

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS - HOW IS THE DECISION MADE?

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

The winter season is upon us. Our district administration, faculty, and staff understand that our decision to open or close schools during inclement weather has a big effect on families. We also understand that our students are better served, both academically and socially, by being in school. But, as always, our top priority is the safety of our students.



HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?

Please understand that we make the decision to open or close the schools in bad weather based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:

- Information on road conditions from transportation staff, adjoining school districts, and from local law enforcement. We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the district; they can be treacherous even if your street or road looks clear.
- Amount of snow and/or ice accumulated.
- Is the snow and/or ice expected to continue throughout the day.
- Temperature and wind chill. Temperature and/or sustained wind chills at or below -10F during peak pick-up times for buses and walking times for students are given special consideration.
- Weather predictions from satellite systems, local radar, National Weather and NOAA Weather radio.
- The weather's impact on our bus fleet.
- Building conditions (such as whether they have electricity and heat).
- Parking lots and sidewalk conditions.

WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As Superintendent of Schools, I am ultimately responsible for the final decision based on the above factors and recommendations from the Directors of Transportation and Maintenance.

WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

We strive to make the decision to close or delay by 5:30 a.m. In some cases, we can make a decision to close or delay the night before but those are special exceptions as conditions can change or improve significantly over night. Keep in mind that unusual weather conditions may force us to make closing/delay decisions after this time.

WILL WE DELAY THE START OF SCHOOL?

We will utilize 2-Hour delayed starts. The addition of two hours for local township, county, and state workers to improve road conditions can make for drastic improvements. We realize that this can be a burden to some families but if a delayed start of two hours allows for students to attend school, we will utilize this option.

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 it and leave for work. If we then send students back home, many will return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses. If conditions get worse during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal, but we will give as much notice as possible through 'Knox Alerts' and the local media and communication outlets mentioned below.

Although our staff and I do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you do not feel that it is safe for your child to get to school, use your best judgment 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.

HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

The Mount Vernon City Schools will utilize 'Knox Alerts' which is an automated phone text alert system. We encourage all families to take advantage of this system as it is the fastest way to communicate school closings, delays, and general information. Sign-up for 'Knox Alerts' can be accessed via the district website. We will also post closings and delays on the district website at www.mvcsd.us.

Tune to - TV channels NBC (4), ABC (6), FOX (28), WBNS (10). Tune to - Radio stations WQIO (93.7), WMVO (1300), WNZR (90.9) -- for up-to-date information on school closings.

Please do not call the school or bus garage unless it is an emergency.

HOW MANY DAYS CAN WE TAKE?

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, districts that change to an hour-based schedule will no longer have calamity days. Instead, schools may schedule "excess" hours above the minimum number required by the Ohio Department of Education. Hours missed above the minimum do not have to be made up. However, if a school closes enough that it will fall below the minimum number of hours, the school must extend its scheduled year.

We have enough excess hours built into our schedule that we will not make-up the first five (5) days missed due to inclement weather. In the event that school is closed for more than five (5) days we will make-up the next three (3) days (days 6-8) through online instruction at grades 6-12 and blizzard bags for grades K-5. Days missed beyond 8 will be made up at the end of the year.

We hope that this explanation helps everyone understand the process we use in making the safest possible decision for all students and staff in our district.

William Seder Jr., Superintendent