

## Winter Weather Update (10.31.2023)

Dear School Community,

Happy Halloween!

This weekend it was about raking and blowing leaves. It was the time to stack firewood for the winter. Then there was also snow flurry icon on my extended forecast.

This all means it is time for the annual winter weather information.

### **THE DECISION PROCESS**

When the forecast predicts wintry weather, students (and maybe parents) may wish for the coveted “snow day.” It is not an easy process, it is one fraught with trying to make the best decision. **Sometimes I get it right. Sometimes I get it wrong. Sometimes it just snows.**

Please read more below.

The process of making the decision to close or delay school begins well in advance of the announcement. Typically, I review weather forecasts in the days before a storm and during the early morning hours. Between 4:45 a.m. and 5:15 a.m., telephone consultations between the superintendents, highway departments, and maintenance personnel, determine the status of the weather and roads. I try to make a decision by 5:30 a.m. based upon the best estimates of what will happen in the next two to twelve hours. This is not a perfect process and changing conditions may necessitate a later decision.

If weather, road, and school site conditions warrant, then I will cancel or delay the opening of schools. **The district will use an automated telephone / text notification system to expedite the announcement of changes in school schedules or other emergency or special announcements. Parents should be sure their contact information is updated to ensure they receive important information.** Radio and television stations, school bus operators, the school district websites, and staff will be notified immediately.

Many factors are considered when assessing conditions impacting the opening, closing, or delaying of school. The primary consideration is the safety of students and staff. Conditions within the towns and surrounding areas may differ dramatically during inclement weather. Consideration is also given to the ability of the maintenance crews of the towns and the schools to clear and sand or salt the school parking lots, pathways, sidewalks, and entrances.

### **DELAYS vs. CLOSURE vs. EARLY RELEASE**

In situations where it is predicted that weather and road conditions will improve during the morning, the opening of schools may be delayed by **TWO HOURS**. This means all bus routes and opening schedules will operate **TWO HOURS** later than usual. The balance of the school day and dismissal will be on a normal schedule.

The district also has an option of a **THREE-HOUR** delay in case more time is needed for road conditions to improve. This means all bus routes and opening schedules will operate **THREE HOURS** later than usual. The balance of the school day and dismissal will be on a normal schedule.

If a delayed opening is called on an early release day, students will remain in school until the normal afternoon dismissal time. **If this change occurs, there will then be no morning prekindergarten and afternoon prekindergarten will resume meeting at its regular time.**

Although early closings are avoided whenever possible, in rare cases it may be necessary to dismiss school early due to unexpected deterioration of weather conditions. In these situations, an announcement will be issued by 9:30 a.m. and schools will be dismissed early.

**Weather dismissal times are as follows:**

Early dismissal times for all schools are as follows:

|           | Weather<br>2 Hr Delay | Weather<br>3 Hr Delay | Weather<br>Early Release |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| LHS/LMS   | 9:23am - 2:00pm       | 10:23am - 2:00pm      | 7:23am - 11:00am         |
| LIS       | 10:25am - 3:05pm      | 11:25am - 3:05pm      | 8:25am - 12:00pm         |
| LCS       | 10:40am - 3:15pm      | 11:40am - 3:15pm      | 8:40am - 12:15pm         |
| Wamogo HS | 9:20am - 2:00pm       | 10:20am - 2:00pm      | 7:20am - 11:00am         |
| Wamogo MS | 10:10am - 2:50pm      | 11:10am - 2:50pm      | 8:10am - 11:50am         |
| GCS       | 11:00am - 3:40pm      | 12:00pm - 3:40pm      | 9:00am - 12:40pm         |
| WS        | 11:00am - 3:40pm      | 12:00pm - 3:40pm      | 9:00am - 12:40pm         |
| JMS       | 11:00am - 3:40pm      | 12:00pm - 3:40pm      | 9:00am - 12:40pm         |

**When there is an early dismissal, morning prekindergarten will dismiss at the regular time and there will be no afternoon pre-kindergarten. Please note that when school is canceled, or when there is an early dismissal all activities and meetings for the day are also canceled. The school buildings will be closed.**

Families should have an emergency backup plan in place in the event of an early closing. Children should be informed of this plan and parents should be sure their children understand where to go in the event of an early closing. Childcare arrangements at home or on the same bus route should be made in advance of the early closing day since it will be difficult for the schools to contact every parent and monitor the whereabouts of every child.

On days when the weather is problematic, parents are advised to stay tuned to the local radio and/or television channel to be aware of early closings. Since each school has a different procedure for dealing with alternate drop-offs, parent pick-ups, etc. parents should follow the established procedure.

**The decision to delay, cancel, or dismiss school early is often a difficult one. *Decisions made by the school district are not intended to prevent parents from making their own decision to send a child to school or keep a child home during severe weather.* Based upon a personal assessment of weather reports, road conditions, and safety factors specific to their residence, parents may make their own decision regarding their child's school attendance during inclement weather.**

Best to all,

Chris