

# MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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TO: RSU 9 Parents & Staff  
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent  
RE: RSU 9 Storm Closing-Delay Process  
DATE: 11-10-2023

The weather is changing, and it is important to review the process I will be using to close, delay or end school early in RSU 9 due to stormy weather. As we all know there is no exact science when it comes to the weather. I can tell you that determining what is the best course of action in the mountains and valleys of Western Maine is not easy. Not at all! I want to assure you that I take this process very seriously and I will do my best to weigh all the factors which go into these travel decisions. *Please know that a great deal of time and effort goes into these decisions every time there is a chance for bad weather. Student, staff, and parent safety is our #1 concern.*

## The following is the School Cancellation-Delay Process we will use in 2023-2024:

- The process starts about 36 hours before a storm is to come our way when long-range forecasts from the National Weather Service begin to predict that severe winter weather may be coming.
- The day before a storm may hit, I review each of the updated forecasts from the National Weather Service. During this same timeframe Director of Transportation Richard Joseph is also reviewing forecasts.
- At 4:00 a.m. the day the storm is due:
  - o I check updated forecasts and get a briefing from a Meteorologist who supports our district.
  - o Director of Transportation Richard Joseph talks with other area Directors to see what they are seeing and hearing.
  - o I also contact several Franklin County Superintendents to discuss their current weather status along with what next steps may be called for.
- By 4:30 a.m. Richard and I discuss what we know and determine if we need more input from Town Road Commissioners or Franklin County Emergency Management Staff.
- Because we need approximately three hours to get all our kids into school, one of the following decisions will need to be made by 5:00 a.m.:
  - o School will go as scheduled
  - o 1 hr. Delay
  - o 2 hr. Delay
  - o No school.
- Once the decision is made to adjust or cancel, we send out a Power Announcement, contact the Daily Bulldog, call WKTJ FM 93, along with contacting the following TV Stations:
  - o WLBZ Channel 2 Bangor
  - o WCSH Channel 6 Portland
  - o WMTW Channel 8 Portland
  - o WGME Channel 13 Portland.

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**Early Dismissal:**

- When school is in session and a storm quickly or suddenly begins to impact our area in such a way that we feel we need to send students and staff home early we will decide as quickly as possible, recognizing it will take at least three hours to get students' home.
- We aim to make an early dismissal decision between 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. at the latest.
- Notification of an early dismissal will be on a Power Announcement and sent to the same news media outlets outlined above.

**This year there may again be some considerations** that will impact school delay and cancellation decisions. Some of our towns along with the state may have difficulty finding staff, including snowplow drivers. Obviously, if roads are not able to be plowed quickly, this will have an important bearing on whether there is a need for delayed school openings or closures. A storm might have passed by 3:30 or 4:00 a.m., but if the hard-working and possibly undermanned MDOT and local town road crews have not been able to keep up with the accumulated snow or ice, school may be canceled, or openings delayed. We will be prepared just in case this does become a problem for us in RSU 9.

Before I became a superintendent, I heard that school opening delays and cancellations were decisions superintendents hated the most. I know from experience that these decisions will lead to my name being taken in vain by some no matter what the decision is. ☺ In the past I have asked those with strong feelings if they would like to be involved in this process from beginning to end for each storm, a sort of Cancellation Advisory Committee. I have had no takers. ☺ ☺ ☺

*With the above said I do appreciate your understanding in advance with the process we will be following this winter.*