



# Westerville City Schools

936 Eastwind Drive, Westerville, OH 43081  
Main Office (614) 797-5700 Fax (614) 797-5701

**John R. Kellogg, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

## Vision

Our vision is  
to be the benchmark  
of educational  
excellence.

## Mission

Our mission is  
to prepare students  
to contribute  
to the competitive  
and changing world  
in which we live.

## Values

Respect  
Inclusiveness  
Community  
Communication  
Collaboration  
Innovation  
Nurturing  
Trust  
Accountability

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The winter season is upon us. 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.

## 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 Manager and others. We have a very 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.



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## **WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?**

I strive to make the decision to close by 5:30 a.m., or earlier, so that we can notify radio and TV stations, post the information to our web site, and send electronic notices to emergency announcement subscribers. Keep in mind that unusual weather conditions may force us to make the decision after this time. Stay tuned to the previously mentioned stations, as well as our web site and e-communications, 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 or cancel pm kindergarten classes, 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 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. Also, please discourage teenagers from driving in bad conditions and offer them alternatives as weather conditions worsen.

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.

Sincerely,

John R. Kellogg, Ed.D

Superintendent