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Dear Darien Community,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving! I enjoyed participating in Darien traditions that are new to me including the Turkey Bowl and The Depot's Overstuffed Turkey Trot. Returning from the holiday break, we were inundated with weather forecasts calling for all sorts of problematic conditions such as snow and ice. Below you will find some helpful information about my process for making determinations for school closings, delays or early dismissals. Another amazing thing about this community is on any typical weekend, Darien has so many amazing events for families. Add the holiday season to the mix and the count of events skyrockets. I hope to see you at one of our many holiday concerts or celebrations.

December 2 was National Special Education Day and it was well recognized in our schools. A huge thank you to each PTO for their efforts in recognizing the significance of the day and showing appreciation to all of our special education staff in the District. As I shared in my message to the community on Tuesday, we are grateful that our PTOs continue to recognize this important milestone in the history of special education and we are grateful for the commitment of our staff in creating inclusive environments where all students feel a sense of belonging.

Weather Decisions

School closings and delays are largely driven by local conditions and the ability for school buses to navigate the roads. Consideration for staff traveling to the District is always part of my process and local conditions are the most significant factor in making the decision. Here is my early morning process:

- 4:00-4:30am: Telephone Call with Fax Alert Weather Service and local superintendents
- 4:30-5:15am: Review local conditions with DPS Facilities staff, DPS Transportation department, Town of Darien DPW, and Darien PD
- 5:15-5:30am: Make final decision and prepare communications.
- 5:30am: School Messenger call, text and email. Post on the website. Notify local media. I will only send a message if we are closing or delaying opening

Additional emergency weather related information, including school arrival and dismissal times, can be found on our [website](#).

Mood Boosters Program

Mood Boost is a program Chartwells runs that features 6 different "Moodies" including: Confident, Smart,

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Calm, Happy, Strong and Alert. The program connects the practice of building healthy foods into our diet and how these foods make us feel. Our wonderful food service staff is starting with Confident and on December 9, when our elementary schools will have Roasted Cinnamon Butternut Squash on their menus. They are also having a tasting event at Ox Ridge Elementary during the lunch waves and will have some fun giveaways for students.

Our goal is to promote healthy foods in a fun way starting with butternut squash which offers numerous health benefits, including supporting heart, eye, and immune health due to its high content of vitamins A and C, fiber and antioxidants like beta-carotene. Next up will be the Smart Moodie on December 17 with Black Bean & Citrus Salad.

Winter Concerts

The winter concert season officially began last night with the MMS Orchestra! We encourage you to review the full [schedule of concerts and performances](#) and attend an upcoming show to support our students.

Hindley Holiday Market

Experience the Hindley Holiday Market on Saturday, December 6, from 1:00-3:00 pm, where the school will be transformed into a charming, old-fashioned market and craft fair featuring unique gifts from local sellers. Enjoy music, crafts, refreshments, and holiday cheer for the whole family; tickets are \$5 per person (ages 3+) and available at the door.

Around Town

Celebrate the holidays and support Darien Gives Back for a festive Gingerbread House Decorating Event on December 12, from 4:00–6:00 PM in the Darien High School cafeteria, supporting Habitat for Humanity; all children in grades K–5 are welcome with a parent, but spots are limited, and gingerbread houses must be purchased by December 10 via MySchoolBucks.

Parent University

Our very first [Parent University](#) will be next week on Thursday, December 11 at 2:00 pm at Middlesex Middle School. Join us to learn more about the Science of Reading and experience our K-3 literacy practices through fun, interactive learning centers.

DHS Sports

The winter athletics season kicks off tomorrow at the Darien Ice House with a boys hockey scrimmage against Marshfield High School at 4:20 pm and a girls hockey scrimmage against Greenwich at 6:20 pm. Go Blue Wave!

Sincerely,



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