
January 28, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As winter weather makes a return this week, I would like to share information about how we decide to close school or not close school due to weather conditions. Much to the chagrin of our elementary students, it has nothing to do with backwards clothes, ice cubes in toilets or spoons under pillows. Nor does it have anything to do with my favorite myth; my ability to see the Nims' dog through the snow in the morning.

Before I explain, please remember that you, as a parent/guardian, are the final decision maker. If you believe the roads are unsafe, or that it is too cold for your child to be on the bus or in school, you can choose to keep your child home.

Typically discussions regarding a closure begin the day prior to a significant weather event. I will communicate with our weather expert, and speak to our Transportation and Facilities directors to make sure we all have the same information. They will speak with the highway supervisors and our plow crews, respectively. We will then establish timelines for the reporting of our plow crews and transportation staff. The day of the event we begin communicating with all parties between 4:30 and 5:00 am. It is my goal to make a final decision for a school closure by 6:15am.

When a decision to close is made, the notification goes out to parents/guardians via our website, Facebook, Twitter, email, and robocall. We will also notify local radio and television stations. Multiple outlets are used in the event that one of them is not working properly, or we are unable to access a particular system. I typically post on my Twitter account first because it is the easiest. If you want your robocall phone number or email address changed to receive, or not receive messages contact: ganandapr@gananda.org.

Throughout the day we will monitor weather and engage other districts regarding the conditions in their school districts before determining whether to continue with after school activities if school was not closed in the morning. Decisions to cancel after school activities are typically made prior to 2:00pm. In such an event, all secondary students will be sent home at the first dismissal.

The decision to close, or not to close, is never made without significant discussion and thought. I remind you that as parents/guardians, you make the final decision. Lastly, I would like to make one request: the biggest help you can provide is making sure your child, whether 6 or 16, is dressed appropriately with pants (no shorts), boots, a jacket, hat and gloves.

Attached you will find additional information to help you understand our responses to specific weather events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shawn Van Scoy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "V".

Shawn Van Scoy, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Gananda Central School District

Common Weather Related School Closure Questions

What factors are considered?

- Weather Predictions
 - We purchase localized weather reports specific to Gananda from a local weather expert
 - Monitor Radars
 - [NOAA Wind Chill Chart](#)
 - NOAA reports
- Road Conditions
 - We speak with highway supervisors about
 - current conditions
 - their ability to keep up with anticipated weather
- Length of Student Time on the Bus
 - Gananda is 14 square Miles
 - Longest bus run is 35 minutes
 - Busses are heated
 - 15 group stops with elementary students outside waiting for bus
 - Here Comes the Bus App to limit wait times at stops

At what temperature are schools required to close?

There is no requirement, it is a local decision. We will look at the real feel temperature on the [NOAA Wind Chill Chart](#), which is a combination of the air temperature and wind (mph). All students in Gananda are bussed to school, unlike PalMac, Newark and ER which have significant numbers of walkers. When conditions reach the dark blue/ "10 minute area" and [frostbite times are in the 10 minute zone we will be closed](#). If frostbite times are within 30 minute zones additional factors will be considered.

What about a travel ban by Wayne County?

- We will be closed
- In Wayne County a travel ban is issued by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
- It is enforced by the Wayne County Sheriff

What about a state of Emergency?

A State of Emergency declared by the Governor is done to obtain federal funding, it has no practical effect.

When are notifications made?

- Our busses are on the road at 6:30am, we try to make the decision by 6:15am
- Conditions can change and cause a last minute closure

How are notifications made?

- We post on the district website, Twitter, Facebook, send an email, send a robocall, and post to local radio and TV stations:
 - Website: www.Gananda.org
 - Twitter: @wearegananda, @svanscoy
 - Facebook: @ganandaschools
 - Radio Stations: WBEE, WBZA, WPXY, WCMF, WROC-AM, WHAM 1180 AM, WDWI 100.5 FM (The Drive), 106.7 (KISS), 92.5 (WBEE), 98.9 (The Buzz), 96.5 WCMF, 98PXY, WRMM 101.3 FM, 94.1 WZNE (The Zone), WFKL 93.3 FM (Fickle Radio), WNYR 98.5 FM, WCGR 1550 AM, WGVA 1240 AM
 - TV: WROC-TV-8, WHEC TV-10, WHAM TV-13/Fox Rochester, R News

How many snow days do we get?

None. Under current NYS regulations there needs to be 180 attendance days. If our closings jeopardize this number, we take days from spring break or other days. (As an example: Last year we converted a ½ day Parent-Teacher Conference Day to a full student day of school because we had closed five days.)

Why don't you close school the night before?

The weather can change significantly in 12 hours; storms that have been predicted to impact us have missed us.

Do you cancel recess at the elementary school?

Recess is cancelled if temperatures are under 25 degrees.

Do you close school mid-day?

Weather conditions can change rapidly. On occasion, we have sent students home midday. Notification is sent out to parents and the community in advance of this action, using the same notification systems.

What about the YMCA After-School Program?

- If we close the after school activities, the YMCA after school program is closed
- If we close mid-day, YMCA after school program is closed

What about the Gananda and Bright Start Preschool Program?

- Both our Gananda and Bright Start Pre-K Programs closes with district closures.
- Bright Start has a separate system to communicate with their parents

If the schools are closed on a Friday, will they be open Saturday for school practices, games, musicals, and/or ski club?

- That decision is made on a case-by-case basis and is heavily dependent on the specific weather conditions
- Coaches and advisors will communicate with their teams and clubs, there will not be a district-wide announcement

If the schools are closed on a Friday, will they be open Saturday for community events?

- That decision is made on a case-by-case basis and is heavily dependent on the specific weather conditions
- A post would be made to the district website
- Individual groups would make contact with their participants, there will not be a district-wide announcement

Definitions:

School Closure - All Schools are closed for the entire day, or remainder of the day. Buildings are not opened in the evening for athletics, concerts, plays or community events.

After School Closure - All Schools are closed for after the last bus leaves. There are no after school activities including practices, games or concerts. The buildings are not open for public events.

Delays - The schools will open 1 or 2 hours late. Simply add 1 or 2 hours onto your child's pick up time in the morning, dismissal is at the same time. This is done at the end of a storm to allow for cleanup of grounds and roadways. This is rarely done.