

SUMMARY

[California Dept. of Education, Closing a School Best Practices Guide](#)

Guide consists of five chapters:

1. Gathering facts

- Decision to close a school must be based on empirical evidence.
- Form a committee or task force to gather the facts; should include community members (business, labor organizations, teachers, environmental planners, land owners, parents, municipal governments, etc.).
- Identify facts to compile (enrollment, facility capacity, per-student operating costs, uniqueness of educational programs at each site, safety concerns, cost savings, transportation, etc.).
- Consider closure alternatives.

2. Deciding which schools to close

- Consider factors other than smaller enrollment (school condition, special program facilities, ethnic balance, transportation, neighborhoods).

3. Making the decision

- Based on the committee's analysis and conclusion the superintendent will make a recommendation to the school board.
- Public hearings are conducted and should be transparent, supported with data, and done as soon as possible.
- Be prepared to discuss proposed uses for closed schools.
- Follow legal provisions.

4. Making the transition

- Communication about plans is the first step; intensive district-to-parent communication should begin at about the same time as the school staff meetings.
- Form a district transition team.

5. Disposing of school property

- A vacant school is a liability. Closed schools should be leased, re-used, or sold outright. Leasing allows a school to retain school in case enrollment increases.

Suggested timeline:

Suggested School Closure Time Line

Task Name	Month						
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
Board workshop to scope the project	X						
Appoint 7/11 District Advisory Committee	X						
Ensure curriculum and instruction are included	X						
Appoint a subcommittee to serve as research group for 7/11 committee	X						
Sub-committee begins facility and demographic research		X	X				
Report progress to Board. Allow for community discussion at board meeting		X	X				
Present 7/11 committee progress report to Board. Public discussion			X				
Begin dialogues with various community groups that may be affected			X				
Begin discussions with staff at site that may be affected			X				
Present 7/11 committee final report with recommendation to Board				X			
Board discussion and community member discussion				X			
Continue to meet with school site groups of potential sites affected				X			
Receive public input at affected school sites				X			
Continue Board discussion					X		
Continue public input					X		
Arrange special Board meeting (large enough area to accommodate all participants)						X	
Board announces decision						X	
Plan enrollment options and site visitations for affected staff, students, parents						X	
Discuss facilities options and requirements at site(s) to accommodate displaced students						X	
District sends letter to parents to inform students of new school assignments						X	
Plan for needed facilities						X	
Announce actual date of closures							X
Appoint District Transition Team (DTT)	As long as needed						
DTT conducts inventory of essential facilities							

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/schoolclose.asp>