

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Category: R

See Also: Policy EBCD

The Superintendent is empowered to close the district schools or to dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. In the event the Superintendent is unavailable, such decisions will be made by the School Board Chairperson.

Such action is never to be taken lightly, for public education is one of the principal functions of the community and should be maintained at a normal level except in extreme circumstances. When this regularity of operation ceases, serious difficulties are caused and the welfare of children may be jeopardized. Schools may not properly be closed merely to avoid inconvenience. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students early, the administrative, supervisory, and operational activity is continued as may be possible. Therefore, if conditions affect only a single school, only that school shall be closed.

In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent shall consider many factors, including the following relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of children:

1. Weather conditions, both existing and predicted
2. Driving, traffic, and parking conditions, affecting public and private transportation facilities
3. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition which would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous
4. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

The Superintendent shall weigh these factors and shall take action to close the schools only after consultation with traffic and weather authorities. Students, parents, and staff shall be informed early in each school year of the procedures which will be used to notify them in case of emergency closing, whether action is taken before or during school hours.

When schools are closed for emergency reasons, staff members shall comply with Board policy in reporting for work:

Full time, year-round employees (principals, secretaries, and custodians) will be expected to report for work on days of emergency closings. The nature of the emergency may dictate the ability to report at the usual hour, but as soon as safety will allow, full-time, year-round personnel shall report to their schools for their workday.

Teaching staff, food service personnel, paraprofessionals, and other staff not on a year-round contract will not report to work on days of emergency closings.

Announcements: When the Superintendent decides it is necessary to delay opening or close any facility or school or cancel any school event, he/she will initiate all related communications to the public by radio, television, website, or other available means.

Delayed Opening of Schools: The Superintendent may delay the opening of schools upon determining that weather conditions appear extremely hazardous to operate school buses at the regular early morning hours, but that travel conditions will appreciably improve later in the morning. The public announcement will report the delayed opening, including the cancellation of morning kindergarten, if necessary. Schools and offices shall close on the regular schedules. After-school activities and events will not be affected by a delayed opening.

Closing of Schools Only for the Entire Day: When the Superintendent determines that weather or other conditions exist or will develop that would make it unwise to open one or more schools any time during the day, the announcement communicated to radio and television stations shall state that the school district is closed. If school is closed for the entire day, all evening programs will be cancelled.

Afternoon and Evening Program Cancellations: When schools are open to the end of the school day, but weather or other conditions deteriorate in the late afternoon, the Superintendent may decide to cancel afternoon and evening programs. Schools and offices should plan and communicate alternate dates and times to hold programs or events.

Weekend Closings: When weather or other conditions are predicted or develop that would make it hazardous to operate weekend programs or events, the Superintendent is responsible for decisions regarding cancellations and for notifying the appropriate media.

SAU #7 Policy Committee: Recommended for Adoption – May 22, 2018

Colebrook School Board: Adopted – June 19, 2018

Pittsburg School Board: Adopted – June 11, 2018

Stewartstown School Board: Adopted – June 28, 2018