

## **FACILITIES SERVICES**

### **Facilities Planning**

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

This policy supersedes Policy 8130.6.

##### **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. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION**

- A. The policy has been amended to include an expedited boundary study option.
- B. Policy sections have been re-ordered to simplify and expedite the process for boundary changes, and adds section IX., section X., and section XI.
- C. Section VI. title has been changed and section reworded for clarity.
- D. Section VII. is new and should be reviewed in its entirety.
- E. Section VIII. is new and should be reviewed in its entirety.
- F. Section IX. title has been changed.
- G. Section X. is new and should be read in its entirety.

##### **III. 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)]

##### **IV. 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 (Student Transfers)—Procedure for Exceptions for Intracounty Student Assignments.

##### **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 underuse of buildings, better relate

program resources to needs, and/or reduce operating costs. Input from the Facilities Planning Advisory Council shall also be considered.

#### **VI. ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT**

The Division Superintendent is directed to 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:

- A. An emergency or other overriding public need requires such a change.
- B. New unoccupied housing requires reassignment to avoid school crowding or to facilitate student transportation.
- C. 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.

#### **VII. EXPEDITED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT**

The Division Superintendent is directed to consider the need to make adjustments governed by this policy and to take the actions indicated accordingly. The Superintendent is authorized to recommend expedited adjustments to school attendance areas, after consultation with the affected School Board representative(s), and after publicly-noticed meetings are held in the affected school communities, when any one of the following circumstances occurs:

- A. An emergency or other overriding public need requires such a change within an expedited time frame.
- B. Less than fifteen 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 will provide the recommended adjustment to the School Board as an information and action item for School Board approval at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Division Superintendent is further directed to report any such changes to the School Board and the public.

#### **VIII. STANDARD BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT**

For boundary adjustments affecting fifteen percent or more of the enrollment at a school, the Division Superintendent is directed to consider the need to make adjustments governed by this policy. The Division Superintendent will provide the recommended adjustment to the School Board pursuant to section X., Public Notice, outlined below. The Division Superintendent is further directed to report any such changes to the School Board and the public. Other adjustments governed by this policy shall be made according to the considerations and procedures specified below.

## **IX . IMPLEMENTING CONSIDERATIONS**

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.

## **X. PUBLIC NOTICE**

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)]

For administrative boundary adjustments or expedited boundary study adjustments affecting the assignment of less than fifteen percent of the pupils in average daily membership in the affected school, no public hearing shall be required.

## **XI. 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 (Student Transfers)—Procedure for Exceptions for Intracounty Student Assignments

Policy  
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FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD