

BCSC – Inclement Weather Statement

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Given the many questions raised regarding decisions to either delay or cancel school, we offer the following information:

We believe there is safety and security inherent in the routine of school. We believe that our public expects schools to be open, if possible, in order to provide necessary services, including education, supervision, and meals, to its students. Given this, we approach each day with the assumption that school will be in session and will begin and end at normal times. A decision to alter the regular schedule due to inclement weather, be it a cancellation, delay, or early dismissal, is based on the careful gathering of as much information as possible, including the most current weather conditions and updated forecasts, in order to determine whether our bus drivers can safely traverse our BCSC roads. We believe the decision as to whether or not it is safe enough for teenagers to drive is a family decision.

Regarding cold weather, it is our strong belief that we can conduct a regular school day for the majority of these types of days. We believe that parents are committed to keeping their children safe and that they will dress their children appropriately for existing weather conditions when sending them to school. The risk of frostbite emerges at wind chill temperatures at or near -20 degrees with 30 minutes or more of exposure. When temperatures reach such a level, then we must carefully consider the risk for our students who must walk to school or wait for buses. Our running “ON TIME” is always contingent on all buses starting as expected and all school buildings being warm.

Last evening, we communicated with our county officials and it was determined that a delay would give them an appropriate amount of time to address roads that were still snow or ice covered. We commend them, as well as our city and state road crews, for their hard work in ensuring our buses could travel safely. It is important to note that road conditions are often not perfect during the winter months and that the need to drive slower, or allow for additional time to get to one’s destination, does not necessarily indicate conditions are unsafe for travel. We do pay attention to the travel advisory status for our county and those around us. For today, Bartholomew County was on yellow, which is the lowest level of any county travel advisory. Brown County, however, was on a travel WATCH, or orange, which recommends only essential travel. The highest alert is a travel WARNING, or red, and indicates travel may be restricted to emergency management only.

Finally, we recognize that it is ultimately a parental decision as to whether or not a child should attend school in the event of inclement weather. We respect a parent’s determination regarding his/her child’s attendance at school on such days. If making the decision to keep a child at home, as with any absence, parents are expected to contact the school and inform school officials. Any student not attending school due to inclement weather will be granted an excused absence and any work missed may be completed for credit.

Jim Roberts