

I just wanted to provide a little insight into our current weather decisions. Today's decision to cancel school was impacted by many factors.

1. Yesterday when speaking to the road commissioners in our area, we felt that the melting snow would prevent blowing drifts and the RCs felt that they could easily get the roads open and at worst we would have a late start. While I was out this AM and when talking to the RCs they were having trouble keeping the roads cleared. Today's wind projections are supposed to peak in the early afternoon and keeping the roads open to return at the end of the day was going to be a challenge. So the decision by us and many other districts was to close school today.
2. When closing school the morning of a weather event, and not anticipating a possible closure the night before, we are most likely not ready for remote learning. Prepping for remote learning is critical for teachers and the students to be successful. Making up the day on one of our identified make-up days seemed to be the best option today.
3. The District identifies MLK day, Presidents Day, and the Monday after Easter as make up days. If additional days are needed we add days to the end of the year. I chose Feb. 21st because we also set a deadline for each of the holidays and I already know of events taking place on the Martin Luther King Monday Holiday. Making up school on Feb. 21st allows all to plan for the day. **Students will be on-site for in person learning on the February 21st make-up day.**
4. Modifying the school schedule due to weather and determining a make-up day is done carefully while trying to balance the needs of younger/older students, families, and staff. Safety will always be the first priority, but making up days is a more complicated decision. Because of Covid and the number of days students have had to miss school, and parent/teacher requests to keep students in school, my thoughts on this have varied on what is the best way to make-up school.
  - a. When we schedule a make-up day on one of the identified days, bringing kids to school allows teachers to work with students face to face.
  - b. When we have weather updates and can plan on a remote day by making sure Chromebooks and materials are ready for students, the remote day allows us to keep school days on schedule and student learning on track.
  - c. Most of us do not like to readjust plans when holidays are needed for make-up days. Hopefully with enough notice everyone can adjust.
  - d. Adding days to the end of the year are not ideal either. During the last two years parents and staff have asked if we could end the year early because of the Covid exhaustion. It seems everybody is ready for the end of the school year as it arrives.

### **Evaluating the next two days**

1. The first hurdle is opening the roads. It looks as if the winds will be diminishing later this afternoon. If our area road commissioners are able to open the roads then we can attend on time. If they need time in the morning to open the roads, we may have to delay the start.
2. Temperatures tomorrow- Temperatures tomorrow are projected to be in the 0 to 2 degree above zero range around 7:00 AM with wind chills around -15. As a temperature safety measure River Bend and other area schools use 25 below zero as a safety guide. I also look to see that temperatures are increasing throughout the day. If temperatures hold steady tomorrow warmer than 25 below zero we will start on time. If temperatures are colder we may have to delay the start of school.
3. Preferences for Thursday and Friday (Each day may be handled differently)
  - a. Start on time
  - b. Delayed start
  - c. Remote learning day (only if all staff can fully support and are ready)
  - d. Cancel school and make up the Monday after Easter and/or add a day to the end of the year.

**I will do my best to gather input on the roads and temperatures throughout the day and hopefully have a decision for staff and families this evening.**

I hope this helps provide insight into weather decisions and decisions to cancel school with a make-up day or use a remote day.

Thank you and stay safe and warm today,

Darryl Hogue