

*School Improvement Grant 1003(g) Funds****CLOSURE MODEL***

School closure occurs when an LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.

An LEA implementing a closure model must:

- (1) Enroll students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.
 - (a) These schools must be within reasonable proximity to the closed school and may include, but are not limited to, charter schools or new schools for which achievement data are not yet available.

It is extremely important to engage families and the school community early in the process of selecting the appropriate school improvement model to implement in a school (see H-4a), but doing so is particularly important when considering school closure. It is critical that LEA officials engage in an open dialogue with families and the school community early in the closure process to ensure that they understand the data and reasons supporting the decision to close, have a voice in exploring quality options, and help plan a smooth transition for students and their families at the receiving schools. (New for FY 2010 Guidance)

The school to which students who previously attended a closed school are sent should be located “within reasonable proximity” to the closed school. An LEA has discretion to determine which schools are located within a reasonable proximity to a closed school. A distance that is considered to be within a “reasonable proximity” in one LEA may not be within a “reasonable proximity” in another LEA, depending on the nature of the community. In making this determination, an LEA should consider whether students who would be required to attend a new school because of a closure would be unduly inconvenienced by having to travel to the new location. An LEA should also consider whether the burden on students could be eased by designating multiple schools as receiving schools.

An LEA should not eliminate school closure as an option simply because the higher-achieving schools that could be receiving schools are located at some distance from the closed school, so long as the distance is not unreasonable. Indeed, it is preferable for an LEA to send students who previously attended a closed school to a higher-achieving school that is located at some distance from, but still within reasonable proximity to, the closed school than to send those students to a lower-performing school that is geographically closer to the closed school. Moreover, an LEA should consider allowing parents to choose from among multiple higher-achieving schools, at least one of which is located within reasonable proximity to the closed school. By providing multiple school options, a parent could decide, for example, that it is worth having his or her child travel a longer distance in order to attend a higher-achieving school. Ultimately, the LEA’s goal should be to ensure that students who previously attended a closed school are able to enroll in the highest-performing school that can reasonably be offered as an alternative to the closed school.

The higher-achieving schools in which students from a closed school may enroll may include any public school with the appropriate grade ranges, including public charter schools and new schools for which achievement data are not yet available. Note that a new school for which achievement data are not yet available may be a receiving school even though, as a new school, it lacks a history of being a “higher-achieving” school.