

## 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.

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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§2-32 School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process (continued)1. Initial Considerations

## a. Facilities: 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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§2-32 School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process (continued)

(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.

E. Charter School Conversion Exception

The Code of Virginia §§ [22.1-212.5](#) and [22.1-212.16](#) permit the conversion of all or a part of an existing public school to a public charter school. In those cases in which a conversion would result in the closing or consolidating the existing public school with another public school or would necessitate the re-districting of the attendance zone/boundary of the affected existing public school or the adoption of a pupil assignment plan, then paragraphs B through D shall not apply and the abbreviated procedures provided in Regulation 2-32 (School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process) will be followed.

Legal References: §[22.1-79\(4\)](#) and [\(8\)](#), Code of Virginia, [Virginia Constitution Article VIII, §7](#)

Adopted: 9/25/01

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INTERNAL OPERATIONS

**REGULATION**

§2-32      School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process

A.            General

This regulation supplements Policy §2-32, School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process by outlining the process which will be followed when a school attendance zone change has been initiated.

B.            Public Meeting Schedule for a School Attendance Zone Change Process

Prior to the start of a school attendance zone change or review, staff will present to the School Board a list of schools that should be notified regarding an upcoming school attendance zone change or review, based on School Board Policy §2-32, School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process. The School Board will be able to add or delete schools that should be included in the notification. Notification of a school community does not necessarily indicate that the school's attendance zone will change, only that its attendance zone will be under review by the School Board and therefore, potentially subject to modification.

The school attendance zone change process will follow the below outlined public meeting schedule. All information associated with the school attendance zone change will be posted on the LCPS website throughout the process.

School Board Attendance Zone Overview/Public Hearing

Staff will provide an overview of the attendance zone change process, potential issues including school facility or programmatic modifications, current and up to 10-year projected student enrollments and school attendance zone suggestions. Following the overview, the School Board will open the hearing for members of the public to provide comment and input regarding the school attendance zones under review.

School Board Attendance Zone Work Session

School Board work session to discuss staff suggested school attendance zone changes, including School Board modifications and/or changes to school attendance zone plan(s).

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**REGULATION**

§2-32 School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process (continued)

Staff Briefing/School Board Public Hearing

Staff will brief the public and School Board on the School Board attendance zone plan(s) currently being analyzed by the School Board. Following the briefing, the School Board will open the hearing for members of the public to provide comment and input regarding the School Board attendance zone plan(s).

School Board Attendance Zone Work Session

School Board work session to refine School Board attendance zone plan(s).

Staff Briefing/School Board Public Hearing

Staff will brief the public and School Board on the School Board attendance zone plan(s) currently being analyzed by the School Board. Following the briefing, the School Board will open the hearing for members of the public to provide comment and input regarding the School Board attendance zone plan(s).

School Board Attendance Zone Work Session

School Board work session to discuss final School Board attendance zone plan(s) and/or alternatives.

School Board Public Hearing(s)

At least one public hearing will be scheduled for members of the public to provide the School Board with input regarding the School Board's attendance zone plan(s).

School Board Recommendation

The School Board's attendance zone plan(s) will be placed on the next available School Board agenda, as an Information Item, for review and discussion. Each plan placed on the School Board agenda as an Information Item should have written rationale that highlights the extent and limits to which it comports with each factor listed in the School Board policy. This written rationale should be provided by the Board member proposing the plan's consideration or by staff, if directed by the Chairman.

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##### §2-32 School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process (continued)

###### School Board Action

The School Board's attendance zone plan(s) and their associated rationale will be placed on the next available School Board agenda, as an Action Item, for review and adoption.

##### C. Staff Dissemination of Information and Communication with the Public

All information or data generated by staff associated with an attendance zone change or review process must be posted on the LCPS website, so as to be uniformly available to the public and/or the School Board Members, either individually or collectively.

To preserve and protect their neutrality and impartiality, staff should not directly engage or communicate with members of the public regarding any substantive facet of an attendance zone modification or review process outside of a Board-sanctioned public forum, except as provided below:

1. Staff may respond to inquiries from members of the public by posting answers on the LCPS website;
2. Staff may respond to individual inquiries of a non-substantive or general nature regarding the process, assist members of the public in the accessing of publicly available data or information, and/or facilitate the public's understanding of a particular attendance zone plan formally under consideration by the School Board; and
3. Staff may refer individual inquiries to members of the School Board and/or to the LCPS website, where all public information associated with an attendance zone change or review process is posted.

##### D. Charter School Conversion Abbreviated Procedures

When the conversion of an existing public school, in whole or in part, to a public charter school would result in the closing or consolidating the existing public school with another public school or would necessitate the re-districting of the attendance zone/boundary of the affected existing public school or the adoption of a pupil assignment plan, then paragraph B of this Regulation shall not apply and the following process will be followed:

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SCHOOL BOARD BYLAWS

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

**REGULATION**

§2-32      School Attendance Zones: Policy and Process (continued)

1.      Staff will present to the School Board a proposed plan for the closing, consolidating, re-districting or pupil assignment plan modification, as may be applicable. The School Board may, at that time, determine if any School Board work sessions or additional public hearings are needed beyond the one public hearing described below.
  
2.      A public notice providing the opportunity for public comment at a public hearing will be published in a newspaper of general circulation and on the division's website at least 10 days prior to the public hearing. The public hearing may be held at the same board meeting at which action is taken on the proposal provided the public hearing occurs prior to action on the proposal.
  
3.      The action taken by the School Board will incorporate a written rationale for its determination.

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