

## SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS DUE TO WEATHER

### Message from the Superintendent

The District recognizes the unpredictability associated with the weather and other unforeseen emergencies. With that being said, all students, parents and school employees should assume that school will be in session and buses will be running as scheduled unless there is official notification from the Superintendent to the contrary.

To achieve the maximum safety for all children and the efficiency of operations, the Superintendent may order the:

- Cancellation of some or all bus routes
- Delay of some or all bus routes
- Closure of school(s)
- Delay of school start
- Early dismissal of school

There are no hard and fast rules as to when school days are disrupted but please be assured that the safety of students is our number one concern. We consider several factors when making the call about having school, delaying school or cancelling school. Of course, if school buildings are uninhabitable we would not have school. Another factor is what is happening with businesses throughout the community. This is important because if businesses are not closed, parents are still expected to work. School delays or closures leave many students unattended and alone in their homes or asking parents to make hard decisions about not going to work themselves. We feel that it is safer for students to be supervised in warm schools than left alone. If businesses are not closed, we make the assumption that our staff members can make it to work too.

During inclement weather, we work with the bus company to determine proper courses of action. We keep in mind that only 39% of our students are eligible to ride a bus and many of those don't ride every day. Our elementary schools are neighborhood schools and most students walk.

We also factor in the timeframes involved. Classes start as early as 7:00 am in the morning at the high schools. The elementary schools are open at 6:30 am when HANDS opens. The first call bell is at 7:35 in the middle schools. We also start serving breakfast at 7:00 am in some schools. Many students get an early start to school.

The weather and road conditions in Montana can change in a hurry. The District monitors the weather closely and communicates with the weather service when we have questions.

The District relies on school principals to make sure that students are warm and safe. On very cold days, students are allowed into the building immediately upon arrival in the morning and are kept inside for recesses. They are kept inside until the busses arrive.

Lastly, the District relies on parents to bundle up their kiddos and to make attendance decisions that are appropriate for their family situations. While the District emphasizes good attendance at school, the District doesn't expect parents, guardians or students to sacrifice safety for attendance.

For more information, click here:

<http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/sites/default/files/School%20Closure%20Due%20to%20Weather%20Webpage%20Information.pdf>

Parents should look for additional information in Wednesday Envelopes (elementary) or in the mail (middle and high school) during the week of November 10, 2014.