

Missoula County Public Schools
Community Relations 4333
School Closure

Prior to the Board adopting a resolution closing an operating school, the Board shall consider the impact of such school closure on the education community. In evaluating the impact, the Board shall consider at a minimum the following factors:

1. Projected or actual enrollment trends and the likelihood that they will remain permanent.
2. The effect the school closure will have on other facilities and on the District's educational program offering.
3. Potential for alternative use of the facility, including the potential for revenue for sale or lease of property.
4. Financial considerations including operation and maintenance costs, anticipated capital improvements, and the costs of closure and transferring operations elsewhere in relation to other schools in the District.
5. The effect the school closure will have on District staffing, and on the costs of instructions, administration, transportation and other support services.
6. Student safety factors, including travel, school building features, and school grounds, in relation to other schools in the District. Ability of other schools in the affected District to safely accommodate pupils if a school closes.
7. Such other facts as the Board deems necessary and appropriate in light of the circumstances.

The Board shall consider the issue of a school closure for at least 180 days prior to a final decision, which shall be triggered by the appearance and discussion of a school closure issue on any published school district meeting agenda. The Board shall conduct hearings to receive testimony from the public during the 180 day period. A separate hearing may be held for each school that is being considered for closure.

Notice of each hearing shall be published once each week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the area. The last notice of hearing shall be published not later than seven days immediately before the final hearing.

The School District may close a school for emergency reasons without complying with the public hearing process set forth above.

The board will adopt written findings, as generated by the board and /or the Superintendent, with respect to the criteria, which shall be appended to and published with the official minutes of the meetings at which the school closure decision was made. The Board encourages the public to participate in this process by attending committee

and Board meetings, and submitting oral and written comment. The weight to be given any of the criteria is left to the complete and sole discretion of the Board.

The final determination of whether a facility shall remain open and what alternative the District shall take shall be made by the Board.

Policy History:

Presented to PN&P Committee on December 2, 2004 for first reading.

First Reading approved by Board of Trustees, December 14, 2004.

Posted for Public Input until Wednesday, January 19, 2005

Presented to PN&P Committee on January 26, 2005 for second reading.

Approved on: February 8, 2005

Revision presented to PN&P Committee on January 28, 2009.

Approved on: February 10, 2009