

## **The Decision to Delay or Cancel School**

Every year many parents and community members ask as to how the decision is made to delay or cancel school due to weather conditions. Most superintendents will tell you that is one of their most difficult decisions. The overall priority in making this decision is the safety of students and district employees.

Each day that the weather brings into question the decision to delay or cancel school myself and Mr. Shafer, the transportation director, are out driving various roads in all parts of the district. In general, we try to make the decision to delay or cancel between 5:30 and 5:45 AM in order to get the message out to parents and employees as soon as possible.

In addition to driving and checking road conditions we are in contact with area school district's administration and transportation personnel as well as local law enforcement in order to determine what the current road conditions are and what conditions we might be able to expect. We also pay close attention to the National Weather Service radar and reports.

The biggest headache comes when the road conditions are okay at 5:45 AM but the prediction is that the weather will get worse as the morning progresses. This raises the issue of closing school based on a prediction that may not come true. Therefore, we try to make the decision based on what road conditions actually are and may choose to wait until the last possible minute before making the decision. There are times when road conditions may be safe for busses to operate but we choose to delay based on our concern for students and employees who drive to school. Parents are encouraged to use their own judgment in determining whether or not they want their student to drive to school or to allow their student to ride with someone else to school on these days.

You may have heard that the State of Ohio has decided to eliminate calamity days for schools. We still have the traditional five calamity days for this school year. For the 2010-11 school year this will be reduced to three calamity days and beginning with the 2011-12 school year, all days that are cancelled will need to be made up. Even though this will make it difficult for the district and for parents not knowing exactly when the last day of school may be, we will not change our standards for deciding whether or not to delay or cancel school. Safety will always be our first priority.

Gregg Elchert

Superintendent