



**AD HOC POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE  
REPORT NO. 24-051**

**04 April 2024**

**APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO THE STUDENT TRANSFER APPEAL  
PROCESS**

**Key Contact: Brett Reynolds, Associate Director of Education, Ext: 8252**

**PURPOSE:**

1. To seek approval of the proposed changes to the student transfer appeal process as prescribed by Policy P.077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers and to rescind Policy P.126.SCO Appeals Hearing Panel (Student Transfers).

**STRATEGIC LINKS:**

2. Replacing school transfer appeals to trustees with a decision by the school administration is in line with the *Education Act* and its *Regulations* which do not require school boards to establish a school transfer process nor a mechanism for trustees to hear appeals against administrative school transfer decisions. This change will allow for better use of resources available to staff in alignment with the pillars of Well-being, and Social Responsibility under the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's (OCDSB) 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

**CONTEXT:**

3. On 12 October 2023, the Committee received [Report 23-066](#) to elicit feedback on the transfer appeal process. Members of the Committee welcomed the proposed rescission. [Report 24-017](#) presented the proposed changes to Policy P.077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers primarily to remove the direction with regards to an appeal panel by trustees, along with other proposed revisions to simplify the policy for parents/guardians and align it with the District writing conventions. Report 24-017 also recommended the rescission of Policy P.126.SCO Appeals Hearing Panel (Student Transfers) and initiated the public consultation on the rescission and the associated policy changes.

This report seeks approval for the rescission of Policy P.126.SCO Appeals Hearing Panel (Student Transfers) and the proposed changes to Policy P.077.PLG having accounted for feedback from both the trustees and the public.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

### 4. Safeguarding the Parents/Guardians' Right

The proposed changes do not affect the right to appeal a decision made to deny a school transfer request. Parents/guardians will continue to be able to appeal the original decision made through two avenues:

- Writing to the principal of the receiving school; and
- Engaging the Superintendent of the receiving school where the first appeal was not granted by the principal.

In response to the feedback opposing the proposed changes with the view that parents would have no support from a third party who advocates for families, staff reinforce that parents will continue to be able to seek trustees' support at any point in the process if necessary. The removal of the final appeal mechanism is recommended to address the resource challenges that are associated with the appeal process. Additionally, staff anticipate that removing this third level of appeal will promote and encourage parents/guardians to provide all relevant information in their initial transfer request application.

### 5. Board Policy P.077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers

The rescission of Policy P.126.SCO Appeals Hearing Panel (Student Transfers) will necessitate some revisions to Board Policy P.077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers, specifically removing section 4.9 stating that: *"Where a request for a student transfer is not granted on appeal to the principal under Section 4.3 (a) of this policy, a final appeal may be made to a panel of trustees as outlined in Policy P.126.SCO Appeals Hearing Panel (Student Transfer)."*

In addition to the above, staff recommend several additional revisions to help simplify the transfer process and better align the policy with current practice. These revisions are attached in Appendix B and include the following:

Section	Revision
Throughout the Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applying the new policy template approved by the Board.</li></ul>
Sections: 3.2, 3.4, 3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using gender neutral language.</li></ul>
Sections: 3.2, 3.3, 3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removing the reference to Policy P.068.TRA Student Transportation which was rescinded in 2015 and replaced with OSTA Transportation Eligibility policy that sets out the criteria for transporting students.</li><li>• Linking to the OSTA policy in the Reference Documents</li></ul>

Section 3.3, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifying the school redesignation could take place as a result of expulsion, not suspension, or for safety reasons.</li> </ul>
Sections: 3.8, 3.25, 3.26, Policy Definitions (Appendix A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacing “students 18 years of age or older” with “Adult Student” in order to include students 16 or 17 years of age who have removed themselves from parental control.</li> </ul>
Sections 3.10, 3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifying the current requirements of student transfers.</li> </ul>
Section 3.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing the reference to the phased implementation of full-day early learning kindergarten as all of our schools currently offer a full-day kindergarten experience.</li> </ul>
Section 3.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplifying the language.</li> </ul>
Sections 3.17, 3.18, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing procedural content and migrating it to the associated procedures.</li> </ul>
Sections 4.7, 4.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifying the language around the two appeal mechanisms available for parents/guardians/adult students; first through the principal and finally through the Superintendent of Instruction responsible for the receiving school. The decision regarding the final appeal is typically made in consultation with the Associate Director of Education.</li> </ul>
Section 4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing the reference to an appeal panel by trustees.</li> </ul>
Reference Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing the references to old transportation policies and procedures, as well as the reference to the appeal panel policy and procedure.</li> <li>Adding the reference to the OCDSB and OSTA transportation policies.</li> </ul>
Appendix A: Policy Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adding the definitions of Adult Student, Board, District, and exceptional personal circumstances.</li> </ul>

Both elementary and secondary student transfer procedures will require an update to align with the above-listed revisions.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- The rescission of policy P.126.SCO will significantly reduce the human resource cost associated with the management of cross-boundary transfer appeal hearings. These hearings currently involve the Associate Director (or designate), the Superintendent of Instruction, the school principals, three trustees and the support of Board Services.

Replacing the school transfer appeal hearings with a timely decision by the principal and the SOI will help parents/guardians better plan for the school year by significantly reducing the time taken in making a decision and the uncertainty associated with it. This will also yield time efficiencies for staff and trustees involved in the process.

## **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES**

7. Consultation on the proposed revisions was open to the public from 8 February 2024 through to 8 March 2024 on Engage OCDSB. Awareness about this consultation was shared in the District's weekly communications with students, parents/guardians, and in the monthly school council update. The feedback received was limited (13 in total), over 60% of which was from parents/guardians and several staff comments. The responses were grouped into three 3 themes; supportive, opposing, and neutral with a little over 40% of respondents supportive of the proposed revisions and the rescission, 30% were opposed, and 25% offered comment but had no clear preference. The feedback from trustees and committee members gathered during the two meetings where the policies were discussed helped inform the revisions in Appendix B.

Communications with parents/guardians will focus on the right to appeal and their ability to involve trustees at any time during the transfer request process. Staff will update the Student Transfer Parent Guide and are currently revising the associated procedures to help clarify and support families and staff.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. THAT Policy P.126.SCO Appeal Hearing Panel (Student Transfers), attached as Appendix A to Report 24-051, be rescinded; and
- B. THAT the revisions to Policy P.077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers, attached as Appendix B to Report 24-051, be approved.

---

Pino Buffone  
Director of Education and Secretary of the  
Board

---

Brett Reynolds  
Associate Director

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Policy P.126.SCO Appeals Hearing Panel (Student Transfers) (Recommended for Rescission)

Appendix B: Proposed revisions to Policy P.077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers

Appendix C: Standing Policy P. 077.PLG Designated Schools/Student Transfers