

Guideline for Closing an Instructional Facility

160-5-4-.16 (a) 9

Educational Facility Site,
Construction, and Reimbursement

State Department of Education
Facilities Services Unit

Effective Date: 05-30-12



Guideline to Close an Instructional Building or Facility

DEFINITIONS:

Instructional Building or Facility: For the purpose of this guideline, an instructional building or facility includes any building or facility that houses an FTE reporting school. It does not include any building or facility that only houses prekindergarten and/or non-FTE reporting programs.

Surplus/Unused Instructional Building: For the purpose of O.C.G.A. 20-2-2068.2(h), any instructional building identified by the LEA that is no longer needed to support the instructional or support programs of the school system.

Surplus/Unused Instructional Facility: For the purpose of O.C.G.A. 20-2-2068.2(h), any instructional facility identified by the LEA that is no longer needed to support the instructional or support programs of the school system.

Phased-Out Building: A building at an instructional facility identified by the LEA in which the cost of renovations and modifications of that building to bring the building up to current standards would be greater than the state funding to replace that building and the LEA has decided to no longer use that building for instructional purposes.

Phased-Out Facility: Any instructional facility identified by the LEA in which the cost of renovations and modifications of that facility to bring the facility up to current codes would be greater than the state funding to replace that facility and the LEA has decided to no longer use that facility for instructional purposes.

Surplus/Unused and Phased-Out Educational Facilities

Before a facility is declared surplus/unused, or phased out, the LEA may be required to hold public hearings on the proposal to close the facility as required in O.C.G.A. 20-2-260 k1.

A school system may earn replacement funds for a phased out building or facility in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-260 if before that building or facility is phased out the local facilities plan has documentation that the renovation and/or modification needed for continued use of that building or facility is greater than the state funding the system would receive and the costs estimates are verified by the Georgia Department of

Education (GaDOE) Facilities Section and only if construction of a replacement facility or additions to other facilities is scheduled to start within the life cycle of the current local facilities plan and only if additional classrooms are needed because of phasing out a facility and/or building(s).

When a local school board declares by official action that a building or facility is surplus/unused, or to be phased out, that declaration shall include the intended future use of that facility, the facility at which the current students will be attending school, when a replacement facility or additions to other facilities (if needed) will be constructed, and the estimated date the building or facility will no longer be used for instructional purposes.

A copy of the board's resolution to declare a building or facility as surplus, unused, closed or phased out shall be presented to the Facilities Section of the State Department of Education.

Each local board of education shall make its unused facilities available to local charter schools in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-2068.2.(h).

Reopening a Closed Facility

At least six months prior to any instructional use of a closed facility, the local board by official action shall declare its intent to reopen that facility.

Such notification shall be presented to the Facilities Section of the State Department of Education. The notification shall include the reason for reopening the facility, its intended use, when the facility will reopen, and how long the facility will be used.

The instructional facility site must be reapproved through the GaDOE site approval process. Facilities closed for less than one school year do not require a site approval.

Any phased-out facility that is reopened is not eligible for capital outlay funding.

Reopening a phased-out facility may result in reductions in previous entitlement and/or repaying capital outlay funds received to replace the phased-out facility. Before a decision is made to reopen a phased-out facility, the school system shall have an evaluation of the impact of reopening that facility conducted by the GaDOE Facilities Staff.

Any surplus/ unused facility that is reopened shall be brought up to current building codes, life safety codes, and meet GaDOE requirements before it is occupied. All instructional spaces in the building or facility must meet the square footage requirements as listed in the Guideline for Square Footage Requirements for Educational Facilities.

Prior to reopening any Surplus/Unused building or facility, a new Certificate of Occupancy shall be obtained and a copy of that certificate shall be on file with Facilities Section of the State Department of Education. (O.C.G.A. 25-2-14)

In emergency situations, LEAs should contact the GaDOE Facilities Services Unit to discuss temporary alternative means of housing students.