



December 9, 2022

Dear Staff, Parents, and Guardians:

The district administration understands that our decision to open or close schools due to inclement weather has an impact on families. We also understand that our students are better served – both academically and socially – by being in school. However, as always, our top priority is the safety and well-being of our students.

## HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DECISION?

Please understand that the decision to open or close schools during inclement or hazardous weather is based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, such as:

- **Information on road conditions from the Bolton Department of Public Works, State Police, and M&J School Bus Company.** We give careful consideration to the most dangerous roads in the district. The Town of Bolton has many winding and hilly streets. Even if your street looks clear, travel elsewhere in the district may be dangerous, especially in the higher elevation areas of Bolton. Also, we consider that many high school students drive to school.
- **Weather Forecast and Predictions.** We prefer not making our decision based solely on weather predictions, which are not always 100% accurate, but sometimes this is unavoidable. The amount of snow and ice forecasted and accumulated along with the timing of the inclement weather are major factors in the decision to close school. In addition, temperature and wind chill factors are important as students wait outside for the bus.
- **Building Conditions.** Our schools need to be a safe, healthy, and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Issues such as whether or not we have electricity and heat are critical factors to consider. Parking lot conditions and entry ways need to be safe and passable for all students, staff, and visitors.
- **What other school districts are doing.** We share information with nine other local school districts via a conference call and check whether they are opening or closing.

## WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As the Superintendent of Schools, I am responsible for the final decision, based on the above factors and recommendations from the Bolton Public Works Department, State Police, M&J School Bus Company, District Facilities Department, and our Consulting Meteorologist.

## HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

The following media outlets are notified: TV Stations (WFSB Channel 3, WTNH Channel 8, WVIT Channel 30, FOX Channel 61) and Radio Station (WTIC 1080AM). As you know, the district sends out a School Messenger alert via phone calls, text, and e-mail informing families that school is canceled, delayed or dismissing early. **Parents/guardians should ensure that all of their current contact information has been given to the appropriate school office.** In addition, you may sign up to receive a text or e-mail message on the status of Bolton Schools from the local TV stations mentioned above by logging on to their website and following their prompts.

**WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?**

A decision needs to be made by 5:30AM as bus routes begin at about 5:45AM and media stations need to be notified to broadcast a school closing alert before students and families leave home to travel to school. We do our best to adhere to this time frame whenever possible.

**TWO-HOUR DELAY DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Please note that the Bolton Public Schools operates on a two-hour delay schedule in the morning if needed. PreK is canceled on a day when we have a delayed opening of school.

**EARLY RELEASE IF CONDITIONS WORSEN**

If conditions worsen during the school day, we may need to have an early dismissal, but we will give as much advance notice as possible to all parents first. Below please find the early dismissal schedule.

PreK ~ 10:15 AM

BHS ~ 11:00 AM

BCS ~ 12:10 PM

Although my staff and I do our absolute best in this process, weather conditions can be unpredictable. If you do not feel as though it is safe for your child to attend school, use your best judgment on whether he or she should attend. Also, please discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives if weather conditions worsen.

I hope that this explanation helps everyone understand the process that our district utilizes to make the best possible decision for all students and staff in our district.

Sincerely,

*Kristin B. Heckt*

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Superintendent of Schools