normal provision of education.
2. Experts are those sources, who are most likely to understand and have full knowledge of the emergency situation, for example in the case of a health emergency the World Health Organization, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Provincial Health Officer and the regional Medical Health Officer.
3. Emergency response authorities from whom direction will be taken in the event of an emergency include Emergency Management BC and local or regional police, fire and emergency response agencies.



QUALICUM SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD POLICY 509

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References:

- [Administrative Procedures to Board Policy 509: Educational Change Due to Emergencies](#)
- [BC Government PreparedBC Guides & Resources](#)

Dates of Adoption/Amendments:

Adopted: 2020.11.14

Amended: **Reviewed 2024.11.24**



Purpose

These Administrative Procedures are written in support of Policy 509: Educational Changes Due to Emergencies

Once an emergency situation that will have impact on the educational operations of Qualicum School District is declared, a planning and coordination task force will be established with membership from senior management, the Board and other staff as deemed important to effectively respond to the situation and ensure health, safety and the continuation of educational services.

This planning and coordination task force will meet as frequently as necessary to establish:

- a. Emergency control procedures and protocols
- b. Education of and communication with staff/student/families
- c. Effective maintenance of core operations and facilities
- d. Continuity of authentic student learning
- e. Communication planning, including possible reporting of elevated absenteeism
- f. Consultation with unions in relation to any employment related challenges
- g. Other emerging topics related to the emergency situation

1. Role of the School Trustees:

- a. To stay fully informed of the progress of the emergency, and to be informed as to the full impact of the emergency on all aspects of the District.
- b. To make any decisions regarding legal, policy and labour relations matters.
- c. To make decisions with regard to non-voluntary placements of employees.
- d. To maintain all practices of good governance during the emergency.

2. Role of the Board Chair:

- a. To liaise regularly with the BCSTA and with other Boards Chairs to understand how Boards are coping with the emergency.
- b. To liaise regularly with the Superintendent of Schools (or designate) to support and assist in scenario planning, agenda setting, planning of special public or in camera meetings and other similar governance duties.
- c. To chair meetings of the planning and coordination team.
- d. To work with the Superintendent (or designate) to speak for the Board of Education and for Qualicum School District.
- e. To update and ensure that School Trustees are well informed.

3. Role of Superintendent of Schools (or designate)

- a. To serve as the planning and coordination team's leader.
- b. To ensure that decisions made by the planning and coordination team are carried out or to report why this did not happen.
- c. To direct school closures or changes as per directives of the Ministry of Education and Child Care and/or other experts.
- d. To lead in the planning related to altered school operation including suspension of instruction and provision of services to limited numbers of students.



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- e. To serve with the Board Chair, as the key spokesperson for school and district related issues.
- f. To provide ongoing clear, calm and honest communication to representatives of union locals, employee groups, DPAC and others.
- g. To provide evaluation and debrief meeting(s) after the emergency situation has passed.

4. Role of the Associate Superintendent and Director of Instruction:

- a. To develop and maintain education plans for implementation as a result of the emergency.
- b. To provide clear, calm and honest responses to learners, staff and parents.
- c. To ensure that vulnerable learners and their families are appropriately and equitably supported.
- d. To assign staff as required while maintaining all employment contracts.
- e. To support schools in planning during times of altered operations including in support of students moving toward graduation.
- f. To support school principals and supervisors in the implementation of the emergency plan.
- g. To liaise with community and provincial agencies.

5. Role of Principals and Supervisors:

- a. To educate all staff and students about control measures.
- b. To ensure that all decisions of the planning and coordination team are implemented at the school or site level.
- c. To advise parents, students and staff of the protocols and procedures needed to mitigate the emergency.
- d. To fully discuss emergency plans and protocols at safety committee and other staff meetings.
- e. To ensure that parents/guardians have provided up to date contact information to the school.
- f. To advise PAC and parents about district plans for the emergency, including website communications and personal preparedness.
- g. To stay in regular communication with District and local public officials.
- h. To report to the School Public Health Nurse and to the Director of Instruction if absenteeism is over 10% of the school/site population.

6. Role of General Manager of Operations and Maintenance:

- a. To develop a transportation plan for students.
- b. To provide general oversight of all operational areas as it relates to the emergency response plan.
- c. To ensure Operations and Maintenance staff are fully trained in the emergency safety requirements.
- d. To ensure Operations and Maintenance staff has necessary equipment and supplies to prevent an emergency.
- e. To audit all Operations and Maintenance controls.
- f. To provide continuation of core building functions.
- g. To continue communication with District Health and Safety Committee.



7. **Role of Information Technology Principal or Manager**
 - a. To develop and maintain electronic communication.

8. **Role of the Secretary Treasurer**
 - a. To develop and implement key financial functions.
 - b. To provide support to the Board in matters of governance and operations.
 - c. To track changes in expenditures because of the emergency.

9. **Role of Director of Human Resources**
 - a. To coordinate employment arrangements for all teachers, support staff and administrators including in relation to leaves or absences related to the emergency.
 - b. To assist departments with the development and implementation of cross training strategies.
 - c. To develop and implement specific employee work practices for use during the emergency.
 - d. To work with unions to consult and react consistently with decisions of the planning and coordination team.

References:

- [Board Policy 509: Educational Change Due to Emergencies](#)
- [BC Government PreparedBC Guides & Resources](#)

Dates of Adoption/Amendments:

Adopted: 2020.11.24

Amended: 2022.10.25: **Reviewed 2024.11.24**