

SCHOOL BOARD BYLAWS

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

§2-32 School Attendance Zones: Policy and ProcessA. Authority

The Loudoun County Public Schools 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)]

B. Reasons for Considering Attendance Zone Adjustments

The School Board may change an attendance zone to maintain or improve operating efficiency in order to maximize instructional effectiveness. In general, adjustments may relieve facility crowding, better utilize existing space, avoid underutilized facilities, mitigate the impact to schools created by demographic imbalances and better allocate program resources and/or reduce operating costs.

C. Attendance Zone Change Process

At least annually, the Superintendent will evaluate whether or not attendance zone changes are to be considered. Typically, the evaluation will take place within the context of the Capital Improvement Program process, but changes may also be recommended at any time to address overcrowding or other concerns. Attendance zone changes may also be initiated at the direction of the School Board. When conditions exist for school attendance zone changes, the Superintendent will recommend to the School Board that options for change be developed. These options will identify schools potentially affected by the attendance zone changes, the means by which the public will be involved in the attendance zone change process and a calendar for the attendance zone change process. The School Board will seek to encourage public participation throughout this process and will hold at least one public hearing prior to holding any work sessions regarding any attendance zone change recommendation. The School Board will act on the Superintendent’s recommendation.

D. Factors Considered in Attendance Zone Changes

When changing school attendance zones, the School Board and the Superintendent will consider, but not be limited to, the following criteria whenever possible:

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a. Efficiency: Effective use of new and existing facilities

- (1) Utilize projected student enrollment and facility capacity as principle measures of determining efficient use of educational facilities.
- (2) Promote reasonable balancing of enrollment within the school system to avoid over or underutilization of facilities or equitable distribution of programs and resources.
- (3) Minimize long-term use of mobile or modular classrooms that cause a school to operate at more than its designed core capacity.
- (4) Minimize future capital and operational budget costs.

b. Proximity: Keeping students close to their schools

- (1) Attendance zones shall be based upon geographic proximity as measured by distance traveled using established routes of transportation.
- (2) Adjacent neighborhoods and communities to a school should be given attendance priority to that school.
- (3) Attendance zones should be contiguous and contain the school, but recognizing there may be short-term situations when this is unavoidable.
- (4) Efforts will be made to encourage walking as the primary means of transportation to a school and promote reasonable walking zones in order to encourage healthier students, promote a cleaner environment and reduce transportation costs.

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c. Community: Encouraging the link between schools and communities

- (1) Promote the concept of community schools in which the school is in the community and the community is in the school.
- (2) Avoid splitting communities in order to underscore the importance of cohesive communities in fostering integrated learning and support environments for students.

d. Demographics:

- (1) Demographic characteristics of the students and communities.

2. Further Considerations

a. Accessibility:

- (1) The reasonable ability for students to attend a school from all portions of the attendance zone, including factors such as relative safety, travel time and overall effect on traffic flow, should be considered.
- (2) Natural and man-made barriers that may make accessibility difficult, including rivers, commuting corridors and major roads and intersections, should also be considered.

b. Stability:

- (1) Minimizing the number of repeated attendance zone changes over a particular time period for a particular school, student, neighborhood or community should be encouraged.

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(2) Promote long-term attendance zone stability.

c. Cluster Alignment:

(1) The eventual alignment of elementary, middle and high schools into cohesive operational clusters in which students remain with their educational cohorts should be encouraged.

(2) Establish a unified feeder system.

The School Board may consider any factors in making an attendance zone change. In the exercise of its authority, the School Board recognizes that it may not be reasonably practicable to reconcile each and every factor in any attendance zone change, but any attendance zone plan adopted by the School Board should be based on the above factors to the greatest extent possible.

Adopted: 9/25/2001

Current Revision: 2/23/2010