



DEXTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Dear Dexter DCS Families and Staff,

This week is already shaping up to be a challenge for the continuity of children attending school. We understand the disruption that a school cancelation creates for kids and families.

With the prolonged snowfall throughout the day and into tonight along with the forecast for extremely cold temperatures this week, I'd like to provide a quick overview of decision-making regarding school cancelation.

When the area is impacted by snow, ice, or fog, we first consider the safety of students traveling to/from school. The criteria include the ability for buses to travel on the roads, the safety of students at the bus stops, the safety of cars traveling on the roads and, in the case of students walking to school, the outside temperature as students head to school. One of our steps on a day like today is to communicate with the Washtenaw County Road Commission to understand their staffing level and snow removal plans. For example, based on the snowfall amounts today and the duration of the snowfall, we have an understanding of how much road will be cleared by tonight before the majority of the crew has to stop for the day and the next shift begins. We also understand the time they'll be in tomorrow morning and can anticipate what the roads will be like at bus time after actually checking some of our roads early tomorrow morning. If you don't receive a phone message or notification by 5:30/5:45 a.m. tomorrow, we will most likely be in school.

If the wind chill dips to the negative 25-degree range (or a sustained -20), please be aware that we may need to cancel school. At that temperature, the risk to our students standing at bus stops or walking to school greatly outweighs the need to have students in school for the day. Please make sure your children dress appropriately for the cold temperatures. Every year, we receive calls when we have school and the windchill is -17 or -18 degrees then see dozens of our students walking off the bus or dropped off by a parent and entering school wearing shorts.

We don't use one particular site for the windchill calculation but generally look at weather.gov, intellicast, weatherbug and accuweather. This provides us with multiple readings so we don't close unnecessarily. We generally do not use the television forecasts to determine a school closing.

Thank you for your patience as we work through January in Michigan. We're hopeful the weather this week cooperates but wanted to make sure you had accurate information on our decision-making process.

Take care, stay warm, and Go Dreads!

Sincerely,

Christopher Timmis
Superintendent, Dexter Community Schools