

AD-R School Attendance Areas

12/17/20

RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:

The Cobb County School District (District) seeks to provide educationally sound and cost-effective schools located as near to students' homes as possible. The District shall adhere to Georgia and Federal law and Cobb County Board of Education (Board) Policy (see Policy ABB [Board Powers and Duties]).

RULE:**A. RECOMMENDED SIZE OF SCHOOLS:**

Size of schools shall be in accordance with the District's Educational Facilities Construction Plan, also known as the Local Facilities Plan, required to be prepared once every five years by Georgia Department of Education Policy 160-5-4-.01.

B. CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED:**1. School Attendance Zone Modifications:**

The District should give balanced consideration to the following criteria when establishing or revising school attendance zones:

- a. Efficient and effective school sizes and enrollment;
- b. Time, distance and safety of students traveling between home and school; and
- c. Efficiency of feeder patterns.

As required by Georgia Law (2007 Ga. H.B. 539), no student shall be assigned or compelled to attend any school on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin, or for the purpose of achieving equality in attendance or increased or reduced attendance at any school of persons of one or more particular race, creed, color, or national origin.

2. School Closure:

The District should give balanced consideration to the following criteria when considering closure of schools:

- a. Enrollment falls significantly below the average school enrollment for similarly organized schools elsewhere in the District;
- b. The school is in need of extensive renovation to meet current state and system facility standards;
- c. Schools located in contiguous attendance areas have sufficient capacity to accommodate students; and
- d. The school may provide greater value to the District if sold or utilized in a different manner.

C. PROCESS:**1. Establishment of School Attendance Zones for New Schools:**

When a new school is opened, the District adheres to Georgia (including, but not limited to HB539) and Federal law and Board Policy ABB in developing proposed attendance zones for the new school and the existing schools impacted by its opening.

Prior to establishing or revising school attendance, the Board shall:

- a. Conduct at least one public hearing to get public input regarding the development of plans for the location of attendance;
- b. Develop two or more alternate proposed plans establishing or revising attendance zones. Such alternate plans must be made available to the public at least 24 hours prior to the public hearing at which they will be discussed; and

- c. Conduct at least two public hearings to allow input from the public on the proposed plans establishing or revising attendance zones. Reasonable notice shall be provided prior to each public hearing.

No plan for the establishment or revision of attendance zones for new schools shall be adopted by the board unless each board member whose education district is affected by the plan has signed off on such plan.

2. **Revision of School Attendance Zones for Existing Schools:**

Attendance Zone changes may occur for existing schools even when there is no redistricting due to the opening of a new school. In these instances, the following minimum steps shall be taken:

- a. Map(s) of the new attendance zone for the affected school(s) should be:
 - (1) Developed by the appropriate division; and
 - (2) Presented to the Superintendent.
- b. The Superintendent may approve the proposed adjustments or return them with suggestions for further study.
- c. Once approved by the Superintendent, these attendance zone adjustments shall be submitted to the Board for review utilizing the same procedures as the Board's review of proposed Administrative Rule changes (Board Policy BDF [Review of Administrative Rules]).

3. **Revision of School Attendance Zones for New Developments:**

The construction of new developments of homes or other dwellings may necessitate the development being moved from one attendance zone to another in order to place the new development in a single attendance zone, to more nearly balance school enrollments, or to facilitate transportation requirements. Unless the Board of Education directs that the District utilize the procedures outlined above for the revision of attendance zones for existing schools, the following procedures should be followed:

- a. Recommended attendance zones adjustments shall be:
 - (1) Developed by the appropriate division; and
 - (2) Presented to the Superintendent.
- b. The Superintendent may approve the proposed adjustments or return them with suggestions for further study.
- c. Once approved by the Superintendent, these attendance zone adjustments shall be submitted to the Board for review utilizing the same procedures as the Board's review of proposed Administrative Rule changes (Board Policy BDF [Review of Administrative Rules]).

4. **School Closure:**

In accordance with State Law [O.C.G.A. § 20-2-260(k.1)] the following minimum steps shall be taken prior to closure of a school:

- a. Conduct two public hearings and provide an opportunity for full discussion of the proposal to close such school or schools
- b. The public hearings shall be advertised in a local newspaper of general circulation which shall be the same newspaper in which other legal announcements of the District are advertised and shall include, but not be limited to:
 - (1) Identification of each school to be closed and location of each new or existing school to which the students in the school or schools to be closed will be reassigned;
 - (2) Proposed size of each new school in terms of number of students and grade configuration;
 - (3) Proposed expansion of existing schools designed to accommodate students being reassigned from the school or schools to be closed;
 - (4) Total cost, including breakdown for state and local shares, for school construction projects required to house students being reassigned from the school or schools to be closed. Local costs shall include identifying proposed sources of funds, whether from bond referendum proceeds or other sources; and
 - (5) Plans for use or disposal of closed school property.
- c. The District shall request formal, written comments or suggestions regarding the system's organizational pattern or school sizes and shall allow appropriate discussion during the public hearings.

D. TRANSPORTATION:

1. Elementary/Middle/High School:

- a. When attendance zone changes occur, a student shall be eligible for bus transportation if he/she elects to attend the school in the approved attendance zone.
- b. If the student elects to remain at the school he/she currently attends:
 - (1) The parent/guardian/student may:
 - (a) Provide their own transportation; or
 - (b) Submit Form AD-1 (Request for Out of Zone Transportation) requesting to, and receive written approval from Transportation to, board a bus at an approved bus stop for that school with the following limitations:
 - 1) The student will be granted permission to board the bus when the ridership capacity is confirmed in writing by Transportation;
 - 2) The District must determine the bus has available seat space for the student (additional buses will not be assigned, nor additional stops created on the route to accommodate students living outside the attendance zone of the school they attend); and
 - 3) It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to safely convey these students to and from the bus stop they have selected. Therefore, a bus route shall not be extended nor shall a bus stop be relocated to meet students living outside the attendance zone of the school they attend.
 - (2) In the event there not be sufficient seats for students living outside the attendance zone of the school they attend, students will be selected by random lottery.
 - (3) Transportation privileges may be withdrawn from students living outside the attendance zone of the school they attend in the following circumstances:
 - (a) The student commits repetitive Student Code of Conduct violations (see Administrative Rule JCDA-R);
 - (b) The parent/guardian disrupts or interferes with the operation of the bus (see Administrative Rule ED-R [Student Transportation Management]);
 - (c) The students who live in the attendance zone of the school the bus serves increases over the course of the year to the point there are no longer seats available for students who live outside the attendance zone of the school they attend.

2. High School Senior Class:

When a new high school is opened, it will not have a twelfth-grade class. Transportation will be provided to these seniors to the school they currently attend.

E. AFFECTED STUDENTS:

When attendance zone changes are made for any of the above reasons, the students affected may elect to remain in the school which they currently attend or enroll and attend the school in their approved attendance zone.

1. HIGH SCHOOL:

- a. When attendance zone changes occur at the high school level, rising tenth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students may elect to continue to attend their current high school.
- b. Siblings:

Qualified siblings of these students may also attend the same high school:

 - (1) This provision attempts to prevent siblings from being required to attend different high schools at the same time.
 - (2) The younger sibling must be a student in high school at some time during the high school tenure of the older brother or sister. The high school student and his/her sibling must be in the following matching grades in the school year prior to the effective date of the attendance zone change:

High School Grade	Middle School Grade
9	6, 7, 8
10	7, 8
11	8

2. MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- a. When attendance zone changes occur at the middle school level, rising seventh- and eighth-grade students may elect to continue to attend their current middle school.
- b. **Siblings:**
 Qualified siblings of these students may also attend the same middle school.
 - (1) This provision attempts to prevent siblings from being required to attend different middle schools at the same time.
 - (2) The younger sibling must be a student in middle school at some time during the middle school tenure of the older brother or sister. The middle school student and his/her sibling must be in the following matching grades in the school year prior to the effective date of the attendance zone change:

Middle School Grade	Elementary School Grade
6	4, 5
7	5

3. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

- a. When attendance zone changes occur at the elementary school level, rising kindergarten (in those schools with District-sponsored programs for students younger than kindergarten and who live in the attendance zone affected by the attendance zone change), first-, second-, third- and fourth-grade students may elect to continue to attend their current elementary school.
- b. **Siblings:**
 Qualified siblings of these students may also attend the same elementary school.
 - (1) This provision attempts to prevent siblings from being required to attend different elementary schools at the same time.
 - (2) A younger sibling of a student attending the school affected by the attendance zone change can attend the same elementary school if the student will continue to attend the elementary school the school year the younger sibling meets all admission requirements and attends the school.

Adopted: 5/23/91
 Revised: 5/27/93
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 Revised: 7/1/13; 2/19/14; 7/22/16; 12/17/20

Legal Reference
 O.C.G.A. 20-2-290 Organization of schools
 O.C.G.A. 20-2-293 Student attending school in system other than system of student's residence
 O.C.G.A. 20-2-60 Consolidation of county schools