

## **FACILITIES SERVICES**

### **Facilities Planning**

#### **Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments, and School Closings**

This regulation supersedes Regulation 8130.4.

##### **I. PURPOSE**

To provide specific guidance for implementing the current version of Policy 8130, Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments, and School Closings.

##### **II. SCOPE**

This regulation guides any closing or consolidation of school facilities, as well as all adjustments of school attendance areas, special program service areas, and special program locations affecting 15 percent or more of a school's membership. The current version of Regulation 3333, Program Location Guidelines, provides guidance in revising special program assignments and/or locations affecting less than 15 percent of a given school's enrollment.

##### **III. PARTICIPATION BY AFFECTED RESIDENTS**

Pursuant to the current version of Policy 8130, the School Board will consider proposed adjustments, other than "administrative changes" as defined in the current version of Policy 8130 or those governed by the current version of Regulation 3333, after taking into account comments and recommendations of the affected school communities. Staff members shall use reasonable means to advise potentially affected school communities of their possible involvement and shall conduct open meetings as necessary to offer affected citizens reasonable opportunity to contribute. These deliberations will be guided by the procedures and calendar attached.

##### **IV. PROCEDURE AND CALENDAR FOR SCHOOL CLOSING AND CONSOLIDATION**

When appropriate, the Division Superintendent will recommend, via the *Annual Facilities and Student Accommodation Plan*, the closing of a facility within a grouping of adjoining schools. The recommendation will not identify a specific school for closing. The Superintendent's recommendation will be documented in terms of the considerations defined in the current version of Policy 8130, section IV.

The School Board will vote during a regularly scheduled meeting held before the end of December whether to adopt without further specification the Superintendent's recommendation to close a school. If the School Board adopts the recommendation, the Superintendent will initiate a community participation process, as discussed in section III., above, to assist in recommending both the school to be closed and the school attendance area adjustments to be made accordingly. The Superintendent will adjust the attached calendar and procedure as necessary to assure delivery of recommendations to the School Board by March of the school year preceding the indicated closing.

**V. PROCEDURE AND CALENDAR FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS AFFECTING RESIDENT STUDENTS**

In accordance with the current version of Policy 8130, the Division Superintendent may implement an administrative change to school attendance areas when less than five percent of the enrollment at each school will be affected and when staff analysis indicates the change will improve the operating efficiency of the school system. Before implementing the administrative adjustment, a meeting will be held with the sending and receiving schools to explain the adjustment and to solicit public comments. At least a ten-day notice will be given to the affected school community prior to the meeting.

The Division Superintendent may reconsider an adjustment that previously did not meet the above criteria if evaluations by staff members indicate there has been a significant change in the adjustment's impact or determining factors.

Administrative adjustments subject to this procedure will be considered during the calendar period for school closings, attendance area adjustments, and program realignments identified in the attachment to this regulation.

**VI. PROCEDURE AND CALENDAR FOR ADJUSTMENT OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS AND PROGRAM REALIGNMENTS**

The process for school attendance area adjustments and program realignments is described in the attached calendar and procedure.

See also the current version of: Regulation 3333, Program Location Guidelines  
Policy 8130, Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments,  
and School Closings

**SCHOOL CLOSINGS, ATTENDANCE AREA ADJUSTMENTS, AND PROGRAM  
REALIGNMENTS  
GENERAL PROCEDURE AND CALENDAR GUIDELINE**

The boundary or program adjustment and/or school closing process generally includes a series of three, or more if needed, facilitated community town meetings. When such a process is required, these meetings are usually conducted between November and March. Each meeting follows a participatory format as described below, with content and support modifications (e.g., language translators, etc.) appropriate to the community and tasks planned for each meeting.

**The Procedure**

The general meeting outline is:

- Participants are briefed on background information required to perform tasks planned for that meeting (and, for the second and subsequent meetings, provided a summary of findings from the prior meeting). Briefings emphasize educational and operational impacts of current situation and of each alternative considered for realignment.
- Participants break out into randomly assigned work groups, each with a facilitator-reporter, to work on the tasks planned.
- Town meeting reconvenes and groups report findings.
- Between meetings, staff members document group findings from prior meeting and post results on the FCPS web page. Staff members use results to build boundary realignment scenarios for review in the ensuing town meeting(s) and a "best" scenario for the subsequent meeting(s).

Work group meeting tasks are:

- Task 1—Identify important factors to consider when determining school to be closed and/or new school or program attendance assignments and suggest neighborhoods that might be included in new alignment.
- Task 2—Review each of the scenarios outlined and identify advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Task 3—Review "best" scenario as briefed, identify advantages (pros), and suggest improvements, if any.

Staff members use town meeting results as they develop the realignment(s) recommended to the School Board.

**The Approximate Calendar**

*September-October:* Facilities Planning Services and appropriate program staffs review enrollment projections, program requirements, and school and program capacities countywide to identify areas in which school closings, attendance area, and/or program realignments should be considered. The names of those schools that could be affected by such changes are reviewed with the affected School Board members. A letter informing parents of the need to change attendance area boundaries, and containing dates of the appropriate town meetings, will be sent from each school involved in a boundary study. If the boundary change affects a middle school or high school attendance area, notification letters will also be sent to the elementary- or middle-level feeder schools. When the need for attendance area adjustments results from the opening of a new school, all schools adjacent to the potential new attendance area will receive notification of the boundary process.

*November-February:* Facilities Planning Services, Office of Planning, Testing, and Evaluation, cluster representatives, and appropriate program staff members brief PTA and PTO leadership of potentially affected schools and hold, at approximately two-week intervals, town meetings with affected communities as described above.

*Late February:* Facilities Planning Services staff members present recommended school closings, school attendance area, and/or program realignments for School Board consideration.

*February-March:* School Board holds public hearing.

*Early March:* School Board acts on realignment recommendations.