



POLICY 7.021

5-C I recommend that the Board approve development of the proposed **new** Policy 7.021 entitled "School Closure and Consolidation."

[Contact: Kris Garrison, PX 48935.]

Development

CONSENT ITEM

- During discussion of the Galaxy/Plumosa/Forest Park options, Board Member Robinson asked that staff research "School Closure" policies used by other Districts, at the completion of the boundary cycle.
- Staff has conducted extensive research with particular emphasis on regions that are experiencing declines in enrollment.
- With the benefit of Best Practices research, a staff committee prepared a draft Policy for the Board's consideration.
- This draft was discussed at the November 12th School Board Workshop and the Board asked for several changes including the creation of an Advisory Committee. Those changes are reflected in the draft Policy.

POLICY 7.021

SCHOOL CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION

The decision to close a school is anguishing. It profoundly affects parents, neighborhoods, communities, District personnel, and, of course, students. It affects relationships, routines, and cherished territorialities. In short, it alters not only District operations but also lives.

A decision not to close a school, however, amidst circumstances of declining enrollment and economic necessity, can be imprudent. And while the immediate effects of closing a school may be painful, the long-term effects can be beneficial to everyone. (California Department of Education, 2008)

When considering the matter of closing District-owned schools, it is the intent and desire of the School Board to provide students high quality academic opportunities in a supportive educational atmosphere.

1. SCHOOL CLOSINGS/CONSOLIDATIONS FOR NON-ACADEMIC REASONS

The Board may close a school or consolidate schools for any or all of the following non-academic reasons:

- a. **Space Utilization Level.** The space available at a school or schools in close proximity is not being used in the most efficient, cost-effective manner; or
- b. **Financial Considerations.** Budget deficiencies or costs of operating multiple facilities make keeping facilities open impractical.
- c. **Physical Condition of Building.** The physical condition of the school building(s) and building systems (HVAC, Electrical and Plumbing), including the cost to replace and/or repair systems and safety hazards and make structural changes necessary to ensure compliance with all city, state and federal laws, makes continued operation of the site cost prohibitive or continued occupancy of the site unsafe or impractical; or
- d. **Alternative Use of School Facilities and Property.** The Board may close a school to use its facilities for other programmatic/educational purposes, for support services, to open a new school; or to provide affordable housing options for teachers.

2. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY

This policy shall not apply to school closings related to the following:

- 34 a. Adherence to State and Federal Accountability requirements and procedures.
- 35 b. Emergency school closings.

36 **3. SCHOOL CLOSINGS DUE TO A NEED FOR CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL**
37 **FOCUS**

38 The Board may determine that a school closure is necessary to address the
39 educational needs of students by implementing new curriculum and/or instructional
40 programs that involve either:

- 41 a. Extensive reassignment of school faculty and staff; or
- 42 b. Transformation of educational focus, which may result in significant change in
43 the student population.

44 Nothing in this policy shall be construed to require the Board to close a school in
45 order to implement a change in educational focus at the school.

46 **4. PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION OR**
47 **CLOSINGS**

48 The Superintendent may recommend school closings to the Board for any of the
49 reasons set forth in Sections 1 through 3 of this Policy. Effective upon Board
50 approval, the process for all school closings the effect of which is the assignment
51 and transfer of all students enrolled at the school to one (1) or more designated
52 receiving schools shall be as set forth below.

53 **a. Data and Analysis**

- 54 i. The District will periodically evaluate any schools in close proximity to one
55 another that are not being fully utilized. Enrollment projections and
56 associated space needs will be evaluated.
- 57 ii. Impacts on operating costs, facility costs, financing such as Certificates of
58 Participation and transportation shall also be considered, along with the
59 market value of the properties under consideration.
- 60 iii. Any schools considered for consolidation shall be evaluated for impacts
61 on the percentage of students meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
62 at any school affected by the consolidation.

- 63 b. **Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.** -- Prior to making a recommendation to the
64 School Board, the Superintendent shall convene an Ad Hoc Advisory
65 committee to review possible options and to submit their report and
66 recommendation(s) along with the Superintendent's report to the Board. The

67 Ad Hoc Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- 68 i. The Chair of the Advisory Boundary Committee, or another member of
69 the Committee designated by the Chair of the committee;
- 70 ii. A Chair of the Finance Committee, or another member of the Committee
71 designated by the Chair of the committee;
- 72 iii. The Florida American Planning Association representative on the
73 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC);
- 74 iv. The Chair of the Construction Oversight Review Committee (CORC), or
75 another member of CORC designated by the Chair of the committee;
- 76 v. The City Manager(s) or designee of the communities directly affected by
77 the potential boundary changes resulting from any potential school
78 closure or consolidation;
- 79 vi. The Student Council President, if available, from the school(s) affected by
80 the consideration of consolidation or closure; and
- 81 vii. The SAC Chair(s) from the school(s) being considered for consolidation
82 or closure.

83 c. **ABC, Finance and CORC Chairs.** If the Chairs of the aforementioned
84 committees elect to identify a designee, they shall give priority consideration to
85 appointing representatives that geographically and/or demographically
86 represent the areas being considered for consolidation or closure.

87 d. **Committee Tasks and Functions**

88 The purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee is to provide an opportunity for
89 community involvement and input into the decision-making process. The Ad
90 Hoc Committee has at least four functions:

- 91 i. Review and synthesize data and analysis prepared by the District staff
92 and explore available alternatives.
- 93 ii. Assist in dissemination of their report to the community at large
- 94 iii. Hold at least one public forum, as provided in Section 4 (f) below.
- 95 iv. Provide a recommendation to the Superintendent.

96 e. **Notice of Superintendent Proposal for School Closure**

- 97 i. Upon consideration, before any public notice is given, the affected school

98 Principals will be fully informed of any consideration of school closure or
99 consolidation and the relevant factors.

100 ii. The Superintendent shall provide advance notice to the public of his or
101 her proposal that a school or schools be considered for closure. The
102 Superintendent will provide a recommendation to the Board and provide
103 advance notice to the public. The Superintendent shall make every
104 attempt to avoid disruption of the academic program in preparation for
105 accountability testing and be mindful of the Advisory Boundary Committee
106 (ABC) process.

107 iii. Notice of the Superintendent's recommendation to close a school shall
108 include a written statement of the Superintendent's rationale. Specifically,
109 the notice shall include an explanation of how the school meets the
110 criteria set forth in the School Closure and Consolidation Policy
111 Guidelines.

112 iv. Prior to the Superintendent's public disclosure of his/her proposal to close
113 a school, he or his designee shall provide notice to the principal, School
114 Advisory Committee (SAC) and staff in the school(s) the Superintendent
115 proposes be closed as well as those schools being designated as
116 receiving schools.

117 **f. Public Input Process**

118 i. The Ad Hoc Committee shall convene at least one forum or meeting on
119 proposed closings held at a location intended to foster maximum
120 participation by persons in the affected school(s). This meeting may be
121 combined with a community input meeting associated with the boundary
122 change process;

123 ii. The Superintendent shall convene at least one public hearing at a regular
124 or special Board meeting.

125 iii. The public may comment on the Superintendent's proposal at the public
126 participation portion of an official Board meeting.

127 iv. The Superintendent will provide an online opportunity for members of the
128 public to comment on any proposed school closure.

129 v. Each meeting or hearing as provided herein shall adhere to the following
130 requirements:

131 A. Notice of the meeting or hearing, its date, time and location shall be
132 provided at least five (5) calendar days in advance of the hearing.

133 B. The hearing or meeting shall take place at least five (5) calendar
134 days prior to Board consideration.

135 C. Sufficient time shall be allowed to elicit public comment.

136 vi. If, after the public hearing, the Superintendent determines to recommend
137 the school closing(s) to the Board, he/she or a designee shall prepare a
138 final board report regarding the school closing(s) based on all pertinent
139 information, including relevant information compiled by the Ad Hoc
140 Committee and received at the public hearing. The board report shall be
141 submitted to the Board for final action and adoption as policy.

142 **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

143 a. After approval of any school closing(s) by the Board, the Superintendent shall
144 be responsible for the orderly closing of the school(s). Palm Beach County
145 schools shall provide support to facilitate the transition of students affected by
146 a school closure. The Superintendent or designee shall assemble a support
147 team to provide necessary and appropriate services, as identified by the
148 Superintendent's designee, to assist those students who attended a school
149 that is closed under this Policy.

150 **6. REASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS UPON SCHOOL CLOSING**

151 a. When a school is closed for non-academic reasons or due to a change in
152 educational focus, the students will be reassigned to a school or schools with
153 available space that can meet their educational needs (including special
154 education and bilingual education).

155 b. Students may apply for enrollment at a school or schools other than the school
156 to which they are reassigned, subject to space availability and District
157 admission criteria.

158 c. If a school closing requires that the attendance boundaries of any school
159 receiving students be redrawn, they shall be redrawn pursuant to applicable
160 Board policies.

161 **7. DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY**

162 a. The District's Property and Redistribution staff shall conduct a full inventory of
163 furniture, equipment and furnishings prior to the demolition of a structure or
164 turnover of any facility to another entity.

165 b. The Superintendent shall recommend to the School Board any land, buildings
166 or property otherwise unsuitable for educational purposes. Upon the
167 Superintendent's recommendation (considering, among other matters, the

168 best value), the School Board may then authorize the Superintendent to
 169 proceed with disposition (sale or lease/option to purchase) of the property in
 170 accordance with Sections 1013.28 and/or 1013.15, Florida Statutes. If the
 171 property is designated for disposition (sale or lease/option to purchase), then
 172 the Superintendent shall cause written notice to be sent to each district charter
 173 school of any competitive process for such disposition of the property.

174 c. If the property will not be offered for sale or lease/option to purchase, but
 175 instead be available for use by other district public schools, then the provisions
 176 of Section 1002.33(18), Florida Statutes (relating to charter schools) shall be
 177 applicable, and the Superintendent shall cause written notices to be sent to
 178 the district charter schools of the process for the utilization of such available
 179 property.

180 **8. REASSIGNMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF ASSIGNED TO CLOSED**
 181 **SCHOOLS**

182 Teachers at schools closed pursuant to this policy shall be reassigned pursuant to
 183 Board policy and the terms of the CTA Contract. Teachers assigned to a closed
 184 school who are fully certified and reappointed for the following school year will be
 185 reassigned to the receiving school consistent with District staffing formulas when
 186 the entire student population at the closed school is reassigned to one receiving
 187 school. The Voluntary Transfer, Unit Adjustment Transfer (UAT), and Involuntary
 188 Transfer provisions of the CTA Contract will apply when all students at a closed
 189 school are not reassigned to one receiving school, but are reassigned to two or
 190 more receiving schools. The "Excessing" and Involuntary Transfer provisions of
 191 the FPSU/SEIU and AESOP Contracts will apply to non-instructional employees
 192 assigned to a closed school.

193 **9. LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS AT CLOSED SCHOOLS**

194 School Advisory Councils at schools that are closed for any reason shall be
 195 dissolved when the school closes.

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Illustrative School Closure/Closure Timeline

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2008						2009			
June	July-Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Aug.
Voluntary Transfer		1 st announcement that closure is being considered	Public Hearings	Decision to close school should	Choice Deadline	Voluntary Transfer		UAT Starts (CTA Contract)	School Closure

Process Ends		(no later than October 15 th)	Start Boundary Process	occur, but no later than Feb.				Boundary Established	
			1st FTE						
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201									
202									

203 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Fla. Stat. §§ 1001.41(2), 1001.42(9)(e)
204 LAWS IMPLEMENTED: Fla. Stat. §§ 1013.28, 1013.15
205 HISTORY: ___/___2008

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References

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209 The California Department of Education. (2008). *Closing a school best practices guide*.
210 Retrieved December 5, 2008 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/schoolclose>

Legal Signoff:

The Legal Department has reviewed proposed Policy 7.021 and finds it legally sufficient for development by the Board.

Attorney

Date