



ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE

Many families ask about the criteria for determining weather-related school closings, delays or early releases.

The foremost factor in the decision to cancel school is student safety. Influencers can include snow accumulations, weather forecasts, road conditions, and wind chill temperatures. RCS consults with grounds and maintenance crews, transportation, the National Weather Service and other area superintendents when considering altering schedules. District officials check road conditions by driving throughout the community, often at 3:00-4:00 a.m. Please keep in mind that the District is 66 square miles and has many subdivisions north of Dutton with dirt roads. These subdivisions send children to eight of our twenty-one schools. If road conditions are such that the district determines driving to be hazardous for buses and student or parent drivers, the district will be closed. We will also close school if temperatures are deemed to be dangerous for student walkers.

The district uses weather information from the AccuWeather Forecast at www.accuweather.com.

One of the alternatives to closing school for the entire day is a two-hour delay, which would allow time for conditions to improve. The benefit of a delayed opening is that the students would not miss a day of school. On the other hand, a negative aspect would be that if conditions do not improve within the two-hour period, the district may have to cancel for the entire day anyway.

Other alternatives to school closings have been suggested; however, at this time the district has not determined that these recommendations will be in the best interest for all students. One suggested alternative includes providing bus pick-up only at main roads, so buses would not have to travel icy or snow covered back roads. The concern here, though, is that students may have to walk further along snow covered roads to reach the bus where there may, or may not, be bike or walking paths. Student drivers and parents may also be forced to drive on roads that are considered too dangerous for buses. Another alternative is to keep school open without providing transportation if the roads are treacherous. This option would create a disproportionate attendance issue for those students who rely on bus service.

The State of Michigan allows us six days grace period, which can be used when the building cannot be opened for various reasons (weather, power outages, water, etc.).

The district understands that for many parents, the cancellation of school causes scheduling and work problems. However, our decisions will keep student safety at the forefront.

The district notifies parents of schedule changes through its School Messenger email services and places an automated phone call to parents using its emergency cancellation services. In addition, school cancellations are published on the district website at www.rochester.k12.mi.us, on local radio and television stations, and on our district social media site.