

Schools shall remain open for instructional purposes as often as possible consistent with giving first consideration to the safety of students. Schools will operate on a normal schedule every day the roads are judged to be safe for travel during the hours that buses and other passenger vehicles are transporting students to and from school.

School officials will make decisions about possible school closings and schedule changes on the basis of the best information available at the time from weather forecasts, local law enforcement, state and local transportation officials, road checks by school personnel, and other sources as appropriate.

A. OPTIONS FOR CHANGING SCHOOL OPERATIONS FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

The following options are available to the superintendent in the event that it becomes necessary to change school hours and/or school bus routes:

1. Schools will operate on a normal schedule using one of the options for limited bus routes.
2. Schools will operate on a one (1) hour, two (2) hour, or three (3) hour delay, with or without the use of one of the limited bus route options. When operating on a delayed schedule, schools will end at the normal hour.
3. Schools will be closed. The superintendent may use discretion as to whether closings and delays due to inclement weather will apply only to students or whether they also apply to teachers and other school personnel. Employee absences will be governed by the provisions of policy 7550, Absences Due to Inclement Weather.
4. Schools will be dismissed early. The superintendent has discretion to set dismissal times as appropriate based on the available information about weather and road conditions.

Decisions about closings, delayed openings, and changes in bus routes will normally be announced by or before 6:15 a.m. The superintendent may postpone a final decision by up to two hours when there is substantial uncertainty about road conditions or impending changes in the weather. When conditions permit, the decision will be made and announced the evening before.

Announcements will be made by automated phone messages to school families and school personnel, through the WCS website, by e-mail, and through other media as appropriate.

B. LIMITED BUS ROUTES AND BUS OPERATIONS

The options for changes in bus routes and operations will include:

1. "Paved Roads Only," the least restrictive option.

2. “Limited Routes A,” consisting of numbered highways, other major roads, and additional streets expected to be safe for travel soon after most snow/ice events.
3. “Limited Routes B,” consisting largely of numbered highways. “Limited Routes B” will only be used when severe winter weather has resulted in a higher than normal number of closings during the school year or when needed to avoid closing schools for a large number of days in succession or within a concentrated period of time.
4. The superintendent may exercise discretion in using different route options for different schools based on road conditions in each school attendance area.
5. The roads used for Limited Routes A and Limited Routes B in each school attendance area will be made available on school websites and (on request) in printed form.
6. Limited bus routes of any type will only be used when buses and other vehicles can operate safely on school driveways and parking lots.
7. The superintendent or school principal may require the use of chains on school buses at their discretion. Individual drivers may choose to use chains when not required to do so if the driver reasonably believes that using chains will provide increased safety for students or others.

Legal Ref.: GS 115C-84 (c)

Cross References: School Safety (policy 4200/7270), Emergency Closings (policy 5050), Absences Due to Inclement Weather (policy 7550)

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