

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DELAYED OPENINGS AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS OF SCHOOLS

I. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative regulation is to set forth the procedures that are to be followed should the CEO/designee decide to close, delay opening, or dismiss early schools and/or the central office in the event of hazardous or extreme weather conditions or other emergencies.

II. Guidelines – System-Wide Closure, Delayed Opening, or Early Dismissal

- A. On days when weather conditions or natural or man-made disasters appear to warrant the closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal of schools, City Schools will follow the procedures set forth below:
1. By 4:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as practicable, City Schools Departments of Facilities and Transportation will complete an assessment of the conditions of neighborhood sidewalks, surrounding jurisdictions, and school parking lots and walkways. Staff also will consider condition reports from the Baltimore City Department of Transportation.
 2. Based on these assessments, a recommendation will be made to the Chief Operating Officer (“COO”). The COO then will contact the CEO/designee regarding the possible closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal of schools.
 3. Based on the assessment of existing conditions and the most current weather forecasts, the CEO/designee will contact the Director of Communications with the final decision of closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal of schools.
 4. By 5:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as practicable, the Director of Communications/designee will notify families of the decision through local news media, the City Schools website, email, Twitter, and Education Channel 77. The notice will include instructions for students, parents, and school-based and non-school-based staff.

B. Decision to Close Schools

1. The decision to close schools may be made for either of the following reasons:
 - a. Travel conditions are potentially unsafe at 5:00 a.m. and are not expected to improve; or
 - b. Acceptable travel conditions exist at 5:00 a.m., but weather forecasts or media reports are predicting that unsafe travel conditions are imminent.
2. A decision to close schools will be announced as soon as practicable.
3. All programs will be canceled for the day.

C. Decision to Delay Opening of Schools

1. The decision to delay the opening of schools may be made for either of the following reasons:
 - a. Travel conditions are potentially unsafe at 5:00 a.m., but are expected to improve during the day; or
 - b. Acceptable travel conditions exist at 5:00 a.m., but weather forecasts or media reports are predicting that unsafe travel conditions are imminent.
2. A decision to delay opening of schools will be announced as soon as practicable.
3. All morning (half-day) pre-kindergarten programs will be canceled. Principals will adjust the school-day schedule for the shortened school day, and breakfast will not be served.
4. If a reassessment of travel, school-building, or weather conditions indicates that schools should remain closed for the day, the delay announcement will be followed by 7:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as practicable, with an announcement that City Schools is now closed for the day.

D. Early Dismissal of Schools

1. The decision to dismiss schools early may be made for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Travel conditions are potentially unsafe;
 - b. Acceptable travel conditions exist currently, but weather forecasts or media reports are predicting that unsafe travel conditions are imminent; or

- c. Outside temperature and/or humidity or natural or man-made disaster causes conditions inside the school to negatively impact the learning environment or poses a risk to the health and or safety of students or staff.
2. A decision to dismiss schools early will be announced as soon as practicable so that school administrators can adjust schedules, transportation can be contacted, and public announcements can be made.
3. All afternoon pre-kindergarten and all extended-day and after-school programs, including interscholastic athletic events, will be canceled.

III. Guidelines – School-Specific Closure, Delayed Opening, or Early Dismissal

- A. On days when an unforeseen event takes place at or near a specific school that makes it unsafe or not feasible to operate the school on its normal schedule, a school closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal may be warranted. In these instances, City Schools will follow the procedures set forth below:
 1. The principal notifies the Executive Director, School Support Network Facilitator, or COO that there is a problem (such as lack of water, power, or heat).
 2. Upon receiving notification that there is a problem, the COO will confer with the CEO/designee.
 3. The CEO/designee will decide whether the specific school should be closed for the day, delay opening, or dismiss early.
 4. The CEO/designee will inform the Director of Communications/designee of the decision. The Director of Communications/designee then will notify families of the decision through local news media, the City Schools website, email, Twitter, and Education Channel 77. The notice will include instructions for students, parents, and school-specific staff.
- B. On days when an unforeseen event takes place at or near a specific charter school that makes it unsafe or not feasible to operate the school on its normal schedule, a school closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal may be warranted. In these instances, City Schools will follow the procedures set forth below:
 1. The principal/charter operator notifies the Chief Operating Officer of the decision to close for the day, delay the opening, or dismiss early.
 2. The Chief Operating Officer notifies the CEO/designee.
 3. The CEO/designee will inform the Director of Communications/designee of the decision. The Director of Communications/designee then will notify families of the decision through local news media, the City Schools website, email,

Twitter, and Education Channel 77. The notice will include instructions for students, parents, and school-specific staff.

- C. In exigent circumstances, such as natural or man-made disasters that pose an immediate danger to students and staff, principals including their equivalents assigned to charter and contract schools, must adhere to the protocols found in Section 4 of the Critical Response and School Emergency Management Guide, found online at <http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/Page/14292>.

IV. Personnel Responsibilities

A. Employee Designations

1. If the CEO/designee designates any additional employees as essential personnel, the Office of Human Capital will notify these personnel of their designation in writing by October 1st. For the 2014-2015 school year, essential personnel will be notified by December 1st. If the CEO/designee designates any employees as essential personnel after the October 1st deadline, the Office of Human Capital will provide notification to these employees within one week.
2. Essential personnel are required to report at all times, including during times of system-wide closures. Employees designated as essential personnel may only be granted liberal leave at the discretion of their immediate supervisor if liberal leave is in effect.

B. Liberal Leave

The CEO/designee may determine that extraordinary conditions warrant the declaration of a liberal leave situation. If liberal leave is announced, employees must contact their immediate supervisor if they will not be reporting to work.

C. School Closures System-Wide

If schools are closed due to weather-related emergencies, employees must adhere to the following reporting guidelines:

1. Unless the CEO/designee announces the need to suspend all City Schools operations, all essential personnel must report to work.
2. If the CEO/designee announces liberal leave, employees may request and, at the discretion of the department head or supervisor, be granted the use of personal, vacation, or compensatory leave.
3. Non-essential personnel working at school locations are not required to report to work.
4. Non-essential personnel working at office locations are not required to report to

work when offices are closed. In the event that offices are open, they are required to report but may request liberal leave if liberal leave is in effect.

D. Delayed Opening System-Wide

If school opening is delayed due to weather-related emergencies, employees must adhere to the following reporting guidelines:

1. All essential personnel must report to work at their regularly scheduled reporting time.
2. Dispatchers and contract transportation supervisors adjust pick-up schedules to the early dismissal time and inform drivers and bus aides.
3. Non-essential personnel follow reporting guidelines as specified in their bargaining unit contracts (e.g. elementary and K-8 teachers report 15 minutes before the student instructional day begins).
4. If schools have a delayed opening but offices open on time, non-essential personnel working in office locations should report at a reasonable time in order to ensure their safety and should communicate their anticipated arrival time to their immediate supervisor.

E. Early Dismissal System-Wide

If school is dismissed early due to weather-related emergencies or extreme heat, employees must adhere to the following reporting guidelines:

1. Essential personnel must remain at work until their regularly scheduled dismissal time.
2. Dispatchers and contract transportation supervisors adjust pick-up schedules to the early dismissal time and inform drivers and bus aides.
3. Non-essential personnel follow reporting guidelines as specified in their bargaining unit contracts (e.g. middle and high school teachers leave 5 minutes after the student instructional day ends).

F. Closure, Delayed Opening, or Early Dismissal at Specific Schools

1. Depending on the circumstances that lead to the school closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal decision, the CEO/designee will determine reporting requirements and communicate them to affected staff via email and the City Schools website.
2. The principal of the affected school must also communicate the decision and

reporting requirements to school-based staff.

- G. In the event an extreme weather-related or other type of emergency, such as natural or man-made disaster, causes a closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal, all essential personnel must adhere to the protocols found in Section 4 of the Critical Response and School Emergency Management Guide, found online at <http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/Page/14292>.
- H. In the event a weather-related or other type of emergency closes a school on a payday, or if there is a payroll-related deadline, principals/unit heads/office supervisors must ensure that checks are available to their staff members and that other mandated schedules are met.
- I. If an employee determines that he/she cannot safely report to work in accordance with this administrative regulation, he/she must communicate his/her decision with a supervisor and use a day of vacation or personal leave.
- J. Each school must report readiness to address inclement weather to the Department of Facilities by October 1st of each year. For the 2014-2015 school year, readiness reports are due by December 1st. Readiness reporting will include but not be limited to indicating that proper snow removal equipment and supplies have been secured by the school.

V. References

Related Policies and Administrative Regulations:

EBCD

Regulation History: New Administrative Regulation, August 14, 2012