

Procedures for Determining Closings and School Delays

In light of the possible snow storm later this week I feel compelled to review this process. This decision is never easy and it encompasses a multitude of factors and can never be taken lightly. It is important to remember that on a regular school day, our elementary and intermediate school buses are on the road until 4:00 p.m. (with completely clear roads).

While school closings and delays may cause hardships for parents/guardians, a decision will always be based solely upon safety. An early dismissal is the least best of all options because then we are sending kids home hoping the many parents who work can get home from work by the time their children get home. For older students, obviously not a problem; for younger students, it is a concern.

In addition, a decision will not always be the same as decisions of neighboring school districts (we attempt to coordinate but this sometimes can be an issue) because weather patterns, geographic characteristics and road conditions may be slightly different. Whenever possible, the district will decide to close or delay school prior to 5:30 a.m. A decision to delay school two hours may be made in order to allow additional time to monitor weather, permit road crews to plow and treat roads, or allow for weather conditions to improve. A final decision to close school will be made by 8:00 a.m. if the start of school was initially delayed two hours.

The superintendent and the supervisor of building and grounds will begin at 4:30 a.m. checking National Weather Service reports, radar and road conditions. The superintendent and building and grounds personnel will consult with other school districts for updates on road conditions and interpretation of impending weather and snow removal crews. School closings and delays will be based upon the following:

1. Current weather conditions and future forecast including temperatures and wind chill conditions
2. Timing of the start and end of a storm and of other weather conditions such as fog and ice
3. Ability of road crews to plow and maintain roads and apply chemicals in conditions that improve road surfaces
4. Ability of district grounds staff to remove snow in parking lots

It certainly is not an exact science and in some cases we do err in the decision making process. Overall, student and staff safety are hallmarks of the decisions made in late starts, early dismissals or cancellations of school and extracurricular events.