

Emergency School Closings

24 P.S. §25-2523

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December 11, 2008
December 7, 2001
September 1, 1997

PURPOSE

This BEC provides guidance and direction regarding public school emergency closing procedures. It reflects current requirements of the Pennsylvania Public School Code and is consistent with law.

BACKGROUND

Section 2523 of the Public School Code of 1949 grants the Secretary of Education discretionary power with regard to payment of subsidy during emergency school closings. When any Board of School Directors or joint school committee or intermediate unit with respect to an area vocational technical school (hereinafter referred to collectively as “school entity”) is compelled to close any school(s) because of contagious disease, natural disaster or other emergency, the following are general procedures the school entity to request the Secretary to exercise its discretion and grant a waiver under §2523 to allow the school entity to receive full subsidy reimbursement notwithstanding the fact that it provided less than a minimum term of 180 days due to emergency closing.

PROCEDURES

Representatives of a school entity affected by a §2523 emergency closing shall immediately contact the Department of Education's School Services Unit (717-787-4860) to discuss the emergency and any proposed solutions.

If the school entity seeks to request a §2523 waiver involving a closing of up to three (3) days that request shall: 1) be made in writing to the School Services Unit, 2) detail and substantiate the reasons which compelled the closing, and 3) include an up-to-date summary of PDE-approved emergency closings per building for the current school year.

If the school entity seeks to request a §2523 waiver for a closing of longer than three (3) days, or involving more than a total of three (3) days during the school year for any building, then, in addition to the written request described above, the school entity will be required to amend the school calendar to make up days missed or ensure a minimum of 450 hours of instruction will be offered to kindergarten students, 900 hours of instruction will be offered to elementary students, and 990 hours of instruction will be offered to secondary students. The request shall include a copy of the original school calendar approved by the Board and a copy of the revised school calendar approved by the Board.

In all instances where a school entity is compelled to close any school(s) under an emergency as provided for in §2523 during the course of the school day, it is not necessary to request a waiver and that day shall be credited as a full day of membership and count as a full day of instructional hours. There will be no loss of subsidy when an emergency closing causes schools to be closed after the beginning of the school day. If the emergency school closing occurs during the course of the school day and prior to the PM kindergarten session, it is necessary to request a waiver for the PM kindergarten group.

In all instances where a school entity is compelled to close any school(s), the §2523 request shall indicate if any students are receiving an extended school year of special education and how the closing will affect the delivery of that program.

A school entity may receive subsidy if it makes a bona fide effort to provide 180 days of instruction to graduating seniors under §1501 and need not seek relief under §2523. Section 2523 applies only to emergency closings of all or some school buildings.

REFERENCES

Purdon's Statutes

24 P.S. § 15-1501

24 P.S. § 15-2523

CONTACT BUREAU/OFFICE:

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