

PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Pupil Accommodation Review Committee was requested to provide recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Training regarding the effective and efficient implementation of the Pupil Accommodation Grant component of the ministry's new funding model and its associated accountability framework. Specifically, the terms of reference for this group are to:

1. Develop and implement a School Facilities Inventory System to compile relevant information for each elementary and secondary school in the province.
2. Determine on a consistent basis the capacity of elementary and secondary schools for each District School Board and District School Authority.
3. Determine on a consistent basis adjustments to benchmark area requirements per pupil for individual boards and school authorities which may be necessary to reflect:
 - a. Disproportionate numbers of students enrolled in special needs programs (i.e. special education; learning opportunities; or language programs);
 - b. The physical characteristics of existing schools;
 - c. One school communities in northern or rural areas.
4. Develop strategies to implement the recommendations regarding accountability made by the Expert Panel on the Pupil Accommodation Grant.
5. Develop guidelines to assist boards to request and assess proposals involving private - public partnerships.
6. Review and assess issues related to the implementation of the proposed Pupil Accommodation Grant funding model that may be raised by individual boards and school authorities and make recommendations on strategies to resolve those issues to the Minister of Education and Training.

ISSUES CONSIDERED

To date the committee has focused on issues related to the calculation of the capacity of elementary and secondary schools for each school board. These issues may be grouped into five broad categories:

- Standard loading factors
- Treatment of specialized spaces within schools
- Treatment of temporary accommodation
- Treatment of leased facilities
- Facilities to be excluded from the capacity calculations

STANDARD LOADING FACTORS

1. Classrooms

The committee recommends that the capacity of individual classrooms, i.e. general instructional spaces of at least 700 square feet (64 m²) be identical to the average class size limits specified in the *Education Act*, i.e. 25 for elementary schools; and 22 for secondary schools.

The committee recognizes that some spaces that are slightly less than 700 square feet are currently being used as classrooms. The committee recommends that the capacity of these spaces should be treated the same as a classroom.

2. Open Concept Classrooms

From about 1967 to 1975, many school boards incorporated the open concept approach to school design to accommodate a new way of teaching. Since that time, many of these schools were retrofitted with permanent floor to ceiling partitions to create enclosed instructional spaces. It was not always possible to alter these spaces into enclosed classrooms, so they were often partially partitioned using book stacks and movable partitions. In these cases, the open concept spaces that were designed to accommodate, for example, 4 classes, have been organized to create 3 classes with circulation space.

The committee recommends that the capacity of these remaining “open concept” spaces be determined by dividing the total area by 900 square feet (which reflects the size of a standard classroom plus additional area required for circulation) and multiplying the result (rounded to the nearest whole number) by the capacity of a regular classroom.

3. Special Education Rooms (Self Contained)

The committee also recommends that in schools with 10 or more classrooms (or equivalent) the capacity of one of the classrooms be deemed to be 9 in recognition of special education needs.

Regulation 298 specifies maximum class sizes for Special Education programs and services. These maxima range from 6 to 16 depending upon the extent of the exceptionalities of the pupils in the class and the special education services available to the teacher. Based upon the current distribution of exceptionalities across the province, the average maximum class size for special education programs is 9.

The committee also recommends that the capacity of one of the classrooms in schools with fewer than 10 classrooms be deemed to be 9 if that school currently offers a special education program in a self contained class. Similarly, the committee recommends that if a school with more than 10 classrooms offers special education programming in two or more self contained classes, the capacity of each of those classrooms be deemed to be 9.

The committee recognizes that data to make such a determination has not been compiled in the School Facilities Inventory System. Boards for whom this recommendation applies, are to provide the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee with documentation reflecting the situation. The School Facilities Inventory System will then be adjusted accordingly.

4. Special Purpose Rooms of Less than 400 Square Feet

The committee recommends that the capacity of special purpose rooms (i.e. general instructional space of less than 400 square feet (38 m²) be deemed to be zero. Generally, these rooms are not used for regularly scheduled full-time instruction. They typically are used for such purposes as resource withdrawal including the provision of paraprofessional services to students with special needs; the provision of English as a Second Language instruction, tutoring, student projects where groups of students work independently or with a teacher; and seminars.

5. Other General Instructional Space

The committee recommends that the capacity of general instructional space ranging in size from 400 to 700 square feet (38 to 64 m²) be deemed to be 12. These rooms, which are relatively small in number, are large enough to be used for small classes on a regularly scheduled basis.

6. Related Issues

In reviewing the information submitted by boards through the School Facilities Inventory System, the committee noted a number of instances where boards had converted space into a second Library Resource Centre or Staff Room. Typically these modifications had been made in schools with a large number of portables and whose student population was so large that these additional spaces were essential. The committee believes that if the portables were removed and enrolment in the school reduced to normal levels these spaces could be used for instructional purposes. **The committee therefore recommends that the capacity of such spaces be deemed to be the same as for regular classrooms, if the space is greater than 700 square feet; 12, if the space is between 400 and 700 square feet; and zero, if the space is less than 400 square feet.**

TREATMENT OF SPECIALIZED SPACES WITHIN SCHOOLS

Typically there are a number of specialized instructional spaces in permanent school facilities. Those that had been recognized for funding purposes by the Ministry are documented in the Capital Grant Plan.

The committee has made recommendations on how to treat these spaces for purposes of determining the capacity of individual schools. These recommendations however, are not intended to be interpreted as directives for program delivery.

The committee recommends that for purposes of determining the capacity of elementary schools (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8), the capacity of the following types of spaces be:

Deemed to be 25

Art Room

- space configured similar to classroom
- program can be delivered in regular classroom setting

Class Room/Relocatable Unit meeting Criteria

- space configured for general instructional use

Commercial Room

- space configured similar to classroom
- program can be delivered in regular classroom setting

Computer Room

- space configured similar to classroom
- program can be delivered in regular classroom setting
- computers are available for students in most classrooms or in Library Resource Centres

French Room

- space configured similar to classroom
- program can be delivered in regular classroom setting

Family Studies Room

- space configured similar to classroom
- program has changed so that content is delivered as part of regular classroom programming

Kindergarten

- Deemed capacity reflects the maximum average class size for elementary schools

Science Room/Laboratory (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)

- space configured similar to classroom
- specialized space required for only a portion of the instructional time
- typically students who take most of their classes in these rooms move to the classroom vacated by students who are making use of the specialized space

Lunch Room

- space configured similar to classroom
- typically boards will use this space to accommodate enrolment pressures before adding a portable to the school

Music Room (Vocal)

- space configured similar to classroom
- program can be delivered in regular classroom setting

Deemed to be Zero

Auditorium

- typically, pupils vacate classrooms to use the Auditorium. The vacated classrooms are not filled

Cafeteria/Cafetorium

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Change Rooms

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Child Care Centres

- Reflects government policy decision not to include space used as child care centers prior to January 1, 1998 in the calculation of a school's capacity

General Purpose Room/Gymnasium/Exercise Room

- typically, pupils vacate classrooms to use the gymnasium. The vacated classrooms are not filled

Guidance

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Health Unit

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Library Resource Centre

- typically, pupils vacate classrooms to use the Library Resource Centre. The vacated classrooms are not filled

Music Room (Instrumental)

- specialized space often shared by several schools
- typically, pupils vacate classrooms for programming in this room. The vacated classrooms are not filled

Portable/Portapak

- Temporary accommodation

Stages

- typically, pupils vacate classrooms when programming (Theatre Arts, Instrumental Music) is delivered on stages. The vacated classrooms are not filled

Technical/Vocational/Design Technology Room

- significant renovation costs required to convert space for classroom use
- specialized space often shared by several schools
- typically, pupils vacate classrooms for programming in this room. The vacated classrooms are not filled

NOTE (see discussion on loading factors):

Special Education rooms are deemed to have a capacity of 9;

General Instructional Space having an area ranging from approximately 400 to approximately 700 square feet are deemed to have a capacity of 12;

Special Purpose Rooms of less than 400 square feet are deemed to have a capacity of 0.

The committee recommends that for purposes of determining the capacity of secondary schools (Grade 9 to OAC), the capacity of the following types of spaces be:

Deemed to be 22

Art Room

- space may be scheduled for use for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Classroom/Relocatable Unit meeting Criteria

- space configured for general instructional purposes

Commercial Practice Lab/Room

- space may be scheduled for use for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Computer Studies Room

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Broad-based Technology/Technological Education Rooms

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Family Studies Room

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Gymnasium (excluding 1st gymnasium space)

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Science Laboratory (Physics, Chemistry and Biology)

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Lecture Room

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting for standard sized classes
- even though Lecture Rooms typically have more than 22 seats, it is impractical to schedule large groups on a consistent basis

Music Room (Instrumental and Vocal)

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Theatre Arts

- space may be scheduled for instructional purposes throughout the day in a rotary setting

Deemed to be Zero

Auditorium

- provides space for student assemblies during the school day

Cafeteria/Cafetorium

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Change Rooms

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Child Care Centres

- Reflects government policy decision not to include space used as child care centers prior to January 1, 1998 in the calculation of a school's capacity

Guidance

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Gymnasium (1st gymnasium space only)/Exercise Room

- provides space for student assemblies or athletic competitions during the school day

Health Unit

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Library Resource Centre

- typically used for research or study purposes by students working independently or in groups and not directly supervised by a teacher

Lunch Room

- Space not used for instructional purposes

Portable/Portapak

- Temporary accommodation

NOTE (see discussion on loading factors):

Special Education rooms are deemed to have a capacity of 9;

General Instructional Space having an area ranging from approximately 400 to approximately 700 square feet are deemed to have a capacity of 12;

Special Purpose Rooms of less than 400 square feet are deemed to have a capacity of 0.

TREATMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

All school boards use some type of temporary accommodation for instructional purposes. These include:

Portables, which are free-standing single units usually of wood or steel frame construction.

Portapaks, which typically are portables clustered together with a wood or steel frame corridor joining them. Portapaks may be separate from the school or attached to the school and may have permanent or temporary foundations. Many Portapaks do not have plumbing.

Relocatable Units (incrapaks, kinderpaks, demountables, Relocatable Classroom Modules (RCMs)), which typically are of a higher quality than portables and portapaks. Constructed with permanent foundations, these units often have water connections and are not readily moved. They can look very much like permanent construction and are considered by MET to be equivalent to permanent construction. They were originally conceived to address shifting school board demographics. Some may be of metal siding, and are considered less than permanent. A few have brick veneer. RCMs usually have a heavier structure and the Ontario Fire Marshal requirements are more stringent resulting in a construction cost that is typically 3 times that of a wood frame portable. In the past, when calculating the Ministry Rated Capacity of a school, RCMs were included as part of the permanent accommodation.

School boards advise that not all Relocatable Units are the same, and some are not considered to be equivalent to permanent construction. Other boards advise that they were designed to be integrated with a core-school concept in such a way that they could be relocated, if necessary.

The committee recommends that portables and portapaks not be included in the calculation of permanent school capacity. These buildings do not provide students with the amenities available in the main school building.

The committee, however, recommends that relocatable classroom modules be included in the calculation of permanent school capacity provided that they are:

**connected to and integrated with the main school building;
on full permanent foundations (i.e., not simply piers or “Sonotubes”); and
non-combustible construction such as steel frame or pre-cast concrete.**

These facilities do provide students with the amenities in the main school building. The committee recognizes that data to identify such units has not been compiled in the School Facilities Inventory System; however, all relocatable classroom modules recorded in the School Facilities Inventory System have been included in the calculation of permanent school capacity. Boards that have relocatable classroom modules that do not meet the above-mentioned criteria are to provide the appropriate documentation to the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee. The capacity recorded in the School Facilities Inventory System will be adjusted accordingly.

TREATMENT OF LEASED FACILITIES

Boards having instructional space, surplus to their needs, have elected to lease the space to coterminous boards or other parties.

The committee recommends that the capacity of leased schools be included in the inventory of the board who owns the facilities and not included in the inventory of the board leasing the facilities.

The committee recognizes that there may be outstanding issues regarding facilities shared by two or more boards, tripartite agreements (Bill 30) and schools owned by boards but situated on leased property. Situations such as these will be addressed by the committee by the appeals process over the next few months.

FACILITIES TO BE EXCLUDED FROM CAPACITY CALCULATIONS

1. Schools where the Costs of Repairs are Prohibitive

School boards may have school buildings or school space which are in need of major repairs. In many cases the cost to address the deficiencies may be prohibitive, i.e., more than the cost of building new school facilities.

The committee recommends that individual schools or school space may be excluded from the capacity used to determine Grants for New Pupil Places for a board provided that:

satisfactory evidence is submitted to the committee by December 31, 1998 to warrant the undertaking of a technical audit of the facility;

a technical audit is undertaken:

in accordance with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education and Training;

by an independent engineering or architectural firm reporting both to the board and the Ministry of Education and Training;

the results of the technical audit confirm that the cost to address the deficiencies approaches the cost of building a new school or new space.

The committee also recommends that the cost of the technical audit be borne by the school board. Boards may use funds from their Pupil Accommodation Reserve Fund for this purpose.

2. Schools not being used for Instructional Purposes

Many boards have schools that have been closed for some time and used for administrative or plant operations (maintenance, storage) purposes. The committee believes that a number of these facilities may still be useful as schools, but recognizes that there may not be a need for this school facility in the community. In such circumstances these schools should not be included in the capacity figures used to determine a board's Grant for New Pupil Places.

The committee therefore recommends that boards be permitted to exclude former schools that they are currently using solely for administrative or plant operations purposes from their capacity provided that:

the facility is not suitable for use as a school without major renovations; and

each of the co-terminous boards declines an offer to acquire the facility at no cost for use as a regular day school.