November 11, 2019

Dear Cheltenham School District Families and Staff -

This week’s weather forecast is calling for a precipitous temperature dip for a large portion of the nation, meaning winter may arrive sooner than anticipated. I’ve heard conflicting reports about what Mother Nature has in store for us through the next few months. Regardless, I want everyone to be as informed and prepared as possible for when the inevitable first snow day robocall is made, and I hope this communication will shed some light on that decision-making and notification process.

We understand the district’s decisions surrounding inclement weather has a huge impact on families and staff, and we strive to announce any schedule changes as early as possible. Please exercise caution when traveling during inclement weather, and, if possible, discourage your teenager from driving.

Below, find information about the District’s inclement weather procedures and notification system.

WHAT REAL-TIME FACTORS DETERMINE IF SCHOOL CLOSES, OPENS LATE OR DISMISSES EARLY?

- **Road conditions.** The superintendent receives reports from CSD’s Facilities and Transportation staff and Cheltenham Township Emergency Management. The District must consider the most dangerous roads in the township first, and, even though streets in a neighborhood look clear, travel elsewhere in the district may be dangerous. The most difficult decisions are when sleet or freezing rain hits after buses are en route. The fact that some high schoolers drive to school further complicates matters.

- **Snow and ice accumulation, temperature and wind chill.** These factors come into play with walkers or those who wait outside for the bus.

- **Weather forecasts and precipitation time frame.** The district prefers not making decisions based on forecasts, which are not always accurate. Sometimes, this is unavoidable. The district will alert families and staff of an impending storm which bears watching. If the accumulated snowfall and/or ice are being cleared, school may open two hours late, in which case buses will run regular routes two hours later than normal. If the precipitation doesn’t begin until school has started, the district may dismiss early but still serve lunch so as to receive credit for a full school day.

- **Building and parking lot conditions.** An obvious concern is whether buildings have heat and electricity. Though the district facilities team is busy plowing parking lots well before sunrise, sometimes they can’t keep pace with the rate of precipitation. Black ice in the parking lots is another consideration.

- **Neighboring school districts.** Area superintendents share information with each other with regard to their decision making and plans.
WHO MAKES THE DECISION AND WHEN?
- The superintendent of schools, in consultation with area superintendents, Cheltenham Township Emergency Management and District Facilities and Transportation staff, makes the final decision as early as possible. In some circumstances, however, the decision to close or open late is made the night before.

HOW ARE FAMILIES NOTIFIED?
- **Mobile Application:** Available for iPhone and Android users, the district’s mobile application features push notifications, the fastest way to learn of a school closing, delayed opening or early dismissal.
- **Telephone:** Families receive a robocall to the phone numbers listed in PowerSchool alerting them of the decision to close or open on a delay.
- **Email:** Families receive a message to the email addresses listed in PowerSchool alerting them of the decision to close or open on a delay.
- **Online:** A “pop up” announcement is posted at Cheltenham.org and on Facebook and Twitter. News media post closing information to their websites by school district names: CBS3 | 6ABC | Fox29 | KYW1060.
- To update your information, visit www.cheltenham.org/updatemyinfo.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH C.L.A.S.P. WHEN SCHOOL IS CLOSED, OPENS LATE OR DISMISSES EARLY?
- If schools are closed, C.L.A.S.P centers are closed.
- If schools open on a two-hour delay, morning C.L.A.S.P. centers are not open.
- If schools dismiss early, afternoon C.L.A.S.P. centers are not open.

The district does its best in this process, but inclement weather poses many challenges. If you do not feel it is safe for your child(ren) to attend school because of inclement weather, use your best judgment.

Best,
Dr. Wagner Marseille
Superintendent of Schools