

INSTRUCTION: Schedules

[Unplanned or] Emergency Closures, DELAYS, AND CANCELLATIONS

I. PURPOSE

IN BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (BCPS), THE DECISION TO CLOSE SCHOOLS OR TO DELAY THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY SHALL BE MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT. THE DECISION IS BASED ON STUDENT SAFETY AND THE ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY DELIVER THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ANY OTHER CONSIDERATION DEEMED RELEVANT BY THE SUPERINTENDENT. THIS RULE PROVIDES GUIDELINES FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES WHEN A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO CLOSE A SCHOOL OR DELAY OPENING AS THE RESULT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES.

II. PROCESS

A. INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

1. THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION (TRANSPORTATION) SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECOMMENDING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT THAT INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS OR ALL SCHOOLS BE CLOSED DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER.
2. THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES WILL PROVIDE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT REGARDING THE CONDITIONS OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

B. SCHOOL CLOSINGS IN THE EVENT OF BUILDING SYSTEM FAILURE.

1. IN THE EVENT OF A BUILDING SYSTEM FAILURE (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ELECTRIC, PLUMBING, WATER, GAS), THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SHALL FOLLOW THE PROTOCOLS OUTLINED IN THE *CRITICAL RESPONSE AND SCHOOL EMERGENCY SAFETY MANAGEMENT GUIDE*.
2. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES (FACILITIES) SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSING THE CONDITIONS AND MAKING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OR CHIEF OF STAFF ON WHETHER A SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS SHOULD BE CLOSED.

3. THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OR CHIEF OF STAFF WILL CONSULT WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT, WHO WILL DECIDE WHETHER TO CLOSE A SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS.
 - a. THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OR THE CHIEF OF STAFF WILL NOTIFY THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION OF ANY DECISIONS TO CLOSE OR DELAY OPENING OF ANY SCHOOL(S).
- C. TRANSPORTATION WILL COORDINATE DIRECTLY WITH THE AFFECTED SCHOOL OR SCHOOLS TO ESTABLISH DISMISSAL TIMES AND PROCEDURES.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. TRANSPORTATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INITIATING ALL SCHOOL CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS, INCLUDING SYSTEMWIDE AND MEDIA NOTICES.
 1. SCHOOL CLOSINGS WILL BE:
 - a. POSTED ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM'S WEB PAGE;
 - b. PLACED ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM'S INFORMATION TELEPHONE LINE (410-887-5555) AND THE BCPS EDUCATION CHANNEL; AND
 - c. PROVIDED TO LOCAL RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS.
 2. USE OF A SYSTEMWIDE CONNECT-ED MESSAGE MAY BE GENERATED, AS DETERMINED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT.
- B. WHENEVER POSSIBLE, MORNING DECISIONS TO CLOSE OR DELAY SCHOOL WILL BE MADE BY 5:30 A.M. AND COMMUNICATED TO MEDIA OUTLETS.
- C. IF SCHOOLS ARE CLOSING ONE OR TWO HOURS EARLY, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL USUALLY BE MADE BY 10:30 A.M.
- D. IF SCHOOLS MUST CLOSE THREE HOURS EARLY, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL USUALLY BE MADE BY 10:00 A.M.

IV. GUIDELINES

- A. CLOSING SCHOOLS FOR THE DAY FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER - WHEN INCLEMENT WEATHER REQUIRES THAT ALL SCHOOLS BE CLOSED, THE CLOSURES WILL AFFECT PROGRAMS AS FOLLOWS:

1. ALL BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS ARE CANCELLED.
 2. EVENING HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.
 3. ALL BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE CANCELLED.
 4. ALL BCPS SCHOOL-BASED STAFF MEETINGS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED IN SCHOOLS ARE CANCELLED.
 5. ALL PLANNED USE OF FACILITIES AND GROUNDS BY NON-BCPS ORGANIZATIONS ARE CANCELLED.
 6. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND REGIONAL EVENTS SCHEDULED OUTSIDE OF BCPS FACILITIES:
 - a. THE PRINCIPAL SHALL CONTACT HIS/HER RESPECTIVE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT AND/OR DEPARTMENT HEAD IN CHARGE OF THE ACTIVITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER STUDENTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THESE APPROVED ACTIVITIES.
 - b. THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OR DEPARTMENT HEAD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING THE SUPERINTENDENT TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE EVENT.
- B. DELAYED SCHOOL OPENINGS -
IF WEATHER CONDITIONS REQUIRE A DELAYED OPENING OF ONE OR MORE HOURS, THE DELAYS WILL AFFECT PROGRAMS AS FOLLOWS:
1. MORNING PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.
 2. ALL BEFORE-SCHOOL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE CANCELLED.
 3. ALL MORNING BCPS STAFF MEETINGS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED IN THE SCHOOL ARE CANCELLED.
 4. AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY A DELAYED OPENING.
- C. EARLY DISMISSAL DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER -
IF WEATHER CONDITIONS REQUIRE AN EARLY DISMISSAL OF ONE OR MORE HOURS, THE CLOSURES WILL AFFECT PROGRAMS AS FOLLOWS:
1. AFTERNOON PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.
 2. EVENING HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.

3. ALL AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE CANCELLED.
 4. ALL BCPS STAFF MEETINGS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED IN SCHOOLS ARE CANCELLED.
 5. ALL AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS ARE CANCELLED.
 6. ALL PLANNED USE OF FACILITIES BY NON-BCPS ORGANIZATIONS ARE CANCELLED.
 7. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND REGIONAL EVENTS SCHEDULED OUTSIDE OF BCPS FACILITIES:
 - a. THE PRINCIPAL SHALL CONTACT THE OFFICE HEAD IN CHARGE OF THE ACTIVITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER STUDENTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THESE APPROVED ACTIVITIES.
 - b. THE OFFICE HEAD IN CHARGE OF THE ACTIVITY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONFERRING WITH HIS/HER ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND FOR MAKING A RECOMMENDATION ON WHETHER THE SCHOOL SYSTEM WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENT.
 - c. THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING THE SUPERINTENDENT TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE EVENT. THE DECISION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT IS FINAL.
- D. EARLY DISMISSAL DUE TO EXTREME HEAT -
IF A SCHOOL(S) IS DISMISSED ONE OR MORE HOURS EARLY DUE TO EXTREME HEAT, THE CLOSURES WILL AFFECT PROGRAMS SCHEDULED IN ONLY THOSE AFFECTED SCHOOL(S) AS FOLLOWS:
1. AFTERNOON PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.
 2. EVENING HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES ARE CANCELLED.
 3. ALL AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE CANCELLED.
 4. ALL BCPS STAFF MEETINGS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED IN THE SCHOOL ARE CANCELLED.

5. THE PRINCIPAL WILL CONSULT WITH THE OFFICE OF ATHLETICS TO DETERMINE WHETHER BCPS-SPONSORED ATHLETIC EVENTS SHALL BE CANCELLED.
 6. ALL PLANNED USE OF FACILITIES BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS SHALL BE CANCELLED.
 - a. THE PRINCIPAL WILL CONSULT WITH THE BALTIMORE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS TO DETERMINE WHETHER ATHLETIC EVENTS SCHEDULED IN THE SCHOOL'S GYNMASIUM OR ON ITS ATHLETIC FIELDS SHOULD BE CANCELLED.
- E. SCHOOL CLOSINGS RESULTING FROM A BUILDING SYSTEM FAILURE OR OTHER EMERGENCY EVENT
1. IF AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL IS CLOSED FOR THE ENTIRE DAY OR DISMISSED EARLY BECAUSE OF A BUILDING SYSTEM FAILURE OR OTHER EMERGENCY EVENT, THE CLOSURES WILL AFFECT SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES AS FOLLOWS:
 - a. ALL SCHOOL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES AND NON-SCHOOL RELATED EVENTS SCHEDULED IN THE AFFECTED BUILDING ARE CANCELLED.
 - b. ALL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE CANCELLED.
- F. CANCELLATION OF WEEKEND ACTIVITIES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER
1. IF WEATHER CONDITIONS REQUIRE THAT SCHOOL CLOSURES OR EARLY DISMISSAL ON THE FRIDAY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING A SCHEDULED WEEKEND ACTIVITY ALL SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES SHALL BE CURTAILED UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT ALL DRIVEWAYS, PARKING LOTS, SERVICE AREAS, AND WALKWAYS ARE CLEARED AND THE SNOW EMERGENCY PLAN IS LIFTED FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY. THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES MAY BE AFFECTED:
 - a. BCPS-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES
 - (1) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR OFFICE HEAD WITH OVERSIGHT OF THE SCHEDULED ACTIVITY SHALL CONSULT WITH TRANSPORTATION TO DETERMINE IF WEATHER CONDITIONS WARRANT CANCELLATION OF THE APPROVED ACTIVITY.

- (2) TRANSPORTATION WILL MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT ON WHETHER A WEEKEND ACTIVITY SHALL BE CANCELLED. THE DECISION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT IS FINAL.
 - b. PLANNED USE OF FACILITIES BY NON-BCPS ORGANIZATIONS ARE CANCELLED.
 - c. IN THE EVENT THAT THE SNOW EMERGENCY PLAN IS LIFTED OVER THE WEEKEND, THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS SHALL CONSULT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER ITS PLANNED USE OF FACILITIES MAY OCCUR.
- G. CLOSING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES IN THE EVENING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, WHEN SCHOOLS WERE NOT CLOSED OR DISMISSED EARLY DURING THE DAY.
- 1. TRANSPORTATION WILL MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT ON WHETHER EVENING PROGRAMS SHALL BE CANCELLED.

V. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

- A. THE FOLLOWING DISMISSAL PROCEDURES SHALL APPLY WHEN A SINGLE ELEMENTARY OR SPECIAL SCHOOL CLOSES EARLY
- 1. THE PRINCIPAL WILL MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE STUDENT'S PARENT OR EMERGENCY CONTACT OF EACH CHILD AND NOTIFY HIM/HER OF THE EARLY CLOSURE.
 - 2. THE PRINCIPAL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT ALL STUDENTS ARE RELEASED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STUDENT'S EMERGENCY INFORMATION.

[No school, office, or system event cancellation or delay will be made without the direct authorization of the Superintendent of Schools.

1. Announcements

When the Superintendent decides it is necessary to delay opening or close any facility or school or cancel any system event, the Office of Transportation will initiate all related communications to the public. The Office of Transportation

will contact the media, the BCPS website, BCPS Channel 73, and the Office of Communications for all emergency closing announcements. The Office of Communications will post all emergency closing information on the BCPS automated information line, 410-887-5555. Periodically throughout the year, the Office of Communications will advise students, parents, and employees to listen for emergency closing announcements on local media, the BCPS website, and the BCPS information line and not to call the school, the central office, or the radio or television stations.

2. Absences Due to Unplanned or Emergency Closures

If 12-month administrative and 12-month clerical personnel who are required to be on duty are absent due to inclement weather, such absence shall result in the loss of a personal business day, salary deduction, or in the case of employees who accrue vacation, the option of charging this absence to accrued vacation days. The procedure for classified personnel is covered in Policy 4270.

3. Delayed Opening of Schools

The Superintendent may delay the opening of schools upon determining that weather conditions are such that it appears extremely hazardous to operate school buses at the regular early morning hours, but that travel conditions will appreciably improve later in the morning. The public announcement will report the delayed opening and bus schedules, including the cancellation of morning kindergarten and morning pre-kindergarten if the delay is more than one hour. School opening times will be delayed accordingly. The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement.

In this instance, personnel shall act as follows:

- a. All 12-month employees shall be expected to report to work at the regular time.
- b. Teachers, instructional assistants, paid helpers, personal assistants, and 10-month clerical employees may arrive at the delayed time.

Schools and offices shall close on the regular schedules. After-school activities and events will not be affected by a delayed opening.

4. Closing of Schools Only for the Entire Day

When the Superintendent determines that weather or other conditions exist or will develop that would make it unwise to open one or more schools any time during the day, the announcement communicated to radio and television stations shall state, "Baltimore County Public Schools are closed." The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement.

In this instance, personnel shall act as follows:

- a. Administrative and 12-month clerical personnel shall report to the school on the regular schedule in order to open the school office for its normal function.
- b. All central offices will be open, and employees are expected to report to work on the regular schedule.
- c. For additional information regarding classified employees, see Policy 4270.
- d. All after-school activities and events will be cancelled.

5. Early Closings of Schools

a. All Schools

Weather or other conditions may develop while schools are in session that may require that schools be closed early. When the Superintendent determines that schools will be closed early, all schools shall be notified by telephone, emergent Superintendent's bulletin, radio and television stations, the website, and Channel 73. The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement. The closing time will be set in relation to the regular closing time of each school, and the announcement will indicate "all Baltimore County Public Schools will close ___ hour(s) earlier than the normal closing time." All schools must close in accordance with this announcement in order to coordinate transportation and so that parents may know when to expect children to arrive at home. Principals shall adjust school schedules, including lunch, in order to dismiss at the announced time.

Except for heat related closings, all after-school activities and events will be cancelled.

In the case of heat-related closings, school, church, community, and Recreation and Parks will determine whether or not to hold afternoon and evening activities based upon the availability of air-conditioned facilities. The local school administration and the Department of Physical Facilities will make this decision for school and community activities; the Department of Recreation and Parks will make this decision for their activities; the Coordinator for Athletics in the Baltimore County Public Schools will be consulted on decisions involving the cancellation of interscholastic events.

The Office of Transportation is responsible for contacting the media for the emergency closing announcement.

b. Selected Schools

Conditions may develop during the school day which makes it advisable to close certain schools while the majority of schools remain in session. The decision to close schools on an individual basis shall be made by the Superintendent upon the request of the Deputy Superintendent(s). Any principal who feels that his/her school should be closed during the school day shall consult with the Department of Physical Facilities and the Office of Transportation and discuss the matter. The Executive Director of Physical Facilities and the Director of Transportation will advise the Deputy Superintendent(s) before a final request is made to the Superintendent. In these cases, it shall be necessary to coordinate this closing with other schools which use the same buses.

Principals of elementary schools shall implement procedures to ensure that the parents or guardians of each child are contacted and are aware of the impending closure. If a parent or guardian is not reached to confirm the dismissal, elementary children shall remain with school personnel at the school. The Principal must be able to account for what dismissal arrangements have been made for each child in the affected school.

A public announcement of the closing of the affected schools will be made. The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement.

Each school is responsible for ensuring that every parent/guardian completes the emergency dismissal form and returns it promptly to the

school at the beginning of every school year. Each school should encourage parents/guardians to discuss the emergency plan with their children so that children know what emergency procedures they are to follow in the case of an unexpected school closing. In view of this, the decision to close a few schools shall be weighed carefully and kept to a minimum.

All after-school activities and events in the affected building(s) will be cancelled.

6. Afternoon and Evening Program Cancellations

When schools are open to the end of the school day, but weather or other conditions deteriorate in the late afternoon, the Superintendent may decide to cancel afternoon and evening programs. Schools and offices should plan and communicate alternate dates and times to hold programs or events.

a. Afternoon and Evening Closings

When schools are open to the end of the school day, but weather or other conditions deteriorate in the late afternoon, the Executive Directors of Departments and offices that operate evening activities will consult with the Office of Transportation and the Department of Physical Facilities to review the weather conditions and make a recommendation to the Deputy Superintendent(s) regarding closing facilities or canceling events. This recommendation will typically be based on the announcement that the Baltimore County snow emergency plan is in effect or will be going into effect during the time of an event. Upon the request of the Deputy Superintendent(s), the Superintendent will make a decision regarding canceling afternoon programs or events by 1:30 p.m. and evening programs or events by 4:00 p.m. The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement and will announce: "Baltimore County Public School afternoon and evening programs will be cancelled."

7. Weekend Closings

When weather or other conditions are predicted or develop that would make it hazardous to operate weekend programs or events, the Executive Directors of Departments and offices that operate weekend activities will consult with the Office of Transportation and the Department of Physical Facilities to review the

weather conditions and make a recommendation to the Deputy Superintendent(s) regarding cancellations. This recommendation will typically be based on the announcement that the Baltimore County snow emergency plan is in effect or will be going into effect during the time of an event. Upon the request of the Deputy Superintendent(s), the Superintendent will make a decision regarding canceling weekend programs or events. The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement and will announce: “All Baltimore County Public School weekend events are cancelled.” This notification will normally be made by 6:30 a.m.

If snow emergency plans are lifted during the weekend, opening of the facility will be contingent on the clearing of parking lots and sidewalks. The local school administrator and the Department of Physical Facilities will make a recommendation to the Deputy Superintendent(s) regarding whether or not to open for school activities. Upon the request of the Deputy Superintendent(s), the Superintendent will make a decision regarding opening of facilities. The Department of Recreation and Parks, in consultation with the Department of Physical Facilities, will make the decision for recreational programs.

8. Closing of the School System

When weather conditions are such that all travel is extremely hazardous, the Superintendent may decide to close the entire school system. The Office of Transportation is responsible for initiating all communications with the public regarding the emergency closing announcement and will announce, “All Baltimore County Public Schools and offices are closed.”

In this case, only specifically designated essential personnel required to maintain the facilities and equipment shall report to work. The Department of Human Resources will notify the appropriate employees of their status as essential personnel on an annual basis.

9. Use of School Buildings

On days when schools are closed for inclement weather or other unplanned emergencies, all planned use of the school facilities, including after-school activities, evening classes, professional staff meetings, Board meetings, and other countywide school system events will be canceled.

10. Snow Removal

The Department of Physical Facilities will coordinate snow removal with the Baltimore County Government.

11. Emergency Conditions

The Deputy Superintendents are to be advised by site-based personnel or the Department of Physical Facilities of any emergency conditions which exist on school grounds.]

RELATED POLICIES: BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 1300, *USE OF FACILITIES*
BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 4009, *EMERGENCY CLOSINGS – EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

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