

The Board of Education of Allegany County adopts the following guidelines regarding the closing or consolidation of schools:

1. Either the Superintendent or the Board of Education may initiate a review of existing facilities and the consideration of the retirement of facilities. The following factors shall be considered:
 - a. Student enrollment trends as related to capacity for all existing schools.
 - b. Age and condition of school buildings.
 - c. Transportation.
 - d. Educational programs.
 - e. Racial composition of the student body.
 - f. Financial considerations.
 - g. Student relocation.
 - h. Impact on the community.
2. If the Superintendent initiates the review described in paragraph 1, he shall make a preliminary evaluation of options for school closings or consolidation. Thereafter, school community committees shall be formed for each affected school. The Superintendent's preliminary evaluation of options shall be presented to such school community committees.

Each school community committee shall consist of the principal, faculty representative, and a minimum of four (4) parents from communities within the attendance area of the school. The principal will submit to the Superintendent a list of names of the committee members.

The Superintendent may designate a member of his staff to serve as an ex-officio member of each school community committee, and may make other central office staff available for consultation with the committee.

Each school community committee will meet within time lines established by the Superintendent. The Superintendent or his designee will provide pertinent data to each school community committee. The functions and duties of a school community committee are to:

- a. Review and assess materials provided by the Superintendent,
- b. Review the criteria for closing or consolidating schools,
- c. Review the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal,
- d. Make available known information and seek community reaction and recommendations,
- e. Prepare a written report with findings and recommendations and present it to the superintendent of schools within the established time line.

Throughout the procedure, the Superintendent may consult with persons, communities, committees, or experts, as well as staff, when preparing his recommendations. After receipt of the school community committee reports, and such other information as the Superintendent may believe will assist him in making his recommendations, the Superintendent shall issue written recommendations to the Board. The Superintendent's recommendations shall not be binding on the Board.

3. If the Board of Education initiates the inquiry without preliminary review and recommendations by the Superintendent, the Board shall direct the Superintendent to begin a review of existing facilities and prepare recommendations as described in paragraph 2.

The Board may require the Superintendent to complete this review and prepare his recommendations within time limits established by the Board, and the Board may require the Superintendent to consult with such persons, communities, committees, or experts as designated by the Board.

4. Before the Board takes final action on the Superintendent's recommendations, or any consolidation proposal, the Board shall comply with the procedures outlined in COMAR 13A.02.09.01.

After a final vote, the majority prevailing in the vote shall issue a written decision containing rationale for the decision, including an impact statement which addresses the considerations for closure/consolidation described herein. Said decision shall also include notification of the right to appeal to the State Board of Education.