



December 12, 2016

To: Principals, Staff, and Parents

From: Todd Gray

RE: Getting Ready for Snow and Cold

Our standard for closing when cold is a Wind Chill Warning, which is -35. Our standard for closing for snow or ice is a Winter Storm Warning. When we anticipate bad weather that does not cause us to close schools, we will communicate the following:

1. *Doors will be open early so students can come directly into the building.*
2. *Dropping students off a bit later than school start is a secondary option for parents, as opposed to keeping students home all day. Better late than not at all.*
3. *When weather is severe, we have allowed parents the option to keep students at home without academic penalty. However, we would prefer to have the students in school, even if it means arriving late.*

The decision to close schools must be made prior to 5:00 am on any given day. Any later than this impacts buses, media notices, employees driving to school and students coming to schools. The general rule is anything less than a 'Winter Storm Warning' or 'Wind Chill Warning' [-35 degrees] we do not close. Although parents may not agree with these benchmarks, we do offer some flexibility as noted above.

Over the last decade--maybe longer--we have consistently used a "Winter Storm Warning" or a "Wind Chill Warning" as the determining factor of when to close schools.

Our rule is that any parent who feels it is unsafe to bring their children to school in inclement weather can keep them home without academic penalty. They can also pick up earlier without academic penalty as well. Missed school work must be completed. However, the actual weather or the forecast must support that decision.

These morning decisions are always very hard. The weather forecast at 4:30 am may not at all be the same as the actual weather at 7:30 am. One major factor in the decision process: We do not have the ability for an early release should the heavy snow decide to come after we are in session. Finding enough bus drivers prior to normal route times and the potential hazard of sending young children to locked homes always creates concern.