



Oakes Public School

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Dear OPS Parents,

With winter upon us and our first winter storm of the year knocking on our door, I wanted to send everyone information regarding our protocol and process for making decisions regarding weather-related school decisions. Before we make a decision on closure, delay, or release, we will consider the type, timing, track, and likelihood of inclement weather, and how it will impact travel conditions for our buses, students who drive to school, and parents driving their children to school. Last but not least, we also need to consider the ability of our staff to open up buildings prior to the beginning of the school day.

When storms or the threat of storms are present, we will gather as much information from local meteorologists, the National Weather Service, driving on town and rural roads, and discussions with contacts (bus service, other superintendents, law enforcement, road crews, rural district parents, etc.) to ensure that we get the best possible assessment of the weather and road conditions. Depending on the track and timing of the storm, this type of information-gathering will be done throughout the preceding day (or week), into the night before the event, and very early in the morning on the day of the event.

Our communications plan is, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, to inform families by 9:00 pm the preceding night or by 6:00 am on the morning of the event. This timeline will be followed to allow the school to adequately make a decision, but also recognize the necessity for families to plan. While some may be frustrated by an early morning call, we must use 6:00 am due to the pickup schedules of our rural bus drivers. If we decide to start late, this may be for a few different reasons. It may be because the daylight will help those needing to drive early in the morning, such as our bus drivers, or it may be because our community needs that additional time to reasonably get to school. In some cases that late start is used to provide the district with additional time to assess the tracking and severity of the weather and its impact on travel.

I promise you that we will always do our very best to make an informed decision regarding weather-related decisions. Our focus will always be on keeping our children, school staff, and bus drivers SAFE while also fulfilling our promise and responsibility to educate our students. I also realize, that regardless of what decision is made in this area, there will always be someone that disagrees. Please allow us grace and kindness as our ND weather does not always cooperate with us despite our efforts to make the most-informed decisions possible.

Thank you and have a safe winter season!

Sincerely,

*Anna Sell
Oakes Superintendent*