

FACILITIES SERVICES

Facilities Planning

Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments, and School Closings

This policy supersedes Policy 8130.4.

I. PURPOSE

To describe the authority of the School Board to determine the assignment of students to schools and programs, to close schools and programs where appropriate, and to define the considerations and procedures for such determinations.

II. AUTHORITY

The Fairfax County School Board is vested with the authority to “provide for the consolidation of schools or redistricting of school boundaries or adopt pupil assignment plans whenever such procedure will contribute to the efficiency of the school division.” [Code of Virginia: Section 22.1-79 (4)]

III. ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS

The basic policy of the Fairfax County School Board shall be to assign pupils to the schools and programs that serve the areas of their residences in accordance with the local school boundaries and service areas established by the School Board. Exceptions to this policy will be made in accordance with the current version of Regulation 2230, Student Assignments to Schools (Pupil Placements)--Procedure for Exceptions for Intracounty Student Assignments.

IV. ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

The Division Superintendent is directed to annually consider the need to make adjustments governed by this policy and to take the actions indicated accordingly. The Superintendent is authorized to administratively adjust school attendance areas, after consultation with the affected School Board representative(s), when any one of the following circumstances occurs:

- an emergency or other overriding public need requires such a change.
- new unoccupied housing requires reassignment to avoid school crowding or to facilitate student transportation.
- less than five percent of the enrollment of each school will be affected, and analysis indicates the change will improve the operating efficiency of the school division.

The Division Superintendent is directed to report any such changes to the School Board and the public via the ensuing *Annual Facilities and Student Accommodation Plan*. Other

adjustments governed by this policy shall be made according to the considerations and procedures specified below.

V. REASONS FOR CONSIDERING BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS, PROGRAM ASSIGNMENT CHANGES, AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The School Board may close a school, change a school boundary, or adjust a program assignment or location in order to maintain or improve operating efficiency and/or instructional effectiveness. In general, such adjustments may relieve facility crowding, make effective use of new or existing space, avoid underused buildings, better relate program resources to needs, and/or reduce operating costs.

VI. IMPLEMENTING CONSIDERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Numerous factors may be considered when consolidating schools, redistricting school boundaries, or adopting pupil assignment plans. The following examples of these factors are not presented in priority order. Any or all of these factors may be relevant in a particular consolidation, redistricting, or assignment plan: the proximity of schools to student residences; projected school enrollment and capacity; walking distances; busing times and costs; walking and busing safety; natural and man-made geographic features; the impact on neighborhoods; school feeder alignments; contiguous school attendance areas; long-range capital plans; the socioeconomic characteristics of school populations; the distribution of programs and resources; the overall impact on families and students; and comparative long-term costs. Adjustments shall be made without respect to magisterial districts or postal addresses and, whenever possible, shall not affect the same occupied dwellings any more often than once in three years. The consideration of these factors and such adjustments shall involve affected communities to the extent reasonable.

The School Board shall “obtain public comment through a public hearing not less than ten days after reasonable notice to the public in a newspaper of general circulation in the school division prior to providing (i) for the consolidation of schools...(iii)...for redistricting of school boundaries or adopting any pupil assignment plan affecting the assignment of fifteen percent or more of the pupils in average daily membership in the affected school.” [Code of Virginia: Section 22.1-79 (8)]

VII. PHASING OF ADJUSTMENTS

When possible, adjustments under this policy shall be implemented through attrition and phasing. The School Board may approve a grade-by-grade phase-in of adjustments for students beginning with the incoming class at the middle or high school levels, when feasible. The School Board may adopt other phasing plans as appropriate to the individual boundary study.

Parents of rising sixth (or fifth) graders, eighth graders, and twelfth graders affected by a boundary change may, at the discretion of the School Board, be provided the option of having their students remain in the school they attended prior to the change.

Legal Reference: Code of Virginia Sections 22.1-79 (4) and (8)

See also the current version of: Regulation 2230, Student Assignments to Schools (Pupil Placements)—Procedure for Exceptions for Intracounty Student Assignments

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FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD