

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies**Emergency Suspension of Policy During Pandemic**

The Bethany Board of Education (Board) is authorized by statute to govern the Bethany Public School District (District), including the adoption, revision, and suspension of Board policies.

The Board, through this policy, acknowledges school closures in response to a pandemic/epidemic and designates the Superintendent or designee to act as a liaison for the District to ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and the community.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has authority to waive instructional hours and school days, to interpret educational requirements, and to oversee the allocation of resources for nutrition, transportation, and other crucial aspects of public education, and providing written guidance to school districts on issues related to pandemic/epidemic emergencies, including but not limited to student attendance, remote learning, meal distribution, and other issues.

Temporary Powers Granted to Superintendent

During declared public pandemic/epidemic emergencies, the Board grants the Superintendent the following temporary powers:

1. Authority to temporarily waive such Board policies or provisions of Board policies as the Superintendent shall deem necessary to comply with guidance from appropriate health or government authorities or necessary for other effective response.
2. Authority to take any lawful actions necessary to ensure the continuation of public education, to provide for the health and safety of students and employees, or to respond to direction from appropriate health and government authorities. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, adjustments to the curriculum and the provisions of alternate educational program options; modifications to the school calendar; adjustments to the delivery of school-provided meals; limitations on access to District property; applying to any governmental body for financial or other aid as may be available; and applying to any governmental body for waiver of regulations or requirements, compliance with which is affected by a pandemic/epidemic emergency.
3. Authority to close the school facility without further action by the Board. Such closure shall continue during the emergency created by the pandemic/epidemic emergency until such time as the Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate health and government authorities, deems it in the best interests of the District and its students to open schools.
4. Authority based upon the needs of the District and the guidelines from health and government agencies disseminated by CSDE, to direct staff assignments during District closures, including, but not limited to essential employees who must report to work, employees who may be reassigned, and employees whose services are not needed.
5. Authority to limit access to public school grounds and District buildings during school closures.

INSTRUCTION

6114.81(b)

Suspension of Policies

The Board hereby suspends provisions of its policies and/or whole policies, as identified by the Superintendent or designee, if such suspension is necessary to implement the written guidance from CSDE relating to containing the pandemic/epidemic emergency for the duration identified in the Governor's order of school closure.

Reporting to Board

The Superintendent shall report to the Board as feasible, appropriate, and timely regarding an emergency closure and efforts to implement written guidance from health and government agencies as disseminated by CSDE and other state agencies pertaining to a pandemic/epidemic emergency.

Board of Education Meetings

In the interest of public health, the Board encourages the public to attend its open public meetings via video conferencing and to limit public comment. The Board reserves the right to adjust Board meeting dates, times, and locations during the District-wide emergency closure in a manner consistent with the Freedom of Information Act. Further, any or all Board members may attend Board meetings electronically.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes § 10-154a
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-207
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-209
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-210
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221
 Connecticut General Statutes § 19a-221
 20 U.S.C. 1232g. 45 C.F.R. 99 (FERPA)

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Source: CABE