

# North Fork Local School Closings & Delays Procedures

Our district staff understands that our decision to open or close schools, offer a two-hour delayed start, or resort to an early release in bad weather has a big effect on families. Also, we understand that our students are better served by being in school – both academically and socially. As always, our top priority is the safety of our students and staff.

## HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?

When bad weather affects the area, we make the decision to open/close schools or modify the school day schedule based upon a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:

- Information on road conditions from transportation staff and from local law enforcements and road crews; We must give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the district; they can be treacherous, even if your street looks clear.
- 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 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 zero degrees);
- Weather predictions (including those from a weather alert service);
- Storm timing;
- Building conditions (such as whether there is electricity and heat);
- Parking lot conditions;
- What other districts are doing.

## WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As Superintendent of Schools, I am responsible for the final decision, based upon the factors and recommendations from the Transportation, Buildings & Grounds Supervisor. We have a 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?

I strive to make the decision to close by 6:00 a.m. or earlier so that we can notify radio and TV stations, post the information to our web site, and send a One Call Now emergency announcement to all subscribers. Keep in mind that unusual weather conditions may force us to make the decision after this time. Stay tuned to the television and radio stations for updates to the closings.

## 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 worsen during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal, but we will give as much notice as possible through the previously mentioned means.

Although my staff and I do our absolute best in this process, we know that often no perfect decision exists. If you as the parent or guardian 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. Contact the building office to inform them that you believe the conditions are too dangerous to send your son/daughter. Also, please discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives as weather conditions worsen.

When you have questions about school being delayed or closed, *please do NOT call the school. We must have all lines open to communicate with our bus drivers, law enforcement officials, and the media during delays and closings.*

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