

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE 3.07: SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCESS

July 1, 2025

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCESS is to provide a written policy and procedures that goes beyond the Department of Education and Workforce language and the statutory language for overseeing school closure. This process includes, but is not limited to, a plan of action for schools closing prior to the end of the school year or due to financial difficulties, procedures for timely notification to parents, orderly transition of student records, disposition of school funds and assets and submitting closing assurances and other documentation that may be required by the Department of Education and Workforce guidance.

B. APPLICABILITY

The SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCESS applies to all Charter School Specialists staff involved in the closure of a sponsored community school.

C. DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Department: **Legal Department**
Other Departments: *Services Department*

D. PROCEDURE

1. The Legal Department will identify schools that will be closing for the current school year based on non-renewal, termination, statutory required closure, or voluntary school closure.
 2. If a school experiences financial difficulties or plans to close prior to the end of the current school year, CSS staff may take over operation of the school in accordance with SOP 3.01 Intervention Process to enable the school to complete the current school year.
 - a. At the end of the current school year the Legal Department shall institute the closing procedures listed below.
 3. The Legal Department shall provide to the governing authority DEW's community school current suspension and/or school closing procedures, its Closure Responsibility Table, Box Labeling Protocol, the Closure Checklist, the Closure Plan, and a Sample Parent Letter ("Closure Documents"). The sample parent letter
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shall include a list of similar area schools and reference to the Department of Education and Workforce's website that can be used to locate other school options, local report card data, graduation information and Ohio's Learning Standards and Ohio State testing information.

4. The Legal Department shall develop and review annually an internal closure guidance document which may be shared with the schools in conjunction with the Department of Education and Workforce's suspension and closing procedures.
 5. The Legal Department shall review the most updated guidance provided by the Department of Education and Workforce and statutory requirements and verify that no additional items need to be added to the CSS Closure Documents. This review will be documented in a memorandum that the procedures were reviewed.
 6. The Legal Department will develop an internal school closure plan specific to each school with a defined timeline that includes an orderly transition of student records, disposition of school funds and assets (which may include auction, inventory or donation) and procedures for parent notification.
 7. The internal school closure plan will also have assigned duties and expectations for stakeholders.
 8. The Legal Department will ensure that all documents are collected as required from schools, management companies and CSS departments.
 9. The Legal Department shall provide specific guidance and training to stakeholders regarding labeling and collection files.
 10. The Legal Department will collect all financial and attendance records from the fiscal officer after school closure as required by statute.
 11. If CSS is the fiscal services provider, financial and attendance records maintained by CSS will be maintained by the Services Department and will not be collected from the school or management company.
 12. Documents outlined in DEW's Suspension and Closure Guidance will be collected and stored on the shared drive in the appropriate closed school folder as: Assets; Auditor of State; Communications; FTE Review; DEW Closure Notification; Quarterly Closing Assurances; STRS/SERS Communication; Student Records.
 13. The Legal Department shall provide technical assistance on the closure process for all stakeholders, including but not limited to school governing authority, school staff, management company, school treasurer, and parents of students that attended the school.
 14. The closure process includes:
 - a. Providing community school suspension and closing procedures to all stakeholders, including but not limited to: communication with parents, providing lists of area schools, web resources, scheduling of the final FTE audit with the Department of Education and Workforce, student record disposition procedures, scheduling an audit with the Auditor of State,
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procedures for transitioning teachers and staff, developing a plan in the event teachers or staff leave prior to the end of school year, forming support networks, requirements for governing authority members; and

- b. Collecting closure status report documents; and
 - c. Emails and other communication for follow-up on closing procedures; and
 - d. Providing procedures for box labeling of school records and high school records; and
 - e. Guidance for disposition of assets, including prioritizing payments to vendors, inventorying assets, distribution plan, notification of auction (if applicable), donation of assets (if applicable) and ensuring STRS and SERS contributions are complete.
15. The Legal Department shall regularly review all elements of the Closure Documents and work closely with the Governing Authority, Operator/Management Company (if applicable), school staff and school treasurer to ensure all required elements are being implemented. Reviews and requests for additional documents, as needed, will be conducted a minimum of two times per month throughout the closure process by the Legal Department.
16. The Legal Department shall provide guidelines to the school governing authority, school staff, management company (if applicable) and school treasurer regarding completion of the Closure Documents
- a. The Legal Department shall review and submit the completed suspension and closing assurances template via Epicenter on the schedule prescribed by DEW.
17. The Legal Department shall monitor the closure following the Closure Documents and ensure timely and thorough completion of all elements. Any deviation regarding the timeliness or completeness of any element in the process shall be reported to the President.
18. At the conclusion of the SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCESS, the Legal Department shall communicate with all stakeholders and provide all required documentation to DEW, the Ohio Auditor of State and other entities impacted by the closure of the school. The Legal Department will establish a goal of completing all closure tasks and submit final documentation within 60 days of receipt of the final closing audit conducted by the Auditor of State.
19. The SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCESS shall promote:
- a. The immediate priority of assisting students and their families in maintaining an effective educational environment, including the selection of new schools and the transfer of necessary student records;
 - b. Supporting school staff in the transition;
 - c. Securing school property;
 - d. All required reporting; and
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- e. Maintaining transparent communication with all stakeholders throughout the process.

E. DOCUMENTATION

Location of documentation:

S:\Closed-Suspended-Reassigned Schools\Closed Schools\Closures
FY\School Name

Supporting documentation included with this process:

1. DEW Community School Suspension and Closing Procedures
2. Model letters and notifications
3. NACSA Accountability in Action: A Comprehensive Guide to School Closure
4. Document retention schedule
5. Training Materials
6. Sample Email Communication
7. Sample Parent Letter
8. CSS Internal Closure Procedures – Non Renewals
9. CSS Internal Closure Procedures – Voluntary Closure
10. Closure Responsibility Table

F. GLOSSARY

Closure, plan of action, disposition, non-renewal, termination, student records, financial difficulties, Closure Responsibility Table, labeling, collection, audit, transition, technical assistance.

G. CROSS REFERENCED SOP'S

None

H. REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Approved By: Chief Executive Officer David L. Cash, Jr.

Date: 06/30/2025