



# Tewksbury Township Board of Education

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

It is the time of year when weather-related events may impact our schedules. While we believe continuity of instruction is important for our students, the main concern during weather events is always the safety of our students and staff.

The decision to close school involves many factors. The Tewksbury Township School District occupies 31.8 square miles of vastly different environments: well-traveled wide roads, narrow and twisting roads and roads at various elevations which lend themselves to varied temperatures and road conditions.

Due to the unique 2020-2021 in-person school schedule related to the pandemic this year, we have some changes to our typical closure for inclement weather. We will not delay our school day due to weather under our current school schedule.

If weather is a concern, then school will be closed for the full day. If school is closed, all students will participate in a remote learning day with their teachers. This day will count towards our 180 days of required school. However, if we learn of extensive power outages in the area, we will fully close and no school (in-person or remote) will be offered. This day would need to be made up at the end of the school year.

**Question: What factors are weighed in the decision to close or alter the school schedule?**

- **Weather Conditions and Forecasts.** We receive information on weather conditions and power outages from a variety of sources including the National Weather Service and the Office of Emergency Management.
- **Information on Road Conditions.** We receive information from our local police authorities as well as our local public works department. Bob Hoffman, Transportation Coordinator, also performs a drive through on many of our roads for assessment. Both main and secondary roads are considered. Keep in mind that while some main roads are passable it is often the secondary roads that will not become passable until much later in the day.

- **School Building and Parking Lot Conditions.** Our custodial staff is always at the ready however, effective snow and ice removal can prove impossible within a short time frame or if the school parking lot is full of cars and buses.
- **Surrounding Districts.** We collaborate with Voorhees High School and take note of the surrounding district assessments as we understand that the decision to open, close or early dismiss our school significantly impacts family schedules and arrangements.

**Question: When is the decision made?** In most cases, the decision to close the school is made between 5:00 AM and 5:30 AM.

**Question: When and how are the parents notified?** A Realtime Alert notification will be sent out between 5:00 AM and 5:45 AM. Additionally, an announcement will be placed on the home page of our district website, and the following media will be notified: Channel 7 WABC, News 12 New Jersey and FOX 5 WNYW. Details about the type of closure, such as a move to remote learning, will be communicated.

**Question: What if the weather conditions shift suddenly and worsen?** While we are aware that these decisions cause significant disruptions within a household we are steadfast in our commitment for the safety of our students and staff. In these instances we will notify the public as soon as possible so that families are able to make plans for their children.

**Question: Who makes these decisions?** As the Superintendent of Schools, I am responsible for the final decision with regard to school closures and delays. As noted above, I consult with numerous agencies, district Superintendents and our own school transportation and facility departments.

In the end, please know that the decisions made are based on the information available and always with the best interest of our students and staff in mind.

Regards,

Jennifer Shouffler, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools