



# **SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT**

**DATE:** February 23, 2017  
**FROM:** Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent  
**LEAD STAFF:** Rachel Friesen/ Principal, Sacajawea Elementary/ (206) 252-5550;  
Ronald Boy/ Senior Assistant General Counsel/ (206) 252-0114

## **1. TITLE**

Waiver of one (1) school day at Sacajawea Elementary due to an emergency school closure due to unforeseen weather conditions

**For Introduction:** April 5, 2017  
**For Action:** April 19, 2017

## **2. PURPOSE**

State regulation WAC 392-129-140 requires that the Superintendent submit a signed statement to the Superintendent of Public Instruction indicating that “the school district board of directors have reviewed the application and supports its submittal” to request a waiver for an emergency school closure. This Board Action Report and the attached letter are the District’s application.

## **3. RECOMMENDED MOTION**

I move that the School Board approve the Superintendent’s application to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, which requests permission for Sacajawea Elementary School to not make up one (1) day of missed school for December 9, 2016 when it was closed due to unforeseen weather conditions.

## **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **1. Background**

Sacajawea Elementary School is at the bottom of a canyon and is surrounded by hills on all sides. There is no way to access the school without traversing a hill, and there are no sidewalks on the side streets children must walk if they are walking to school. The hills tend to be shaded, and can get very icy. On the morning of December 9, 2016, 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE and NE 98<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> Streets were covered in a sheet of ice. There were several snow closure signs posted on the surrounding hills. SES staff witnessed several instances of cars sliding on these hills despite the snow closures. As a result, there was concern for the safety of our students who walk to school.

SES staff reported that numerous vehicles driving on the roads surrounding the school had trouble due to the weather conditions. A milk truck observed delivering to a neighboring home had to make several tries before being able to get up the hill on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE. A bus not connected with Sacajawea had trouble ascending the hill as well. As SES teaching staff began arriving, several had minor mishaps. Two SES teachers went out specifically to help people whose cars were stuck. They helped seven vehicles that morning.

The hill on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE in front of the school, where our student drop-off and bus zones are located, were solid ice. In order to access the drop-off zones, vehicles have to stop on the hill and wait in line. On another morning this winter, when we had a late start, several families stopped to wait in line and were unable to get good traction to continue up the hill to the drop-off zone. This caused cars to slide backward in a high traffic area. This was a scary situation for all involved and we were lucky that no accidents occurred. On December 9, 2016, there was significantly more ice than the day when drivers struggled to stop on the hill.

The school principal did consider having busses drop students at a nearby Les Schwab on Lake City Way, but this would require students to walk up NE 98<sup>th</sup> Street with no sidewalk. With cars sliding, this was determined to be too great of a safety risk. As a result, the decision was made to close school that day.

a. **Alternatives**

Not approve the waiver request and have Sacajawea Elementary School open one day during the school year when school is not scheduled or after the regular school year ends. This would require the District to bargain with the Seattle Education Association to extend the work year and determine compensation.

b. **Research**

The District has previously requested waivers for similar situations where one school had to close and others did not. Principal Friesen and the staff of Sacajawea Elementary support this waiver request.

5. **FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE**

Granting the requested waiver does not increase expenditures. Denying the request would create some additional costs as most of the staff at the school worked on December 9, 2016 and the District would need to compensate school year employees with an additional day. Also, if only Sacajawea Elementary School were to be open on a certain day additional transportation costs would be incurred by the District.

If not approved by the Board and OSPI, the estimated costs of operating SES for an additional day would be:

Transportation:	\$3526.00
Certificated Staff:	\$6031.68
TOTAL:	<b>\$9557.68</b> (estimated)

Fiscal impact to this action will be neutral if approved by the Board and OSPI.

The revenue source for this motion is N/A.

Expenditure:  One-time  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A

Revenue:  One-time  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A

**6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

With guidance from the District’s Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

- Not applicable
- Tier 1: Inform
- Tier 2: Consult/Involve
- Tier 3: Collaborate

This is primarily an administrative decision because of the financial and compliance implications.

**7. EQUITY ANALYSIS**

NA

**8. STUDENT BENEFIT**

This action will allow students to receive the necessary instructional hours and remain on schedule for breaks with other District schools/students.

**9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY**

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter
- Board Policy No. \_\_\_\_\_, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. POLICY IMPLICATION**

This motion implicates no policy. RCW 28A.150.220 & WAC 392-129-140 mandates this course of action.

**11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

This motion was discussed at the Curriculum and Instruction Committee meeting on March 13, 2017. The Committee reviewed the motion and moved the item forward with a recommendation for approval by the full Board.

**12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Upon approval of this motion, the District will submit the waiver request to OSPI for review. If approved by OSPI, Sacajawea Elementary School will follow the school calendar utilized by all District schools.

**13. ATTACHMENTS**

- Draft Letter from Superintendent Nyland:  
*School Emergency Closure – December 9, 2016*  
*Request to Waive School Days Under WAC 392-129-140 and WAC 392-129-150*

February 23, 2017

Chief Financial Officer  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Old Capital Building  
P.O. Box 47200  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7200

Re: SCHOOL CLOSURE WAIVER REQUEST

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter and enclosed School Board Action Report as the application by the Seattle School District (“District”) under WAC 392-129-140 and 392-129-150 to waive one (1) day from the 180-day calendar without the loss of state funding for Sacajawea Elementary School (“SES”). This request is made pursuant to a school emergency closure caused by unforeseen natural events that resulted in SES being closed on December 9, 2016.

To support the District’s request for a waiver, the following information is being provided:

1. Name of district: Seattle School District No. 1.
2. Name of the school district superintendent: Dr. Larry Nyland
3. A statement signed by the superintendent that the school district board of directors has reviewed the application and supports its submittal: The Board of Directors for the District reviewed the waiver request at open public meetings on April 5, 2017 and April 19, 2017. The Board of Directors, through the enclosed School Board Action Report, has reviewed and approved of the waiver application to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”). Please consider this letter and its attachments to be my signed statement.
4. The name of the individual school that did not operate: Sacajawea Elementary School.
5. The unforeseen natural events, mechanical failures, and/or actions or inactions by one or more persons, which caused the school emergency closure: Sacajawea Elementary School is at the bottom of a canyon and is surrounded by hills on all sides. There is no way to access the school without traversing a hill, and there are no sidewalks on the side streets children must walk if they are walking to school. The hills tend to be shaded, and can get very icy. On the morning of December 9, 2016, 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE and NE 98<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> Streets were covered in a sheet of ice. There were several snow closure signs posted on the surrounding hills. SES staff witnessed several instances of

cars sliding on these hills despite the snow closures. As a result, there was concern for the safety of our students who walk to school.

SES staff reported that numerous vehicles driving on the roads surrounding the school had trouble due to the weather conditions. A milk truck observed delivering to a neighboring home had to make several tries before being able to get up the hill on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE. A bus not connected with Sacajawea had trouble ascending the hill as well. As SES teaching staff began arriving, several had minor mishaps. Two SES teachers went out specifically to help people whose cars were stuck. They helped seven vehicles that morning.

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The school principal did consider having busses drop students at a nearby Les Schwab on Lake City Way, but this would require students to walk up NE 98<sup>th</sup> Street with no sidewalk. With cars sliding, this was determined to be too great of a safety risk. As a result, the decision was made to close school that day.

It would be a financial and operational hardship to ask one school to open when all the other schools are closed. This impacts family and staff plans, including day-care vacation, educational, and other plans that take place based on the adopted school calendar. This would also create unanticipated financial costs, such as staff salaries (paying school year staff to work an extra day or one-half day) and transportation costs to operate buses for only one school on one day.

6. The specific date of the school emergency closure: December 9, 2016.
7. The specific date that the school district has scheduled to make up the lost day:  
The District does not propose to make up this one day at SES. This waiver request is made pursuant to WAC 392-129-140 and 392-129-150. The closure was isolated (one school in our system was closed). It would be an expense to deliver central services (transportation) to just one school when other schools are not in session. The District can utilize the waiver and still comply with the district-wide annual average total instruction requirements contained in RCW 28A.150.220.

Thank you for your attention to the District's waiver application.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Larry Nyland  
Superintendent

Enclosure: School Board Action Report

cc: Michael Tolley, Associate Superintendent Teaching and Learning  
Pegi McEvoy, Assistant Superintendent for Operations  
Flip Herndon, Associate Superintendent for Capital and Facilities  
JoLynn Berge, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance  
Kim Whitworth, Northeast Region, Executive Director of Schools  
Rachel Friesen, Principal, Sacajawea Elementary School  
Ronald Boy, Senior Assistant General Counsel

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