

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA****Background**

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a long-term facilities plan and update this plan as is necessary in order to house students in safe, efficiently operated, and effective learning environments. In reviewing the facilities plan, the Superintendent or designee may need to develop recommendations for the Governing Board to close a school if the following criteria are present:

- Structural hazards due to disasters or facility age create safety issues for housing students
- The community surrounding a school becomes unsafe for student learning or access to the school
- Declining enrollment decreases the student population at one or more schools to 300 or less students and/or surplus classrooms at a school are greater than classrooms housing students
- Decreased enrollment affects the economic resources of the district and one or more schools must be considered for closure in order to conserve and efficiently manage fiscal resources for existing students in the district
- School closure savings outweighs district office closure or other facility closure savings
- Development of new communities or boundary shifts due to new construction, proposed freeways, or other conditions in the Santee community result in significant demographic and geographic changes in school populations

**Procedure**

Once these conditions are recognized, the Superintendent shall:

1. Develop an administrative recommendation to close or not close a school and present this recommendation to the Board.
2. Provide the Board with a report that summarizes the critical data, an analysis of the issues impacting school closure and a transitional plan for students who may have to move to alternative school sites if a school is closed.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)

3. Administration will analyze the following critical issues and report the impact on school closure recommendations to the Board. In emergency school housing situations where student safety is compromised, the Superintendent shall develop an immediate and reasonably prompt recommendation for alternative school housing if student safety is at issue.

If student safety is not compromised, the reports regarding the impact of school closure decision shall be developed and presented to the Board by no later than February of the preceding year before school closure takes place. This will provide time for staff, administration and families to make transitional plans to move to the alternative school.

4. The Board retains the authority to make decisions about school closure based on the needs of the entire district.

**Reports Requested From the Community School Closure Committee**

**Safety and Facilities**

Facilities and school environment safety, building structure, traffic, roads, and crime:

1. Schools shall be considered for closure if the facilities, surrounding areas, access to and from school, age of facilities, transportation, neighborhoods, et cetera... present a safety hazard to the well-being of students, families and staff alike. In these cases, if the safety hazards are not repairable, or must be repaired before occupancy, then temporary or permanent school closure decisions should be of the highest priority.
2. Schools shall be considered for closure if the surrounding area is not conducive to support an educational community for students traveling to and from school either because of adverse traffic conditions, unsafe walkways, or significant crime in the school area.
3. Schools may be considered for closure if a disaster affects the school and either physical, environmental, and/or emotional issues are present which establish a detriment to a positive school climate.
4. When a school is designated for closure, a report on new transportation and walking routes to the receiving school must outline safe walking and busing access.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)**Cost Savings and Enrollment**

Fiscal impact of closing or not closing a school due to enrollment decline and facilities operational and personnel costs:

1. If the impact of declining enrollment and resultant revenue reductions are such that they are projected to negatively affect the fiscal foundation of the school district, the district may consider closing a school for financial efficiency. All other savings (such as the closure of the district office or other administrative facilities) need to be considered first before school closure decisions are made.
2. Decisions shall be made to close a school when the savings for personnel, building operational costs, utility costs and transportation costs shall have a positive and necessary fiscal impact on district finances, significant enough in the Board's estimation to outweigh:
  - a. Personnel moving costs;
  - b. State facilities fees costs for unused buildings;
  - c. New transportation routes;
  - d. The data shall demonstrate the impact of the fiscal outcome of these conditions.

**Asset Value**

Efficient asset management and the highest and best use plan for property after a school is closed. (Reports shall show if there is any likelihood of generating revenue as a surplus property once the school is closed.)

1. Decisions to close a school shall be made in light of the fiscal needs of the district. When dire fiscal needs of the district are established and a decision to close a school is imminent, the criteria for which school to close shall be based on the following asset management criteria:
  - a. Realistic lease options available for the property where the school is closed;
  - b. The highest and best use which would indicate an appraised value on a given date for sale of school property;
  - c. Realistic options for favorable zoning by the City of Santee;

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)

- d. Reasonable plan for interim use during the time a property is in negotiations for sale;
  - e. Planning provided by appropriate consultants regarding use of property if sold.
2. The criteria as to which school to close shall be based on the ability of the school district to project use of the property after school closure to generate income for the school district. Schools that are projected to sit unused for a significant time period may have a lower consideration for closure than schools with potential higher land use after closure. Schools that need to be closed should have a projected viable alternative use and this use shall be analyzed and presented as data in the administrative report.

**Boundaries and Demographics**

Boundaries adjustments based on enrollment shifts in schools and demographic changes, decline or growth in the school community:

1. If boundary adjustments are necessary, and these adjustments will impact student enrollment by substantially reducing it in specific geographical areas, a school may need to close. The Superintendent or designee will report to the Board about such considerations that influence school closure if enrollment dramatically drops at a school due to city zoning changes, landlord or tenant shifts in policies, newly constructed schools that shift enrollment and pending freeways that are projected to deplete enrollment.
2. When making a decision to close a school and boundary shifts are necessary, demographic reports shall show that the school is not realistically scheduled to reopen for a minimum of five years. Staff and students do not need to make multiple moves in an unreasonable time-period because of changing school closure decisions. (NOTE: The district cannot control the impact of multiple moves in closing a second school, if necessary, where staffs that have moved as a result of the first school closure are reassigned.)
3. The analyses for closing a school due to boundary shifts shall be used in light of projected demographic outcomes for the school attendance area including a report of information about the student population projections for the next five years and the impact on enrollment due to new housing developments.
4. Note: The administrative report on recommendations for closing a school shall be made as a result of and after decisions about boundary adjustments are made and not before, if at all possible.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)**Academics**

Academic impact of school closure and necessary support systems and costs to re-establish academic programs report:

Criteria for closing a school shall include rationale for the academic impact on the student population that will need to move, and if the impact on moving is deemed negative to academic programs, the Board will consider the following criteria before a closure decision is made:

1. If a special needs student body, as in a special education population, (SDC classes) are to be moved, the best analysis should include ways to not displace these students at this school. Another school should be considered for closure first where the impact would not affect the continuity or integrity of the SDC program, if at all possible.
2. However, if the school will be closed and the special needs population will be displaced, an analysis of support systems that enhance or improve learning in the transition to the new school environment shall be planned and reported to the Board.
3. If a GATE population is to be moved, the same considerations as in 1 and 2 above are to be implemented if school closure is necessary.
4. If a second language population is enrolled at the school designated for closure, the same considerations as in 1 and 2 above are to be implemented if school closure is necessary.
5. If the Board is choosing to close a school that is a high performing school, some of the same considerations about which school to close and what supports to establish in the new environment where the students will move should be reported to the Board and developed in a plan prior to school closure decisions.
6. The criteria for closing a school must include evidence that the closing school's additional programs such as computer lab, woodshop, et cetera, are not eliminated as a result of school closure decisions.
7. Before a school closure decision is made, research into junior high or other alternative groupings district-wide shall be provided to determine if the end result will meet the outcomes originally intended for closing a school. Those groupings must also have as an outcome, that once the closure occurs, the structure will be better for students academically. Junior high combined groupings shall not be structured just so schools will not close. The report on academic benefits comparing consolidation of junior high groupings to academic benefits of school closure shall be addressed in a final report to the Board.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)**Capacity**

Capacity and accommodation resources of receiving schools and transition schools:

1. When a school is slated for closure, evidence that optimum capacity for the receiving school(s) should be researched and confirmed including classrooms, traffic space, potential year-round schedule, parking areas, available enrichment program facilities, and recess and playground areas. Evidence will be based on State guidelines for capacity per square footage and enrollment ratios as well as local community needs.

Capacity, however, should be researched in a way that determines whether an unreasonable burden will be placed on administration in managing a school campus or additional discipline issues are projected to increase if the students from the school that is closed transition to the campus receiving the students from that school. If the decision is to close the school, then accommodations to support the enrollment increases in additional personnel to the receiving school shall be considered. A report on cost of programs and personnel shall be provided.

If capacity exists in the receiving school and other criteria apply, then a school closure decision may be recommended.

2. The Superintendent or his/her designee will address in *a* report facility asset management, where the unused and non-revenue generating surplus classrooms exceed the used student occupied classrooms.

When the enrollment dwindles below 300 students, schools may be considered for closure.

**Economic and Transportation**

Economic impact of school closure on projected decrease in inter-district transfers, projection of charter schools, and family economic issues:

1. Schools shall be considered for closure if other factors mentioned in this document are present; however, consideration of the economic hardship of students and the potential impact of attendance issues at the receiving school shall also be included. Additional support is to be provided at the receiving school for economically disadvantaged students if a school is closed. Creation of a smooth transition for these students is advisable and a transition report sharing this plan shall be developed and presented.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)

2. Although not easily predictable, school communities may form charter schools in resistance to school closure decisions. The financial impact of this issue must be considered before school closure decisions are made. When a charter school may be formed as a result of school closure decisions, the economic savings projected from the school closure may not be realized and therefore may be lost by expenses of decreased student ADA because of the opening of a charter school. Administration will investigate and report findings on the likelihood of a school charter forming as a result of school closure. The economic savings of closing the school shall be weighed in light of school charter fiscal losses.
3. The decision on which school to close shall be made for schools that are most likely not to experience enrollment loss due to inter-district transfers, private schools or other considerations. The loss of inter-district transfers shall be projected.
4. If the school is closed, the cost of transportation for students with economic concerns shall be considered in making the final decision and therefore transportation costs shall be estimated and weighed against anticipated school closure savings.

**Parent/Guardian Choice**

Feasibility of parent/guardian choice options:

1. The decision to close a school shall take into account reasonable openings and first choice for students and their families who are being displaced. These families may choose, as there are vacancies, any school in the district for enrollment of their child or children.
2. Schools that are closed with eighth grade students shall be closed at the end of the school year whenever possible. The students who are entering eighth grade in the following year shall be allowed to remain together in the school they are transferred to by choice so they can graduate together.

**New Housing Developments**

New schools built in the community and the impact on student housing and school closure:

1. With the possibility of new housing developments in the district in 2008, boundary shifts in the next three to seven years and new school construction are a possibility. In these situations, the criteria for closing an existing school are as follows:

When the enrollment in the old school is depleted as a result of new school transfers, and boundaries are shifted to accommodate new school families, and there is no longer a need for the old school, the results of this information shall be reported and a decision to close the old school may be advisable.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE CRITERIA** (continued)

2. If because of school choice, the enrollment of an existing school is significantly depleted because parents wish their children to attend a newer or modernized school, an older school may be closed.

