

G-5: Administrative Procedures

District Reconfigurations & Long-Term School Closures



REFERENCE

[Board Policy G-5: District Reconfigurations & Long-Term School Closures](#)

DEFINITIONS:

Special Enrollment Program: A full-day academic program in which a parent opts to enroll the parent’s student and that is offered at a specifically designated district school. The special enrollment programs within the district are its gifted or advanced learning programs and dual language immersion programs.

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

State law sets forth two distinct processes to be followed when a school district proposes changing school boundaries or closing a school. The time frames in these administrative procedures align with state law; however, nothing prevents the district or board from extending the length of any process. Recognizing the impact these decisions can have on families, the board and district will strive to make all final decisions within a timeframe that gives families as much advance notice as possible.

When proposing to change school boundaries, state law requires a minimum of 30 days between when the board approves a recommendation for studying boundaries and when the board takes final action. During this time, potentially affected stakeholders will be notified, the district will disseminate its proposed boundary plan and hold at least one informational meeting, and the public will have an opportunity to comment at a board meeting and a public hearing. If the board approves any boundary adjustments, the new boundaries will not go into effect until the next school year.

When proposing to close a school, state law requires a minimum of 90 days between when the board approves a recommendation for studying schools for potential closure and when the board takes final action. During this time, potentially affected stakeholders will be notified, the district will disseminate its proposal and hold informational meetings, and the public will have an opportunity to comment at two board meetings and a public hearing. State law requires that a school board approve any school closure before December 31, in order for the closure to go into effect at the beginning of the next school year however, these procedures set forth an earlier deadline of December 15.

I. Procedures to be Followed During Each Year in Which Changes to School Boundaries are Being Contemplated

- A. Public input on proposed school boundary changes
 - 1. Concerns, suggestions, and questions may be raised by the public at any time during this process. Such communications should be directed to the superintendent’s designee (hereafter the “G-5 Administrator”).
 - 2. Members of the public wishing to make a formal public comment to the board must sign up to speak during the public comment period of a scheduled board meeting. See, B-2: Administrative Procedures, School Board Meetings, Section II, Public Participation at Board Meetings.
 - 3. The public will have multiple opportunities to provide input on any proposed school boundary changes during informal community information sessions, a designated public comment period in at least one board meeting, and at a scheduled formal public hearing.
- B. Superintendent and/or G-5 Administrator recommendation
 - 1. At least 30 days prior to the board voting to change school boundaries, the G-5 Administrator will gather information to present to the board regarding possible school boundary adjustments.
 - a. In an effort to be transparent and avoid surprise, prior to making any recommendation for boundary adjustments in an open board meeting, the G-5 Administrator will meet with the principal and school community council (“SCC”) chair of each school that might be affected by a recommendation to change school boundaries. The purpose of this meeting is to inform them that their school will be included in the upcoming recommendation.
 - b. An initial recommendation to adjust school boundaries will typically be based on:
 - i. the district’s identified need to equalize, to the extent possible, the enrollment at the district elementary, middle, and/or high schools; and/or
 - ii. a school closure that necessitates new boundaries.

2. Subsequent to hearing the recommendation, and no later than 30 days prior to the anticipated board vote, the board shall make and approve a motion to initiate the district sending the required notifications in accordance with state law.
 - a. The district will notify the following individuals that the board is considering a boundary change:
 - i. parents of students enrolled in the schools directly affected by the proposed boundary change, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - ii. parents of students enrolled in other schools within the district that may be affected by the proposed boundary change, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - b. At the same time, the district may send the notifications of the public hearing described in Section I.D.1.b.ii.
- C. In-depth study
1. Upon any board motion to consider boundary changes, the G-5 Administrator, district leadership, and key department personnel will begin an in-depth study of the factors listed below to draft an appropriate and safe school boundary plan.
 - a. School enrollment data, which may include, but is not limited to, declining or increasing enrollment data, and future enrollment projections.
 - b. Facility capacity, school utilization (enrollment vs. school capacity), and location.
 - c. Student safety, including but not limited to the availability of safe walking/biking routes, crosswalks, pedestrian overpasses/underpasses, crossing guards, speed bumps, hawk lights, etc.
 - d. Transportation, which includes but is not limited to looking at the costs/savings related to transportation, and the capacity of the district to transport all affected students and arrive at school on time.
 - e. Geographic features of the district, including consideration of whether there are any natural boundaries, or major thoroughfares which cannot be crossed safely by pedestrians, and consideration for contiguity of the school boundary.
 2. The public will have an opportunity to review the proposed school boundary plan for a minimum of ten days. A copy of the plan shall be made available in each affected school and distributed to each affected SCC.
 3. The district will also regularly post updates on its website and send communications to families using the district's standard communication platform/software.
- D. Public Comment, Public Hearing, and Information Sessions
1. During the 30-day period, the board will provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed boundary plan:
 - a. during at least one public board meeting; and
 - b. hold a public hearing and provide public notice of the hearing in accordance with state law.
 - i. The notice of the public hearing shall indicate the school(s) which will be impacted by the proposed boundary change, and the date, time, and location of the public hearing.
 - ii. At least 30 days before the public hearing, the district will provide notice of the public hearing to:
 - (1) parents of students enrolled in the schools directly affected by the proposed boundary change, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - (2) parents of students enrolled in other schools within the district that may be affected by the proposed boundary change, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - (3) Salt Lake City Council members; and
 - (4) Mayor of Salt Lake City.
 - iii. The notice listed immediately above in Section I.D.1.b.ii, shall also be provided 10 days prior to the public hearing.
 - iv. The required notice must be published:
 - (1) on the district's website;
 - (2) on the Utah Public Notice Website;
 - (3) at the district's community learning centers; and
 - (4) on the front entrances of any potentially affected schools.
 2. The proposed boundary plan will also be presented at information sessions scheduled throughout the 30-day period.
 - a. The number and location of the information sessions will be determined by the board.
 - b. Notice of any open information sessions will be provided to parents of students enrolled in the schools affected by the proposed boundary changes.

- E. Board Agenda Items
 - 1. The required public comment opportunity will be placed on a board agenda, and the G-5 Administrator will provide feedback from any information sessions for the board's consideration.
 - 2. The required public hearing will be held as part of the board's agenda, and the proposed boundary plan will be placed as a discussion item on the board agenda.
 - 3. If after discussing the proposed boundary plan the board determines to take action on a proposed boundary changes, the recommendations will be placed on the action agenda for the next public board meeting.
 - 4. Except in emergency situations, the following school year is the earliest any approved boundary change will take effect.
- F. Parents of students enrolled in a school affected by a boundary change will have at least 30 days after the board approves any such change to file an open enrollment/school choice application.
- G. The boundary adjustment process outlined in this section will be followed when the district is proposing to relocate a special enrollment program.
- H. The board must vote on any proposed boundary change that is unrelated to a school closure prior to the end of February in order for the change to go into effect in the next school year.

II. **Procedures to be Followed During Each Year in Which an Official Long-Term School Closure is being Contemplated**

- A. Public input on a long-term school closure
 - a. Concerns, suggestions, and questions may be raised by the public at any time during this process. All such communications should be directed to the G-5 Administrator.
 - b. Members of the public wishing to make a formal public comment to the board must sign up to speak during the public comment period of a scheduled board meeting. See, B-2: Administrative Procedures, School Board Meetings, Section II, Public Participation at Board Meetings.
 - c. The public will have multiple opportunities to provide input on any proposed school closures during informal community information sessions, a designated public comment period in at least two board meetings, and at a scheduled formal public hearing.
- B. G-5 Administrator recommendation
 - 1. At least 90 days prior to the board voting to close any school, the G-5 Administrator will gather information to present to the board regarding schools that should be considered for potential long-term school closure.
 - a. In an effort to be transparent and avoid surprise, prior to making any recommendation in an open board meeting, the G-5 administrator will meet with each principal and SCC chair of a school that is being recommended for potential closure. The purpose of this meeting is to inform them that their school will be included in the upcoming recommendation.
 - b. The G-5 Administrator's initial recommendation will be based on a school meeting one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. Five-year enrollment projection data indicates the building will be at or below 50% of capacity and surrounding schools will be at or below 65% of capacity.
 - ii. Enrollment at an elementary school falls below 300 students.
 - iii. General teacher standard FTE funds only allocate one teacher in at least two grade levels (grades 1 through 6) in an elementary school.
 - iv. Estimated costs associated with all short-term repairs, building lifespan needs over the next five years, and/or addressing the structural safety issues is greater than 35% of the estimated cost of building a new school.
 - c. Any school adjacent to a school that meets the criteria listed in II.B.1.b. may also be studied for potential closure.
 - 2. Subsequent to hearing the recommendation, and no later than 90 days prior to the anticipated board vote, the board shall make and approve a motion to initiate the district sending the required notifications in accordance with state law.
 - a. The board must make a separate motion for each school under consideration for closure.
 - b. The district will notify the following individuals that the board is considering a school closure:
 - i. parents of students enrolled in the schools directly affected by the proposed closure, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - ii. parents of students enrolled in other schools within the district that may be affected by the proposed closure, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
- C. In-depth study

1. Upon any board motion to consider the long-term closure of a school, the G-5 Administrator, district leadership, and key department personnel will begin an in-depth study of the factors listed below to determine the viability and appropriateness of closing an identified school.
 - a. The factors to be considered are:
 - i. School enrollment data for the school and surrounding schools, which may include, but is not limited to, declining or increasing enrollment data, and future enrollment predictions.
 - ii. Facility capacity and design, which may include if applicable, consideration of the building's physical condition, maintenance/repair needs, utility costs, school utilization (enrollment vs. school capacity), and location.
 - iii. Transportation, which includes but is not limited to looking at the costs/savings related to transportation, and the capacity of the district to transport all affected students and arrive at school on time.
 - iv. Geographic features of the district, including consideration of whether there are any natural boundaries, or major thoroughfares which cannot be crossed safely by pedestrians, and consideration for contiguity of the school boundary.
 - v. Special programs, which may include, but are not limited to, consideration of the presence or absence of special education programs, English language learners, dual language immersion programs, and accelerated and gifted programs.
 - vi. Special program facilities, for example, special programs, such as providing services for special education students, may require special facilities. Consideration will be given regarding the extent to which a large capital investment has been made in creating such special facilities and the costs associated with rebuilding those facilities elsewhere.
 - vii. Financial implications, which may include consideration of operational costs, staffing, utilities, and facility re-utilization.
2. The public will have an opportunity to review the in-depth study on school closure(s) for a minimum of 30 days. A copy of the study and a summary shall be made available in each school proposed for closure(s) and distributed to each affected SCC.
 - a. The district will also regularly post updates on its website and send communications to families using the district's standard communication platform/software.
3. Public Comment, Public Hearing, and Information Sessions
 - a. During the 90-day period:
 - i. the board will provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed closures during at least two public board meetings; and
 - ii. hold a public hearing and provide public notice of the hearing in accordance with state law.
 - (1) the notice of the public hearing shall indicate the school(s) which will be impacted by the proposed closure, and the date, time, and location of the public hearing.
 - iii. At least 30 days before the public hearing, the district will provide notice of the public hearing to:
 - (1) parents of students enrolled in the schools directly affected by the proposed school closure, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - (2) parents of students enrolled in other schools within the district that may be affected by the proposed school closure, using email or the parent's preferred method of communication;
 - (3) Salt Lake City Council members; and
 - (4) Mayor of Salt Lake City.
 - iv. The notice listed immediately above in Section II.C.3.a.iii., shall also be provided 10 days prior to the public hearing.
 - iv. The required notice must be:
 - (1) published:
 - a. on the district's website;
 - b. on the Utah Public Notice Website;
 - (2) posted:
 - a. at the district's community learning centers; and
 - b. on the front entrances of any potentially affected schools.
4. The proposed closure will also be presented at information sessions scheduled throughout the 90-day period.
 - a. The number and location of the information sessions will be determined by the board.

- b. Notice of any open information sessions will be provided to parents of students enrolled in the schools affected by the proposed closure.

D. Board Agenda Items

1. The required public comment opportunity will be placed on a board agenda, and the G-5 Administrator will provide feedback from any information sessions for the board's consideration.
 2. The required public hearing will be held as part of the board's agenda, and the recommended school closure(s) will be placed as a discussion item on the board agenda.
 3. If after discussing the recommended closures the board determines to take action on a recommendation(s), the recommendation(s) will be placed on the action agenda for the next public board meeting.
 4. Any vote to close a school must occur prior to December 15 of the calendar year preceding the beginning of the school year in which a school closure takes effect.
- E. Because a long-term school closure will necessitate boundary adjustments, the district will have 60 days after the day on which the board approves a school closure to adjust school boundaries. The boundary adjustment process will follow the timelines and procedures outlined in Section I.
- F. Any proposed closure of a special enrollment program will follow the school closure process outlined in this section.
- G. Any alternative or non-traditional school will be evaluated for closure using criteria specific to that site, such as whether the school is still serving its intended purpose, its enrollment, and whether it is fiscally responsible to maintain that site.

III. Extension of Timelines

- A. If the number of schools under consideration for closure or the scope of the boundary changes warrant additional time for study, as part of the initial recommendation the superintendent or G-5 Administrator can propose an extended process.
1. State law requires that a school closure decision be made by the board prior to December 31.
- B. If circumstances require the extension of any specific timeframe listed in these administrative procedures, the superintendent or G-5 Administrator will notify the board in an open and public meeting that a particular deadline has been extended due to extenuating circumstances. Any such extenuating circumstances will be explained in the board meeting.

IV. Grade-Level Reconfigurations within Schools

- A. If the district determines that the grade levels being served within a school should be adjusted, the superintendent will make the applicable recommendation to the board.
- B. Any recommendation must be made at least 60 days prior to any board action on the proposed reconfiguration.
- C. If the recommendation has the support of the board, the board will hold one public comment period during an upcoming board meeting to gather public input on the recommendation.
- D. Any decision to reconfigure grade levels within a school will be made prior to the end of February preceding the school year in which the reconfiguration will take effect.

V. Decisions Related to District Facilities no Longer in Use as School Buildings

For any unused school building, the following procedures will be followed to determine its future use. Potential options for an unused school property include: using the site to address a different district need, declaring the site "surplus property" and thus available for sale, or repurposing the site to benefit the district and community while still retaining ownership of the site.

- A. Immediate district need
1. Once a decision has been made to permanently close a school building, the district will determine if there is an immediate district need for the building.
 - a. An immediate district need means the district has a foreseeable need for new or additional space to meet the needs of district students, including for operating a district or school program or a special school, or to address a district operational space need.
 - i. In an open public board meeting, the superintendent will recommend to the board that a building be used to address an identified district need.
 - ii. During a subsequent public meeting, the board will provide time for public comment on both the identified district need and the site chosen to address that need.
 - iii. After receiving public feedback, the board will place the recommendation on an upcoming board agenda for a vote by the board.
- B. Determining site eligibility for repurposing or surplus
1. If the district determines it has no immediate district need for the building, the district will conduct a feasibility study to understand the best uses for each site. The study can include:

- a. A real estate analysis ("REA"). A REA will assess the current conditions of each site, such as assessing the existing condition of buildings and development allowed under zoning and other regulations. This phase could include an assessment of the development potential of each site, should its zoning be adjusted. A real estate market analysis can inform land uses that are in demand near each site, such as housing, retail, and small scale or creative office. Based on the development that is legally allowed, physically possible, and market feasible, a baseline land value will be identified; and
 - b. A financial and economic analysis ("FEA"). Using the baseline development assumptions identified during the REA, the FEA will define a creative and organized land use plan for each school site that meets the district's goals, is market feasible and ready for implementation. This phase of the project will refine potential commercial and community-focused uses of the sites and consider their impacts on the surrounding community, with a goal of adding value for both the neighborhood and district. A detailed financial analysis and risk assessment for each proposed land use plan will validate that the plans are financially feasible.
2. When the feasibility study is complete, the district will present to the board the recommendation for each site to either repurpose the site or declare it surplus property.
- C. Surplus Property
1. If the feasibility study suggests that it is in the best interest of the district to sell the property, the superintendent or designee will recommend to the board that the property be declared "surplus" in accordance with Utah Code §53G-4-901.
 2. If the board declares a site to be surplus property, the district will give written notice to the appropriate eligible governmental entities that the property is available for purchase.
 - a. The notice shall comply with the requirements outlined in Utah Code §53G-4-902.
 3. If the eligible governmental entities forfeit their right to purchase the surplus property, the board is no longer obligated to sell the surplus property to an eligible entity.
 4. Any sale of surplus property to an eligible entity must comply with state law and only be used for one of the statutorily identified purposes.
 5. If the board sells surplus property to an eligible entity, the sale proceeds may only be used for bond debt reduction or school district capital facilities.
 6. School sites or buildings may only be conveyed or sold by a board resolution affirmed by at least two-thirds of the school board members.
- D. Site Repurposing
1. A recommendation to repurpose the site will feature a land use plan for each site that is founded on the facility, regulatory, market, community need, financial, and risk assessments conducted. The land use plans are intended to ensure that each repurposed site continues to serve as a community asset while offering value and enabling the district to advance its academic, staff recruitment, and other objectives.
 - a. As the district identifies a development recommendation for each site, the district will offer informal community feedback opportunities, which may include hosting community meetings and smaller focus groups to hear from community members and stakeholders.
 2. If the board supports the development recommendation, during at least one subsequent public meeting, the board will provide time for public comment on the development recommendation.
 - a. The district will use a variety of communication methods to ensure that the public is aware of the development recommendation and upcoming opportunity for public comment during a board meeting. The district will also provide frequent updates, details and timelines on a district's Site Repurposing webpage.
 3. If the board determines to move forward with the development recommendation, the district will follow the correct procurement process ("PP") to receive proposal submissions for each site that align with the development recommendation.
 - a. The PP will outline the district's concept for the property and the criteria, including benefits to the community, that must be met by any proposals.
 - b. The PP serves as an invitation to potential partners to submit proposals on how they would like to fulfill the request outlined in the PP.
 - c. A review committee, comprised in accordance with state law, will evaluate all submissions based on how well they meet the criteria and priorities outlined in the PP.
 - d. Based on the outcome of the PP, the superintendent or designee will make a final recommendation to the board on which submission should be awarded a contract to repurpose a site.

- i. All decisions related to repurposing a site, including options for long-term lease or partnership will be voted on by the board in an open and public meeting.
- E. Timeline
The determination on whether to sell or repurpose a site may be a multi-year process; the district will provide frequent updates of where it is in the process for each site and projected timelines on a district Site Repurposing webpage.
- F. Upkeep of Properties
Closed school properties will be maintained throughout the year (including building and grounds maintenance). Buildings will be regularly monitored by district personnel and local law enforcement.