

FACILITIES SERVICES

Facilities Planning

Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments, and School Closings

This policy supersedes Policy 8130.7.

I. PURPOSE

To describe the authority of the Fairfax County 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

A student shall attend the school that serves his or her residence based on the school boundary, unless Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) determines that a different instructional program is required to meet the student’s needs. Exceptions will be made in accordance with the current version of Regulation 2230, Student Transfer Process.

IV. REASONS FOR BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

Reasons that may require revision of previously established school boundaries are:

- A. Capacity surplus or deficit of an existing school
- B. Equitable access to educational opportunities
- C. The opening of a new school
- D. The closing of a school
- E. Alleviation of attendance islands
- F. A natural disaster, such as a fire

V. SCOPING

Prior to boundary adjustments, the Department of Facilities and Transportation Services will provide the School Board options for the scoping:

- A. The efficient and educationally effective use of the capacity of each school
- B. Evaluate program placement at each school to determine if relocation of a program can alleviate overcrowding

VI. CONSIDERATIONS GOVERNING ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Schools identified with a reason for boundary adjustments in Section IV of this policy shall, adhering to the One Fairfax Policy, have a variety of elements examined when establishing new school boundaries including:

- A. Socioeconomic and/or racial composition of students in affected schools
- B. The geographic location of affected schools in relationship to the surrounding student population
- C. The safety of walking and busing routes
- D. Operational efficiency, to include long-range capital plans and busing costs
- E. Avoid the creation of attendance islands

When boundary changes are being considered by the School Board, the changes shall not be restricted by the boundaries of individual schools, administrative areas, zip codes, or magisterial districts.

VII. RESTRICTIONS ON BOUNDARY CHANGES

The School Board is committed to the use of long-range planning techniques to minimize the necessity for frequent boundary changes. Every effort shall be made to limit boundary changes for any residential unit to no more than once during a three-year period except as required by the opening of a new school, the closing of a school, or a natural disaster. Whenever such changes are required, every effort shall be made to lessen educational and social disruptions.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

The Division Superintendent shall recommend annually to the School Board to adjust school boundaries and program boundaries in response to an existing boundary being misaligned with a geographic feature (i.e. lot lines and new roadways) as determined by the Department of Facilities and Transportation Services. This may also include minor adjustments related to pipe stems and cul-de-sacs to maintain or improve operating efficiency.

IX. REASON TO INITIATE A SCHOOL CLOSING

When a public school building appears to the Division Superintendent to be unfit for occupancy, it shall be his duty to close the same and immediately to give notice thereof in writing to the members of the School Board. No public school shall be held therein nor shall any state or local funds be applied to support any school in such building until the Division Superintendent shall certify in writing to the School Board that he is satisfied with the condition of such building and with the appliances pertaining thereto. (Code of Virginia, section 22.1-136)

X. PUBLIC NOTICE

The School Board shall obtain public comment through a public hearing not less than 10 days after reasonable notice to the public in a newspaper of general circulation in the school division prior to providing for the consolidation of schools or for redistricting of school boundaries or adopting any pupil assignment plan affecting the assignment of 15 percent or more of the pupils in average daily membership in the affected schools. (Code of Virginia, section 22.1-79(8))

XI. STUDENT CONTINUITY

Upon School Board adoption of a boundary adjustment, exceptions for students choosing to remain at their current school in their final year of elementary, middle, or high school will be made in accordance with the current version of Regulation 2230, Section B:7, Senior Status.

XII. REVIEW OF POLICY

The School Board shall review this policy at least once every five years and revise this policy as needed. (Code of Virginia, section 22.1-253.13:7).

Legal References: Code of Virginia, sections 22.1-79, 22.1-136, and 22.1-253.13:7.

See also the current version of:

Policy 2670: Programs for Students with Disabilities

Policy 8110: Five-year Capital Improvement Program Planning

Regulation 2230: Student Transfer Process

Regulation 2670: Free, Appropriate Education for Students with Disabilities

Regulation 3333: Location Guidelines

Regulation 8110: Five-year Capital Improvement Program Planning

Regulation 8120: School Planning

Regulation 8130: Local School Boundaries, Program Assignments, and School Closings