

**SCHOOL CLOSINGS, ATTENDANCE AREA ADJUSTMENTS, AND PROGRAM REALIGNMENTS
GENERAL PROCEDURE AND CALENDAR GUIDELINE**

Regulation 8130.5 (excerpt)	Analysis
<p>The boundary or program adjustment and/or school closing process generally includes a series of three, or more if needed, facilitated community town meetings. When such a process is required, these meetings are usually conducted between November and March. Each meeting follows a participatory format as described below, with content and support modifications (e.g., language translators, etc.) appropriate to the community and tasks planned for each meeting.</p> <p><u>The Procedure</u> The general meeting outline is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are briefed on background information required to perform tasks planned for that meeting (and, for the second and subsequent meetings, provided a summary of findings from the prior meeting). Briefings emphasize educational and operational impacts of current situation and of each alternative considered for realignment. • Participants break out into randomly assigned work groups, each with a facilitator-reporter, to work on the tasks planned. • Town meeting reconvenes and groups report findings. 	<p><u>Regulation:</u> The procedure calls for three or more (if needed) community town meetings between November and March.</p> <p><u>Issue:</u> Regulation 8130.5 allows for public hearings until March. As a result, there can be no imperative for the School Board to make a decision before the end of February since the regulation provides a window for public input through March.</p> <p><u>Regulation:</u> Briefings emphasize educational and operational impacts of current situation and of each alternative considered for realignment.</p> <p><u>Issue:</u> This regulatory obligation was not met. The educational impact of the current situation was addressed in a hypothetical—typical large school/small school. The educational impact of “each alternative considered” was never addressed.</p> <p>Likewise, the operational impact of the current situation and each alternative was never addressed.</p> <p><u>Regulation:</u> Town meeting reconvenes and groups report findings.</p> <p><u>Issue:</u> This regulatory obligation was not met. None of the town meetings were reconvened following work group sessions. As a consequence, groups were to report findings—as is required.</p>

- Between meetings, staff members document group findings from prior meeting and post results on the FCPS web page. Staff members use results to build boundary realignment scenarios for review in the ensuing town meeting(s) and a "best" scenario for the subsequent meeting(s).

Work group meeting tasks are:

- Task 1—Identify important factors to consider when determining school to be closed and/or new school or program attendance assignments and suggest neighborhoods that might be included in new alignment.
- Task 2—Review each of the scenarios outlined and identify advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Task 3—Review "best" scenario as briefed, identify advantages (pros), and suggest improvements, if any.

Staff members use town meeting results as they develop the realignment(s) recommended to the School Board.

Regulation:

Staff members **use results** to build boundary realignment scenarios for review in the ensuing town meeting(s) and a "best" scenario for the subsequent meeting(s).

Issue:

The regulation implies that there is a burden placed up FCPS to demonstrate that public input was considered and used in developing scenarios. This burden was not met. The process was not open and transparent. It is impossible to know to what extent town meeting participant input was used, if at all, in developing scenarios.

Regulation:

Review "best" scenario as briefed, identify advantages (pros), and suggest improvements, if any.

Issue:

This regulatory obligation was not met. This was never presented as a task at the town meeting work group sessions.

Regulation:

Staff members **use town meeting results** as they develop the realignment(s) recommended to the School Board.

Issue:

Again FCPS staff is required to use input from town meetings. As with the fourth bullet under the "general meeting outline," FCPS staff has not met its burden to demonstrate that town meeting results were used in developing its recommended realignment to the School Board.