

# HIGHLAND

## Local Schools

### School Closing Information

As we approach the winter season, the following information may help you better understand the process the District uses when making the decision to open or close school, offer a two-hour delayed start or resort to an early release due to inclement weather.

These decisions are based upon a careful analysis of relevant factors, such as:

- Information on road conditions from transportation staff, local law enforcement and state, county and township road crews (as warranted); *Please keep in mind that road conditions can vary dramatically throughout the district;*
- Amount of accumulated snow and ice;
- Whether precipitation is expected to continue throughout the day;
- Temperature and wind chill (wind chills at or below -15°F to -20°F during key walking and waiting-for-bus times are given special consideration);
- Impact on our transportation fleet (school bus diesel fuel begins to gel at an ambient temperature of 0 degrees);
- Weather predictions (including those from our own satellite system and local radar);
- Timing of storm;
- Building conditions (is there electricity and heat?);
- Parking lot conditions;
- What other surrounding districts are doing.

#### WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

The superintendent is responsible for the final decision, based upon the factors above, as well as recommendations from road crews, and local law enforcement and safety officials, as warranted. We have a very large district. Weather and road conditions may be fine in one portion of the district, but not in another. In such instances, we must close school or modify the school day for the entire district.

#### WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

We strive to make the decision to close by 5:30 a.m., or earlier. **However, keep in mind that unusual weather conditions may force us to make the decision after this time.**

#### NOTIFICATION

The Highland Schools uses a variety of resources to notify parents and staff of school closings, including our automated phone call system, District website, social media sites and e-newsletter. Closing notifications are also announced on TV, radio and posted on many storm alert and school closing websites.

#### WILL WE CLOSE SCHOOL IF CONDITIONS WORSEN?

Even if weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse our decision in the morning without endangering students. Once we make the decision to open the schools, many parents rely on that and leave for work. If we then send students back home, many will return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses. If conditions worsen during the school day, we may need to have an earlier dismissal, but we will give as

much notice as possible through the previously mentioned means. (Please make sure that you have completed and returned to school, the early-release information sheet for your child.)

### **TWO-HOUR DELAY**

If the District is on a two-hour delay, there will be no LatchKey in the morning. When a two-hour delay is called, the school day starts two hours later than normal, but ends at the regular time. Bus pick up times are adjusted accordingly. (Example: If your child is normally picked up at 7:15 a.m., the bus will arrive at 9:15 a.m. on a two-hour delay.)

If a two-hour delay is called, it is important to have alternative plans in place for childcare as needed. In addition, it is also important to plan for the entire day to be cancelled. During a two-hour delay, it may be decided that weather conditions or other conditions have not improved enough to hold school for the remainder of the day. Parents will need to monitor information coming from the District during the delay, including our automated phone call system, e-newsletters, website and social media sites to adjust plans accordingly.

Although we do our absolute best in this process by carefully considering all information, we know that weather forecasting is an imperfect science and often no perfect decision exists. As always, our top priority is the safety of our students. If you do not feel that it is safe for your child to get to school, use your best judgment as to whether or not he or she should attend. Also, please discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives as weather conditions worsen.

We hope that this explanation helps everyone understand the process that we use to make the best possible decision for everyone in our district.