



Superintendent's Message Regarding Inclement Weather

Parkland School District has 3 snow days built into the calendar. The first three snow days may be made up as teacher professional development and students will have no requirements to complete work. If additional inclement weather days are needed, Parkland may use Flexible Instruction Days (FIDs). Students will have lessons and work to complete during the school day on a FID. Teachers will notify students of the day's schedule via Schoology. Attendance will be taken based on participation in a virtual session and/or submission of assignments on the FID. Teachers will be available via email and Schoology during regular school hours on a Flexible Instruction Day.

In much the same manner as everyone else, we learn about approaching weather conditions from television, radio and computer reports. Once the weather alert occurs, our Transportation and School Services Departments begin to make necessary preparations for school.

If the weather front is occurring in the evening or overnight, Transportation will have a couple of drivers out at about 4 AM. First, they will check those roads that are typically most problematic. From north to south, our school district spans 75 square miles and varies greatly in road and weather conditions. At the same time, we will be speaking with the municipalities and PennDOT about plowing/cindering/salting schedules. We also speak to key personnel in surrounding school districts to ascertain any information that may be helpful.

Typically, by 5 AM, we have gathered enough information to discuss our plans for the day. This information is coupled with our knowledge of Parkland School District demographics:

- Weather conditions vary greatly across the district
- We have in excess of 1,000 bus stops
- Our buses will travel in excess of 8,000 miles during a school day
- Our buses will be operating within the typical traffic flow
- Many of our bus stops may be affected by snow plowing
- Our Grounds Department will need time to plow parking lots and clear walkways

Based upon all the data we collect about weather and road conditions, I typically make a decision about whether or not we can hold in-person learning by 5:30 AM and I start to make the necessary contacts. The radio and television stations will be notified, and key personnel are called. **We use our rapid notification system to send staff and parents a personal phone call, email and/or text message with the alert. If your contact information has changed, please notify your child's school office as soon as possible.** The message is also posted on our district web site at www.parklandsd.org.

On most of these occasions, we will make ONE decision early in the morning and that will be the FINAL decision for the day. We believe this is easiest for most parents to make plans for the day. Once in a great while, the timing of a weather event is such that buying a little extra time with a delay MIGHT allow us to safely open school. In these rare events, the message will state that we will provide an update by a certain time. The same means of communication will be used to provide an update when necessary.

Please remember - it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make arrangements for the care of your children in the event that we need to close or delay our schools for weather or any other potential emergency situation.

This information is being shared to provide you with some insight into what happens behind the scenes during bad weather events in Parkland. Please know that student safety is the central focus of this exercise. Entrusted with the safety of thousands of students, we will always err on the side of caution in making weather-related decisions. No decision is more important.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING! Let's hope for a mild winter and an early spring!

Sincerely,
Dr. Mark J. Madson, Superintendent of Schools