School Emergencies and Closures

The Superintendent may order closure of schools in the event of extreme weather or other emergency, in compliance with established procedures for notifying parents, students, and staff.

The Board of Trustees is authorized to declare that a state of emergency exists within the community. A declaration issued by the Board of Trustees is distinct from any declaration in effect or previously issued by local, state or federal authorities. An emergency declaration issued by the Board of Trustees authorizes the School District to take extraordinary measures to protect students and staff while delivering education services in a manner authorized by law. The method and location of instruction and related educational services shall be implemented in a manner that serves the needs of students, their families, and staff and preserves the School District's full entitlement of funding.

The trustees may order the emergency closure of schools for one (1) school day each year, without the need to reschedule the lost pupil instruction time when the closure is the result of an emergency. The 1-school-day closure under this subsection is not subject to the reduction in BASE aid pursuant to Section 20-9-805, MCA.

In the event of a declared emergency, the School District shall avail itself of all flexibilities allowed by law, rule, or regulation and shall be otherwise governed by the school finance laws and rules of the state of Montana. The School District shall comply with auditing requirements and reserves the authority to assert its rights to manage school district funds or seek state and federal funds in a manner consistent with the full flexibility available under all applicable laws.

If a declaration of emergency is declared by the Board of Trustees, it may later adopt a resolution that a reasonable effort has been made to reschedule the pupil-instruction time lost because of the unforeseen emergency. If the trustees adopt the resolution, the pupil-instruction time lost during the closure need not be rescheduled to meet the minimum requirement for aggregate hours that a school district must conduct during the school year in order to be entitled to full BASE aid. At least 75% of the pupil-instruction time lost due to the unforeseen emergency must have been made up before the trustees can declare that a reasonable effort has been made.

For the purposes of this and related policies, "reasonable effort" means the rescheduling or extension of the school district's instructional calendar to make up at least 75% of the hours of pupil instruction lost due to an unforeseen emergency through any combination of the following as outlined in accordance with Policies 2050 and 2100:

(a) extending the school year beyond the last scheduled day;
(b) the use of scheduled vacation days in the district's adopted school calendar
(c) the conduct of pupil instruction on Saturdays;
(d) extending instructional hours during the school day.

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Cross Reference: 2100 School Calendar and Day
2050 Student Instruction
8110 Bus Routes and Schedules

Legal Reference: Section 20-9-801 - 802, MCA Emergency School Closure
Section 20-9-806, MCA School closure by declaration of emergency
Section 20-9-805. Rate of reduction in annual apportionment entitlement.

Policy History:
Adopted on:
Reviewed on:
Revised on:

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